



FORT, SEAFIELD & WALLACETOUN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes: Meeting held on Wednesday, 9th September, 2015 in Girvan Roo, Ayr advertiserm, County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr, at 7.00 p.m.

Present: N McLean, (Chair); F Watson; O Stewart; P Ferguson; D Gardner; J Hood; P Martin; S McIntosh; S Crawford; M Anderson

In Attendance: H Hanson, UWS; Cllr B Grant; C Campbell, Link Officer; S Hilley, Ayr Advertiser.

Apologies: Cllr A Dorans; Cllr K Darwent; Cal Reid; M Hitchon; P McCall;

The Chair opened the meeting at 7.05p.m.

Changes to Previous Minutes

Pat Ferguson, J Hood, and C Campbell asked that they be noted as having sent apologies for the meeting.

Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

Chair noted that Cllr Dorans said in relation to Belleisle that there is now no barrier to John Campbell completing restoration of the main building; however, this is not strictly correct as he still has to get his planning resolved for the car parking, and there are other issues of a confidential nature, which are holding the matter back. Cllr Grant offered to clarify some matters. Planning permission that was granted was for 123 car parking spaces. Mr Campbell has asked for further parking to be available and SAC are in a position to accommodate this. Cllr Grant would like to speak to Mr Campbell about this matter as it has been ongoing for some time. There seems to have been a false impression given to the public of South Ayrshire, there is no car parking issue that cannot be resolved; we have met the request for 123 as part of the planning permission, he has asked for more, he has asked for many things, and there are certain things we can't do for him, but we can resolve the car parking issues. N

McLean said he had attended a meeting on 2nd June with John Campbell and Jill Cronin, when that matter was discussed, and he hasn't got a specific car parking area, which he said he would allow the council to use when he wasn't needing it. But in order to comply with the planning consent he needs to have a designated area which could have his exclusive use when he needed it. Cllr Grant stated that if anyone in this room, or beyond, thinks that the council would prevent a multi-million development for the sake of a few car parking spaces then they have got it so wrong. N McLean explained that there had been legal complications that they couldn't sell the car parking area that he was looking for because it wasn't contiguous with the hotel. Cllr Grant said that matter has been resolved a year ago, but N McLean said it had not. Cllr Grant said that he could not discuss the matter fully at a public meeting, but asked that the Chair take his word that there remains no barrier regarding car parking. Mr Campbell has requested more, which can be accommodated, but SAC will not sell him another piece of land. The Chair went on to say that on this matter they would have to agree to differ at this stage, due to other meetings he has had. Cllr Grant maintains that there are no barriers regarding car parking. The original deal with Mr Campbell was good and he cannot understand why it has not gone ahead. Cllr Grant stated that he was available to assist in any way with the matter, and possible act as 'broker' between Mr Campbell and the Council then Mr Campbell knows where to find him. It is hoped for a resolution soon.

Pat Ferguson asked Cllr Grant for his update on the Clubhouse, as she has to leave early to attend another meeting. Cllr Grant gave details of the resolution for the contract for the Clubhouse renovations. He read out a communication from a constituent dated 8th September, forwarded from Donald Gillies, of SAC Estates Department, which detailed that the tender for the remainder of the work has been issued to two local firms who were on the original tender list. The return date for the tenders is 14th September. This allows a much faster pre-tender period as the aim is to re-start the work as soon as possible. The remedial works were carried out on the portion of the building constructed by T & A Kernoghan prior to the termination of their contract. Concerns had been raised regarding further possible delays, but assurances were given that the problems that had previously been apparent have all been resolved. The works will be due to recommence at the end of September 2015 with whichever firm wins the tender process. The completion date will now be early March 2016, which is a full year delay. The intention is to have the building wind and water-tight as soon as possible. The windows and doors are actually stored on site so the replacement contractor will not have any lead-in time for delivery of these key items. Cllr Grant then explained that these works were also taking up around 50 further car parking spaces with the storing of materials etc. for the work. There had been comment within the letter regarding the fact that the original contractors had been Irish and not local, but it was pointed out that there can be no discrimination on these grounds. However, it was also mentioned within this letter that said firm, T & A Kernoghan, had already had their contract terminated on another project in similar circumstances in Scotland. Cllr Grant explained that this had been a community project in Coatbridge, and they suffered the same fate as South Ayrshire, being let down badly. The Council had given the firm two chances to get back on track but they failed to do so. Cllr Grant feels that as we are not the only victims of this company that this would suggest a bad contractor rather than a bad project management regime. Cllr Grant believes the blame lies squarely with the contractor and not the architect etc. The existing design team will continue to provide professional consultancy services for the following disciplines – architects, structural engineer, quantity surveyor, mechanical and electrical engineers, the project will be overseen by South Ayrshire Council's professional design services section. Pat asked Cllr Grant if he had any idea how much more the work was going to cost. His personal opinion is that it may be approximately £300,000, given time delays etc.

