

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

DRAFT Minutes – October 2007

For approval

1. Attendance

Community Councillors

Ken Crichton, George Davidson, David Finlay, Kenneth Fraser, Ian Goudie, Stuart Holdsworth, Zoe Smith, Marysia Denyer, Dennis Macdonald, Laurence Reed, Patrick Marks, Carole Tricker, Judith Harding, Ian Hunter

Students' Association Representatives

Matthew Guest

Nominated

Jude Innes

Fife Councillors

Robin Waterston, Dorothea Morrison, Frances Melville, Bill Sangster

Apologies

Joe Peterson, Tom D'Ardenne

2. Minutes of September 2007 Meeting

3.1.1 Mrs Denyer noted that the Neighbourhood Watch area mentioned was Tom Morris Drive not Scooniehill as reported in the minutes.

3. Presentation

There was no public presentation or Police presence.

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville

4.1.1. Gibson Place - Flooding Problems

Gullies are being checked following concerns raised by local residents about flooding. A combination of high tides and heavy rain are to blame. Transportation is checking, but because of the numbers of gullies in the town it will take eight weeks before they are all checked. Mr Finlay asked if the Council had looked at the new system, which had been put in at Bow Butts as it had been only since then that properties down from that system had experienced flooding at times of heavy rain. Mr Finlay felt that the basis of the problems was in the tanks installed underneath the car park at Bow Butts. Cllr Melville agreed to check out the matter.

4.1.2. Murrayfield Road

This small dead end road has recently been resurfaced, but a resident had noticed that the spur had not been touched. Cllr Melville discovered that the spur had been considered to be in better condition and it wasn't in need of resurfacing.

4.1.3. Complaint about Toilets

A complaint from a tourist about an incident in the toilets by the Golf Museum, forwarded by Patrick Marks to Cllr Melville has been passed to the relevant Council Dept for investigation.

4.1.4. East Sands Regeneration

Cllr Melville commented on an update from Alan Paul of Facilities Management in Fife Council, which is involved with other organisations in looking at the regeneration of the area. There is a two-pronged approach. One part relates to the role of the Harbour Trust and development in the immediate Harbour area, the other relates to a possible development at the Gatty in conjunction with the University of the Highlands & Islands of a Scottish Oceans Institute.

4.1.5. Core Path Proposals

The 3rd draft of core path proposals for East Fife are largely completed and have been digitised. Negotiations are still ongoing in relations to core path proposals in the local area.

4.2. Cllr Sangster

4.2.1. Seagull Problem

Cllr Sangster commented about recent press on this subject. He said he'd been trying to make the public aware in the past couple of years about the availability of pamphlets on how to deal with seagulls in the local office. He said that it was the problem of the owner of properties affected to deal with the problem, with the help of Fife Council where appropriate.

4.2.2. Ladies Toilets - St Andrews Harbour

Funding has been found to fix the problems in the Ladies Toilets.

4.2.3. Alcohol Free Zones & Night Time Noise Team

Cllr Sangster commented about the Community Council initiative in getting more happening in this area, with signs due to be erected in more parts of the town. Ms Smith asked about the cost of the signs and for a definition of what an alcohol free zone could do. Cllr Sangster replied that the signs cost nothing as they were already in stock. He explained how an alcohol free zone is meant to work. He also informed the meeting about a team called the Night Time Noise Team. This team whose remit is to deal with the problems of night time noise, such as loud music can respond quite speedily and determine with their equipment whether a source of noise merits a fixed penalty.

4.3. Robin Waterston

4.3.1. Sea Gull Problem

Cllr Waterston commented on this matter. He noted that Fife Council has removed a lot of gull eggs from Madras College, which may have an effect upon the Seagull presence in the town. He added that this is not an uncommon problem of coastal areas and welcomed any ideas from other towns in dealing with this problem.

4.3.2. Planning System - Statutory Consultation

Cllr Waterston talked about changes in the planning system. There has been an experimental system whereby officials deal with uncontroversial and minor applications. This has reduced the amount of material having to go to the main Planning Committee. This experiment is coming to an end and is due to be reviewed. One controversial proposal is to raise the trigger for planning applications to go to committee, from five independent objections to ten. Cllr Waterston is against this proposal. The other issue relates to the status of the Preservation Trust, which in the new system will not have any statutory role, unlike Community Councils. Cllr Waterston thought that there was a case for the Preservation Trust to be given an honorary statutory role. Dr Goudie agreed with Cllr Waterston that there appeared to be no reason to take the statutory consultee right away from the Preservation Trust.

It was agreed that the secretary write a letter to Fife Council on this matter supporting the role of the Preservation Trust in the planning sphere.

