

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Provisional Minutes –7th October 2013

For Approval

1. Attendance

Community Councillors

Ian Goudie, Kyffin Roberts, Izzy Corbin, Carol Ashworth, Judith Harding, Ken Crichton, Howard Greenwell, Alice Alexander, Patrick Marks, Penny Uprichard, Ronnie Murphy, Henry Paul, Robert McLachlan, Henry Cheape, Marysia Denyer,

Students' Association Representatives

Chloe Hill

Co-Opted

Lindsey Adam

Niall Scott

Fife Councillors

Dorothea Morrison, Brian Thomson

Apologies

Callum Corbin, Ken Fraser, Bernadette Cassidy, Frances Melville, Keith McCartney

2. Minutes of 2nd September Meeting

4.4.3. Argos Development – Miss Uprichard commented that the Argos development plans had not been approved as implied in the minutes. Correction noted.

3. Presentation

3.1. Madras College – The Two Sides of the Debate

Mr Roberts explained the format and timing of presentations to the Community Council informing the participants that the presentations would be 7 minutes with an allowance on this occasion for 3 minutes to give a total of 10 minutes. The speakers could speak for as long as they wanted within these rules and any remaining times could be used for questions.

3.1.1. Parent Voice Presentation

Mr Colin Brown, representing Parent Voice gave the first of the presentations. Mr Brown thanked the Chair and Councillors for the opportunity to address the meeting. He reminded the meeting that he was a resident with strong family connections with the town for over 60 years and the good fortune to have 6 grand children living in St Andrews. He went on to say that Parent Voice represented a group of ordinary parents and grand parents who have been campaigning for a new Madras College that will provide a first class education for our children. We believe that after countless disappointments we need to build the school without delay. As such we would ask that you the representatives of the people of St Andrews take into consideration the following points in coming to your conclusions on the plans, which have been submitted by Fife Council to build a replacement for Madras College at the site known as Pipelands.

We trust that all Councillors acknowledge that the need for a replacement for Madras College is imperative given the condition of the current buildings and the

arrangement. This arrangement was criticised by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of schools in 2006 and again in 2008 and conditions have deteriorated since.

Only one site, which is capable of meeting the needs for a 21st century school has been identified and is available for our school. The site known as Pipeland is within our town. It is easily accessed for local pupils whom we assume you will represent in your deliberations. For those who travel the new Madras will no further than their present journey. We have scrutinised the Fife Council plans and sought expert advice where necessary and believe that the plans form a sound basis to provide that first class school for our children. Furthermore the plans encompass features unique to St Andrews such as a South Street style quad and maximising the light and views to the North Sea and the Angus coast beyond. We have taken as many opportunities as possible to encourage all those in all the areas affected and with an interest in the plans to consider them and make their points known to the Council.

As was evident from the outcome of previous consultation exercises a very clear majority of respondents are in favour of the new school at Pipeland with a consistent, underlying message to Fife Council to get on with it.

We have noted that this Council and the Preservation Trust's request for an extension to the period has been agreed and on reflection we accept that more time is useful for Councillors given the large amount of information supplied by Fife Council. We also noted however that the Convenor of your Planning Sub - Committee is also a prominent member of the Preservation Trust. With no disrespect the Convenor or the Preservation Trust we would expect Mr Chairman that due process would be applied by you in ensuring that the views of St Andrews Community Council reflect those of the wider community and not just those of a particular faction.

In your scrutiny of the plans we trust you will look at those aspects addressed by the plans, which address concerns, rightly raised in the consultation process. Already we have been dismayed by some comments in the press, which highlight details without reporting the plans to overcome or offset the matter. Such scaremongering is unhelpful to say the least. Finally we would advise councillors that we too cherish our historic and beautiful town of St Andrews. We are confident therefore that with the constructive input of this Community Council and the other parties to the current plans we will have a school building and a campus at Pipeland, which the citizens of St Andrews can be proud to call the place in which we educate and develop our children and our young people. We cannot afford to gamble on hope any longer. The new Madras in St Andrews is within our grasp. We would ask our Community Councillors to seize this opportunity for our children and for our town. Thank you once again for the opportunity to address the meeting.

Mr Murphy asked Mr Brown how many members there were in Parent Voice? Mr Brown in reply suggested that Mr Murphy look at the number of supporters on the Parent Voice website. In the Facebook page there are several hundred supporters.

Mr Crichton said that he took exception to the criticism levied against one of the CC members in the presentation that they might be biased. He informed Mr Brown that any letter from any of the CC committees had to be approved by the whole CC. Mr Brown in reply apologised and said that it wasn't meant as that and he reminded Mr Crichton that he said "with respect" in his comments, then added that concern arose from the fact that the newspaper article reporting the delay to the process was reported by the CC representative who he understood to be a prominent member of the Preservation Trust. He also that they weren't saying that it wasn't proper for him to have a voice, but they were asking the CC to be careful that it represents all the groups, including the Preservation Trust as well as the wider community. No insult was mentioned and he hoped that none would be taken.

