

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council Draft Minutes – August 2007

For Approval

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Tribute to Mrs Nan Taylor

Mr Fraser paid tribute to the late Mrs Nan Taylor, who had died suddenly after the last meeting of the Community Council. He reminded the meeting of Mrs Taylor's long record of service both as a North East Fife District Council Councillor and twice as a Community Councillor, most recently chairing the Planning Committee. Mr Fraser has written on behalf of the Community Council to express sympathy to Professor Sam Taylor and his family on their sad loss. Mr Fraser then requested the meeting stand in a minute's silence in tribute of the late Mrs Nan Taylor.

1. Attendance

Community Councillors

Les Beech, George Davidson, Marysia Denyer, Dave Finlay, Ken Fraser, Ian Goudie, Judith Harding, Patrick Marks, Joe Peterson, James Potton, Laurence Reed, Zoe Smith.

Students' Association Representatives

Matthew Guest.

Nominated

Jude Innes

Fife Councillors

Dorothea Morrison, Bill Sangster, Robin Waterston

Apologies

Frances Melville, Ben McLeod, Carole Tricker, Stuart Holdsworth.

2. Minutes of July 2007 Meeting

The secretary apologised for a number of typographical errors in the text of the July meeting minutes. The minutes were otherwise accepted as correct.

Page 1 – Under item 2, read "June" and not "May" meeting
 Page 1 – 3.2. – line one, read "opportunity" not "opportune ity"
 Page 1 – 3.2. – Last line; 1st paragraph read, "restaurant" not "restaunt"
 Page 2 – 1st Para, last line, read "and" not "an"
 Page 2 – 3.3. – Para 2, 2nd line, read "council" not "concil"
 Page 2 – 3.3. – Para 9, 3rd line, read "Structure" not "Strc=uctue"
 Page 4 – 3.3. Should be 3.4.
 Page 4 – 3.4. – Para 9, 1st line, read "charges" not "charnges"
 Page 4 – 3.4. – Para 10, 2nd line read "focus" not "focius"
 Page 6 – 4.1.2. – 1st line, read, "issue" not ~"isse"
 Page 9 – 5.2 – Should be "Blackfriars"

3. Presentations

3.1. Presentation on Bi-Polar Disorder from Ms Lesurf

Ms Lesurf, until recently a member of the Community Council gave a brief presentation on her diagnosis of Bi-polar disorder and the way in which it presents in those so affected. She commented that this condition may be much more common than people appreciate. She didn't appreciate until after her diagnosis that she could lead a normal life despite the mood swings. She also mentioned the affect on her life of having being diagnosed with epilepsy many years ago. She described the way in which someone with a disability can be described inappropriately by use of language, and suggested that it would be better to describe her as having epilepsy rather than being an epileptic. She made a plea for anyone with disabilities to be treated with more understanding, particularly when it came to being in paid employment. She had never been able to get paid employment since coming to St Andrews with her partner. She felt that this was due to a lack of understanding of potential employers of her epilepsy.

3.2. Comment on Post Office Plans by Ms Lesurf

Ms Lesurf noted that the plan for altering the front of WH Smith to allow disabled access had been refused. She noted that there appeared to be a request for access now at the back. She has written with her views to the Courier following the meeting. She urged campaigners, including the Community Council not to give up the attempt to transfer the Post Office to WH Smith.

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Bill Sangster

4.1.1. Councillor Training

Councillors having been having tests on licensing as part of their training.

4.1.2. Parking Fees – St Andrews

Mr Beech asked for Councillors views about the increase in parking fees. Cllr Sangster replied that these had been the decision of the last administration and had to go ahead. The new Council will look at future charges, with the possibility of being able to consider these at the East Area Committee meetings instead of decisions being taken centrally. Changes will happen, but they will have to go through committees.

