

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Minutes January 2004

Approved

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1. Attendance

Community Councillors: Laurel Aguilar, Ken Crichton, George Davidson, Richard Douglas, Ken Fraser, Ian Goudie, Ian Hamilton, Joe Lamb, Pete Lindsay, Dennis Macdonald, Donald Macgregor, Joe Peterson, Frank Riddell, Ewen Sparks, Archie Strachan, Penny Uprichard.

Students Association: Derek MacLeod.

Fife Councillors: Sheila Black, Jane Ann Liston, Frances Melville, Bill Sangster.

Apologies: Chris Lesurf, Cynthia Tero, Murdo Macdonald, Bonnie Ryder, Will MacFarlane.

2. Minutes of December 2003

Read for accuracy in matters of substance – harangue the secretary for minor errors (spelling etc) outwith the meeting.

3. Presentations

For anyone wishing to address the meeting on a matter relevant to St Andrews. Please contact the Secretary or Chair before the meeting. Priority will be given to those who have been invited to speak or have given advance notice.

3.1. Police report

none

3.2. St Andrews Harbour

Ken Sweeney, a Fisherman Trustee, gave a short illustrated presentation on the recent past, present and a quick look into the future of the Harbour.

Four years ago the Harbour Trust started a review of the future of the harbour and of its own structure.

In the past St Andrews had a vibrant harbour, with a new bridge, yachts, working fishing boats, but poor facilities. Now fishing has declined to a small number of boats working only in the morning, there are few yachts as the harbour basin and facilities are found unattractive. Recently the harbour has not been seen as an asset to St Andrews.

The Trust decided to put together a vision for the future aiming for more boats, an attractive setting, developed facilities, CCTV for security etc. Started to plan how to move forward, looking at secure pontoons with berthing for 45 yachts, integrated transport to rest of the town, a lock between inner and outer harbour all with the aim of linking in to a network of marinas developing up the east coast of Scotland. It was during the preliminary surveys for these plans that the major problems of the recent past came to light. Now those have been put right the Trust can look to move forward again.

One of the reasons for reforming the Trust itself is to be able to include people with the expertise to guide the project; currently only elected representatives of fishermen and Fife Councillors can be Trustees.

He finished with a few words on funding, pointing out that over £1M has been put in to the physical structure to date to bring it to stability. The Trust estimates the same amount again will be needed to update it to meet modern requirements, but which would benefit not just the harbour itself but help revitalise the whole east end of St Andrews.

Cllr Frances Melville, who chairs the Harbour Trust, added that the presentation had the full backing of the Trust. She noted that the whole community has backed the work to date and hoped that can carry forward to improvements not just maintenance. The conditions of the Lottery funding received implies expectation of further work in the future. She supported the remarks on the need for appropriate expertise on the Trust; while the legal process to reform an old trust is slow and tortuous, she hoped that visible moves to reform would become apparent late in 2004.

Joe Lamb questioned the procedures for reform of the Harbour Trust, but was assured by Cllr Melville that all steps were being undertaken with legal advice and in close consultation with the Scottish Executive.

3.3. Crawford Centre funding

John di Folco, Crawford Centre Management Committee Chair explained the crisis facing the centre's funding. The Scottish Arts Council is considering withdrawing £48K of annual funding after April 2005. It had so far not been possible, he said, to determine from the SAC what facts weigh in the balance of this "consideration". SAC has identified Crawford Centre as not meeting their strategic needs though when asked what these needs were, SAC admitted they haven't actually drawn them up in detail. They have concerns over the programmes run by the Crawford, the governance and other (unspecified) matters. His analysis of the overall profile of the threatened cuts across the country is threatening arts support on the periphery, as if the SAC only wants to support arts close by the metropolitan centres.

He went on to outline some of the current work of the Crawford that is threatened. He sees it very much as an interface between the visual arts community and the public. It exhibits work both by national and

international artists, but also emerging local Scottish artists, supporting newcomers through the Artist-in-Residence programme. It does much work in education: in deprived areas eg. Buckhaven and Methil; with Rymouth House; there is the University's Museums & Galleries course – the only such course in Scotland. The Crawford also supports work in the landscape and the historical centre of St Andrews itself (eg the phenomenally popular Light Labyrinth at the Cathedral).

There are currently negotiations ongoing with the University regarding its relationship with the Crawford Centre; presently the centre pays a peppercorn rent for the building which are university property. These may offer a way out of the crisis but are not progressing quickly enough.

Asked what the community council could do in support John di Falco suggested writing to James Boyle, Chair of the SAC, indicating our support and expressing our concerns, perhaps, over the loss to life in St Andrews itself, Fife and Scotland. Copies could be sent to Menzies Campbell MP and Iain Smith MSP, who has already given a great deal of support, as has Cllr Bill Sangster. Further he asked that anyone with contacts in the arts community, and visual arts in particular should bring influence to bear to get people to write in support of the Crawford, to SAC and to local and national press.

