

FORT, SEAFIELD & WALLACETOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting

Wednesday 13 May 2026, 18:30

The Grain Exchange, Ayr

01 Welcome and Introductions

The Chair, Ian MacLeod, welcomed members and attendees to the meeting. The Chair noted that the meeting would close at approximately 19:45, following which there would be a brief private session for voting members.

Present at the meeting:

Community Councillors (i.e. voting members):

Margaret Anderson, Carol Fisher, Michael Hitchon, Ian MacLeod (Chair), Alan Roseweir, Robert Singer, Forbes Watson.

Ex-Officio Members:

Cllr Bob Shields, Cllr George Weir.

South Ayrshire Council (SAC) link officer:

David Porte

Public:

Beryl McKinlay

02 Apologies

Apologies were received from the following voting members: Denise Sommerville.

Apologies were also received from the following ex-officio members: Siobhian Brown MSP and Elaine Stewart MP.

It was noted that the Scottish Parliament election of 7 May 2026 meant that MSPs on the regional list were in a prospective capacity and could not have been invited to attend.

No apologies were received, disappointingly but not unexpectedly, from two Ayr West ward councillors: Martin Dowie and Lee Lyons.

03 Declarations of Interest

The following standing declarations of interest were confirmed:

Item 07.7.1 — Reports: Ayr Town Centre Regeneration, Burns Statue Square consultation update:

- Cllr Bob Shields: business operator on, or in the vicinity of, the road proposed for redevelopment.

Item 07.7.4 — Reports: Ayr Town Centre Regeneration, Pride in Place Programme:

- Alan Roseweir: member of the Pride in Place board.
- Robert Singer: near relative of a member of the Pride in Place board.

Item 08.1 — Ayr South Beach Sand Ingress:

- Alan Roseweir: resident in the immediate vicinity; however, he is reporting and representing residents in his capacity as community councillor.

04 Approval of Minutes — Meeting of 8 April 2026

The minutes of the meeting of 8 April 2026 had been circulated to members in advance. Members confirmed they were a fair and accurate record, and the minutes were approved without amendment.

05 Matters Arising

The Chair noted that the majority of action points from the previous meeting had been placed on the current agenda.

The possibility of seeking an increased administration grant from South Ayrshire Council (SAC) in future funding rounds had been mooted previously and will be revisited in due course, subject to a decision by FSWCC members.

Carol Fisher raised the subject of place planning. The working party comprising Carol Fisher, Ian MacLeod, and Robert Singer had not yet concluded its work; an update would be provided to voting members in the private session at the close of the public meeting.

06 Correspondence**06.1 Blackburn Road / Esplanade Car Park — see item 07.6.2**

A communication had been received from a member of the public regarding the ongoing situation at Blackburn Car Park / Esplanade. The matter was scheduled for discussion at item 07.6.2.

06.2 Short-Term Let — Queen's Court, Sandgate — see item 07.4.2

A request had been received from a property owner at Queen's Court, Sandgate, asking FSWCC to object to a short-term let (STL) application. The matter was scheduled for discussion at item 07.4.2.

07 Reports**07.1.1 Finance — Treasurer's Monthly Statement**

The Treasurer, Michael Hitchon, presented the monthly financial statement. Funds in hand stood at approximately £800. The grounds maintenance and insurance reimbursement had been received; thanks were recorded to David Porte for expediting that process.

Regarding equipment, the audio transcription hardware in use at meetings was confirmed as being on personal loan from Ian MacLeod at no cost to FSWCC. The Otter.ai software subscription had been paid in a prior year at £74; no current software costs were being incurred.

The Treasurer reiterated that DW Shaw Solicitors had not donated to FSWCC in financial year 2025–2026 and had not yet donated in 2026–2027, nor did he anticipate receiving a donation. Carol Fisher offered to make contact with DW Shaw, as she had done in previous years. Members agreed she should do so.

Action: Carol Fisher to contact DW Shaw Solicitors regarding their intention to donate to FSWCC in 2026–2027.

07.2.1 Planning — Savoy 5 Building Works

Ian MacLeod referred to correspondence from SAC planning staff — relayed via Cllr George Weir — confirming that the owners of Savoy 5 had applied for retrospective planning consent at the end of 2025. The window for objecting to that retrospective application had long since passed.

