

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Draft Minute – June 1999

Meeting held at 7pm, Monday 7th June 1999 in St Andrews Town Hall Burgh Chamber.

Chair: Frank Riddell

Present:

Community Councillors:

Maries Cassells, Ken Crichton, Ian Goudie, Chris Lesurf, Pete Lindsay, Dennis Macdonald, Murdo Macdonald, Donald Macgregor, Lindsay Murray, Joe Peterson, Frank Riddell, Archie Strachan, Cynthia Tero, Chris Young.

Student Reps

Craig Buchanan

Nominated Rep

Bill Sangster (Merchants Assoc)

Fife Councillors

Sheila Hill, Jane Hunter-Blair, Jane Ann Liston, Frances Melville

Apologies

Helen Lawrie, Ken Fraser

2. Contributions from Members of the Public

2.1. Police Report

PC Cumming drew attention to two current police initiatives in Fife: vehicle excise licence checks and a focus on speeding – he'd welcome information on any problem areas. He also warned that the tourist season was also the peak period for travelling criminals – people should be on their guard.

Questions

Q.

Chris Lesurf asked about a reported attack, after which the victim was told that if they had no witness there was nothing that could be done.

A: The law of Scotland does indeed require corroboration.

Q.

Chris Lesurf asked if the police could do anything about school buses persistently driving onto pavements?

A: Probably for Fife Council to sort out with Stagecoach – the problem lies in the size of the buses being used in the narrow residential streets.

Q.

Ian Goudie: are police consulted over traffic lights at road works – for instance on one long site the time cycle is too short on the length covered for young cyclists to get through.

A: Matter for the Roads dept, though Inspector Ritchie does have regular meeting with Roads over traffic & road works.

Q.

Murdo Macdonald reported a problem with taxis using St Mary's Place as a taxi rank in the evening. This makes leaving the car park outside the council office dangerous. It is not, as far as he's aware, an official taxi rank.

A: May be a 2ndry rank or on a single yellow line (unrestricted parking in the evening) – will check and report back.

Q.

Cynthia Tero described problems with speed of cars passing by the cemetery causing difficulty for cars leaving it. It is worse since the new position of the sign and new roundabout. Now very difficult to get out from cemetery at some times of day

A: Agreed that cemetery junction is difficult as the driver on the main road has priority. Drivers must use patience and good judgement.

Cllr Frances Melville commented that she had foreseen this problem and asked for the 30mph sign to be moved to include the cemetery, but Police & Roads Service officials decided against this.

2.2. Scenic Map

James Rattray of Scenic Maps recapped on the product – a large painted map with major attractions picked out, funded by associated advertising. He displayed an example for the benefit of anyone who was not at the presentation to the April meeting. Since then he's met with the Merchants' Association and the Tourist Board as suggested.

With the Merchants' Association there were no problems over the main map, but they felt that a map booklet such as SM produced for other towns would be a problem as they produce their own already. SM don't want to intrude so agreed not to produce a competitive booklet and indeed offered free use of their map for the Merchants' booklet.

At the Tourist Office however Alison Laughlin was not in favour. He reported that she felt that the 19 or so tourist maps and information boards already about the town are adequate, and moreover were general information not in need of regular updating like Scenic Maps' product. She also had doubts that the Scenic Map would be in keeping with the architecture and style of St Andrews.

In response to questions Mr Rattray indicated that if the Community Council did support the idea of a scenic map he would start to look at possible locations for a single map – preferably somewhere central. Asked how they would assess the need for a map Mr Rattray explained that in other places they used questionnaires after the map was installed to determine whether it was meeting the requirements of those using it.

**Meeting agreed to support the principle of a Scenic Map
Frank Riddell to meet and discuss with Merchants Association and Tourist Board**

2.3. Mr Christie

Spoke briefly to announce that he has republished his streetmap and historical chart of St Andrews. These he intends to distribute to St Andrews primary schools, along with a book on the Apostle Andrew. He generously distributed copies of his map to those present at the meeting.

