

FSW Community Council meeting via Zoom 9th June 2021 @ 7pm

In Attendance: Norman McLean, Forbes Watson, Michael Hitchon, Olena Stewart, Phil Martin, Ian Henderson, Denise Somerville, Alison Logan, Gordon Kelly, Trina McNicol

Councillors: Martin Downey, Lee Lyons, Derek McCabe

Link Officer: Chris Campbell

Public: Chic Brodie

Police: continues to be no communication or response to emails, from Jamie Cree and Geraldine Cannell.

**Apologies:** Eric Armstrong, Alan Roseweir and (via Denise) Jason Peters, David Petrie, Katherine McNab,

Also not present: Dympna Gardiner, no computer access. Sandy Crawford, Libby Morrison, Siobhian Brown not in touch

Norman welcomed everyone and pointed out this was last meeting before summer break. He expressed hope that in September the group would be able to meet in person.

**Minutes** of meeting 12th May 2021 proposed by Forbes and seconded by Iain Henderson.

**Matters Arising:** Gordon highlighted question posed by Eric asking if contracts, in particular those pertaining to Ayr centre pool proposals, would be 'tied' prior to planning permission being granted (and next year's election) Derek McCabe said still no formal plans and no major contracts issued prior to election.

**National Community Council Scheme** representative. Trina had volunteered however discounted as not a full member of FSWCC. Olena will now pass on Ali's name to Karen on the council.

Forbes gave update on **Fort, Seafield and Wallacetown Community Association**.

Constitution has been signed by office bearers and members. Eric Chair, Trina Treasurer, Gordon Secretary. Forbes, Denise and Alan members.

Await OSCR decision on SCIO application. Trina thanked Chic for offering to interpose and will contact him if need arises.

Initial project concerns Development of South Harbour area including the beach Watchtower which in 1999 was privately sold by SAC. Investigations re title deeds, and stipulations of sale are ongoing. Watchtower's pigeon infestation is causing problems to Harbour flat residents.

Norman said lots happening in **Wallacetown**. Meeting organised with Kevin Anderson and Jamie Tate which he asked if Denise and Ali would be free to attend. Both said they were available. Norman to confirm details.

Jason Peters has been knocking doors and collating positive and negative comments.

Denise pointed out that Jamie Tate from Wallacetown so should be well informed.

Progress will be made over summer recess into forming Wallacetown strategic group.

Constituent Hugh Reddox has expressed interest in getting involved in regenerating the area.

**High Flats:** empty promises on like for like housing overheads. Increases in rent and council tax the norm for rehoused residents. Councillors need to ask questions.

Martin said there would be no demolition before next year's election.

Norman suggested as occupation levels so low, could move and 'condense' existing residents leaving one block at a time empty to allow refurbishment.

Martin pointed out that vast sums are sitting in the Housing Revenue Account 'for a rainy day'. Why not being used to provide much needed housing? New housing planned at Mainholm delayed because with Citadel's reopening, John Pollok now main Covid vaccination centre. Ali highlighted landlords are being paid £750 pw by Scottish Government for scheme (5mth duration) to provide temp accommodation for people experiencing homelessness. Martin said matter of council taking back housing stock has been raised by Iain Davis. Norman pointed out that in Priority Housing Areas, government pay for houses to be bought back and refurbished.

Chic asked for names of all property owners in Wallacetown to be made available.

Norman said that if rent paid via Universal Credit scheme, tenants living in unacceptable conditions have no recourse to withhold payment.

**Dilapidated building bottom of Fort Street.** Forbes suggested as situated opposite Customs House, possibly the old Toll House. Norman suggested planning contacted as building has historic status.

Phil pointed out proximity to Ayr Academy PS. Making the building safe needs to be a priority. Norman also mentioned the poor state of library stone and paintwork.

**Belleisle.** Martin announced no change. Recent discussion with SAC chief executive reconfirmed intention to sell. Norman asked 'Why so long?'

Gatehouse has been sold to a Brighton based company. Sale conditions include refurbishment. Chic asked if new Economic Development Councillors held list of global companies and individuals willing to invest in Ayr.

**Golf Academy.** Martin said Ayrshire golf strategy is to move Academy to Belleisle. Norman pointed out Dalmling is a better option as interested youngsters don't have to cross Ayr. Cllr Connolly, chair of committee, has ruled out Dalmling (for prestige reasons?)

**Station Hotel.** Martin has no update. Still awaiting report from Network Rail, Government and SAC.

Chic pointed out scaffolding is costing £60,000 per month. Scaffolding company just floated on stock exchange; biggest contract is with SAC.

**Riverside Block** hearing again closed to public. Written submissions accepted but only if points haven't been brought up previously.

Norman referred to present administration's manifesto priorities around transparency.

Michael suggested it should be a Place Plan enquiry.

**Planning.** Phil apologised for non attendance last meeting. Kyle St offices, application for 8 flats. Encouraging to note more residential accommodation planned for town centre.

Town Hall, Newton Steeple, Morrison Church in George St all added to list of buildings requiring urgent attention.

Michael expressed concern over possible pigeon infestation due to missing windows in Rusty Nail, Burns Statue Square. Chris will raise with Building Standards but pointed out limited recourse unless decided building dangerous. Owners must be given every opportunity to repair before more radical intervention.

**Parked Boats in Racecourse View.** Martin said owner registered as 'no fixed abode' however known by ARA. No legislation to enforce removal. Norman pointed out danger to children, accident waiting to happen.

Chris to take up with Fire Service.

**Esplanade Motorhome Parking.** Martin said owners were forbidden to sit outside their motorhome and that no signage existed informing visitors of payment and stay duration arrangements. Also that there were no signs on the Esplanade forbidding overnight parking. Gordon pointed out signage had in fact been put in place, however Martin maintained it had been there prior to new parking provision being introduced.

Gates will only be introduced if arrangement made permanent.

**Finances.** Michael said grant allocation had come through. Moving forward, saving should be made on recent monthly Zoom charge.

**AOCB.** Norman to be informed by council if Darlington Church to be sold..has heard nothing on that to date. Chic said provenance check must be done on prospective buyers.

Chris said putting green proposals put forward by Rotary Club will be discussed at meeting on 8th September. Initial indication is for Rotary Club to run putting green from Easter 2022. Council have agreed to cut grass however won't supply equipment.

Chris asked that FSWCA contact resident Sheelagh Laing re Watchful fishing boat. Trina agreed to get in touch

**Date of Next Meeting 8th September 2021. Place and time tbc.**