Ms Harding asked how much the parking cost to run in St Andrews and how much was earned from the scheme. Cllr Sangster has in the past tried to find out the costs, but had been informed that no records for St Andrews were kept separately because it was viewed as a Fife wide scheme for car park maintenance.

Cllr Sangster thought that the Community Council could write a letter to Fife Council expressing its concerns about the parking issue. Ms Smith suggested that the letter should contain a request that Fife Council look at offering local residents free parking in areas like the West Sands during the summer.

Secretary to write to Fife Council Transportation on above matter.

4.1.3. Park and Ride Scheme

Ms Harding also asked about this scheme and it's future following a recent newspaper report that it may not be run again. Cllr Sangster acknowledged that this scheme has been part funded by the Merchants Association and possibly the University in the past, but he couldn't see why Fife Council couldn't run the scheme this year.

4.1.4. Enforcement of Planning Conditions in New Developments

Dr Goudie commented on the laxity of Fife Council at times in enforcing planning conditions. He cited the promise of a crossing at John Knox Road to be funded by Mitchell Homes before any of the new houses were occupied. This issue has now dragged on with Dr Goudie's wife discovering that the crossing had gone out to tender last year and Mitchell Homes had accepted Fife Council's tender to build the crossing in early 2006. So far there is no sign of the building taking place. Cllr Sangster agreed to check out the matter.

4.1.5. Kinnesburn Clearance

Mr Macdonald commented that several years ago SEPA had threatened prosecution if any unauthorised clearance of the Kinnesburn took place. Cllr Sangster reassured the meeting that he'd received a letter, which stated that SEPA would allow sympathetic clearance, which avoided damage to local wildlife habitat. Fife Council is trying to find funding to do this work. Mr Finlay mentioned problems of erosion at the bank east of the road bridge near Rymouth. Cllr Sangster was aware of this problem, due he said to wooden banking supports deteriorating. This had been brought up at the local meeting and Fife Council is again trying to find funding to repair the damage.

4.1.6. Street Furniture

Mr Finlay brought up concerns about the way street furniture has a tendency to spread out to eventually almost block areas of pavement for pedestrians. Cllr Morrison related how she'd gone out with Peter Milne to look at this matter recently. Mr Finlay suggested that benches might be a partial answer, as unlike chairs they would be less mobile. Cllr Sangster mentioned how he'd received copies of regulations from Edinburgh Council, which stipulated the distance which street furniture was allowed to go out on the pavement before contravening the regulations. He'd given a copy to Mike Thorpe and asked him if it could be considered on a trial basis in St Andrews.

4.1.7. St. Mary's Place – Bus Shelter

Mr Finlay commented that the bus shelter erected outside the Students Union appeared to be badly placed, creating an obstacle for wheelchair users. Cllr Sangster agreed to take up this matter.

4.2. Robin Waterston

4.2.1. Planning Training

Cllr Waterston has completed his training. He informed the meeting that every councillor is now trained to sit on planning committees. A logjam of applications due to the elections and training should now be cleared. Decisions should now be made at a more local level where possible

4.2.2. Flooding and Drainage Problems

Cllr Waterston reported attending various meeting to do with these problems. There will be further meetings. He acknowledged Fife Council's lack of powers to deal with some of the issues when private owners are involved. He felt that some of the difficulties on the south side of St Andrews are due to global warming and that more flood defences and mitigation measures are needed. He suggested that the Scottish Executive and the UK Government need to be encouraged to release more resources to local level to improve flood defences.

Mr Finlay asked about plans for Kinnesburn clearance as he'd heard that SEPA are happy to allow the work to be done. Cllr Waterston said that this matter had been discussed at the last Locality Meeting and is to come up again at a meeting on the 4th September. Cllr Sangster suggested that it might be useful to write to Mike Thorne of Transportation Services on this matter as well.

Secretary to write to Mike Thorne of Transportation Services

4.2.3. Parking Charges

Cllr Waterston also commented on the increase. He explained that increases had usually been in line with inflation in the past, but this one related to a need to round up the charge in a way, which he didn't completely understand. He added that the new committees would review in due course all such charges.

