

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Agenda - June 1999

There will be a meeting at 7pm, Monday 7th June 1999 in St Andrews Town Hall Burgh Chamber.

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Contributions from Members of the Public

(for anyone wishing to address the meeting on a matter relevant to St Andrews. Please contact the Secretary or Chair at or before the meeting.)

2.1. Police Report

2.2. Scenic Map

Progress report from James Rattray

3. Minutes of 3rd May

(Read for corrections of substance - harangue the secretary for minor (spelling etc) mistakes outside the meeting).

4. Matters arising from previous meetings

4.1. Shell Garage

(May 4.5.) Licensing hearing scheduled for 17th (or possibly 18th) June.

4.2. Hogweed

(May 4.6.) Fife Council have sprayed plants on their ground, at time of writing no action has been taken on other plants while the permission/action of the land owners is sought. Some of these plants are growing over the public footpath where anyone could brush against them...

4.3. Burgh Chambers

(April 7.3.6) Meeting arranged with Fife Councillors, Property Services & Community Services 4pm Monday 7th June - Pete Lindsay (Sec.) & Archie Strachan (Tres.) to attend.

4.4. Meeting with Cameron Community Council on Feddinch

(May 6.5.1.i) Meeting was held with Cameron CC representatives Randal Barrie and David Brown at the planning committee meeting on 31st May, Joe Peterson also attended. Dealt with under 6.5. Planning.

5. Reports

5.1. Chair

5.2. Treasurer

Annual Statement of Accounts - see separate sheets.

5.3. Secretary

5.3.1. Clippings

volunteers for news monitors wanted! It would be useful to have a clippings archive of the community council's appearance in the press. To achieve this we need a couple of people to watch each of the local (Citizen, East Fife Mail, Advertiser) and national (Scotsman, Courier etc) and trans-border papers and to forward cuttings monthly in time for a summary for community council.

Any Volunteers?

5.3.2. Contents of CC Cupboard

(for information) Appendix A.

5.3.3. Community Paper Recycling

(for information) in view of the Community Council's past interest in paper recycling (Feb 4.3) I

note that David Collins and Jayne Myrone at 41 Warrack St (tel 475868) accept paper (remove all staples & sticky tape) sorted as follows:

- Newspaper
- Shiny Paper *eg* magazines
- Office Paper *eg* envelopes with plastic windows removed, letters, computer printouts
- Shiny Card *eg* cereal packets
- Card *eg* loo roll tubes, cardboard boxes, corrugated card

5.3.4. Jurassic Garden

(for information) Richard Batchelor has sent us his proposals for a possible use of the garden at 1 Greyfriars Garden.

6. Matters raised by committees

6.1. General Purposes

6.2. Golf

6.3. Finance

6.4. Millennium

6.5. Planning

Appendix B - Response to Fife Structure Plan Review Response.

6.6. Publicity

no meeting due to pressure of Planning work

6.7. Recreation

6.8. Youth

7.0 Matters raised by Fife Councillors

7.1. Frances Melville (West)

7.2. Sheila Hill (South)

7.3. Jane Ann Liston (South East)

7.4. Jane Hunter-Blair (Central)

Appendix A: Contents of CC Cupboard in the St Marys Place Local Office.

- Sharp word processor/typewriter & disks.
- US flag 3x5 ft (certified flown over US capitol 17/3/95) - present from Arlington.
- Upper Arlington flag 4x6 ft
- Planning advice notes: fairly complete library when not out on loan to various planning ctee members.
- 2 doz. St Andrews Quiz Book.
- Old attendance book 94-97.
- Tree planting - file & map.
- 50-ish CC Arms - A3 colour copies.
- CC headed A4 paper - most of a ream.
- Plain white quarto - most of a ream.
- Ribbons etc for typewriter.
- Box mixed small flags listed as:
 - 5x1yd Union, no poles, & ropes.
 - 3x1yd Saltire, no poles.
 - length rope with 15 Union 22';x12'
 - ditto 2 flags.
 - 17 Lion Rampant 18'x8.5' (3 without sticks, one slightly torn).
 - 9 Union on sticks 11'x6'.
 - 15 Union 9'x4.5' (8 on sticks, 2 Stapled together, 5 without).
- Presentation scroll tubes - 2 doz. approx.
- Bag of tube stoppers - lots
- 1x2yd Union Flag (worn)

- 2x4yd Union Flag (worn)
- Red, white & blue bunting 25yd approx.
- ditto 50yd approx.

Appendix B - Fife Structure Plan Review Response.

