

Fort, Seafield and Wallacetown Community Council
Minutes
7pm, 10th May 2023
Council Chamber, Town Hall Buildings, Ayr

1. Attendance

Attendees: Denise Somerville (Chair), Gordon Kelly (GK), Michael Hitchon (MH), Alan Roseweir (AR), David Connelly (DC), Carol Fisher (CF), Phil Martin (PM), Forbes Watson (FW), Jim McKay (JM), Andy Seville (AS), Ken Ballantyne (KB), Robert Singer (RS), Kenny McLeod (KM).

SAC Councillors: George Weir, Bob Shields

SAC Link Officer: David Porte

Police: No Attendance

Minute Secretary: Post Gapped – Minutes taken by GK

Public: James Dick, Douglas Herring, John Allan, Lynn Carleton, Nick Larkin

2. Apologies

Eric Armstrong, Cllr Martin Dowey, Cllr Lee Lyons.

3. Declarations of Interest

All members declared that they had no interests that conflicted with the planned Agenda.

4. Minutes of Meeting Held on 12th April 2023

Draft minutes of the meeting held on 12th April 2023 had been circulated to all members by email prior to this meeting. It was proposed by FW, seconded by AR and agreed that these were a true account of the meeting and therefore ratified and released for distribution.

5. Matters Arising from Meeting Held on 12th April 2023

a. Pavilion Festival/Steet Rave:

- i. The recent event held on Ayr Low Green passed without major incident. It was opined that inclement weather may have prevented those without tickets from attending and kept overall numbers lower than they may have been – second hand tickets were offered for sale right up to the event. Overall though, the actual event appeared to have been well run over the two-day period.
- ii. Matt Lamb, who attended the April CC meeting, had continued to engage with the CC and local residents' groups to minimise disruption, provide further clarity on previously confusing communication and provide reassurance. A further meeting is planned with Mr Lamb to discuss feedback.

- iii. Cllr Shields stated that 95% of comments regarding the event had been positive and that reports of a 5-year deal being signed immediately after the event had been exaggerated. There are still several matters that need to be resolved before such a deal can be signed, such as bylaws that restrict the use of Common Good land for recurring events. It was pointed out that this appeared to contradict several press releases, including some on South Ayrshire Council's official websites, one of which pictured SAC Leader Cllr Martin Dowe with the event organisers, announcing the 5-year deal. Cllr Shields reiterated that this had been exaggerated.
- iv. Although the CC had not been provided with any factual reports, it was reported anecdotally that local businesses appeared to have benefitted from the event. However, it was also pointed out that this event coincided with the Craig Tara Football Festival held on the Old Racecourse over the same weekend and that this, too, increased footfall in the area.
- v. Whilst most comments were positive, it was noted that the music event was not without criticism, including a letter that had been published in the Ayrshire Post dated 10th May 2023, which was described as 'scathing'. Other areas of criticism included the use of potable water to fill plastic butts used for barricades and ballast (two of which had been left behind), with the water then being poured away after the event.
- vi. It was proposed (PM), seconded (AR) and agreed by vote that the Chair would draft an objective note regarding the event for submission to local press. KM requested that it be minuted that he objected to this proposal.

Action: Chair to draft letter to Ayrshire Post.

b. FSWCC Notice Boards:

- i. DM had met with former FSWCC Chair Norman McLean (NM) to discuss access to notice boards that were previously used by the CC. NM said that some of these boards have become dilapidated and no longer have keys but can be accessed without requiring a key.
- ii. It was agreed that notice boards still offer an effective way for CCs to communicate information therefore this system should be restored. The Link Officer stated that, as there is no SAC budget for provision of CC notice boards, any new or replacement boards would have to be purchased by the CC themselves, although SAC may be able to assist with siting/installation. On that point, the Link Officer stated that planning authority may be required to fit a notice board to the Wallace Tower office on High St. However, it was pointed out that a notice board existed there previously but had been removed during recent refurbishment. At the time of this discussion, there was no recollection of planning authority for removal of the old board. If this is the case, its reinstatement should be mandatory.