Miss Uprichard commented upon Mr Brown's claim that the Pipeland site was within the town, reminding him that it is actually in Greenbelt, outside the town and on prime agricultural land and that these factors would add complications to the situation. Mr Brown in his reply said that he understood the concern about the

Greenbelt, but as the application was for a school that offset his concerns. He was involved in agriculture himself and said he knew about these things. He went on to say that it was interesting how the town had developed, with the wonderful old town on an almost Edinburgh basis. Likewise there was a newer town developing at the far end of the town, with an industrial and commercial sector as well as the hospital/health centre.

Mr Greenwell took issue with two points that Mr Brown raised in his presentation, firstly that there was more than one site. North East Fife Area Committee considered 13 sites and they selected a different site, which was overturned by the full Council. There was not just a single site in and around this town he added. In reply Mr Brown repeated that Pipeland was the site that had been identified, was available and therefore given the circumstances of the current school there was not the luxury of prevaricating any longer.

The second point, with which he took issue, was Mr Brown's contention that children would not have to travel further. Children coming from Taybridgehead to South Street at present would have to go a mile further, a fifteen minute, ninety vehicle traffic jam, according to the papers on the Fife Council website. Mr Brown in reply stated that for the children going to South Street, getting in and out was already a huge issue, so he didn't see how travelling to the other end of town would be a great issue and for Kilrymont pupils the distance would be almost equidistant.

3.1.2. North Haugh Group

Mr Roberts introduced Mr Lindsay Matheson of the North Haugh Group. Mr Matheson thanked the Community Council for the opportunity to speak a little about the big decision, which is awaiting this entire community. He started by stating that the North Haugh Group believed profoundly that there have been mistakes made in the lead up to the point at which we are at, in particular over the selection of a suitable site. We believe that we have arrived at a position where by far the best and most obvious solution to the fate of the exciting new school, which we want dearly to be provided for the children and the community of this whole catchment. It has been done in such a way that we have arrived without giving full consideration to the most obvious solution, which was a site on the west of St Andrews, in the town, which he considered to be a vital point, within the town boundary and in the Local Plan. He added that the site had been arrived at after many years of consideration by the Local Plan.

A plan of the site with accompanying details was then distributed to CC members. He felt that a quite marvellous campus could be created, combining the end of the North Haugh and accessing across the A91 through a crossing the playing fields of Station Park. The group thought that that vision provided in itself an absolute contradiction and opposition to what would be provided at Pipeland. He acknowledged that Pipeland would be a new school, but on a difficult site, a sloping site, north facing and exposed, with a lovely view but a site which would be difficult and expensive to maintain and run, and also a site, which he claimed would present considerable safety issues. The safety issues would he claimed encompass both those coming to the school and those going to local outlets. The group's conclusion was that a western site would be infinitely preferable.

He then focussed upon the merits which he group felt had not been adequately examined by Fife Council to date. He then said that when the new administration had come into power the previous year, one of its first acts had been to try and find a site on the western side of the town. He added that all parties were agreed that that was the best area where a new school should be located.

The North Haugh Group felt that its task was to work up that idea to a point where they could show in a prospectus that it was an unimpeachable case for a very good school. Because the group felt that they had a very strong case for the North Haugh site, they also felt that they had to oppose the Pipeland site on a number of grounds.

The group he said had worked up a sheet comparing the two sites and felt that it was very clear that on access and location, as well as the environmental impact the argument could not be sustained between the two. He also felt in terms of sports facilities there could be no comparison, with only three sports pitches and one all weather pitch in the Pipeland plan compared to nine pitches on Station Park plus two unused areas a cricket pitch. He added that these would still have to be used the group claimed if Pipeland was to go ahead because he claimed that three pitches would be inadequate for the scale of sport and extra curricular activities for which the school was well known. He felt that providing an umbilical link to Station Park would result in a very exciting campus for a school on the North Haugh site. He concluded by saying that even the foundation of the original Madras College in 1832 was an extremely fraught process, involving the entire community and closing two schools. He felt that it was a similar situation now and that it was vital that the right solution should be arrived at without undue haste.

Mr Cheape asked about the stance of the University in relation to the availability of the north Haugh site? Mr Matheson replied that when he'd been in post in 2006, the University had been very happy to discuss an exchange of the site at the North Haugh for South Street. In 2008 that site was offered formally to Fife Council, but that previous administration asked for the Langlands "B" site. When that failed he added that the University had twice stated publically that its door remained open to Fife Council making an approach. He felt that if that site would be available if Fife Council made the approach in the right way.

