

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Provisional Minutes –7th January 2013

For Approval

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1. Attendance

Community Councillors

Patrick Marks, Ian Goudie, Ken Fraser, Henry Paul, Marysia Denyer, Penny Uprichard, Kyffin Roberts, Izzy Corbin, Andy Primmer, Carol Ashworth, Ronnie Murphy, Judith Harding, Howard Greenwell, Robert McLachlan, Bernadette Cassidy, Catherine Rowe, Ken Crichton, Callum Corbin.

Students' Association Representatives

Co-Opted

Lindsey Adam

Fife Councillors

Keith McCartney, Dorothea Morrison, Brian Thomson, Frances Melville

Apologies

Freddie fforde, Ali West, Henry Cheape, David Patterson, Alice Alexander, Henry Paul

2. Minutes of Meeting

These were accepted as correct as read apart from a change of Old Folks Treat to Senior Citizens Party.

3. Presentations

3.1 – No presentation this month

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville

4.1.1. Planning Committee Changes

Cllr Melville commented upon the draft report, which had gone to Fife Council last month with proposals for the planning system to be divided into three areas in Fife. This still has to be ratified by the Executive when the details of the new structure become clear. There are issues according to Cllr Melville such as the drawing of boundaries as this could cause some complications, particularly for councillors whose wards are on the boundaries. She also hoped that the committees would have a fair degree of autonomy in decision-making. She also acknowledged that in some major planning issues there might need to be a central body for decisions affecting the whole or a major part of Fife.

Miss Uprichard reminded the meeting that all Community Councils had been against this change and wondered where the democratic process stood when the opinion of Community Councils was ignored. Mr Roberts echoed Miss Uprichard's comments saying that CC reps he'd spoken to from other areas had been disappointed at this decision. Cllr Melville acknowledged this concern but added that the final decision would only be known when the Executive confirmed the Council decision.

4.1.2. Harbour Gates funding

Mr McLachlan asked for clarification about whether the Common Good Fund had made a donation towards the replacement of the harbour gates? Cllr Melville replied that the suggestion of a donation of £10000 was still to come up at the next Area meeting and might still be necessary, but would depend upon the amount the trustees could source from Government bodies.

4.2. Brian Thomson

4.2.1. Castle Sands Work

Cllr Thomson had spoken to Mark Dewar at Transportation Services who had informed him that the works had been completed at the end of November. Mark Dewar then checked upon the reason for the barriers at the top of the beach entrance not being removed and informed Cllr Thomson that the Fife Coastal and Countryside Trust should have removed the barriers and if they weren't removed soon Transportation Services would remove them.

4.2.2. Landslip at Hallowhill

Cllr Thomson reported on the landslip by the Kinnessburn at Hallowhill. He's chasing that matter up with Council officials.

4.2.3. Potholes in local roads

Cllr Thomson said that Council officials did try to monitor the condition of roads and pavements. He reminded the meeting of an online way to report potholes and there was an emergency number for more serious problems. Mrs Denyer queried the quality of the materials used to fill the potholes. Cllr Thomson replied that the subject of the material used had been discussed recently at the North East Fife Area Committee and this was being investigated further. Dr Goudie mentioned a hole by the entrance to Craigtoun Park, which had been filled recently but was in trouble again. Cllr Thomson replied that in relation to holes over a certain size and depth the council had a duty to fill them as soon as possible.

4.3. Keith McCartney

4.3.1. Madras College

Cllr McCartney discussed the decision to call in the Council decision of the 4th December on the future siting of Madras College. The Scrutiny Committee will be looking at the decision and deciding whether the planning and cost issues can be overcome. He commented that if the financial and planning obstacles could be overcome he would accept the possibility of a school being built at the Pipeland site. He added that he felt that these issues would be better addressed before public consultation took place. He added that the Council thought that it would be better to press forward with a planning application in principle to clarify the possibility of the school being built at Pipeland. The issue of cost also needed to be addressed, but based on recent experience with the new school at Dunfermline he hoped that officials would be able to come up with reasonably accurate figures of build cost. He commented that a school on the Station Park site if chosen would have cost about £48 million pounds, with the pond site costing possibly over £50 million pounds. Councillors had asked the Executive to come forward with a cost for the new school

in the knowledge that the current budget has been £40 million for several years, but may cost more which could affect its deliverability unless the Council can find the additional funds above the budgeted amount. He reminded the meeting how long the Madras replacement issue had been going on for and hoped that despite the recent failures of two other sites to be acceptable that the Pipeland site could be consulted with confidence by the public.

