

# Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

## Draft Minutes December 1999

*For Approval*

version date 17/12/99

**Chair:** Frank Riddell

**Present:**

**Community Councillors:** Maries Cassells, Ken Crichton, Ken Fraser, Ian Goudie, John Landon, Chris Lesurf, Pete Lindsay, Murdo Macdonald, Joe Peterson, Frank Riddell, Archie Strachan, Cynthia Tero, Chris Young.

**Students' Association:** Linda Pialek

**Co-opted/Nominated:** Archie Muir, Tony Fusaro (for Bill Sangster)

**Fife Councillors:** Jane Ann Liston, Frances Melville, Jane Hunter-Blair

**Apologies:** Sheila Hill, Steve Durrant, Donald Macgregor, Bill Sangster, Hugh Gray, Helen Lawrie, James Arnold.

Frank Riddell welcomed John Landon, co-opted as replacement for Sean Dobson.

## 2. Contributions from Members of the Public

### 2.1. General

**2.1.1. Firemaster Nigel Champion** - invited on our behalf by Cllr Frances Melville to explain changes to St Andrews fire cover.

Started by pointing out that he was talking to a script so that he would be able to check back if he was misquoted. He went on to state that the level of cover in St Andrews was not being changed just the risk categorisation. This was last set some 10 years ago to a category B risk, which requires attendance within 5 minutes for a first vehicle and 8 minutes for a second. It is not possible to meet this target in St Andrews. 95% effectiveness has dropped to 60% over the last few years. On examination of the problem, prompted by Best Value reviews and the like, St Andrews should not be categorised as B risk, but rather as C risk. The difference is in the area of the town in which there is a of high risk of loss of life in a fire. While there are such areas - hotels and halls of residence - they are not dense enough to qualify. On the standard 0.5 Km square used in the assessment process the areas including halls or hotels also include 60-90% open space but only about 12% B in one typical analysis square. The B classification requires continuous areas such as achieved in medium to large cities (ie parts of Dundee). Most of Fife's small towns and countryside is categorised as D risk.

Required response to a fire in C areas is 1 appliance in 8-10 minutes (though it is Brigade policy to send 2 in St Andrews). Class D risk areas require 1 pump within 20 minutes which is 98% achieved. To bring St Andrews up to a level of cover sufficient to achieve B response times would cost about £250,000 to upgrade equipment and increase running costs by £850,000 a year.

In response to questions he explained that the St Andrews fire station covered about halfway out to Cupar, Crail and Anstruther.

To put the cost of running the service and cover into context when asked what was the cost of a life he gave the figure of £35,000 as the current assessment.

Asked why there had been a drop in effectiveness in recent years (95%-60%) he blamed false alarms due to the equipment in halls of residence. More sensitive equipment was triggered by normal cooking, cooking accidents (burnt toast was cited), candles and even perfume sprays. There was also a suspicion that the sensitive equipment was easily deliberately triggered maliciously, but the University had a very strict policy for dealing with such problems and the incidence of malicious incidents had dropped.

A number of questions centred around traffic congestion in the town and the effects of various traffic calming measures. The Firemaster said that he would be quite happy if all traffic were banned from the roads to keep them clear for his vehicles, but that it was not possible to stop the town just to let a fire engine through on occasion. St Andrews does not have a problem compared with some major cities where a few hundred yards can take 20-30minutes to cover - even in a fire engine. On traffic calming he said that the emergency services are consulted in

the design but that he was happy to have traffic calming because while 850 are killed by fire annually, thousands are killed on the roads therefore he said traffic calming is more likely to save a life than his fire engines.

### **2.1.2. Police**

- Sgt Paxton answered questions. Chris Lesurf opened on parking on pavements and the proposed fixed penalty notices mentioned a few months ago. Sergeant replied that these extended powers for traffic wardens don't come into effect until next year

Murdo Macdonald asked what the police opinion of the layout of the new pedestrian crossings was.