There will be attempts made to recover the money from the original contractors, but there is not much hope for success. The Chair raised the question regarding due diligence in the choosing of the original contractor; to which Cllr Grant replied that there is no evidence of any wrongdoing whatsoever, and criteria requirements had appeared to have been met. It would appear that the contractor had let down the Council, as they had with another local authority as is now known. The matter was drawn to a close for the time being, recognising that it has been an unfortunate set of circumstance. Cllr Grant went on to praise the tolerance of the prospective clubhouse users and season ticket holders, who have had valid reasons for complaint. The Chair mentioned that the level of tolerance could perhaps have been assisted by the excellent condition the golf courses have been maintained to by SAC workers. The work is also excellent in the walled garden. OS commented on work that had been done on shrubs and trees that have made a difference. MA commented on the subject of workers in the parks department in general. There is an article in the current Tenants' Newsletter showing the tenant participation officer, Gordon Campbell, spending time 'shadowing' a parks department worker, and the dedication of these people is very evident, with the quality of the works they produce being excellent, and to be commended.

Cllr Grant referred to page 3 of the minutes to make the correction that it is the north side of the south pier that was mentioned regarding the railings being erected, funded by the Common Good Fund.

The bollards at the Campbeltown Bar in Main Street, will be removed by Christmas, to give easy access to parking there and thus access to the High Street.

The Flower Show was a great success and thanks go to Dobbie's Garden Centre for sponsoring and for the prizes, and there are proposals to extend competition to include allotments. There are some new allotments and proposals for more.

CC mentioned an error in reports when there is reference to Edward the Bruce. The minute secretary explained that it was Robert the Bruce's brother Edward that was being referred to originally. There was then some questions about whether there was a brother Edward.

Post meeting note: *"His campaign culminated in resounding victory over Edward II (whose larger army of 20,000 outnumbered Robert's forces by three to one) at the Battle of Bannockburn, near Stirling on 24 June 1314. Bannockburn confirmed the re-establishment of an independent Scottish monarchy.*

Two years later, his brother and heir presumptive, Edward Bruce, was inaugurated as High King of Ireland (which increased pressure on the English), but was killed in battle in 1318."
Extracted from the official website of The British Monarchy – Robert I (1306-1329)

Pat Ferguson left the meeting at 7.40.

The Chair asked if there was any Public Business. There was none at this time.

Police Business.

No Police business.

Ayr Town Centre Renaissance

Cllr Grant spoke about the pace of the Renaissance as being a bit slow, but most of this is due to negotiations for the purchase of some of the buildings at the bottom of the High Street. The Chair was able to give update of this from a meeting he had attended previously. The remaining properties will be owned by the Council in a matter of two weeks. There is to be a Community Council workshop in County Hall on 22nd September when they will be discussing these issues. He recommended this meeting to those interested in the developments of the town centre. He noted from the Ayr Advertiser that the Council have discussed the traffic position and have agreed new signage around the town, also there will be no general traffic down the High Street but there will be two-way traffic at the bottom of the High Street to the Fish Cross. CC said he had heard talk of Renaissance owning a piece of road that comes from the Afflecks building on to the High Street which would make sense to open up the bottom of the High Street. Cllr Grant went on to describe some proposals for change regarding the High Street up to Kyle Centre, which has new owners; and also the triangle of land bordered by Sandgate, High Street and Newmarket Street. He explained about some of the requirements of planning where it is necessary to advise the Planning Department what is proposed to be put in place in the streetscape before making any changes. It is also necessary to try to retain the historic frontage of the streetscape. There was a short discussion as to whether work would be started before Christmas and what could be done in the meantime. N McL suggested that there needs to be some discussion with David Bell and Renaissance whilst Cllr Grant feels that there is a need for discussion with developers about what the Riverside development should look like – Student accommodation, housing, retail, public space? FW said that it had been hoped by some shopkeepers at the bottom of the town that these buildings would be away by Christmas; it seems now that this is not the case. Suggestion was made to contact David Bell and invite him to the next meeting.

OS drew attention to an article ‘Scotland’s Towns’ from the Sunday Herald that she had copied for interest as it is about Ayr and the work going on in the town centre.