Mr Murphy asked about the cost of the new Dunfermline school. Cllr McCartney thought it was about £32 million pounds. Mr Murphy asked why that school design couldn't just be transplanted to St Andrews if it would save time in consultation? Cllr McCartney explained that while the Dunfermline school design would be of some influence in a possible new Madras, he explained that the Dunfermline school site was very different as it was Council owned and was a flat site with an access road already going into it as it had been school playing fields. He cited the various issues affecting the Pipeland site from its sloping aspect to the need to fit it in sensitively to the landscape and the need to purchase the site. Mr Murphy felt that the basic cost of the Dunfermline school would give the Council a starting point to which the other bits could be added as necessary. Cllr McCartney replied that he didn't know how long it would take officials to work out the costs at this time.

Miss Uprichard commented that if a decision had already been taken on the site prior to the consultation, surely the consultation would be only a paper exercise? Cllr McCartney suggested that as the decision had been taken by the Administration, Cllr Thomson could answer that question. Cllr Thomson replied that the decision taken in December was to proceed with the consultation and a planning application for the Madras Pipeland site. Miss Uprichard queried whether the subject of the consultation would only be the Pipeland site. Cllr Thomson confirmed that this would be the case.

Mr Greenwell asked, why at the North East Fife Area Committee meeting did Bill Lindsay, a Fife council official indicate that the planning for Pipeland would be at least a year longer than any of the other sites and had no guarantee of success because it was a build in green belt? He wondered why Councillors were insisting on following this path and condemning the school children to an extra year in Kilrymont when we could be sitting here two years down the line having had the application refused because it was in Green belt? Mr Thomson replied that only the Kilrymont site would be quicker in planning terms with all other sites being longer.

Mrs Corbin expressed concern about the fact that choosing the Pipeland site would see buses still having to go through the town. Cllr Thomson replied that if Mrs Corbin could suggest a suitable alternative in the western side of the town he'd be happy to hear about it. Mrs Corbin suggested the two-school solution, with a school at the Taybridgehead as a more suitable alternative to meet the needs of the two communities. Cllr Thomson replied that the two schools option was not on the agenda and had been rejected by the previous two administrations and was not affordable for the allocated budget. Dr Goudie followed up on the two school theme asking if Fife Council might have thought about asking about obtaining additional funding from the Scottish Government to help it towards achieving its Carbon reduction target? Dr Goudie also welcomed Cllr McCartney's suggestion about the appropriate way to proceed, pointing out that it might be wrong to have the consultation before it was clear that planning consent could be obtained given the green belt status of the Pipeland site. He felt that it would be wrong to encourage parents into a consultation before that issue was resolved. He suggested that the Scottish Government needed to be asked if building could take place in any circumstances in the Pipeland site. Cllr Melville supported Dr Goudie's point that Fife Council should have gone to the Scottish Government for advice, because of the problems associated with the development. She added that the previous

administration had not tackled that issue either despite her attempts to get that addressed.

Mrs Rowe asked why the two-school solution wasn't in favour. Cllr Thomson replied that the main problem was finance, but he also pointed out that parents in Leuchars/Guardbridge area were about half way between the two possible school locations so where would their children go? Some parents might choose St Andrews and some the Bridgehead.

Cllr Thomson added that in relation to the Scottish Government being involved, he felt that they would call the application in and appoint a Reporter to scrutinise the application. He also explained that in terms of progressing the planning application for the Pipeland site the Executive gave officials the authority to proceed in submitting a planning application in tandem with the statutory consultation. With regards to the costs he advised that the detailed design needed to be worked out and this could incur considerable costs so couldn't be done before the outline planning consent was obtained. He noted as well that the previous administration had decided to proceed with the Kilrymont planning application without any costs being in place. The cost plan wasn't completed until three months later when the consultation was nearly completed. He explained that the cost plan was just a simple square meterage rate, which could be calculated in a few days.

