

## ST MONANS AND ABERCROMBIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the St Monans and Abercrombie Community Council held on Monday, 20 January 2020, at 7.30 pm.

### Present:

P Copland (Chair)

W Buchan

S Collier

CLlr Holt

S Bridges (Secretary)

M Ashworth

G Bell

CLlr Porteous

V Salvage (Vice Chair)

H Ironside

CLlr Docherty

In attendance: S Potjewijd, St Monans Development officer.

Members of the public: 18

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

V Bland, M Syme, B Morris and PC Stecka had all sent their apologies.

No declarations of interest were noted at the beginning of the meeting.

### 2. St Monans Community Development Officer Update

Mrs Potjewijd was invited to provide a brief update on the various activities within the community. She noted that this would probably be her last report to the Community Council as the funding for the position from Fife Council ended at the end of February. Mrs Potjewijd expressed her thanks to the community for its support, noting she had thoroughly enjoyed working with residents and local community organisations.

*Youth Hub:* Working with a small number of volunteers, She was looking to find a venue to run the group. As previously reported to the Community Council, she had secured a small amount of money to start the project off and she had secured the support of a qualified youth worker from Fife Council. She had also reached out to some youth to ask for their views. Community engagement will be essential. As always, more volunteers will be needed and additional resources and funding will be required. Full training will be provided for every volunteer. She hoped that the initiative would run until the end of the year. If anyone is interested, please contact Mrs Potjewijd.

*Adult training courses* – The Paediatric first aid course is now fully booked and there is a waiting list for the next one

*Little Wellies* – Noted that the parent & toddler group had secured additional funding for another year. This would allow the Little Wellies to be free to all.

*Winter community walk* – held on 21 December was very positively received by everyone who attended. It was so successful, that plans are to make this an annual event. Particular thanks was expressed to the Community Choir for their singing on the day.

*St Monans Tidings Newsletter* – The next publication is due in two weeks. If

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anyone would like to help in running the newsletter, delivering it, or wished to suggest ideas for content, please contact Mrs Potjewijd. She also noted that she would continue to volunteer to help in its production after February.

Mr Copland thanked Sonja for her comprehensive report.

Mr Bridges queried whether there were other opportunities for additional funding to finance this position. He noted that Sonja's contribution to the local community in the last eleven months had been considerable and that many positive CAP activities had only happened in St Monans due to her role as Community Development Officer. He also noted that in the next edition of the 'St Monans Tidings', there would be an update on some of the activities in relation to the Community Action Plan (CAP); it was an impressive list. This had been a part-time appointment funded by Fife Council. The grant had been made available to the St Monans Community Trust who, in turn, paid Mrs Potjewijd. He noted that even although it was a part-time role, the 'bang for buck' was huge and should not be underestimated and the loss of Mrs Potjewijd's services would have a detrimental impact on our ability to deliver on many of the projects identified in the CAP.

Cllr Holt queried whether the Community Trust had been in discussions with Fife Council to seek additional funding. A resident, Mrs Ruth Craib, declared that she was Secretary to the Community Trust. In response to Cllr Holt's query, Mrs Craib stated that the Community Trust had approached Fife Council to seek additional funding, but had been advised that there was none. However, other potential sources had been suggested. One major application had been made to a funding agency, but this had been rejected due to the sheer scale of competing applications. Mr Bell (Vice Chair of the Trust) agreed with Mrs Craib and stated that he also considered it crucial for this post to continue on behalf of the community.

Mrs Salvage voiced her disagreement with the views expressed about the Development Officers role. She stated that many residents had volunteered to assist in community events and had never been paid. This role was a paid position and if a person was being remunerated to do these activities then, of course, more things would be achieved. Mrs Salvage also noted that there hadn't been a need for such a role in the past and argued that many of the activities undertaken by Mrs Potjewijd did not address concerns that many residents in the village faced. Specifically, she mentioned loneliness, addiction and mental health problems. Mrs Potjewijd replied that this was not correct. She had worked with members of the Beautiful St Monans team and local people with mental health issues on garden activities last summer. This was a very practical example of bringing different people from different parts of the community together. Mrs Ironside also disagreed with Mrs Salvage's assessment and noted that many young, single mums with limited income attended the Little Wellies club for free because of funding which had been secured through

Sonja's work. Mrs Salvage stated that Sonja had done quite a good job, but still queried what else was required to be done that needed a paid position.

