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Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Minutes - February 2002

approved

Chair: Murdo Macdonald

0. Presentation

Archie Strachan introduced the Young Citizens. Chair Murdo Macdonald presented the award to Young Citizen Kirsten Nisbet and commendations to David Reed and Laura Gilman.

1. Attendance

Community Councillors: Ken Crichton, George Davidson, Richard Douglas, Ken Fraser, Ian Goudie, Chris Lesurf, Pete Lindsay, Dennis Macdonald, Murdo Macdonald, Donaldf Macgregor, Lindsay Murray, Joe Peterson, Frank Riddell, Archie Strachan, Cynthia Tero, Jean Thomson, Penny Uprichard.

Student Association: Tom Plant, Stephanie Nicholson.

Nominated/Coopted: Bill Sangster, David Reed.

Fife Councillors: Sheila Hill, Jane Ann Liston, Frances Melville, Bill Brooks.

Apologies: Joe Lamb.

2. Minutes of January 2002

accepted

3. Presentations

3.1. The Blue Stane

Colin McAllister gave some information on the Blue Stane, its history and thoughts on its future.

It is the oldest historical object in the town, shown in a 1680 map on the south side of Doubledykes Road, it was moved to its current location at the north end of Alexandra Place in the 1880s with the railway arriving at St Andrews. Before the Doubledykes Road it was possibly at the West Port, and before that at the cathedral. Reputed to be Kenneth Macalpine's coronation stone, it is believed to have been significant in Pictish times some 1500 years ago. The stone itself is a glacial erratic whinstone, moved from its original position by a glacier and deposited when the ice retreated. It is probably originally from Drumcarrow hill. Similar significant stones with legendary links to feuding giants and Picts and kings are known at Crail and Inverness for example.

He would like this historical artefact recognised by an informational blue plaque both to celebrate our history for ourselves and as an item of tourist interest. He suggested various possibilities:

- leave where it is, protected by metal fence and erect plaque on the fence. As far as he can establish the owners of the property, Allied Domeque, have no problem with this.
- move to where it was previously at Doubledykes,
- Preservation trust museum, protected, nearer what may be its earliest identified location.

He closed by asking community council to take up the cause and persuade Fife Council to take action.

However Cllr Frances Melville informed the meeting that Fife Council was already on the case. It had been agreed with the Local Office some time ago that a plaque should be erected. Locality Manager Kate Hughes explained that former councillor Jane Hunter-Blair had raised that matter. The money exists, but the company owning the property has not formally given permission for a plaque. Fife Council officers and elected members will continue trying.

3.2. John Knox Road - further developments

Peter Rogers spoke on behalf of residents of Winram Place. He had previously spoken at community council about earlier aspects of this development 18 months ago. There is now an extension to previous proposal, with housing extending above the 50m contour, all the way up to the A915 Largo road. Fellow residents are most concerned at the elevation and damage to the proposed green belt; this will be very visible from most of the town. He emphasised that there is no objection to affordable housing, which is a large part of the extended proposal.

Ian Goudie replied as convenor of the Planning committee. The history of this development was a sorry saga. Community council oppose all development on the site because of its height and proximity to the proposed civic amenity and recycling centre. This development site was not included in the draft 1996 local plan; it was included through objection at public enquiry, so there was in effect no public consultation on the proposal. Community council did not object at the time as it was missed due to the bulk of material in the local plan amendments. Community council was further very unimpressed at the stance of the new Fife Council at the initial planning application. When a height restriction was proposed for the site Fife decided to ask the developer whether they would prefer a 50m restriction on ground level or roof level...

The current application is advertised as a departure from local plan. It was indicated as 60 low cost houses, but now includes 22 assisted living houses as well as the old people's home so the density of development is considerably in excess of original proposals. Apparently developers propose to dig out the hillside to keep within the 50m limit.

While it is certainly contrary to the spirit of the green belt Ian Goudie was pessimistic at chances of stopping it as the area is zoned for development under the current local plan. Green belt is not formally identified and the new Fife Structure Plan is not yet adopted. However provided there are enough objections there will be a departure hearing.

Cllr Sheila Hill, who represents the area concerned by the development, said she would be meeting planning officers soon and will raise views expressed. She also noted that her regular surgery on 18th Feb at Canongate school would be a good opportunity for residents to make their views on the development known to her.

3.3 Police

PC Balmaves attended

3.3.1. Fireworks

[January 3.2.3] licences for sale of fireworks are controlled by Trading Standards. There used to be a voluntary code of conduct on the dates for domestic firework sales but there are no British companies making fireworks now and the foreign suppliers won't cooperate. There is nothing the police can do apart from deal with the offences of sale to the underaged, throwing fireworks onto a road (under 19th century legislation) and breach of the peace as described last month.