Mr Niall Scott confirmed that the pond site was available, but added a number of riders in relation to the matter. He said that Fife Council had made it clear that even if the university were to offer them the pond site for free they would not accept it, as they did not think it suitable. At the present time the University were not actively offering the site again to Fife Council, preferring that the Council would make the approach to discuss the possibility of a deal.

Mr Roberts then brought the discussion to a conclusion, recognising that discussion could go on but he didn't feel that it would serve any particularly useful purpose at the meeting.

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville

Apologies

4.2. Brian Thomson

4.2.1. Speeding in Buchanan Gardens

Cllr Thomson had received complaints from residents in Buchanan Gardens/Strathkiness Low Road about speeding motorists. He was keen to seek the views of CC members on this matter. He had asked officers to carry out a speed survey in mid-August. The results showed that the mean average speed on Strathkiness Low Road going east was 28.4 mph and the west bound vehicles average speed was 30.6 mph. In Buchanan Gardens the average speed for vehicles going east was 29.8 mph and westbound 28.5 mph. In his assessment the results did illustrate the fact that quite a few vehicles were going above the speed limit, even if only one survey showed an average speed about 30 mph. He added that the conclusion of the surveying officer was that the results were not a serious cause for concern. He felt differently from the officer and believed that there was a speeding problem, but acknowledged that there was no money in the budget to put measures in place. He was keen however to get feedback on his report, with views as to whether there was a need for measures in that locality and what type of measures could be undertaken.

Miss Uprichard felt that the signs saying slow down were not effective and she was also against speed humps feeling that they were bad for cars and for peoples' backs. Mr Paul added that in other areas such as near Leven there were signs, which indicated a car's actual speed, which he thought were more effective in making motorists change their speed. Cllr Thomson acknowledged that there was no money in the current budget for new measures though he was willing to lobby for funding to get measures introduced. Mr Murphy suggested that it would be useful to put in a mirror at the junction of the Strathkiness High Road and Buchanan Gardens due to the acute angle at which the roads meet making visibility difficult. He thought that a mirror would reduce the risk of accidents at that junction. Mrs Ashworth suggested making the Strathkiness Low Road a 30 mph zone out as far as Rufflets as local residents in Lumsden Crescent were concerned that there was a possibility of an accident with cars approaching the roundabout at a higher speed. Cllr Morrison commented in relation to that idea that it had been turned down by Fife Council officers, as the road didn't meet the criteria required for such a change. A 30 mph zone can apparently only be implemented when there are properties on both sides of the road. Mr Crichton suggested that the best way to deal with speeding would be to put in average speed cameras. Cllr Thomson supported this idea but acknowledged that they were very expensive to install.

4.2.2. Westport Pergola

Cllr Thomson had put a motion to the last East Area Committee supported by Cllr Morrison to ask for a report into the handling of that matter to be presented to a future meeting of that committee and also the implications for the Council if a discontinuance notice was pursued.

4.2.3. Newmill Bridge

He is still awaiting feedback from Criminal Justice about the work to be done on that crossing.

4.2.5. Kinnessburn Footpath

Work to repair the footpath is to commence the day following this meeting.

4.2.6. No.1 Greyfriars Garden

The Fife Council Property Services officer dealing with the matter has made contact with the owner of the site to discuss the idea of a compulsory purchase order. Cllr Thomson and Cllr Morrison would both support this idea if necessary. Mr Crichton mentioned that the Community Council had been asking for years to get this ground compulsorily purchased and he wondered why it was now a possibility when in the past it hadn't been. Cllr Thomson wasn't aware of the past history but it had been mentioned to Councillors by the Preservation Trust and they had spoken to Council officers who had agreed to see whether it might be possible, but any progress would be subject to committee approval. He concluded by saying that sometimes the mere threat of a CPO persuaded landowners to come to a voluntary agreement and he thought that it might be possible that the owner faced with a CPO could offer the land to the Preservation Trust for a price.

4.2.7. Changes to Police Public counter opening times

Cllr Thomson informed the meeting about proposals by Police Scotland to close scores of public counters at local Police stations across Scotland. In St Andrews the proposal is to restrict opening times to between 9 – 5. He had major concerns about that proposal and he encouraged members to voice their views on the website link.

4.2.8. Market Street Uplighters

Cllr Thomson has asked the relevant Council officer to look into why the uplighters near Subway are still not working.

4.2.9. Lawmill Flooding

The owner of the property by the duck pond had approached Cllr Thomson about flooding in his driveway due to leakage from the duck pond. Cllr Thomson has asked a Council official to look into possible options to resolve this problem.