3. Minutes of 3rd May

2.2. Consultations etc In questions afterwards Cynthia Tero had also expressed concern about the safety of Maggie Murray's Bridge if more traffic is routed along Bridge Street.

6.4. Millennium: Helen Lawrie would like to make clear that "(ie high)" was a Secretarial interpolation of her actual phrase "significant commercial price".

4. Matters arising from previous meetings

4.1. Shell Garage

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

Pete Lindsay to attend

4.3. Burgh Chambers

(April 7.3.6) Meeting arranged with Fife Councillors, Property Services & Community Services 4pm Monday 7th June – Pete Lindsay attended along with Cllrs Jane Ann Liston and Jane Hunter-Blair. Extra work was agreed to better match paint work; sand and re-seal the floor of the entrance hall; clean the brass plaque on the stair landing listing the provosts; and attempt to restretch/rejoin the stair carpet where a seam had opened, posing a trip hazard. There was not money available in current or foreseeable budgets to replace the carpet despite burn marks from dehumidifiers and discoloration by water. The carpet cost in the order of £60 per square metre, 3-4 times what is normally spent on carpets in Fife Council properties. Any move to replace the carpet would require money released from Fife's reserve fund. St Andrews Councillors must convince Fife Council that this would be a good use of the reserves.

5. Reports

5.1. Chair

5.1.1. Loches

Frank Riddell reported that he had spent a couple of nights in Loches while in France on business, and brought back with him the greetings of the Mayor and Council to St Andrews.

5.1.2. Greyfriars Garden

An approach has been made to the District Valuer for a price for the garden. It seems that the Valuer's figure is the maximum amount that can be paid from public funds.

It was agreed after a short discussion that the garden business be returned to the Millennium committee.

5.1.3. Association of Scottish Community Councils AGM

Frank Riddell asked for the meetings approval for himself and Pete Lindsay to attend this in Stirling 12th June, at cost of £10 each. Agreed.

5.2. Treasurer

5.2.1. Annual Statement of Accounts:

Archie Strachan emphasised that the balance carried forward was an accounting total only, most of it already being committed to various funds and projects. Only the Administration and General sub-accounts are available for use.

The 1998-99 accounts were approved.

5.2.2. Bandstand Repair Funding:

The Fife Environmental Trust has awarded £7,285 on condition that we enrol in a UK national environmental organisation *Entrust* which will cost a further £100.

Agreed to enrol in Entrust.

5.2.3. Community Council Trust Account:

Information received from Donald Macgregor.

5.3. Secretary

5.3.1. Clippings

Chris Lesurf volunteered to help collect news clipping covering our activities.

5.3.5. Home Energy & Management Advice

Provides help to tenants and owner occupiers to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

**Advertise in Event
Invite them to speak in the autumn**

5.3.8. RAF Leuchars Freedom of St Andrews 17th June

Who can attend on behalf of the community council?

Frank Riddell found it very regrettable that Fife Council should have organised a clash between the honouring of the RAF and the departure hearings so important to the future of St Andrews. The hearings in the town hall will be hampered by the noise of passing jets and bands, and access for the public would be difficult with South Street closed for the parade. Cllr Frances Melville agreed that the situation was extremely undesirable. Cllr Liz Harris, opposition group leader on Fife Council, had spoken to Convener John Macdougall about this clash, but Stuart Allan, head of Law & Admin claimed that 17th June was the only day 'all parties' could attend the hearing. Frank Riddell pointed out that as one of the major objectors we had not been consulted in any way on the meeting date, indeed had not yet even been officially informed of the date. 'All parties' seemed to include only the convenience of Fife Council and the developers. Cllr Jane Ann Liston drew attention to another clash, with East of Scotland Water's meeting on their developments in and around St Andrews, scheduled for the Thursday evening when the departure hearing would undoubtedly still be running. There was general dissatisfaction with Fife Council's organisation of the hearings.

**Murdo Macdonald and Joe Peterson to attend
Pete Lindsay to inform Fife Council & complain about clash**

5.3.9. Coastal Issues Day

Chris Young to attend

5.3.10 Home Safety Working Party:

no one was free to attend.