Accordingly, members acknowledged that any complaints from neighbouring residents regarding external works would constitute a private civil matter. FSWCC's monitoring of this matter therefore lapses. Members also acknowledged the long-standing impasse whereby the site operates under a temporary alcohol licence, this being a consequence of the impossibility of obtaining a full licence until planning consent is in place.

07.2.2 Planning — Ayr Town Centre Shop Fronts: Signage Compliance

Michael Hitchon's previously reported dialogue with SAC — conducted through his membership of the Kyle and Carrick Civic Society — was considered alongside FSWCC's long-standing suggestion that the Council undertake its own inspection of planning records for suspected non-compliant shop fronts. Members agreed that to do so would duplicate work already being carried out by the Civic Society. FSWCC's role should be to provide community council backing, where appropriate, to the Civic Society's endeavours.

Members agreed that this item would transfer from the Planning section to the Ayr Town Centre Regeneration section as a standing agenda item from the following meeting.

Action: Secretary to schedule this matter as a recurring agenda item under Ayr Town Centre Regeneration.

07.2.3 Planning — Month's Planning Application List

Forbes Watson reported the following planning applications of note from the month's list:

- 21 Burns Statue Square — change of use to short-term let. An objection had already been submitted by Forbes Watson prior to the meeting.
- 37 Miller Road — a comment (not a formal objection) had been submitted drawing attention to concerns regarding access at the rear of the property; the roads department was requested to examine this carefully at the planning stage.
- 7 Wellington Square — change of use to short-term let (office premises; see also item 07.4).

No other applications of note appeared on the month's list.

07.3.1 Licensing — Month's Licensing Application List

Forbes Watson reported the following licensing applications, to which FSWCC had no objection:

- Mulligan's, 79 Arthur Street — application for variation of licence to permit closing at 02:00 on Fridays and Saturdays.
- Willie Wastle's, 20 New Bridge Street — application for extension of hours to 00:30 on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.
- 47 Burns Statue Square — provisional licence application for the Indian restaurant premises.
- Public procession — Apprentice Boys of Derry annual march to and from Wellington Square. Forbes Watson noted that the procession has taken place annually without incident.

07.4.1 Licensing (STLs) — Month's Application List

It was noted that STL applications are not subject to a statutory disclosure obligation to community councils by SAC. Applications of interest to FSWCC arise as and when brought to our attention by third parties, or where prospective applicants adhere to the procedural legal sequence by first seeking a planning determination on change of use from residential to short-term let.

07.4.2 Licensing (STLs) — Queen's Court, Sandgate: Objection Request

Consistent with FSWCC's established position of objecting to STL applications where a property has a shared entrance with other occupiers, the Chair had lodged an objection to the STL application at Queen's Court, Sandgate, which had been brought to the Council's attention.

The Chair reported that SAC had rejected the objection, dismissing it on the grounds that it constituted a 'general dislike of short-term lets'. Members expressed dismay at this characterisation, given that FSWCC's policy is objectively selective — objections being lodged only where there is a shared entrance. The Chair will pursue an appeal for reconsideration. Cllr Weir offered to ask the relevant SAC officer's manager to review the decision.

Action: Chair to pursue appeal for reconsideration of the rejected STL objection at Queen's Court, Sandgate. Cllr Weir to ask the SAC officer's manager to review the decision.

07.4.3 Licensing (STLs) — SAC STL Policy Update

The Chair observed that the agenda for the SAC full council meeting of 14 May 2026 contained no item on STL policy, notwithstanding that the autumn 2025 full council meeting had noted that a policy revision proposal would be presented to full council by spring 2026. Members noted the slippage.

07.4.4 Licensing (STLs) — Other: Policy Refinement

FSWCC's established practice has been to object to short-term let applications only where a property has a shared access with other occupiers. Several members favoured refining this policy further: that objections should be raised only where other occupiers of shared-door premises are residential, rather than commercial. Members agreed unanimously to adopt this narrower policy henceforth, notwithstanding the ongoing objection to the STL application at Queen's Court, Sandgate, which will be maintained.

07.5.1 Police — Month's Report

A police report was received. Members noted the month's report. No matters requiring specific action were raised.

07.6.1 Roads — Dalblair Road: Second Speed Survey Update

Ian MacLeod reported that Ayrshire Roads Alliance (ARA) had recently acknowledged their commitment to carrying out a further speed survey on Dalblair Road, to determine whether speed mitigation measures implemented to date have had a sufficient effect. However, ARA advised that they were unable to commit to a date given other matters currently being prioritised.