- iii. Cllr Shields opined that the recently announced Capital Funding Project (see Para 9) may provide electronic notice boards at key sites around the ward.

Action: Link Officer to investigate removal of notice board from Wallace Tower and requirement for planning authority.

c. Parking Issues at Junction of Doonfoot Road & Arrol Gardens

- i. Following concerns raised by members of the public at the April meeting regarding parking at the junction of Doonfoot Road and Arrol Gardens, Ayrshire Roads Alliance (ARA) confirmed that Arrol Gardens has not yet been adopted, therefore the developer has been requested to address this issue. Until a permanent solution can be found, ARA intends to promote a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order for double yellow lines at the location.

6. Abridged FSWCC AGM

- a. MH provided a Treasurer's report, which is appended at **Annex A**. In summary, the CC accounted for an annual budget of £886 in the FY 22/23, which funded administrative costs, mandatory insurance, audit and ICO registration fees, leaving a small amount for donation to local good causes. Funding raised through Civic Pride projects and events is also reported.
- b. Due to suspension of the CC and the absence of a Chair for much of the year, a Chairperson's Report was not produced. However, MH read a summary of CC activity and this is appended at **Annex B**.
- c. The FSWCC Constitution was signed by the Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer.
- d. The Chair reiterated the need to fill the FSWCC Secretary position and provided a brief overview of the role. CF volunteered (proposed by FW and seconded by AR) and, as this was uncontested, was appointed as FSWCC Secretary with immediate effect. It was noted that this is a separate role to that of Minute Secretary, which has yet to be filled.
- e. A vacancy remains for a Community Councillor from the Wallacetown sub-ward.

Action: Chair to advertise Minute Secretary and Wallacetown vacancies.

7. Reports

- a. **Police:** No representatives attended and a report was not provided prior to the meeting.
- b. **SAC Elected Members**
 - i. It was noted that neither SAC Leader Cllr Martin Dowey nor Deputy Leader Cllr Lee Lyons have attended any FSWCC meetings since the last local election on 5th May 2022. Apologies were provided for this meeting but it was agreed that non-attendance of both of these Ward 5 Cllrs for a full year was poor, especially when contrasted with the near 100% attendance of Cllrs Weir and Shields.

- ii. A report from Cllr Dowey was read, signposting the Capital Funding Investment proposal, Ayr Show, Family Fun Day at the Cutty Sark Centre and future of the Pavilion Festival.
- iii. **Cllr Bob Shields:**
 - (a) Electronic notice boards have been suggested under the SAC Capital Funding Investment proposals. These would be sited at key locations around town and could attract revenue by providing advertising space as well as public notices. It was noted that, if these go ahead, they could be of use to the CC and that the CC could assist with suggestions for appropriate sites.
 - (b) Following criticism of the lack of a programme of events at the new Cutty Sark Centre, the centre is to be opened with an event over the weekend 13/14 May 2023. Future plans could not be obtained prior to the meeting, as the person responsible for these was on leave.
 - (c) The decorative paving at the Cutty Sark Centre is to be extended around the bottom corner of High St to consolidate the area.
 - (d) Temporary fencing around the empty care home on the Esplanade is to be replaced with a permanent fixture inside the property boundary prior to it opening but the date for this is not known.
- iv. **Cllr George Weir:**
 - (a) Regarding the Capital Funding Investment programme, SAC leaders and officers met to discuss priorities for each ward. Proposals are welcomed from community councils and the public but there is no set deadline for submission or format for any proposals.
- c. **Short Term Lets (STLs)**
 - i. Public Member Lynn Carleton voiced concerns regarding SAC policy on STLs. A comment from Destination South Ayrshire that 'the self-catering sector boosts the South Ayrshire economy by over £50 million' appears to have significant influence on policy decision-making, yet is unqualified and, at best, questionable. Lynne referred to an informal study on a seafront flat operating as an STL. The study looked at occupancy during the period between Sep 22 and Apr 23. During this period, the property was unoccupied for most (56%) of the time, whilst tourists made up only 7% of occupancy during the period studied. If this is typical of STL properties in the area, it is difficult to see how the industry can be credited with such economic benefits, when compared to normal, permanent residents who live, work and shop in the area, and pay Council Tax.