4.2.10. Section 75 Agreements and Commuted Sums

Cllr Thomson had asked Cllr Melville about this matter and she had asked Council officers to prepare a paper on the subject. This relates to where developers are granted planning permission but agree to pay a commuted sum in relation to possible affordable housing or industrial land or education needs. Cllr Thomson had wondered where all such money was being kept as it wasn't clear to Councillors. He had asked how much such money was in the fund and what the criteria were for spending it. There is to be a report to the North East Fife Area Committee on the 20th November. Dr Goudie commented that he hoped that developers would not be allowed to get away with commuted sums instead of building affordable housing. He wasn't convinced that money going into a generic pot would be spent again in St Andrews. Cllr Thomson acknowledged that this had been a bugbear of his in the past and he would like to get affordable housing rather than commuted sums. He acknowledged that part of the problem was in relation to policies in the local plan, which allowed developers of less than 20 units to pay a commuted sum instead of building affordable housing. Dr Goudie commented that he hoped Councillors would try to get this policy changed. Cllr Thomson said that there was a review of the affordable housing policy going on at present and he would suggest that change to the officers concerned. Miss Uprichard added that developers could get around the policy by dividing their applications into two with one just below 20 units and the other for just a couple of properties. Cllr Thomson acknowledged that it was a loophole in the policy along with special needs housing.

4.2.11. Market Square Fountain

Cllr Thomson was asked if there was any news about the Melville Fountain? Cllr Thomson replied that in discussions with officials problems had been identified in relation to blocked drains in the area, which the Council and Scottish Water are investigating. There may be issues related to commercial properties putting inappropriate material such as noodles down the drains. Cllr Morrison also commented upon these problems.

4.3. Keith McCartney

4.3.1. Abbey Walk

Cllr McCartney reported that an inspection has been done and a work order to replace the missing section of double yellow lines was issued to the council's lining contractor on 19th September. It is anticipated that this work will be completed in three weeks.

4.3.2. Dead Trees in Market Street

Cllr McCartney reported that all four trees are to be replaced hopefully starting in the second week in November.

4.3.3. 'Gate' on Lade Braes

Cllr McCartney reported that the Community Service Project Officer is aware that the project is not yet complete and work on the 'gates' and bridge by Plash Mill Cottage will continue until it is done. The workers cannot get there every day, but will certainly be there twice a week (presumably weather permitting).

I have asked that, in addition to the existing project, consideration is given to extending the work to include the three sets of 'gates' giving access to the Lade Braes from Lawmill Gardens. The Projects Officer and the Area Manager (Parks, Streets and Open Spaces) are to make a site visit.

4.3.4. Seagulls

Cllr McCartney reported that signs asking people not to feed the seagulls have been put up beside the benches in Church Square, Market Street (outside the Buchanan Building) and on The Scores near the benches at the Martyrs Monument.

4.3.5. Craigtoun Road

Cllr McCartney reported that the bushes, which were growing out and onto the path on the north side of the road between the bridge at Little Carron and Lawhead Primary School, have been cut back.

4.3.6. Jacob's Ladder

Cllr McCartney reported that the bushes growing out through the handrails and onto the steps have been reported.

4.3.7. Kennedy Gardens

Cllr McCartney reported that a request has been forwarded to the Area Manager (Parks, Streets and Open Spaces) that consideration be given to refreshing the circular raised bed on the pavement at the corner of Kennedy Gardens by the entrance to Kinburn Park which presently contains a few roses long past their best.

4.3.8. Spraying

Cllr McCartney reported that spraying of the late season weed growth, which has appeared in roads and pavements around the town, was scheduled to begin on Monday 23rd September.

4.3.9. Pedestrian Crossing (Craigtoun Road)

Cllr McCartney reported that the green light on the easternmost column on the north side of the pedestrian crossing on Craigtoun Road between Lade Braes and Lawhead Primary School which was hanging loose from its mounting was reported and fixed.

4.4. Dorothea Morrison.

4.4.1. Bridge at Cockshaugh Park

Cllr Morrison had spoken to Ian Barbour of Fife Council about the painting of the bridge recently, but the Payback Scheme who are meant to be doing the work have not managed to do it by the promised date. Cllr Morrison has been trying to contact the officer in charge of the Payback Scheme so far without success.

4.4.2. Botanic Gardens

Cllr Morrison had suggested to Kay Morrison the Deputy Provost that it would be useful to have a meeting with the four local members. Kay Morrison has taken over a position in the Botanical Gardens Educational Trust from Cllr Thomson.

4.4.3. Changes to Police Station Counter Opening Hours

Cllr Morrison like Cllr Thomson was concerned about the proposals to close public counters or reduce opening hours in Police Stations around Scotland. In St Andrews the proposal is to open between 9 - 5 instead of 24 hour opening.

