



Minutes of FORT, SEAFIELD & WALLACETOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL (FSWCC) meeting

11th February 2026, 6.30pm

**Working For Wallacetown ('hub') building,
37 George Street, Ayr, KA8 0AH**

Chair: Ian MacLeod

Minutes: A.I. via Apple iPhone transcript processed by MS Co-Pilot and edited by Ian MacLeod

Attendees/ panel:

David Connelly (CC member), Michael Hitchon (CC member), Ian MacLeod (CC member), David Porte (SAC staff - link officer), Alan Roseweir (CC member), Robert Singer (CC member), Denise Sommerville (CC member), Forbes Watson (CC member), George Weir (SAC member)

Members of Public:

Beryl McKinlay, Bill McLellan, John Monaghan

1. Welcome and Introductions

Members agreed Ian MacLeod will chair tonight's meeting given that chair Denise Somerville was expected to arrive late caused by unavoidable traffic delay. Chair (Ian) welcomed attendees including members of the public. Chair acknowledged members of the public's stated business they wished to raise for discussion and noted that such matters will be covered by items we already have on our agenda. Furthermore, Chair pledged to invite those members of the public to contribute to those items in due course this evening.

2. Apologies

Eric Armstrong, Carol Fisher, and councillor Bob Shields sent apologies. No apologies have been received from Jim McKay but Forbes Watson conveyed that Jim has intimated resignation although no formal resignation has been received by FSWCC nor by South Ayrshire Council. SAC councillors Martin Dowey and Lee Lyons have not given apologies. David Connelly arrived at item (4.) *Approval of Minutes*, and Denise Somerville arrived at item (6.2.2) *Reports – Planning - Ayr town centre shop fronts signage enforcement*.

3. Declarations of Interest

Alan Roseweir and Robert Singer declared interests regarding item (7.) *Pride in Place Programme*: Alan is a member of the programme's board, and one of Robert's close family members is on the programme's board.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1. Meeting of 14th January 2026

Alan Rosweir proposed approval of the minutes, Forbes Watson seconded the approval; all members present approved the minutes.

5. Matters Arising

These are follow-ups from the previous meeting minutes. Where such matters are included in named/ recurring items of today's agenda, we will report there. Here are matters arising from the previous minutes that are not on today's agenda:

- 5.1. Action: *Councillor Weir continues to press South Ayrshire (SAC) to publish an economic impact report regarding the International Air Show but SAC are non-committal about the date that was tentatively sometime this month (February 2026).*
- 5.2. Secretary Ian MacLeod has filed Michael Hitchon's record of the suppliers and agents used to produce the viewfinder engraving located on Ayr promenade that was purchased in 2010 (approximately).
- 5.3. Action: *Eric Armstrong's task to investigate the performance and sufficiency of facilities at Ayr bus station has not yielded an update/ success yet. We will keep this open pending progress by next meeting.*

6. Reports

6.1. Treasurer

6.1.1. Monthly statement (M Hitchon)

Michael Hitchon, presented the monthly statement.

6.1.2. Scope for making charitable donation (M Hitchon)

Action: *In anticipation that there are sufficient funds available to donate to local good causes when reported to the next FSWCC meeting (March 2026), members are to consider which good causes they feel ought to receive donations – Likely up-to two organisations, maximum fifty pounds each.*

6.2. Planning

6.2.1. Savoy 5 Building Works (F. Watson)

(History: Autumn 2025 - Local residents reported their observations to us that the site's development includes structures and/or materials not given planning

approval. Ward councillor Shields's enquiries yielded confirmation from SAC officers that the site has been served notice that it must apply for retrospective planning permission. Relatedly, the site is operating through a temporary alcohol licence).

Forbes Watson's email to SAC seeking timeline for planning and licensing process compliance received reply that the temporary alcohol licence will run indefinitely pending resolution of the planning process, which is indefinite itself. Councillor Bob Shields' written update to our meeting reported that he has extended his lens of scrutiny to include refurbishment of the related entity Savoy Park Hotel about which Bob is concerned that the closure for months for refurbishment without planning applications lodged might reveal non-complaint change of use in due course. Bob reports that his concerns about both entities have not been answered by SAC yet.

Action: FSWCC will retain 'Savoy 5' on our agenda and Forbes and councillors Shields and Weir will pursue updates on action by SAC.

6.2.2. Ayr Town Centre Shop Fronts Signage Enforcement (M. Hitchon)

Michael Hitchon reported that the organisation through which he and their members have sought explanations from SAC about the conformity of selected shop signs in Ayr town centre have not received a reply.

