

ELIE HERALD

SUMMER EDITION - JULY 2016



Town Hall and Community Development Trust

There has often been anxiety expressed that the villages are too dependent upon the summer five weeks and other major holiday periods to sustain the businesses and infra-structure on which a local population thrive. A rough estimate suggests that less than 40% of properties are occupied by full time residents. A further aspect is the cost of purchasing or renting property other than as a holiday home or rental investment. Winter in the villages can be a lonely existence. The question is - Do we need to try to change things by attracting more people to live here permanently and if so how do we go about it? The plight of Earlsferry Town Hall is typical. This venerable old building once a hub of activity, theatrical performances, cinema, mission hall (yes - in the 19th Century !) and general meeting place has long fallen out of favour. Currently Fife Council employees maintain it as best they can. But its time and finance is limited. There will come a time when resources are no longer there to maintain such a building without it generating some income of its own. The rentals of the hall have fallen off in recent years and it is very seldom used. Do we want this to go the way of other such buildings and be sold to a developer and converted into apartments or is there some use we can establish which will keep the old building going and provide a use to the community? It is a common good building and this means it owned by the community.

At a recent drop in session at the Town Hall held by the Fife and Community Councils various suggestions were made. The most viable seems to be the possibility of turning it into a hostel type establishment catering for families and individuals who wish limited bed and breakfast facilities and who are perhaps

just passing through – perhaps on the coastal walk. A comparison might be to Murray Library in Anstruther. However it is obvious that such a project would need serious funding. The community council is not in a position by virtue of its statutory position to make use of what seem to generous sources of funding for such a project. How would we go about it or at least get a feasibility study? One and perhaps the only way would be to create a Community Development Trust. There are a number of such organisations in Fife and they seem, subject to proper management, sound foundations and effort, successful. Pittenweem and St. Monans for example where the latter has recently refurbished its tennis courts via such a vehicle. Such a trust could address other issues in the villages like the lack of parking facilities in the summer, the need for a local post office etc The Community Council therefore wishes to canvass opinion from interested groups and all residents of the villages as to whether such a Community Trust would be a viable way forward both to focus on the Town Hall and also on the wider development of the facilities in the community. The community council will therefore be writing to all groups in the area who might have an interest in such a venture. Could we ask you to consider and discuss these proposals and give us feedback on the views of your organisation and indeed as individuals.



PLANS ARE AFOOT FOR TOILETS AT EARLSFERRY

With the sale of the toilet block behind Earlsferry Town Hall the nearest public toilet to Earlsferry beach is Stenton Row and a good mile from Chapel Green. We had hoped that with minimal expenditure we could have adapted part of Earlsferry Town Hall to provide access to the toilets inside the hall. The idea would be to build secure door in the hall and gain access to the toilets from the passage at Cross Wynd – an access which actually exists. There was a meeting about this and it seemed to be feasible. However Fife Council who would do the work now want us to employ surveyor/ architects etc to draw up plans for the work at our cost or to pay the Fife Council to do so even although the work would be done by Fife Council. This is particularly disappointing since any new toilet access in Earlsferry will not now be available until next year assuming we can go ahead with the proposals. We all may have to hold on a bit longer.



BEACH PROJECT

We are happy to say that the Big Lottery has granted us funding to do a preliminary study of the beach and dunes and David Bell a consultant has been engaged to investigate and report. He will be walking the beach and dunes shortly looking at the position and will welcome feedback from all those interested. We will publicise his visits and people will be given a chance to meet him and enter into the discussions. It is hoped that his report and recommendations (if any) will be available early in the Autumn..



We are also now on Facebook – visit us and see what's going on at:-
"Elie and Royal Burgh of Earlsferry Community Council"

DISASTEROUS FIRE AT ELIE DELI



What a tragedy for the McCullochs and the whole area when the Deli burnt down. It was a horrific sight but out of this has come the determination of the McCullochs not to be thwarted and they are looking at alternatives since it is likely to take at least 18 months to resurrect the shell of the building left. We will give them our support and wish them success. They have stated that they much appreciated the kindness and sympathy from the whole village.

Seek the Golden Temple between 9th and 7th Fairways



This shelter long subject to the ravages of strong winds which had laid bare its timbers has been recently refurbished and glints in the sunlight. As yet it does not yet serve drinks and snacks but it is at least cosmetically an improvement. Someone has asked how long it has been there...anyone know anything about it ?

PROPERTIES IN ELIE AND EARLSFERRY, FIFESHIRE, FOR SALE, Part of a Sequestrated Estate.