Mrs Harding wondered how long the new school would be expected to last for? Cllr Thomson replied that generally a 50-year lifespan would be the benchmark. Mrs Harding commented that there would then be buses still required for 50 years. Cllr Thomson thought that a future new distributor road would avoid the need for the buses to go through the town.

4.3.2. Lighting Problem at Fordyce Court

Mr Crichton asked in relation to this matter previously raised by Mrs Denyer whether a risk assessment had been carried out? Cllr McCartney replied that council officials were looking at the lighting issue and have spoken to the ambulance station and are looking at possibly highlighting the steps in question with white paint.

4.4. Dorothea Morrison

4.4.1. West Port

Cllr Morrison has had contact from the lawyer representing the owners, but hasn't had time to get back to the lawyer due to the festive season break.

4.4.2. Castle Sands

Cllr Morrison reported that work had been completed with the road repaired but she was awaiting official confirmation about when it would reopen for use.

4.4.3. Street Lights not working

Cllr Morrison had also been reporting street lights, which weren't working to Fife council, but due to the holiday break was still awaiting a response.

5. Planning Committee

5.1. Planning Report

Mr Greenwell reported a relatively quiet month in which the committee had objected to only four applications, which he then mentioned. The objections related to the signage at the Victoria Café, an ongoing issue, a couple of applications where it was

felt that inappropriate design materials were being used and one where it was thought there was overcrowding on the site. At the beginning of 2013 that three planning appeals had come to their attention. One was the Wind Farm at Kenly Green, the student accommodation at Wonderyears Nursery and the Montessori Primary school at 44 South Street.

5.2. Feddinch Appeal Update

Miss Uprichard reported that an independent investigating officer had been appointed to look at the Community Council complaint but added that he was not from a planning background. Miss Uprichard had emailed the officer to point out that the CC complaint was on planning grounds and that he should perhaps seek assistance from someone in the Scottish Government Planning dept. Miss Uprichard had also sent the officer emails detailing how the Local Plan had been adopted days four before the Reporter's notice of intention and she was given to understand that the Reporter would be bound by the adopted Local Plan when making his/her judgement. She had also sent copies of her emails to the DPA who had replied confirming that the Reporter would have been bound by the adopted Local Plan. She was therefore awaiting the outcome of the investigation to see if Greenbelt policy would be upheld or whether the Scottish Government would find away around it.

6. Matters Arising

6.1. Martyrs Monument Update

Mr Roberts reported that he believed the project was on time and completion would not be long.

6.2. Craigtoun Park

Mr Roberts reported on the success of the recent fundraising event at Craigtoun at which he'd played the part of Santa Claus. The Friends of Craigtoun are still seeking confirmation and agreement from Fife Council that they support what the Friends of Craigtoun are planning. He has been told verbally that in principle there is no problem. He acknowledged that it would be a huge undertaking for the Friends of Craigtoun to run the various facilities during the coming summer period. There are plans to have a grand reopening around Easter Friday, but would welcome both written agreement from Fife Council as well as more volunteers.

6.3. Botanic Gardens Update

In Mr Paul's absence Mr Roberts reported that he'd spoken to Mr Robin Waterston and he was concerned that there were still a lot of difficulties to overcome. The meeting was reminded of a forthcoming consultation next week at the Town Hall.

6.4. Housing Commission

Mr Roberts said that there wasn't a lot to report at present. The forms for the public to complete were available online and also in various locations around the town. The actual Housing Commission won't start its work until later in January.

6.5. Sheriff Court Closure Threat Update

Mr Murphy reported that the petitions had been reasonably well supported. The submissions made to the Court Service are being considered but now it's a matter of waiting to hear the outcome of the petition

6.4. Reports from Representatives

None.

