

FORT, SEAFIELD AND WALLACETOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Chairman: J Norman McLean
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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT : May 2018 – APRIL 2019

As annually reported, 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 our Councillors, Chris Campbell, our Link Officer and Angie Pinkerton of AHEAD as other regular attendees is greatly appreciated. The Press has not been as well represented as would have hoped, mainly due to the changed roles of Catherine Hunter (Ayr Advertiser) and Sarah Hilley (Ayrshire Post).

We say farewell to members retiring this year in Election year. Our thanks go to Robert Singer, Peter McCall, Eileen Munro, Judith Paterson, Liz Martin, and Frank Ward. Also to Yolanda McCall our Minute secretary and Angi Pinkerton, our special co-optee for Wallacetown who both served the community well in their extra positions. We welcome our new members, Allan Dorans, Ian Henderson, Elizabeth Morrison and Alison Logan with two new co-opted members for Fort Sub Ward, Murray Buchanan and Catriona McNichol waiting in the wings for nomination at our AGM.

The Station Hotel building continues to haunt us all having now been given a shroud which I hope is not prescient. We now await the Structural Report. The redevelopment of the Winton Buildings (former Clydesdale Bank) in High Street is yet still becalmed as reported last year however we are assured of a completion by the end of May.

Belleisle Hotel continues the sad tale of apparent inactivity in the "buy back" negotiations.

The Town Centre Christmas shop window display competition was again successfully held under our auspices and looks likely to continue.

The new Ayr Academy building at Craigie is now complete and occupied with the proposal to relocate Ayr Grammar School in the Academy site well advanced. Perhaps due to the historical significance of the site, Ayr Grammar primary should be renamed thus keeping the name closely associated with the site founded in 1233. It has, after all, never been a grammar school for many many years.

The Council continues to produce consultations and concept ideas on the Town Centre but an overall vision has yet to appear. Let us hope that this vision will emerge, from whatever quarter.

Once again, additional car parking charges are mooted in Ayr (with new charges sought in Prestwick). When will the Council realise that unintended consequences will result in less footfall and therefore revenue lost to the community, not to mention accelerating the further decline of the town centre.. We have continually campaigned for a free parking period within the meter zone.

The Golf Academy proposal at Seafield golf course now seems becalmed due to the lack of a credible Business Plan.

Our main concern now is the Council proposal to redevelop the Riverside Place multi storey flats dispersing the 200+ residents, many with mobility issues, to as yet undefined outlying sites thus breaking the social cohesion and ready access to the town centre for many very elderly tenants. This issue will be ongoing (to quote a well exercised Council expression) well into our next year and we have sought Community Empowerment Act powers to represent the tenants on this vital issue.

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

Please use our Community Council web site (fswcc.org.uk) and again our thanks are again due to Forbes Watson for his company's sponsorship and Olena Stewart for keeping it up to date.

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 eleventh year with a growing programme. This gives regular playing of the much admired old Lewis organ. From now until June, various other venues will be used while the Lewis organ is being refurbished with the remainder of the programme held in Ayr Town Hall at 12 Noon on Mondays.

We were able to donate yet again to three charities from our modest means.

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. It is reassuring that I can repeat this last paragraph year on year.

J Norman McLean
Chairman
4 May 2019