

# Royal Burgh of St Andrews Community Council

## Annual General Meeting 1999 - Draft Minutes

Held at 7pm, Monday 3rd May 1999 in St Andrews Town Hall Burgh Chamber.

Chair: Ian Goudie

### Present:

#### Community Councillors

Craig Barrett, Ken Crichton, Sean Dobson, Kenneth Fraser, Ian Goudie, Hugh Gray, David Scott Kinnen, Helen Lawrie, Chris Lesurf, Pete Lindsay, Dennis Macdonald, Murdo Macdonald, Donald Macgregor, Lindsay Murray, Joe Peterson, Frank Riddell, Archie Strachan, Cynthia Tero.

#### Students Association Reps

none.

#### Nominated Members

Bill Sangster.

#### Fife Councillors

Jane Ann Liston, Frances Melville

#### Apologies for Absence:

Maries Cassells, Cllr Sheila Hill, Chris Young.

## 2. Minutes of June 1998

**Accepted.**

## 3. Chair's report.

Donald Macgregor's report accepted with the thanks, again, of the meeting for his work as Chair over the last few years.

## 4. Treasurer's report

Archie Strachan apologised to the meeting for the lack of a report - although a preliminary report had been presented last month other commitments had prevented completion of the formal report.

## 5. Meetings.

Agreed to continue current practice - 1st Monday of the month except August (no meeting) and January (make allowance for holiday period).

## 6. AOCB

Secretary drew attention to his report - for information.

## 7. Election of Officers.

### 7.1. Chair.

Frank Riddell prop Sean Dobson 2nd Craig Barrett.  
Murdo Macdonald prop Hugh Gray 2nd Archie Strachan.

Paper ballot: 9 votes each. Frank Riddell selected on the toss of a coin.

### 7.2. Vice-chairs

Frank Riddell proposed that the current number of three vice chairs be continued and named Ian Goudie, Murdo Macdonald, Lindsay Murray.

**Meeting Agreed - elected unopposed.**

### 7.3. Treasurer.

**Archie Strachan was re-elected unopposed.**

## 7.4. Secretary.

Pete Lindsay was re-elected unopposed.

## Monthly Meeting May 1999 - Draft Minutes

Held Monday 3rd May 1999 in St Andrews Town Hall Burgh Chamber immediately following the AGM.

## Attendance & Apologies

As AGM

## 2. Contributions from Members of the Public

### 2.3. Planning & Traffic

*(Taken out of order to allow David Rae to answer points raised for the Planning Service)*

Mr Docherty raised some concerns:

#### On Planning:

He felt that some recent decisions were not in the best interests of St Andrews, listing the Gateway on the North Haugh as being too high for its situation at an entrance to the town; the Gatty Marine Laboratory - too high on the sea front; St Nicolas Farm development 'an eyesore'. He was concerned too at the prospect of Golf-related over development - 600 chalets at Feddinch, as well as the Kingask and Scooniehill projects.

On the other hand he expressed his desire that a site be found for a new hospital, in the proposed green belt area if necessary as he feels health has a higher priority than views.

He concluded his remarks on planning with the opinion that planning in St Andrews has gone downhill since his arrival 40 years ago.

#### On Traffic:

He was concerned at the introduction of the new roundabout at the West Port, which lead to vehicles coming through the West Port too fast, endangering pedestrians crossing the road or vehicles manoeuvring on westmost end of South Street.

He also asked by what right valuable parking spaces in town had been coned off from 8am apparently to reserve space for limousines and buses to take people to the Kate Kennedy Club Ball in the evening. He felt that as in previous years the pickup point should be on University property.

## 2.2. Consultations, Studies & the Planning Process

*David Rae, Head of Fife Council Planning Service, and Jim Birrell, East Area Planning Manager.*

David Rae opened by remarking what a pleasant place St Andrews is to come to and that this is because of the efforts of the Planning Service in Fife Council and before that the Region and District councils.

Turning to the current golf development proposals; there are 3 before Fife Council, with the original Kingask proposal having been appealed to the Secretary of State after rejection by the East Area Development Committee.

- Kingask II is a slightly more detailed version of the original proposal.
- Scooniehill is 2.5 golf courses, golf academy and 92 residential units.
- Feddinch comprises golf course, hotel/conference centre and 612 housing units.