**Meeting agreed Chair to write.
Donald Macgregor**

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville (West)

4.1.1. 20mph speed limits at schools Cllr Melville noted some changes to the details of the proposals since the document was published.

Joe Peterson asked if to reduce costs of implementing 20mph zones consideration would be given to implementing the international standard yellow & black markings for the school zones, rather than yet another custom local standard.

Dennis Macdonald raised a problem with current warning lights for children's crossing zones near schools. As they are manually operated they are sometimes not switched on due to oversight or absence of the usual crossing attendant.

4.1.2. Availability of Environmental Impact Assessments It is the opinion of the Planning Service that the aim of the Scottish Executive circular quoted is to ensure that the cost and a source of EIAs is known to interested parties. If there is a problem obtaining the advertised full EIAs from developers Planning Service will look at holding a stock for purchase in accordance with the circular.

Penny Uprichard suggested that from her experience there was a need for more than one copy of major EIAs to be available for consultation in the Local Office.

4.1.3. Harbour Toilets As Chair of the Harbour Trust she has contacted various officials and the Police about this and was pressing for urgent action. Pete Lindsay passed on information received just before the meeting that Environment Service was urgently looking into costs of erecting gates to close the toilets at night. There was some concern that the toilets should not be closed outright as there is a legitimate need for facilities in this area. Better lighting and a rôle for CCTV were suggested.

4.1.4. Bus Station Echoed Ken Fraser's report (Appendix D) of a very useful meeting.

Joe Lamb questioned how it was that the local press was reporting in November 2002 that funding was available to start work on refurbishment within 6 months. It now seems there is a 3 year timescale. Cllr Melville replied that the delays came partly from sourcing other external funding and the consultation process itself.

4.1.5. Craigtoun Road Development Ian Goudie pursued some points with Cllr Melville as Chair of East Area Development arising from the Section 75 agreement and responses received from Community Services.

They confirmed that the current developer will plant the avenue of trees along in early 2004. However he noted that due to the delay some of the sites are now in private gardens so there may be problems with siting.

There is an electricity substation installed which was not shown on plans received by community council, so not commented upon. It needs screening.

The kickabout area was grass-seeded in 2003.

He drew particular attention to the response on the bus turning area. It was stated that there "was not a formal requirement for a separate bus turning circle". He read out the specific terms of the planning consent which did indeed require it. Why, he asked again, is the public purse paying for this requirement on the developer.

Cllr Melville agreed this was a matter of deep concern and will investigate further.

4.2. Sheila Black (South)

4.2.1. Craigtoun Road Development Following on, Cllr Black, as local councillor, said she had been amazed by the reply on the turning circle and agrees this is a matter of concern. She will also look into the trees matter and chase the rebuilding of the wall mentioned at past meeting.

4.2.2. Ceilidh Congratulated community council for running this again, and in particular Murdo Macdonald for organising it and his helpers on the night for the smooth running.

4.2.3. Bassaguard Joe Peterson asked if there were any developments to report? She responded that Economic Development were on the trail of sources of funding to tidy the area up and make it more attractive as a small industry area.

4.3. Bill Sangster (Central)

4.3.1. Town Inspection He has recently undertaken another walking inspection of the centre with Peter Milne of Transportation Service and Kate Hughes, Locality Manager, to bring a number of matters to their attention.

4.3.2. Flood Protection Some initial results on the Kinnessburn expected in March or April.

4.3.3. Park & Ride Over the past Christmas period Saturday service there were an average 190 passengers per day.

4.3.4. Health Centre Bench Kate Hughes is investigating whose is the bench and therefore whose responsibility this is.

4.3.5. Town Centre Bus Stop Shelters Asked about these Cllr Sangster said he understood that planning applications would soon be submitted for a shelter at St Mary's Place, and South Street – away from Blackfriars he hoped. There will also be new cycle shelters the Local Office car park and racks at Market Street.

4.4. Jane Ann Liston (South East)

4.4.1. Paper Collection Bins Blue bins will be arriving in St Andrews in February. They won't be delivered to places without a grey bin, nor to the town centre flats.

4.4.2. Bus Station Meeting She too felt the meeting very useful. She added that the focus group she joined during the workshop sessions saw travel integration as very important. She was however disappointed at late arrival of Scottish Enterprise to the meeting and the absence of the University despite the meeting being held on their property.

4.4.3. Alcohol Free Zone Noted that she had been approached for comment by national press on the renewal of the AFZ, quoting the community council response as being listed as in favour of continuation in the relevant meeting papers. Secretary Pete Lindsay expressed concern at this report as community council had been split 50:50 for and against the AFZ [Feb 03 7.2.] and he had been careful to emphasise this in letters to the officials, then and when the subject was revived [Oct 03 7.5.]. Cllr Frances Melville sits on the Policy and Resources Committee which will be considering this and agreed to make community council's position clear if the journalist's reading of the papers was correct.