A. At the moment they seemed counter productive but they were designed he understood by the council roads dept in consultation with the police so while the layout at (eg) Bell St/South Street seemed difficult he assumed it was legal. The intention was, as he understood it, to give pedestrians priority in the town centre and slow traffic generally. Various comments about safety, particularly regarding the elderly and disabled, were reiterated. John Landon made a comment that the most dangerous places for pedestrian in town were crossing from the West Port to the Whey Pat and by the hospital where there is no pavement for a section of Abbey Walk forcing pedestrians to cross busy road.

Ken Crichton wanted to know what the police were doing about cyclists without lights - as a motorist he was very worried about the possibility of hitting an unlit cyclist.

Sgt confirmed that cycling without lights is an offence. He hoped that any of his officers witnessing such a thing would at least 'have a word' with the offender suggesting they continue their journey on foot. There was a gentle susurraton of disbelief at this point.

Frank Riddell suggested that many of the offenders were students and that the problem be tackled by a joint approach by Police and the Students' Association. Murdo Macdonald mentioned last year's initiative of not charging offenders if they could prove they had acquired lights within a few days of being caught. Sgt Paxton will pass these suggestions on to PC Cumming on his return to duty in the new year, though he explained that there were technical difficulties with the lights scheme.

Maries Cassells continued on the case of students by asking if there had been an increase in 'annoyance' - noise etc - from students in the last few years?

A: This sort of problem goes in cycles said Sgt Paxton. There did seem to be an increase in some areas of town over the last few weeks.

For the Students' Association Linda Pialek explained that they were taking steps to reduce noise in the streets by poster campaigns etc. Frank Riddell reminded the meeting that he had met with the University and Association recently when it had been identified that a three pronged approach was needed - action by University, Association and Police. Sgt Paxton mentioned that there were various initiatives particularly increased foot patrols in central areas. Cllr Jane Hunter-Blair said there was a lot of hard work going into this problem at the moment.

Joe Peterson asked about Police cover for the Millennium Hogmanay.

A: there will be increased cover provided by changed shift patterns, moving desk jobs to patrol etc.

### **2.1.3. Mr Christie**

Spoke briefly to call for greater coverage for Saint Andrew as the town's name saint in the Saint Andrew's day programme.

He also raised the matter of the various St Andrews town charters and the Burgess Roll which are currently held in Cupar rather than being on display in St Andrews.

**2.1.4. Hamilton Hall Ball** - (see 6.3.3.) members of the hall's ball committee answered questions on their proposed Fireworks display in March. While they were already in the process of dealing with most of the points raised with respect to safety arrangements there are still issues of neighbour notification and parking to be dealt with after consultation with Police, Fife Council etc.

### **2.1.5. Mr Docherty**

Expanded on his earlier questions to the Fire Brigade regarding the safety of the current traffic calming layout. When it was installed he understood it would be reviewed in 3 years which he had not heard of happening.

He then turned to the zebra crossings in the centre of town. He did not feel these to be optimally positioned. He was particularly concerned about the crossing from the Children's

Library to Holy Trinity Church. This had severely interfered with the arrangements for a funeral at the weekend, he reported.

Frank Riddell thanked him for his comments, which reflected the views of many on the Community Council he noted. He said that a formal submission to Fife Council would be considered in the new year, as decided last month. Mr Docherty hoped he would be able to attend that debate.

<10 minute break just after 8pm>

## Fife Councillors

### 2.2. Frances Melville

**2.2.1. Hungry Horse & Kinkell Brae** developments refused planning permission at East Area Development Committee. This was as recommended by the Planning Service for all the reasons that were brushed aside or ignored for Kingask: traffic impact, landscape value, use of farming land, coastal development, sewage & waste infrastructure etc.

While applauding the decision Frank Riddell remarked that the sharp contrast between the officials' recommendations in these cases and Kingask brings the planning system in Fife into disrepute.

#### 2.2.2. Recycling

- Fife's performance continues to fall from the standards set in the District Council's days.

