

Fort, Seafield and Wallacetown Community Council
Minutes
7pm, 13th September 2023
Council Chamber, Town Hall Buildings, Ayr

1. **Attendance**

CC Members: Denise Sommerville (Chair), Gordon Kelly (GK), Carol Fisher (CF), Michael Hitchon (MH), David Connely (DC), Forbes Watson (FW), Robert Singer (RS), Kenny MacLeod (KM), Eric Armstrong (EA), Alan Roseweir (AR).

SAC Councillors: Cllr Bob Shields, Cllr George Weir

SAC Link Officer: David Porte

Police: Not present.

Minute Secretary: GK (stand-in)

Public: L Meek, H. Ford, Rachel Borland, Ewen Campbell (EC)

2. **Apologies:**

- a. Kenneth Ballantyne, Jim Mackay, Andy Seville (AS), Phil Martin.
- b. Cllrs Martin Dowey and Lee Lyons were invited to the meeting but did not respond.

3. **Declarations of Interest:**

Nil.

4. **Minutes of Meeting Held on 8th August 2023:**

- a. Factual amendments to the draft minutes of the previous meeting were agreed by vote and ratified.

Proposed: DC, **Seconded:** Chair. **Carried.**

b. Cllrs Weir and Shields asked to be included in the circulation of the draft minutes prior to each meeting, to assist in their preparation. It was noted that draft minutes must be controlled to prevent unratified versions being circulated inadvertently and that only CC members are eligible to vote on ratification of minutes. However, it was deemed fair that, due to the value that Elected Members' contributions add to meetings and the fact that their verbal reports are included in the minutes, they should have sight of draft minutes prior to these being ratified and published. Draft minutes will therefore be sent to Elected Members after each meeting they attend.

Proposed: KM, **Seconded:** CF. **Carried.**

5. **Matters Arising from Meeting Held on 8th August 2023:**

- a. **Agenda Item 8 - Motorhomes on Ayr Seafront:** Due to competing priorities, Kevin Braidwood from ARA and Fiona Robertson from 'Streets' had not been invited to this meeting.

Action: Chair to email both and invite to future meetings as schedules allow.

6. **Reports**

- a. **Police:** A Police report was sent to SAC but this was not received by the CC prior to the meeting.

- b. **SAC Elected Members**

- i. **Cllr Bob Shields:**

- (a) Jetski activity in harbour area is being investigated following several complaints. It was opined that a local bylaw may be required to prohibit this.

- (b) SAC are in talks with owners of Ayr Ice Rink regarding continuation of this amenity. Plans to build a new facility at Craigie Park have been suggested but, unless the current ice rink remains open, there will be a lapse in availability of services. Owners of the current ice rink are insisting on remuneration.
- (c) A major hotel operator has approached SAC regarding the vacant Burns House site – no further details disclosed.
- (d) First Group are in talks with SAC regarding a combined transport hub – no further details disclosed.
- (e) A major hotel operator has shown interest in Belleisle House – no further details disclosed.
- (f) Ayr River Sports facility is nearing completion.

ii. **Cllr George Weir:**

- (a) Complaints have continued to be received regarding parking around the entrance to Arrol Gardens, especially when the Old Racecourse is in use for football events. As a TTRO enabling extension of double-yellow lines has been effected, this is now an enforcement issue. KM suggested that parking provision for such events could be made on the Old Racecourse. Cllr Weir agreed to put this suggestion to SAC Environmental Strategy Officer Fiona Ross.
- (b) A recent Police draft report was issued in error and it may be too late to recall.
- (c) Projects approved under the recent Ward Capital Expenditure Programme are due to commence, including red tarmac on the Esplanade and work on trunk roads.
- (d) An Active Travel report is due for release during w/c 18th Sep 2023.

iii. CC members questioned the Councillors present on the situation regarding Ayr Station Hotel:

- (a) Cllr Shields stated that this was on the agenda for a Full Council Meeting scheduled for 15th September 2023 and that Elected Members would be asked to approve continuation of funding to maintain the building's encapsulation. He went on to say that the building has no value and a recent report estimated costs of £11 million to make the building watertight without encapsulation, up from a previous estimate of £6.6 million, all of which would have to be funded by SAC.
- (b) This was questioned, as it appeared that the figures for restoring the external fabric of the building had been confused with estimates for demolition of the South Wing. Cllr Shields said that these figures had been discussed verbally and he could not confirm their veracity.