4.4.4. Bus Service Changes

Cllr Morrison mentioned that there were quite a few changes in bus services in the area (details sent to CC members by email)

4.4.5. New Bin Stores

Cllr Morrison reported that work to locate bins in town centres areas is ongoing and it is hoped that this will reduce the problem of black bags and the associated seagull problems.

4.4.6. Road Works in town

Cllr Morrison commented generally on the proliferation of road works around the town associated with building works taking place, such as the Students Union. Miss Uprichard reported that she had asked the Fife Council officer dealing with the road works to send her a report on waiting times. Mrs Alexander commented on the issue about where buses could stop in the town centre because of the building and road work. She asked if it was possible to have a temporary bus stop in Greyfriars Gardens, otherwise it was a long walk for pensioners to other bus stops while the stop opposite St Marys Place was out of action. Cllr Morrison had asked Stagecoach who had looked into it but had decided against it. Cllr Morrison acknowledged that there would be considerable problems for people getting around the town until all the works had finished.

4.4.7. Tree Grills in South Street

Mrs Ashworth asked Cllr Morrison when the grills would be placed around the base of the trees in South Street? Cllr Morrison replied that there had been an intention to put down grills but due a number of problems the bases around the trees had been left in the current muddy state. One problem has been a disagreement between Planning and the officer who had done the design guidelines for St Andrews. Cllr Morrison thought that there might be a surface, which could be put down, which would give a sort of pebbly effect but she otherwise had no idea about how long any decision might take.

5. Planning Committee

5.1. Planning Report

5.1.1. Some Planning Comments

Mr Greenwell commented that while it had been a quieter month in the number of applications, the committee had met three times because of the Madras College application. First of all he briefly commented upon the other applications dealt with, most of which did not raise any concerns from the Planning Committee. Two applications which had gone to the North East Fife Area Committee and to which the Planning Committee had objected were the, a) Robertson Homes application and b) the fast food outlet in Lamond Drive. He reported that the committee had turned both these down.

5.1.2. Madras Environment Impact Assessment Report and Planning in Principle Application

Mr Greenwell said that early on the committee had voted to object to the application. Committee members each took on some parts of the report/application to study in more detail and work to frame objections where necessary. The committee also applied to Fife Council for an extension of the time to consider the EIA/planning application, though they did work to the date of the 8th October, which was the actual four-week period as allowed for initial responses to Fife Council. Mr Greenwell informed the meeting that he had earlier this afternoon circulated an 11-page letter detailing areas of concern. On the basis of these the committee felt the application should be refused. Mr Greenwell then read out the headings of the areas of concern on the letter.

The objections were as follows:

1. Significantly contrary to the Development Plan and both the Tay Plan and North East Fife local plan
2. Contrary to Green Belt policy.

3. Budget issues were also noted by the committee but the figures used in the letter were only based on those mentioned by Fife Council itself. He said that five areas of additional financial costs were documented in the letter taking approximately £5 million as a conservative estimate.
4. Flooding issues due to the excavation of the southern hillside.
5. Traffic issues on Largo Road, such as a potential 15-minute 90-vehicle tailback first thing in the morning, which had been mentioned by Transportation Services and also that road junctions leading up to the roundabout by the hospital would be operating at over capacity for a period of time.
6. Proximity to Mobile phone masts
7. Flooding on Scooniehill Road as well as the overflow of the "suds" pond into the Kinnesburn creating the potential for more flooding.
8. Concerns about the possibility that classrooms at the back of the school would be north facing into the hillside, meaning that there would be less natural light and a potential need for more lighting. The exposed nature of the site might also mean a need for more heating.
9. Light pollution from flood lit sports pitches, which could impact on local residents.
10. Lack of a swimming pool.
11. Impact on users trying to access the hospital at certain times.
12. Noise impacting upon the hospital hospice.
13. Bussing costs and the Climate Change Act. It was felt that there could be slightly more greenhouse gas emission and this didn't help targets for the Climate Change Act.
14. No educational benefit in the school being sited at Pipeland as opposed to any other site. He added that there was probably more of a benefit to have the school at the western side of town close to sporting facilities.

He concluded by saying that the Planning Committee was unanimous in its support for submitting this letter and asked the Community Council for its approval to submit the letter to Fife Council.

Mr Paul raised a standing order point in relation to members declaring a declaration of interest. He said that according to the rules if a member had a predetermined position they had to state it. He added that he had found five CC members on a website opposing Pipeland. He felt that these CC members should consider whether they should state a declaration of interest. Mr Roberts sought clarity from Mr Paul on his point of order stating that the planning committee were merely seeking the support or otherwise of the full CC for the letter to Fife Council. He asked what in Mr Paul's view was the problem? Mr Paul replied that the problem was that the members in question had already pre-decided their position on this matter so according to the rules could not take part in the discussion. Mr Paul at Mr Roberts request named the members on the list which was on the website for the New Madras group.