**2.2.3. EC law & ruling on Temporary Sheriffs** - noted that the implications of this continues to spread. It seems that even Licensing Board members cannot also serve on the Safety Panel as the former is quasi-judicial while the latter 'controls' the Police, leading to a conflict of interest in the eyes of strictly interpreted EC laws on human rights which requires an unbiased judiciary not controlled by the prosecuting authority.

**2.2.4. Harbour Trust** is writing to local businesses appealing for funds for the pier repairs.

#### 2.2.5. Waste bins

- Ian Goudie asked Fife Councillors to raise a problem with rubbish collection. During the high winds of the previous week full bins put out on the kerb edge for collection had been blowing over and spilling. But when the bins were put into gateways or just inside gardens to keep them upright the collectors would not collect as the bins were not in their correct position. Other members confirmed this problem across town. Related questions asked were i) who is responsible for clearing spills from bin collections? ii) will Fife Council pay compensation for damage if a bin blows into the path of a car?

It was agreed unanimously that the opinion of the meeting was that bins should be collected from 'sensible' locations with regard for the weather conditions. Fife Councillors asked to take this up and Secretary to write to Cleansing & Waste Management to raise these questions.

**Pete Lindsay to write**

#### 2.2.5. Lighting

- Linda Piálek raised that poor lighting in Kinburn Park, a major thoroughfare for anyone walking from the centre to Kennedy Gardens/North Haugh.

### 2.3. Cllr Jane Hunter-Blair.

#### 2.3.1. Byre Theatre

- work is running behind schedule so the contractors have applied to keep the footpath closed for an extra 6 months.

Asked about the noise problems from the construction work, reported in *The Citizen* recently she has been there and experienced the problem and agreed that there might be grounds for a compensation claim for some nearby residents.

**2.3.2. Traumatic Brain Injury Service** - this is provided by Fife Social Work Community Care, who had asked all Fife Councillors to publicise to their Community Councils. Information leaflet from 01383-312693.

### 2.4. Cllr Jane Ann Liston

**2.4.1. Tourism Management Project** - the subcommittee workgroups have now moved to evening meetings to make it easier for the likes of Community Council representatives to attend. Unfortunately the first of these had clashed with Community Council's Planning Committee which several of our people (IG, LM) are on. TMP will reschedule - Ian Goudie added that he'd been contacted with apologies for the clash and to make appropriate arrangements.

**2.4.2. St Andrews Week**

- very successful. Good publicity was generated by the Brussels-London-Edinburgh-Cupar-St Andrews baton (a board with cuttings and pictures was on display outside the chamber). She gave her thanks to all who had assisted or supported St Andrews Week in general and the baton in particular.

**2.4.3. NE Fife & South Tayside Rail Study** - study had concluded that at the moment there was not a case for a St Andrews line. However the results were close enough that Fife Council will keep this under review. Once she has the complete report she'll pass copies of the relevant section to the Planning Committee.

Ian Goudie asked why the reported cost of the link had risen from £6 million ten years ago when StARLink had started to £27m mentioned in the report. Cllr Liston explained that this increase was the difference between reinstating the old line using refurbished line and equipment available at the time and building from new on a new route now. She gave a number of examples of costs for similar reinstatement/new built rail projects.

Joe Peterson called for a campaign for a footpath on A91 between Kincaple and Strathtyrum so that people could walk from Leuchars.

**2.4.4. Rail-Bus link**

- in the meantime a bus service to Leuchars running every 15 minutes station is to start soon (30 minutes on Sunday). These will not be timed to meet specific trains. Given the general efficiency and timekeeping of bus services in Fife she experiences she has doubts about the level of service that will be provided.

**3. Minutes of November meeting.**

Corrections:

**6.2.6.** funding for St Andrews in Bloom - should be £250 not £150.

**6.3.5.** date given was for the 1st *evening* meeting not the *next* meeting.

**7.3.2.** para 2 - Links Trust not Links Management Trust.

**4. Matters arising from previous meetings****4.1. Discussion of Committee structure report**

Meeting agreed that this was a reasonable description of the current process and could be added to the standard documentation of the Community Council (along with the constitution and standing orders).