FSWCC Comment:

- a. Subsequent to this meeting, a detailed report by SAVE Britain's Heritage was released on 14th Sep 2023 and sent to SAC Officers and Elected Members. The report can be accessed online at <https://www.savebritainsheritage.org/news/item/923/PRESS-RELEASE-Breakthrough-survey-of-Ayr-Station-Hotel-transforms-the-debate-on-its-future> and a summary of key points is at Annex A.
- b. A special Full Council Meeting was held on 15th Sep 2023. A broadcast recording of the meeting can be accessed at https://south-ayrshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/796334. **Comment Ends.**

c. **Short Term Lets (STL):**

- i. As the deadline for mandatory licensing of STLs in Scotland of 1st October 2023 approaches, it was noted that the public list of STL Applicants had not been updated since 28th July, contrary to previous assurances from SAC that it would be updated fortnightly. The latest edition available online listed only 36 entries for Ayr West, 3 of which had been withdrawn (Annex B refers). It was confirmed that any STL operating without a licence beyond 1st October would be doing so illegally, therefore this would be a Police matter.
- ii. It was noted that many licence applicants have failed to observe mandatory conditions regarding appropriate posting of notices when applications are made. It was estimated that this was the case for around half of the known applications in the FSWCC area but it appeared that spot-checks by SAC licensing staff were only being conducted sporadically. A lack of consistent enforcement, coupled with the outdated public list, means that some licences could be approved without neighbours ever being aware of the application or able to make representation. In any case, neighbours are never given sight of applicants' proformas, therefore cannot see operational plans, etc.
- iii. GK suggested the possibility of postal notifications being sent to neighbours of applicants, similar to the process for planning applications, but it was noted that the current legislation makes no provision for this. Although Planning Approval is required in some instances, such as for change of use class of a property, concerns were raised that both licencing and planning panels consisted of the same staff.
- iv. Despite Ward 5 having the largest concentration of STLs in South Ayrshire, none of the Ward 5 Councillors sit on the STL Licensing Panel. During recent broadcasts of Regulatory Panel Hearings, it was observed that members lacked knowledge of how the STL Licencing Scheme should work. Cllr Weir said that training was planned for Elected Members but this had been postponed. Cllr Shields added that many Elected Members from other wards were disinterested in the STL Scheme, as they felt it was of little significance to their area.
- v. Representatives from FSWCC and the Fort, Seafield and Wallacetown Community Association continue to liaise and assist where possible and Cllr Shields said that SAC Leader Cllr Dowe planned to meet with them. This has yet to be arranged. It was agreed that FSWCC should request an updated list of STL applications as of 1st October 2023 and report unlicensed STLs operating beyond the deadline.

Proposed: GK, **Seconded:** AR. **Carried.**

Action: Chair to write to SAC Private Sector and Landlord Registration Officer Chris Carroll to request updated STL Applicant List as of 1st October 2023.

- vi. Cllrs Shields and Weir were asked for an update on the list of questions they were asked by email on 22nd June 2023, regarding claims that the self-catering sector boosts the South Ayrshire economy by over £50 million, noting that this claim had been cited in planning reports and regulatory panel hearings in support of STL applications. Both agreed to revisit and attempt to answer the questions.

d. **Planning:**

- i. KM referred to pre-application notice from Cornerstone Telecommunications for replacement and upgrade of an existing Vodafone mast at Cunning Park, Doonfoot Rd. It was agreed that the proposals represent the most appropriate and least intrusive plans for upgrade of this essential facility and that FSWCC would not object to a subsequent planning application, if as detailed in this notice, but that recommendations to improve the aesthetics of the installation would be made.

