

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Provisional Minutes – August 2008

For Approval

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1. Attendance

Community Councillors

Ken Crichton, Ken Fraser, Zoe Smith, Patrick Marks, Judith Harding, Ian Goudie, Carol Ashworth, Marysia Denyer, Fiona Harden, Rob Fett, Alex Bain, Catherine Rowe

Students' Association Representatives

Andrew Keenan

Nominated

Fife Councillors

Dorothea Morrison, Bill Sangster, Robin Waterston

Apologies

Shaun Atkinson, Frances Melville, Jude Innes, Dave Finlay, Karen Hutchence, Henry Paul

2. Minutes of July 2008 Meeting

1. Ms Rowe noted that she had been omitted from apologies for June 2008 and Mr Finlay had been omitted from the July minutes as attending
2. 4.1.2. Blue Flag Award – Mr Finlay concluded after Cllr Sangster's remark - was it not the case that the water quality was being degraded due to the sewage out falls from the Kinkell Braes and this should be investigated.
3. 5.2. Dr Goudie pointed out that the information had come from Penny Uprichard and not as noted.
4. 10.1. Bandstands – Mr Finlay queried the lack of content at this item. He'd explained that the costs of £2000 were requiring to be increased to attract the list of bands that have normally attended the bandstand in the past. However he also raised the question as to whether it was correct that the money should be drawn out of the Common Good Fund of St Andrews when he didn't see any local residents in attendance during last year's concerts, and the fact that Funds to clear the Kinness Burn, renew the notice board at Spar's etc etc from Fife Council are consistently not available.

3. Presentations

3.1. P.C. Brian Robinson

3.1.1. Buggies on West Sands

PC Robinson reported on this subject, which had been raised at the July meeting. He'd checked on the legal situation with regard to the use of motorised vehicles. He described how the beach area is divided into the shore and the foreshore. According to the Outdoor Access Code and the Land Reform Act (Scotland) there is no general right for vehicles to be used on the foreshore. However the more significant legal provision relates to the shore. As vehicles have to cross the shore to reach the foreshore, they can be stopped by legislation, which forbids their use on the shore. The police would have power to deal with vehicles crossing the shore to access the foreshore.

Cllr Morrison commented on issues relating to vehicles accessing the foreshore to launch other vehicles. PC Robinson acknowledged that there may be exemptions whereby vehicles can access the foreshore with permission of the landowner, however he still thought that there was still an effective deterrent to ban vehicles accessing the beach under the Road Traffic Act. Mr Crichton pointed out that while this may apply in St Andrews, at other beaches, such as Kingsbarns access rights might be differently applied depending upon ownership of the shore.

Cllr Sangster asked if vehicles found churning up the grassy areas on the beach could be dealt with, PC Robinson said that this was covered under a section of the Road Traffic Act.

3.1.2. Parking Problems at Kinkell Terrace

Ms Rowe asked PC Robinson about the situation where taxi drivers park at Kinkell Terrace. She said that one taxi has parked in front of the driveway of an elderly couple, thus blocking access. She wondered if anything could be done to sort out the problem. Ms Rowe added that many of the drivers parked at Kinkell Terrace overnight, and then during the daytime parked their own cars in the location when coming to use their taxis. PC Robinson acknowledged that there was nothing one could do to stop private cars parking there. PC Robinson agreed to check out the possible problem relating to the elderly couple at Andrew Thom Place and the parking in front of their driveway.

3.2. Library and Museum Service Review Presentation

Dorothy Browse, Service Manager for Libraries and Museums in Fife and Liz Rosser, Customer Services Team Leader for the area including St Andrews gave a presentation on the Service they represent and the plans for change, which are being considered.

In March 2008, the Housing and Communities Committee approved the review of service provision for libraries and museums. Ms Browse said that she would give the meeting an idea of the review, and would seek views of the service in this area. An online questionnaire was available to complete, and hard copies were available for anyone without Internet access. They were trying to get the views, both of users and non-users. Consultation would also take place in focus groups for age related groups such as schools, students, the elderly and disability related groups. They are also looking at examples of best practice elsewhere in Scotland. She also emphasised the importance of individual views.