Cllr Morrison commented that she'd discovered that she'd been listed on that same site but had been unaware of her inclusion, as no one had asked her if she wanted it added to the list. She had asked for her name to be removed. Mr Crichton queried why members couldn't state their views, as a vote hadn't been taken. Mr Paul replied that members shouldn't declare their views publically before a vote. Mr Roberts commented that he'd never he never said to anyone to put his name down as a supporter. Mr Paul acknowledged that and added that that's why he'd raised it, to seek clarification about the list as it was in the public domain and could be misunderstood by anyone reading it.

Dr Goudie commented that he couldn't accept that stating a position in favour of one proposal would necessarily affect judgement in relation to the planning application on the table. Mr McLachlan commented that as he understood matters the meeting was not being asked to vote for Pipeland vs. North Haugh, but purely on the merits of the planning application for Pipeland. Mr Roberts confirmed this fact. Mr McLachlan thought that in that case it didn't matter what one's own personal views were as the question was whether the CC thought that the application met the planning requirements, yes or no! Mr Roberts suggested that Mr McLachlan given his background in local government was probably correct and proposed that the meeting move matters on. However he sought other comments before seeking a final decision from the meeting.

Ms Chloe Hill commented that when students stand for office they make their position known on relevant matters and in this case she felt that CC members should act similarly on such a controversial matter. Mr Crichton suggested that a possible way out of this problem might be to propose a motion that the councillors mentioned by Mr Paul should make it clear that their names were put on the website in question without their consent and that therefore it was a false account and should be disregarded. Miss Uprichard added that she hadn't asked for her name to be added to the list of supporters on the website but otherwise didn't feel that it was relevant to the matter in hand.

Mr Murphy said that his understanding was that if members were actively promoting a particular option like the pond site, they shouldn't be able to vote in relation to the matter being discussed. Mr McLachlan commented that he would differentiate between having an interest and having an opinion. "Dr Goudie felt that the meeting was generalising the notion of an interest to a ridiculous extent. Traditionally having an interest had implied a financial interest." He added that he also felt it was unacceptable that the Fife Councillors were unable to express views in a similar way before votes were taken. Mrs Corbin didn't feel that anyone had a conflict of interest in relation to commenting upon problems perceived in the planning application for the new Madras.

Mr Greenwell explained the nature of the contact he'd had with the North Haugh group and went on to say that in relation to the letter under discussion it was merely an analysis of the potential flaws/problems with the application and didn't make any comment about alternative sites. He added that he had no personal position on where the school should be built, but was keen to see that a first class school was built, which fitted in with all required planning regulations etc. He would be against what he described as a "quick fix" at Pipeland, which the town would have to live with for 50 years.

Mr Paul said that he'd raised the issue because of the content on the website and had wanted to discover if the councillors listed had actively wanted their names on the website or not. He acknowledged that everyone would have a predetermined view, but could not state publically before a vote what way they were going to vote.

Mr Scott asked what would be the effect of the Community Council objecting to the application? Mr Roberts replied that there might be very little effect on the outcome. He explained to Mr Scott the Community Council's statutory position of which Fife Council should take note of the objection, but in the end it didn't mean that the application would be refused.

Mr Scott asked about the possible effect upon the CC if in objecting the Scottish Government called in the application, thus potentially delaying the application by a couple of years? Miss Uprichard explained that the application could be called in by the Scottish Government not because of any Community Council objection but because it is a local authority development and is significantly contrary to the Development Plan. She went on to explain that Fife Council was going against its own Local Plan, which it had spent ten years progressing until it was confirmed last year.

Mr Roberts asked members if there was a desire to make a decision about the letter detailing objections to the planning application for a new Madras. The vote was 8 for and 3 against in principle to make such a decision. Dr Goudie suggested that it might be an idea to vote in principle about the letter but as there was now an extended period in which to respond, he thought that it might be useful to take the time to make a small number of corrections and improvements to the letter. Miss Hill didn't think that it was possible to vote in relation to the letter if corrections or changes were made subsequently, which might change some of the detail on which the original vote had taken place. Miss Uprichard reminded the meeting that the application wasn't coming to the full Fife Council until next April, which she felt should put to rest any allegations made that the Community Council was trying to delay the application.