4.3. Dorothea Morrison

4.3.1. Parking Measures

Cllr Morrison reported that her visit to Harrogate had produced some useful ideas, which she hoped to disseminate to appropriate persons to consider in Fife Council.

4.3.2. Planning Training

Cllr Morrison mentioned the code of conduct with respect to Planning. She reminded the meeting that when making planning decisions, Councillors are only allowed to make a decision on planning grounds, and unless objections they receive fulfil such criteria they cannot be considered as a reason to refuse.

4.3.3. Parking Charges

Cllr Morrison answered a question from Mr Finlay who asked whether Fife Council could freeze charges such as parking, until other areas of Fife caught up to the local level of charges. Cllr Morrison didn't think this would be possible. She cited a talk to the Preservation Trust by Peter Milne about parking in which he admitted that the profit made from St Andrews went into the central pot to assist in the upkeep of car parks in local villages. Mr Finlay felt that the money could be better spent possibly in building a multi-storey car park beside the bus station or in giving some form of discount for local residents, especially senior citizens towards local parking, as he felt that they are discouraged by cost from shopping in the town centre.

5. Planning Committee

5.1. Planning Meeting – 9th July Minutes – Appendix B

For information only

5.2. Planning Meeting – 24th July – Traffic Calming Proposals

Dr Goudie introduced this issue, which had been discussed at the last planning meeting. He had managed to get a week's extension to allow discussion of Community Council response. This is a major proposal, with plans to introduce 28 speed cushions, 20 mph speed limits in all areas south of the Kinnesburn excluding the area surrounded by Roundhill Road to Largo Road and Lamond Drive southwards, to introduce 118 signs and 43 new anti-skid surfaces. Mr Finlay had compiled the response on behalf of the Planning Committee. His response indicated a support for 20 mph zones and anti-skid surfaces at school entrances, including Kilrymont in Roundhill Road omitted from Phase 1 of these proposals.

Speed cushions were not supported on the main thoroughfares, with Mr Finlay listing a number of reasons from obstruction and possible hazard for emergency vehicles to increasing pollution at such cushions and possible increased damage and maintenance costs for local residents vehicles. There was support for strategically placed cushions in known problem areas, such as Lamond Drive to King Street and the Bogward/Carirnhill junctions, with the Planning Committee willing to work with Fife Transportation to identify other problem areas.

There was a lack of support for permanent 20 mph zones in side streets, due to a view that traffic in most of these streets was minimal and usually about 20 mph due to the nature of the roads. There would also be clutter and signage pollution at the entrance to 20 mph zones, which might also cause pedestrian obstruction.

The committee also not in favour of raised pedestrian crossings, preferred speed cushions before the crossing to calm traffic earlier.

There was a general feeling that the introduction of the 20 mph proposals was excessive and that the money could be better spent on improving transportation services within and around St Andrews. The introduction of further warnings and voluntary methods such as rumble strips and speed systems was the preferred option.

Mr Finlay cited the example of electronic speed signs introduced in Bonnybank to inform drivers of their speed, which changed as the driver slowed down as being as effective, along with a clear indication of the speed limit in the immediate area.

Mr Fraser summarised the letter and asked for comments from the meeting. Mr Peterson voiced his opposition to the letter and gave his analysis of some of the issues raised. He said that newer regulation height speed humps did not damage vehicles going over at a reasonable speed, had not been objected to by public transport providers in Fife, and were not a problem for emergency vehicles. He felt that skid pads were very useful, particularly in areas where there were children around. He felt that speed humps on routes such as Lamond Drive were essential because of the increasing speed of vehicles on such routes. He also felt that the 20 mph zones in residential streets not on main through routes were useful in traffic calming. Overall, he didn't feel he could support any of the proposals in the letter.