6.5. Any Other Matters Arising

6.5.1. Flood Threat Query

Miss Uprichard asked about the comments on the assessment of flood risk carried out by Fife Council and mentioned by Cllr Morrison at the previous CC meeting when she had talked about a forthcoming meeting on the subject. Miss Uprichard asked if the discussion had looked at recent flood risk areas such as Dura Den. She added that she had not been impressed by what she'd read about the assessment of flood risk. Cllr Morrison replied that Fife Council kept a list of flood risk areas and that Dura Den might be added to that list. She described how flood risk areas could be reviewed and their status changed, such as the Kinnessburn, which is now at less risk since the removal of the berms. She went on to talk about some of the problems being due to farmers not looking after their field drains properly. She admitted that she wasn't impressed with the response she'd heard at the meeting.

7. Committee Reports

7.1 Recreation Committee

7.1.1. Recreation Committee Report

The report was presented by Mrs Denyer, having been previously circulated prior to the meeting by email. Mrs Denyer also announced that Mrs Corbin had become the Vice chair of St Andrews in Bloom. Mrs Denyer also reminded members about the Preservation Trust Annual Quiz on the 28th February. She hoped that there would be two teams of four from the Community Council.

7.2. General Purposes

No report

7.3. 200 Club

1. Mrs S Room. 2. D Watson. 3. Miss Fewster.

7.4. Health, Education and Welfare Committee

7.4.1. HEW Report

Mrs Corbin announced that St Andrews Community Hospital had won a national energy award. Mrs Corbin is also going to attend a Scottish Health Council Network conference in Glasgow. Finally she mentioned that there was to be a free Mental Health Training Day for carers

7.5. Rail Sub Committee

7.5.1. Rail Sub-Committee Report

Dr Goudie reported that the proposal put forward to get the St Andrews Rail Link as a possible candidate for national development had overcome its first hurdle with Fife Council supporting the idea.

8. New Business

8.1. Call for Nominations from Community Councils for My Place Awards 2013

Mr Roberts asked for possible suggestions for this award. Mr Corbin suggested that two members of St Andrews in Bloom should be considered for the award. Mrs Denyer made the meeting aware of the amount and type of evidence required by the Civic Trust who were running this award as the Preservation Trust had put Maries Cassells of the Pilgrim Trust forward last year and had not been successful. Mr Greenwell suggested that the Martyrs monument project might be a candidate given that it might be finished by 31st January. Mr Roberts suggested it as a possible subject for the GP meeting. Mrs Denyer added that the timescale for submission was very short in which to produce a portfolio on the subject or project.

8.2. Onshore Wind Review Consultation

No comment – for information

9. Reports from Office Bearers

9.1. Chair

Mr Roberts reported on the success of the Senior Citizens Treat and the excellent turn out of the students and others helping.

9.2. Treasurer

9.2.1. Treasurers Report

See report circulated by email and online.

9.3 Secretary

9.3.1. Correspondence – see Appendix A.

Mr Marks commented on the email correspondence about the enquiry about the use of the St Andrews logo, which Niall Scott had offered to pass to a relevant contact in the St Andrews Links Trust. Mr Roberts confirmed that he'd had an email from the Links Trust to say that they were in contact and proceeding with discussions on the matter.

10. Any Other Competent Business

10.1. St Andrews Citizen – Departure of Editor

Mr Niall Scott reported that Mike Rankin currently editor at the Citizen is moving to a new job outwith Fife and will not be replaced. Future editing will be done at the publisher's offices in Kirkcaldy and there will be one local reporter. Mr Scott thought that the issue should be flagged up as a concern at this diminution of local democracy. Mrs Denyer was critical of the amount of local news being published in the St Andrews Citizen. Cllr Melville acknowledged that she'd heard about the changes some time ago and added that she felt that the Citizen website was very poor. She felt that it was symptomatic of the way newspapers were changing. Mr Roberts commented that perhaps the CC should take up Mr Scott's suggestion and make representation to the paper's publishers about this decision. Mr Crichton suggested a vote regarding a possible letter to be sent. Mr Roberts felt that there appeared to be general agreement to send some form of letter of concern to the Citizen's publisher.