Mr Murphy asked the CC members to think seriously about the vote about sending the letter and think if they were representing the interests of the people of the town or their own interests. It seemed abundantly clear to him that there was a lot of support for getting the school built, and if the school didn't work out it would be Fife Council who would have to shoulder the blame. He felt that the letter whilst excellently crafted didn't represent the interests of the people of the town that it is going to effect. Mrs Corbin felt that siting a school very close to the hospice in the hospital was not right and didn't respect the need for those using the hospice to have peace. Dr Goudie in reply to Mr Murphy said that he disagreed and felt that there was a relatively small percentage of the population of the town in favour of the school proposal. In part this was because the number of people with school-aged children in the town was very small, which he felt reflected the failure of housing policy over many years.

Miss Uprichard added that when there had been the five drop in sessions about the school proposals attendance had been just 114, hardly she felt an overwhelming number showing a serious interest in the detail of the proposed new school.

Mr Roberts asked the members if they would like to vote on the actual letter and it was agreed that this would take place. The voting saw 9 voting for and 4 against.

Dr Goudie then raised the issue of a potential newsletter, which he had compiled, in which details about the Madras application were outlined with reasons for the CC's concerns about it. If it were to go out it would require approval of the full CC.

Miss Hill queried the newsletter as it was titled as being from the Community Council not just the Planning Committee. Mr Paul felt that if it was a Planning Committee newsletter that committee should pay for it and distribute it. He acknowledged that the mention of Craigtoun and the CC work done in relation to that was a positive message, but he was disappointed that there was no mention of the Botanic Gardens situation, which he thought showed up the University in another light. He added that those who believed that the University could come up with a positive proposal in relation to the school site should reflect upon its change of attitude towards the future of the Botanic Gardens. Mr Roberts reflected that all previous newsletters had gone out in the name of the CC and that there was no such thing as a Planning Committee newsletter.

Mr Paul queried the insertion of a paragraph about a past TV programme in which there had been a mention of a donation made by the owners of the Pipeland site, Muir group and a donation to the local Labour Party. Miss Uprichard felt that it was relevant to remind readers about this matter as she reminded the meeting about the Muir Group's past attempts to build on the Southern hillside and how the Reporter last year in the examination of the local Plan had ruled out the Southern hillside as a site for building. She felt that the school plans could encourage the Muir Group to consider again the possibility of housing. Mrs Alexander didn't see the relevance of the mention of the TV programme and the Muir connection to the subject discussed in the newsletter.

Mr Paul thought that the wording “To object” should be replaced by a request to people to comment. He felt that the CC shouldn’t be ordering people to object. He felt that this wasn’t the role of the Community Council. Mrs Adam thought that the newsletter was too anti-Pipeland to give people a chance to weigh up the issues and felt that it should present the issues in a more balanced way and it didn’t explain how the CC had come to its decision.

Mr Roberts wondered if it would be possible to spend some more time on the newsletter, given that there was not universal support for it with its present content. Dr Goudie said that he was happy to substitute some content for a paragraph about the Botanic Gardens situation. Miss Uprichard reminded the meeting that the issue of objection was relevant as in her awareness objections carried more weight than general comments. Miss Hill was concerned that the newsletter didn’t give the public the option to comment and only asked them to object. Mr Murphy thought that the CC should give the public balanced information and ask them to give the CC their views as well as writing to Fife Council. He felt that this would show that the CC could act more democratically. Mr McLachlan pointed out that the newsletter didn’t say that the CC actually supported a new school and suggested that it should be amended to say so. Mr Paul suggested that the newsletter could incorporate an option to support the proposal as well as object to make it more balanced. Dr Goudie reminded the meeting that in previous newsletters when the CC had been objecting to issues such as the Western Development it hadn’t hesitated in asking the public to support its objections and felt that the current suggestion was akin to sitting on the fence.

In concluding the discussion Mr Roberts felt that the newsletter needed editing to make it more acceptable to members concerned at its present content. Miss Uprichard commented that there was nothing factually incorrect in the newsletter. Mr Roberts asked the meeting if there was a view that the newsletter could be put out in its present form or not. Dr Goudie said that he was willing to make some alterations to reflect the concerns of members. Mr Paul still didn’t feel happy with Dr Goudie’s suggested amendments/alterations as he viewed the tone of the newsletter as essentially asking people just to object. He also felt that there were few people in the town who didn’t have a view for or against the current school plans.

Mr McLachlan suggested the possibility of having a chattier introduction to lessen the tone of the newsletter. Mr Murphy suggested putting Mr Greenwell’s objection letter on the CC website and that the Chair write to the public and suggest that they could read the objection on that site. Mrs Corbin suggested the possibility of going back and rewriting the newsletter. Dr Goudie replied that time was a problem for him due to work commitments and he was concerned that the CC might end up not issuing important information and advice to the town on a major planning application.

