

Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

Minutes - January 1999

Meeting was 7pm Monday 11th January 1999 in the Burgh Chambers, Queens Gardens.

Present:

Chair: Frank Riddell

Community Councillors: Craig Barrett, Ken Crichton, Kenneth Fraser, Ian Goudie, Hugh Gray, David Kinnen, Helen Lawrie, Chris Lesurf, Pete Lindsay, Dennis Macdonald, Lindsay Murray, Joseph Peterson, Archie Strachan, Chris Young.

Student Reps: Natalie Grant, Daniel Johnson

Nominated/Co-opted: Bill Sangster, Caroline Jack

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

Young Citizen of the Year Award

Archie Strachan introduced the joint recipients of the award: Erica Ellison and Graeme Broom (both 17).

"Since the Madras College Interact Club was chartered in 1996 it has raised over £4,000 for local national and international charities as well as assisting in other funding and community activities. Graeme Broom as International convertor has this year played a major part in this fund raising. He has organised shoe boxes full of Christmas presents for Romania and is at present applying for a Rotary grant to replace the primary school building destroyed in the Bangladesh floods. Graeme is also involved in local youth work.

The President this session of the Interact Club is Erica Ellison and Erica as well as chairing meetings raised over £300 for Macmillan Cancer Relief by organising the "World's Biggest Coffee Morning". Monies raised have gone to help buy medical equipment at the Cottage Hospital & Ninewells, taking out disadvantaged children to Craigtoun, wells for a village in Bangladesh and to many other known charities.

Graeme is being awarded for his leadership and involvement in St.Andrews life and Erica for her leadership of and as the figurehead for the good work done locally and throughout the world, hence bringing credit to our Royal Burgh of St.Andrews, by the Interact Club of Madras College."

Death of Patrick Cassells

I know that you all will have been as shocked as I was by the untimely death of Councillor Patrick Cassells. These things remind us of human mortality. How doubly unfortunate this sad event is when his widow, Maries, is one of our own members.

Whether one was on the same side of the political fence as Patrick or not there could be nothing but admiration for the way that he carried out his public duties and commitments as a councillor for the town. He was a man of stature, not only in the physical sense we all knew so well, but also in the way he, like all of us here, cared for St Andrews. He had a vision of St Andrews that few others holding public office have had recently and he was prepared to work untiringly on behalf of the citizens of our beautiful town to achieve that vision. Part of tonight's agenda - the establishment of a charitable trust for St Andrews incorporating this Council the University and the Preservation Trust was one small part of that vision. I know that you would wish that a letter of condolence be sent to Maries from this Council.

It is appropriate, therefore, that I ask that you all rise with me now for one minute's silence and in so doing signify your recognition of Cllr Patrick Cassells' work on behalf of our town.

*Frank Riddell
Vice Chair*

1. Apologies for Absence

overlooked!

2. Contributions from Members of the Public

2.1. Subsidised Bus Routes

Gordon Hanning of Fife Council's Transportation Service. Explained that it is up to the commercial bus operators to decide which services to run. This is not directly influenced by Fife Council. There are no subsidised routes within St Andrews at the moment, but two projects for this year are a trial Park & Ride scheme for 3 months over the summer and trying to sort out the Bus/Rail link at Leuchars - the bus operators not having responded satisfactorily to suggestions that they meet the trains rather than just miss them.

Q. Ken Fraser asked about timetable changes to the town S1-3 services that has resulted in the loss of services from the outskirts to the centre of town in the 8-9am period when people will be travelling to work, increasing the likelihood that they will come in by car which, Bill Sangster pointed out, increases traffic and pressure on parking space in the centre of town.

A. Changes are due to a general restructuring of Fife Scottish services Fife-wide in response to reduced profits. They are reducing the number of drivers and buses to the point that there are insufficient left to run some normal services at the same time as school buses. As a school bus costs Fife Council about £25,000 per annum, to get other services to run at that time effectively costs the operator that much. In response to several questions Mr Hanning made it clear that normal travellers can hail and ride on school buses, though Caroline Jack pointed out that school buses are very crowded.

Q. Caroline Jack asked whether the age limit of 15 for half fare travel was reasonable.

A. This is purely a Fife Scottish decision. There is no legislation on the subject.

Q. Lindsay Murray and Archie Strachan asked questions about the St Andrews-Leuchars Rail Station link, particularly whether alternatives to Fife Scottish running buses between the two had been considered, especially rail operators running their own buses and operating through ticketing to St Andrews.

A. Legislation currently does not allow this, through the current Government's policy is to favour integration and there may be changes in a forthcoming white paper. Integration of this sort would also be useful at Markinch/Glenrothes and Dalgety Bay so the council are watching developments with interest.

