

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Minutes

approved

December 1998

Meeting was 7pm Monday 7th December 1998 in the Burgh Chambers, Queens Gardens.

Chair: Donald Macgregor

Present:

Community Councillors: Craig Barrett, Maries Cassells, Kenneth Fraser, Ian Goudie, Hugh Gray, Chris Lesurf, Pete Lindsay, Dennis Macdonald, Murdo Macdonald, Lindsay Murray, Cynthia Tero, Chris Young

Student Reps: none

Nominated: Bill Sangster, Caroline Jack

Fife Councillors: Patrick Cassells, Sheila Hill, Jane Ann Liston, Frances Melville.

1. Apologies for Absence

Received:

Ken Crichton, Natalie Grant, Dan Johnson, David Scott Kinnen, Helen Lawrie, Frank Riddell, Archie Strachan

2. Contributions from Members of the Public

2.0 Mr Christie

Spoke briefly about James Wilson, the Burgess roll and a donation to the Hay-Fleming library

2.1. Police Report

Sgt ??? answered questions:

Q.

Murdo Macdonald asked how the campaign on bicycle lights was going, as he had noticed no improvement.

A.

Sgt replied that Vehicle Defect Rectification forms were being used. Unlit cyclists are issued one of these then have 7 days to purchase lights and present proof at the police station or suffer a fine. He then admitted that only three had been issued in the last month. The point was made that this was unlikely to have a huge effect on the problem.

Q.

Chris Lesurf asked about unattended cars left with the engine running - it is obviously dangerous, is it illegal?

A.

Sgt confirmed that it is an offence, but that Police tend to warn the offending driver of the dangers of the vehicle being stolen rather than the chance of children accidentally releasing it. It is an offence against pollution laws.

2.2. Wind Power proposals

(NEFCOM (N.E. Fife Community Wind Power) propose to build 3 windfarms - clusters of 3 turbines on major hills about Fife. They currently have planning applications for research meteorological masts on the sites.)

NEFCOM, represented by Gordon Pay and Mike Tough, spoke first. Gordon Pay outlined the general case for wind power. Global warming, caused by the burning of fossil fuels raising the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is a threat to the whole world. The Government aims for 10% of UK energy needs to be met from 'renewable' energy sources such as wind power. Government guidance on renewable energy projects acknowledges that Scotland is well placed to benefit from wind power and that wind power must necessarily be sited in open visible places to be effective.

Mike Tough went on to describe the proposed developments. The three sites are Drumcarrow Craig near Strathkinness Flagstaff Hill (Largo) and Lucklaw Hill (Balmullo). Each site would

have 3 x 750kW turbines which they calculate will give each site the capacity to supply an average of 7% of domestic consumption in NE Fife - 21% in total. The total height of the turbines will be 70m from the site ground level to tip of blade. There will also be a hard-core access road for installation & maintenance, a switchgear hut and connection to the local electricity grid by small 3 wire 'telegraph pole style' power lines.

FLAG, Fife Landscape Action Group's Claire Enders then spoke. They have no objection to wind farms and renewable energy but consider that NE Fife is not an appropriate place for such developments as it is densely populated and dependent on tourism which is dependent on landscape. FLAG believes that the NEFCOM proposal contravenes several points of the Local Plan. The wind farm sites on top of prominent hills will dominate the landscape and be visible from a large number of towns and villages in Fife. Other wind farm operators have chosen unpopulated/non-tourist areas and have specific policies to avoid dominating the landscape. NEFCOM is a cynical attempt to profit not to provide for local people - Fife is over provided for energy at the moment. She ended by pointing out that this was essentially an industrial development in rural land and listed a number of local organisations (residents and preservation groups) supporting FLAG.

A joint question session followed:

Several people asked about the hilltop site - surely other places have low land wind farms?