Fife Councils Museums and Libraries Service she revealed had the biggest number of buildings and vehicles of any such service in Scotland, including Glasgow and Edinburgh. Some 51 libraries, 9 museums, 2 Heritage sites, 3 mobile libraries and one mobile museum make up the stock. They also serve all the schools and provide collection services for Homes for the Elderly. Trying to keep such a large and diverse service fresh was one of the major challenges, and also spreading limited resources around so many premises.

A major aspect of the review was to examine the Core Services and to determine in consultation with communities what these core services should be. She acknowledged that much of the traditional type of service was quite passive with people coming in to borrow books etc, but not participating in a more active way. More active participation did take place, but could still develop considerably given the right stimulus.

Changing demands by customers included the setting up of reading groups, research guidance, learning opportunities, object identification and online information etc. All these changes placed a greater demand on Library and Museum staff to have greater expertise and more varied skills.

Recent investment in the service was described, with Ms Browse describing investment in upgrading St Andrews museum and library.

Making library requests free has had a positive effect with a substantial increase in the number of requests. This has benefited the smaller libraries as well. Ms Browse claimed that there was an average of just over 12 days for most requests to be fulfilled. This was helping to make the most of the stock in the whole of Fife. Developing the Museums Service online was another way to make much more material accessible, given the fact that museums could only display a fraction of their collections at any one time.

The development of the Home Delivery Service, not only for the housebound and elderly, but also for other customer groups was an area the review also hoped to explore.

Sharing and engaging with people in relation to the history of an area was also viewed as very important.

She reiterated the need to get views from users and non-users to help progress development that would engage more people in using the facilities.

She was happy to be contacted by email on the review as well – Dorothy.browse@fife.gov.uk and likewise for her colleague – Liz.rosser@fife.gov.uk.

Mr Marks asked whether his perception that the newly revamped St. Andrews Library had less stock was correct? Ms Browse admitted that there were fewer books, but claimed that they were more probably better quality and more up to date. She went on to add, that in libraries before refurbishment, there was often an accumulation of numbers of books, but there was insufficient attention paid to how often those books were used and the cleanliness etc of the books. She couldn't give figures, but didn't think that there were a lot fewer books than before refurbishment, and agreed that it was partly perception. Ms Rosser confirmed that book numbers were only slightly down. She also mentioned that a stock rotation system kept books moving more frequently between branches.

Ms Rowe asked about the questionnaires. Ms Browse advised that copies could be handed in at libraries and that hard copies were available at libraries. Library staff would be happy to assist elderly customers to complete questionnaires online as well. Ms Rowe also asked about the availability of books for research purposes, noting that there didn't appear to be as many as previously. Ms Browse acknowledged that there were fewer books, claiming that part of the problems was due to lack of space, but adding that the free request system did allow books to be quickly obtained. She also acknowledged that old books about St Andrews might have been part of the Hay Fleming collection, which moved the university library and could be accessed there. If there were any problems with access of that collection Ms Browse said she'd be happy to speak to the university Librarian.

Ms Smith commented on the lack of availability of a core textbook for her daughter at the Library. She asked who decided on what should be the stock at a library. Ms Browse in reply said that there was a team of library staff who made decisions about library stock. It was done partly by size and space, but also partly by demand.

Ms Rowe compared the library facilities at Lowestoft, which she had previously experienced, claiming that it was considerably larger than St Andrews. She wondered why St Andrews had in her view such a small stock. Ms Browse in reply said that library stock was based partly on catchments population and St Andrews library was comparable with other libraries in similar sized catchments in other Fife towns.

Mr Crichton asked about the requests service and how customers are contacted when their books have arrived. Ms Browse thought that it was mostly by phone, with emails where available.