Mr Beech commented on what he felt was the failure of the past attempt at traffic calming in Lamond Drive. He disagreed that emergency vehicles were affected by speed humps as their axle widths allowed them to traverse speed humps safely. He disagreed with Mr Peterson's contention that cars going over speed humps at reasonable speed didn't suffer eventual damage. He supported Mr Finlay's letter.

Ms Smith supported the idea of speed bumps. She didn't feel that she could Mr Finlay's objection to speed humps. Ms Innes commented that speed humps in Strathkiness where she lives haven't in her view slowed down traffic.

Dr Goudie reminded the meeting of the late Bette Christie's concerns that anyone suffering back pain would find speed humps painful because of the change in the momentum of a vehicle going over them. Dr Goudie attempted to summarise the views expressed, assuming that there was support for 20 mph zones

outside schools. The main area of disagreement he felt was in the location of other speed humps, and observed that the plans demonstrated a lack of local knowledge in the places they located such humps. He felt that officials needed to go out to see the situation on the ground, before finalising locations. He was also concerned about how poor positioning could affect cyclists. Areas such as the west end of Bogward Road and Lamond Drive he viewed as being appropriate for speed humps, given the tendency of motorists to speed on these straight stretches of road.

Mr Fraser in summing up, noted the division of opinion in the meeting about the letter. He proposed to ask for votes on those who supported the letter as written, and a vote for those who wanted the letter only to support the idea of part time 20 mph zones outside schools. The votes were 8 in favour of the letter substantially as written and 3 in favour of restricting the content to the 20 mph zones outside schools.

5.3. New Hospital – Update and Proposals

Dr Goudie informed the meeting of significant information received about the plans, which have changed his views. He has penned a letter detailing concerns about the development proposals. He emphasised that there was no objection in the letter to the hospital development in itself, however the discovery of plans as they exist, for a major road along the northern edge of the site were of great concern. He said that information contained in the land purchase agreement indicated that the access road be provided to a specification and location satisfactory to the Muir Group. He felt that this finally put beyond any doubt evidence of linkage between the hospital development and the development of the southern hillside.

Dr Goudie felt that the meeting should be seriously concerned about the apparent lack of democratic control in this development proposal. A newsletter is being proposed to alert the public to the issues of concern identified.

Mr Fraser summarised the situation, which he felt required discussion and asked for comments. Ms Smith commented that while sympathetic to the issues detailed, she cautioned that our objection should be very clearly shown not to be with the hospital development itself, but with the additional development which could follow on the southern hillside. She wanted the Community Council to be seen as being strongly in favour of the hospital, while being able to alert the public to less savoury aspects of development, which could be, tagged on to the development conditions.

Ms Hart asked if the Community Council was against all housing developments on the southern hillside. Dr Goudie replied that historically the Community Council has been opposed to housing in that location. He commented upon the impact in the town of large housing developments being not just visual, as a critic in the local paper had alleged. He reminded the meeting that developers tended to be interested in building large private houses, not affordable houses. He felt that the recent discovery about the road, showed how acute the danger could be if allowed to go unchallenged. Once a road was in place, he felt that development would be much less easy to stop.

Mr Beech asked that if Fife Council decided to build a similar number of council houses in the same area, would the Community Council still object? Dr Goudie acknowledged that it would be much more difficult to object, but reminded the meeting that the Community Council wasn't completely anti housing development in the right places. The Community Council had always advocated a contour – based approach, using low lying land in the Kinness valley to the west of the town where there would not be the visual intrusion that would occur on the southern hillside. Mr Beech felt that the Community Council was making itself unpopular by seeming to object to the hospital, and couldn't see the problem with an access road. In reply, Dr Goudie had no problems with an access road to the hospital of the right proportion for the needs of that premises, but he added that the Muir Group by specifying the size and location of the road told it's own story in his view. Mr Beech asked about the ownership of the southern hillside. Dr Goudie informed the meeting that the Muir Group owns 370 acres, while the hospital site is tiny in comparison.