3.3.2. Parking on Abbey Walk

Ken Crichton, backed by Jean Thompson, made the point that when there is a car boot sale at Cosmos, parking on the road is restricted by coning. During the week there is no restriction on parking by those delivering/collecting from Greyfriars Primary School though the road is much busier.

3.3.3. Graffiti Lindsay Murray

reported graffiti in Lade Braes walk between from Queens Terrace and Largo Road. As graffiti attracts graffiti she hoped something could be done about it. PC Balmaves said the police will do what they can to get it cleaned/covered.

3.3.4. Madras Kilrymont

Cynthia Tero passed on complaints about the behaviour of pupils leaving Madras college making it dangerous to drive past by throwing things (bottles of Coke etc) across the road etc.

PC Balmaves replied that police had attended in response to a complaint, but did not see anything at what had been reported as the peak time. However there are liaison arrangements being made with the schools to look at various problems.

3.3.5. Station Car Park

Frank Riddell queried the status of a car with broken windows parked there for some weeks: can it be removed?

The police are aware of it. It is not abandoned. The owner resides locally, knows of its state but chooses not to repair it at the moment.

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville (West)

4.1.1. Fife Structure Plan

Welcomed the good news that the green belt has been made part of the plan by the Scottish Executive.

4.1.2. The Links car parking

Petition for waiting restrictions by residents having problems with illegal parking and congestion.

4.1.3. Lammas Fair

Unanimous view of the working group that the Lammas Fair should stay in the town centre. The auction will be abandoned to save time and expense of the attendance of officers as there has been no competition for the stances in some years. There will be simple stance lets instead. Report to go to Health & Safety on questions of costs of safety precautions with the implications for the Common Good Fund income and insurance costs for the traders.

Murdo Macdonald was also at the meeting and generally backed the conclusion. Staying in the centre of town though not unanimously supported through town is the majority view of people in his experience.

4.1.4. Common Good Fund and the Byre Theatre Arising out of the previous item's implications for the Common Good Fund Callum MacLeod asked if recent reports of grant awards for the Byre would affect the CGF by reducing the amount being extracted to support the theatre's loans. Frances Melville thought it unlikely but will ask.

Callum MacLeod proposed that community council write to the Byre board and ask them to pay back at least some of the money extracted. While he did not think this likely, should the Byre even make any profit but it would make the point. Archie Strachan seconded. None opposed.

Pete Lindsay to write

Ian Goudie then further suggested that comment be made to the lottery funders who had advised the Byre board to apply for more money (leading to the financial disaster they had to be rescued from at the cost of almost the entire CGF) pointing out how damaging their advice had been. This too was generally backed.

Pete Lindsay to write

4.2. Sheila Hill (South)

4.2.1. Recycling Centre. Fife Council still waiting for an answer from Safeway's. There is funding put aside out of capital allocation to buy the land in question, though not (yet) for development of the centre.

Generally agreed that community council should make the need and support for a recycling centre clear to Fife Council.

Pete Lindsay to write Law & Admin

Callum MacLeod suggested that community council should set a deadline of the end of the year for Safeway's cooperation, and perhaps organise a boycott should they prove recalcitrant.

Cllr Jane Ann Liston noted that at the Waste Management committee it was suggested that Safeway's lawyers were stalling, hoping the council would turn elsewhere. Indeed there were suggestions that another site might be found from those who don't know St Andrews well enough to realise this is the only suitable site, a matter that has been investigated and confirmed several times.

4.3. Jane Ann Liston (South East)

4.3.1. Kinnessburn

Asked Law & Admin whether Fife Council can ignore SEPA's 'advice' over clearing the burn. The answer was an emphatic No! SEPA themselves have again said that they are happy to receive any environmental study that might lead them to a different conclusion than their present one against clearing the burn.

She noted that the new storm water tanks seem to be having some effect, during the current heavy weather, on the level of the burn and flooding up out of the drains neither of which have been as bad as generally expected from what people have said to her.

Fife's Flood Prevention Report has been updated and republished recently by Transportation Services. In the flood risk assessment scale from 1 (most serious) down to 5 the Kinnessburn is rated at 9. She is making further enquiries as to what this actually means. The report also suggests the burn is dredged by Community Services, which was news to them. Perhaps Transportation Services could talk to SEPA?

4.3.2. St Mary's Place parking. It is not possible to regulate the taxis specifically as the location is not an official taxi rank. If it were the number of vehicles waiting here could be specified. Law & Admin are looking into this as one possibility. She has suggested that Stagecoach should be involved in any discussions on traffic problems in St Mary's Place because of the effect on the bus stop opposite the Fife Council office and the difficulties buses are having getting to it from Bell St.