4.3.3. HMOs

Cllr Waterston is going to put forward a proposal to the Council about the problem of some new build houses rapidly becoming HMOs when they should in his view remain as family homes. He welcomed the views of Community Councillors also on this subject. Mr D'Ardenne asked Cllr Waterston if he would like to attend the Students Association Accommodation Committee where he'd hear the student perspective on this topic. Cllr Waterston replied that he'd be happy to attend a meeting.

4.3.4. Re-Appraisal of Housing Land Requirements

Cllr Waterston hoped that the Community Council would be submitting an objection and ideas to the current proposals. Dr Goudie felt that there needed to be a much tighter definition of what sort of housing should be built. He was concerned that private developers would abuse the system and build the usual type of houses. As current proposals stand only 3 in every 10 new builds are proposed to be affordable.

4.3.5. Chewing Gum Recycling Containers

Ms Smith asked about these containers, which she felt were not perhaps serving any useful purpose. Smokers were apparently using them making them look even less attractive in Ms Smith's view. Cllr Waterston agreed to look into the matter. Cllr Sangster added that gum collected from the bins was used for other purposes.

4.4 Dorothea Morrison

4.4.1. Madras Pupil Litter and Graffiti Problems - South Street

Cllr Morrison has been having meetings with the Rector about the problems of litter and graffiti. She has also taken up the matter with the police. Environmental Wardens are now patrolling the area so she hoped that this would help reduce the problem.

4.4.2. Graffiti Problem

This has been discussed at local office meetings. The problem lies in the removal of graffiti from private property, which is the responsibility of owners, but when a property is an HMO this can cause a problem.

4.4.3. Toilet Facilities/Comfort Stops for visitors

Cllr Morrison commented on the problem of a lack of toilet facilities in the town. Vandalism is a major problem in toilet management and partly as a result some toilets have been closed. She cited the West Sands toilet as an example of vandalism problems, which costs the Council a lot of money. However she was encouraged by an idea of encouraging businesses such as cafes to allow visitors to use their toilet facilities. She mentioned this in relation to the Coastal Path and the idea that walkers can find "comfort stops" en route.

4.4.4. South Street Work

Cllr Morrison commented on the progress of the work in improving the pavements etc, but had asked the Council to be mindful of the effect on businesses, some of which have lost sales as a result of the disruption.

4.4.5. Gullies

Like Cllr Melville, Cllr Morrison has had contact with the Council about clearance of gullies. She has had the same response, but commented that she knew of gullies, which hadn't been cleared for several years.

4.4.6. Seagulls

Cllr Morrison knows of the problems and the way in which it has been managed at Madras College. She encouraged private businesses and property owners to put up devices to discourage nesting gulls. She also mentioned the problem if gulls were fed and the problem of rubbish having to be in black bags in the centre of town. She thought that students coming to live in the town should be better educated about managing their black bags to reduce chances of gulls taking food remnants from them. Mr D'Ardenne wondered if Cllr Morrison could write to the private letting agencies on the issue of bin collection, reminding them to tell their tenants when to put their bins out? Cllr Morrison agreed that this was important, but felt that the agencies were not always being given out details of litter collection.

4.4.7. Preservation Trust and Planning Consultation

Cllr Morrison hoped that the Community Council would give the Preservation Trust its support in seeking, at least an honorary statutory consultee role. She reminded the meeting of the expertise and experience of the Preservation Trust in planning issues. Cllr Melville also supported the Preservation Trust having such a role and suggested that the matter needed to be addressed urgently. Mrs Morrison thought that we would have to keep close watch on changes, particularly if they could have a major economic impact.

Secretary to write to Fife Council to ask for inclusion of Preservation Trust as an honorary statutory consultee.

5. Planning Committee

5.1. Minutes of Planning Meetings - see Appendices G & H in agenda

5.1.1. Objection to Westburn Lane

Mr Finlay said that the Planning Committee objection had still to be finalised.

5.1.2. Objection to Largo Road

Details in Appendix B. Mrs Denyer commented about this proposed development. She and other local residents have concerns about this site, as it will look on to pre-existing open spaces and gardens used by families. There was the issue of the land's designation as light industrial use and increased traffic matters. She was also doubtful about the affordability.

5.1.3. Finalised Housing Requirement

Mr Finlay commented that the Planning Committee has still to comment on this issue and noted that comments had to be in by 12th October. Cllr Melville commented on the fact that in papers on this matter, the change in wording to 'Strategic Land Use Allocations' from "Strategic Development Areas" amongst others, needed to be deleted, as there was little difference in what they represented. There was also a feeling that specific mention of "St Andrew West" needed to be replaced simply by "St Andrews" as the former was too constricting. She felt that other areas of Fife needed to be able to take some of the disproportionate load from this area. Mrs Morrison commented on the need for more affordable housing as a very important local need.

