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Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Minutes - November 2002

approved

Chair: Murdo Macdonald

1. Attendance

Community Councillors: Ken Crichton, George Davidson, Richard Douglas, Ken Fraser, Ian Goudie, Chris Lesurf, Pete Lindsay, Dennis Macdonald, Murdo Macdonald, Donald Macgregor, Gordon Pay, Joe Peterson, Frank Riddell, Ewen Sparks, Archie Strachan, Cynthia Tero, Jean Thompson, Penny Uprichard.

Nominated & Co-opted: Bill Sangster.

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

Apologies: Joe Lamb, Rory O'Hare

2. Minutes of October 2002

[Oct 5.3] figure of 8 weeks should read 16 weeks.

Accepted

3. Presentations

3.1. Community Police Report

PC Janice Lister attended.

3.1.1. Crossing Red Light Chris Lesurf raised an incident she had witnessed on City Road, at the pedestrian crossing by the bus station, of vehicles running through an amber and subsequent red light. She pointed out that pedestrians have right of way - even if crossing against the light. PC Lister advised that the practical course would be to report the registration number of offending vehicles.

3.2. Best Kept Town

Jim Hooton & Alistair Barnard of Fife Council Community Services spoke.

(Photos of problem areas in St Andrews at the time of the Best Kept Town judging were circulated by Bill Sangster).

Jim Hooton noted that while some of the problems shown were Fife Council's, others were on privately owned property, harbour trust land, etc where Fife Council had no remit. He suggested a

committee of various interests - community council / merchants association / Fife Council / etc - be formed to work on the preparation of St Andrews for subsequent competitions.

Alistair Barnard followed on to admit that several community councils have raised issues with the 2002 competition. He will be arranging a joint meeting with community councils in NE Fife to go over the criteria. These are being brought in line with the national Beautiful Scotland in Bloom competition. They judged the Best Kept Town for Fife this year. He emphasised that the idea of the competition is to get communities involved in the presentation of their town.

In discussion it was agreed that the big meeting would be useful and suggestions were made for further meetings specifically on St Andrews, to involve various St Andrews groups.

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville (West)

4.1.1. Streetlights on Buchanan Gardens Having problems contacting Scottish Power about the lack of lights: can't get through queuing system to report. Fife Council eventually got through and the problem was isolated to one old gas lamp column. She considers the difficulty contacting Scottish Power very unsatisfactory.

4.1.2. Rights of Way [Sep 4.5.1] Asked David Rae to update, but nothing yet (possibly due to email problems).

4.2. Sheila Hill (South)

4.2.1. Lade Braes Some of the worst holes in the path have been patched. She is urging regular maintenance for the whole of the Lade Braes. Cynthia Tero hoped that the patches were level and not the lumps of surfacing material standing proud of the surface, frequently the result of patching, which are as dangerous as the hole they replace.

4.2.2. Botanic Gardens Entrance resurfaced.

4.2.3. Various ex-rose beds Need to allow the ground to refresh, will put grass down now, smaller flowerbeds may come later if budget is available.

4.2.4. Bassaguard industrial area Is a mess. Fife Council's Economic Development Service have no money to put anything there. Cllr Sheila Hill speculated that perhaps it would be better as housing. Others suggested conversion from outright industrial to small business/office units. One comment was made that this should be done at the West Port too rather than changing the former garage to housing and losing any employment opportunities there.

4.2.5. Craigtoun Road Ian Goudie raised potential danger of school pupils coming from the new houses currently having to cross the busy Craigtoun Road to catch their school bus.

4.2.6. Craigtoun Road development Ian Goudie also asked when the planned recreation area will be implemented?

4.3. Bill Brooks (Central)

4.3.1. Queens Terrace [Sep 4.3.2.] Work completed. Other work at Murray Park & Place [Oct 4.3.2] running a week behind schedule.

4.3.2. Pavement in North St The problems shown in the photos circulated for item 3.2. above will be covered by the forthcoming pavements upgrade.

4.3.4. Vandalism [Oct 4.3.4.] Higher profile police presence about the town centre seems to have calmed the situation somewhat.

4.3.5. Kinnesburn report [Sep 4.3.1.] Delayed by of the widespread effects of recent weather, but 'guaranteed' by the end of this month, according to SEPA and the independent assessor.

4.3.6. Dempster Brae Grit Bin Donald Macgregor asked that the grit bin, which is repeatedly thrown in the burn, be fixed in place, chained to a lamppost or whatever. He reported that it was currently teetering on the brink... Cllr Jane Ann Liston had noted this in passing and had already emailed the appropriate people in Fife Council.