5.3.11. Data Protection

Secretary to register as necessary.

£75 Registration fee agreed

6. Matters raised by committees

6.2. Golf

6.2.1. State of the links

Murdo Macdonald reported a meeting with the Links Management at the Links Club House. It seems the state of the links is generally ok.

6.2.2. Future of the Golf Committee

As it had been formed to deal with the Fife Council review of the Links Trust which was now not going forward, Pete Lindsay asked if the committee was still needed?

Murdo Macdonald defended the committee saying there was always golf-related business. Cllr Frances Melville noted that the relevant report to Fife Council's Policy & Resources committee proposed that while no action is taken now the situation be looked at again in two years time.

6.3. Finance

6.3.1. Coat of Arms Account

Has only brought in £160 over the time of the current deal (and no money at all in the last two years). Archie Strachan asked if the income was worth the effort of continuing to try to exploit the arms. From the papers it seems that Archie Muir had put a lot of effort into it over the years for very little return.

Donald Macgregor reported a recent approach from Murray, Donald & Caithness, asking about the rights to the Burgh arms. These are not ours to give, the Community Council arms being separate (though derived) from the old Burgh arms. He had redirected them to Archie Strachan, as Treasurer, who has received no enquiry.

Several people thought that there was still a possibility of making money from the arms, despite previous experience.

Archie Strachan to discuss further with Archie Muir

6.4. Millennium

Report noted.

6.5. Planning

6.5.1. Meeting with Cameron CC

date was 31 May not 24 as reported in planning minute.

accepted

6.5.2. Strategic overview of golf etc developments:

accepted

6.5.3. Feddinch

Planning committee recommended objection to this development

accepted

6.5.4. Overview of the crisis facing the town

There was a long discussion on the Planning Committee's recommendation that an appeal be made to the Secretary of State to 'call in' in turn the three golf-related applications that Fife Council had called in from the East Area Development committee to Strategic Development.

Ian Goudie opened, outlining the current state of play, noting the special Strategic Development committee meeting to decide the three developments is set for 7th July. He expressed the opinion that setting it for the first week of the school holidays when many local people would be away) was not accidental. He reported that the Planning committee had, in effect, lost faith in Fife Council's unbiased operation of the planning system. If the Strategic Development committee come down against Kingask in particular it will, he said, be the most surprising conversion since that of St Paul. He proposed that the Community Council ask the Secretary of State to call in the golf related developments around St Andrews. A summary of the grounds was circulated: summarising the summary these are:

1. Development on prime agricultural land.

2. Significant departure from Structure or Local plan.
3. Affects the setting of scheduled monuments or grade A listed buildings.
4. Contrary to national planning advice and policy guidelines.
5. Substantial public concern over the planning process.

Frank Riddell believed the community council was obliged, as a statutory body, to bring the five points listed to the Secretary of State's attention, for his decision.

Bill Sangster asked why there was no coverage of the impact of these development proposals on schooling and policing as well as traffic in St Andrews. Frank Riddell assured him that these matters were covered in the Community Council submissions to the Planning Service. Lindsay Murray felt that the overview was a case of consulting again and again until objectors give in through sheer weariness. She claimed that the further traffic studies undertaken for this review had been targeted for one of the quietest times of the year, before the tourist season had properly started and during the university end of year/exam period inevitably skewing the results.

Dennis Macdonald challenged the description of the development sites as 'prime agricultural land'. He made the point that farmers could not make a by living farming this 'prime' land. Ken Crichton drew a distinction between the planning term 'prime' and profitable while Lindsay Murray pointed out that profitability was an effect of the ups and downs of the agricultural business cycle. Dennis Macdonald added that as there were no permanent residences proposed there would be no extra pressure on the schools etc. Frank Riddell explained the Planning committee's concern over pressure on local services arose from the hundreds of low paid jobs the developments promised to bring, putting pressure on local housing as workers and their families sought to move into St Andrews to minimise travel costs.

