

THE INDEPENDENT

Elie Herald

Summer 2019

Planning and Charette Update

Editorial

Two important events have been occupying our minds for the last few weeks. The first, of course, is the planning application for development at Grange and Wadeslea on which we will provide an update. The second is the Charette exercise carried out by PAS on behalf of the Community Council. Earlsferry Town Hall was the host of an assembly of villagers who wanted to have a say in the future of our lovely place. There is a separate Report of this event but on the three days the attendance seemed on the low side and it was disappointing that more permanent members of the community did not trouble to come along and take part. However we have been assured by the organisers, a professional outfit, that the number of attendees was not too dissimilar to such events in other places. It is perhaps the vociferous and passionate few who want to have some sort of influence on the future of the villages - indeed it might argued that it is the **arrogant** few who think their views are the correct ones. What happens now is that the discussions and conclusions if any will be collated and further drop in session will

be held at **Earlsferry Town Hall on Saturday 13th April between 2 and 6 pm.** The results of the preliminary meetings will be on display and all those interested in the future of the villages are urged to attend. They will not be formal sessions but merely drop in to meet the team and discuss the interim findings and even influence and change the final report. This is very very important for those who hold the villages dear to their heart whatever the status, permanent resident, weekend home owner, tenant or even casual visitor. We all have an obligation to have some input into the process and it may be the only chance we get and we are voting to provide for the next generation. Views on the planning application will also be capable of being noted. It really cannot be stressed how important this exercise is both in relation to the general future of the village but also the attitude to the planning application.



Saturday 13th April

2 pm - 6 pm

**Have your views heard and
see into our future**

Charette +

Briefly this is a process by which professional and experienced people can canvas a community and draw up lists of what the community wants to see in the short, medium and long term. The benefit of it being done by professionals like PAS is that their results are recognised as representing the views of the community and thereby capable of attracting suitable funding for projects which the community may wish. The team associated with this have spent at least a month in Elie before these events speaking to as many people as they could. The school children were invited to have their ideas put forward and local businesses and "stakeholders" were invited to have a view. Much of the information amassed during these preliminary interviews was on display on the three days of the workshops and discussed at length. Of course many other ideas developed independently and the whole thing will be incorporated into a document forming a Community Plan for the future.

Thursday evening 28th March managed to gather about 30 interested people who were briefed on the work of the PAS organisation and the hoped-for outcomes of the process. The hall was festooned with stickers, posters and other paperwork which had been accumulated from the consultees prior to the workshops.



Friday 29th was divided into two workshop sessions **Connectivity and Local Economy**. The former was intended to be in relation to the transport issues in the village although broadband connectivity and mobile phone coverage was also discussed. It became clear - as if it needed to - that parking and public transport were particular concerns. Various alternative parking sites were looked at. Extending the size of the Ruby Bay Car park was obviously a possibility but the view was that until there was easier access on foot from that car park to the harbour and beaches it was too far for most visitors to walk. It was thought that with the proposed new development some access could be improved by a road from the main A917 across Wadeslea to the car park or even a walk-way from the car park across Ruby Bay. It was no surprise that none was able to come

up with quick and easy solutions to the parking problems during peak periods. One way systems restricting parking and residents permits were possible but each had its own undesirable consequence.

Some of the issues discussed by the primary school



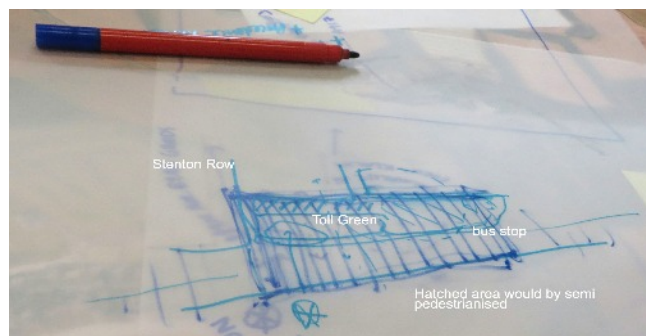
The second workshop on Friday afternoon concerned the local economy. The villages' lifelines were tourism and visitors, whether on a day basis or for extended periods. There was a view that more could be done to promote Elie as a golfing venue as perhaps a satellite of St. Andrews and with Dumbarrie Golf course in progress more could be made of its proximity to Elie. It is apparent that in addition to the usual four or five weeks in July and August when the villages are full of holiday makers there is an increasing trend of week end visitors during the "off season". There was a thought that this could be promoted by having themed weekends - for example a yoga and well-being week end, a creative writing or literary week end and various other themed events.. The idea would be that it would attract more weekend visitors and offer more occupation of holiday houses off peak. It was recognised that any such events would require work from the community members interested in promoting them and their success would depend upon the input of the community. It was noted that already there is a putative plan to hold a literary week end in 2020 and we look forward to seeing the outline of that plan. It was noted that whilst there are a number of active organisations in the community there was a lack of co-ordination in their efforts. One possibility was to create a Development Trust or a Tourist Unit and have volunteers acting as co-ordinators



of these various groups. It was noted that a mobile app was almost ready for unveiling which would provide details of on

going events in the village. Elie Fayre day committee have produced this (see below).