FLAG says it is a business decision to increase NEFCOM profits. NEFCOM response is that they are bidding for consideration under the Scottish Renewable Option 3 scheme. This requires that NEFCOM makes a business case that it will generate enough power. Power generated is proportional to the windspeed cubed and windspeed is 25% higher on top of a hill than at ground level. Asked about the economics they expect to be able to produce electricity cheaper than coal or nuclear station and about the same cost as gas. Capital cost is £500,000 per installed turbine.

Asked about research and the current planning application NEFCOM explained they have had small masts erected to measure windspeed and are now wanting to erect full-size mast for more detailed figures.

The current communications mast on Drumcarrow hill is estimated by NEFCOM to be 30m high, or slightly less than half the size of a turbine.

FLAG was asked what positive contribution they were making to carbon dioxide reduction. They favour energy conservation rather than producing more energy. NEFCOM says conservation alone is not enough, that alternatives to burning fossil fuels must be used for energy production.

Asked whether NEFCOM had considered other renewable energy sources they had, but wind power is proven and the technology is available off the shelf. This is not the case for example for wave power.

In questions on the appearance of the turbines FLAG pointed out that these are industrial structures not windmills and accused NEFCOM of refusing to undertake various studies or surveys on their effects. NEFCOM pointed out that they are in discussions with Fife Council Planning Service on what studies need to be done as they have not submitted application for the full structures yet. Asked if transparent blades could be used to make the wind turbines less visible they pointed out that as well as problems of material strength transparent blades were dangerous to birds. For strength the tower would be steel and the blades probably wood laminate. It has been found that painting the structure white reduces long distance visibility.

2.3 St Andrews 1998 Foundation

Cllr Patrick Cassells spoke on the intention for form this charitable trust. The intention is to raise funding for St Andrews related project where it is not available from Fife Council. The foundation would operate as the Scottish end and distribution point of international fundraising efforts - particularly through the US Caledonian Society. To this end it would identify worthy projects in town - anything from a new theatre to a rollerblading rink. It would also arrange the *quid pro quo* for donations such as guaranteed times on the Old Course and pewter/silver/gold pilgrim badges reflecting size of donation.

Trustees proposed to be the four Fife Councillors for St Andrews, the Principal of the University, Chairs of the Preservation Trust and Community Council and one other Community Councillor (probably an officer). The two representatives of from the Community Council are to reflect its status as an elected statutory authority.

Donald Macgregor reported that he had a copy of the draft constitution for the trust and sought

approval of Community Council to go ahead. It was felt that this was all a bit much to digest immediately and was referred to the General Purposes committee plus any other interested councillors to discuss and report to next month's meeting.

General Purposes to comment & report

This then lead into discussion of the harbour. The "Chariots of Fire" run raised 'a four figure sum'. Posters for the harbour campaign were circulated, but Lindsay Murray pointed out that they omitted the essential information of where to send donations (to the Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council Trust Fund, c/o 8 Dempster Terrace).

Chris Lesurf asked about the barrier (shown in the poster) that now closes off the pier. Cllr Patrick Cassells said it will be removed as soon as repairs can be carried out and make it safe to do so. Lindsay Murray/Cllr Frances Melville suggested that a collection box be set up, but Hugh Gray was against this. He pointed out that it would have to be pretty substantial to withstand vandalism/theft. Cllr Patrick Cassells will raise the matter at the next Harbour Trust meeting.

4. Matters arising from last meeting

4.1. Next Meeting

(from Nov 5.3.1.)

There is now a schedule of meetings for 1999 displayed on the Community Council noticeboard outside the Children's Library.

4.2. Streetname for Lawhead North development

(from Nov 5.3.2)

Although Forbes Place has been passed to Fife Council officials there was further discussion, particularly with Cllr Sheila Hill proposing that Alexander Berry a student of the university in the 1800s and later benefactor, be acknowledged. She proposed that decision that had been delegated to our Planning Committee be overturned as Fife Council will not formally consider the naming until East Area Development committee 19th Jan 1999. She also pointed out that the access road to the Lawhead School itself (off which the Lawhead North development is accessed) needs a name - perhaps that could be Forbes <something> and the development itself be Berry Close.