4.4. Jane Ann Liston (South East)

4.4.1. Transport consultation 3rd Dec, 7-9pm, Town Hall

4.4.2. Town Hall flag rope Has now been repaired, the UN flag flew on the appropriate days. She had conveyed concerns over the short period the previous repair lasted, which called into question the quality of work, and the delays in undertaking repairs. If there is a problem of funding repairs she suggested that it may be the Common Good Fund should be approached as the Town Hall is a Common Good Property.

4.4.3. Rail timetables The lack of timetables she was asked to investigate last month was down to a failure by Scotrail's printers, now corrected. Fife Council will formally raise concerns at lack of passenger information at the next liaison meeting.

4.4.4. Libraries Regarding the current proposals for the Town Library refurbishment she is concerned about the move of the Children's Library from the Town Hall, which will lose the Common Good Fund a substantial part of its income. She noted too that community council is being 'blamed' for resisting the ex-cambion property swap proposals.

Archie Strachan reminded the meeting of remarks by head of Law & Admin, during the Byre/CGF affair, who assured community council representatives that income to the CGF would be maintained should something happen to eg library income. Fife Council should be held to this commitment.

4.4.5. Public Toilets The long-awaited report on Fife public toilets came to Environment & Development Committee recently. It includes criteria which will be applied to decide which St Andrews toilets will be closed. It was noted that while charges, where made, don't cover the cost of staff to collect them. Also felt to be penalising families, low-paid etc. Talk of toilets fees being eligible for Fifestyle card discounts. Report suggested that public buildings with toilets should be more available to the public. She has made the point that new facilities should be made available before the old ones closed.

Murdo Macdonald emphasised that the community should be consulted on any closures.

4.4.6. Hay-Fleming Book Collection She is concerned at reports that more rigorous security is being brought in at the University Library, where the Town's Hay-Fleming collection was moved from the Town Library in Church Square a few years ago. There is a feeling among ordinary townspeople that they cannot use the university library, which she fears may be exacerbated by the new ID cards described in the press recently. What is the feeling of community council on the matter?

While there were some thoughts that the existence and location of the Hay Fleming collection could

be better publicised, especially at the town library, overall it was not thought to be a problem. The better security and conditions for preserving the collection at the university were held to outweigh any perceived barrier. Ken Fraser, from his connections with the university library was able to reassure the meeting that the ID card was not compulsory: anyone wanting to access the HF just needs to check in at the front desk to collect a temporary pass. Frank Riddell will take up matter of easier public access with the Librarian and Principal.

4.5. General

4.5.1. Common Good Fund Common Good Fund committee representatives Archie Strachan, and Cynthia Tero noted that they were unhappy with the recent levels of consultation between the Fife Council side and Community Council. Cllr Frances Melville admitted things had not gone smoothly recently, but that this had been recognised and promised there would be a return to the older, more formal system of meetings for discussion of applications.

5. Planning Committee Report

Report circulated at the meeting

Report of the PLANNING COMMITTEE Meetings of 14.10.02 and 28.10.02 for the Community Council Meeting of 4 November 2002.

1. Planning Applications.

(i) Bute Building & School of Psychology. There were a couple of points of concern about this application which the committee was unable to resolve from the plans. These related to which trees would be felled and to the pipework and flues at the southern end of the Bute Building. Miss Uprichard agreed to make enquiries and to write if appropriate.

(ii) The Raisin, S Alexandra Place. The location of the proposed internally illuminated sign was not clear from the plans. Miss Uprichard agreed to make enquiries and to submit an objection if the proposal involves increasing the number of signs.

2. Harbour Traffic.

The committee considered proposed revised traffic arrangements for the harbour area. The general belief of the committee was that there is not a major parking problem at the harbour. We were happy to support a no-waiting-at-any-time restriction on the harbour side of the road in front of the flats, and a prohibition (perhaps achieved by a weight limit) on buses using the road that circles the flats. It was felt, however, that to ban all vehicles (except those requiring access) from this road would be an OTT reaction which was disproportionate to the problem. We are, for instance, aware that elderly and disabled drivers derive considerable pleasure from waiting, usually in their vehicles, at the top of the slipway beyond the flats in order to look at the view. We believe that waiting in this position for half an hour is not usually a problem to anyone, and would be very sorry to see it banned. The committee was also sceptical about the claimed benefits to cyclists from the proposals in view of the extensive cobbled area.

3. Fife Environmental Network Consultative Draft.

Mr Lindsay has submitted the committee's reactions to the draft. These appear as Appendix G to the main agenda.

Updates:

1.i Bute: Penny Uprichard reported that she had learned that no trees to be felled, just shrubs. Information on status of pipework and flues still not available and will be pursued.

1.ii The Raisin The illuminated sign mention in the application was not shown in the plans because Fife Council had already told the developer that it would be unacceptable in the Conservation Area.

6. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

6.1. St Andrews Library

Ken Fraser felt that there was insufficient detail in the figures given.

