

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Provisional Minutes –7th January 2014

For Approval

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1. Attendance

Community Councillors

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

Students' Association Representatives

Co-Opted

Lindsey Adam

Fife Councillors

Keith McCartney, Dorothea Morrison, Brian Thomson

Apologies

Callum Corbin, Frances Melville, Alice Alexander, Tom Waterton-Smith

2. Minutes of Meeting – 2nd December

The minutes were accepted as correct

3. Presentations

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville

4.2. Brian Thomson

4.2.1. Pie Machine

Cllr Thomson had been seeking advice about this machine since its appearance at Fisher & Donaldson. Alistair Hamilton had informed him that while formal planning permission might not be required, it needs advertising consent because it has an illuminated light in it.

4.2.2. Uplighters near Subway

This is apparently a switching issue and has not been resolved. Cllr Thomson is to follow it up.

4.2.3. Whyte-Melville Fountain

Mrs Adam asked if there was any news on the fountain. Cllr Thomson didn't think that there was anything to stop the fountain working again, but agreed to get an update.

4.3. Keith McCartney

4.3.1. Potholes

Potholes in Carron Place, Kinnessburn Road and Lawmill Gardens have been reported and repairs actioned.

4.3.2. Lighting Faults,

A number of faulty street lights were reported as not working in the following streets and repairs actioned: Canongate, John Street, Kinburn Park, Largo Road, Lawmill Gardens, Learmonth Place, Wardlaw Gardens.

4.3.3. Hope Park Roundabout

A plan for operations to carry out the work of putting barriers additional to those already extant is in preparation. Funding for the new barriers will require to come out of next year's Traffic Management and Road Safety Revenue budget and work will take place in the new financial year.

In the meantime a request has been submitted to the Road Management team asking that they arrange to replace the two damaged sections of barrier, which had previously been removed, using funding from the maintenance budget.

4.3.4. Ladebraes

Community Payback have assessed the three 'gates' leading to the Lade Braes from Lawmill Gardens and agreed that they can carry out the work of repainting them with the Council providing materials.

Community Payback has continued with scraping work but was not sure how much more painting could feasibly be done over the course of the winter. They were hopeful of getting the red oxide on at least one of the bridges but may not get the black gloss on until we get warmer weather again.

Miss Uprichard queried the paint colour being used. Cllr McCartney reported that black appeared to be the corporate colour of choice for all work in the Ladebraes.

Mr Greenwell noted that on one of the bridges, part of the railings had been given their undercoat but the remainder had been stripped down but left without the undercoat. Cllr McCartney thought that part of the problem was the weather making work difficult to complete before better weather.

4.4. Dorothea Morrison

4.4.1. Murray Park Car Park

Cllr Morrison had heard back from an official to say that his understanding was that the Car Park was to be relined and had been coned off with signing for this work. Some motorists moved the cones to park and had as a result been fined.

4.4.2. Traffic Signage

Cllr Morrison reported back on a query from Mr Greenwell about new traffic signage. Cllr Morrison explained that at Balfour Place there were two no entry signs at the entrance to that street. She added that the signs were there to provide information to drivers particularly in relation to the new one-way system. The signs she added were the smallest permitted in the regulations. Once the one way has been established signage may be reassessed.

The no entry sign at the Mill Port is incomplete with the two signs still to be cut to length and lights and signs fitted.

Signs at Hepburn Place and Greenside Place are being put in place at present and their size is dictated by the regulations.

Mr Greenwell in reply noted that 20 mph signage on both sides of signs at the bridge over the Kinnesburn had been removed. He also commented that there were actually 4 signs at Balfour place and 6 posts. He queried the need for a new post to advertise

the 20 mph restriction at the top of Greenside Place as he said there was already a sign about parking restrictions. He queried why there had to be two posts?

Mr Greenwell reminded the meeting about the large tourist industry in the town and he felt that tourists wouldn't want to see numerous no entry signs etc in their photos. He felt that Transportation services often put in signs in inappropriate places with little real thought about the visual impact in a town of historical importance.

4.4.3. Gregory Place

Mrs Denyer reported the concerns of Mrs Rowe about the state of the road at Gregory Place mentioned to her by residents of Kirkhill. Cllr Morrison acknowledged that she was aware of this and had reported it previously.

4.4.4. Housing Development Name - Kinnessburn Lane

Mr Fraser had noted that the developers of the housing at the end of Kinnessburn Lane had given the development the name Kinness Brook. Mr Fraser wondered if the developers had to apply for an official street name or is the development just part of Kinnessburn Lane? Cllr Morrison wasn't certain but could check. She recognised that the CC was generally consulted in such matters of street names. Mr Greenwell commented that the last street name about which the CC had been consulted had been at St Nicholas/Abbeypark. The CC suggestion had been ignored he said and the street became "The Avenue".

