



FORT, SEAFIELD & WALLACETOUN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes: Meeting held on Wednesday, 18th November, 2015 in Maybole Room, Ayr County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr, at 7.00 p.m.

Present: N McLean, (Chair); M Hitchon; O Stewart; P Ferguson; P McCall; S Crawford; J Hood; S McIntosh; M Anderson.

In Attendance: PC Michael McClymont, Police Scotland; PC Neil Emmerson, Police Scotland; Cllr A Dorans; Cllr K Darwent; Cllr B Grant; Chris Campbell, SAC; David Bell, Ayr Renaissance; Sarah Hilley, Ayrshire Post.

Apologies: F Watson; P McCall; P Martin.

Previous Minutes were accepted as correct, proposed by MH, seconded by SC.

The Chair opened the meeting at 7.00p.m.

Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

MA advised that the Police had, as promised at the last meeting telephoned her regarding her enquiry about a brothel suspected in Church Court. The update from that telephone conversation is that there have been no arrests to date regarding this, although there is activity that the Police are keeping an eye on.

Police Business.

The officers gave update on the recent Halloween event, Tamfest, which is planned to take over 3 days next year as a result of this year's success.

They also further discussed the Area Report figures, which have been circulated to the Group. There was a discussion on the changes in the activity around Clubs in the town centre, with these working on reduced hours. There are therefore reduced anti-social activities as a result.

The Chair enquired about housebreaking figures, and these are reducing. There had been 10 in Seafield with 4 of these detected; forensic tests are taking time, however, which has an impact on detection. There were 42 call-outs in Seafield, 1 assault, 1 vandalism, and 1 theft. In contrast there were 178 call-outs in Wallacetoun, 9 thefts, 19 disturbance calls – noise, domestic violence etc., some road traffic accidents, - in all for Wallacetoun there have been 49 crime reports with 25 of these being detected.

Police left the meeting at 7.20 p.m.

Ayr Town Centre Renaissance

David Bell was welcomed to give an update on the progress of Ayr Renaissance. He was able to advise that the purchase of No 8 High Street has now been completed, and also the Shoefayre Building. This means that Ayr Renaissance now own almost all of the properties needed to progress with the Riverside Development. The planning process is moving along with the next step of outlining the development framework intended for the area in order to achieve the necessary permissions for the demolition to start. It is intended to submit detailed applications in the first half of 2016. The Chair asked if there was any way that demolition could be started first in order that people could get a better view of the potential of the site in advance of final decisions of use. David outlined that Historic Scotland's processes are against this, despite its logic. MA asked about the ownership of the Forum. David said this is ongoing, and that this should not stop proceedings, although it would be better to have that building's ownership too. SAC now own the complete block from there down with no gaps in the middle. Cllr Darwent said there is also the possibility of compulsory purchase open to the Council. David confirmed to MA that the sandstone building on the corner will remain. There followed a short discussion regarding the recruitment of architects to design the project. Cllr Darwent was able to outline the method to be used to procure the best architect for the job, high quality, and high profile people being the target.

David then spoke about work on New Bridge Street, most of which is complete, with work ongoing in the building including the Central Bar, which is nearing completion, though a bit behind schedule. Completion is expected around the end of January, weather permitting. The small grants scheme is going along well with some applications active, this funding is available till the end of 2016.

Town Centre Management – the Town Centre Steering Group is up and running with 13 members meeting monthly to decide how to improve management of the town centre, and town centre entertainment etc. He also mentioned the Tamfest celebrations and its success, focusing on the efforts put into this by many people involved. Planning ongoing for next year, confirming it will cover three days.

Kyle Centre update – the owners have said that they have agreed terms regarding occupancy of the cinema; although it is not yet known exactly who this tenant will be.

The Chair asked about the Afflecks building access which is at the Police entry in Town Hall. Cllr Grant confirmed this and that there is another, pedestrian only, in Hope Street, next to the old Morrisons shoe shop.

The Chairman went on to ask about traffic proposals for the High Street. David said this will continue as it is for now. There is some thought about turning left from New Bridge on to

High Street to access the bottom of the street, with exit also being back on to new Bridge, left on to Sandgate. There is ongoing debate regarding this. Cllr Grant outlined some of the problems regarding costs, access, emergency facilities. Cllr Darwent mentioned that the re-opened River Street will have an impact on giving pedestrian access from there to town centre. Cllr Grant said that there is ongoing improvements to signage within the town centre and this should help. SC suggested that the buses should be re-routed away from the High Street when street entertainment such as Tamfest is happening. Next year with a three day proposal this would have quite an impact. David said that there are plans to actually close the road for this event, though at this stage he cannot promise this will happen.

The Chairman asked David if there was any control on the owners of the Heart Foundation building at the bottom of High Street, as it is in a bit of a state, with weeds etc. David said that there was no control, and to his knowledge the top floor has been voided, with staircase having been removed. Concern was stated regarding the future condition of the building and how it will soon start to break up. Cllr Grant stated that Building control does have authority on owners of such buildings, and this will be looked into. People should notify the Council of any buildings they have concerns about. The owners do have responsibility on the upkeep of their properties. There are grants available to assist with such projects. Cllr Grant gave example of the Station Hotel owners in Malaysia. Building Control have actually been communicating with them for 2-3 years, and only recently have succeeded in work beginning on some remedial work. The Chairman mentioned that it would be helpful to know what the plans are for the future of the Hotel.