Mr Collier suggested that the Community Council should be approaching the discussion by identifying what was required to be done in the village. Mr Copland noted that this had already been established through the CAP. In addition, Fife Council had identified the need for this dedicated position to help drive through the CAP proposals and had recognised that such a role would require an appropriately trained person. Hence their offer of funding. The role was to act as a motivator to advance the actions prioritised in the CAP. It was also important to remember that the role was a direct resource from the Council and had day-to-day contact with the relevant key staff at the Council.

Mrs Salvage argued that it should be for the Community Council to be comfortable with what activities the role should prioritise. Mr Bridges reminded the meeting that the CAP was not a Community Council initiative; the previous Community Council had declined to run the programme and it had been left to a small group of volunteer residents to drive the CAP forward. The consultation process involved public meetings and communications to every household in the village. This was followed up by a public meeting, at which residents were invited to score the survey findings. The CAP was therefore a community driven and community owned programme.

A resident stated that it was great that local people had volunteered to do activities in the past, but she wished to point out that people still volunteered today to undertake activities around the village and did so because they enjoyed it. Having a part time Development officer in the Community did not stop volunteers! Another resident stated that if there was public grants and funding available, the community should apply for this funding to allow the role to continue.

Mr Buchan asked why the Common Good Fund did not release funds for community projects and suggested Fife Council was not allowing the Community to access this funding. Mr Copland reminded him that we had a similar discussion at the December meeting. The funding was available, but community organisations were simply not applying for it. Subject to following the correct application process and meeting the necessary criteria (not insurmountable) local community groups were encouraged to apply. Councillors Porteous and Docherty both agreed with Mr Copland's assessment.

(Mrs Potjewijd left the meeting).

Mrs Salvage queried why the Community Council had not discussed what Mrs Potjewijd had been paid or whether her work was considered value for money. Mr Copland stated that the funding arrangement was not a matter for the Community Council; it was a matter for the Community Trust. Mr Buchan

followed this up by asking why it had come to the Community Trust in the first place. As the meeting was discussing the activities of the Community Trust, the Secretary reminded the meeting of the requirement for members to declare any interest in the Community Trust. Mr Copland, Mr Bell and Mr Buchan all declared an interest as Trustees of the St Monans Community Trust.

Mrs Salvage rephrased her question and asked why both the funding of, and the activities of, this role had not come back to the elected Community Councillors. However, Mr Bridges pointed out that Mrs Potjewijd had been attending every Community Council meeting since her appointment in February 2019 and had made comprehensive reports on her activities at each meeting. These were well documented and she had gone on record several times in asking for views and opinions from these meetings. A resident suggested that it was absurd to suggest that the Community Council did not know what the role entailed.

Mr Bell provided a brief reminder to the background to Mrs Potjewijd's appointment. At the request of the Community Council, he had attended a meeting organised by Fife Council officials and the three local Councillors, to discuss anti-social behaviour problems in February 2019. At the follow up meeting in Glenrothes, Council officials suggested the creation of a community support worker. This was discussed and agreed through the Community Council. It was therefore incorrect to suggest that Community Councillors were unaware of the role. At the suggestion of the Fife Council officials, the Community Trust was used to facilitate the grant funding. Mr Copland agreed that was his recollection of events and noted that Mrs Potjewijd's activities are scrutinised by Fife Council through her line management reporting into the appropriate Communities team. It was also pointed out that Fife Council had also arranged all employment legal aspects concerning this role.

Mr Collier concluded the discussions by suggesting that perhaps there was a communication breakdown between the Trust and the Community Council and both parties should work to improve this.

### **3. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising.**

All other matters were considered closed, except for the following:

#### **3.1 Community notice board replacement**

Mr Bridges noted that this action was now included in the wider Residents Association initiative to have a memorial garden around the site of the current notice board. It was therefore agreed to defer this matter to the Association. The Community Council will continue to support the need for a new notice board.

#### **3.2 Common Goods asset Register**

Following the Council request to review this register in September, Mrs Salvage

advised she had still not had an opportunity to review the St Monans section. Cllr Holt advised that the closing date was 31 January and offered to resend Mrs Salvage additional papers to help her in this task.

V Salvage  
Cllr Holt

### 3.3 Gully cleaning at Abercrombie

No change since last meeting. Cllr Docherty agreed to chase up this matter with Fife Council again.