Action: Forbes and Michael will liaise to ascertain whether suspected non-compliant shop signs had applied for and/ or were granted planning permission.

6.2.3. Planning notifications in the last month

Forbes summarised applications received by SAC since our last meeting (January). None merited an objection from us. However, members and public were interested in the opportunities and obstacles for the Darlington church building at the north entrance of New Bridge to be brought into use. Regrettably, Forbes suspects that the tenants – a charity – will need to gain and deliver on sizeable funding to make the premises useable and that such a high bar might prove unfeasible, thereby returning the building to vacancy for re-marketing for let.

6.3. Licensing

6.3.1. Savoy 5 temporary licence (F. Watson) (see 6.2.1.)

6.3.2. Licensing applications within the last month (none received)

6.4. Short Term Lets (STLs)

(history: FSWCC object to applications made in buildings with a shared access. Given residents' concerns about harms that STLs bring to shared access buildings' fabric, character and amenity, SAC elected members tasked officers to bring policy improvements proposals to elected members by spring 2026.)

No STL applications made since our last meeting (January) merited our objection.

6.5. Police

The police report was circulated among members, indicating crime detection levels had remained consistent, with no significant incidents reported. Members acknowledged routine traffic and speeding concerns

6.6. Roads

6.6.1. Dalblair Road speeding

(History: local resident's queries yielded explanation from Ayrshire Roads Alliance (ARA) about threshold for ARA and/ or police to act to calm speeding. Senior ARA officer Jane Corrie gave further detail at our inquorate meeting December 2025: Accessible Ayr project plans preclude structural change, but first-line measure – 20 mph repeater signs – will be deployed by early 2026 and speed survey undertaken afterwards. No improvement would result in vehicle-reactive signs.)

We will keep in mind the constraints and opportunities for structural change in Dalblair Road: Accessible Ayr project, and the longer-term prospective development of the Arran Mall site.

Action: David Connelly will write to ARA to obtain confirmation as to when the Dalblair Road speed survey will be undertaken, analysed and reported.

6.6.2. Ayr Parking Strategy (2025)

(History: SAC considering approval of strategy FSWCC decided to urge our ward councillors and SAC cabinet that current arrangements should remain until alternatives can be presented to residents, especially those in Queens Terrace and Fort Tower area, whose concerns are noted in the strategy.)

Ian MacLeod confirmed he had written to ward councillors and SAC cabinet to urge the status quo until known local concerns are addressed, and that proposed revisions to the strategy be made publicly available weeks in advance of SAC decision.

Chair – Ian – read note from councillor Shields that he thinks Ayr Parking Strategy (2025) will not be implemented and that limited localised changes will be implemented instead, with any broad change being limited to modernised charges

(i.e. price increase) rather than structural or major policy changes.

6.6.3. Ayr Grammar Primary School

Councillor Weir reported that headteacher and staff will reiterate safety pleas and appeal for better conduct when school reconvenes following current mid-term holiday but that the problem is long-standing and persistent. Alan Roseweir proposed that we record our concern that a serious incident is very possible, and all members present agreed.

Action: SAC link officer David Porte will report as to what traffic safety measures and initiatives are being implemented and/ or planned for AGPS.

6.7. Common Good

(History: FSWCC have asked SAC for clarity about income from the fund's assets, and suggested revisions to the management of the fund using Scottish Borders Council's Peebles town fund as a template. Recent SAC chief executive changeover has delayed SAC consideration of our suggestions.)

Forbes Watson has heard from SAC chief executive and his officers that ambiguity remains regarding the fund's assets' values and possible disbursements – historically and currently – and that the process to resolve this will take many months. Councillor Weir reckons that forthcoming SAC full Council meeting will consider a question about this matter and process.

Action: Forbes will monitor March 2026 SAC meetings' agendas and outcomes regarding SAC's examination of their records about the fund..

6.8. Wallacetown Community Energy Project (WCEP)

(History: The operators are Scottish Charity Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) Fort, Seafield, and Wallacetown Community Association (FSWCA) whose WCEP is producing surplus solar energy of which the profits will be gifted to charitable causes in the Wallacetown area in due course.)

Alan Roseweir reported that WCEP has reached the ceremonial milestone of each solar panel host site – three early years and/ or primary schools in Wallacetown – assuming a deliberative role in the planned disbursement of income to charitable activities. Accordingly, an invited range of stakeholders will celebrate this milestone at an event at Riverside church hall on 25th February. In recent days, WCEP was featured across BBC Scotland's radio, television and internet platforms morning, noon and night, including appearances and discussion with FSWCA and FSWCC members Alan Roseweir and Denise Somerville.