1.0 Overview

Any response from the Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council to the Structure Plan review exercise seems to us, sadly, to represent a triumph of hope over experience. It had been assumed that the future of our town was protected by the planning guidelines that have been put in place over the last few years. However, we have seen what appeared to us to be prevarication in the preparation of the St Andrews Strategic Study, a planning document demanded by the Secretary of State. Despite this status the Study, within months of its adoption, has been dismissed as non-statutory, and a planning application which clearly flouts its spirit has been judged to be compatible with it. Equally, many relevant sections of the Local Plan and the Structure Plan have been adjudged toothless. Moreover, these have not been the findings of highly-paid lawyers employed by wealthy developers. These were the verdicts of Fife Council's own planning officials who had assisted in the creation of these documents.

It appears to us that the Fife Council is now seeking responses to the current Structure Plan review after it has effectively deemed worthless all the efforts of our community and of its own officials prior to last autumn that were designed to assist and inform the current review process. The Fife Council must appreciate, in view of these events, that we can legitimately construe that it considers short-term economic planning to be far more important than long-term environmental planning. The views of St Andrews were clearly and unequivocally expressed in the massive response to the Strategic Study process. It now appears to us that these views are considered of little importance to Fife officials compared to a headline proclaiming jobs secured, however ephemeral those jobs may prove to be. We trust that our scepticism is understood. We sincerely hope that steps will be taken to restore our faith in local planning processes.

1.1 Reaffirmation of the Strategic Study

There is no doubt on what principles the people of St Andrews would like to see the new Structure Plan based. The consultation on the Strategic Study secured an unparalleled response and its findings are well-documented. However great the desire on the part of some of Fife's planners to overturn the principles to which they had previously subscribed, we see no evidence whatsoever that the previously expressed broad consensus of the people of St Andrews has changed. For the avoidance of any doubt, this Community Council on behalf of its electorate reaffirms its support and the support of the community which it represents for the findings of the Strategic Study. This forms the first keystone of our response.

1.2 The failures of the present guidelines

Rather than producing new ideas, the problem is how to enshrine the principles of the Strategic Study in planning policies which are water-tight and which cannot be dismissed, even by their authors, as soon as it becomes convenient to do so. We have some difficulty in advising how this should be done. For instance, Policy E13 of the current Structure Plan says that "*The strategy of the Structure Plan does not support development ... that would have a detrimental effect on the unbuilt coastline*". There is also a presumption in the Structure and Local Plans against development on prime agricultural land. Although most people would read these as unequivocal statements, we have discovered in the last three months that in the eyes of Fife's top planning officials they do not preclude the building of a 200-bed hotel and a golf clubhouse on prime agricultural land overlooking the sea. What then, if anything, do these plans preclude, and how should the wording be changed so that the clear wish of the community cannot be so dismissed? The second keystone of our response is that planning guidelines must be made water-tight and adhered to.

1.3 Transport and sustainability

Another area in which there is a huge gulf between the theoretical principles of the Council and its actual practice is the role of public transport in determining the location of development. We have often quoted the assertion by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution that "*there is a broad consensus that land use planning policies should seek to minimise the need for travel and encourage the use of less polluting forms of transport.*" The questions on housing and jobs in the Information Booklet for this review hint at the importance of both public transport and a good match between the locations of homes and jobs. Yet in practice the Council is prepared to support large developments that would create many jobs in remote parts of Fife poorly served by public transport and in areas where it has been agreed

that there should not be a major expansion of housing. The third keystone of our response is that employment should be taken to people, people should not be taken long distances to employment. Adoption of this keystone will enable the Fife Council to adopt green transport policies, reduce urban dereliction and pollution and allow green belt policies to be developed successfully.

1.4 Where should new development be located?

We have previously suggested that for N.E. Fife sustainability considerations imply focusing development near the railway line. In particular we recommended that the Council should investigate the willingness of the Tay bridgehead area to accept new development in return for improved facilities such as a secondary school and a rail halt. We note that the Information Booklet says that *“The next Structure Plan must decide where the key employment opportunities in Fife are; it is likely that these will be focused on the key transport corridors running through Fife”*. We agree with this and focusing development along the main east coast railway line forms the fourth keystone of our response. If it is not possible to provide new employment opportunities near to the main pockets of unemployment in Fife, which would clearly be the ideal solution, then such a policy would indeed be desirable. In the light of recent experience, however, we could not describe it as *“likely”*. The reality is that the Council will grasp at whatever employment opportunities are offered regardless of broader planning considerations.