Ms Smith felt that the letter could be slimmed down a bit possibly by taking out bits that might be viewed as peripheral to the main issue, such as the phone mast. Dr Goudie acknowledged that some of the points are relatively trivial, but as the letter itself was intended for the East Area Committee, not for public consumption, the seemingly peripheral or minor issues were in his view still of some merit.

Mr Peterson thanked Dr Goudie for producing in his view a strong and coherent document on the topic. He suggested however that the first paragraph could be rewritten to show the reasons why the Community Council supports the new hospital, to give it a more positive start. Dr Goudie replied his willingness to receive suggestions for alterations.

Mr Fraser summarised the meeting view that with some possible alterations as discussed, the letter could go forward without a vote. This was unanimously agreed. Mr Fraser also asked the Community Council's view about putting out a newsletter. Mrs Denyer felt that this was a good idea. Ms Smith offered to assist Dr Goudie in producing the newsletter. Dr Goudie was happy if other members wanted to sign the letter and reminded the meeting that a meeting to finalise the newsletter will need to be held as soon as possible given the date of the meeting which will decide upon the hospital application. Mr Guest asked that the support of the student community not be forgotten in this issue.

Cllr Morrison asked that it be minuted that the councillors took no part in the discussion of the hospital planning application.

6. Matters Arising

6.1. St Andrews Post Office Closure/Transfer – meeting report

Mr Fraser reported that the representative of the Post Office was left in no doubt as to the feeling of local people about the plan, however he doubted that this would make much impact upon the essentially commercial decision which would be taken. Mrs Denyer felt that the attitude of the Post Office representatives reflected a fait accompli. She was concerned about the fate of the original Post Office building and suspected that it might be purchased by a local developer to convert into luxury

accommodation. Mr Beech asked about the front access, which wasn't shown, on the plan. Mr Fraser replied that the disabled access wasn't on the plan distributed, but an application had been put into Fife Council, which was at the front of the building.

6.2. Fife Access Seminar Report

Mr Peterson reported on his attendance at this meeting. Mr Peterson had attended with the hope of hearing about core paths issue. He reported that there were no plans for implementation of core paths in St Andrews at this time, with Fife Council concentrating on core paths in the west of Fife.

6.3. Reports from Representatives

6.3.1. Harbour Trust Meeting

Mr Fraser had attended on behalf of the Community Council. The main item of interest had been the issue about the harbour toilets, already mentioned by Cllr Morrison. There was no indication that the Harbour Trust would be taking over responsibility for the toilets in the near future.

6.3.2. Fife in Bloom

Cllr Sangster had represented the Community Council in the judging as Mr Peterson and Mr Crichton had been on holiday. He felt that St Andrews had been looking very good on the day.

6.3.3. RAF Liaison Committee Meeting

Mr Macdonald and Mr Holdsworth had attended this committee at Leuchars. No significant items of news. The base will be quiet for another several weeks until the resurfacing work is completed on the main runway.

6.3.4. World Class Meeting

Mr Macdonald had attended in his representative capacity recently. The recent meeting was poorly attended with no controversial issues raised. Mr Finlay asked where the minutes of the World Class meetings are held. Mr Macdonald confirmed that he received minutes.

6.3.5. Bandstand Concerts

Mr Finlay reported on recent bandstand concerts. Most had been successful, apart from one cancelled due to poor weather and another due to the Ladies Open.

6.4. Web Site/Community Council Minutes update

Dr Goudie reported no movement in relation to the website although there had been contact with Mr Lindsay. The subscription for the website is due this month.

Mr Marks reported on a recent meeting with the Locality Office manager, Kate Hughes and a colleague. He reported their willingness to print the minutes and distribute as well if print ready copy was provided and labelled envelopes. They would require the minutes and agenda to be sent at least a week before the meeting, possibly as early as the Friday week before the meeting.