Saturday saw concentration on **Recreation and Leisure and Community**. This workshop was initially sparsely attended but people drifted in later to take part which was encouraging. There was a widely held view that since the villages are a Mecca for recreation and leisure already nothing should be done to interfere with that. However some ideas for improvement were considered. One such idea was the creation of a sports centre/complex at the harbour taking into it the Watersports centre building and the toilet block. A building in this space could house a community centre, meeting rooms, heritage centre, gym, pilates studio, cafe, library etc. It was accepted that this would require major investment and would need to involve the Harbour Trust, Elie Estates and various other interested parties. However the main drawback was access to it and parking. The final workshop on Saturday afternoon dealt with Community and in the main covered lack of facilities in various shapes and forms. The water system, sewage system and waste disposal were objects of much criticism. There was also a suggestion that the Toll Green areas could be expanded and made into a community space. It seems that this idea of main roads having pedestrian priority has been pioneered in Amsterdam. The Toll Green area could be expanded onto the roadway and vehicles would require to weave their way through pedestrians. This utopian view of a European style piazza was initially attractive but the practicalities were difficult to overcome. The reduction in traffic on the main road would inevitably lead to Woodside being used as a rat run.



Other matters like lack of landfill bins and smaller tweaks which could improve things were also discussed.

Opinion

So has this been a worthwhile exercise - it's not finished yet-despite the seeming reluctance of everyone to discuss the development plans of Elie Estates? It had been thought that this "Charette Plus" exercise could highlight what the community's reaction to the development proposal was likely to be. If that was the object it has to some extent not been addressed. It is of course the case that the infrastructure of the villages - water supply waste treatment etc, - are all matters which will be in the planners minds when considering the applications and there were views expressed outwith the workshops which may well feature in the final report but the playing down of that issue was perhaps a little disappointing. It can be seen that since there was funding by the Scottish Government for this exercise to devote much of it to complaints about the development plans could be the subject of concern. The developments may be properly addressed through the planning process although there was possibly a missed opportunity to consider this in the context of the Charette. There is no doubt that the effort of the PAS team was considerable and their expertise and ability to focus in on items of concern was impressive. It makes it even more important for those who could not attend the workshops to attend

the **final session on 13th April Earlsferry Town Hall**

Drop in and look and discuss 2 - 6 be there.....

Public Event re planning

The community council held an open public meeting on 19th March to inform everyone of the details of the planning applications that had been lodged. In excess of 100 people turned up and it was encouraging that so many were interested. What perhaps was discouraging was the apparent lack of awareness by many in the hall about these plans. There had been suggestions that the public consultation undertaken by Elie Estates was not as extensive as it should have been.....Awareness now heightened one hopes !



But those who won the booby prize seek anonymity.



Lifelong support for our Forces and their families

Planning

There's a Moose about the Hoose



Bootsie and Snudge Certainly not a wee timerous couring beastie, that's for sure. My cats-Bootsie and Snudge-are hunters of the top order,bringing me offerings of mice or voles most days (or nights).Some of these are unharmed and make their way into the furniture where they provide hours of fun for the said cats. Most are redirected out of the front door,but one has decided that permanent residence is more to its liking. I have a habit of leaving a banana beside my bed for munching during the night (high potassium and all that).One night,I discovered that my banana had been got at, its skin gnawed away and some of its contents eaten. Being a scientist to trade (cf.Fleming,Logie Baird,etc - NOT),I decided to investigate further and left a portion of my midnight feast beside my bed. Each morning,the offering had disappeared. This Ceremony has been ongoing for over three months and I have yet to catch the culprit in the act. What makes this stranger is that my cats sleep on the bed beside me and have shown not the slightest interest in the nocturnal visitor. More of a mouse burglar than a cat burglar methinks?



From our rodent and supernatural correspondent.

Both the Grange and Wadeslea planning applications closing date for comment is now 10th April. A quick look at the planning portal shows over 100 objections to the Grange site and smaller numbers to the Wadeslea site. The application will now go to the planning committee of the councillors and this is where there are a few difficulties. In the first place the three East Neuk and Landward councillors are on the planning committee and are expected to represent their constituents but at the same time cannot publicly express any view prior to the meeting at which they vote. The real question is what the planning departments' briefing paper is likely to say. This document is highly persuasive on the planning committee and indeed if the planning committee go against their official recommendation an appeal and consequent expense is likely. This is a seriously flawed process and hopefully the new Planning Bill will improve communities' involvement in the planning procedure. It is particularly important when the community that is affected is against the proposal but the planners recommend acceptance of it because it conforms with government public policy. Who knows what they will do now ? But there are a couple of irons in the fire. Firstly the charetteplus could be argued as being representative of the views of the village even although there has been a degree of coyness in acknowledging that the charette might have had something to do with it and secondly the Participation Request to Fife Council by the EEAG might well result in delay. The planning committee are not likely to meet until May.

