



FORT, SEAFIELD & WALLACETOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12th April 2017 in Room RB3, Town Hall, at 7pm

Members Present

Norman McLean (NM) Chair, Forbes Watson (FW) Vice Chair, Michael Hitchon (MH) Treasurer, Olena Stewart (OS) Secretary, Sandy Crawford (SC), Peter McCall (PMcC), Phil Martin (PM), Liz Martin (LM), Eileen Munro (EM), Frank Ward (FW)

In Attendance

Cllr. Bill Grant (WG), Cllr. Alan Dorans (AD), Chris Campbell (CC) Link Officer, PC Emma McGinlay (PCMCG).

Public

David Connelly (DC), Frances Brown (FB), Andrew Crawford (AC)

1. **Apologies**

Dympna Gardiner (DG), Cllr. Kirsty Darwent (KD), Judith Hood (JH)

Welcome

NM welcomed all and noted that this is the last meeting before the council elections. He thanked all the councillors for their assistance, wished good luck to those standing again and offered particular thanks to Bill Grant and Kirsty Darwent, who are retiring after ten years and five years respectively..

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

March minutes accepted with corrections to the Ayrshire funding on page 2.

3. **Matters Arising**

With regard to the planning application for 3 houses in Auchendoon Crescent, which FSWCC submitted an objection to, Councillors voted unanimously to refuse the proposal.

4. **Public Business**

NM welcomed visitors DC, FB and AC. FB wished to highlight issues of speeding in the town centre, specifically along Dalblair Road, between the Mercure Hotel and Burns Statue Square. Trying to cross the road can be difficult. Ayrshire Roads Alliance (ARA) advised that more signage for the 20mph speed limit was due, but that was a year ago. BG said that Police Scotland, traffic department and ARA are aware of issues. He would like to see police with a speed gun there. PMcC advised that there have been prosecutions for speeding in Dalblair Road. FB believes buses are the worst offenders and there is also an issue of people not giving way as they join Dalblair Road from Dalblair Way, they don't see the roundabout. Road markings need to be refreshed. PM has heard reports from the flats that the noise in the area is sometimes like a race track. AD offered to contact Stagecoach, police and ARA to raise the issue. FW suggested FB contacts the Ayrshire Post who might be interested to pick it up too.

PMcC, (Secretary of FrOST – Friends of St. John's Tower) gave a talk about the upcoming Heritage Day to be held at the tower. FrOST made a virtual tour of St. John's Tower with members of Scotland's Urban Past, SUP (part of Historic Environment Scotland) and the SUP team were keen to return. The event will

run from 10am-4pm on Saturday 6th May. SUP have laser scanned the tower. There will be lots of activities including displays of stone carving, ancient graffiti, weapons demonstrations and story reading by the Yolanda McCall, author of a children's book, 'The Tale of a Scottish Tower.' There is also a new website for the tower: www.stjohnstower.btck.co.uk LM wondered if St. John's Tower is included in the Heritage Trail. BG advised, 'Yes.' Six benches will be located at the six stages of the Heritage Trail, funded by the Coastal Communities Fund; the first has been placed near the cannon along the old citadel wall. MH advised that the St. John's Tower event fits into Scotland's 2017, 'Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology.'

5. **Police Business**

PC McGinlay presented a report sent from the Community Inspector for Ayr, contactable at James.Hendrie@Scotland.PNN.Police.uk

Crime Statistics for March 2017, with comparable figures for March 2016:

Crime Type	Mar. 2017	Mar. 2016
Housebreaking	5	5
Theft of motor vehicle	3	8
Drug offences	18	13
Assaults	22	27
Breach of peace/Abusive behaviour	17	12
Drink/ disqualified driving	1	2

PC McGinlay read from the report:

- Breaches of the peace and drugs have seen an increase, but assaults have reduced on the same period last year. However, the detection rate remains high with regard to these crime types.
- Housebreakings in the Ayr West ward have remained the same for this period last year. Vehicle crime has decreased with three reported this past month, residents should remain vigilant during the lighter spring months as we have seen sheds broken into with gardening equipment being targeted. The detections rates for these crimes remain quite low and anyone seen acting suspiciously should be reported to police immediately.
- Drink driving and disqualified driving has reduced, possibly due to proactive policing with the high visibility road safety campaign running throughout February and March to deter speeding and hopefully reduce collisions and the number of people injured or killed on our roads, where we have witnessed an increase.
- Local police will be running a high visibility antisocial behaviour campaign throughout March and April 2017 in an attempt to tackle neighbourhood issues. Results will be made available at the next meeting.
- Police Scotland have also launched their 2016 – 10 year strategy for policing and everyone is invited to contribute their views on webpage <https://consult.scotland.police.uk/consultation/2026>