There was some observations about the changes in the town, the Chair mentioned the state of the red sandstone building at the bottom of Old Bridge Street, which is in a dreadful state of repair. Cllr Grant said this is not to do with the Council. There has been a lot of work done with public money to try to rescue private buildings. Discussion followed regarding various sites throughout the town a lot of which are private buildings. Cllr Grant emphasised to members that the Council do attempt to contact absentee landlords in order to try to get them to maintain the fabric of their properties, often to no avail, and there is a lot of public monies spent to try to keep some properties in reasonable condition. FW asked if it could not become a criminal offence to neglect such buildings. Suggestion from Chair that this should go to Holyrood to seek legislation. Inspections are carried out and public money is being spent on such buildings. Cllr Grant mentioned the area of Smith Street/Union Arcade where there are businesses being affected due to the condition a building has been left in following an accident with a vehicle. It is often difficult to find some of these owners. The Chair talked about the state of the Station Hotel and that it will not take much more time in its current state before it will fall down. Cllr Grant talked about the possibility of acquiring The Station Hotel for Council Offices in place of Burns House, but it is not a viable project.

Cllr Grant mooted that if people would support the businesses in the town centre then this would help; but retail has changed for out of town and the internet and this will not change

back. Car parking was discussed for a short time, with comparisons mentioned regarding Silverburn and other towns and their costs etc.

Councillors' Business and Matters Arising

The recent Air Show was talked about with reports about the good weather and the good traffic management, car parking arrangements, and the crowd control. Vintage cars, military village, fun fair and other attractions were all very successful. Credit was given by Cllr Grant to the cleansing department staff for the successful tidying of the beach and surrounding areas so quickly after the event.

Speeding cars seem to be giving concern in the area. FW asked about the football tournament, OS said it had been a success, but there were some car parking concerns. Unfortunately there was an incident of one of the football coaches urinating in the field instead of using the nearby toilets. There was also an incident on the day of the Air Show when a car driver, with his family in the car, got out and urinated at a tree in front of one of the local residents.

Cllr Grant then spoke about the scaffolding which is up at County Buildings and the Town Hall, this is a big spend on the maintenance of these buildings to invest in their future.

Cllr Grant stated that he is ambitious to have some work done to 'cheer up' the bus station at Sandgate.

The Chair stated that there was no articles to discuss regarding new planning applications.

Question was asked about 'plot 9' and Cllr Grant outlined how the situation had got to where it is, 30 flats and a nursing home is now being built.

Cllr Grant went on to commend Templeton House, he had attended the opening and it is a stunning development.

The Chair reported that the Ayrshire Litter Volunteer Network was in the process of folding due to lack of funding. An invitation was extended to members to join Cllr Grant on a Sunday morning at 10.00a.m. meeting in Morrison's car park.

Cllr Grant left the meeting at 8.25p.m.

MH's report was taken as read as it had been circulated to all members.

OS reported that there is a lot of e-mails coming in from Brian McQuillan, Community Engagement Officer, South Ayrshire Council, regarding Health & Social Care, which she is forwarding to members as they come in.

There was an e-mail about the timber decking at the Pavilion, and it had been agreed at court and William Hammond is to pay the costs as an objector.

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland, comments to be in by 22nd October, this consultation has been sent out to members.

The Big Debate on 11th September, at Harbour Arts Centre, Irvine, doors open 11.15a.m., the programme is on at 12 till 1.00 on Radio Scotland.

The Tenants Fun and Information Family Day, 12th September in the Citadel. MA advised that the Housing Minister had been coming to open the day, but due to the local by-election she can no longer do this due to purdah.

AOCB

The Chair advised that Cal Reid has resigned as he is now based in Glasgow, and we have Herborg Hansen in his place. She advised the group that she is taking on Cal's project regarding lighting the footpaths around the University. There followed some discussion including where the budget would come from, with suggestions for match funding, heritage funding, etc. The everyday usage of the footpaths and how to justify applications for funding. Conversation moved on to the geography of the River Ayr and the bridges, CC suggested contacting Fiona Ross, Head of Neighbourhood Services, SAC to help with this project. Suggestion was made to HH to conduct surveys on the usage of the footpaths.

A general discussion followed regarding student accommodation in the area, mentioning the possibility of the Station Hotel and other places being used for this. HH said that the Community Council could make the approach to achieve the funding.

Financial Report

There is **£245-39** available for administration.

The meeting ended at 8.50 p.m.

Wednesday, 14th October, 2015 at 7p.m. in Girvan Room, County Buildings, Ayr.