SEPA Doubts

There are added complications in that SEPA and Scottish Water have both expressed, shall we say at best, doubts about the schemes which the developer proposes to use to remove and supply water etc. Armed with the objections from these two bodies the proposers of the application may well decide to meet the criticism face on by finding a different way of removing and supplying the water or the application may be withdrawn at this stage and re-presented after revision.

Affordable homes?

It is totally wrong to think that the vast majority of people in the villages are totally against any form of change and the proposals

SSAFA'S Quiz Night at Pav

A thoroughly challenging evening under George Harvey's quizmaster ship was enjoyed for the benefit of SSAFA. A total of £410 was donated and the prize winners of the quiz are shown celebrating their wins

of Elie Estate. There is - and this seems to be accepted - a need for affordable housing in the village. Therefore why is it not possible to designate a portion of the Wadeslea site and build 25 affordable homes and discard the rest of the massive development - Well the answer is a question - where is the money to come from? Any landowner, even the most philanthropic, is likely to want to see a good capital return on the disposal of some of his land and 25 affordable homes however financed is not likely to enrich the landowner by very much especially since the infrastructure to support this limited number of homes is likely to be expensive.

Elie House Development 1999

There are many similarities with the application in 1999 for development of the grounds and House at Elie Estate. On that occasion the applicant sought to build up to 25 houses on the estate beside Elie House to finance the refurbishment of the main house. There were a number of meetings held in relation to this application and eventually after the planning department took on board the objections, planning permission for these houses was refused although permission to refurbish Elie House and build three houses on the chapel footprint was granted. In effect the developer decided that he could not finance the refurbishment of the main house without the money from the sale of these houses. It seems highly likely that a similar position pertains to the present application in that the money generated by the Grange site would be used to develop the Wadeslea site and both are therefore inextricably bound. Now if the Grange site plan is rejected where will that leave Wadeslea?

EEAG objections

The comprehensive objections lodged on behalf of the EEAG extending to 12 pages of well argued and reasoned objection hopefully will have some credence with the planners and committee. But this is on a knife edge and if Scottish Government policy is to seek affordable homes to be built by private developers the only way in which that can be financed is by the sale of units to owner occupiers. There is a full planning application in more detail for the land to the west of the manse at St. Monans. It is worth looking at it since the boast is that there will be 49% of affordable homes. (The total is in excess of 80 units). Now if that is viable for affordable homes it might be argued that the provision of more here is likely to lead to a glut on the market. See 19/00250/FULL in the planning portal. However it must be remembered that what has been put forward for our area at this stage is Planning Permission in Principle.

.....and now?

Where do we go from here ? It is impossible to say but it is vital in our view to keep the momentum and interest up and be proactive in discussing and considering these proposals. One rather sour note however is that some people have stated to the Charette organisers that they were in favour of Elie Estates proposals but were frightened to say sothat is sad and there is no need for it to be divisive.

Other News



An Elie Whats' On app will be launched shortly (8th April). It has been developed by Elie Fayre Day committee and will be free to download from the apple or google play store. The aim is provide a notice board of current events and local information. It will be of particular interest to permanent residents and home owners. One of its functions will be the ability to upload information about coming events and especially give early warning of problems e.g. road closures. There is a business listing for those that have opted into it but the main focus will be on community groups. Some already

have a social media platform and the app is intended to enhance their presence and introduce new groups to social media.

Scarecrow Festival

Don't forget 3rd to 6th May is the Scarecrow weekend and one of the busiest out of season. Get your brochure from the usual outlets and enjoy our creativity. The Fayre Day group are also arranging a plant sale on Toll Green later in May - use the app to find out about this !

Elie Environmental Action Group

We are charged with the Elie and Earlsferry environs and will be embarking on major improvements to the flora displays etc soon but we are having a fund raising coffee morning on **Saturday 4th May in the Church Hall** where Bill and Ben will have a potting shed and advise on "Weeeds", we also have collecting tins in shops around to enable us to improve your environment so give generously - you will see the results - precious little goes on admin ! Well ok none but we are very well organised. We could do with some scarecrows to get rid of the rooks/crows/jackdaws, or whatever they are, polluting Toll Green.



Elie & Earlsferry History Society

Get to know your local history

Steve Liscoe on Fife's Defences 7.30 Church Hall Thursday 11th - we have postponed the outing until September and hope to visit Abbotsford in the borders by Train. Date to be confirmed soon.

The Pav

It's the 20th Anniversary of the Maclaren's involvement with the Pav and they are looking to mount an exhibition of photos before and after their time so please hand in what you may find to Lachlan at the Pav and in meantime look forward to these engagements -

13th April Burger Night; 21st Easter Sunday Egg Rolling etc.; May 12 Ardross Carvery; 18th May Hi tea in the traditional style; Father's Day Carvery 16th June take the strain off Dad !

Out of Hours Medical Care

It is hoped that soon there will be an announcement of full or partial re-instatement of the out of hours medical care at St.Andrews Hospital.



The **Elie Herald** welcomes feedback, contributions etc constructive or destructive and we can be contacted at info@grahamjohnston.scot or if you want to look at previous editions or get the answers to the problems see

<http://www.elieandearlsferry.net>