Both Murdo Macdonald and Dennis Macdonald made the point that if all three developments went ahead they would overwhelm St Andrews but some development was necessary. Dennis Macdonald was particularly concerned that the vital role of having some golf courses as open green space contributing to a green belt be recognised and warned of the potential damage of the proposed Kinkell hotel development. Murdo Macdonald felt some development was necessary to provide opportunities for the young people of the town, but was concerned at the speed of the departure hearings and wasn't convinced that the planning overview would be fair given how quickly it had been produced. He was very concerned though that if all three developments are tuned down developers will conclude St Andrews will not accept any development and desert St Andrews altogether. He did not think this was what the town wanted and was not convinced that the Community Council was putting forward the broad view of the people of St Andrews, reflected by the opinions of people he talked to.

Joe Peterson argued that point five of the grounds listed was not valid and harmed the image of the community council, by appearing to be a provincial, politically-motivated attack on Fife Council. How could we argue that an issue in one ward in Fife was a national concern overriding the needs of the whole of Fife? Lindsay Murray opined that when there is talk of St Andrews as a potential World Heritage Site and it is frequently referred to as the jewel in the crown of Fife tourism matters affecting it could hardly be described as minor. If St Andrews was to aspire to be the jewel, countered Joe Peterson, then it needed jobs and development. On jobs, he believed that people living in St Andrews are mostly obliged to find work outside putting the unemployed in the town at a disadvantage, that there was therefore an urgent need to provide for the unemployed in or close by the town. Cllr Jane Ann Liston provided the information that according to Fife Council's figures St Andrews was in fact a net importer of labour – more people come in than go out for the working day.

Ian Goudie closed the debate up by saying that a lot of the work apparently on offer in these developments would necessarily be of a seasonal nature as it would be tourist related. The economics of the ventures were dependent on flying in US golfers, a market which was notoriously dependent on the world political and economic situation. What development, he asked, would we welcome? That sympathetic with the nature and setting of St Andrews. The developments under consideration were clearly contrary to the various studies, policy and plans put in place in recent years to protect those very features of St Andrews.

**Appeal to the Secretary of State: Accepted 11-2 votes
(2 abstained)**

6.5.6. Chemistry (Purdie) Building Service Towers

there has been a meeting between residents of Kennedy Gardens and the developers. The need for the service towers if generally accepted, and the new design is less obtrusive than previously but the materials are still mostly aluminium sheets which pose aesthetic problems (even in the North Haugh)

Lindsay Murray queried the purpose of scaffolding currently in place about the building. Frank Riddell, while pointing out that as he works in the building he has an interest in the service towers issue and could not contribute to any debate on the subject, was able to inform the meeting that this scaffolding was to do with refurbishment of laboratories not the service towers.

Accepted

6.6. Publicity

Chris Lesurf's suggestion for a wider drawn competition to name a community council newsletter was accepted.

Publicity Committee to organise

6.7. Recreation

Report noted

7. Matters raised by Fife Councillors

7.1. Frances Melville (West)

7.1.1. Flower beds at entrance to town

Bill Sangster asked when these would be planted. Cllr Sheila Hill said it should have started already.

7.2. Sheila Hill (South)

Thanked the Community Council for the recent letter of sympathy for the death of her husband, Phillip.

7.2.1. Gibson House

Has recently had a very favourable report and was of pride to the town.

7.2.2. Overgrown ground by Safeways

Was reported by Dennis Macdonald to be encroaching on the road. Cllr will look into the matter.

7.3. Jane Hunter-Blair (Central)

7.3.1. Licensing

There were a lot of queries over licensing matters in the centre of town raised during the election so Cllr Hunter-Blair asked how licensing issues were handled by the Community Council. Pete Lindsay replied that we had been informed that we would be receiving information about some licence applications after pressure on Fife Council from Cupar CC. We wait to see the level of work and timescales involved in commenting as we've received nothing yet. Currently licensing is dealt with *ad hoc*.

