

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Draft Minutes – June 2007

For Approval

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1. Attendance

Community Councillors

Les Beech, Ken Crichton, George Davidson, Dave Finlay, Ken Fraser, Ian Goudie, Stuart Holdsworth, Patrick Marks, Laurence Reed, Carole Tricker, Nan Taylor, Elise Methven, Maggie Stracey.

Students' Association Representatives

None.

Nominated

Jude Innes

Fife Councillors

Frances Melville, Dorothea Morrison, Bill Sangster, Robin Waterston

Apologies

Ben McLeod, Joe Peterson.

2. Minutes of May 2007 Meeting

2.1. Omissions on Attendance List of May Meeting

Mrs Stracey and Mr Beech noted that they had been omitted from last month's attendance list and asked to be added for the record.

2.2. Objection by Mrs Taylor about sentence in 3.1. reporting on presentation by Mr Lindsay.

It was agreed to delete the second sentence, para 2 of item 3.1, 'Mrs Taylor acknowledged ... planning matters.' from the record.

3. Presentations

3.1. Presentation by Dr C Carter about the proposed closure of the Crown Post Office in St. Andrews and transfer under franchise to W.H.Smith plc.

Dr Carter gave a detailed account of the proposals by the Post Office Ltd to transfer the local South Street office to the premises of W.H.Smith plc in April 2008. The transfer is a purely commercial decision because the Post Office as a company is losing money, despite government subsidy. The decision has been reached following a year's trial in six other post offices in England, similarly transferred to W.H.Smith stores, which have allegedly been a success, if Post Office Ltd, statements are to be believed. Dr Carter argued that St. Andrews because of its busy office did not seem an appropriate candidate, and listed various concerns about the W.H.Smith store site. A lack of information on the background to this commercial decision concerned him, and he felt that the Post Office needed to state whether the St Andrews office was operating at a profit or a loss. There were also concerns about the new site being able to maintain a similar quality of service, as local Post Office staff appeared to be reluctant to transfer to the proposed new site with substantially poorer pay and conditions of service. He has with Mrs Cummins and Mrs Squires been collecting signatures on a petition to eventually present to Post Office Ltd, and at the time of the meeting over 14528 had been collected from local people and visitors. He urged the Community Council to add its voice to the protest.

Mr Finlay asked how Dr Carter planned to progress the campaign and whether any other campaigns against such closures/transfers had been successful. Dr Carter said that a lot of work, such as emailing is going on behind the scenes, and he hopes that there will be a collective gathering of various groups and MSPs and MPs to endorse the campaign and petition. He acknowledged that to date no other protest had been successful, but one franchise arrangement using a local Spar in Perth had fallen through on technical grounds.

Mr Crichton noted that there had been an erosion of services offered by Post Offices over the past 14 years with little public protest. He felt that this erosion had to be stopped if we were to save Post Offices. Dr Carter in his reply agreed that the erosion in services was serious, but believed that now the public had become aware of the problem. Dr Goudie wondered if this could be made a more political issue, given the imperviousness of commercial interests to public concern. Dr Carter suggested asking awkward commercial questions such as what would happen if business was being lost both on WH Smith's main business and in the postal side due to public animosity to the transfer.

It was agreed that the secretary write to the Chief Executive of WH Smith and there will be further discussion at the General Purposes Committee.

3.2. Presentation on work to be started to upgrade parking and pavements in South Street by Douglas Farnan, an engineer with Fife Transportation Services.

Mr Farnham presented details of work to be undertaken from September 2007 to upgrade the footpaths

and carriageway in South Street, Church Street and Bell Street. Work had originally been planned for South Street in 2005, but funding problems had put the stopped that work. The Council has European Regional Development Fund matching funding for this work. The work has to be completed by next April under the funding regulations.

It is planned to replace paving slabs with Caithness slabs and the carriageway will be fully dug up and a new surface with a 20 year life expectancy laid. The pavement in Bell St will be widened to aid pedestrians. The Bell Street crossing is to remain a Zebra Crossing. 10 car parking spaces will be lost due to regulations on the width of the newly aligned spaces, which will not be at angles as they are currently. A minimum of four trees may be lost in the work because of problems with removing them and replanting without damage. They will be replaced and the trees will be placed in special tree pits to avoid problems with roots too near the surface damaging and distorting the pavements and carriageway. The bicycle rack near WH Smith will be replaced with a more useable one and a new one will be built near Bell St.

Planning permission is still to be obtained, but it is hoped to start as stated earlier. The proposals have been supported in principle by the Merchants Association.

Mr Macdonald asked if the loss of 10 parking spaces could be afforded? Mr Farnham explained that new regulations were to blame for the loss. The loss would be taken into account in the Parking Plan .

Cllr Waterston asked about the crossing at Madras which has long been a problem, and which he'd been lead to believe might be replaced by lights. Mr Farnham said that he'd been told by his lead officer, Mr Dewar that the crossing was to remain as a Zebra Crossing. He acknowledged that there had been discussions before his time on various options, but would have to check on why it had been decided to have the Crossing remain as a Zebra Crossing.

