

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council Monthly Agenda – July 2007

There will be a meeting of the community council at 7pm Monday 2nd July in the Burgh Chambers of the Town Hall, Queen's Gardens. There will be a short break at about 8pm during which the 200 Club draw will be made. The meeting is audio-recorded to assist the secretary in producing the minutes.

(Copies of Agendas and Minutes of the Community Council are held at Fife Council's Local Office, St Mary's Place and the Town Library, Church Square. Those from late 1997 on are on line at <http://www.standrewscc.net/>)

1. Apologies

2. Minutes of June 2007

Read for accuracy in matters of substance – harangue the secretary for minor errors (spelling etc) outwith the meeting.

3. Presentations

3.1. Loches Alliance – presentation by Mrs V. Fowler, Chair

3.2. Green Belt update – presentation by Ms Penny Uprichard

3.3. New St Andrews Hospital – Professor Sam Taylor

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville

4.2. Bill Sangster

4.3. Robin Waterston

4.4. Dorothea Morrison

5. Planning Committee

Mrs Taylor will bring a report to the meeting of any recent planning decisions.

6. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

6.1. St Andrews Post Office Closure/Transfer – update – see Appendix C

6.2. Fife Access Seminar - report

6.3. Reports from representatives

6.4. Web Site/Community Council Minutes update

6.5. Any Other Matters Arising

7. From Committees

7.1. Recreation

7.2. General Purposes

Appendix D

7.3. 200 Club

8. New Business

9. Reports from Office Bearers

9.1. Chair

9.2. Treasurer

9.3. Secretary

9.3.1. Correspondence – Appendix A.

10. Any Other Competent Business

Please notify Chair of AOCB items before the start of the meeting or at the break. Hint: Given that the end of the meeting is often taken in something of a rush, unless items are urgent it might be better to submit them for next meeting's New Business

10.1. Report from Donald Macgregor about attendance at University Conference – see appendix B

Appendix A – Correspondence

Date	from	Subject
June 2007	Scottish Executive	Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning – Application Form 2007
20/06/07	Post Office Ltd	Closure of St Andrews Post Office/Transfer to WH Smith –reply by Alan Cook, Managing Director to letter from Patrick Marks
June 2007	Fife Council: Law & Administration	Notice of Meeting: North East Fife Area Committee – 26/06/07
20/06/07	Fife Council: Law & Administration	Letter to announce award of £4000 to St Andrews in Bloom from St Andrews Common Good Fund
20/06/07	Fife Council: Law & Administration	Letter to announce award of £7000 to assist with cost of remedial work to the north east slipway at St. Andrews Harbour from the Common Good Fund
June 2007	FOE Scotland	Earthmatters magazine – Summer 2007
12/06/07	Fife Council: Law & Administration	Notification of a proposal to hold a public procession – 01/07/07 – East Fife Motor Club
22/06/07	Fife Council: Law & Administration	Letter from Linda Purdie about Community Council election date and announcement of schedule for CC elections in Fife.
22/05/07	Fife Council: Law & Administration	Licence Application No.12: Media Launch of St Andrews Sea Cadet Corps – 30/06/07
June 2007	Post Office Ltd	First reply from Managing Director of Post Office Ltd with regard to Post Office closure/transfer
June 2007	Email from Web Site Host	Request for renewal of domain name etc by 15/08/07 for £35.25 (inclusive of VAT)

Appendix B. Report on University Conference by Donald Macgregor

I attended the 'Univer-City' seminar at the University of Lund, Sweden, in mid-June. Because of Fife Council commitments I had to delay my departure till Thursday 14 June, which meant I was only able to attend on the last of the three days - which was when I was due to speak.

25 university cities or towns were represented from all over Europe, from Turku and Uppsala in the north to Coimbra, Salamanca and Urbino in the south. Nearly all the presenters were either senior academics from the fields of geography, architecture and town planning, or by appointed or elected mayors or senior staff. There was a wide variation in the papers presented, in technique and subject matter, and a digest of the presentations is to be produced in book form, probably in September. I hope to provide the CC and the University with a copy when available.

It was clear that in a number of cases co-operation between civic and university authorities had resulted in exceptionally successful integration (and in others of course less so). I found of particular interest the talk on 'Cambridge Futures' where an extensive and genuine consultation with community groups on a number of alternative and complementary plans for possible 'futures' appeared to be in great contrast to the type of 'consultation' which may in the past have become familiar to some of us.

Incidentally many of the university cities were or contained World Heritage sites, for example the Beguinage area of Leuven in Belgium, Weimar, central Urbino, the Old Town of Vilnius, and the Castle and Cathedral of Durham.

In any event I was glad to have had the opportunity to represent St Andrews at the conference in the beautiful and very hospitable city of Lund. It is intended that the theme of university/town integration will be pursued over the coming years by at least some of the participants. There are many lessons that we in St Andrews could learn from others, and I hope it will be possible for us here on the rim of Europe to be involved in that process.

Appendix C: Post Office Correspondence from Community Council to Mr Alan Cook, Managing Director of Post Office Ltd

CLOSURE OF ST ANDREWS POST OFFICE/TRANSFER TO WH SMITH

I am writing on behalf of the Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council to express our grave concern about the plans to transfer the services of the main St Andrews Post Office to a private company, namely WH Smith.

I recognise that the Post Office has financial difficulties, but the Post Office in St Andrews is extremely popular and busy, and serves a very varied community, from students and local citizens to tourists. To transfer it to a building which is smaller, has no access for the disabled and belongs to a company which is currently struggling in its own market area seems to local people to be irresponsible. This will potentially expose post office services to the vagaries of the success or failure of the company.