Cllr Jane Ann Liston

Ian Goudie concerned that the public are being misled by the information being given out on this; most of the changes are for the benefit of staff, there will be little if any increase in number of books available.

6.2. Greenbelt Forum

Agreed to appoint representatives who would take up various concerns expressed about the draft constitution - contact them directly with any further comments. Representatives: Ian Goudie, Penny Uprichard, Frank Riddell.

Reps: IG, PU, FGR

6.3. A Boards

Noted

6.4. Western Development

Ian Goudie noted that the proposed development was against the general thrust of Fife Council's planning policy. He advised that we should 'keep powder dry' with objections fearing developers would merely circumvent them if revealed at an early stage. We do not need to respond, according to Scottish Executive, and this will not affect our right to comment later. The Environmental Impact Scoping Study should be to gain factual information from relevant bodies, not a trawl of possible objectors for opinions.

He went on to say that the developers want to initiate a debate on development around St Andrews. This has already been done, over the last 7 years, culminating in the strategic study, the conclusions of which are for a green belt and against the sort of (1000 house) development proposed. They should not be allowed get away with trying to reach a more favourable conclusion for their purposes.

General Scottish Executive advice, in Planning Advice Note 47 is not to meet directly with developers to discuss applications.

Ewen Sparks asked about the reports of an 'Information Evening' to be run by the developers (University, Headon, etc). No invitation had been received.

6.5. Town Twinning

Cllr Sheila Hill asked if there was any progress to report on the proposal regarding Loches? Murdo Macdonald responded that community council was not committed to twinning, but there are more links with Loches already than previous requests; it deserves serious consideration. There will be a piece in the next Bulletin asking for feedback from the town.

7. New Business

7.1. Early Adoption of Green Belt

This Community Council calls on Fife Council to implement the proposal by Menzies Campbell M.P. that there be an immediate alteration to the St Andrews Area Local Plan. This alteration should specify the precise boundaries of the Green Belt encircling the town, as required by the new Structure Plan.

Prop Frank Riddell, 2nd Cynthia Tero. Adopted unopposed.

Pete Lindsay

7.2. Tay Area Rail Study

In discussion of outline points for a reply Ian Goudie raised the repeated themes, from tourist and other studies of St Andrews, of the tourist traffic experience in the town centre and how to get more tourists into town. He supported a railway as a way of getting the desired tourists into St Andrews without increasing the traffic burden. Pete Lindsay noted the long standing support of community council for StARLink, since its inception. Other points made called for better use of current transport links in the short term - direct links to Leuchars meeting trains for instance, and overall better integration of the transport system.

Reply to feature restored rail link and other short term integrated transport improvements.

Pete Lindsay

7.3. Police Community Councils consultation

Murdo Macdonald

7.4. Fireworks licensing

Frank Riddell to review
Pete Lindsay to write

7.5. Raisin Weekend

Noted

7.6. Fife Road Safety Strategy

Reply to follow general past community council policy

7.7. CCTV Evaluation

Response to query use of the term Visitors, number of incidents to be studied, wording of questions.
Study premature after only 6 months?

Pete Lindsay

7.8. - 7.12.

Noted

7.13. Scottish Civic Forum

Incoming documents to be circulated to HE&W and Ken Fraser

7.14. NHS Fife Board Meeting

Chris Lesurf

8. Reports from Officers

8.1. Chair

8.1.1. Remembrance Sunday Gave details of the service arrangements for those who would be attending.

8.1.2. General Purposes Committee meeting Long delayed through illness and pressure of business but arranged for 7.15pm Thursday

8.2. Treasurer

nothing to report

8.3. Secretary

8.3.1. St Andrew's Day Greetings Card design not available; to be brought to GP committee instead.

8.3.3. Fife Environmental Network Consultative Draft Environmental Strategy Noted, but Penny Uprichard asked for late addition expressing concern at lack of coverage of Archaeology and Built Heritage.

8.3.6. CC group picture not arranged yet.

9. Reports

9.1. from Committees

9.1.1. Recreation verbal report from Joe Peterson: Art & Photography exhibition preview 7pm 27 Nov, Victory Memorial Hall. Need people to cover for show - please sign up at the preview or see Joe Peterson. Boots sponsorship finished after 6 years, for which period thanks. Ian Joy shop now sponsoring.

9.1.2. HEW No report due to pressure of the Recreation work taken on by Joe Peterson.

9.1.3. Publicity Some problem with the amount of copy for the next Bulletin. Already 3-4 sides and the Young Citizen award notice has just been raised for inclusion. Discuss at GP committee, also review Loches coverage balanced.

9.1.4. General Bill Sangster proposed thanks to Joe Peterson for all the work he's shouldered recently - generally agreed.

9.2. from Representatives

None

10. Any Other Competent Business

Public and press were asked to leave while Murdo Macdonald updated community councillors on a matter concerning an individual.