4.4.4. Community Council Showcase As a result of a proposal from the recent community council seminars (October & November) days there is to be an showcase exhibition/open day on the work of community councils ("show and tell"), before the next community council elections.

4.4.5. East Sands Leisure Centre Asked why the East Sands Leisure Centre was closed over the holiday period she explained that the pool must be drained and refilled once a year for various reasons including maintenance and health & safety issues. This takes a considerable amount of time, particularly to bring it up to temperature. It had been found in years when it had remained open over the period that this was the least disruptive time as fewer people wanted to use the facilities at this time of year than any other.

5. Planning Committee

5.1. December Minutes

Minutes were circulated at the meeting.

Planning Meeting – 8.12.03

Petheram Bridge – Transportation intends to lose more parking spaces in the town centre, and says they will be compensated for by extra spaces at Petheram Bridge. Councillor Melville might persuade other people to wait, i.e. not take a bite out of the hillside, until the public have had a chance to comment. F R. suggested gouging out the hillside more to the east. Councillor Melville had suggested making more efficient use of the area, reducing the amount of greenery. P.L. suggested better pedestrian access, separated from paths for cars. There was discussion on the amount of new car spaces to be expected – 100? The Committee thought that ground cover was a priority, and that it was a pity to lose the path across the top of the area to Jacob's Ladder. It was also suggested that the extension of the car park should not go past the existing path.

Ashleigh House – zebra crossing. N.C.

Links Trust – 7th golf course:– I.G. to write objection. OBJ. I.G.

29 North Castle Street (retrospective) – remove render and paint. N.C.

80 North Street – change Salvation Army worship hall to dwelling house

Howard Mitchell Building, Greenside Place – erect lighting column. N.C.

Howard Place – alter flat to form 5-person HMO, inc. fire doors. N.C.

6 Balfour Place – lowering of wall, replace with balustrade. N.C.

Physics Building, North Haugh (University) – install fire door and extraction system. N.C.

New Picture House – display two (externally?) illuminated digital fascia signs OBJ. R.D.

12A Greyfriars Garden – proposed internal alterations (listed building) N.C.

Planning Convenor Ian Goudie added to the printed report:

Petheram Bridge car park: he noted that diagrams showing occupancy of the current car park only get to 85% twice and only above that once, on monthly samples. He was concerned about the quality of the

data and it's interpretation. He believes Transportation Service's strategy is to make town centre parking swingingly expensive so people will be glad to use Petheram Bridge – hence the need for expansion which is not justified by current occupancy figures. Whatever the opinions on this strategy it is short-sighted to go forward without taking into account parking and transportation strategy in the North Haugh/Town Centre areas.

John Knox Road He noted that the details of the ramp access to the homes for elderly/disabled – which does not seem possible on the site within Scottish Homes conditions on gradients in such cases – are not included in the East Development Committee papers for Tuesday. Appeal item 24 – exact details of ramps should be submitted and approved before work starts. Asked that FC members take this up tomorrow.

New Picture House Richard Douglas told the meeting he had sought clarification of details of this application from planning officials; as a result no objection was necessary.

5.2. 7th Links Trust Golf Course, Kinkell

Ian Goudie introduced the letter of comment pointing out as the fundamental concern as the context of the battle for a green belt for St Andrews. He reminded the meeting that this was not Fife Council's desire, despite wide local support; it had to be imposed by Scottish Executive in the Fife Plan. In regard to the green belt the concept of prematurity was now supported by planners for developments in the probable green belt area before the boundaries and conditions are set. This concept is vital to defending the landscape setting of the town until the green belt is in place. He asked community council to support the objection. Debate ensued.

Donald Macgregor questioned what development would be acceptable within a green belt?

Dennis Macdonald did not support any objection, feeling that community council should follow the lead of the Green Belt Forum and Preservation Trust and submit no comment. He argued that this should not be considered a new development, rather an overflow facility for the six existing Links Trust courses and as such would not cause an increase in the total number of golfers. He went on to say that the Links Trust is responding to the increase in local users vs tourists. The balance of tourist income vs near free local play must be maintained for the economy of the Links overall. The private courses serve a very different market to the Links Trust and should not be considered as 'capacity' in this context.

Archie Strachan reported that Murdo Macdonald had asked him to pass on his views as he was too ill to attend the meeting and felt strongly on the matter. He said Murdo Macdonald felt that a golf course with a minimum number of necessary associated buildings, ie no form of housing development, is acceptable green belt development. He would therefore oppose any objection had he been able to be present.

