



FORT, SEAFIELD & WALLACETOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 14th September 2016 in Room RB3, Town Hall, at 7pm

Present

N 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), Dympna Gardiner (DG), Phil Martin (PM)

Yolanda McCall (YMcC) Minutes Secretary

In Attendance

Cllr Bill Grant (WG), Cllr. Alan Dorans (AD), Cllr. Kirsty Darwen (KD), Chris Campbell (CC)
PC Connor (PCC), PC McGeechon

Public

Frank Ward (Wallacetown)

1. **Apologies**

Sarah Hilley (Ayrshire Post).
Eileen Munro (EM)

Welcome

NM welcomed all to the new session. He advised that Scott McIntosh has resigned due to other commitments and introduced Yolanda McCall as the new minutes secretary.

Co-option of New Members

None

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Proposed by Olena Stewart
Seconded by Judith Hood

Changes to Previous Minutes

None

3. **Matters Arising**

Nil

4. **Public Business**

NM welcomed Frank Ward and advised him that Wallacetown is currently under-represented on the Community Council. There is also a vacancy for Seafield.

5. **Police Business**

PC Connor presented the following Police Report:

Ward Priorities

1. Drug Misuse
2. Violence / Anti-Social Behaviour
3. Road Safety
4. Dishonesty / House Breakings and Theft

Local officers have been carrying out high visibility mobile patrols in an attempt to deter illegal parking and speeding in and around local schools.

Local residents are advised that they should ensure that all garages and garden sheds are locked and secured especially when using garden machinery; these could be a potential target for thieves. Please ensure that all valuable items are marked accordingly.

Crime Statistics: Monthly Report – 18 Crime Reports – 9 Detected

Crime Type	Offences	Detected	
Serious Assault	0	0	
Housebreaking	1	0	Enqs Continue
HB:Sheds/Garages	1	0	
Theft from m/v	2	0	
Poss. Drugs	0	0	
Common Assault	2	2	
Breach of the Peace	2	2	
Street Drinking	1	1	

AD complimented and thanked PC's Connor and McGeechon for a very comprehensive report. PCC advised that the new Chief Inspector may visit the Community Council.

BG asked if there were any issues connected to the old firm game. No major issues.

JD enquired about the Air Show. No connected issues.

BG complimented the parking and traffic movement arrangements which proved to be efficient and effective. NH thanked SAC for the £120K spend on the Airshow. All thought to be money well spent.

General discussion re: statistics for drugs misuse compared to what some (BG, KD) have witnessed in town centre. PCC confirmed no crimes of drug dealing or possession last month or this. NM questioned whether the figures are reflecting reality. PCC advised that there is no law for a person being under the influence of drugs. CC proposed that the supply area could be out-with this ward and that perhaps we just see the symptoms, shop-lifting, anti-social behaviour, etc.,

MH queried the stats for street drinking and requested more frequent patrols of Wellington Lane and Wellington Square areas.

6. Ayr Town Centre Renaissance, Belleisle and Riverside Consultation

AD and KD gave an update on the Riverside Consultation: 300 people attended the consultation in the old Watt Brothers building on 6th Sept., 100 comments forms completed, 85% positive. There are concerns over parking. There will be a 2nd consultation on 28th Sept. NM asked if there would be any change to plans on 28th? AD and KD thought unlikely for 28th. PMcC stated that on 6th Sept. David Bell and James Knox implied that there would be an update on 28th to reflect/include public views. AD advised that so far the project is on target and on time with demolition of buildings planned for Feb/Mar 2017. There will be an archaeological survey and that will dictate further development timescale. KD asked for views of those in attendance. MH offered that it was mostly good ideas with a positive if Burns House is demolished, but had concerns re: approximately 320 Council employees with no parking facilities. The solution of bike/bus/walk is not thought to be practical. NM raised concerns that the Council Offices could ultimately dominate the site and sought reassurance that enough space had been factored into the current plan and that the final master plan will not allow mission creep of the Council. There must be a balance of Council Offices with other uses of the site – commerce/housing/shops – and there should be many vistas of the river visible from the High Street with both sides of the river smartened up to complement the new development. KD stated that there has been high buy-in between the Council and the Renaissance Group with agreement that Arran Mall site would be the second option for Council accommodation. The plan is to maintain space at Riverside for other uses. BG believes that Burns House must go and added reassurance they were now working to an ambitious timescale as per

the plan. NM commented that it was 12 years since Gibson McDonald's original vision. BG said that Ayr Renaissance did not envisage the demise of High Streets everywhere, not just Ayr; plans had to be adjusted accordingly. MH queried the plan for offices upstairs and suggested a ground floor reception with exhibition space on ground floor. BG countered that with the Art Rooms at Ayr Academy, can we afford more community space? FW felt that the Council should be congratulated on moving ahead with plans, great that something is being done, but was there definitely sufficient space in this plan for all the Burns House workers and has the County Buildings space been considered. KD confirmed yes, and costing work has been done. NM stressed the importance of having housing in town centres; we should learn lessons from abroad. BG stated that the Council is in process of acquiring the derelict site in Fort Street (formerly Billy McEwan's organs) to build 8 flats, for independent living with a caretaker on site, bringing people into the town.

JH queried the move of the Learning Shop from the Sandgate to the John Pollock Centre. It had been a good drop-in place, but now was harder for people to get to. BG believes it was a cost-savings decision, not an easy decision, but the facility was kept open, just relocated.