Mr Roberts asked if members were in favour of a modified version of the letter going out? Mr McLachlan felt that a letter in some form was needed. Miss Hill suggested that the problem with the letter wasn’t the facts but the tone and suggested it needed redrafting. Mr McLachlan offered to try and rewrite relevant paragraphs in the newsletter to make it more acceptable. Mr Roberts thanked Mr McLachlan for his offer. Dr Goudie agreed that if Mr McLachlan could email him his modifications he could see what could be done. He agreed that if Mr McLachlan could email him his modifications he would see what he could do.

Miss Uprichard informed the meeting that she’d received information that the consultation would be open until the 5th January. Mr Roberts added that he would contact Fife council to try and confirm the closure date for public comments and would ask if this could be extended.

6. Matters Arising

6.1. Botanic Gardens Update

Mr Paul announced he'd stepped down from his involvement in the Friends of the Botanic Gardens. Mrs Corbin is now on the committee of the Friends of the Botanic Gardens. Mrs Corbin had no update to report.

6.2. Housing Commission

Mr Roberts hoped that the report would be published soon but had no date for it.

6.3. Reports from Reps

None

6.4. Any Other Matters arising

None

7. Committee Reports

7.1. Recreation Committee

Mrs Denyer has circulated a report by email. Mr Paul also reported that the Coffee Morning had raised about £260, which after costs left a total of about £200 profit. He thanked CC members for their support and added that he felt it was worth the effort.

7.2. General Purposes Committee

No recent meeting.

7.3. 200 Club

1st Mrs Reed, 2nd Mrs Tricker, 3rd Mrs Alexander

7.4. Health, Education & Welfare

7.4.1. Report

Mrs Corbin reported that she is now on the Access Forum. There is now news about the defibrillator sites with possible locations including the East and West Sands, Spar & Tesco. Mr Roberts asked about any move towards installing the defibrillators. Mrs Corbin reported that progress depends upon the site and the building to which the machines are being attached. The shops have to get permission from their head offices and there will be planning requirements in some locations.

7.5. Rail Sub – Committee

Despite an indication that the promised report from Transportation Services would be considered by last month's North East Fife Area Committee it was not on the agenda, but is now expected to come to committee either at the end of this month or November. As far as TAYPlan is concerned, the 'Big Ideas' suggested during the non-statutory consultation earlier this year were considered last week on 1st October but as yet nothing of these deliberations has been published. It has to be hoped that TAYPlan will not repeat the error of the earlier Tay Estuary Study and only consider rail services to St Andrews in a Tayside context while ignoring the benefits of greater connectivity throughout Fife and with Edinburgh, including the airport interchange.

There was also a very useful meeting with Professor George Hazel and one of the Fife Council Executive to discuss a method of part-funding the line.

8. New Business

None

9. Reports from Office Bearers

9.1. Chair

No new items, apart from business he'd already brought up earlier.

9.2. Treasurer

9.2.1. Treasurers Report

See report sent out by email.

Mr Paul also requested the possibility of the treasurer getting a laptop, which could be passed to new treasurers as part of the post. The cost would be about £350. Mr Greenwell queried whether funding could be obtained from a source such as the Community Trust. Mr Paul reminded the meeting of the current state of CC funds and the fact that the annual grant could be affected if the CC was shown not to be using its funds. One off purchases such as a computer would not make a big dent in available funds. Mr Greenwell thought that the Planning Committee might also benefit from its own laptop so that all the data could be kept on that machine. Miss Uprichard suggested that the Planning Committee would welcome access to funds, given the contentious nature of much of the work and the possible need to seek advice. Mr Roberts suggested that the committee should put in an application for possible funds to the next meeting.

9.2.2. St Andrews Day 2013

Mr Paul detailed the events for St Andrews Day, which will consist of four main events, starting with a Food Fair, then the switching on of the Christmas Lights in Market Square, then a march round town with Madras Pipe Band finishing with a Ceilidh in St Salvator's Quad. Funding has come from a variety of sources, including £600 from the university towards the Ceilidh. It was clarified that while the University is viewing the ceilidh as a part of its 600th anniversary celebrations, Mr Roberts sought assurance that the event would also be billed as a Community Council event in conjunction with the University. Mr Paul agreed to make certain that the University aware of this request.

9.3 Secretary

9.3.1. Correspondence – see Appendix A.

Mr Marks informed the meeting that Mr Sangster had given him information about the COSMOS Centre AGM and open evening on the 29th October with various events and presentations and refreshments between 19.00 – 21.00. Everyone welcome - no charge.

10. Any Other Competent Business

10.1. Police Station Closure Concerns

Mrs Corbin mentioned the concerns around the proposals to close or reduce the hours at many police stations including St Andrews. There is a consultation details of which were emailed to members prior to the meeting, received from Police Scotland.

10.2. Wreath for Remembrance Sunday

Mr Crichton reported that he'd received the wreath for Remembrance Sunday.