- ii. It was noted that the self-catering sector includes caravans and opined that economic contributions from the various holiday parks in South Ayrshire are being conflated with the comparatively small contributions from dwellinghouses and flats used as STLs, to make the latter appear more beneficial. It was questioned whether loss of Council Tax (due to many STLs operating under 100% Small Business Rates Exemption) had been considered in Destination South Ayrshire's claims, or the detriment to traditional hotels and guest houses, and whether landmarks such as Ayr Station Hotel may have remained viable if not for the proliferation of STLs.
- iii. AR stated that the significant social problems caused by many STLs should be considered and pointed out that the subject's place as a standing agenda item on FSWCC meetings indicates the gravity of the situation and its effect on residents.
- iv. Cllrs Weir and Shields were asked if clarification could be provided on the economic claims made by Destination South Ayrshire, and how the '£50 million' figure had been derived. Cllr Weir said that this may be met with significant resistance but agreed to attempt to seek clarity.

Action: Cllrs Weir and Shields to seek qualification of £50 million economic boost.

- v. PM referred to an article in the Ayrshire Post dated 10th May 2023 regarding appointment of regional tourism advisor Lynsey Eckford and noted that the article advocated 'responsible tourism'.

d. **Planning**

- i. KM is pursuing a complaint to the ICO regarding SAC's persistent failure to respond to requests for information, even under FOISA. He related several instances where objections to planning applications have been disregarded or downplayed.
- ii. Plans for conversion of the former Clintons Cards building into 6 flats include insufficient details for internal storage of bins. Installation of 6 x heat pumps is also planned.

Action: KM to ascertain detail for installation of heat pumps.

i. **Licencing**

- i. Prior to the meeting, FW had circulated notice of an alcohol licensing application from Marks & Spencer in Ayr High St. There were no objections to the application.
- ii. FW provided notice of an application for a parade on 12th Aug 23. This is an annual parade, which follows the same route each year. A vote was cast and there were no objections to the application.

j. Ayr Common Good Fund

- i. Further to the recent music festival, Cllr Shields stated that a fee of £2,000 was charged for the use of the Low Green, which is part of the Ayr Common Good portfolio. He opined that this was an entry level fee and may be higher for any future events.
- ii. The Chair asked for clarity on the Common Good portfolio, what the fund consists of and what it is spent on. Cllr Weir suggested that the CC invite a representative from SAC to provide a brief on the Common Good Fund. FW stated that he had recently asked for a breakdown of Common Good income from SAC Community Asset Transfer Coordinator Robin Jamieson but had been advised to submit an FOI request. GK recalled that this had been done previously and rejected on the basis that SAC accounts are available on their website, however the published accounts did not break down Common Good income or expenditure. It was noted that the public should have clear and easy access to all information regarding Common Good management but that any questions relating to this have generally been met with a lack of clear answers or transparency.

- Action:**
- a. FW to meet with Robin Jamieson to discuss Common Good portfolio and funds and make a formal record of the meeting.
 - b. Cllrs Shields and Wier to bring a report on Common Good to the next FSWCC meeting.
 - c. FSWCC to repeat this item on next meeting Agenda.

8. FSWCC Media, Website and Emails

- a. KB had received a report from ex CC member Adam Short and engaged with Paul from Smart Multimedia, who administer the FSWCC website. The £15pcm fee for this is good value and the arrangement can continue as is.
- b. Smart Multimedia are unable to provide email services therefore a trial was undertaken with a provider called Zoho, to host official email addresses for CC members. The trial was successful and it was agreed by vote that official email addresses should be obtained for all CC members and used for all CC business.

Action: KB to obtain and allocate 16 official email addresses on an annual subscription charged at £1pcm. This is to be reviewed annually.

- c. In addition to the new email addresses, it was agreed by vote (proposed by Chair, seconded by GK) that a WhatsApp group be set up for informal communication between members to reduce email traffic and facilitate quicker response.

Action: Chair to set up WhatsApp group.

9. Capital Funding Proposals

a. Cllrs Shields and Weir stated that the mooted £1m per ward capital funding would be derived from savings made due to scrapping the new leisure centre plans. However, they went on to cast confusion over the project, stating that there was no deadline or set process for submission of proposals and that proposals will be accepted throughout the next four years. Furthermore, plans had already been discussed within SAC to use the funds to tackle issues that had been brought to SAC's attention over previous years.

b. JM quoted an official briefing on the scheme that stated "The final stage of the approval process will take place.....on 29 June 2023", indicating a closing date for submissions. Cllrs Weir and Shields insisted that there was no deadline.

c. Several CC members voiced concerns that the scheme was not as had been advertised and the proposed funding may be used for outstanding maintenance issues rather than identifiable capital projects that deliver tangible benefits to the community. Additionally, CC members had conducted diligent research and canvassed local opinion to identify appropriate proposals for recommendation but it now appeared that these were not welcome.

d. Confusion regarding the purpose of the scheme and how it would work, along with a lack of time due to already protracted discussions regarding this confusion, meant that proposals that had been brought to the meeting could not be discussed in detail. However, the following were briefly introduced:

- i. Proposed by JM (reiterated as first raised in April meeting) – Renovation of unused portions of Old Racecourse Pavilion for use as changing rooms, public toilets and café.
- ii. Proposed by AR – Financial contribution to capital funding of Wallacetown Renewable Energy Project.
- iii. Proposed by Douglas Herring and James Dick of Ayr Yacht & Cruising Club – installation of seating and general improvements to area of North Harbour wall overlooking yacht berthing area.
- iv. Proposed by MH – Upgrades to Town Hall organ.
- v. Proposed by Chair – Improvement of disabled access to Mill Street Playground.

e. Due to the runout of time when discussing the above, it was proposed by CF that these matters be brought forward in the next meeting agenda. However, the viability of further discussion on any proposals would depend on clarity regarding the scheme and whether such proposals would be considered by SAC. In anticipation, GK recommended that any proposals should be concise and detailed enough to be put to a vote for CC support.

- Action:**
- a. Cllrs Weir and Shields to obtain clarity on scheme, including method and closing date for submission.
 - b. GK to contact Newton & Heathfield CC re North Harbour proposal.

10. Seafront Motorhome Parking

Lines have been painted to delineate 25 motorhome parking bays in The Battery (approach road to pier) but there has been no public consultation on the matter and no waste disposal facilities have been provided.

11. Electric Vehicle Charging Points

A report to SAC Cabinet regarding EV Charging Infrastructure proposals dated 25th Apr 23 was referenced. AR voiced disappointment that plans appeared to have been developed in the absence of consultation with the public and CCs.

Action: Chair to write to report author Kevin Braidwood of ARA.

12. Public Business

Nick Larkin questioned the role of ward councillors, explaining that, where each ward only had one councillor, many now have several (4 in the case of Ward 5). This means that correspondence often goes unanswered, as individual responsibilities are not clear.

Action: Cllr Shields to respond to Mr Larkin

13. AOCB

Nil.

14. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 14th June 2023 at 7pm, Ayr Town Hall.

FORT, SEAFIELD & WALLACETOUN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT For the Year ended 31 March 2023

£	<u>RECEIPTS</u>		
286	Balance from Previous Year:	Bank Current Account	240.08
<u>5</u>		Cash in Hand	<u>5.50</u>
291			245.58
715	South Ayrshire Council:	Administration Grant 800 + Insurance 86	886.00
250	South Ayrshire Council:	Community Project (for FSWCA)	10,000.00
60	Donations:	A&PLC, AG, RCofA / Anon	5.00
		Dinner (personal contributions)	<u>260.00</u>
<u>1,316</u>			<u>11,396.58</u>