Ian Goudie did not think that a taxi rank would be an acceptable solution as the problem was basically obstruction of the road by parked vehicles, not the fact they are taxis. Some support was expressed for double yellow line traffic restrictions to be extended from the junction itself west past the Students' Union entrances.

4.3.4. Homeless hostel

There will be a public meeting in Guardbridge over proposals to turn the B&B accommodation opposite the Hungry Horse on the A91 into accommodation for homeless people from the St Andrews area. Currently St Andrews people who lose their homes are being housed in Methil which makes it very difficult for them to keep up a job in St Andrews.

4.3.5. Urban Cycle Routes

She has suggested that once the new routes are in place Fife Councillors, Community Councillors and Fife Officers should cycle round to evaluate at first hand the practicality of the routes.

4.3.6. Fife Structure Plan

She pointed out another piece of good news from the Scottish Executive amendments to the plan, the requirement that the potential rail route to St Andrews be safeguarded in the planning system.

4.3.7. Jubilee Masque

There will be a meeting on Thu 7th at Madras College, Kilrymont Rd for interested parties. In the mean time she asked if community council would act as a lead body to make an application for funding from the Awards for All scheme's jubilee grants. The reason for the request was the relatively short time for a grant application to be processed taken with the slow AfA procedures might jeopardise the grant if the application was delayed for an independent committee to be constituted.

A very long discussion ensued. There was concern that community council would be held responsible for the money and be dragged deeper into the event than originally envisaged. Eventually two proposals emerged.

1. Community council should make a grant itself of £500 if the masque goes ahead, but not take on the grant application. Proposed Callum Macleod Seconded Stephanie Baker Nicholson. **Vote** 2 for, 10 against, 6 abstain.

2. Community council make the application but only release the money to the masque committee if convinced the project is viably organised, first step to evaluate support at Thursdays meeting. Proposed Frank Riddell Seconded Ken Crichton. **Vote** 14 for, 1 against, 4 abstain.

As treasurer Archie Strachan noted that community council does not have £500 in general funds anyway.

4.4. Bill Brooks (Central)

4.4.1. Town Centre Refurbishment

Scottish Enterprise Fife's project work starting within two weeks. There will be meetings between Council, SEF and local traders, and notices in The Citizen with contact phone numbers for queries.

4.4.2. Abbey Street

There are other works in Abbey Street, remodelling parking and drop-off points by the Byre Theatre.

Lindsay Murray reminded the meeting that she had objected to the parking changes on behalf of community council because of safety fears over the change to perpendicular parking very close to the bend and junction at Abbey Steet/Abbey Walk.

Penny Uprichard asked if the proposed tree planting would be part of the work? Councillor Bill Brooks thought trees and other landscaping was a later phase but will confirm that.

4.4.3. Urban cycle routes

Work will commence 11 Feb for 6 weeks. Shouldn't cause much disruption, mostly erection of signs and line painting.

4.4.4. St Mary's Place parking. Arranging for the new taxi operators association to meet with police and Fife Council to agree times and locations they can park, to try to resolve the problem amicably. There are now about 30-50 taxi operators coming into town. On the other part of the problem, the buses from Dundee night clubs, Cllr Brooks is taking that up later, and hopes to report progress by next meeting.

4.4.5. Lammas Fair Cllr Brooks too is happy to see it remain in the centre of town.

4.4.6. Cycle racks

[Jan 4.4.2.] the removal of some racks questioned last month is due to the new cycle routes and related upgrading of cycle facilities. Better stands to lock bikes to are being provided by Scottish Enterprise Fife and Fife Council. Pete Lindsay suggested that steps be taken to clear abandoned and wrecked bikes on a regular basis, citing the rack in front of the Students Union as a problem with broken bikes extending onto the pavement. No one seemed too sure who had responsibility for clearing up this particular location, or any others for that matter.

4.4.7. Logies Lane

Cynthia Tero again raised the matter of a plaque to commemorate the fact that Logies Lane is over the former graveyard of Holy Trinity church. Some skeletons were excavated there 10 years ago during the alterations to a pedestrian space from the former dead end road. She has been calling since then for the burial ground to be commemorated.

4.4.8. Wind Damage to Stonework

Ken Crichton asked what steps the council would be taking to safeguard stonework around town after recent high winds. Councillor Jane Ann Liston replied that she understood the responsibility for keeping buildings safe for passers-by was that of the building's owner/proprietor.