All three have been referred to the Strategic Development Committee (rather than the East Area) where he was confident they would be treated professionally, properly and fairly. The original invitation to speak was on the relevance of the various studies - strategic, traffic, landscape, etc - to the planning process. These are taken into account but any planning application has to be considered in terms of the Development Plan comprising the Structure Plan from Fife Region in 92/3 and the local plan adopted 95/6 by NEF District. Two Strategic Studies had been required (by the Secretary of State) for incorporation into the structure plan - St Andrews was one (the other was West Fife). There are also National Planning Policy Guidelines but these don't have the same weight as the Development Plan. On top of these are various other plans and schemes - Sites of Special Scientific Interest etc - which also have to be taken into account. The result is a very complex environment in which planning

decisions have to be made.

Consultations - are they important, are they taken into account?

Yes they are important - they can reveal matters which need further investigation. However just because the final decision isn't in line with a consultation submission doesn't mean it hasn't been considered and taken into account. In the golf developments there will be further studies and advice sought as a result of issues raised in the consultation process.

Timescale for the golf developments - this is only an estimate due to the forthcoming elections and other external factors - Departure Hearings in St Andrews in June ready for consideration in the Strategic Development Committee at the end of that month. Particular issues that will be considered are the impact on St Andrews - landscape and traffic in particular - economic impact on the area, both the positive and negative impact on tourism, and quality of design.

Turning to Mr Docherty's remarks:

Gateway Centre: recognising that feelings were high the Area Development Committee took a decision only after a lot of work in redesign and moving building back from the road. Gatty Marine Lab: obviously a building which will attract comment...

St Nicolas Farm: while it could perhaps do with some landscape work he disagreed that it was an eyesore - many places in Fife would appreciate estates of that quality.

In 40 years St Andrews has changed, which is not the same as going downhill. While there are some buildings of the 60s-early 70s that leave much to be desired this isn't a problem specific to St Andrews nor are the problems due to the sheer scale of increase in traffic over the last 40 years.

Questions

Q. Traffic. Frank Riddell asked about the effects of traffic generated by the various golf developments on St Andrews, pointing out that queues along South Street through the West Port were known already. Isn't St Andrews at or very close to its traffic capacity?

A. David Rae: The three developments won't all necessarily get approval. Traffic is a matter on which Planning is seeking more advice from Transportation Service and a proper study conducted.

Q. Independence of Advice. Hugh Gray was concerned that the overview study on the golf developments was to be done in-house by the Planning Service which had already recommended one for acceptance. Why not an external, independent report? Is the Planning Service the appropriate body to conduct a study when it is also sitting in judgement?

A. DR: Has every confidence in Jim Birrell who is undertaking the study. Officers in the Planning Service give professional honest appraisals of applications, the decisions are taken by the councillors. Where necessary external expertise and advice are sought - for example some economic and traffic matters.

Q. Neutrality of Fife Council. Lindsay Murray asked how Fife Council could be seen as a neutral arbiter in the planning decision after the Convener of Fife Council, John MacDougal, held a reception in St Andrews for one of the developers?

A. DR. On the matter of the reception he understood that the Convener believed that he was welcoming the development with full outline planning consent. This turned out not to be the case. However David Rae emphasised that, contrary to some rumours, "No councillor has spoken to me or leaned on me" to decide on the recommendation for any application, though he could see why people might wonder. It was, he said, really for the councillors and Convener to defend and explain the public positions they had taken on these developments not him.

Q. Move to Strategic Development Cttee. Lindsay Murray: Why are three planning applications within one councillor's ward suddenly regarded as Strategic to all Fife?

A. DR. As more applications appeared it became apparent that there were wider issues involved than should be dealt with at a local level.

Q. Meetings with Developers. Someone (who?) asked about the propriety of meetings between the Community Council and developers.

A. Jim Birrell: having spoken with the Scottish Office to clarify the meaning of Planning Advice Note 47 para 20 he could confirm that while discussions between developers and community councils were strongly discouraged, meetings to ensure that both sides have as full and accurate information as possible were fine, especially overseen by neutral party such as the Planning Service for propriety.

There had been something of a problem with mutual misunderstandings in the past with both sides communicating only through the Planning Service; a position they find somewhat uncomfortable as this must inevitably result in a certain amount of unintentional distortion.

Q. Traffic Diversion. Cynthia Tero was concerned at the talk of traffic diversion through Bridge Street/Melbourne Place and Lamond Drive to avoid the weak bridge at St Mary Street. Properties along Bridge Street and Melbourne Place were already deteriorating due to heavy traffic (delivery lorries) to the Safeway supermarket, she said.