Speaking personally Archie Strachan suggested that if the land is available to development at all then a golf course is preferable to housing. He thought that a golf course with basic necessary facilities well screened from view would be acceptable. There should be very severe restrictions on the buildings permitted – a basic refreshment facility for instance but not a restaurant.

Ewen Sparks, Chair of the Merchants Association, feared that development here might take business out of town as had happened with the St Andrews Bay clubhouse and the Kingsbarns courses. He asked if there had been an economic impact study? Ian Goudie responded that the EIS was only in the sense of an economic case for the course, not its impact on the town.

Joe Peterson stated that as a golfer he'd like another course and felt that the objection stands or falls on stands or falls the question of whether another course is needed – if it is needed then the question is just where. He said that another Strathtyrum-style course to the west of the town wouldn't be much challenge to golfers and so of little attraction, in which case another location was needed. Any other site will be in the prospective green belt. He agreed that there will be a transport impact, but agreed with Dennis Macdonald that the proposed course will only be an alternative destination for local golfers rather than a true increase in the number of journeys to a golf course. He believes that a seventh course would be beneficial to the town economy. He objected to the overall tone of the letter in objecting to the new course. He called for a letter in support of the new course, though with concerns over some aspects noted.

Ian Hamilton had heard that the waiting list for local links tickets stood at around 500, which argued for a need for expansion and he saw a possible benefit to the east side of town through a park and ride scheme associated with the proposed course.

Laurel Aguilar said it was not the golf course she found difficult to accept, but it was clear from the plans exhibited that the planned clubhouse on the coast will have a huge visual impact overlooking as it did the harbour, cathedral, etc. She disagreed with the consultant's report statement that it would have a minimum impact. On the positive side improvement to the Fife Coastal path to a combined pedestrian and cycle path would be a huge asset.

Frank Riddell's concern centred on the impact of this development on the credibility green belt, with a clubhouse, maintenance buildings and a restaurant. He questioned the absolute need for another course when the Duke's and Kingsbarns courses lie underused.

Penny Uprichard cited the presence of a sewage plant in the middle of the course would render it unattractive to golfers, on top of which she noted that non-links courses in the area are not prospering, citing as evidence 'special offer' price reductions at the Duke's. She felt there was no evidence of unmet need. She called for support for the green belt.

Someone noted that Links Trust figures say that from 1995-2001 there was a 25% increase in golfers. However '95 was an Open Championship year. The 97-02 increase in demand was only 1.3%.

Ken Crichton felt it was necessary to formally object within the terms of the planning system just so the queries about the submitted plans and justifications are considered seriously.

Ian Goudie responded to the concerns raised about the proposed letter. On transportation he pointed out that the thrust of the argument made was asking for further information, in the form of a full formal Traffic Impact Assessment. Himself he was surprised at the level of traffic projected and felt that there was poor account taken of the other facilities (clubhouse, restaurant etc.) on the site. Some were concerned at the dangers of refusal in case other, less acceptable development occur on this 'available' site. It is also necessary to consider the dangers of acceptance. There are a number of other large developments in the wings. They will not hesitate to use any acceptance here as a precedent for their own project. If the community council want to protect the green belt this must be opposed until the formal rules are in place. The principles are what matter; he would be quite happy to discuss the detail wording of the letter where it was found unclear.

Dennis Macdonald proposed that no objection should be made, and no letter of comment submitted by community council. There was no seconder.

(At 9.30pm Donald Macgregor proposed the formal suspension of standing orders to permit a resolution to be reached. Seconded Dennis Macdonald. No opposition.)

After a number of other ideas were heard the meeting agreed to Ian Goudie's suggestion to vote on the four headline points, as if they were accepted in principle the rest of the letter followed on from them.

(i) The implication of the Fife Structure Plan is that this application for probable Green Belt land should be deemed premature. To do otherwise would set a very dangerous precedent for the town.

13 for, 0 against, 3 abstain

(ii) The proposal does not comply with Structure Plan Policy N7 on Development on the Undeveloped Coast.

10 for, 3 against, 3 abstain

(iii) The applicants' case for a new course is an amalgam of statistical and legal arguments, but neither of these strands is pursued with sufficient precision to be persuasive.

10 for, 3 against, 2 abstain

(iv) The methodology used to assess the numbers of vehicle trips which would be generated by the proposed development is unsound. The predicted figures are likely to be serious underestimates. One can therefore have no confidence in the conclusion that a full Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) is not required.

7 for, 2 against, 6 abstain

(one member left the meeting between votes ii and iii)

It was then proposed that in view of the short deadline for submission (Friday following the meeting) the letter of comment should be revised by Ian Goudie to reflect points made in the meeting and reviewed by Donald Macgregor as Chair.

Proposed: Frank Riddell, seconded: Penny Uprichard. Opposed by Dennis Macdonald on the grounds no letter should be sent. No seconder.

**Ian Goudie
Donald Macgregor
to review letter**

Meeting concluded at 9.48pm