4. Fife Councillors

4.1. Frances Melville – absent

4.2. Bill Sangster

4.2.1. Burst Water Mains – Church Street

This area is closed until the 6th August for repair work

4.2.2. Puddles – Scores/North Castle Street

These had been reported to Fife Council for action.

4.2.3. Seats on the Scores

Cllr Sangster had made enquires about the replacement of seats along the Scores at the University end which he said appeared to have disappeared.

4.2.4. Seats on Church Square

These are being repainted following uplift during the Lammas Market

4.2.5. St Andrews in Bloom

Tubs have been removed during the Lammas from South Street.

4.2.6. Pavement outside Ladyhead Bookshop

Ms Rowe commented about the poor state of the pavement on the North Castle Street side of the Ladyhead Bookshop, which she said was in poor condition, and was supposed to have been repaired. Cllr Sangster agreed to get it checked out.

4.2.7. Gull Problem in South Street

Ms Smith met a local property owner before the meeting who had complained about the presence of the gulls, which try to breed on the roofs. Cllr Sangster in reply said that it was the same problem last year. Ms Smith asked what the Council did about gulls? One option was to pay the Council to remove the gulls. Cllr Waterston mentioned an initiative between Fife Council and the East Enders Association. He added that there wasn't any known solution other than private householders taking steps to discourage gulls using rooftops. He also thought that one of the biggest problems was black bags, which then gulls exploit, partly due to shortage of natural food sources.

Cllr Sangster also added that the problem had been particularly bad this year in the Hope Park Church and Howard Place area because of the nature of the roof areas. He felt it was the responsibility of the homeowners to sort out the problems, possibly by preventative measures aimed at stopping access to potential nesting sites or removing nests and eggs. Cllr Sangster had suggested to local homeowners that they investigate setting up a speaker system, which emitted the sound of a hawk, thus frightening away the gulls.

4.2.8. Hot Water Temperature – Church Square Toilets

Ms Smith expressed concern about the high temperature of the water in the Church Square toilets. She felt that a sign mentioning the fact was not sufficient and wondered whether there was any thermostatic control. Cllr Sangster agreed to investigate the matter.

4.3. Robin Waterston

4.3.1. Former Landfill Site – West Sands

There has been concern expressed by the Ranger Service about erosion at this site at the far end of the West Sands and what could be released into the surrounding environment. Cllr Waterston reported that an intrusive site check was going to take place in the next few months. Mrs Denyer wondered if there might be anything toxic. Cllr Waterston in reply indicated that the aim of the site check would be to determine what was in the site and make it safe. Records from the site, which closed in the 1960s, were incomplete.

4.4. Dorothea Morrison

4.4.1. Flower Tub at End of Bogward Road/Hepburn Gardens

Cllr Morrison had been contacted by a constituent, who had heard about the imminent visit of the Beautiful Scotland judges, and was concerned about the state of a planter in the above location. The said planter was full of weeds. Ms Smith reassured Cllr Morrison that the judges wouldn't be going past that planter and suggested that the constituent was free to weed the planter and plant it out with flowers.