2.0 Housing demand

In terms of methodological improvements, we would encourage more disaggregation of projected housing demand into its component parts, by tenure and size of housing. In principle this information should be available through the Housing Plan. Provision of affordable housing in St Andrews remains a problem, demand is high, yet too often we have seen sites originally designated for social housing eventually being used for top of the range private developments. Availability of finance for affordable housing is likely to remain the major problem here, but it would be desirable, if legislation permits, to see either more earmarking of sites for social housing or, in the case of large developments, moves to ensure a better mix of housing on any given site. Developers prefer to build houses in the higher reaches of the price range in St Andrews claiming that there is *“high demand”*. The truth of the matter is that such expensive housing is only built and trickle fed into the market at a relatively slow rate. There is no evidence of *“high demand”* in this price range. On the other hand there is such evidence in the lower price ranges. Provision of adequate social housing in carefully designated areas around St Andrews forms the fifth keystone of our response.

3.0 Green Belt

It is distressing that Fife Council gives every indication that it would like to push the question of green belts on to the back-burner. On the list of 12 Topic Papers, green belts come in at number 11, after biodiversity and just ahead of historic buildings and archaeology. Even at that, the term green belt appears only as a sub-heading under the more nebulous title of *‘Countryside around towns’*.

The reasons for Fife Council's embarrassment on the issue are clear. The Strategic Study showed unequivocally that for St Andrews the issue of the green belt is one of prime importance. Paragraph 2.37 of the Strategic Study report noted that, during the consultation on options, *“The largest number of responses related to the green belt campaign and over a half of all responses were in support of this proposal.”* Yet, despite concluding that the question of a green belt should be included as part of the Structure Plan Review, the approach that the Council's officials have taken to the proposed Kingask development would irreparably damage the Green Belt before its birth.

Topic Paper 11 says *“The key issue for the Structure Plan is whether the existing development in the countryside policies are adequate or additional designations should be promoted”*. In the case of St Andrews, Fife Council has answered the question itself and indicated that the AGLV designation is no barrier to proposed hotels, conference centres and leisure facilities or other *“golf-related”* developments. The policies relating to the use of prime agricultural land have also been ignored. Additional protection in the form of a green belt is clearly needed if, in the case of St Andrews, there is to be any hope of achieving the third of the three main purposes of green belts, as defined by the government, namely *“to maintain the landscape setting of towns”*. The adoption of a green belt around St Andrews forms the sixth keystone of our response

4.0 Transport and Travel

In 1995 in response to the Transportation Study we wrote *“It was most unfortunate that the severing of the rail link (to St Andrews) in the 1960s preceded significant expansion of the*

town in the 1970s, and the size of the University has also increased appreciably since that time. It should also be remembered that the worst congestion in St Andrews is that due to influxes of tourists in the summer. A key principle of the transportation strategy must be to avoid bringing unnecessary vehicles into the town. Reinstatement of the rail link, or some similar form of transport, between the main east coast railway and the town could make a vast difference in this respect. In particular such a link would be of supreme value on the occasions when the Open Championship is held in the town."

In the last four years there has been a significant increase in the frequency of gridlock in the town centre. The pressure on the town centre continues to increase, driven by the gradual expansion of the town and ever higher levels of car ownership. Urgent attention must be paid to the problem. Rather than pursuing developments which will lead to huge numbers of extra vehicles in the town, the Fife Council must take positive steps to ameliorate the situation. We welcome the investigation into the viability of restoring the rail-link, be it to Leuchars or Dairsie, but the description of the project in the Strategic Study as "a longer term option" appears lacking in a due sense of urgency. In particular it is vital that the optimum route be defined and safeguarded from incompatible developments. Restoration of a rail link to St Andrews forms the seventh keystone of our response.

5.0 Tourism

Topic Paper 2 asks "*Should more tourism be encouraged in Fife and, if so, where?*" Again the answer for St Andrews is closely tied to the question of transport. The tourism strategy developed by the Tourist Management Programme, and quoted in the Strategic Study paragraph 2.27, recognised that "*the town has almost reached saturation during the peak summer months and that new demand should be attracted to the shoulder months (spring and autumn) and during the quieter winter months*". The aspect of that saturation which is hardest to address is again the problem of visitor's cars. If visitors came without their cars, the town could cope with more day trippers and those who stay overnight. Clearly reinstatement of the rail-link could help in this regard, but the attachment of modern society to the motor car is very strong. Half-baked assurances from developers that their guests will leave their cars at home should be viewed with considerable scepticism. Controlled development of the tourist industry in St Andrews with emphasis on the shoulder months forms the eighth keystone of our response.

6.0 Community Facilities

The first three years of the Fife Council have seen no progress on the question of community facilities for St Andrews, even on matters on which the Council inherited earmarked funds from the former District Council. As a result we are still waiting for a new library, a recycling centre and a replacement for Petheram Bridge despite our understanding that capital for some of these projects was passed to the new council from the old District Council. We also understand that outline planning consent for the new library was given by the old District Council. Compared to possible exploitation of the town to provide jobs for other parts of Fife, failure to provide facilities may be regarded as a minor ill, but it is again indicative of how we see the Fife Council's attitude to the town we represent.