(I now have further info on Berry from Phil Hill which I'll include in the January agenda - pl)

Lindsay Murray suggested that the late David Niven be commemorated at the Argyle Street Development.

4.3. The Blue Stane

(from Nov 6.5.3.iii)

The suggestion that if the stone is to move it should go to the Victory Memorial Hall garden was generally agreed to be a good idea. Cllr Frances Melville will take up with appropriate council department.

Secretary to write also.

5. Reports

5.3. Secretary

5.3.1. Forthcoming Events

The following organisations are pencilled in to address us:

- January: ???? on Subsidised bus routes, Cosmos Centre Youth Workers on current developments
- February: Castle Furniture project
- March: Fife Healthcare on "Integrated Assessment"

5.3.2. Citizens Advice & Rights Fife

(from Oct 4.1.)

Donald Macgregor to be proposed to CARF to represent us.

5.3.3. Castle Furniture Representative

Decision on replacement representative to the project to wait on February when Castle

Furniture speak to us.

5.3.4. Flags

(From Nov 6.3.7 via Publicity Committee)

Purchase of a new Saltire flag to be dealt with by General Purposes, fundraising from old flag by Publicity committees.

**General Purposes to report
Publicity to report**

5.3.5. St Andrew's Week hours

Ken Crichton (St Andrews Week rep) to raise problem of access to 9-5 events at next St Andrews Week meeting.

Ken Crichton to raise

5.3.7. Parking Policy in Fife

(from Oct 5.1.2)

Bill Sangster, for the Merchant's Association, pointed out that the reason given for the delay of implementation of parking charges in Leven (driving trade from the town centre to out-of-town supermarkets) is precisely the problem they see here with parking charges.

5.3.10 Bus Services

Gordon Hanning booked to speak to us at January meeting.

5.3.11. Fife Constabulary Policing Plan 99-02

Secretary to write suggesting (i) appointment of replacement Community Safety Officer, (ii) increased Police familiarisation exercises in secondary schools in line with Chief Constables' recent speech calling for young people to be taken seriously by Police.

Secretary to write

5.3.12. Other correspondence

Benefit take-up project - Chris Young to attend.

Millennium Events - passed to our Millennium Committee, NB Ken Fraser should be listed as convenor on the Community Councillors list.

5.4. Community Safety Panel

To be covered under item 5.3.11

6. Matters Raised by Committees

6.2. Golf

Murdo Macdonald reported the committee is to meet with Fife Council Law & Administration dept to discuss the poor publicity for the Links reform consultation process. Many people have been unaware of it until the petition.

Hugh Gray detects dwindling enthusiasm for the 'reform' at Fife Council as it will have to wait for the Scottish Parliament - they have missed the boat for getting a Scottish bill through Westminster.

6.4. Leisure & Recreation

Entries for the Photographic competition on display at the Crawford Centre

Images of St Andrews exhibition had 574 visitors in total, felt to be very successful particularly by the Art Club who'll be happy to mount further such exhibitions in conjunction with us.

Senior Citizen's party: 230 guests confirmed. Members of Community Council welcome to help out at 4pm 15th Dec Student's Union.

Dennis Macdonald reported that he was looking for prizes/gifts for the attendees from local businesses. Pete Lindsay reported that he'd been approached by Archie Muir (former community councillor) on Ken Crichton's prompting to print letters for the same purpose. Dennis Macdonald to sort this out with Ken Crichton/Archie Muir.

200 Club

£50 Mr A.C. Rutherford, £30 Mrs D. Scott, £20 Mrs N. Taylor, £15 Mr R.A. Wood.

6.5. Planning

Report circulated by Ian Goudie

Report of the PLANNING COMMITTEE Meetings of 13.11.98 and 30.11.98 for the Community Council Meeting of 7 December 1998.