5. Planning Committee

5.1. Planning Committee Report

Mr Greenwell acknowledged that the previous month had been quiet with less than a handful of planning applications received. BT had put in applications for several new cabinets around the town in mid-December. The Planning Committee had not taken any great objection to the applications and he noted that the cabinets were probably to accommodate the fibre optic broadband system being rolled out across the country.

The committee has objected to the demolition of Abbey Park. The committee believe that Robertson Homes have been very neglectful of a 200-year-old building over the best part of 12 years.

Mr Greenwell has been contacted by two of the neighbours of 12 Grange Road concerned about plans to build a livingroom/bedroom/bathroom on the back of what is effectively a Guest House. The main issue centres on a hedge, which should have shielded the development, but which is falling down and is to be removed thus giving no shielding between the extension and the neighbours' gardens.

The Wonder Years development proposals continue to be a major topic of discussion in the planning committee as well as other bodies such as the Preservation Trust. The planning committee has put together a list of all the policies, which this development is breaching, such as being significantly contrary to the Local Plan. He claimed that the 135 proposed beds were more than the town needed, especially after approval of over 200 elsewhere in town. He added that letting agents were struggling to let all properties currently available for students.

Another item related to the request by Robertson Homes to reduce their previous application to build 1000 sqms of office space in St Leonards Lodge. The committee felt that Robertson Homes shouldn't be allowed to have this original plan relaxed to reduce planned office space. He added that Robertson Homes shouldn't be allowed to reduce the quality of finish at St Leonards Lodge and that any exits from the building should be by the Avenue and not directly on to Abbeywalk.

He also reminded councillors that the committee had objected to plans to build two small properties at the back of the old Argos store site on 157 South Street.

Finally Mr Greenwell discussed the unsatisfactory responses the committee had had from Mr Birrell about the pergola at the West Port Tavern. The committee will be discussing at its next meeting the possibility of making a formal complaint to Fife Council and Audit Scotland over the behaviour of Fife Council in relation to the approval of the pergola.

Miss Uprichard had been studying the agenda for the next NEF Planning Committee meeting and had noted that despite several major applications there was nothing recommended for refusal. She was dismayed to read comments about aspects of an application being contrary to something but still recommended for approval. She felt that there appeared to be no hard and fast rules against development. She cited the Wonderyears development proposals as an example of the way officers appeared to be uncritically accepting responses from the developers about conditions.

Miss Uprichard then discussed the ongoing issues about the Pergola. She'd written to Mr Winter on 4th November 2013 asking if Fife Council had acted ultra vires in giving planning permission 4 days after it had given the CC its 14 days response time as an objector to the plan. She wrote a further letter a couple of weeks later to Mr Winter, who briefly replied that he'd asked Mr Birrell to reply. She eventually got a letter from Mr Birrell dated 11th December not addressing her point. She has written again to Mr Birrell.

Mr Scott informed the meeting that he'd heard from Mr Winter that he'd been able to read the report prepared for the University in relation to housing needs. Mr Paul commented that he'd read the report, which was recommending the need for at least 500 student rooms and noted the pressure on local housing stock because of students renting privately.

Mr Scott then commented upon the CC's attitude towards applications for student accommodation and urged it to review its reasons for objecting in light of the issues raised in the report.

Miss Uprichard commented on the way the University had increased the numbers from 3 or 4000 in 1996 to the present 9538 without any discussion with the town. Mr Scott in reply asked Miss Uprichard if she'd read the report. She acknowledged that she's looked through it. Mr Scott suggested that her estimate of student numbers was completely false. Miss Uprichard replied that her figure came from the Higher Education Statistics Agency, a figure that she preferred to believe. Mr Scott replied that that figure was not a head count but of the number of enrolments, which could include students enrolling for night classes. He said that the exact head count was no more than 7800.

Mr Paul agreed with Mr Scott's figures, which were also in the report. He asked Mr Scott to report on the University's expansion plans as he believed there were plans to provide three new departments including law, which could mean an increase in the number of students over the next five years. Mr Scott denied any plans to increase the number of students, but acknowledged that the University was always considering the question of expansion, particularly in science as this related to the ability to get funding, but he denied any plans to have a law faculty at this time.

He claimed that the University was taking very seriously its effect upon the town, citing Professor McClelland's report and the University support of the Housing Commission.

Mr Murphy asked Mr Greenwell's about the committee's view that there was no need for more student flats. Mr Murphy wondered if the general issue of need was a relevant planning issue?

Dr Goudie commented that another statistic to be noted was not just the quantity of student housing but the breakdown by price. He said that there was no sense in talking about over provision if the ones available for rent were very expensive pricing them out of the student market. Dr Goudie reminded the meeting that he did

support more student accommodation if it helped to release accommodation for local people on the town. But he felt that he couldn't win that argument unless he was completely confident in knowing the expansion plans of the University. He felt that the issue of student accommodation could only be properly answered if the CC knew the direction in which the university was going with expansion. He didn't believe that CC members had enough information on that point to make informed decisions.