Also the building in which the local WH Smith's is situated is leased from the Bank of Scotland, so is at the mercy of another commercial enterprise which could change lease conditions to make it unprofitable.

To be honest, local people are perplexed at the lack of respect the senior management of the Post Office are showing to their customers with the lack of consultation when the decision was made to transfer St Andrews main post office. The trial runs at other Post Offices which have supposedly demonstrated that the idea is commercially viable have not been met by great public support, and evidence from contact with

local communities affected has been very mixed.

In the petition being circulated in St Andrews virtually no one has objected to signing to express their concern that this distinctive and popular post office will be transferred to a cramped and less easily accessible premises, subject to commercial vagaries of the company running it.

I would urge the Post Office to closely examine its motives for choosing St Andrews and be more open about the risk that will be taken in such a venture. Should WH Smith's fail as a company, the Post Office will be at risk. What thought has the Post Office given to such a situation?

I feel that the local community deserve better from a long established and usually respected institution,

2nd letter

CLOSURE OF ST ANDREWS POST OFFICE/TRANSFER TO WH SMITH

Thank you for your reply to my recent letter in relation to the above proposal. Your reply does not address all the concerns which the Community Council and the local community have about this proposal.

One interesting point I have noted in the DTI "Post Office Network" consultation document does need answering in relation to the proposal. The following quote from this document is interesting as it does mention the idea of partner deals, but only as stated, and not where there is a thriving crown post office and a thriving sub-post office with large and growing customer numbers, "Where there is over provision threatening the livelihoods of sub-postmasters this needs to be addressed. Where full-time offices exist to serve small customer numbers alternative ways of delivering services, such as the partner deals with other businesses or mobile units trialled by Post Office Ltd over the last 18 months, need to be considered". I would hardly say that the above criteria relate to the situation in St Andrews.

I would also be interested to know the financial position of the St Andrews Crown Post Office. Is it making a profit or a loss? I would hope for an honest and open answer as too often businesses hide behind claims of "commercial confidentiality". Local people can not be expected to fairly assess the claims made by Post Office Ltd if they only have partial facts. If it is making a profit, then why transfer? If it is not, why not?

You imply in your letter that if you don't transfer the crown post office to WH Smith you can not safeguard its existence. If you can not give this guarantee in a busy town like St Andrews, surely no post office is safe?

How was the St Andrews Post Office chosen compared to other crown post offices in Fife? I can not think it coincidence that the two crown offices chosen in Fife are in what must be two of the busiest towns for postal services in Fife. I find it puzzling that Cupar wasn't chosen as it has a much larger WH Smith store, indeed it has two premises, one of which is a large bookshop and the other premises is similarly large and could accommodate the Cupar Post Office more easily than WH Smith in St Andrews could incorporate the post office.

An issue of security of the WH Smith premises in St Andrews has also been flagged up to the Community Council. The access for collection of mail is more difficult and less secure. It is only accessible through the small Bank of Scotland car park and at present may not be secure enough for valuable mail.

We recognise that the Government has tasked the Post Office to restructure to meet the challenges of the changing nature of its business, but it also emphasises the need to retain a national network and does not specifically indicate that these need to be moved into private ownership. The recent consultation must have thrown up a huge amount of concern from a wide range of organisations similarly fearful at the future of their communities. I would also imagine that other commercial enterprises may not be happy with WH Smith taking on this trade as everyone uses the post office!

Yours Faithfully

Patrick Marks
Secretary St Andrews Community Council

Appendix D. General Purposes Committee

Minute of meeting held on 13th June 2007

Present:

K Crichton, K Fraser, N Taylor, C Tricker, I Goudie, P Marks.

1. Change to Standing Orders.

These are out of date. K Fraser will draft out an up to date version that reflects the way things are organised at the moment.

2. Community Council printer

This is a large piece of equipment and at the moment it is located in P Lindsay's house. Alternative places for it to be stored were discussed.

3. Web site.

P Lindsay used to look after this and so a replacement needed to be found. K Crichton offered to do this if help and support was available. P Lindsay would be contacted to see if he would help.

It was also suggested that the minutes of Community Council meetings could be shorter, without so much detail. P Marks agreed with this idea.

4. Post office closure

It was suggested at the last full council meeting that a more proactive stance should be taken over the

move of the Post Office to Smiths. Ways to do this were discussed. P Marks read out the letter he had already sent and it was decided to send an amended version to M Campbell and Ian Smith with a copy to D Miller (Press). P Marks agreed to do this.

5. Dates of Community Council Meetings

It was decided to reinstate August 6th as the date for the August meeting

6. Structure Plan/development

There was discussion as to whether Fife Council should be contacted about the situation in St Andrews, but it was decided not to at present.

7. St Andrews Community Council Elections

K Fraser suggested that elections could take place earlier than next February. Only 40 days notice is required so it was agreed that the end of November was a possibility. The students would be back and established by then. The full council would be asked to discuss this at the next meeting. P Marks would check if this was possible before then next meeting.

8. Education, Health and Welfare Committee

It was suggested that this might be re-established ,with perhaps some of the new members becoming involved. It was decided to leave this suggestion until after the election.

9. Election of new members

The committee discussed whether the procedures used to elect the new members to fill the vacancies on the council was undertaken in the best way. Was it enough to use the information that the prospective members supplied with their applications? It was decided that this was acceptable and so no change to procedures would take place.

10. Co-opted members

It was suggested that the council should co-opt the full allocation. After discussion it was decided to co-opt when appropriate.

11. Crerar Plans

It was decided to follow advice given and not to attend the meeting as official representatives of the Community Council. This would not stop members attending the public meeting as private citizens.