1. Departure Hearings

(i) **Craigtoun.** Mrs Murray represented the Community Council at the hearing on November 12 on the two applications that cover the proposed erection of 36 ancillary hotel accommodation units, the conversion / alteration / extension of out-buildings to form 4 ancillary hotel accommodation units and the erection of a further 2 units. She highlighted, in particular, the visual impact of the proposed development.

(ii) **Kingask.** Dr Riddell spoke for the Community Council at the hearing on November 19 on the application to erect a hotel, ancillary units, conference and leisure facilities etc. The core of our objection was as outlined in last month's planning minute. He also prepared and presented more realistic photo-montages of the proposed hotel than those which had been submitted by the developer.

(iii) **Gateway Centre** The hearing will be at 7 p.m. on Thursday 17 December in Room 009 of the Kilrymont Building. Revised plans for the centre have been received.

2. New hospital site

A press release was issued by Dr Riddell following a discussion by the Planning Committee of the announcement by the Perth & Kinross Healthcare Trust that they still believe a greenfield site to be the best option and that they will seek exemption from the provisions of the recently completed Strategic Study. This provoked great concern, as did their declared intention of re-opening public consultation on the matter.

Following these exchanges, Mrs Cathy Adamson attended the meeting of the Planning Committee on November 30. She explained that the transference of control to the new Trust next spring was causing a delay in the process of going out to tender under the PEt scheme. Members of the committee stressed that, as the Strategic Study had recognised, the town does not wish to see development on the southern hillside. The St Leonard's Fields site remains the preferred option for the town, and any delay that might result in the loss of that site is viewed with alarm.

3. Scooniehill Farm

In response to a letter from the developers outlining their plans for two golf courses, a clubhouse and a golf academy etc., Mr Lindsay wrote thanking them for the information, and pointing out our agreed stances with regard to the southern hillside and Kingask. He indicated that we would be grateful for a copy of the plans once they are submitted.

4. Planning Applications.

(i) **93 Market Street.** Mrs Murray submitted comments on some aspects of the proposal to erect 5 houses, convert an office to a further house, etc. We see the proposed development as over-intensive, are concerned about emergency access, and would wish to see grey slate used on all elevations (rather than using modern concrete pantiles on some).

(ii) **144 Market Street (Victoria Wine Co.)** Mr Crichton agreed to enquire about the proposed colour scheme for the new shopfront.

(iii) **101-103 Market Street.** Mrs Murray agreed to submit an objection to the application for a major rear extension to form a huge new shop, and to examine its compliance with the Council's infill policy. There is also interaction with the proposed houses at 93. Market Street, some of which would look out at the long blank wall of this development.

(iv) **Pipeland Steading.** Dr Riddell agreed to object to the application to realign four proposed new dwellings into a position in which they would be significantly more visible from the town. Such a move would not be compatible with the findings of the Strategic Study.

(v) **4/8 Abbey Street.** Mrs Murray agreed to object to the proposed new flats. We see the proposed height as excessive and would wish one storey to be removed from the plans. We also believe the rear of the building should be redesigned to avoid the use of balconies.

5. Street Name

The planning committee decided that the new road in Lawhead North site was not an appropriate one to name after former Provost Niven, Noting the University's long-standing connection with the site, Mr Lindsay wrote on our behalf to propose that it be called Forbes Place.

6.5.1.i

Cllr Frances Melville noted that the Craigtoun applications are recommended for approval.

6.5.1.iii

We have not responded to the revised plans because they don't seem to make a substantial difference to our original objections.

6.5.2.

Chris Lesurf commented from her Health Council experience that while the Healthcare Trust speak of need to have room for expansion as a reason for preferring an 'uncompromised' or greenfield site they can't or won't actually say what expansion might be needed for.

Dennis Macdonald warned of the dangers of a greenfield site being the stalking horse for full development of the southern hillside by such as Muir Development.