A. JB. 3 independent traffic consultancies are to look at the traffic studies; including the effects on junctions and of diverted traffic. Some of the survey material used by the developers was patchy, selective and out of date. An independent traffic study is to be undertaken in May.

Q. Failed Projects. Chris Lesurf wanted to know what controls there were on what happened to a site if the project went bust.

A. DR. This would be considered by the economic study.

Q. Wider Development. Joe Peterson suggested that a partial 'ring road' from Safeway east would help the traffic situation for the golf developments and also open up business development land to bring real jobs as well as seasonal tourist-related ones. What are the extent of Fife Council's powers to require this of developers?

A. DR. Nobody wants St Andrews swamped by housing and business development up the hillsides. A diversity of development and jobs is an important issue throughout Fife - possibly throughout Europe. National Government is intent on changing travel methods away from the individual in a car, to reduce both road demand and pollution.

A ring road was considered as part of the Strategic Study process. It was not favoured because of cost and the inevitable development pressure it would bring.

Q. Development Budget. Dennis Macdonald. It was bad news that the Hyundai plant in the west of Fife was lost after much development of the infrastructure there. If the golf developments here represent 10% of Hyundai do we get 10% of the development budget for our infrastructure?

A. DR. Hyundai only postponed, in theory. Due to economic problems two Korean firms, Hyundai and Lucky Gold, were forced to merge and put off various developments. Things are looking better on the economic front now, perhaps the plant may yet be activated.

Hyundai took up part of a previous development schedule, not something done specifically for it. The outlook now for capital investment is bleak; 10% of the currently available nothing (much) is still, effectively, nothing. The only possible source of money would come from private developers. Kingask are committed to infrastructure improvement.

Q. Room on Golf Courses. Donald Macgregor questioned whether new golf developments were viable given that the traditional links courses that are the heart of St Andrews golf are operating nearly at capacity - will people be attracted to the new developments if they find they can't get a round on the Old Course?

A. DR. Load on the original courses has only been brought up recently, thanks to the consultation process. It is certainly a factor to be considered in the economic study.

A. JB. There will be a short but focussed survey on golf demand and economics through the Links Trust and other local golf courses.

On ring roads: to be reconsidered by the transportation study. Previously it has seemed that cost of a ring road has to be funded by an unacceptable level of associated development.

Q. New plans and studies. Ian Goudie expressed some concern that existing development plans and studies seem to be turned aside - is it right that we're asked to consider golf developments as a 'blank canvas'.

A. DR. While studies never do start from scratch it is reasonable to pose the fundamental questions again every so often.

From the chair Frank Riddell thanked David Rae and Jim Birrell for their time in attending this meeting, especially as it fell upon a public holiday.

*There was a five minute break before the rest of the meeting.*

### 3. Minutes of 5th April

Accepted

### 4. Matters arising from previous meetings

#### 4.1. Harbour

(April 5.3.4.) Cllr Frances Melville advised that there had been very fruitful meetings between the Harbour Trust and Fife Council Law & Administration department as a result of which Morag Wallace, head of East Area Law & Admin, will prepare a report on the various points raised. There will also be a meeting with Fife Scottish/Stagecoach to discuss the tour bus which causes problems when it passes through the harbour area.

#### 4.2. Noticeboard

(April 5.3.2) As Treasurer Archie Strachan asked if there was any progress on the new noticeboard? Helen Lawrie explained that Fife Council had vetoed the original location (the car park wall of the St Mary's Place Local Office) on safety grounds, and so a new site was being sought. It does not now seem likely that a new noticeboard could be in place in time to qualify for last year's expenditure.

Dennis Macdonald added that now the Mercat Wynd had closed he had rescued that Community Council noticeboard, currently stored in his garden shed, and still had time to retrieve the general noticeboard if anyone could store it; it is far too big for his shed. The Community Council noticeboard is 3x4 feet if anyone can find a suitable location for it.

#### 4.3. Maps

(April 2.3) Mr Rattray of Scenic Maps will come to June meeting to report on progress.

#### 4.4. Minute & Constitution queries

Still no reply from Fife Council.

#### 4.5. Shell Garage licence

Secretary sent objection to 3 year licence, suggesting further 6 months to cover trial. No acknowledgement as yet.

#### 4.6. Giant Hogweed

Letter written to Fife Council Environmental Health Service including new information on an extensive infestation adjacent to Woodburn Park. No response as yet.

### 5. Reports

#### 5.3. Secretary

##### 5.3.1. Local Holidays

there were no objections to the proposed dates.