**Report accepted**

Several people pointed out that to be effective and useful members of Community Council members should play an active role in at least one committee. It was also pointed out that committee membership is noted on the list of Community Councillors circulated occasionally by the Secretary.

A gap in the coverage of the committees with the lapse of the **Health, Education and Welfare Committee**

during the life of the previous Community Council was filled when Chris Lesurf, Chris Young and Joe Peterson volunteered to revive it. The Secretary will gleefully pass any incoming relevant material to the new committee...

**4.3. Police Consultation**

Noted

**4.4. Planning Seminar**

Noted

**4.5. Bow Butts proposals**

Noted

**4.6. Christmas Lights**

(Nov 2.3.5.) there may be a report through the Local Services committee in January

**4.7. Simpson Family**

(Nov 6.1.2.) Frank Riddell sent off various material as discussed last month, with the addition

of cuttings of the press coverage, for which he thanked local reporter Dougie Millar for the suggestion and obtaining the cuttings from The Courier. All received, with thanks from the Simpsons.

#### 4.8. CARF

(Nov 2.4.2.) Lack of contact with the Community Council's representative Donald Macgregor raised by Fife Councillors with CARF officials, who will investigate.

### 5. New Business

#### 5.1. Acting Chair

Motion proposed by Frank Riddell, seconded by Maries Cassells:

**"That during the absence abroad of the Chair, Frank Riddell, during the period 16th January 2000 to April 28th 2000, Vice-Chair Murdo Macdonald should take in his place as Acting Chair as necessary during this period."**

**Motion agreed - no opposition**

### 6. Officers' Reports

#### 6.1. Chair

**6.1.1. Remembrance Sunday** - Frank Riddell found it slightly disappointing that there were only three other Community Councillors at the service in Holy Trinity and four at the War Memorial for the wreathlaying.

**6.1.2. Goodwill messages for St Andrews day** - formally received the messages of goodwill from our various political representatives in the run up to St Andrews week, as reported by Cllr Liston in 2.4.2. above. Congratulated her for successfully organising the business and proposed that congratulations of the meeting be minuted - none against.

**Meeting congratulated Cllr Liston**

**6.1.3. Loches reception**

- representatives from Loches were received by Cllr Macdougall, Convenor of Fife Council at the Burgh Chambers before going on to the preview of the Art & Photographic Exhibition. In connection with the latter proposed that Ken Crichton be congratulated for organising the exhibition. Meeting agreed.

**Meeting congratulated Ken Crichton**

**6.1.4. Attended St Andrew's Day Address** by Henry McLeish.

**6.1.5. Harbour Trust**

- reported on a recent harbour trust discussion of the state of the pier. The core of the long pier has mostly washed away and is in a state of imminent collapse - quite possibly this winter if the wrong combination of weather and tide hit it. The Trust has drawn up emergency plans to clear the channel from the harbour should this occur so that fishing boats etc may continue to operate with minimum interruption.

#### 6.2. Treasurer

**6.2.2. Coat Of Arms Sub-Committee** - Archie Muir reported that there will be a meeting with Patersons of Perth re licensing week commencing 13th Dec.

#### 6.3. Secretary

**6.3.3. Hamilton Hall Ball Fireworks (3/3/00)** - having heard from the Ball Committee representatives (2.1.4.) meeting saw no reason to object to this - though there were some concerns with public safety it was felt that these should be left to the relevant authorities licensing the display.

**6.3.4. Special Warden Proposal** - Cllr Frances Melville commented that Cllr Scott-Hayward didn't seem to be aware that the various changes to the law next year would make it easier for dog owners to be brought to task for the fouling by their pets. Meeting decided to take no action on the proposals.

### 7. Committees' Reports

#### 7.3. Millennium

Joe Peterson asked if there was any family hogmanay entertainment known of? It seems that the Step Rock swimming club is holding a family disco in the Victory Memorial Hall.