4.4.2. Changes in Common Good Fund

There are proposals to change the way the Common Good Fund monies are distributed. The main proposal is to allow delegation of decisions for amounts up to £5000 to officials. Cllr Morrison said that this made her and her Councillor colleagues unhappy, and they were planning to take up the matter with Finance and Asset Management. Mr Crichton asked for more clarification on this proposed change. Cllr Morrison explained that while there would still be consultation with ward members under the new scheme, the final decision would be made by an official in Fife Council. She was trying to get the present system retained. Mr Crichton asked why an application by the Festival Committee for £1000 had been refused and only £500 awarded. Cllr Morrison explained that due to the funds being low they felt that it would be fairer to give the reduced award, to ensure that money still remained for other worthy applications. Cllr Sangster reminded the meeting that the funds going into the Common Good Fund have been reduced because the income from the Lammas, which was a major source, has been steadily reduced. This was partly due to a reduction in rents and also costs for policing etc, which are now imposed. Cllr Sangster was concerned about the future outlook for funds from this source and the resultant impact upon the Common Good Fund. Cllr Morrison reiterated her desire for the system to remain unchanged. She felt that local knowledge was vital, particularly when funds were low and there was a need to know how to best use the funds. Mr Fett asked if there was any way to influence the amount of money put into the Common Good Fund? Cllr Sangster explained that the Common Good Fund income was influenced by the rents from the Lammas Market. As mentioned earlier rents have reduced in recent years. Cllr Waterston said that the situation re such funds was quite complicated. He explained how the local councillors are consulted and then the requests go to the East Area Committee. That Committee usually accepted the advice of the local

councillors. He felt that it was inappropriate for the requests to go to the East Area Committee and thought that it was better if the four local members and the Community Council dealt with the applications. He thought that the proposals put forward were quite reasonable. They would take the Area Committee out of the equation, and would allow local members to advise the Council Officer charged with Common Good matters, of their views on applications. He also commented that the Scottish Charities Regulator wasn't happy with the present system, so changes might be welcome. Mr Crichton suggested that the Community Council should write to support the idea that local members should decide all applications.

Secretary to write on behalf of Community Council to object to changes.

4.4.3. Availability of Planning Applications in Local Offices

Cllr Morrison also touched on the issue of the availability of paper plans in local offices. She recognised that there was an attempt by the Council to reduce paper use, but felt that partly because not everyone could access the internet to view plans, that plans should still be available, or at least plans likely to raise some comment. Cllr Sangster added that the decision to stop having plans available at the local office was to bring the area into line with the west and central areas where plans are not available in local offices. Dr Goudie commented that the Council was under pressure from the Scottish Government to move to eplanning. Cllr Morrison thought that it was a bit premature for the Scottish Government to force eplanning on the population before better access to eplanning was available to the average member of the public.

5. Planning Committee

5.1 Meeting with Alistair Hamilton

Ms Rowe reported on a Planning Committee meeting with Alistair Hamilton. This had been called to discuss the access to paper copies of plans. Ms Rowe thought that it had been useful and hoped that she would be able to continue receiving plans. Dr Goudie commented upon the attempt to force through electronic versions of plans, saying that he thought it was extremely difficult to work with electronic versions, compared to having the paper copies to scrutinise. He could not foresee the system becoming any more user friendly in the near future. He talked about the need for very large screens to do the plans any justice and even then it would be impossible to compare sheets illustrating before and after. Cllr Sangster commented that the Council still intended to have paper copies and that everyone should be able to have a look at these copies. Ms Smith added that paper copies would have to be specifically requested. Dr Goudie thought that Alistair Hamilton while indicating that paper copies would still be available for the Community Council to inspect was indicating that there could still be a change to electronic in a year or two. Cllr Sangster agreed about the difficulty of viewing plans online. Mr Bain commented on the size of monitors, which would be required to get anything like a decent view of plans, and the quality of scanning documents was commented upon by Mr Marks and Ms Smith.

5.2. Departure Hearing – Crerar Hotel Proposals

Ms Smith asked if anyone was representing the Community Council at this hearing. Ms Rowe thought that Mr Finlay might be involved, but had passed the paperwork to Mr Reed, so couldn't be certain. If necessary Dr Goudie or herself would attend for the Community Council.