**Pete Lindsay to write**

##### 5.3.2. VONEF membership

meeting agreed to renew at £10.

**Archie Strachan to send**

##### 5.3.4. Fife Coastwatch

No one was aware of this (possibly an old welfare committee was involved), but it was agreed that it sounded like a Good Thing with which we should involve ourselves.

**Pete Lindsay to write**

##### 5.3.6. Training/Licensing Bouncers

Archie Strachan pointed out that Chris Young is now our Community Safety representative; information should be passed to him.

Meeting agreed to support any initiatives on training and licensing bouncers in St Andrews.

Cllr Frances Melville added, from her knowledge as Chair of the East Area Licensing Board, that it seems likely that the Scottish Parliament will be looking at the Licensing Act; there is a general feeling that bouncers will have to be licensed under any new legislation.

##### 5.3.8. Flying the Union Flag 1st May

meeting did not wish to change the policy of continuous flying of our name saint's flag.

##### 5.3.9 North East Fife Volunteer Bureau

meeting agreed to invite them to speak

**Pete Lindsay to write**

### **5.3.10. Lade Braes street name plate**

meeting agreed that including house numbers in the new signs would be a very good idea.

**Pete Lindsay to write**

## **6. Matters raised by committees**

### **6.4. Millennium**

Report circulated at the meeting.

Helen Lawrie added to the report on 1 Greyfriars Garden that Ian Donald had now heard from the owners who were willing to sell at a commercial (ie high) price.

### **6.5. Planning**

*Report circulated at the meeting.*

#### **6.5.1.i Feddinch**

Joe Peterson asked what consultation there had been with Cameron Community Council, as this development was in their area?

None, was the answer. It was explained that our council can act in any matter affecting the St Andrews community according to both Fife Council's community council scheme and our constitution and that at a meeting with neighbouring community councils in November (November appendix B) we had been encouraged to involve ourselves in neighbouring developments.

Joe Peterson proposed (2nd Dennis Macdonald) that a meeting be arranged with representatives of Cameron CC to discuss Feddinch. Agreed.

**Pete Lindsay to arrange**

Joe Peterson also asked that any member who expressed an interest should be allowed to attend the meeting with Cameron. This was agreed.

#### **6.5.1.ii Kinkell Brae hotel**

Frank Riddell noted that he had added a rider to the objection suggesting that if the development committee were minded to approve the application they should consider imposing various constraints on development of the 'public space' in future and require binding guarantees of the developer over upkeep and cleaning of the viewing points.

### **6.6. Publicity**

Frank Riddell reported that he had received a quote for a medallion of office for the chair person of the community council from David Martin of Westport Jewellers, of £400 plus VAT. This is for an embossed silver medallion with the arms of the community council, with supporting ribbon and name bars for successive bearers. The cost of a full colour enamelled medallion, which had also been investigated, would have been about £1,000.

Joe Peterson proposed, 2nd Archie Strachan, acceptance of the quote and agreement to proceed.

**Agreed unopposed**

### **6.7. Recreation**

#### **6.7.1. Street Fairs**

Ken Crichton reported that the Common Good Fund was to be approached for £500 in support of the Street Fairs.

As representative of the Merchants' Association Bill Sangster spoke against this. Cllr Jane Ann Liston replied that the Merchants' Association support the street fairs and have two representatives on the SF Committee who had not objected to such an approach. After some debate as to whether the increase in shoppers in the town centre for the fairs increased spending in shops as well as at the fair booths (claimed by the Tourist Board) and whether supporting the fair was supporting 'outsiders', a show of hands was called. Supporting the approach to the Common Good Fund:

**For 5, Against 6.**

#### **6.7.2. Free Roses**

The publicity committee has received details of a British Rose Growers Association scheme to

donate lots of 100 plants (out of a total 2000) for community use. Meeting agreed that the Recreation Committee should look into this further and if possible make an application.

### **6.7.3. Bandstand Concerts**

Archie Strachan has 15 bands booked for the summer concert series, though Fife Council has not yet started repairs. He will be checking with the council whether repairs will affect planned concerts.

## **7.0 Matters raised by Fife Councillors**

### **7.3 Jane Ann Liston (South East)**

#### **7.3.1. Bus Services**

Negotiations are underway with Stagecoach to restore the S4 evening service by subsidising it.

#### **7.3.2. NE Fife/Tayside Rail Study**

suggests that now is a good time for applications to develop a Cupar-St Andrews railway supporting services from Edinburgh, with a rail station restored to its former location next to the Bus Station.

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