## 7.4. Planning

report circulated

### 7.4.2. Scenic Maps

- committee recommended support for the Scenic map proposal in South St as our original suggestion of the Bus Station was unsuitable. In discussion the map was opposed on the grounds of being unnecessary (Maries Cassells) and in bad taste/poor appearance (Tony Fusaro for the Merchants' Assoc).

Pete Lindsay proposed acceptance of Planning Committee's recommendation, Dennis Macdonald seconded. 7 for the recommendation, 5 against, 4 abstained.

**Agreed South Street location for map**

## 7.5. Publicity

No meeting but Frank Riddell has discussed possible location of a new notice board in Logies Lane/Church Sq with Alastair Hamilton of Planning Service. Opinion of Historic Scotland is being sought.

## 7.6. Recreation

**7.6.c1. Art Exhibition.** Very pleased with all who helped though would have been a little lost without the Photographic Club to cover the times when there were no community councillors present. There were the same number of paintings as last year and a 20% increase in the number of photographs. Next year's exhibition will be an open entry.

### 7.6.c2. The Xmas Tea

- please will as many community councillors as are free turn up to help out! Someone suggested that perhaps any students still in town could help out as an gesture towards Town/Gown relations. Donald Macgregor pointed out that as the party was being held, as usual, in the Students' Association building that seemed a pretty substantial gesture towards town/gown relations! He asked more Community Councillors to take a part.

### 7.6.c3. 200 Club.

Archie Strachan as administrator of the club expressed his concern that the roll was still dropping. The constitution of the club allows no more than half of the monies collected to go out as prizes, and that point was approaching as the membership has dropped to 116. Frank Riddell suggested an article in the local press to publicise the club.

**Archie Strachan to contact press.**

## 7.7. Youth Committee

Meeting agreed to he proposals to broaden the youth committee - now to be called the Youth Forum. To try for the broadest involvement it was agreed that a public meeting be organised with invitations to a diverse range of youth related organisations such as the Youth café project, Boys Brigade, St Leonards, etc.

**Archie Strachan to organise?**

## 8. AOCB

### 8.1. St Andrew's Day Holiday

Ken Fraser passed on a suggestion from Keith McCartney that the Community council should campaign for St Andrew's Day to be made a national holiday, starting by writing to our local MSPs.

Proposed Joe Peterson, 2nd Maries Cassells. None against.

**Pete Lindsay to write.**

Keith McCartney's proposal:

St Andrew's Day is the ideal day for a national holiday on which communities in multicultural, multifaith Scotland could focus events in celebration of themselves and their place in Scottish society today much as happens in the excellent St Andrew's Week events organised by our own community.

St Andrews Day carries no political baggage and is a day to which all people can relate. It would therefore seem appropriate that the lead in a campaign to have St Andrews Day declared a national holiday from the year 2000 be taken by this Community Council which itself is apolitical and represents the community most closely associated with St Andrew.

The Community Council made sterling efforts to achieve this in the past but was thwarted by the complexity of the task in having to persuade all local authorities in Scotland to agree. The situation is now changed with the advent of the Scottish Parliament who have themselves de facto conceded the case for a St Andrew's Day holiday by suspending business on that day this year to allow MSP's the opportunity to attend events in their constituencies.

I would therefore propose that the Community Council write to Iain Smith, as MSP for the constituency containing St Andrews, to ask that he seek to put forward the motion 'that St Andrew's Day be declared a public holiday from 2000' before the Scottish Parliament for debate at the earliest opportunity.

## **8.2. Planning**

Ian Goudie noted that notwithstanding the reported remarks of Jim Birrell, Area Planning Manager, at the Planning Seminar (Appendix B) there are still problems getting plans for some applications that officials deem of no public interest.

Frank Riddell pointed out that he has invited Jim Birrell and Nick Brian to meet the planning committee meeting Monday 13/12/99 to discuss the problem.

## **9. Sherry & Mince Pies**

by Jane & Pete - *merry Christmas* all...