7.3.2. Bottoms Up, Market Street.

Cynthia Tero complained about the display boards outside new off-licence at the corner of Bell St/Market St. She felt that they would be more suitable in the extensive windows of the shop than the current humorous dioramas.

7.3.3. Traffic Survey

Joe Peterson asked who was conducting a recent traffic survey? Some thought it was to do with the golf developments overview, but Bill Sangster thought it was the annual traffic study that the Merchants Association regularly informed Fife Council was less than idea as it is conducted when the students are away.

7.3.4. Town Centre population.

Another point that had come to the Cllr Hunter-Blair's notice while campaigning was the very small number of permanent residents in the town centre. She had found only fifteen families with school age children, the rest being older or the young, transitory student population. This brings about quality of life problems for older residents finding themselves juxtaposed with the youthful exuberance of the students. She asked for comments.

Much of the discussion centred on appearances – such as the cleaning or not of windows and doors – and rubbish collection especially at the end of the university term. On clean windows and rubbish on the streets some blame was pointed at absentee landlords and their letting agents whose lease conditions for their tenants were not enforced. Cllr Jane Ann Liston had

herself noted all the addresses of town flats courtesy of the University Registry and passed this information to the St Mary's Place Local Office, they had arranged for a letter to go to each address, giving information about end-of-term and special rubbish collections. Unfortunately the cleansing service did not seem to have the resources to cope even with the benefit of the extra information.

Also mentioned were unoccupied university accommodation that some suggested the university should be forced to make students live in rather than have them rent property about town. This would, it was said, free up housing for local people who could not pay the rents that would otherwise be charged to students.

Frank Riddell undertook to meet with the University authorities to discuss points raised. Craig Buchanan, Students Association rep, expressed a strong interest in attending such a meeting.

Frank Riddell to arrange

7.4. Jane Ann Liston (South East)

7.4.1. Planning

All the NE Fife councillors are on the East Area Development Committee for the next few months, a great improvement on the previous situation where many councillors could not speak before the committee on developments in their own wards. However there will be a review of the committee and area structure of the council in about six months time which will probably change everything.

(Meeting agreed for standing orders to be suspended at 9.30)

7.4.2. David Niven Picture

Christine Mullen, daughter of the late David Niven, wishes to donate a painting of her father to be hung in a public place. What is the opinion of the meeting?

A short discussion brought no objections to the principle, with the town hall widely held to be the best place for this in town, but the size and quality of the picture needs to be known before a suitable site could be suggested.

7.4.3. St Andrews in Bloom

Cllr Liston is now chairing the committee. Efforts are being made to get the flower beds planted in the earlier part of the year. Alison Laughlin is to write to the University and Safeways to encourage them to take a greater part. The Whyte-Melville Fountain in Market Street, which had been planted as usual and at a cost of £141 from the Bloom committee, has been excavated 'to see if the water could be reconnected'. No one quite seemed to know who exactly has asked for this – the Community Council had been blamed (immediate denials from all likely parties – Millennium and Recreation) but notwithstanding who or why ever it was done the earth and plants were to be restored before the various judges for floral competitions pass through town.

7.4.4. Pipeland Road Park/skating pond.

Fife Council has been approached with a suggestion for a property swap: the Baptist Church in South Street for the park, for development of new Baptist premises. Opinion of the community council was sought:

This proposal was widely condemned, no one speaking in favour of it. Meeting agreed that once the current construction of the holding tank was completed the park should be returned to its previous condition as an essential green space in the middle of a residential area. The derelict golf club factory on Largo Road/Tom Morris Drive junction was suggested as an alternative, but others preferred that should remain as a business site.

8.0. AOCB

8.1. Photos/Prints circulated

Donald Macgregor circulated photos of the harbour and pier from Sam Taylor to be sold to raise funds for the Pier Project.

8.2. Suggestions Box

Dennis Macdonald passed on a letter from Mr Gourley regarding the RNLI collection mine at the harbour.

Pete Lindsay to pass on to RNLI

8.3. St Andrews Town Sign (North Haugh)

Bill Sangster pointed out this has been repainted.