Members discussed the ongoing concern regarding vehicle speeds on this road. Councillors Shields and Weir were asked whether Dalblair Road featured in the SAC Road Improvement Plan 2026/27, approved at Cabinet on 28 April 2026. Neither councillor recalled the relevant details.

07.6.2 Roads — Blackburn Road / Esplanade Car Park: ASB Update

Members received an update from David Porte on the Council's noted concerns from the April meeting, at which it had appeared that SAC might attempt to repeat the previously failed approach of manually closing insubstantial barriers by staff.

David Porte's update, provided in advance of the meeting, has been superseded by a working group meeting held in the week prior to this meeting. At that working group, SAC acknowledged that re-attempting an already failed system would in all likelihood be doomed to failure. That approach will therefore not be pursued. Instead, SAC will seek to obtain budgetary and policy approval for heavier-duty, remotely operated barriers.

Members noted that such measures would be most viable within the context of SAC developing a coastal parking strategy that includes charging for parking — in line with the practice of most other coastal Scottish local authorities.

FSWCC will monitor SAC's progress on the coastal parking strategy generally, and developments at Blackburn Car Park specifically.

07.7.1 Ayr Town Centre Regeneration — Burns Statue Square: Consultation Update

Members noted that SAC had publicised an online consultation, opening on Saturday 16 May 2026, regarding the Burns Statue Square proposals. At the April 2026 meeting, it had been noted that SAC had pledged, at the March 2026 full council meeting approving the consultation proposal, to approach businesses in the vicinity directly. FSWCC, having previously heard from affected business operators, expressed the hope that those businesses would be properly approached by SAC as pledged.

07.7.2 Ayr Town Centre Regeneration — Scottish Affairs Committee: Proposed Visit to Ayr High Street

Members noted the proposed visit to Ayr High Street by the Scottish Affairs Committee. To date, neither the Chair nor the Secretary had been invited or notified of such a visit. The Chair undertook to monitor relevant publicity and, if necessary, to contact the MP who had initiated the visit — Elaine Stewart MP — directly.

07.7.3 Ayr Town Centre Regeneration — Arran Mall / Hourstons: Disposal and Mixed-Use Update

Cllr George Weir was invited to report on discussions that had been held in private at the SAC full council meeting of March 2026, the draft minutes of which suggested that the proposed development of the Arran Mall / Hourstons site was predominantly residential in character, rather than retail or cultural. Cllr Weir confirmed that characterisation. Members acknowledged that the process was ongoing and that there may be scope to seek to influence the outcome.

07.7.4 Ayr Town Centre Regeneration — Pride in Place Programme Update

Alan Roseweir presented a paper providing a detailed update on the Pride in Place programme's current position. Key elements reported included:

- A strategic funding model proposed by Alan Roseweir, designed to ensure that programme-funded projects leverage complementary funding from other sources as a matter of course, delivering higher volume and longer-lasting impact.
- A salaried co-ordinator position for each local authority area, funded by the UK Government.
- The intention to establish a programme website, which has not yet been delivered.

07.7.5 Ayr Town Centre Regeneration — Other: Town Centre Appearance and Enforcement

Beryl McKinlay was invited to update members on her efforts to monitor SAC's use of its enforcement powers to compel business operators and property owners to maintain or improve the aesthetic of their premises and trading areas, covering matters such as building standards compliance, commercial waste disposal, and shop-front appearance.

Members gave consideration to a number of buildings and sites of specific concern to Beryl McKinlay. On balance, members concluded that the issues identified did not reach the threshold for FSWCC to treat them as a pressing community matter, given that the sites in question were isolated privately owned properties rather than a concentrated cluster materially affecting the public realm.

Nonetheless, FSWCC's interest in the appearance of the town centre public realm continues. This matter will remain a recurring sub-item on the agenda, enabling FSWCC to receive updates on activities such as the Kyle and Carrick Civic Society's enquiries into shop-sign compliance. FSWCC encouraged Beryl McKinlay to liaise with that organisation to help advance her campaign.