5.1.4. Structure Plan

Dr Goudie apologised that the submission from the Planning Committee hadn't been revised due to other commitments. He still hoped to prepare material for the next Planning Committee meeting. He recognised the need for a detailed submission. He added that it was important to have a clear land use policy in planning, and felt that more needed to be done in order to find solutions for issues such as transportation and affordable housing. He was concerned at the lack of ideas about how to ensure that affordable housing remained affordable. Mr Crichton thought that housing would only remain affordable if they were built by a Housing Association or similar body for rent, as he didn't think that housing built for sale would long remain "affordable" in St Andrews. Dr Waterston talked about possible alternatives, one idea being Community Land Trusts where the community owned the land, and anyone buying property on that land had to sell back to the Trust for a pre-determined price, possibly a percentage below the market price. However he added that it required communities to get actively involved, as the legal framework was already in place. He expressed an interest in talking further to the planning committee to discuss such an idea. Mr Fraser asked Cllr Waterston if he could perhaps write up something on this idea. Cllr Waterston agreed to look out some more details from a web site on this subject.

5.1.5. Fascia Sign at 47 South Street

Dr Goudie commented on the proposed change of material for this sign, which the Council Planning official had apparently "deemed to be acceptable." Part of the problem he said was the lack of consistency in making decisions, despite a long-standing policy that wooden signs were the norm. He was concerned that allowing some businesses to use different materials would make a mockery of this policy, in which case it might be more sensible to modify the policy if the Council was no longer prepared to implement it consistently. Cllr Morrison commented that the Preservation Trust had also studied the situation regarding signs. She said that it is not just a matter of materials used, but also the design. Getting good makers of fully wooden signs was becoming more difficult. So signs using a mix of materials, such as vinyl on wood could be acceptable if done to a high design standard. She cited the "Little Italy" shop sign as a good quality sign from different materials.

5.1.6. Waterstones Air Conditioning Application

Mrs Tricker expressed her concern about the possibility that Waterstones Book Shop might get the go ahead for its new application, thus causing further distress to the elderly couple living in its proximity. Mr Crichton wondered about writing a letter to object. Mr Fraser commented that a letter had been previously written. Mr Finlay wasn't clear how a further application could be made, given the previous rejection. Cllr Melville explained that if there was a material difference in an application it could be considered, though she admitted that it wasn't always easy to see how officials interpreted what might make such a difference

to allow a fresh application. She suggested that the Community Council could write a letter asking for an explanation.

Secretary to write to Fife Council asking about difference in Waterstones application to previous application.

6. Matters Arising From Previous Meetings

6.1. The Proposed Medical Sciences Building

Report in appendix C - for information

6.2. Letter about Flooding on the Kinnesburn

Mr Marks had written Fife Council on the flooding concerns and had received a reply from Mr Thorpe - see Appendix E . His letter asked questions including a request for local knowledge of past flood events. Mr Marks was asked if he had any response to Mr Thorpe's questions. Mr. Marks acknowledged that it was difficult to answer. He had a little knowledge from an old postcard of some flooding, but otherwise appealed to members of the Community Council and the public to assist by passing on relevant information required to help Fife and the Water Board plan with greater awareness of past flood events.

6.3. Parking Charges

Letter from Fife Council's Mr McClellan in Appendix F . Dr Goudie commented that parking was a policy which seemed to be driven by officials. He asked the Regional Councillors if the new council had a policy on parking across Fife? Cllr Melville acknowledged that the original policy as now in place had been discreetly pushed through in 2005. There had been opposition across Fife she said, once the true nature of the policy became clear. The new Council is committed to reviewing parking charge policy, and in future decisions will be taken by Area Committees.

7. From Committees

7.1. Recreation

7.1.1. Fife in Bloom Award

Mr Crichton reported that he'd read that St Andrews had been awarded an Achievement Award by the RHS as part of its Britain in Bloom competition. Cllr Melville also added that she'd meant to bring along two gold medals awarded to St Andrews with respect to the Fife in Bloom competition - one being an Area award, the other a Fife wide award.

7.1.2. Art and Photographic Exhibition 2007

This takes place at the Victory Memorial Hall from 24 - 26th November. All Community Councillors are invited.

7.1.3. St Andrews Day Reception

Mr Crichton described the programme of events, starting with the Beating of the Retreat, followed by a reception in the Council Chamber or the Main Hall depending upon numbers responding to official invitations which are due to be sent out.