Concern was raised by MH regarding the Clydesdale Bank Building in High Street, which is in private ownership. There is an open window and pigeons accessing the building. He has concerns about the long term damage they will cause, as had been the case before in Wallace Tower and this cost a lot of money to put right. David Bell said it was his understanding that the window had been nailed open by the RSPB. There was some anecdotal discussion regarding this matter, but no solution could be settled on as it is in private ownership.

There followed some general discussion regarding the Riverside Project and the processes and considerations around this, both physical and financial, and also business practices and the historical interests to be respected.

The Chairman thanked David Bell who left the meeting at 8.15 p.m.

The Chairman announced that the Christmas Window Display competition will be judged on 7th December. This is presented by Community Council in partnership with Ayr Guildry and the Ayr & Prestwick Lions Club.

Belleisle

The Chair is trying to get in touch with John Campbell, regarding the progress at Belleisle, but has been unsuccessful. Work appears to have stopped with the progress at the main building. There was a conversation about what has been done, what has been planned, and what has still to be done.

Cllr Grant reported that the clubhouse work has successfully progressed. The new company lives up to its name – 3B – means Bigger, Brighter, Better.

MH raised the subject of the conservatory, which he says is wonderful. NMcL said the play park is brilliant, and asked Cllr Grant about the courtyard. This is to be revisited and funding will be found; so work will be done to tidy it all up.

OS announced that Belleisle has been nominated in the Fields in Trust Best Parks Awards, and voting is online till the 25th November. Belleisle is one of 9 Scottish parks nominated.

Councillors' Business and Matters Arising

Cllr Dorans announced that SAC has been judged to be second best Council in the Country for Registration services. Target met in recording births, deaths and marriages was 99.61% and was only beaten by East Dunbartonshire.

Ayrshire Roads Alliance have agreed to put reflectors on bollards on the Esplanade.

Requests to the Licensing Board from Madisons and Club de Mar to extend their hours to 3.00 a.m. have been rejected by the Board. This is to remain at 2.30 a.m. The knock-on effect to all support services will be too great. This brought some discussion about the pub and club trade locally and the changes there have been in the volume of trade.

Asylum seekers – the people in Adamton House are not refugees, they are asylum seekers put there by the Home Office, and are in the process of being assessed. The Council have agreed to take some refugees from Syria, and will expect around 10 – 20 sometime before Easter. There is opportunity for some volunteers to help with these people. Serco is working in Adamton House and looking for some volunteers there, and also the Council will be looking for some to assist with the refugees. Contact should be made with the council.

Cllr Grant mentioned the student flats under construction on Craigie Road, to be called Cree Lodge Court. Nightingale House at Seafield has been sold for residential mews development. There had been a complaint about a car driving on the beach.

There will be an extra journey made by the gully wagon to clear leaves from certain areas to prevent flooding.

The sculpture park at Rozelle has featured on STV news, with Cllr Grant speaking about the park.

Fly tipping in Wallacetoun still is a big problem.

He made mention of a few shops that have closed in the town, but also drew attention to a couple of new businesses, Digby Brown solicitors; a new hot food shop next to Odeon and a new Thai restaurant at Tam's Brig.

Cllr Grant also referred to the regrettable decision to cancel the Christmas lights switch-on, due to the threat of bad weather. He conceded that it was the right decision to make at the time, and once made could not be reversed.

MH said the Savoy Café is to re-open soon, and also the bar next to West Kirk, The Set, is to open soon.

Cllr Darwent mentioned a few musical events to take place in December in the run-up to Christmas.

The Chair mentioned that Holyrood gave Councils leave to reduce business rates, and he wondered what SAC had done about this. Cllr Grant replied to this stating that this is happening across the UK, with mixed reviews. It will bring a challenge and may be a bonus

for some and problems for others. The whole rateable system needs looked at. There was a discussion regarding the business rates/rates reform in general. Cllr Dorans said it was being looked at locally but nothing to happen between now and March.

PF asked what was happening at Heathfield. Cllr Grant replied that Marks and Spencer are taking up one third of the new building and the rest is for a company with consent for bulky good. Possibly B & M Stores. Cllrs confirmed that Sainsbury's will also to go ahead as planned for South-east Ayr.

CC reported that there had been a complaint about skateboarders on South Harbour Street so he has put out a community safety survey to the area, to get consensus of opinion. Sectarian graffiti in the Turners Brig underpass, was detection on this, due to hidden cameras in the underpass. Also at Belleisle they are close to detecting, with CCTV cameras, boy racers spotting specific cars at certain times.

Good reports on the use of the Yeurt for craft classes etc. at Belleisle and Rozelle.

Planning

Planning lists shows nothing to report.

Correspondence

No Correspondence.

Financial Report

£560.00 for Administration.

AOCB

None.

Date of next meeting

Wednesday, 13th January, 2016 at 7p.m. in Girvan Room, County Buildings, Ayr.