Proposed: KM, **Seconded:** DC. **Carried.**

Action: KM to write to Sam Platt of Cornerstone to ask if the installation can be painted to better match its surroundings.

- ii. KM referred to Planning Application 23/00580/APP in relation to change of use at 56 Kyle Street from office space to a leisure facility with teaching pool, details of which had been circulated prior to the meeting. One objection was noted but it was agreed that, whilst FSWCC would not object to the

application, that the Planning Authority would be asked if adequate measures had been considered to prevent chlorine smells affecting neighbours.

Proposed: KM, **Seconded:** GK. **Carried.**

Action: KM to write to SAC Planning regarding prevention of chlorine odours affecting neighbours.

- e. **Licencing:** No applications received.
- f. **Common Good:**
 - i. Cllr Weir has obtained an updated list of Common Good assets and will forward to FW.
 - ii. Nick Larkin has submitted a request under FOISA for disclosure of financial benefit to the Common Good Fund for use of assets such as the Low Green and Old Racecourse for the recent Ayrshow.
- g. **Treasurer:**
 - i. MH reported that, as at 13th September 2023, FSWCC had a working balance of **£588.18**.
 - ii. Due to the ongoing absence of a minute secretary, increased financial incentives were discussed. Although it was noted that FSWCC is not an employer, and can therefore only offer payment for expenses as opposed to any form of salary, it was proposed (FW), seconded (EA) and supported by majority vote that the minute secretary expense payment be raised from £40 to £60 per meeting. However, it was subsequently accepted that £600 for 10 meetings p/a would be more than the CC could budget for. The vote was therefore annulled and payments will remain at £40 per meeting. The search continues for a civic-minded individual with the ability and capacity to fulfil this role.

7. **Community Engagement Ideas**

- a. **Air Show:** Time constraints prevented a detailed discussion following the recent airshow but it was agreed that, although there were issues with traffic management, provision of toilet facilities and a lack of local catering suppliers, the event was, on the whole, very enjoyable for those who attended. It was agreed that an Events Working Group should be established, with the intention of representing community interests and concerns and establishing constructive engagement with SAC and future event organisers. EC was approved as a specialist co-optee in accordance with Clauses 4.20-4.22 of the Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils and will join the Working Group along with GK and AS.

Proposed: GK, **Seconded:** Chair. **Carried.**

Action: GK to establish Events Working Group and co-opt EC.

- b. **Community Councils Joint Meeting:** The Chair reported that some CCs are struggling to attract enough membership to remain quorate at meetings or even sustainable. Some ideas had been mooted to merge CCs with common boundaries but it was agreed that FSWCC is already overstretched and meetings regularly overrun in attempts to address the myriad issues faced across the three areas it represents. As the last joint meeting was poorly attended, the Chair intends to write to all members to establish ongoing viability, timing and frequency of meetings.

Action: Chair to write to other CC chairs.

8. **Speeding:**

Local residents had written to the CC to voice concerns regarding continued instances of speeding vehicles. Due to time constraints and a lack of police representation, it was agreed that the Chair would forward the residents' concerns to Elected Members. As the residents concerned had not consented to their personal details being shared, it was agreed that the letters should have these details redacted.

Action: Chair to send anonymised complaints to Ward 5 Councillors.

9. **Questions and Concerns for Proposed Meeting with MP and MSP:**

A meeting between the Chair, Vice Chair and our MP and MSP had been planned for 15th September but this was postponed by the MSP after production of the agenda for this meeting. Due to the postponement, as well as time constraints on this meeting, CC members were asked to email any points to the Chair.

Action: CC members to email points for MP and MSP to Chair.