J Docherty

### 3.4 Repairs to railings on Station Road

The Residents Association continues to follow this up with Fife Council. A resident noted that new railings had been installed around Braid Court and queried if new railings could also be installed onto Station Road. However, Mr Collier noted the relative poor quality of these railings and suggested that this might not be a good idea.

### 3.5 Road Sweeping on Station Road.

A resident advised she had seen a Road sweeper in the village just before Christmas.

### 3.6 Defibrillator

Extensive work has been undertaken to upgrade the electric junction box and wiring into the Harbour Masters office. The Council has also agreed to upgrade the internal décor, but this will not happen until the new financial year. Once this work has completed, it is planned to attach the defibrillator to the outside wall. Meantime, it was noted that the Top Shop has kindly offered to put a defibrillator onto one of their external walls. Currently, there no plans for another one in the village, but Mr Copland agreed to send a note of thanks to the owners.

P Copland

### 3.7 Speeding problems through Abercrombie

Ongoing. This continues to be an issue with near accidents happening daily. The terrible and dangerous condition of the road through Abercrombie was again highlighted. Potholes have been identified and marked by Fife Council officials, but nothing has been done to fix these.

### 3.8 Burns Supper on Saturday 8 February 2020

Raffle prize donations are now being sought for the Burns supper and can be dropped off to Mrs Ashworth or Mrs Salvage. Tickets for the evening are now on sale from members of the committee, Mrs Salvage or Pete Peddie.

As in previous years, the Community Council would like to donate book token prizes to the primary school as part of the national Burns competition. The winners would also recite their poems at the supper. Mr Bell kindly agreed to finance this cost, approximately £85, on behalf of the Community Council.

G Bell

3.9 Common Good Fund and general funding of community projects.

The meeting was reminded that this action was to create a central register of all funding applications for every community group. This would allow for better co-ordination and prioritisation. A resident, Mr Rathbone, is still working on this spreadsheet/register with the Secretary.

Both Mr Copland and Cllr Porteous again stressed the fact that funding was available through the CGF and encouraged community applications. Cllr Holt also clarified a point regarding the approval process for CGF applications. The Community Council did not take the decision to grant funds from the CGF. It simply recommended support or rejection for each application. The Local Councillors and/ or the Full NEF Area Council committee were responsible for agreeing or rejecting applications. Of course, the opinion of the local Community Council was always an important consideration in such deliberations.

3.10 Celebration of the bi-centenary of Millers boat builders in St Monans.

It was generally agreed that this would be a worthwhile project to pursue. However, no individual or community group had yet stepped forward to take this proposal forward. Mrs Salvage will continue to pursue.

V Salvage

There being no other comments, Mrs Ashworth proposed (Mrs Ironside supported) that the minutes be adopted. The minutes were approved.

**4. Community Police Report Update**

Mr Copland read out the report from PC Stecka.

During December, the police received 1177 calls in the North East Fife (NEF) Area, of which 21 calls related to the St. Monans & Abercrombie area. Of these, two crimes related to breach of bail and vandalism. Other calls were in relation to assist members of the public, complaints regarding anti-social behaviour, concern for persons, public nuisance, road traffic incidents and noise complaints.

PC Stecka would like to know if there are still issues with youths congregating at St Monans Primary School as well as drug items found near the school.

Officers have tried to increase their presence in St. Monans in recent weeks and he hoped the community could see this.

Speed sites have been carried out on the A917 throughout the whole of the East Neuk recently resulting in a number of drivers being warned in respect of their speed. The NEF Festive Safety Campaign was enforced throughout December working on Commercial Premises Security with great success.

**Chairpersons Report**

5. Mr Copland advised there was nothing significant to note, including with respect to the new housing development to the west of the Old Manse.

**Secretary's Report**

6. Mr Bridges noted that it had been a busy month for receiving correspondence:

*Fife Council Locality Response Team:* This group undertakes landscaping and environmental projects, providing waged and voluntary placements for people interested in working in this field. For St Monans, the following is in the pipeline;

- Salt Pans, St. Monans, grass cutting (Cllr. Porteous). Site visited and discussed, should start in the Spring of 2020 when the grass starts growing, costings to follow.
- Paint railings on both sides of road from Hope Place on Station Road to East and West Street, St. Monans (Cllr. Porteous).

