

FORT, SEAFIELD AND WALLACETOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Chairman: J Norman McLean

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT : May 2017 – APRIL 2018

This has been yet again a year of activities throughout our town and in keeping with last year, we have had a busy year with well attended meetings and plenty of discussion. The dedicated attendance of our Councillors, Chris Campbell, our Link Officer and Angie Pinkerton of AHEAD Community builder as other regular attendees is greatly appreciated. The Press has been well represented by Catherine Hunter of the Ayr Advertiser and Sarah Hilley of the Ayrshire Post.

We welcome our new members, Robert Singer, David Petrie and Patrick Gibbon representing Wallacetown Sub-Ward and this now gives us a full complement in our Community Council. I cannot recall having had a full Council complement before.

Ayr Town Centre Renaissance is now causing great concern with the submission for Planning Approval of the SAC Council Offices at the bottom of the High Street (Riverside block). A Public Meeting on the proposals convened by us was well attended by over 250 people and voted overwhelmingly to reject the Application as being inappropriate and not complying with the Outline Consent Conditions. The redevelopment of the Winton Buildings (former Clydesdale Bank) in High Street seems to have become becalmed and we await the completion soon.

The Town Centre Christmas shop window display competition was again successfully held under our auspices and looks like continuing.

Great concern has been voiced regarding the deteriorating condition of the Station Hotel and its long term use and how any works will impact on Ayr Railway Station. A Dangerous Building Notice has been served and it is rumoured that prospective purchasers are showing interest.

The new Ayr Academy building at Craigie is now complete and occupied with the proposal to relocate Ayr Grammar School in the Academy site well advanced.

Belleisle Park now has moved forward and tangible results are there for all to see. The new play park has been greeted with great acclaim and is now being enjoyed by countless children (and their parents). The Conservatory is now open and taking bookings. The hotel project still sits in a state of limbo and it is galling to continually have to report no progress at all for another year, however there is a glimmer of hope on the horizon. Unfortunately I cannot say more at the present time. The Visitor Centre, formerly the stable block, is now under construction with completion due in November while the rockery in the walled garden is complete. The Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Deer Park now has six special breed sheep to accompany the six young deer which have been successfully introduced to add to the ageing deer population. Things are very encouraging with well over 2500 well wishers on Facebook and we look forward to real progress with the Hotel in the near future.

A new Policing presence to our Council has been in place and regular updates from police in attendance is appreciated.

The Scottish International Airshow was again an outstanding success and we look forward to this year's Show which brings huge financial gain to the town. It is not understandable that the SAC Council has declined funding for 2019 but continues in 2020.

Our Council successfully objected to the planning application to build three houses in Auchendoon Crescent on land designated in the Local Development Plan as open space and a wildlife site at Cunning Park however the Application was granted on Appeal.

Please use our Community Council web site (fswcc.org.uk) and again our thanks are again due to Forbes Watson for his company's sponsorship.

The lunch-time Town Hall organ recitals continue to be organised by Michael Hitchon MBE on our behalf and is greatly appreciated by the ever growing number of attendees. The continuation is now assured for the tenth year with a growing programme. This gives regular playing of the much admired old Lewis organ. From now and for the remainder of the programme until 26 November, the concerts will be held in Ayr Town Hall at 12 Noon on Mondays.

We were able to donate yet again to three charities, the Belleisle Conservatory Ltd, The Ark, and the Salvation Army from our modest resources this year and again wish them success.

Once again, I must thank our Community Councillors for the exceptionally well attended meetings and unstinting support of Fort, Seafield and Wallacetown Community Council in the last year. It is reassuring that I can repeat this last paragraph year on year.

J Norman McLean

Chairman

4 May 2018