10. **Public Business:**

a. L Meek and H Ford voiced concerns regarding reduction of hospital and care facilities in South Ayrshire. Cllr Shields stated that, although rumours of relocation or closure of services had been denied by NHS officials, such assurances had been made then reneged upon in the past. Cllr Shields went on to say that he had an online meeting planned with Ayrshire & Arran Health Board on Tuesday 19th September 2023 and would report accordingly.

b. It was noted that any reduction of services at University Hospital Ayr (UHA) would have the most adverse effect on those living in the South of the County. The Chair referred to a request from Girvan CC for all other CCs to support a letter of objection to reduction of services at UHA and it was agreed that FSWCC support this letter.

Proposed Chair, Seconded KM. Carried.

Action: Chair to endorse letter initiated by Girvan CC.

c. The discussion regarding UHA led to observations that large-scale housing developments, such as that planned at Corton, would place further demand on local healthcare services. Concerns were also raised that a planned retail complex at the Corton development may also place further pressure on local retail services, such as those existing at Heathfield and the ailing town centre. Although recent press articles had claimed that the proposals would bring employment and prosperity opportunities, it was opined that the effect on the wider area would probably be the opposite. No action points were derived from this discussion but it may be revisited as plans mature.

11. **AOCB:**

David Porte advised that a Place Planning meeting would be held at the Arc, Citadel Leisure Centre, from 1830 to 2130 on Thursday 28th September 2023.

12. **Date of next meeting:**

The Chair concluded the meeting at 2105hrs and confirmed the next CC meeting for Wednesday 11th October 2023 at 7pm, Ayr Town Hall.

Annex A – Key Points from SAVE Report on Station Hotel

1. Ayr Station Hotel is in much better condition than previously known, according to a [major expert survey and cost appraisal](#) published today.
2. The Report shows that the North and South Ranges of the building can be saved for £9.2 million, as opposed to demolition of the South Range only for £6.6 million, under plans tabled almost a year ago.
3. To date there has been no assessment of how the Station Hotel building could be retained and adapted for new station facilities and a transport interchange. The retention and refurbishment option remains untested.
4. Demolition as currently proposed would see the cleared site remain in the ownership of absentee owner Mr Ung, causing further delay and costs to the Council.
5. The Reuse and refurbishment option has the potential to open up multiple external sources of funding.
6. SAVE calls on South Ayrshire Council to urgently include the findings of this report and associated costings, in all discussions on the future of the hotel and its emerging [Ayr Town Centre Plan](#) due in 2024.