There was some discussion about the drivers involved in the recent fatality and MH enquired whether the road safety campaign targeted primary school areas, to discourage parents parking close to the Grammar. PCMcG advised this campaign focused on major trunk roads. FW asked for clarification of trends for the housebreaking. PCMcG advised it was random. BG spoke of a campaign for S5 pupils, run by the council and other agencies, educating young people about the risks of reckless driving. NM enquired whether driver re-training is mandated for young offenders. PMcC and PCMcG advised, 'No.' All were reminded that use of mobile phone while driving now attracts 6 points and a minimum fine of £200.

6. **Ayr Town Centre Renaissance, Riverside Consultation and Belleisle**

AD advised that the demolition work at the riverside is proceeding on time with removal of asbestos and soft materials prior to excavations. New Gates have arrived for King's Arms Close (off New Bridge St.), provided by the Ayr Townscape Heritage Initiative. Ayr Academy students were involved in the project. Discussion is ongoing for names for the old Clydesdale Bank building and the riverside area. AD presented the shortlist of names and a vote was taken by FSWCC members, with overwhelming preference given for: 'The Meal Market' and 'Merchant Quay.' AD will feed this back to the council.

OS reported concerns about Belleisle Hotel's door being open the previous night. PCMcG was aware of the call but could offer no knowledge regarding the outcome. BG believes it may have been a member of staff and urges the owner, Mr Campbell, to take more responsibility. NM read in papers about a draft agreement for car parking at the site. AD said a revised plan has been provided by the council and they

are waiting for Mr Campbell to move forward with it. There is a buy-back clause which kicks in later this year (Aug/Sept) and decisions will need to be carefully considered by the council. NM requested that the CC be kept informed of plans.

BG advised Monument Road will be closed during works planned for 24-28th April at Roselle. The wall has bulged and coping has been dislodged. Removal of 3 or 4 fairly major beech trees and subsequent repairs to the wall needs to be carried out. AD expects the entrance to Roselle should be available throughout.

7. **Councillors' Business and Matters Arising**

BG reported on the replacement of trees in Park Circus, Ronaldshaw Park, Bellevue Street and Bellevue Crescent - all part of the conservation area. The cladding work in King Street area is a joint programme with energy companies; it will reduce heating costs and provide a secondary benefit of improved appearance. NM and all present agreed it is cosmetically much improved. BG continued his report, noting the beautiful terrace cottages in Elba Street replacing the old Elba Court. Similar affordable one-bedroom housing is being built in Woodlands Crescent and in the Kincaidston area. Some changes have been made to the taxi rank in Smith Street, hoping to make it less chaotic and improve safety with a raised walkway. FW and MH said it is not clear what the purpose of it is and double yellow lines are flaunted by the taxis. BG will report back the concerns of CC members over what is intended for the traffic flow in that area. BG has always been passionate about litter and told the group about a recent incident of fly tipping on a commercial scale – seven large bags of some industrial product, powder and pellets, dumped in lay-bys on the road towards Minishant. The good news is that the material was tested, it is safe, and the council will use it for path works.

AD reported that Scottish Ministers have decided that the Arran ferry will remain in Ardrossan and not move to Troon. The site at Corton has been bought by new developers and is now expected to proceed. The A77 junction at Doonholm Road is to be redesigned. A meeting has been held, chaired by John Scott, to resurrect the Flower Show under a new banner. About 40 people attended, mostly traders. A new committee was formed and there is a plan to hold a smaller show, possibly at the race course in August. CC suggested the upcoming Ayr South funding awards may provide a possible source of backing. Groups can apply for up to £10,000 this time. AD confirmed that the Ayr Horticultural Society is in the process of being wound up. There is to be a change at the crematorium, with regard to Saturday funerals, no cremations will take place until the Monday. Bodies will be held securely, but it is a sensitive and possibly emotive issue that AD believes should be aired to the wider public, he will take it to the director.