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville

4.1.1 Traffic Regulation Order – Lawhead School

The order to set up a 20 mph zone by Lawhead School has been published for initial comment, prior to going forward for formal approval to Councillors.

4.1.2 Greyfriars School – Councillors/Transportation Officials Meeting

There is to be a meeting to discuss specific issues relating to Greyfriars school, such as the traffic regulation order.

4.1.3 Canongate School Traffic Regulation Order

Cllr Melville has been trying to find out the current position with this planned order, but without success to date.

4.1.4 Parking Meters

Cllr Melville reported that there had been an initial meeting with Transportation officials. Discussions are to be ongoing with officials asked to come back at the next meeting with information/proposals. Historic Scotland are to be represented at the next meeting.

4.1.5 WH Smith planning application

As part of the Post Office transfer saga, Cllr Melville reported that in a letter she'd sent, WH Smith had informed her of their plan to submit a planning application for the front of the St Andrews store.

4.2. Bill Sangster

4.2.1 St Mary's Place upgrading work

Cllr Sangster reported that this has gone slightly over schedule, but hopefully should be finished by end of June.

4.2.2 Lighting by New Railings on The Scores

Cllr Sangster has asked Transportation Services to look at some form of lighting in this area to increase safety by making the public more aware of the proximity of the cliffs.

4.2.3 Speaker system for Community Council meetings

Cllr Sangster had been approached by a member of the public concerned about not being able to hear clearly all councillors comments at meetings. He felt that the speaker system should be in use to ensure that everyone can clearly hear the matters being discussed.

4.2.4 Litter Bin, St Mary Street.

Cllr Sangster reported that the bin is to be moved to a nearby, more suitable pole near the bridge.

4.2.5 Traffic Flow, St Mary's Place

Mr Beech asked if there was any truth in the rumour that St Mary's Place will remain one way once work is completed. Cllr Sangster denied this and said that it will revert to 2 way traffic

4.2.6 Drain Cover, Woodburn Park

Mr Crichton asked Cllr Sangster if he was aware of this cover which was causing problems. Apparently after heavy rain the top is blown off by the pressure of additional water. Cllr Sangster agreed to investigate.

4.2.7 Drainage Problem, St Mary Street

Mr Crichton mentioned a problem with drains at the beginning of St Mary Street, backing up even when it hasn't rained and causing some sewage overflow. Mr Crichton has written to the Water Board and SEPA without any satisfactory outcome. Mr Sangster agreed to follow up this problem.

4.2.8 Quality of Road Repairs – Cockshaugh Park Area

Mr Finlay commented on his observations of road repairs not being up to the same quality as the rest of the road in the area in question, the Headon development. He had made enquires when he'd noticed a hole in the road, and had been informed that the road would only be reinstated to high quality finish at the end of the project. He wondered about quality assurance inspection in relation to road repairs. Cllr Sangster noted his concerns, and said he could report it so that it would be checked

4.3. Robin Waterston

4.3.1 Flooding Problem Scooniehill/Kilrymont Road

Cllr Waterston reported that he's been trying to arrange discussions with Scottish Water about the quite serious problems which afflict this area after heavy rain. He hopes to press for some progress in tackling this problem.

4.4. Dorothea Morrison

Cllr Morrison had no specific issues to report. She commented that she has been undergoing induction training like Cllr Waterston and has continued some work on issues she'd been addressing before her election. She hoped to have more to report at the next meeting.

5. Planning Committee

5.1 Minutes

5.1.1. Continental Market

Mrs Taylor outlined a planning request for a series of Continental Markets at the same site as the Farmers Market, but lasting for 4 days on each occasion. The application is for three markets starting in July 2007 with further markets in December and March. The time for each market between setup time and closing has been requested as 6 am to 7 pm. Ms Innes for the Merchants Association commented that they don't really want such a market, though are happy to have the monthly Farmers Market.

Mr Fraser suggested that there should first be a vote as to whether the Community Council supported the idea of a Continental Market or not, after which the finer detail could be discussed. He recognised that there might be only planning grounds for objection in relation to loss of parking. He suggested that the Planning Committee could write to the Council to object on the possible grounds discussed. Mr Beech suggested as a compromise, that the Continental Market could be allowed on a similar basis of to the Farmers Market for three Saturday mornings in the year. Mr Holdsworth felt that we should put forward a straight forward objection on parking grounds.

Planning Committee to write to Fife Council to object to the proposed Continental Market

6. Matters Arising

6.1. Fife Access Seminar

No report due to absence of Mr Peterson who attended

6.2. Farmers' Market – update

As agreed Dr Goudie had written a letter to Fife Council summarising Community Council views as expressed at last month's meeting.

6.3. Reports from Representatives

6.3.1. Local Safety Panel

Mr Crichton had attended this local body which looks at local safety issues. The Community Council had aided the funding of a safety course which had according to Mr Crichton been quite successful. Cllr Sangster is the Chair of this panel. He added that they are looking at organising safety pamphlets to distribute to local hotels etc. The Safety Course is to be repeated next year in Cupar.