07.8 Elected Members' Reports

Councillors Shields and Weir raised the following matters not addressed elsewhere on the agenda:

Coastal parking strategy:

Members acknowledged that SAC full council's forthcoming consideration of a coastal parking strategy could have a transformational effect on Blackburn Car Park, the Esplanade, and the surrounding area, by raising revenue to fund security measures and thereby limiting anti-social behaviour by car culture enthusiasts.

Belleisle Park golf centre development:

A development of the golf centre — encompassing the buildings and car park within the Seafield ward of the park — was noted. SAC is likely to approve the long-consulted plan.

Citadel Leisure Centre diving pool:

The diving pool and associated equipment at Citadel Leisure Centre are likely to be closed and the space repurposed, SAC having determined that the cost of maintenance and further development is not viable in the absence of central government grant funding. Members considered the matter and concluded that it does not constitute a sufficient community interest to warrant opposition to the planned closure.

08 Ayr South Beach Sand Ingress

08.1 Ayr South Beach Sand Ingress — Formal Paper (A. Roseweir)

Alan Roseweir presented a formal paper on the Ayr South Beach sand ingress issue, covering zone designations and the SAC audit panel process. Members had considered the paper in Alan's absence at the April meeting but had agreed to defer detailed discussion until he was present to provide context and explanation.

Members acknowledged the detailed research underpinning the paper. It was agreed to request that Councillors Shields and Weir ask SAC officers to provide FSWCC with SAC's plan for managing sand ingress, including their schedule for routine, periodic, or regular maintenance and prevention work on the recreation beach zone. Both councillors accepted that task.

Action: Cllrs Shields and Weir to obtain from SAC officers their plan for servicing the recreation beach zone and their plan for the prevention of sand ingress at Ayr South Beach.

09 Community Noticeboard

09.1 Noticeboard Location — Presentation and Proposal (C. Fisher)

Carol Fisher presented a proposal regarding the siting of a community noticeboard. After discussion, members agreed in principle to proceed. The use of the Twa Dugs pub was suggested as an additional or alternative location and members agreed this was a reasonable option to pursue alongside other sites.

Additionally, it was noted that David Porte would ask SAC whether it would be possible for FSWCC's required public notifications to be displayed on the premises of the Wallace Tower, which is centrally located and well-suited for this purpose.

Action: David Porte to enquire with SAC whether FSWCC public notifications may be displayed on the windows or premises of the Wallace Tower, Ayr town centre.

10 Questions From The Floor

(integrated into the relevant items during today's meeting)

11 Any Other Competent Business

Place Planning

Carol Fisher noted that she, Ian MacLeod, and Robert Singer had been in discussion regarding the place plan but that the consultation had not yet concluded. It was agreed that the draft place plan would be circulated to all members for comment ahead of the June meeting.

Vape Shops

Cllr Bob Shields raised the proliferation of vape shops in Ayr, in the context of the recent serious fire in Glasgow involving premises where lithium batteries were stored. Cllr Shields noted that a significant number of vape shops had opened in Ayr in recent years and that Building Standards and Planning currently have limited powers to control such premises under existing legislation.

Cllr Shields advised that he was preparing a motion — anticipated for introduction at the next meeting, following the Scottish Parliament recess — calling on the Scottish Government to legislate requiring vape shops to adhere to the same operational controls as licensed public houses, including the requirement for operational plans, business plans, safety checks, and evacuation procedures.

David Porte reported that a vape shop working group had been referenced at the previous week's community safety meeting, and he undertook to report back on its work. Members formally recorded their support for Cllr Shields's initiative and agreed to await his formal motion for consideration at a future meeting.

12 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Fort, Seafield & Wallacetown Community Council will be held on:

Wednesday 10 June 2026, 18:30
The Grain Exchange, Ayr

Summary of Action Points

Ref	Action	Owner
07.1.1	Contact DW Shaw Solicitors regarding intention to donate to FSWCC in 2026–2027.	Carol Fisher
07.2.2	Schedule shop fronts / signage compliance as recurring item under Ayr Town Centre Regeneration.	Secretary
07.4.2	Pursue appeal for reconsideration of rejected STL objection (Queen's Court, Sandgate). Cllr Weir to ask SAC officer's manager to review.	Chair / Cllr Weir
08.1	Obtain SAC plan for servicing recreation beach zone and prevention of sand ingress at Ayr South Beach.	Cllrs Shields & Weir
09.1	Enquire with SAC whether FSWCC public notifications may be displayed on the premises / windows of the Wallace Tower.	David Porte