*2020 Year of Coasts and Waters:* This designated year aims to inspire both visitors and locals to explore and experience our unrivalled landscapes and seascapes. Led by VisitScotland, the aim is to celebrate and promote the very best of Scotland's coasts and waters. In support of this, a funding opportunity has been set up by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to create new opportunities for communities to connect with our coasts, seas and freshwaters. The fund will support community-led projects costing between £2,000 and £10,000. This is a competitive fund for projects that will be implemented during 2020. Deadline is 28 February.

*Community Councils Scheme Review:* Fife Council has agreed to review the current Scheme for Community Councils. There are two questions being considered:

- Are there opportunities to merge, or even divide, existing community council areas, to take account of demographic changes since the original boundaries were put in place?
- Does each Community Council have an appropriate number of Community Councillors?

Fife Council also intend to consult the public, with copies of the maps being available throughout Fife. The consultation on current boundaries is open until 28 February.

After a brief discussion, it was agreed that our current boundary and membership should remain at the current level. Mr Bridges did note that Abercrombie's name had been dropped in the revised boundary. He agreed to point this out to Fife Council when he responded to the consultation paper.

S Bridges

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*"Introduction to Community Engagement"*: this is a Fife Council course and is taking place on Wednesday 20 February from 6.30pm - 9.30pm. The Course is being run at Caledonia House in Glenrothes.

*Provision of Minutes*: Mr Bridges also advised that an anonymous letter had been sent to the Community Council complaining about the lack of published minutes since October. There was a suggestion that this was a breach of the constitution and the individual queried whether this was careless or deliberate.

Mr Copland and Mr Bridges expressed disappointment that this had been raised anonymously. Mr Bridges agreed that the draft minutes had not been placed on the website recently as he had experienced some technical difficulties in uploading onto the site. However, he dismissed the suggestion that this was a breach of the constitution as the Community Council members had always received their papers within the required timescales. The draft minutes that appear on the St Monans website was not a legal requirement, but was a practice that he had personally introduced when taking up the role to encourage transparency. He reminded the meeting that copies of the signed minutes were also available in the library. A copy was also sent to Fife Council.

Cllr Docherty stated that he fully supported the Secretary and had always found the minutes to be factual and reflective of the meeting. Cllr Holt suggested that copies could also be sent to the East Fife Mail as they might consider publishing a summary. Mr Bridges agreed to look into this suggestion further.

S Bridges

### **Treasurer's Report**

7.

There was no update available for the meeting

### **Members Reports**

8.

*Community support initiatives*: Mr Collier noted the next meeting with Fife Council officials would be 5 February. In terms of anti-social behaviour, there were no reported incidents. The increased police presence may be helping here. He also reported that the bin store lock was now in place and the area was now looking much tidier. Unfortunately, fly tipping has become an issue and Mr Collier was speaking to Fife Council to see what signage could be made available to discourage this. Both Mr Collier and Cllr Porteous encouraged residents to report fly tippers.

In response to a question about progress in publishing a St Monans 'Welcome pack' for new residents, Mr Collier said it would be available in the next two weeks.

S Collier



## 9. Councillor Updates

Cllr Holt suggested that it would be worthwhile to invite a representative from ENeRGI to address the next meeting about their services. ENeRGI provides support and information for people who have experienced, or are experiencing mental health and/or substance misuse issues as well as their carers. The Secretary was asked to contact Norman Cowie, the local manager, and invite him to the next meeting.

S Bridges

The meeting was pleased to note that Cllr Docherty had been appointed a director of Fife Centre for Equalities (FCE). FCE's mission is to develop a harmonised approach to build a collective voice to champion equality, diversity, inclusion and social justice.

Cllr Porteous followed up on the earlier discussion regarding the Year of the Coast & Waters, by informing the meeting that the Fife Coast & Country Trust (FCCT) were considering applying for the new funding to upgrade the coastal path between St Monans and Pittenweem to be disable friendly.

Cllr Porteous also noted the positive discussion around creating a memorial garden on Station road and provided a number for residents to report fly tipping. Call 03451 550022 Lines are open between 8am to 6pm. Fly tipping is illegal and anyone who spots offenders should not be afraid to report them. If they did not wish to do so personally, then Cllr Porteous would do so on their behalf.

## 10. Towns Team Update

Mr Bell reported that there had not been a meeting this month. He reiterated the point that the Towns Team was not a closed organisation and that anyone from the community or business community could join and attend the meetings. These were held on the first Monday of the month in the Masonic hall, Braehead, at 7.30pm.