Annex B – Extract of STL Applications for Ayr West as at 13th Sep 2023

Applicant Forename	Surname	Individual/ Company	Existing/New operator	Short-Term Let Address	Postal Address	Postcode	Proposed Occupancy	Licence Type	Property type
David	Grant	Individual	Existing operator	Flat 5, 3D Racecourse View		KA7 2TS	4	Secondary Let	Flat
Joe	Donohoe	Individual	Existing operator	Flat D, 85 Dalblair Road		KA7 1UQ	4	Secondary Let	Flat
Lisbeth	Kirop	Individual	Existing operator	15D Wellington Square		KA7 1EN	4	Secondary Let	Flat
Lisbeth	Kirop	Individual	Existing operator	4 Yeomanry Place		KA7 1LD	4	Secondary Let	Flat
Lisbeth	Kirop	Individual	Existing operator	15G Wellington Square		KA7 1EN	4	Secondary Let	Flat
Edward Shaw Property Ltd	N/A	Company	Existing operator	9 Seafield Drive		KA7 4BG	6	Secondary Let	Detached
Nature CIC	N/A	Company	New operator	Flat 1, 23 New Market Street		KA7 1LP	4	Secondary Let	Flat
Nature CIC	N/A	Company	New operator	Flat 3, 21 New Market Street		KA7 1LP	4	Secondary Let	Flat
Edward Shaw Property Ltd	N/A	Company	New operator	1A Cassillis Street		KA7 1DN	6	Secondary Let	Flat
Stuart	Robertson	Company	Existing operator	4 Mews House, Fort Street		KA7 1DJ	4	Secondary Let	Flat
Brian	Mossie	Individual	Existing operator	Flat E, 64 Dalblair Road		KA7 1UQ	4	Secondary Let	Flat
Lisbeth	Kirop	Individual	Existing operator	15C Wellington Square		KA7 1EN	2	Secondary Let	Flat
Edward Shaw Property Ltd	N/A	Company	Existing operator	17 Seafield Road		KA7 4AA	6	Secondary Let	Detached
Doninni Apartments	N/A	Company	Existing operator	6 Leeward Park		KA7 4XF	6	Secondary Let	Detached
Craig	MacDonald	Individual	Existing operator	33 Merkland Road		KA7 4UN	7	Secondary Let	Detached
Doninni Apartments	N/A	Company	New operator	3 Cromwell Road		KA7 1DY	4	Secondary Let	Detached
Olena	Stewart	Individual	Existing operator	26 Gartferry Court		KA7 2UQ	4	Secondary Let	Flat
Ann	Burnip	Individual	Existing operator	30 Abbots Way		KA7 4HJ	6	Secondary Let	Detached
Hugh	McGarvery	Individual	Existing operator	23 Seaview	Dunure	KA7 4LX	5	Secondary Let	Detached
Gerald Elliot	Atkinson	Individual	Existing operator	16 Ewenfield Road		KA7 2QB	2	Secondary Let	Detached
Liz	Drysdale	Individual	Existing operator	16 Bath Place		KA7 1DP	4	Secondary Let	Flat
Venture Lettings Ltd	N/A	Company	Existing operator	42 Churchill Tower	South Harbour Street	KA7 1JT	6	Secondary Let	Flat
Fiona	Coubrough	Individual	Existing operator	28 Barns Street		KA7 1XA	4	Secondary Let	Flat
Patricia Edwards Cottages Ltd	N/A	Company	Existing operator	Ground Floor	52 Fort Street	KA7 1DE	4	Secondary Let	Flat
Barns BB Ltd	N/A	Company	Existing operator	8 Barns Crescent		KA7 2BW	8	Secondary Let	Flat
Nicola	Hardie	Individual	Existing operator	16A North Harbour Street		KA8 8AA	4	Secondary Let	Flat
Venture Lettings Ltd	N/A	Company	Existing operator	Flat A	2 Fort Court	KA7 1JD	6	Secondary Let	Flat
Doninni Apartments	N/A	Company	Existing operator	17 Queens Terrace		KA7 1DU	8	Secondary Let	Semi-detached
Millers Of Ayr Ltd	N/A	Company	New operator	Flat B	20 Bath Place	KA7 1DP	6	Secondary Let	Flat
Doninni Apartments	N/A	Company	Existing operator	Flat A	11 North Harbour St	KA8 8AA	2	Secondary Let	Flat
Millers Of Ayr Ltd	N/A	Company	New operator	Flat A	20 Bath Place	KA7 1DP	6	Secondary Let	Flat
Nicola	Hardie	Individual	Existing operator	Flat D	14 North Harbour St	KA8 8AA	4	Secondary Let	Flat
Doninni Apartments	N/A	Company	Error	57 Churchill Tower	South Harbour Street	KA7 1JT	6	Secondary Let	Flat
Doninni Apartments	N/A	Company	Existing operator	37 Donnini Court	South Beach Road	KA7 1JP	4	Secondary Let	Flat
Doninni Apartments	N/A	Company	Error	14 Rowallan Court	South Beach Road	KA7 1JR	2	Secondary Let	Flat
Morag	Fox	Individual	New operator	8 Cromwell Road		KA7 1DY	4	Home-Let	Flat

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