6.5. Local Holiday Dates/ St Andrews Day Holiday

Mr Marks reported on a letter received from Beth Flynn of Fife Council Law and Admin asking for Community Council views on the proposed holiday dates and a request as to whether we would want the St Andrews Day Holiday as a separate day or a substitute for an existing bank holiday. Ms Innes from the Merchants Association suggested that the merchants would prefer the November holiday to be the St Andrews Day holiday.

2008 local holidays are as follows, February 4th, March 3rd, April 28th (May Day), Oct 6th, November 3rd and a half day Thursday, date unspecified. Mr Marks apologised for bringing up the matter so late in the meeting as the Council had wanted comments by the previous Friday. Cllr Sangster explained the logic of the early May Day holiday, which was due to traffic management issues.

7. From Committees

7.1. Recreation Committee

7.1.1. St Andrews Community Council Garden Award Ceremony

Mr Peterson and others will be judging local gardens this coming week, with a view to choosing the winning gardens. The awards for the competition will take place on Thursday 6th September at 7.00 pm.

7.1.2. Beautiful Scotland

St Andrews had been visited recently. Mr Peterson had been unable to attend due to holiday commitments. Three members of St Andrews in Bloom had accompanied the judges around the town. He explained that the criteria for judging had changed, with St Andrews now being compared to similar sized seaside towns elsewhere such as Rothsey. The judges hadn't given any clear indication about St Andrews chances.

7.1.3. 200 Club Draw

1st: 103, 2nd: 15, 3rd: 82.

7.2. General Purposes Committee

No meeting, so no report

8. New Business

8.1. Community Council Vacancy

Mr Fraser asked for views about filling the vacancy left by the sad death of Mrs Nan Taylor. Mr Peterson thought that we should advertise. Dr Goudie reminded the meeting that there were unsuccessful vacancies and perhaps they should be contacted. Cllr Sangster thought that legally we might need to advertise. Mr Fraser asked for Community Council's views on whether the vacancy should be advertised. In a vote 9 supported advertising the vacancy, 1 opposed. Mr Finlay queried whether we should be contacting the unsuccessful candidates anyway to advise them of the vacancy. Mr Fraser agreed to check on this procedure.

9. Reports from Office Bearers

9.1. Chair

No report

9.2. Treasurer

No report as absent.

9.2.1. Purchase of Chairs for Bandstand

Cllr Sangster reported that he'd managed to purchase 30 second hand folding chairs plus chains for security when not in use and in storage. Cllr Sangster requested reimbursement of the cost of purchasing the chairs and chains.

9.3. Secretary

9.3.1. Letter from Scottish Water

A letter has been received from Brendon Williams, Regional Community Manager – Tay Region introducing himself as contact for any queries the Community Council may have about Scottish Water. He is contactable at Gowans Water Treatment Works & Depot, 14 Gowans Terrace, Perth, PH1 5AY, his email is brendon.williams@scottishwater.co.uk and he can also be contacted via Scottish Water's Contact Centre, 08456018855.

10. Any Other Competent Business

10.1. Gonfannon

Mr Peterson reported that the Gonfannon pole has been cut to make transport easier for any functions at which it might be required. The Gonfannon will be erected later in the year at the museum with a proper handing over ceremony to be organised later in the year.

10.2. Water Board Work Warning Signs

Mr Macdonald reported on signs for road works being left for some time after completion of work. He was concerned that these represented a hazard to pedestrians and road users. He wondered why they weren't picked up more quickly following job completion. Cllr Sangster thought that the Water board must eventually send a lorry round to pick up signs from a number of jobs. Mr Fraser suggested that the secretary could write to the Water Board expressing our concern about this matter

Secretary to email Water Board contact on this matter.

10.3. Drain Cover in park behind St Nicholas Street

Mr Peterson asked for an update on the repair of the drain cover in the park behind this street. Cllr Sangster said he'd reported it, but to date no action had been taken to fix the problem cover.