6. Matters Arising

6.1. Bandstand Concerts

Kilrymont Rotary Club has approached the Community Council with a proposal to possibly run the Bandstand Concerts for a three-year period. Ms Smith proposed that the meeting vote on the proposal. There was unanimous agreement that the Kilrymont Rotary Club's proposal be accepted. There was also discussion about an approach via Councillor Sangster by Dysart Colliery Band to play at the Bandstand for a cost of £300. Discussion followed about whether the funding of that concert. As there was only £300 left in the Bandstand account and some of that was already committed, Mr Crichton asked if there were any unallocated funds in Community Council accounts. Mr Fett reported that the Community Council had £1073.81, which was accumulated interest, which could be used towards payment of the Dysart Colliery Band. Ms Smith proposed that £200 of this unallocated funds could be used for the Dysart Colliery Band payment. Ms Smith asked Cllr Sangster to alert the Dysart Colliery Band to our decision to pay for their concert expenses. Mr Crichton queried the source of the funds, but it was agreed in the end to commit funds as discussed. Cllr Sangster to arrange for the chairs for the band to be taken to and from the bandstand. They are stored at the Victory Memorial Hall and are owned by the Community Council. Cllr

Sangster asked about the use of the chairs by Kilrymont Rotary. Ms Smith suggested that Kilrymont Rotary could be offered the chairs as part of the agreement to run the bandstand concerts.

6.2. Beautiful Scotland Judges Visit

Mr Crichton reported on the planned route of the visit and photo opportunities he had arranged. The route will go from Ken's house, up to the harbour, then the War Memorial, the Preservation Trusts garden, St Savlators, North Street and Hope Park Church. At the latter there will be a photo opportunity with the special needs children, the Madras Green flag and the Madras teacher involved in the project. Cllr Sangster asked if the route would take in the Martyr's monument as he has got a group of musicians to be at the bandstand playing Scottish music when the judges pass that way. This will include a visit to the recycling centre. Ms Smith suggested that anyone able to spare time to help in a final tidy up the following day could give his or her details to Mr Crichton.

6.3. Luxury Tourism Awards – update

Mr Marks reported that he had emailed Patrick Loughlin on this subject. Advice he'd got back from Patrick Loughlin had indicated some scepticism about the awards. Mr Loughlin thought that it had the appearance of a commercial venture, which might benefit Lugano out of season, but had little other evidence of having connections with major operators etc.

6.4. New St Andrews Hospital Name – Short List

A letter had been received from the team overseeing the project with an attached list of proposed names. There was a request to return the form with the preferred choice of name. Ms Smith suggested that members fill in the forms and return to the project team.

6.5. Reports from Representatives

6.5.1. Leuchars Community Forum

Mr Fraser reported on his recent attendance with Mr Paul. The only item of possible interest related to an item brought up by Mr Paul. It related to the Royal Engineers TA Unit based at RAF Leuchars. They are looking for things to do to keep up their skills. However there were two qualifying aspects to the offer, one being a refusal to do anything that Fife Council ought to be doing, secondly they would need to be supplied with the necessary materials for any construction work.

6.5.2. Travel Plan Update

Ms Rowe reported on contacts with Mr Dove and with Mr Stewart, Traffic Manager in an attempt to get someone to make a presentation to the Community Council without success. She'd been informed about a letter to be sent out about a public meeting, which will be held locally on the 4th September about the travel plan. Mr Marks confirmed receipt of a letter indicating that such a meeting was being planned. Ms Rowe was asked how she felt it was going. She replied that it was slow progress, and there seemed to be little agreement about the buses. Cllr Sangster commented that he thought that there was now a realisation of a need for a bus service, and hopefully more details would be discussed at the next committee meeting later this week.

Ms Rowe also reported that she was disappointed at the poor attendance by representatives from other Community Councils. She felt that a lot of officials were in attendance. Cllr Sangster added that he felt that a good bus service and related public transport facilities were needed to reduce the need to use cars. Mr Crichton thought that there should be a combination of the shuttle service and the Park & Ride. Mr Fett suggested that a petition might be a possibility to show public support for better public transport.

