



FORT, SEAFIELD & WALLACETOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12th October 2016 in Room RB3, Town Hall, at 7pm

Members Present

Norman McLean (NM) Chair, Forbes Watson (FW) Vice Chair, Michael Hitchon (MH) Treasurer, Olena Stewart (OS) Secretary, Sandy Crawford (SC), Peter McCall (PMcC), Judith Hood (JH), Phil Martin (PM), Eileen Munro (EM)

Yolanda McCall (YMcC) Minutes Secretary

In Attendance

Cllr. Bill Grant (WG), Cllr. Alan Dorans (AD), Chris Campbell (CC) Link Officer, PC Peter Douglas (PCD)

Public

Richard McMinn (RM)
Elizabeth Martin (EM)
Nigel Hackett (NH)

1. **Apologies**

Sarah Hilley (Ayrshire Post)
Dympna Gardiner (DG)
Cllr. Kirsty Darwent (KD)

Welcome

NM welcomed all to the meeting.

New Members

Richard McMinn, a Community Builder, was co-opted as a special interest member for Wallacetown.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Proposed by Norman McLean
Seconded by Michael Hitchon

Changes to Previous Minutes

None

3. **Matters Arising**

Nil

4. **Public Business**

NM welcomed Elizabeth Martin and Nigel Hackett and advised that there is a vacancy on the community council for a Seafield representative. Frank Ward has shown interest in the vacancy for Wallacetown and sent apologies for this meeting.

5. **Police Business**

PC Douglas presented the Crime Statistics for the period 12th September to 12th October:

| Crime Type | Offences | Comments |
|-----------------------------------|----------|--|
| Shop-lifting | 18 | |
| Normal thefts | 10 | |
| Breach of peace/Abusive behaviour | 8 | 6 of which this month |
| Assaults | 10 | 2 of which were serious, at club times |
| Vandalism | 1 | |
| House-breaking | 1 | |
| Knife crime | 1 | |
| Offensive weapon | 1 | Tied in with a possession of drugs |
| Possession of drugs | 3 | 4 crimes including the one above |
| Theft of pedal cycle | 1 | |
| Forgeries | 2 | 1 taxi fraud, 1 forgery at chemist |
| Drink driving | 1 | |
| Drug driving | 1 | Had a weapon on him as well |
| Culpable reckless conduct | 1 | Drug user deposited outside a flat |

Detection rates were not available. PC Douglas apologised that the fuller report was not available today and asked if members wanted to raise any issues. FW reported a suspicious white van with no writing on it, looking at homes, supposedly checking roofs. PM was approached by same van; occupants said they were seeking work. PCD noted it. WG discussed shop-lifting offences with PCD.

6. Ayr Town Centre Renaissance, Belleisle and Riverside Consultation

Re: Renaissance project, AD advised that results from the second public open event are still being analysed. NM attended the meeting. Timescale has been contracted. If outline planning consent is obtained, this will trigger Historic Buildings allowing demolition to take place and archaeological dig to commence. NM hopes medieval remains in that part of town will not have been disturbed by existing foundations. In parallel with that, there will be the application for detailed planning consent. Generic plan, doesn't specify uses, apart from Council offices and open spaces; it will evolve and develop as application goes forward. Very exciting. Best architects in the country doing it. Master plan by Niall McLaughlin and Charles Jencks will now go out to tender for architects to do the detail. PMcC asked if any reference was given to comments made during the last meeting. AD referred to two comments - one that Council building should not dominate the site and secondly that there should be ground floor access to the Council building – these have been passed to David Bell and further meetings are planned between the architects and senior council officers. NM stressed that mission creep for more space for the Council is still a concern. AD and WG said the Council building will not dominate the site, however area behind Hourstons is not likely to be available to the Police. They would like to put a custody unit in the centre of the town but this was deemed unsuitable. NM observed that current Police Station does not appear to be over-occupied. WG agreed.

JH enquired about the Clydesdale building. AD advised work is progressing; some traffic restrictions to allow contractors to move in, internal work beginning. WG added that the roof needs major repairs.

OS brought to everyone's attention the free events for Tamfest taking place in the old Watt Brothers building.

Re: Belleisle, AD reported more windows broken in the hotel. It is a private enterprise, in the hands of Mr John Campbell. No further progress with the development. NM, in his role with the Friends of Belleisle, hopes to meet with John Campbell, will compliment him on initial work completed, and try to find out exactly what is causing the delay. WG advised that the Council has offered assistance with the planning application. Discussion continued (NM/WG/OS/EM) with a consensus that problems with the hotel are casting a dark shadow over the other good things in the park – new golf club-house, swing park, conservatory. There is also a major issue with lack of toilet facilities that needs to be addressed, apparently missing from the master plan. OS reported an issue that became apparent at recent evening event held at the conservatory - navigating very dark paths between conservatory and car park - solar lighting is being investigated to assist. OS complimented RM on the hugely successful community picnic that he organised in the park and RM provided an overview of the event. OS/CC/AD/WG talked further about the broken windows at the hotel. John Campbell is aware. CC advised that a Safety Officer still visits the site twice per week and local residents remain vigilant.

OS advertised the continuing plant sale at Belleisle and the family fun event for Halloween on 30th October. There is still a need for more volunteers. Some discussion about possible fund-raising

ventures: WG referred to a very successful community shop in Kirkcudbright. CC noted a similar shop in Maybole, but it does require lots of volunteers. NM expressed huge thanks to OS for her work at Belleisle Conservatory.

