



Where should the new Madras College be sited?

Parents, and present and future pupils, are clearly the major stakeholders, but the decision on the site for the new Madras College will affect, to varying degrees, the lives of everyone in this town. Make sure your view is heard!

It has been known since November that the site now preferred by Fife Council's officials for the new Madras College is the existing Kilrymont site. After it became clear that the University's Langlands site was no longer in the frame, the Community Council urged Fife to spend three months carefully reassessing the available options. Soon, however, the officials had prepared a comparability study backing a re-build on the Kilrymont site – a choice that has since been endorsed by the Education & Children's Services Committee. If the town does not want the Kilrymont option, it needs to say so loudly now.

Some advantages of Kilrymont re-build

- (i) Probably quicker delivery than other possible sites, despite listed building and asbestos problems, as site is already owned and in educational use.
 - (ii) In walking distance for pupils in SE of town.
 - (iii) After re-build, existing flourishing community use activities can continue.
 - (iv) Existing swimming pool would be refurbished.
- For a link to Fife's proposal document, go to <http://www.standrewscc.net/>

Some disadvantages

- (i) Need to decant to temporary accommodation at South St during the re-build of Kilrymont.
- (ii) Continuing problem of buses accessing the school and more parents using cars to drop off pupils.
- (iii) Less easy for senior pupils to use University Library in lunch hour.
- (iv) Loss of large potential site for housing, particularly affordable ones.

Some broader questions

- (i) **Effects on town centre** What will happen to the school's current buildings in South St? How will the loss of the lunchtime trade affect the viability of shops in the town centre?
- (ii) **What's the future for Station Park?** At the Jan 12 meeting, we were told that most sports activity will take place at Kilrymont, with only Saturday and occasional weekday use of Station Park. If a cash-strapped Council has considered selling off Craigtoun Park, how secure is an under-used Station Park?
- (iii) **Lunchtime implications** The number of pupils visiting Morrison's each lunchtime is likely to double. What will be the effects on Scooniehill Rd., the Largo Rd crossing and the shop itself?
- (iii) **Do the officials have ulterior motives?** Fife's officials may well wish to protect the viability of the proposed western extension of the town between the High Rd and the Guardbridge Rd. This may well be affected if the Kilrymont site is not used and becomes available for around 200 houses.

The Bloomer report on the Madras issue was commissioned by the Muir Group, and must be read in that light. Keir Bloomer's analysis, that the choice is between speed of delivery and the best long-term option, is nevertheless useful. He argues authoritatively that education is changing and will need more flexible buildings in future. He raises (see pp. 13-15) a range of possible problems with the proposed decant to South St (fire safety, adverse educational impacts for pupils, shortage of sports facilities) that parents should at least consider. Fife Council has agreed to provide more detail on this matter at least. The full report can be accessed via <http://www.standrewscc.net/>

Controversial Pipeland site on the Southern hillside The Muir Group is proposing a single site school at Pipeland. This has to be seen as part of their strategy to develop the southern hillside. The town has been strongly opposed to such development since 1993. The Community Council has consistently supported the inclusion of this area in the Green Belt, and does not see this as an acceptable site for the school. The future status of Station Park would come into question.

Have your say by Feb 10, online, by letter or email! See over for details . . .

The Station Park alternative

Benefits A genuine single site school, not too far from the University (including its library) as in the previous vision. All sports facilities would be on site, including a larger no. of good rapid-draining pitches. School buses wouldn't need to enter St Andrews. There would be no need for temporary accommodation.

Possible problems There would be some visual impact, but this could be minimised by putting the school building, which would only use a small fraction of the site, at the eastern end - not the west as officials have suggested. It may provoke some opposition – but probably less than the southern hillside. It would remove any danger of this land being sold. Officials have pointed to planning difficulties, but their impartiality is in some doubt. Planning regulations can prove more flexible when officials so desire – remember Kingask!

A Tay Bridgehead School plus a St Andrews School – the best solution?

Benefits Major planning decisions are now supposed to address climate change and carbon reduction. The Scottish Govt. is seeking a massive 42% cut in carbon emissions by 2020. A Tay Bridgehead school would cut the total pupil bussing distance by about 50% (and avoid some pupils sitting on buses for over an hour a day). This would imply having a much smaller school in St Andrews, making more viable all the possible sites - at South St, Kilrymont or Station Park.

Problems Officials have argued that smaller schools cannot deliver as broad a curriculum, but other local authorities in Scotland do not see the need for the very large schools in Fife. The other main objection has been cost. Two smaller schools would cost more than a one large one, but much less than double the cost. As the annual bussing cost (£780,000 as at March 2011) is likely to rise in future, the choice is between capital or recurrent costs. Can the funding required for cutting the carbon footprint be found?

Make your voice heard! Tell Fife Council your views by February 10th online

at <http://www.fifedirect.org.uk/haveyoursay> (Scroll down to **Madras College – Kilrymont site**) or write to the East & Levenmouth Area Education Office, Rothesay House, Rothesay Place, Glenrothes, KY7 5PQ. Also email your views to one of your local Fife councillors:- cllr.frances.melville@fife.gov.uk, cllr.dorothea.morrison@fife.gov.uk, cllr.william.sangster@fife.gov.uk, cllr.robin.waterston@fife.gov.uk.

Other Community Council News

Grass roots support for Jubilee Wood

120 volunteers turned out on Nov 30 supporting the Community Council project to plant a Jubilee Wood on land between the Western Cemetery and the Kinness Burn. The volunteers included members of Madras Eco club, local primary schools, St Leonards pupils, students and staff from the Transition team at the University and members of the local community. The Links Trust and the University Grounds Dept had cleared the site and Fife Council financed the stakes and guards. For more pictures of the event, see <http://www.standrewscc.net/>



Are you a Friend of Craigtoun?

The Community Council is establishing a Friends of Craigtoun Group. Membership is open to all who wish to see Craigtoun Park restored to being a major attraction. Fife Council says that it lacks the finance to reverse the decline of recent years, so we also wish to explore whether a Craigtoun Community Trust can be created to take over the running of the Park. If you're interested in becoming a friend, a membership form can be found at <http://www.standrewscc.net/>

St Andrews Community Trust, established

by an agreement between the Community Council and the Links Trust, has got off to a flying start in its first year. Awards made include £2,600 to St Andrews Guides to replace their perimeter fence, £5,000 to STANDEN (St Andrews Energy Network) for helping people in fuel poverty, £2,500 to Homestart to train new volunteers and £7,500 to the St Andrews Festival. To find out the kinds of project that can be supported, and for an application form, go to <http://www.standrewscommunitytrust.co.uk/>

Senior Citizens' Party before Christmas was able to go ahead, despite a power-cut at the Town Hall, when the University kindly assisted the Community Council by providing, and facilitating the use of, Lower College Hall. Students, together with pupils from Madras and St Leonards, also provided help.