2.2. Youth Development Project

Vicky Gibson spoke briefly to introduce the project to provide a Youth Café at the Victory Memorial Hall, distributing a paper summarising the background and aims. With colleagues Sue Law and Fiona Watson, Community Education Workers also involved in this, she then answered questions.

Q. Pete Lindsay asked about external support - previous initiatives with Youth Cafés and Discos had failed, he'd heard, for lack of adult volunteers to help and provide for necessary safety.

A. This time there is support from Community Education paid workers so it isn't dependent on volunteers.

Q. Lindsay Murray asked how the Café would relate to the work at the Cosmos Centre?

A. The two complement each other. The café will be a far less formal atmosphere than the club setting of the Cosmos.

The Community Council agreed to minute their full support for the café.

2.3. Police Report

Sgt Adamson explained she was newly (2 months) posted to the area, but would try to answer questions.

Q. Archie Strachan: what progress in obtaining a replacement Community Safety Officer?

A. Inspector Ritchie is still pushing for this, but no outcome yet. Pete Lindsay added that he had, as Secretary, included the requirement for a CSO in a letter to Fife Police before Christmas.

Q. Craig Barrett: has there been an upsurge in muggings and 'student bashing' or 'English accent bashing' attacks recently? He was aware of an incident that required a student to go to hospital. The Students' association representatives added that there were occasional attacks

and David Kinnen mentioned the David Russell Hall to Andrew Melville Hall path. Caroline Jack pointed out that she knew of people in Madras College who had been attacked - if there was an upsurge it wasn't specifically students or English accents being targeted.

A. Sgt Adamson was only aware of one incident since she arrived in the area but will have more information brought to February's meeting.

Q. Joseph Peterson asked whether more Police on foot about town would be possible?

A. Resources are limited. There is a car and a van which must be crewed by two officers each. Only officers over and above these will be available for foot patrols in St Andrews. The St Andrews area covers out to Kingsbarns and Balmullo hence the need to crew vehicles first. Availability of officers for foot patrols after 10pm is very variable. (See Sep 98 2.2. for more on police resources).

David Kinnen pointed out that St Andrews is fortunate to have the level of cover it does. In his home town of Penicuik, some 10,000 higher population than St Andrews) there are no locally based police after 7pm, cover coming from Dalkeith instead. Crime, he said, is soaring.

Q. Ken Crichton: putting officers on bicycles has been successful elsewhere, would it be possible here?

A. This is under discussion at the moment.

Q. Dennis Macdonald: what effects have the CCTV cameras which were bought a while ago had?

A. Don't know. Will have more information brought for February's meeting.

Q. Hugh Gray asked for an update on the campaign for cycle lights.

A. Lots of vehicle defect forms have been issued and several sets of lights bought in response, but don't have exact figures.

Craig Barrett expressed his admiration and congratulations on Police handling of the Hogmanay crowd in Market Street and the fountain area. The Sergeant agreed that it was a very good-natured crowd.

3. Minutes of 7th December

Corrections:

2.3. Collection box at the pier: Hugh Gray is against this. (Hugh Gray)

4.2. Lindsay Murray suggested that the late David Niven be commemorated at the Argyle Street development. (Lindsay Murray)

6.5.1. Applications recommended for approval were only those for Craigtoun not all as stated. (Frances Melville)

7.1.3. Congratulations were for St Andrew's week activities of the Community Council and those involved in them. (Frances Melville)

The minutes were accepted with these amendments.

4. Matters Arising

4.1. St Andrews (1998) Foundation

There was a debate on the proposal by the late Patrick Cassells to provide for a second place for a Community Councillor trustee in addition to the Chair ex-officio.

Hugh Gray proposed that the second trusteeship should be open to any community councillor rather than just to officers as suggested in the General Purposes Committee report.

Cllr Jane Ann Liston pointed out that the GP report was in line with Cllr Patrick Cassells idea that all members of the trust be ex-officio.

Hugh Gray challenged a Fife Councillor's right to speak in Community Council debate but, as Chair Frank Riddell clarified, Fife Councillors are full members of Community Council ex-officio according to both the old Constitution and the current Scheme of Administration, though with no voting rights.

After discussion two proposals were put to the vote.

1) That the Community Council recommend to the trustees that Community Council representation should be the Chair (or designated Community Councillor substitute) and one other Community Councillor, elected by the Community Council for the purpose (prop Hugh

Gray, 2nd Craig Barrett.).

2) An amendment that the second Community Council representative should be elected from amongst the Officers of the Community Council (prop Ken Crichton, 2nd Lindsay Murray).

The Amendment was defeated by 7 votes to 6.

Proposal 1 was then accepted by 7 votes to 5.

4.2. Street Name for Lawhead North Development.

There was discussion of the merits of long vs short street names and the use of Scots terms (Wynd) in preference to English (Lane).