## 11. Public Questions

11.1 Overgrown hedge in lane approaching St Monans primary school  
A resident complained that this lane was dark and dangerous due to the overgrown hedge. Mr Bell agreed. He had visited the site to see what could be done to cut back the hedge. Unfortunately, the hedge is on private property and will need substantial work or even removal. Sandra Mayes (Secretary to the Residents Association) agreed that the Residents Association would also push to have this hedge removed or drastically cut back.

11.2 Right of Way beside 24/26 Station Road  
Another resident asked for an update on the fencing encroachment on the

public right of way beside 24/26 Station road. Cllr Porteous advised that the owners would be contacted for an update after the work on the retaining wall had been completed and the groundwork had stabilised.

**11.3 Beautiful St Monans update**

Another resident wished to advise the meeting that the Beautiful St Monans team had raised £150 from the sale of calendars. Sincere thanks were expressed to Dave Smith for all his photography and to Gerrards, Top Shop, the Diving Gannet and Pathhead Nurseries for all agreeing to sell copies in their outlets.

**11.4 Dangerous parking on corner of Queen Margaret Street**

A member of the public, whose elderly parents live in St Monans, complained that a commercial van was dangerously parked on the corner of Queen Margaret street (near the site of the old phone box). A child had narrowly avoided being hit by a car due to the inconsiderate parking. Mrs Salvage agreed to contact PC Stecka about this and the member of the public was encouraged to send a picture of the van to the employer of the firm whose van was causing the dangerous situation.

V Salvage

**12. AOCB**

**12.1 St Monans electric vehicle charging point**

Fife Council plan to install an electric vehicle charger in St Monans this financial year and have contacted the Community Council regarding a suitable council owned public car park with potential power supply. The obvious choice is the MUGA carpark. After a brief discussion, it was unanimously agreed to support this proposal. Mr Bridges will advise Fife Council.

S Bridges

**12.2 Fife Coast & Countryside Trust Motorhome parking proposals**

Cllr Porteous advised that a paper produced by the FCCT was available to download from their website, which proposed a pilot scheme to charge motorhomes to park within designated parking bays at Ruby Bay and Kingsbarns. Overnight charges would also apply. FCCT would use existing byelaws to enforce these charges and parking outside the designated bays would attract a fixed penalty from Fife Council.

**12.3 Dog fouling**

Complaints about fouling have increased in the last month. Residents were reminded to complain to the Safer Communities team at Fife Council and not the Dog Warden Service. It was suggested that the Community Council could invest in purchasing more bins for the village (particularly around the top of the Dawsie) and Mrs Salvage agreed to write to Fife Council to determine whether the Council would then be prepared to adopt these bins to allow for emptying. In addition, concern was expressed about irresponsible dog owners bagging the excrement and leaving the bags on the street and in local gardens.

V Salvage

12.4 Car parking around the Top Shop area

With the recent closure of the oil company depot, it was noted that an increasing number of cars were badly parking in and around the entrance and pavement to the former depot. Residents were reminded that if a pedestrian with a walking aid or pram could not pass on the pavement, then under the Equality Act 2010, this obstruction would be considered an offence. Neighbours were encouraged to report such parking to the police.

12.5 Noisy car in and around East Street car park

Mr Collier has received several complaints about a noisy car in and around East Street. A number of residents in the audience confirmed this car was a common noise problem around the village. Although this is not a police matter, it would be considered as noise pollution. Cllr Porteous recommended residents individually report the car to Environmental Health.

12.6 Community Council Annual General Meeting

Mr Buchan raised the matter of an Annual General Meeting and noted that there hadn't been one in 2019. He also suggested that it required four weeks' notice. There was a brief discussion about the matter and it was agreed that one should be held in February.

**13. Frequency of Community Council Meetings**

After the public meeting, the Community Council discussed the need for holding a meeting during the month of December. Mr Bridges advised that the constitution required meetings at least quarterly. Therefore holding ten meetings a year was more than adequate in meeting the obligations set out by Fife Council. If the Community Council had to convene during the holiday months it could, of course, do so. He therefore proposed (Mr Copland seconded) that St Monans & Abercrombie Community Council meet ten times per year and that the months of July and December would not require ordinary meetings. This was unanimously agreed.

The meeting then discussed the practical logistics regarding the upcoming Burns Supper.

**14. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Community Council will be on Monday 17 February 2020 at 7.30pm.



Chair