6.9. SAC Place Planning – Ayr South/West

(History: FSWCC acts as a formal partner in South Ayrshire Council's 'Community-Led Action Plan (CAP) 2026-2030' for 'place planning' for Ayr South, subsection Ayr West council ward.)

Delegated FSWCC members have worked with SAC officer Audrey Gatt to give form and structure to preferences garnered from Community survey in recent years: Suggestions have been refined and grouped to improve deliverability.

Action: *Secretary to send draft FSW-CAP to all FSWCC members for their consideration and approval at our next monthly meeting.*

6.10. Ayr Town Centre Regeneration

6.10.1. Accessible Ayr Project

(History: Publicly, and to elected members, FSWCC stated its opposition to 'stage 1' proposals which envisaged cycle-paths, vehicle lane contraction, and refreshed pedestrian street furnishings in the high street environs of Alloway Street, Sandgate, and some of the high street itself.)

Though media reported the cycle lane proposals were dropped by SAC at their Cabinet meeting 20th January 2026, minutes contain no details other than “to continue consideration of this matter to a future meeting of Cabinet”: [Cabinet agenda and associated papers for the meeting on 17 February 2026 - Agenda Item No.2 Minutes of previous meeting of 20 January 2026](#). However, in his written report to our meeting, Councillor Bob Shields intimates that he senses cabinet and/ or full SAC leaning towards discontinuing the project entirely because external funding is conditional on core or extensive cycle-path infrastructure which Cabinet have rejected. However, Bob reports that some external funding for 'active travel' might materialise for possible proposal to build a pedestrian and cyclist bridge across the river Ayr at the harbour area.

Action: *FSWCC to keep monitoring SAC decision-making about Accessible Ayr project.*

6.10.2. Burns Statue Square Redevelopment

Related to Accessible Ayr project decision mentioned above at item 6.10.1, Ayrshire Live/ Daily Record reported that SAC Cabinet member Councillor Clark stated that “[Burns Statue Square Regeneration will go ahead as planned.](#)” FSWCC considered the archive paper from SAC full council meeting 14th May 2025, and remain unclear as to what is being proposed other than significant extended pedestrianisation of the east side of the 'square' (i.e. from the corner of Alloway Street to Smith Street) to the loss of the current carriageway. Carriageways nearby would be reconfigured but such options are unclear and we cannot find which option SAC prefer. FSWCC members sense that this project has had less community input than Accessible Ayr.

Action: *FSWCC members to review the SAC report ahead of our March 2026 meeting with a view to forming an opinion on the project.*

6.10.3. [Redevelopment of the Former Hourstons Building and Arran Mall](#)

Discussion about prospects per item 11 of the [Final South Ayrshire Council Minute - 6th November 2025](#): “officers [to] present a report to Council by March 2026 ... options appraisal ... forms and tenure of residential development ... option of disposal of the sites ... and/or the engaging with a development partner”.

Ian MacLeod suggested that the listed status of the Hourstons facade likely means development of it is not economical for private funders therefore public funders likely required to bring that building into use, probably in the form of ground floor retail units and social housing on the upper floors. Relatedly, the Arran Mall site’s attractiveness to developers likely will be contingent on the Hourstons building being brought into use. Given that probable chain of events, the form that the development of the Arran Mall will take is a key matter: SAC’s brief appears inclined to dispose of the site to residential developers.

Ian appealed to FSWCC members to consider his proposal that FSWCC shall urge SAC to deliver an options appraisal that includes using the site for non-residential development, i.e. one or more of cultural, educational, leisure, and retail purposes so that the public realm character of the town centre is enhanced rather than diminished towards dormitory/ residential status. Robert Singer seconded the proposal and a majority of FSWCC members agreed.

***Action:** Ian MacLeod and/ or Denise Somerville to urge SAC to include a non-residential disposal option in its report to SAC scheduled for March 2026.*

6.10.4. Loudon Hall

(History: This historic building is owned by SAC and been marketed for sale, likely because it is loss-making. FSWCC decided to offer our assistance to the operator’s trustees efforts to find a continuing use for the building.)

Denise Somerville confirmed she has extended FSWCC’s offer of support to Loudon Hall’s operators/ trustees and awaits response. Councillor Weir suggested that any buyer will need to adhere to restricted conditions of development given the building’s listed status.