6.3.2. St Andrews Greenbelt Forum

Mr Marks and Mr Finlay reported on their attendance and briefly reported on the content of the meeting.

6.3.3. East Sands Leisure Centre Committee

Cllr Sangster reported that this committee has been suspended by Community Services without telling anyone. Cllr Sangster has asked for the reason for this decision and is still awaiting a reply.

6.4. Any Other Matters Arising

6.4.1. August Meeting Date

Mrs Taylor asked about the August meeting date. Mr Marks informed the meeting that the decision of the previous month's meeting would have to be reversed, as the 13th August is the Lammis Fair, and the meeting room has been booked for another event. It was agreed to continue with the 6th August date. Mr Marks also informed the meeting about the date of the January meeting also being suitable the way the xmas/new year dates fall. It was agreed to continue to have the meeting on the 1st Monday in January.

6.4.2. Bandstand Concerts

Mr Finlay had discovered that the Bandstand area is being used during the 1st Sunday in August for parking for the complimentary cars used by the golfers attending the Womens' Open. He was also concerned that the final of that event might be disturbed by the concert scheduled for that Sunday, 5th August. Mr Finlay was reassured that the concert would not disturb the golfers and might be an added attraction for many visitors.

6.4.3. Planning Law Seminar

Mr Finlay asked about the letter received offering free training in the workings of the new Planning law. Mr Marks confirmed that the invitation had come from FOE Scotland who could be approached and asked to send a trainer.

Mr Marks agreed to check on the details as it might benefit the Planning Committee and other interested Community Councillors.

7. Committee Reports

7.1 Recreation Committee

7.1.1. Planting of Garden at Town Entrance

Mr Crichton reported that the Recreation Committee is working with Lawhead Primary School to plant this small garden (at the Strathtyrum junction of the Old Guardbrigde Road) in the next few days.

7.1.2. Senior Citizens' Xmas Tea

This has been put back until January as the University is closing later than usual so the facilities will not be available in December.

7.1.3. New Year Ceilidh

Mr Crichton reported that the Town Hall has been booked for the Ceilidh. Mr Crichton asked for the Community Council's formal approval of going ahead with the Ceilidh. There was general approval.

7.1.4. St Andrews Day Reception

Mr Crichton asked about the possibility of this event taking place again. He would be able to send out invitations. There was general approval of the idea. The Recreation Committee will work to organise this event.

7.2. General Purposes Committee

Meeting to take place in June. Date to be arranged at end of meeting.

7.3. 200 Club

7.3.1. 200 Club Draw

1st No. 43. Mr I. Cowe, 2nd No. 23. Mrs D Sangster, 3rd No. 69. Dr E Cormack.

7.3.2. 200 Club Grants

Mrs Tricker asked if any decision had been made about outstanding applications. Mr Crichton informed the meeting that applications will be discussed at the forthcoming Recreation Committee meeting, a week Tuesday.

8. New Business

8.1. Printing and Distribution of Agenda/Minutes and Community Council Web Site Maintenance

Mr Marks explained the current situation following the resignation of Mr Lindsay. Mr Lindsay for an interim period has agreed to continue printing the minutes and agenda, but when this stops the Community Council will need to get a new home for its laser printer and accessories. The management and maintenance of the Community Council web site is also up for grabs. Mr Finlay expressed surprise that the Community Council didn't have access to a computer and printer in the local office. After discussion it was agreed that the the General Purposes Committee should discuss the matter and hopefully find a solution. Mr Sangster also agreed to check on the possibility of the Local Office at St Mary's Place being able to assist in printing

8.2. St Andrews Post Office Closure/Transfer

As this matter was aired by Dr Carter as a presentation earlier in the meeting, no further discussion took place.

8.3. Election of New Councillors

Election took place of the four new Community Councillors from the list of applicants appended to the agenda. The following applicants were successful: Mr James Potton, Miss Zoe Smith, Mrs Marysia Denyer and Ms Judith Harding. The names of the unsuccessful candidates will be kept on file should further vacancies arise.

8.4. Review of Enrolled Environmental Bodies on the Entrust Database

Correspondence had been received by the secretary from ENTRUST which maintains a register of all enrolled EBs which may request funding or have received funding under the Landfill scheme. To reduce costs in maintaining their database ENTRUST had written to ask in the Community Council wished to

remain registered or be removed. It was agreed that the Community Council should remain registered although it has only once requested funds, in case future need arises.

9. Reports from Office Bearers

9.1. Chair

No report

9.2. Treasurer

The Community Council has £25,459.32 in funds

9.3 Secretary

See Correspondence list.

10. Any Other Competent Business

10.1. World Class Representation

A query regarding our position vis-à-vis the above body was raised by Mrs Stracey(?). She was concerned that reports from World Class were implying Community Council support for their plans, when this might not be the case. The meeting was reminded that Mr Macdonald is still a representative on World Class. Dr Goudie explained that at one point the Community Council had decided to send an observer to the meeting, but World Class insisted in labelling anyone attending as a representative. Mr Fraser pointed out that if no one from the Community Council attended we would have less idea of their plans.