Ms Rowe reported that she had been asked how she got to the doctor if she wasn't well. She had told the meeting that she would take a taxi if she wasn't well as she had no one to take her by car. She had indicated that this was a quite common means for elderly residents getting to the doctor if not well, but didn't know if her views were being taken on board. Cllr Sangster commented on the availability of a Dial-a-Ride system elsewhere in Fife, but didn't know if it would come to this area. Ms Rowe also commented on the limited parking, even for staff. There are only 180 parking spaces, with no staff guaranteed a space. Staff who require to regularly use their cars to go out to visit patients could struggle to park in the hospital. Cllr Sangster informed the meeting that there would be cycle parking.

6.5.3. East Sands Leisure Centre Liaison Committee

Ms Smith asked about the future for this committee on which the Community Council had a representative. Cllr Sangster said that it was uncertain due to the change over to the new Trust status, but he'd be checking out with the manager whether any user group/committee was going to be set up soon. It was felt that the old system had been working well, so he couldn't see why it shouldn't continue. Ms Smith mentioned concerns about a free-swimming initiative during school holidays. She felt that some parents were using it as a sort of crèche, leaving their children for lengthy periods, which was having an effect upon the way staff, could manage the swimming area. She was concerned, as were other parents she knew about the ability of the staff to cope with the behaviour of some of the youngsters left by parents, and had mentioned the matter to the centre manager, Bill Donn. She recognised that there was a warning system in operation, but felt that it was difficult to police, especially as the pool could have several dozen youngsters at busy times.

7. Committee Reports

7.1 Recreation Committee

7.1.1. St Andrews in Bloom

Mr Bain reported that judging is to take place this week. He reported that someone is needed to go round later in the week to knock on doors etc.

7.1.2. Best Kept Town

Mr Bain reported that St Andrews is in the final for the Best Kept Town, with judging this coming Friday.

7.2. General Purposes Committee

7.2.1. Laser Printer

The Community Council laser printer is to be put on Freecycle.

7.3. 200 Club

7.3.1. 200 Club Draw

No draw this month

7.3.2. 200 Club Grants & Membership

7.4. Health, Education and Welfare Committee

No meeting

8. New Business

8.1. Transition Towns

For information. Mr Marks suggested that members could check out the idea on google. Mr Yarr will be happy to give a presentation at the next Community Council meeting. Cllr Waterston suggested that the presentation should be put back a month, as the students whom he thought should be involved wouldn't be back. Ms Smith thought that there wasn't any hurry in this matter and that Mr Yarr could be invited to speak at the October meeting. It was agreed to check out this possibility

Secretary to contact Mr Yarr about a possible change of date for presentation

8.2. Proposed Re-organisation of Trust Funds

For information. The period of consultation has been extended and there won't be a decision taken until October. Discussed in detail earlier in meeting

9. Reports from Office Bearers

9.1. Chair

No report

9.2. Treasurer

Financial report circulated at meeting. There was brief discussion about possible ways to give away more money to worthy local causes. Mr Fett suggested a poster campaign, and Ms Smith contemplated approaching local groups to see if there was any need for small grants. Dr Goudie queried the use of funds just for such purposes; saying that there might be other ways the funds could be well used. He cited the example of costs, which might need to be incurred at planning, enquires and for consultancy work, as has been done in the past. He mentioned that the Preservation Trust had used a professional legal person at an enquiry whereas the Community Council has depended upon amateurs to present their case in such situations.

9.3 Secretary

9.3.1. Correspondence

See appendix A. Mr Marks also mentioned that he's been getting an increasing number of emails and phone calls from a wide range of enquirers on all matter of subjects. He thought that because his email and phone number would come up on the web site, people were tending to think of him as a contact for the whole of St Andrews!

9.3.2. Poppy Wreath for Remembrance Day

Mr Crichton asked about the ordering of the wreath. The secretary confirmed that he'd ordered and received it last year. An order could be put in soon, with an insert with the Community Council name.

10. Any Other Competent Business

10.1. Guardbridge Paper Mill march

Mrs Denyer reported that she'd joined the march in relation to the closure of the Paper Mill and was disappointed not to see more people from St Andrews on the march.