7.1.4. Senior Citizens Xmas Party

This will be held on 10th January because of problems of holding it before Xmas.

7.2. General Purposes

7.2.1. St Andrews in Focus

See Appendix B of October agenda for details.

7.2.2. Bobby Jones Commemoration

See Appendix B of October agenda for details

Secretary to write to Fife Council on this matter

7.2.3. Press Reports of Community Council Business

See Appendix B of October agenda for details. Mr Fraser explained that this was not a criticism of the press who attend the meetings, but was a possible way of getting other details of the meetings not usually reported into the public domain. Mr Fraser asked for a volunteer to compile material to send into the local press. No volunteers, so Mr Fraser suggested leaving the matter to the new Community Council to consider.

7.2.4. St Andrews Hospital

Mr Fraser and Professor Taylor had discussed the two matters detailed in Appendix B. Mr Fraser felt that 4.1. would only work with a resurrection of the Health, Welfare and Education Committee.

7.3. 200 Club

7.3.1. Sea Cadets

Mrs Tricker mentioned that the new Sea Cadets group with which she has some connection, had approached the 200 Club several weeks ago but had not made any response to date. Mrs Tricker wondered if a decision could be taken at this meeting, given that the request would be for more than the 200 Club's maximum of £200. The Sea Cadets had requested £500, to help them purchase various training materials. They will be based at the Sailing Club. The Club is aimed at 11 - 14 yr olds.

Mr Holdsworth proposed that the main Community Council meeting should give £500. Cllr Sangster

commented that the amount of money requested was only a small percentage of the overall amount required to allow the group to start and function.

A vote was taken on the motion proposed by Mr Holdsworth to give the Sea Cadets £500 towards set up costs. Mr Hunter seconded the motion. The vote was carried by 13 - 0.

8. New Business

8.1. Erection of Signs for Alcohol Free Zones

Mr Reed reported on the initiative, which had blossomed, from his contact with the Police and Fife Council, with invaluable assistance from Cllr Sangster. The availability of signs at no cost was a bonus with the town being covered more comprehensively at relatively small cost. Mr Reed went around with the Community Police to identify sites where the signs could be erected. He also commented on the need for members of the public to phone the police if they spotted illegal drinking in these zones.

8.2. Remembrance Sunday - 11th November 2007

For information. The Community Council will be represented as usual, with 4 places specifically reserved for official representation at the Church service, then procession to the War Memorial to lay wreaths.

8.3. Fife Volunteer of the Year Awards 2007

For information

8.4. Consultation on the 2007 revision of Fife's Community Plan - 'A Stronger Future for Fife'

For information

8.5. Fife Health and Social Care Partnership Service Delivery Plan 2007 - 2011

For information only

8.6. Planning Aid for Scotland's "Reach Out" Project

Forwarded to the Planning Committee. This was a questionnaire from this organisation seeking views on the treatment of small ethnic groups, such as travellers in the planning system.

8.7. Centenary of the Death of Old Tom Morris

Cllr Melville informed the meeting that the New Club are taking the lead with respect to Old Tom Morris by organising a competition amongst local Clubs and is also to host a dinner next year. The Secretary will inform Mr Morrow who first emailed on this matter about these plans.

9. Reports from Office Bearers

9.1. Chair

9.1.1. Community Council Election

Mr Fraser commented upon the lack of information about nomination dates. Cllr Waterston thought that there had been a slip up, as the Councillors had seen information, which he'd be happy to share.

9.1.2. Public Presentations

Mr Fraser commented on a query about the number of public presentations at Community Council meetings, and the amount of time, which they could take up. There had been a suggestion to limit these to one per meeting, but Mr Fraser wasn't certain how this might be best managed. Mr Fraser suggested that he could write down his thoughts on the subject and bring it back to the November meeting.

9.1.3. Greyfriars School Opening Invitations

Mr Fraser had been sent five invitations in relation to the official opening of the new Greyfriars School, which he would be happy to pass around.

9.2. Treasurer

9.2.1. Letter from Flora Selwyn

Mrs Selwyn had written to Mrs Tricker thanking the Community Council for its award towards the Ceilidh she'd run for new students. She also thanked Mr Fraser for his inspirational talk at the event, which had been very successful.

9.2.2. Expenses

Mrs Tricker reminded members to put in their expenses claims before the final meeting of this Council in November.

9.3. Secretary

No additional items to mention.

10. Any Other Competent Business

10.1. Bandstand Concert Chairs

Cllr Sangster has managed to find a storage place for the chairs in the Victory Memorial Hall.