Mr Scott in reply said that it was not possible to predict what a university might be like in 10 years time and didn't think any university in the country could predict on these matters. He added that universities were at the whim of Government. He felt that there was no way he could make any definitive statement about future plans or need of the University. He said that the University currently had no plans for expansion but did have to respond to changes in funding opportunities and demographics. He admitted that the University could grow incrementally but that this was very difficult to control.

Mr Murphy returned to the issue of opposition to student flats mentioned by Mr Greenwell as well as the opposition to 157 South Street and the Grange Road application and the lack of screening. Mr Murphy couldn't see that these were issues, which the CC should be getting involved in but should leave it to the planners and other relevant officials. He thought that if a local person approached the CC Planning concerned about a development that might be a time to get involved. He felt that issues such as the hedge in Grange Road were a waste of time. Mr Greenwell acknowledged that the issues mentioned were all current objections that he was reminding NEF Councillors about in advance of their next area planning meeting later in the week. In response to Mr Murphy he commented that he felt the underlying purpose was to represent the local community and if someone from the community approached him he would hardly refuse to pass on their concerns to local councillors.

Mr Paul brought up the issue of the recent failed Departure Hearing wondering whether it would be discussed. Mr Roberts in reply said that he was as surprised as everybody else that the meeting was adjourned because of the inefficiency of Fife Council. He emphasised that the failure of the meeting was due to Fife Council and not as reported in the press and on certain websites that the CC had managed to delay it again. He felt that such accusations were nonsense and the truth needed to be more clearly heard. Mrs Denyer backed Mr Roberts's comments. Miss Uprichard clarified that it was the applicant who caused the delay. She reminded the meeting that the application in effect was being put forward by Fife Council and being determined by Fife Council, a procedure that she thought was not suitable, even if it was legal.

Mr Roberts acknowledged that he'd tried to take heat out of the situation and that it had got a bit personal and out of hand. He commented that local people who believe in the Pipeland application do firmly believe for what they think are the right reasons, as do those who oppose the Pipeland application. He was concerned that the different groups were getting more entrenched in their positions. He reminded the meeting that at the end of the day a decision would have to be made and we'd all have to live with it, whether we like it or not.

6. Matters Arising

6.1. Botanic gardens

Mrs Corbin said that she'd report on the Botanic Gardens at the next meeting, as there would be a committee meeting until the end of January.

6.2. Housing Commission

The report has now been printed and will be distributed in the very near future. At present it is with the reference groups.

6.3. Standen Report

Mr Murphy reported on a new finance initiative called the Green Deal in which Standen have become involved. This involves customers installing energy efficiency measures and paying for them through their power bills. The payment for the measures stays with the property not the consumer if they move. Standen is involved because the improvements to be installed have to be accredited by a trained advisor. Standen staff are getting themselves qualified to do this work. The initiative is not just for domestic properties. Applications can either be by the Landlord or the tenant.

6.4. Reports from Representatives

6.4.1. St Andrews Day Celebrations

Mr Paul reported on the St Andrews Day Celebrations. The CC had worked with various bodies throughout the day from the parade to the ceilidh. He thought that it had worked very well with good work between the students and CC members. He would like to do the same thing in 2014. He asked for permission for the CC to be involved as it had been last year to help arrange the parade and ceilidh in conjunction with the student body. Mr Paul clarified for Mrs Harding that he welcomed anyone to become involved and advised that planning did need to start soon after the previous event. Mr Paul asked for permission to carry on negotiating about running this event on the 30th November. Mr Roberts supported the idea but without committing any funds to it at present. The meeting approved the proposal. Mr Roberts also emphasised the need for co-ordination to ensure that events did not clash or overlap, citing one event, which clashed with the Civic Reception reducing numbers attending that event.

6.5. Any Other Matters Arising

7. Committee Reports

7.1 Recreation Committee

Mrs Denyer read out her report about the Senior Citizens Party held on Friday 13th December, which she described as a resounding success. There were almost 180 guests attending the event, with many guests coming from the local care homes. Entertainment was provided by a variety of acts from the Canongate Glee Club to highland dancers and an St Andrews University Acapello Group called the Accidentals. Jimmy Bone provided the party with tales of St Andrews worthies. She thanked everyone who had worked to set up the decorations and table settings. Audrey MacInaw and Morag Hamilton were two other volunteers who worked hard behind the scenes. She thanked the local businesses that donated raffle prizes. Her only disappointment was the poor response from the CC for donations for the hamper and she had to ask Mr Paul for some funding to pay for some hamper items. Catering was of a high standard with Mrs Ashworth organising in that area. Mrs Denyer also expressed thanks to Madras pupils who helped on the day serving the platters of food. The party generated many positive comments from the guests.