4.4.9. Multiple occupation

flats Ken Crichton asked what steps are Fife Council taking to enforce the new planning rules on these and are the Students Association advising the students what to look for.

Tom Plant (VP Representation of the Students Association) felt that the new HMO rules were excessive and having a very deleterious effect on students by reducing the number of properties available and putting up rents to pay for work necessary to meet the obligations of the legislation. He felt that as long as there was a functioning carbon monoxide detector that was sufficient safety precautions. He understood that some sort of information had been made available to residents of New Hall who would be looking for flats about now.

Frank Riddell commented that it was unacceptable for students to live in unlicensed houses which did not meet the modern safety standards.

Cllr Jane Ann Liston assured the meeting that the East Development Committee, who handle these planning applications, took matters very seriously and were processing many applications under the new rules. As with other planning conditions it was likely breaches would be reported for investigation by concerned members of the public - particularly other landlords who were adhering to the rules.

5. Planning Committee Report

Ian Goudie apologised for the lack of a written report, due to pressure of work.

Five applications had been dealt with recently

1. Royal Bank of Scotland's external lighting - seeking less powerful lights.

2. One-to-One phone mast at Denbrae - object to location, too visible.

3. An application at Hallowhill

to build an infill house within an existing garden - object as against character of area (we have previously objected to similar applications in neighbouring plots).

4. 1 Shore Head - replacement windows - object, ask for something more in line with current style.

5. CCTV

- 10 more applications, some for different sites, several for boxes of associated electronics and controls for the wall-mounted cameras. Pete Lindsay had previously questioned the location for these when they were omitted from the original applications. Bill Sangster, Chair of the Community Safety Panel said he thought two applications related to changed location for the cameras moved from Abbey St and the Clydesdale Bank. The system should be running by 30 June.

Frank Riddell added that he had recently been approached by Scottish Enterprise Fife for details of our Arms for the plate at the A91 entrance to St Andrews. What they had wanted was the Pantone process digital colour codes. He has told them that the current representations of the arms are hand-painted in an entirely analogue process. As the representation is heraldic the legal position is that precise shades of colours are not important provided the Arms are recognisable. He has asked for a review copy of their design to ensure it is acceptable to us.

6. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

6.1. Hospital Meeting

There was a brief discussion for the benefit of those who had been unable to attend the meeting with Dr Bell. The responses to Dr Bell's questions as put to that meeting were confirmed.

6.2. St Andrews Citizen

David Scott, editor of the St Andrews Citizen, replied to our complaint:

I refer to your e-mail of January 26, 2001, concerning the council's unhappiness with the Citizen of November 30, 2002.

I would point out that we did devote a page and half to St Andrew's Week on November 23, with a story and detailed programme of events for each day.

Referring to the main front page article and the lack of balance, I agree that we should have had comments from the student representatives. We did print their views the following week.

I would add we wish to see continuing solid town/gown relations, but that does not preclude us from reporting any issues of concern.

Meeting then agreed that Murdo Macdonald and Lindsay Murray as Chair and (a) Vice-Chair should seek a meeting with David Scott to discuss more general reasons for some members of community council's unhappiness with the paper's coverage of the town's affairs.

Murdo Macdonald to arrange

7. New Business

7.1. Cosmos Centre Representative

Jean Thompson, already a Cosmos committee member, to take over as Community Council rep there.

7.2. Golf Anniversary

Suggestion from Keith McCartney held over for next month due to time taken on the Masque.

8. Reports from Officers

8.1. Chair

8.1.1. Spanish consul

Thanked those who were able to attend and uphold the international honour of St Andrews.

8.1.2. Lammas Market

In additions to what had already been said he will be attending further meetings on the organisation of market and will of course report back.

8.2. Treasurer

Reminded members that the end of financial year is 31st March and it would much aid his book keeping if expenses claims could be processed before then.

8.3. Secretary

8.3.1. Historical Query It was suggested the enquirer be referred to Mr Christie.

8.3.2. Satellite opportunity centre

Kate Hughes was called from the audience again to give a brief summary of the facilities that are now available at the St Mary's Place office: access to computers for on-line job searching, benefits research and the assistance of experienced personnel.

9. Reports from Committees and Representatives

9.1. Health Education & Welfare

Environmental Strategy Questionnaire. Joe Peterson said he was looking for input from as many as possible. The response to the questionnaire would go into the process setting part of Fife's Environmental Strategy, so would affect everyone in St Andrews.

Could he have completed forms by the end of the week at latest.

9.2. Youth Liaison Group

Report noted

9.3. Recreation

Next meeting, Tuesday, to determine the year's programme

10. Any Other Competent Business

None.