7. **Councillors' Business and Matters Arising**

WG and AD reported that recent business has been dominated by the Holmston Cycle track, which has been widely reported in national as well as local press. The cycle path was intended to form part of a safe route between Coylton and Ayr. Ayrshire Roads Alliance oversaw the project. No laws were broken, but it was a big mistake not to consult with SAC and there was no public consultation either. After overwhelming local public opposition and a majority council vote, a decision has been taken to lift the path, returning Holmston Road to its previous state. WG and AD reaffirmed the Council's support for safe cycling and acknowledged the positive health benefits; however this project was ill-thought out and implemented without consultation. Removal will begin at end of month. It will cost £90,000 in total to lift and restore the road. PM/CC/WG discussed the statistics for usage of the track. It is hoped that ongoing relationship with the funders, including Sustrans, will not be damaged. NM advised that Alec Christie wants to resurrect with Sustrans the idea of the cycle track (national route 7) crossing the river at the site of the old railway bridge.

WG noted an upturn in Newmarket Street with some new shops opening. Greggs has moved to bigger premises round the corner. Council are still keeping an eye on the pavement trading there. He complimented MH on the concerts for "Luminate" – Scotland's Creative Ageing Festival. Holmston House has been officially sold. NM advised there will be a public consultation on 7th November, 12-7pm, a drop-in event, to view plans for the development proposals, residential and care home. CC was contacted regarding consultation with local residents. He provided information and advised the developers that the full detailed plans should be presented from the outset. New housing near Elba Street underway. Tree issues in Bellevue Crescent and Park Circus are being addressed. NM asked about the development in Fort Street, gap site by old McEwan's Organs shop. WG advised that the area has been cleared and work is finally going ahead with plans for 7 flats for people with challenging circumstances with one caretaker flat plus 5 other bungalows. NM advised caution with the foundations due to archaeological issues close to the old citadel. EM enquired about the Station Hotel. WG advised that Building Control repetitively write to the owners. It is hoped that a sale will eventually go ahead, possible uses being a boutique hotel or student accommodation. A Cycle-Hub (cycle hire) facility is due to go in front of the station in conjunction with Abellio and the Council.

WG and AD reported genuine concerns regarding the poor performance of Ayr Academy and provided statistics which indicate it is failing its pupils and not providing the opportunities they deserve. The school's future will be reviewed in the New Year. Parents and public will be consulted and any major decisions will be taken following the Council elections in May. The Head Teacher from Kyle Academy, Lyndsey McRoberts, has been appointed Executive Head Teacher. Ayr Academy Parent Council have called for a public meeting, arranged for next Monday 7pm at Mercure Hotel, AD will attend as will Director of Education, Douglas Hutchison. JH asked about teacher shortages. AD advised this is a national problem, not just South Ayrshire. Scottish government have plans to direct more Council Tax funds to education, devolved to head teachers to make improvements by copying best practise elsewhere. JH challenged the 'new' Curriculum for Excellence." She believes there is an issue with departments losing the experience that they held in the previous curriculum. WG sees it as a challenge with no quick fix.

AD spoke of the Trusted Trader Scheme launched by the Council last week, led by Trading Standards. It is an on-line service, providing a list of reputable traders along with public feedback from those who have used the service.

NM and WG discussed decisions of Sainsburys and Waitrose not to proceed with recent Ayr proposals and also Council decisions relating to various town retailers and the timing of historic movements of businesses to the Heathfield site (Halfords and Currys) with agreement that there has been a change in retail requirements throughout the UK. Town centre needs to concentrate on small independent units. Lidl are set to expand into neighbouring premises (Brantano's). The Kyle Centre is back on the market, the previous expected sale having fallen through.

8. **Planning Control**

NM in process of handing this over to PM. There was an application for 4 houses to be built in Auchendoon Crescent, but NM highlighted possible drainage issues and the application was withdrawn. PM and NM review the planning applications and decision list every month.

9. **Reports**

MH/OS reported in advance of the "Ayr South Decides" event, Saturday 22nd October. It is a way for local people to choose which projects in their area they want funded. Local groups can bid for money by presenting their project on the day to local people who vote in person at the event. The votes are counted and money given to those with the highest number of votes. Funding of up to £1000 will be available to community groups operating for the benefit of the health and wellbeing of Ayr South and Coynton Locality areas. MH will bid on behalf of FSWCC for funds to develop the number of lunchtime organ concerts up to 34 concerts on Mondays from April to November. The concerts are supported by local people and visitors who welcome daytime events. They encourage people to get out of the house, meet others, socialise, enjoy the music, change library books, walk a bit, exchange chat and feel part of the community. PM and JH volunteered to assist MH with the bid.

CC noted that this method of allocating funds is likely to become the norm, with big funders like the lotteries putting money into local community pots with simple 2-page application forms instead of the complicated strategy applications of the past.

10. **Financial Report**

Treasurer reported £550 available for administration.

11. **Correspondence**

OS continues to forward all emails to members as and when received. Email from Alloway and Doonfoot CC enquired about FSWCC's views on obtaining identify badges. After discussion, it was decided that there is no requirement for badges; when dealing with Community Council matters an appointment is usually made and the CC representative is therefore expected. A valid point raised was that badges can also be faked.

OS requests all to look at the CC website and advise if any changes or additions are required. NM requested that minutes from monthly meetings be put on the website promptly "subject to ratification" instead of waiting for the minutes to be accepted at next meeting when the information can be somewhat out of date.

12. **AOCB**

CC advised that there is an ongoing review of how Link Officers support community councils with an aim to focus support where it is most needed. It is possible that the Link Officer will not attend every meeting, but there will still be an allocated Link Officer available if required.

13. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

9th November 2016 at 7.00pm

Room RB3 Ayr Town Hall