Finally Mrs Denyer asked how many councillors thought it was worth supporting the two Coffee mornings? She noted that it was always the same people who got involved and urged all councillors to try to help in some way to help ensure the success of future coffee mornings. Mr Paul supported Mrs Denyer's appeal about the coffee mornings and felt that the income was very important. CC spending would have to be reduced without the coffee mornings. Mr Roberts also backed the idea of having two coffee mornings. Miss Uprichard also supported the need and suggested that there should be at least one meeting to discuss and plan these events.

7.2. General Purposes

Mr Roberts acknowledged that there would need to be a GP Meeting soon as there were some items, which required to be discussed.

7.3. 200 Club

1st No.88. Rev Moffatt 2nd No.96. Mr Paterson 3rd No. 84. Dr Ashcroft

7.4. Health, Education and Welfare Committee

Mrs Corbin reported the news that what are known as Homecare Pathway Packages are to be dissolved in England and Wales and she thought that this might happen in Scotland as well.

7.5. Rail Sub Committee

Nothing to report

8. New Business

8.1. Election of New Community Councillor

Mr Roberts announced that the procedure to elect a new Community Councillor would be discussed at the next GP Meeting to ensure that the process could be considered robust. There is currently one vacancy, but the vacancy has not yet been publicised in the local media.

Mr Cheape as a relatively new CC commented that it was quite difficult to understand how to become a CC. He suggested that possibly having application dates one or two times a year might be one possibility. Mr Roberts acknowledged that there were a number of things, which needed to be discussed at the forthcoming GP meeting in relation to this process.

9. Reports from Office Bearers

9.1. Chair

No additional items to report but Mr Roberts indicated that there was an item, which would be discussed at the GP meeting, following a letter he'd received from an individual concerned about the CC operations. He would report back to the February meeting on any further developments in this matter.

9.2. Treasurer

The Treasurers Report was emailed to members before the meeting. Mr Paul advised that the finances remained pretty much the same, but there had been a grant received for the Senior Citizens Treat from the Common Good Fund for £1200, for which he thanked Fife Councillors. Cllr Morrison suggested that the Welfare Fund could be tried in future, as the Common Good Fund might not always have the money. Mr Paul replied that he tried to spread around his funding requests.

Mr Paul went on to say that the CC would be about £200 over what it would have in income for the coming year compared to last year when it was £200 under. He explained that this was due to the financing of the newsletter, which was financed over 2 years.

He urged members to give him good notice if they thought there would have to be large expenditures, as this would help him in his planning. There will be approximately £3700 in the reserve account.

9.3 Secretary

9.3.1. Correspondence

Mr Marks reported on recent correspondence with Mr William Welsh the Fife Council officer who liaises with Community Councils. Contact had been in relation to the recent complaint by a member of the public about the Community Council and he had also informed Mr Marks that the Community Council elections would probably be held in November 2014. Other elections and the Independence Referendum would keep officials busy until that time. He had also informed Mr Marks that there wouldn't be any training sessions for Community Councillors this year due to the various election pressures. Mr Marks hoped that once things had quietened down that officials would give consideration to training sessions for new Councillors in particular. Miss Uprichard suggested that the CC should arrange an informal meeting for new members to give them a picture of the CC, what it does and the connections it has with the community and its connections with Fife Council and the Councillors. She added that new members haven't been given much idea of how things operate and have been left to find out for themselves. Information is available on the web in various locations about CCs and any current CC should be prepared to answer queries from new members about the CC.

Mr Roberts acknowledged the need to help new members better. Mrs Corbin said that she'd hoped to have a CC starter pack out this month but this had been delayed by difficult family matters. She still hoped to have a pack out soon.

Mr Marks briefly went over the other correspondence received and mostly emailed to members for their perusal.

10. Any Other Competent Business

10.1. Community Council Notice boards

Mrs Adam asked if there were any plans to sort out the CC noticeboard on the corner beside Trespass? Mr Roberts acknowledged that it hadn't been used for a long time due to problems with getting it open. He acknowledged the need to use the noticeboard better. Mrs Adam hoped that it could be used, as it seemed to be a bit of a waste to see it lying there unused.

10.2. Toilets in the Town Hall

Miss Uprichard said that she would like to see a notice put up in the town to indicate the availability of public toilets in the Town Hall. She asked Councillors for comments. There was general agreement that that would be a good idea.

10.3 Wall Plaques to Polish Inventor

Mr Denyer informed the meeting that two plaques had been put on a house wall past the Ardgowan Hotel commemorating in Polish & English the Polish inventor of the mine detector Jozef Stanislaw Kosacki. She had attended the unveiling service in December.