Several existing facilities in St Andrews are under great pressure. One, which is the Council's responsibility, is Madras College (see para 6.1), but the same is true of the Health Trust's facilities, namely the Memorial Hospital and the Health Centre (see para 6.2). As mentioned above the public library is another facility that has long past its replacement date. Another major recreational facility for St Andrews is the section of the Fife Coastal walk from St Andrews to Crail. This public right of way should be signposted, conserved, maintained and upgraded where appropriate.

6.1 The need for a new secondary school in North Fife

In response to the consultation on the Strategic Study we wrote "Whether or not it is in the context of sustainability, Fife Council cannot long delay a re-examination of secondary school provision in N.E. Fife. In contrast to much of the rest of Fife, the population of N.E. Fife continues to rise steadily. While the electorate of the Kirkcaldy constituency has been in decline, since 1983 that of N.E. Fife has risen by an average of about 3000 every five years. The schools in Fife must literally move with the times. Average rolls in Fife secondary schools are the highest in Scotland. The capacity problems of Madras College are already particularly acute, with temporary accommodation in use at South Street. We believe some limited further development in St Andrews is desirable, but we recognise that this will further exacerbate the difficulties at Madras College. A new secondary school in North Fife would offer opportunities for imaginative new initiatives in secondary education. A reduction in bussing would help pupils in North Fife and reduce traffic problems in St Andrews, both in South Street and near the Kilrymont building."

6.2 The need to identify a site for a new hospital in St Andrews

In response to the Issues Report on the Strategic Study we wrote “*It is widely recognised by the medical profession and the population at large that a range of further healthcare facilities is required in St Andrews. These include a health care centre for the elderly, a day surgery unit and, as a result of the phasing out of Stratheden Hospital, a psychiatric in-patient unit.*” We have argued “*...that the question of suitable locations for these new facilities is one which needs to be urgently addressed. The Community Council believes that it would be highly desirable to locate an in-patient unit for the elderly on the St Leonard’s Field site adjacent to the Memorial Hospital. This site is within walking distance for a non-trivial proportion of the population of the town, and is close to the bus route along the Crail/Anstruther road, as well as to the town bus services. The size of the site is such that it could accommodate other healthcare facilities, and it is obviously advantageous to avoid splitting healthcare provision in the town any more than is presently the case with sites at the Health Centre in Pipeland Road and at the Memorial Hospital. It is ... essential that the planning process is used to identify and protect sites that are required for the general good of the community.*”

6.3 Civic Amenity Site

We understand that a civic amenity site originally featured in the plans approved for the recent expansion of the Safeway supermarket. We also believe that capital was passed for this project from the old District Council to the Fife Council. It is most unsatisfactory that in one of the pearls of Scotland’s tourist industry there should be bottle banks in the main town centre car park. It is equally unsatisfactory that capital intended for the benefit of St Andrews should not have been so used.

The improvement of the civic facilities in St Andrews, the construction of long agreed facilities such as a new health centre and library and the development of a new High School in the Tay bridgehead area form the ninth keystone of our response.

Response keystones

1. The Community Council reaffirms its support for the findings of the St Andrews Strategic Study and urges the Fife Council to incorporate these findings into the Structure Plan.
 2. The Community Council regrets that in the recent past Fife Council officials have been unable to implement the recommended planning policies contained in the Structure and Local Plans, the Strategic Study, the Transportation Strategy and the Landscape Assessment Study when writing committee reports. We urge that these guidelines are made water-tight in the new Structure Plan and are strictly adhered to in the future.
 3. Employment should be taken to people, people should not be taken long distances to employment. This policy should be the key strategy directing the new Structure Plan.
 4. If the policy in keystone 3 is not possible new development should as far as possible be placed along the main east coast railway line so as to assist with green transport policies.
 5. Improvements in the availability of social rented housing are needed in the St Andrews area.
 6. The Community Council wishes to see implementation of a green belt around St Andrews and the designation of severely limited areas in which future housing development can take place.
 7. We wish to see the active investigation of a rail (or similar) link to St Andrews and the safeguarding of any route identified.
 8. Tourism development in St Andrews should be controlled so as not to increase demand in the peak summer months but to push demand to the shoulder (spring and autumn) periods.
 9. We wish to see the improvement of civic facilities in St Andrews, including the construction of long agreed facilities such as a new health centre on St Leonards Fields, a library in Kinburn Park and the development of a new High School in the Tay bridgehead area. Agreed sites for these facilities must be safeguarded.
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