In the matter of the road leading to Lawhead School the majority vote was for Lawhead School Wynd (Prop Helen Lawrie, 2nd Dennis Macdonald) over Lawhead Wynd (prop Pete Lindsay, 2nd Sean Dobson).

On the main issue of the name for the development itself Community Council voted by 7 to 6 to keep the original proposal of Forbes Place.

(Oops: who actually proposed & 2nd this?)

4.3. Benefit Take-up Project

Chris Young reported that there will be a 4-6 week campaign starting in march to encourage take-up of Family Credit. This will concentrate on the area south of the Kinnessburn and east of Largo Road. There will be general advertising in St Andrews and advice facilities in Langlands School and the Pipeland Road Health Centre. Along with these surgery-style facilities there will also be home visits if people prefer.

Asked which bodies are involved Chris Young read off a list of voluntary bodies associated with the project. Asked specifically about CARF (Citizens Advice & Rights Fife) he said they were involved but had not yet attended a meeting due to pressure of other commitments.

This is a pilot scheme. If it works in St Andrews South it may be extended to other areas of Fife.

The report was accepted.

4.4. Recycling

Ian Goudie reported that Kirkcaldy has paper recycling bins - which are emptied into the general waste after people have dutifully filled them with their paper for recycling.

Cllr Sheila Hill said Fife Council now has a heavy duty shredder for reducing trees etc to wood chips and mulch for recycling. Cllr Jane Ann Liston mentioned that on a recent visit to the Melville Wood landfill site she learned that it is now taking all waste from Central Fife as well as NE Fife is now being tipped there, reducing its lifetime to 3-5 years.

Ian Goudie raised the problem of wheelie bins. As predicted before their introduction in the recent high winds they have tipping and sliding along eg Lindsay Gardens after being emptied and left by the roadside. Sheila Hill reported that in view of concerns with emptied bins on Melbourne Brae blocking the pavement (December 8.3.) Cleansing Services will be adopting a 'take back to doorstep policy'.

5. Reports

5.1. Chair

5.1.1. Pier Project

Nan Taylor wrote to inform us of some fund-raising schemes: loose change is being collected in a money-bank at James Seniors - encourage friends, neighbours and colleagues to empty their pockets; the anagram competition: 25p for an entry form, closing date 30th January; Bring & Buy Sale NB not a coffee morning on the 30th January, 10am-noon, helpers for stalls and tombola much appreciated. Ken Crichton said the Leisure & Recreation committee members were too busy but Lindsay Murray, Craig Barrett, Sean Dobson, Dennis Macdonald volunteered.

Further detail on all of these from Nan Taylor 472588.

5.2. Treasurer

Report circulated.

In answer to a query: the 98-99 grant from Fife (recently received) was £2,800.

The report was accepted.

5.3. Secretary

5.3.1. Files

Ken Fraser explained that the excess material from the Secretary's files had been passed to the University Library Manuscripts Department.

5.3.2. Flag

Imminent arrival of a new flag welcomed. There was some discussion of when the flag should be flown.

Pete Lindsay to check previous practice

The report was accepted.

6. Matters Raised by Committees

6.1. General Purposes

The report was accepted.

6.2. Golf

Dennis Macdonald and Hugh Gray commented on a press release issued on behalf of the council/golf committee before Christmas, but as Murdo Macdonald and Donald Macgregor the other members of the committee were not present because of illness discussion was held over until February.

6.3. Leisure & Recreation

6.3.1. Competitions

Ken Crichton gave a list of the competitions that the Community Council is involved with or runs. These are under review for the coming year on grounds of interest and overlap with other bodies' activities. Those continued: Odd One Out, Gardening, Photographic, Art Show. Also the Christmas Party. Library competition is suspended as other groups are running similar. This will restart if the situation changes as the committee agree that use of the library should be encouraged.

6.3.2. Street Fair

Material was circulated briefly for comment. Next Street Fair meeting 26/1/99.

6.3.2. St Andrews in Bloom

The St Andrews in Bloom Committee has approached the Community Council for £250 towards hanging baskets etc as they had received a similar amount last year. It was explained that the previous payment had come from competition monies rather than the Community Council's funds and that it had not been intended as a regular payment.

There was discussion of the effectiveness of the current hanging baskets and the watering scheme. Archie Strachan expressed doubt that the current £3,500 for 5 waterings a week was effective. Cllr Frances Melville pointed out that other places spend far more on watering. Joseph Peterson's experience is that in hot and windy weather three waterings a day can be necessary for baskets to keep their condition. It is hoped that the rediscovery of the purpose built watering machine that went missing early last summer will make next year's efforts more effective. Ken Crichton will be pressing for the use of 24" baskets rather than the current 12-18" as they will hold moisture better.

The meeting agreed to the £250 on this occasion.