PMcC referred to a letter received from Scottish Water advising of water works commencing 24th April, for eight months. Councillors were aware. There was a consultation meeting, but it was held without much notice. It could be disruptive for businesses, and there will also be road closures.

8. **Planning Control**

PM had no new applications that stand out, just standard extension requests. The Station Hotel is the building he still receives questions about. People want to know what's happening with it. BG understands it is on the market for £1 million. AD advised that Network Rail has had to have experienced people on site overnight to do work to the building. Robin Ghosh has a scheme in mind for student accommodation/ retail outlet/ council accommodation. If that doesn't happen, it will run into disrepair and result in huge bills for the council to keep it safe. FW added that the Station Hotel has a Malaysian owner who is not interested in doing anything with it. BG responded that the council are not in the business of buying hotels with public money when the private sector fails. They already have lots of property in the town. Holmston House has just been sold, for a nursing home and recreation area, but the council could run into nightmare scenarios with the upkeep of failing old buildings in the town. The Station Hotel will become a building at risk. Building Control are engaged with Network Rail to protect passenger safety, but it is a complex scenario. BG/NM agreed that perhaps the CC should approach the manager with the members concerns.

LM raised concerns about the future of Ayr Grammar. BG advised it will close, and the council will invest heavily in Ayr Academy to turn it into a town based primary school. The Grammar may be sold for housing or may become an archive centre. It is in a good, accessible position, but the costs of creating a suitable environment could be high. LM suggested a museum. AD would like to see a cultural heritage centre on the ground floor of the Town Hall, highlighting the mining and fishing history of the area.

FW spoke of Nigel Martin's plans to re-establish a children's hospice. He would like a seafront location and is keen to build it in Cunning Park, but he has concerns that it won't be allowed. NM stated that this CC has objected to developments in that area that are contrary to planning. BG acknowledged that it is a

wildlife site, but a planning proposal of this type could be very emotive. Perhaps another seafront location could be secured. PM stressed that Cunning Park is open space and a precedent cannot be risked, if a hospice is allowed, other developers will want to build there too. NM has suggested to Nigel Martin that he have a plan B. NM/BG discussed other possible sites.

FW raised residents' concerns about advertising banners along Racecourse Road and Racecourse View. It is a conservation area and the banners detract from the character of the area. NM advised that banners are allowed for 28 days. BG suggested bringing it to the attention of John Hamilton in Planning. MH and other CC members were shocked to see the yellow stripes on the County Building's steps. It is a category A listed building in a conservation area. NM will take a look and follow up both points with the Enforcement office of the Planning Department.

9. **Reports**

OS has emailed out all reports received.

10. **Financial Report**

Treasurer reported £266 available for administration. Thank you letters have been received for donations made to The Ark, Ayr Community Church (Salvation Army) and Belleisle Conservatory.

11. **Correspondence**

MH attended the Locality Planning Group meeting. He feels it is important to have a CC presence at these monthly meetings. It is a forum for people from other community councils who serve in Ayr South and Coylton. There were representatives from the medical professions who had concerns about the NHS, such as waiting lists for the MSK Clinic and the core service provided by the District Nursing Service. There is also an initiative to provide 'safe places' for people with dementia. PM went to the North Ayr meeting; the focus was on mental health and issues with carers and caring facilities.

MH advised that the South Ayr Decides event is coming up soon. £80,000 is available for small groups between the North and South localities. He would like to see groups being partially self-funded before grants are provided. He will re-apply for the Organist Entertains - 35 Monday lunchtime organ concerts are planned for this year. Last time they were not successful in their bid, but they were not given an opportunity to speak and promote the benefits.

OS had two letters: one welcoming LM and FW to serve on the CC; another regarding a meeting of the Common Weal on 26th April. AD described the Common Weal group's ideology of "All of us First." They have fortnightly meetings with guest speakers and discussions. FB added that the group are trying to encourage more community involvement. The next meeting is on the 1st May, focusing on pensions, at the Glenpark Hotel.

12. **AOCB**

H. Hanson, the student representative for UWS, has ill health and can no longer attend. OS will approach UWS for a replacement.

AC enquired about rumours of a consultation on town centre car parking. AD advised there are ongoing consultations, but nothing specific is imminent. It will be a matter for discussion after the council elections.

13. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

Wednesday 10th May at 7.00pm
Room RB3 Ayr Town Hall