***Action:** FSWCC will keep this item open for future meetings to receive a progress report from Denise Somerville and/ or elected members.*

6.10.5. High Street Aesthetic

(History: a member of the public has steadfastly pursued explanations from SAC about enforcement of standards regarding commercial waste bins and building decay, and sought action by SAC on Cutty Sark and general High Street flowerbeds.)

We heard from a member of the public that they took a walkaround the high street and environs with senior SAC officer Kevin Braidwood and secured pledges to tend to the flowerbeds and for consideration to be given to screening off unsightly decaying buildings in part or wholly. FSWCC commended the member of the public for their persistence and achievement of pledges and/ or actions to improve our high street environs.

Action: Secretary to liaise with member of the public about their monitoring of pledges made by SAC regarding high street aesthetic maintenance.

6.11. Fundraising and Grants

No action has been taken but FSWCC agreed to retain this item on the agenda for March 2026

6.12. Guest Speakers

(History: Some members are concerned that scheduling a parliamentarian to speak to us at our April 2026 meeting breaches period of 'purdah' whereby such conduct might be perceived as party-political.)

Ian MacLeod referred to [South Ayrshire Council Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils Including Handbook for Community Councillors](#), specifically section '4. Composition and Membership Criteria' where it is stipulated that any community council in South Ayrshire is comprised of elected local residents to the office of Community Councillors, and 'ex-officio' members – i.e. elected members – be they South Ayrshire councillors, members of the Scottish and/ or UK parliaments. Accordingly, any parliamentarian for FSWCC area is a member of FSWCC although all ex-officio members have no voting rights. Accordingly, Member of Parliament Elaine Stewart is a member of our community council and at rights to attend our meeting and/ or provide us their 'elected members report' as per the aforementioned handbook's appendix 'Standing Orders for Community Councils'. FSWCC members accepted this rationale and it was clarified that we will write to Elaine Stewart MP to correct our mis-styling of her involvement as 'guest speaker', and instead clarify that April 2026 meeting is the earliest possible date she can attend our meeting to participate in person.

Action: Secretary to inform Elaine Stewart MP about ex-officio status precedence.

6.13. Elected Members

No further reports beyond information already relayed by Councillors Shields (in writing) and Weir (in-person).

7. Pride In Place (PIP) programme

(History: South Ayrshire Council area – not the local authority itself – has been awarded £20m over ten years from 2026 for improvements to physical and social infrastructure in clustered areas recorded as areas of high deprivation as measured according to Scottish

Index of Multiple Deprivation – SIMD. FSWCC member Alan Roseweir is on the programme’s board of trustees/ directors.)

Alan Roseweir reported that the Town Board’s geographic boundaries for action and funding are some contiguous SIMD areas on the north side of the river Ayr, commonly understood as – moving from east to west – Whittlets, Dalmilling, Lochside, Wallacetown, and North Harbour. By omission, it is clear that Ayr town centre – commonly understood as the high street and environs south of the river Ayr – will not be eligible for funding from this programme. Alan Roseweir is willing to report on the programme’s progress regarding Wallacetown as and when appropriate.

Action: *Retain Pride In Place programme on March 2026 agenda.*

8. Merging Wallacetown North into FSWCC

(History: Having secured SAC’s agreement that it would be legal and beneficial for Ayr North ward neighbourhood ‘Wallacetown North’ to be included within the boundary of Wallacetown ward for the purposes of community council representation, FSWCC voted in January 2026 to do so.)

SAC stipulated that enacting the inclusion of Wallacetown North within FSWCC requires FSWCC ratification of the meeting we made the decision. Accordingly, for clarity, we record that we ratified the January 2026 meeting minutes where we decided to include Wallacetown North within FSWCC.

Action: *Denise Somerville to inform relevant SAC office that our decision to include Wallacetown North within FSWCC has been ratified, in anticipation of further instruction from SAC.*

9. Communication

In this instance, we refer to conventional noticeboards that ought to be placed and used within the bounds of FSWCC. Carol Fisher provided relevant information despite her absence: SAC officer Audrey Gatt collaborating with us on ‘place planning’/ ‘community-led action plan (CAP) has pledged funding from SAC to install one physical noticeboard within the bounds of FSWCC. Given that a noticeboard exists and is accessible in Wallacetown, a decision needs to be made as to whether Fort or Seafield ward is allocated the prospective noticeboard being funded by SAC. FSWCC members are requested to consider this matter for decision at our March 2026 meeting.