6.5.2. Scooniehill Golf Development

Dennis Macdonald asked if we had a position for or against this development. As the plans are not available to us yet this remains to be seen.

Caroline Jack suggested part of this closest to the town could be developed as playing field/park land. Dennis Macdonald suggested that such 'planning gain' could be extracted as the price for the rest of the development.

6.7. Youth Committee

Reported a Youth Disco scheduled for 23rd Dec in Victory Memorial Hall.

Cllr Frances Melville passed a letter from Transportation Service on bus fares for young people to Youth Committee (Nov 6.7.1). She also reported that there will be a Community Safety event for young people next spring - details (will be) passed to the Youth Committee.

7. Matters raised by Fife Councillors

7.1. Cllr Frances Melville (West)

7.1.1. 'Internet' Café

Cllr Melville made known her politer feelings on the decision by Sheriff Lucy Keen allowing the 'Internet' Café. She made it clear that if there is the least sign of trouble or breaking of the licence at this site Licensing committee will act.

The 'Internet' Café intends to have 57 gaming machines, 26 bingo seats and 10 internet terminals. Cllr Jane Ann Liston (also member of the Licensing ctte) noted that another such café with the same owners and used as an example in the application has no longer has internet terminals when she visited it over the summer despite still being an 'internet' café.

Hugh Gray asked why there was no objection in view of the proportion of gaming machines. Cllrs Frances Melville and Jane Ann Liston explained that the Sheriff did not seem to take note of the numbers. There had been objections submitted to Planning Service by the Community Council but the objections had not been competent for planning purposes. They would have been valid for licensing but could not be passed on by Planning. It is intended that in future cases like this Planning may be able to suggest more appropriate destinations for such objections (though will not be able to pass them on themselves).

Fife Council's new Town Centre policies are now be against further developments like this entertainment arcade.

7.1.2. Waste Paper

Cllr Melville noted that despite Fife's abandonment of wastepaper recycling Perth & Kinross

Council was expanding its scheme.

Ian Goudie suggested that we write to Grace Morris head teacher at Dunino Primary School who have recently won a recycling award. Generally agreed.

Secretary to write

There was some discussion of the possibility of arranging private enterprise paper recycling initiative in St Andrews. More information to be circulated for January.

Recycling to go on Jan agenda

7.1.3. Congratulations

Cllr Melville finished by congratulating the members of the Community Council involved in last year's St Andrew's Week activities.

7.2. Cllr Patrick Cassells (Central)

7.2.1. Byre Theatre

Building has commenced, completion expected in May 2000. From January 18-22 there will be a public exhibition of architects drawing of the new building at the Victory Memorial Hall.

Hugh Gray was of the opinion that it was Fife Council's fault that the site had been idle for so long.

7.3. Cllr Sheila Hill (South)

7.3.1. Gibson House

The old people's home has received a good report from ????

7.4. Cllr Jane Ann Liston (South East)

7.4.1. Recycling

- cardboard??

7.4.2. Buses

There is a new area manager of Fife Scottish buses, who appears to be more amenable to comment than the previous incumbent.

8. Other Matters of Public Concern

8.1. Leuchars 'Interchange'

Dennis Macdonald commented on the Leuchars railway station bus turning circle and pointed out the tendency for buses (for St Andrews) to whiz round and away just before a train comes in... It can hardly be termed an interchange. Cllr Jane Ann Liston agreed and pointed out she's been campaigning on this and related matter for some time.

8.2. Golf - Links petition

Cynthia Tero asked how well the cutout-and-send petition voucher in the local press had worked. Murdo Macdonald pointed out that these had gone to Fife Council so the outcome was unknown as yet.

8.3. Wheelie Bins

Cynthia Tero raised the matter of bins continuously on the streets, often outside the wrong house - particular problem at Melbourne Place.

8.4. Archæology

CT further asked a question about old bones - *check details with her*

9.0 Sherry & Mince Pies

Supplied by Pete Lindsay & Jane Ann Liston - Happy Christmas all.