6.3.3. St Andrew's Week

A document was circulated. Lindsay Murray raised the name of the St Andrews Week festival. As it only occupied 5 days of programmed events last year there was a proposal in the document to use a name like "St Andrew's Days Festival". She was against this as she felt that "Days" sounded weak, and felt that "Week" sounded stronger.

6.3.4. Thank-you letters

These have been written to those involved in the Christmas tea party and the Art Festival

6.3.5. 200 Club

This month's draw: £50 Mr H Wilson, £30 Mrs D Allen, £20 Mr Myerscroft, £15 Dr D Barrie.

6.5. Planning

Ian Goudie circulated the planning committee report.

6.5.1. 'News Management'

Cllr Frances Melville expressed her fears for the conditions requiring provision of a proportion of affordable housing before other developments at John Knox Road and Craigtoun can proceed. There is a lack of 3rd party funding available at the moment and she fears the conditions may be dropped.

6.5.2. Scooniehill Golf Development

Joseph Peterson was against the proposed objection on behalf of the Community Council as he felt that not enough of the details were known and also that it was out of this council's area. Ian Goudie informed him that the Community Council, in the form of the planning committee to whom such work is delegated, had the plans and publicly available documentation and the statutory duty to comment. Lindsay Murray pointed out that anything that impinged upon St Andrews was our legitimate interest and that members of this community council had met with some of our neighbouring councils in October (see November 1998 appendix B) when we were urged to take a greater interest in developments in surrounding areas.

Dennis Macdonald asked if our response might not be ruled as out of order as Scooniehill is outwith our area and we would then lose the right to comment at the later stage of a detail application. Frank Riddell listed a number of ways that a development there would directly affect St Andrews itself, giving us the legitimate right to comment, and observed that the planning system did not prevent a 'failed' objector from objecting again at a later stage.

Dennis Macdonald then claimed that golf courses were, in effect, a green belt. Lindsay Murray disagreed; to be economically viable the golf part of the package came with various housing and hotel development. David Kinnen added that a golf course counted as 'developed' land rather than agricultural, unlike a true green belt, thus making it easier for later built development which would no longer be on unspoilt agricultural land. Several speakers spoke of the dangers of the over-development of golf in the area.

From the chair Frank Riddell then called for a vote on whether the meeting accepted the item.

Meeting backed the Planning Committee by 10 votes to 2 (2 abstained).

6.5.3. Gateway Centre

Scaffolding to indicate some of the dimensions of the proposed centre will be put up, standing until 15 Jan (also for Kingask).

6.5.4. Kingask

Joseph Peterson spoke in favour of the development on the basis of the jobs it will create in the seasonal and tourist business. He believes it is very short sighted to object to continuing development in the area, as it benefits local economy. Ken Crichton said that there were nearly 200 unemployed registered at St Andrews Job Centre, and asked what need there was for the 300+ jobs promised at Kingask, and probably the same at Scooniehill? Ian Goudie described the economic benefits of a development dependent on continuously flying in US golfers as uncertain and asked what happens if the project collapses due to US recession or fear of flying in times of tension? Dennis Macdonald suggested that if Kingask goes bust the Links Trust could take over. Hugh Gray did not believe the Links Trust had the powers to do so.

As the meeting was in danger of exceeding its allotted time in this debate Pete Lindsay moved acceptance of the item (2nd Chris Lesurf).

Meeting backed Planning Committee by 9 votes to 2 (3 abstained)

At 9.30pm Frank Riddell proposed suspension of standing orders to allow consideration of any urgent business, with anything else carried over to February. The meeting agreed.

6.5.5-7.

Other items on the circulated report were noted.

6.5.8. Woollen Mill

Ian Goudie reported that while the planning committee had found no reason to object to this development on the basis of its external appearance there was now some concern because of

historical links to Tom Morris with parts of the internal development and an associated old shop interior.

Dennis Macdonald wondered what the fate of the Woollen Mill's buildings at James St/Largo Road would be. This was a cinema in his youth. Cllr Jane Ann Liston believes that the associated building at that site was the 'Tin Tabernacle' the first (post reformation) Catholic church in St Andrews.

6.6-8. carried over

7. Matters raised by Fife Councillors

7.1. Frances Melville

7.1.1. Craigtoun House

Continued for traffic assessment

7.1.2. Bow Butts Bandstand

Repair/restoration will cost about £19,000. Should this wait for the result of a National Lottery application or approach the Common Good Fund (which stands at about - £65,000)?

It was suggested that the secretary write to the Preservation Trust in case they might be able to help preserve the bandstand.

Pete Lindsay to write

8. Other Matters of Public Interest

8.1. Health Council

Chris Lesurf pointed out that the local Health Council is looking for new members. The Health Council has a similar rôle in the Health Service as the Community Council in Local Government. Contact her for further information.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm
