

FORT, SEAFIELD AND WALLACETOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT : May 2016 – APRIL 2017

This has been yet again a year of activities throughout our town and in keeping with last year, we have had a busy year with well attended meetings and plenty of discussion. The dedicated attendance of Councillors Kirsty Darwent, Bill Grant, who retire this year, and Allan Dorans was greatly appreciated with their input to our meetings being vital. Chris Campbell, our Link Officer is another regular attendee whose diligent and helpful contributions to our Council is greatly appreciated. Another welcomed visitor on a regular basis is Catherine Hunter of the Ayr Advertiser who reports faithfully to the wider public of our deliberations.

We welcome our new members, Liz Martin and Frank Ward (previously co-opted) representing Seafield Sub Ward and Wallacetown sub-ward respectively. We now have a full complement in Fort and Seafield Sub Wards but still need 3 additional Councillors for Wallacetown.

Ayr Town Centre Renaissance moves forward apace and acquisitions at the bottom of the High Street (Riverside block) have now come to fruition as we all now witness the demolition in progress. A Public Consultation on the proposals was well attended and suggestions were taken on board. James Knox, Ayr Renaissance Chairman, is to be applauded for his contribution in bringing nationally famed architects Charles Jencks and Niall McLauchlin on board to create a Master Plan of the development that has been recognised as outstanding. An addition now under construction is the redevelopment of the Winton Buildings (former Clydesdale Bank) in High Street to become an enclosed market with upper floor offices etc.

The Christmas shop window display competition was again successfully held under our auspices however I feel that this initiative has now served its purpose.

Ayr Gaiety theatre has now re-opened after further refurbishment and we must support their team in securing funding from SAC, and by using it ourselves.

Great concern has been voiced regarding the deteriorating condition of the Station Hotel and its long term use and how any works will impact on Ayr Railway Station.

The new Ayr Academy building at Craigie is now nearing completion with the proposal to relocate Ayr Grammar School in the Academy site well advanced.

Belleisle Park now has moved forward at great pace and tangible results are there for all to see. The new play park has been greeted with great acclaim and is now being enjoyed by countless children (and their parents). The Conservatory is completed and is now open. The hotel project still sits in a state of limbo and it is galling to continually have to report no progress at all for another year, the likelihood of any development on this scale looking extremely remote despite SAC having been very supportive of this project. The stable block is now beyond the design stage and the rockery in the walled garden is complete. The Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Deer Park now has six young deer which have been successfully introduced to add to the ageing deer population. All in all things are very encouraging with well over 2500 well wishers on Facebook.

A new Policing presence to our Council has been in place and regular updates from police in attendance is appreciated.

The development of the vacant site in Fort Street earmarked for flats for those of learning disabilities is moving forward. A virtual tour of St John's Tower is available and our thanks are due to Peter and Yolanda McCall for their efforts.

The Scottish International Airshow was again an outstanding success and we look forward to this year's Show which brings huge financial gain to the town.

Safe-Ayr – Street Pastors have been most successful on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights in reducing street incidents in the town centre.

Virgin Media continue to disrupt our streets in an effort to install TV cabling throughout the town. We hope to report the completion of this huge task in our next Report!

Cree Lodge student accommodation in Craigie Road is now occupied.

Our Council successfully objected to the planning application to build three houses in Auchendoon Crescent on land designated in the Local Development Plan as open space and a wildlife site at Cunning Park.

We have a Community Council web site (fswcc.org.uk) and our thanks are again due to Forbes Watson for his company's sponsorship.

The lunch-time Town Hall organ recitals continue to be organised by Michael Hitchon MBE on our behalf and is greatly appreciated by the ever growing number of attendees. The continuation is now assured for the ninth year with a growing programme. This gives regular playing of the much admired old Lewis organ. Temporary arrangements were in place during the annual maintenance of the organ by the use of St. Columba's Church and Holy Trinity Church organs earlier in the year.

We were able to donate yet again to three charities, the Belleisle Conservatory Ltd, The Ark, and the Salvation Army from our modest resources this year and again wish them success.

Once again, I must thank our Community Councillors for the exceptionally well attended meetings and unstinting support of Fort, Seafield and Wallacetown Community Council in the last year.

J Norman McLean
Chairman
4 May 2017