AD and KD spoke of other town centre developments being supported by Ayr Renaissance. Work is planned for the renovation of the old Clydesdale Bank building, but a commercial objection may delay planning/building consent. It is hoped that ground floor space will be available in summer 2017 with 2 floors of offices above. Re: the Townscape Heritage Initiative, work will continue on 13-17 New Bridge Street (by the former pink buildings) and so that whole entrance to the town should soon all be completed. THI has partnered with the National Trust for Scotland to do re-construction work at William Wallace's Shield at corner of Newmarket Street and High Street; there will be new gates at 1-3 New Bridge Street and Ayr Academy students will be involved in the physical making of those under the instruction of an expert blacksmith. Lots of other initiatives going on in town centre – weaving workshops, Heritage Trail work and Coastal Communities funded cultural projects. Town Centre Management Initiatives: Safe and Clean project continues with chewing gum removal and a tidying up of bins in the street. TamFest 28th-30th October, Christmas Lights switch on will be 20th November, good co-ordination between Ayr Central and High Street traders. Ayr Renaissance Strategy is being developed with Dermott Lawlor, in process of choosing and appointing consultants with regard to a 5 year plan for the town, looking at a transport hub etc., Other funding applications are in for various other projects, grants are being lined up for consistent developments to support the town.

NM asked for clarification of the new gates, 1-3 New Bridge Street, and was advised these will provide access to the River Ayr walkway, behind the old Woolworth's store.

PM asked about the Station Hotel. KD advised it is in private ownership. There is ongoing work, but there are ongoing issues.

There was further discussion (FW/MH/NM) about the archaeological issues that might arise with the Riverside development. This was the medieval heart of the town, but original stonework may have been destroyed by 1970s foundations. KD advised there will be long full-length trenches, extensive excavations expected on 15% of the site. PMcC asked if there would be a time limit on the digs. KD felt that SAC would have little influence over timescale at that point, there could be delays. PM highlighted that in many European cities archaeological finds are incorporated into features of the new development by putting glass around any interesting discoveries. All agreed a good idea. MH asked if preliminary archaeological surveys are in the public domain. KD said, not yet and she doesn't know when they will be.

Re: Belleisle, BG advised that issues over food at the clubhouse have been resolved and the swing park is good. Road issues (tarmac, potholes) are awaiting water mains work prior to resolution. Hotel work is not progressing, but it is in private ownership, there are no council issues preventing it going forward. OS stated that the 'Friends of Belleisle' supported the sale of the hotel, but perhaps now they need to ask questions. Are the owner's plans too ambitious? NW/MH suggested asking for a more modest development with work to be done in phases. CC reported security issues, broken windows. Public are being very vigilant, there is a great facebook page. CC doesn't foresee a big problem, but there are some concerns re. groups of 6-10 young adults hanging around at times. OS reported that the conservatory is open 10-4 daily and is now available for event hire. There is a new ramp with a sticky door and some people have mistakenly thought it was closed. There is someone on duty inside till noon each day. A booklet is on sale for £3.50, "A History of Belleisle Conservatory."

7. Councillors' Business and Matters Arising

The new cycle path along Holmston Road has been the subject of much concern, particularly with regard to parking. KD said there is parking available in side streets and within the cemetery for those attending funerals. BG advised that the path is part of a project to provide a safe cycling route from Coylton to centre of Ayr. The Council has in the past worked with Scottish Government to improve cycling provision in this area, however the Council were not consulted on this project which was drawn up by Ayrshire Roads Alliance in conjunction with Scottish Government. AD advised that Sustrans provided £60K and there were two other funders. The public have a right to raise a petition to object. NM requested a dedicated Council member to oversee bike paths in future to ensure the community is involved in decisions and that the public are kept informed. AD advised that a development like this will not happen again without SAC being consulted. NM hoped that lessons have been learned re. communication.

BG advised that the Gaiety has re-opened. MH described it as an exemplary restoration worthy of an award. BG reported that plans for the migration of the Grammar to Ayr Academy are progressing and the new Ayr Academy development is progressing. He offered credit to Ayrshire Roads Alliance for their management of traffic at the Air Show and some minor road repair issues that were quickly addressed. Scotland is proud of the Air Show; hopefully it will be secured for the future. Fort Residents Association have raised queries for the planned review of residents' parking. BG confirmed there will be a review, but there will be consultation, it will take time and it is not imminent.

FW raised concerns about litter in Newmarket Street. BG will take that up. JH questioned whether the increased pavement trading in Newmarket Street is appropriate. BG advised that the Council are aware of the situation and it will be monitored.

AD reported on the Cruise Ship Clio that docked in Ayr harbour and which he visited to give a talk to the 90 passengers. He has brought to the attention of the Council that there is a need for someone to be available to facilitate such visiting ships in order to best promote the town.

8. **Planning Control**

NM reported a resident's objection to an illuminated sign at Hartfield House. There are 3 other applications to be looked at.

9. **Reports**

OS supplied flyers for up-coming Belleisle Conservatory events in the town including a Race Night at Abbotsford Hotel, 30th September, with a Community Picnic the same day.

MH reported on a successful Doors Open Day weekend (3rd/4th Sept.) Feedback positive. Attendance thought to be good, figures will be confirmed when questionnaires returned. Organ recitals continue to be popular.

10. **Financial Report**

Treasurer reported £200 available.

11. **Correspondence**

None

12. **AOCB**

None

13. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

12th October 2016 at 7.00pm

Room RB3 Ayr Town Hall