	<u>PAYMENTS</u>		
425	P&T, Meetings, Stationery, <i>The Poor Had No Lawyers</i>	45.96	
100	Website	180.00	
80	Minute Secretary's Emoluments	320.00	
50	Donations: Newton Primary School	50.00	
50	The Ark	50.00	
50	Newton Primary Nursery	50.00	
86	Zurich Insurance	86.00	
40	ICO Registration	40.00	
43	Zoom	-	
39	Dinner	260.00	
78	Town Centre Competition	-	
30	Independent Examination	30.19	
	Transfer to FSW Community Association	10,250.00	
<u>1,071</u>			<u>11,362.15</u>
<u>245</u>	<u>SURPLUS</u>		<u>34.43</u>

<u>Represented by:</u>		
240	Bank Current Account	28.93
<u>5</u>	Cash in Hand	<u>5.50</u>
<u>245</u>		<u>34.43</u>

Hon Treasurer: *G. Michael Hitchon* MBE

The above Statement of Receipts & Payments for the Year ended 31st March 2023, has been prepared from the records, vouchers and other information provided, and is found to be in order.

M. J. Laird.

M. J. Laird, CA, Independent Examiner, Ayr, 10 May 2023.

FORT, SEAFIELD & WALLACETOUN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Civic Pride Projects

Brought Forward	275.53	
Payments	<u>0.00</u>	<u>275.53</u>

Town Hall Monday Lunchtime Organ Concerts

Brought Forward	7983.00	
Door Sales	<u>6590.25</u>	
	14,573.25	
Payments	<u>4,205.34</u>	
Balance transferred to Ayr Arts Guild SC005562		<u>10,367.91</u>

Community Raised Funds for Dedicated Projects

<u>Window Boxes Scheme</u>		
Brought Forward	3,486.63	
Donations Received	<u>530.00</u>	
	4,016.63	
Payments	<u>255.41</u>	
Balance		<u>3,761.22</u>

<u>Ayr 800 Trees and Plaque</u>		
Brought Forward		<u>200.00</u>

Community Raised Funds transferred to Ayr Arts Guild SC005562		<u>3,961.22</u>
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Hon Treasurer: *G. Michael Hitchon* MBE

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FORT, SEAFIELD & WALLACETOUN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT covering the year April 2022 – March 2023

The Community Council met eight times during the year. Ali Logan resigned in September, Gordon Bingham in October, Norman McLean and Olena Stewart in November and Adam Short in March. The CC was suspended in November and December because of accusations of bullying. An inquiry took place and interviews conducted – SAC admitted this had been a wrong procedure and no complaint was upheld.

Ali, Phil, Forbes left apologies once; Norman, Alan, Gordon and Adam twice; Denise, three times, Gordon four times and Eric five times; Kenny and Michael attended all meetings.

Officers were appointed in April. Topics included speeding on Doonfoot Road and Ayr Station Hotel. In May the FSW Community Association was awarded £10,000 from the Coastal Communities Fund and, experiencing delay in establishing their own bank account, the CC agreed to hold the sum on their behalf. It was to fund a feasibility study by the University of Strathclyde and others, for an Energy Project in Wallacetoun. Other topics included: short term lets; a cycleway across the old railway bridge; Ayr Development Trust; and the suggestion that the archaeological excavations on the riverside site should become an attraction for locals and tourists.

In June, the SAVE Britain's Heritage report on Ayr Station Hotel was welcomed; the suggestion was made that Flower Pot Lane be re-named; and deer warning signs were recommended for Doonfoot Road.

At the September meeting Olena was appointed Chair; and Davies Brock appointed as a special interest co-optee.

October discussions included the future of The Watchful, Ayr Common Good Fund; and concerns about the development of the new Ayrshire Hospice. The CC agreed for short term lets to go on the agenda.

In January amendments were suggested for the September and October minutes.

In February the CC met in the former Ayr Academy Art Department and learned of Recycling Saturday, received papers on Web Hosting, Using HTTPS and using personal email accounts for work.

In March the CC unanimously agreed to the policy of objecting to short term lets if there was common entry and a common stairwell.

Following the by election, the CC was then up from eight to 14 members.

GMH