To be Sold by Public Roup, within the Ship Inn, Elie, on Friday the 17th March current, at One o'clock afternoon,

1st, **A**LL and Whole that **PIECE** of **GROUND**-lying on the south side of the Lint Mill Yard, in the Town, Barony, and Parish of ELIE, measuring 27 Ells on the north, 40 Ells on the east, 30 Ells on the south, and 25 Ells on the west; together with the **DWELLINGHOUSES**, **SHED**, and **OTHER BUILDINGS**, erected thereon; and, also, an **AREA** or **PIECE** of **GROUND** adjoining, extending to 200 **Square Yards**; all as presently possessed by **WILLIAM STEEL** and **JOHN STEEL**, Shipbuilders, Elie. **Fee-Duty**, 17s. per annum. **Upset Price**, £200.

2d, **A DWELLINGHOUSE** and **YARD**, situated in **EARLSFERRY**, which belonged to the said **WILLIAM STEEL**. **Upset Price**, £200.

Messrs JOHN CURRIE & SON, Elie, will point out the **Properties**; and further information may be had on application to **JOHN COCHRAN**, Blockmaker, Commercial Place, the **Trustee**, or to the **Subscriber**, at No. 13, **Bernard Street**, **Leith**.

At same time and place, there will be Exposed for Sale,

A SCHOONER, on the stocks, nearly finished, and **A SLOOP**, about half-finished.—See *Advertisement*. **JAMES PAUL**.

Leith, 4th March 1843.

Planning of New Houses – Owner/occupied only ?



Places in the Lake District and the Cotswolds have tried to address the problem of a huge influx of visitors at holiday times and empty properties for the rest of the year. Should we impose conditions on new build houses that they should not be let out as rental properties. In effect this would ask the planning department to put section 75 notices on the application containing such a prohibition. There is already such a notice in place on the three new build houses at the Orangery and the new site at the Water Garden in Elie House. Of course this is controversial and may be contra to government policy but should we be at least considering something like this ?

Should we try to ensure that new build houses are occupied all the year round and not just used as holiday homes or rental properties. Such a condition would hopefully inject a much needed resident population to the villages and thereby hopefully halting the decline in resident population. Is this a matter which could be addressed by a Community Development Trust and the Community Council ? Your views matter so please let the CC know what you think.

Adventures of the "Eccentric Shepherd"

Early one summer, my travels found me following once more in the footsteps of the Covenanters of old who fled the lowlands of Scotland in search of a refuge from religious persecution and made the Orkney Islands their home. This is the reason why a large proportion of the population have surnames common to those of the south. Practically everyone on North Ronaldsay, for example, is called Muir.

In order to reach any of the islands from the mainland of Orkney one must either catch a ferry at the crack of dawn or else take to the air in a Britten-Norman Islander. On my journey the added attraction was a new car exhaust nearly as long as the plane itself which had to be fed gradually between the passengers, then carefully extracted at the end of the flight. The island airfields are just grassy pastures without cows or sheep, those having been removed five minutes before a plane is due and returned immediately afterwards.

Having arrived in North Ronaldsay by air, you will have already seen most of the island. It is about three miles long by two miles wide at its longest and widest being composed of blown sand, clay and rock. There are six lochs – Gretchen, Hooking, Ancum, Garso, Dennis and Trolla Vatn – and a lighthouse on Dennis Head which outrivals (outshines perhaps) the Hill of Holland (20 metres) as the highest point. The island is therefore somewhat exposed to the prevailing wind, which is probably why some of the sheep and cattle are tied down by one leg. There are two shops, a church, a big house and several ancient haws, knowes and brochs. The rest of the island is divided into crofts with fields of hay, pasture and black oats. The proximity of Scandinavia is reflected in the local tipple – Carlsberg Special.

The island, however, is perhaps best known for its sheep.

The North Ronaldsay sheep is more goat like than sheep like, resembling a ball of untidy and variegated wool into which four knitting pins have been stuck. Lambs and sheep of all ages wander about in boisterous groups, pushing each other into ditches and jumping out suddenly from behind walls. A five foot high stone dyke runs around practically the entire circumference of the island. This is not as you might expect to keep the farm animals in but to keep the sheep out. A typical seascape is that of low cliffs rocky shore and sheep busily pulling seaweed from the low tidal pools. They forage amongst the basking seals, chase gulls from the choicest jetsam of the shore line, and graze any vegetation foolish enough to seek an existence on the cliffs to a lawn like consistency be it grass, heather or salt marsh.

It is said that this diet imparts a unique flavour to the mutton, but this I cannot confirm.

By "The Eccentric Shepherd"



SUMMER PARKING PROBLEMS

We go on at length about this during the peak periods...little difference it makes too...however please make sure you are not restricting the normal flow of traffic when you park. There are spaces up at Chapel Green Road which could be used in preference to parking in the main streets.

PAT ROWAN RETIRES

After stalwart and long service with the Community Council, Pat has resigned. We will miss her valued input and wish her well in all her other ventures.

Produced July 2016 by: -
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