Action: *Carol Fisher to collate and report factors to consider when deciding which ward will receive the funded noticeboard.*

10. Public Business

(already integrated into the meeting at earlier items)

11. Any Other Competent Business

11.1. Station Hotel

Forbes Watson wondered if Councillor Weir or any other FSWCC member has information on the progress of efforts by SAC and/ or rail authorities to force owner of Station Hotel to make good the property and/ or dispose of it for development. Some members reported rumour that court action involving co-operation between UK and Malaysian authorities is imminent, as too might be a decision or action by Network Rail.

Action: Forbes Watson to report on any news about progress of Station Hotel dispute.

12. Date of Next Meeting

18:30, Wednesday, 11 March 2026, at the Working For Wallacetown ('hub') building, 37 George Street, Ayr, KA8 0AH.

(Action Points summary overleaf)

<u>Agenda No.</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>ID</u>	<u>sub-item</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Responsible</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
5	Matters Arising	5.01.01	International Air Show	Press South Ayrshire (SAC) to publish an economic impact report regarding the International Air Show	Councillor Weir	04/03/2026
5	Matters Arising	5.03.01	Ayr Bus Station	Report on the the performance and sufficiency of facilities at Ayr bus station	Eric Armstrong	04/03/2026
6	Reports - Treasurer	6.01.02	Local Good Causes	members to suggest which good causes (x2, £50 each) they feel ought to receive donations	all members	04/03/2026
6	Reports - Planning	6.02.01	Savoy 5	Retain 'Savoy 5' on agenda and pursue updates on action by SAC.	Councillor Shields; Forbes Watson; Councillor Weir.	04/03/2026
6	Reports - Planning	6.02.02	Shop Sign compliance	Ascertain whether suspected non-compliant shop signs had applied for and/ or were granted planning permission.	Michael Hitchon; Forbes Watson.	04/03/2026
6	Reports - Roads	6.06.01	Dalblair Road	Write to ARA to obtain confirmation as to when the Dalblair Road speed survey will be undertaken, analysed and reported.	David Connelly	04/03/2026
6	Reports - Roads	6.06.03	Ayr Grammar Primary School	Report as to what traffic safety measures and initiatives are being implemented and/ or planned for AGPS	David Porte	04/03/2026
6	Reports - Common Good	6.07.01	SAC cabinet/ full meetings 5th, 17th, 26th March	monitor March 2026 SAC meetings' agendas and outcomes regarding SAC's examination of their records about the fund.	Forbes Watson	04/03/2026
6	Reports - Place Planning	6.09.01	Ayr South-West plan	Secretary to send draft FSW-CAP to all FSWCC members for their consideration and approval at our next monthly meeting	Ian MacLeod	04/03/2026

6	Reports - Town Centre Regeneration	6.10.01	Accessible Ayr	Keep monitoring SAC decision-making about Accessible Ayr project.	Ian MacLeod	04/03/2026
6	Reports - Town Centre Regeneration	6.10.02	Burns Statue Square	Review the SAC report ahead of our March 2026 meeting with a view to forming an opinion on the project.	all members	04/03/2026
6	Reports - Town Centre Regeneration	6.10.03	Hourstons and Arran Mall site	Urge SAC to include a non-residential disposal option in its report to SAC scheduled for March 2026.	Ian MacLeod; Denise Somerville.	04/03/2026
6	Reports - Town Centre Regeneration	6.10.04	Loudon Hall	Keep item open for future meetings to receive a progress report from Denise Somerville and/ or elected members	Councillor Shields; Councillor Weir; Denise Somerville.	04/03/2026
6	Reports - Town Centre Regeneration	6.10.05	High Street aesthetic	Secretary to liaise with member of the public about their monitoring of pledges made by SAC	Secretary	04/03/2026
6	Reports - Guest Speakers	6.12.01	Ex-Officio members	Secretary to inform Elaine Stewart MP about ex-officio status precedence	Secretary	04/03/2026
7	Pride In Place (PIP) programme	7.01.01	-	Retain on agenda for March 2026	Secretary	04/03/2026
8	Adding Wallacetown North to FSWCC	8.01.01	-	Inform relevant SAC office that our decision to include Wallacetown North within FSWCC has been ratified, in anticipation of further instruction from SAC	Denise Somerville	04/03/2026
9	Communication	9.01.01	Noticeboard	Collate and report factors to consider when deciding which ward will receive the funded noticeboard.	Carol Fisher	04/03/2026
11	A.O.C.B.	11.01.01	Station Hotel	Report on any news about progress of Station Hotel dispute	Forbes Watson	04/03/2026

END