

EDITORIAL

It will not have escaped your notice that the masthead of this publication has changed. The coat of arms has been removed and with it the imprimatur of the Community Council. You will have been aware of the resignation of the editor from the Community Council but despite that there seems to be a view that this publication might have been of some value to the community. As an experiment normal service will be resumed at least for this edition and its reception will predicate any future editions. Bear in mind that the contents have no longer been approved by the Community Council. It is important therefore to realise that any opinions expressed herein are those of the editor rather than anyone else. Information upon which this newspaper is based is often not reliable but so far as possible the editor has sought to get confirmation of what is written herein. The most important aspect is that our readership should enjoy what they are seeing.... Feedback is welcome and also contributions and letters for publication to the editor should be sent to info@grahamjohnston.scot



HISTORY SOCIETY BOARDS INAUGURATED



At a ceremony at Chapel Green on Monday 27th August the History Society information boards financed by the Heritage Lottery Fund were inaugurated by our former Councillor Elizabeth Riches MBE. There were a number of invitees including Willie Rennie our MSP and representatives of various organisations that have encouraged the Society in its project.



Later that afternoon the Mars Boys Story Board at the Harbour was officially opened by Gordon Douglas, the Mars Boys historian, who has done so much to promote the memory of these extraordinary boys and their holidays in Elie. It is hoped that the addition of these information boards may add to the pleasant experience of walking round Chapel Green and also inform visitors to the Harbour of the heritage of the Mars Boys.

Community Council Elections

The election of Community Councillors occurs every four years and there will be an election in October for our Community Council. This is particularly apposite because the next few years are likely to be crucial in the development of Elie and Earlsferry and careful scrutiny is going to be necessary on the plans to make changes. Your Community Council is expected to represent the views of the community and it is vital that these views are communicated to our elected representatives. At the time of going to press there seem to be likely to be only 5 nominees for the 8 places thereby rendering an election unnecessary.

Football Pitch



There was a thought that Elie Estates had taken over the football pitch and were considering incorporating it into some of their expansion plans but now the pitch has been excluded from those plans. If the attendance at the summer football camps is anything to go by there is a market. All we need now is to get goal posts.

Parking



It has never been easy to find a parking space in Elie during the holiday season and some even fell foul of a visit from the traffic warden. Some 26 victims were found but some had been unfortunate. The area beside the old post office sorting office in Links Place had been for many years designated as a minimum wait of "30 mins-and-no-return-within-30-mins" area probably designed to enable the post office vans to load and unload....Not only since the demise of the sorting office but probably before that, the sign was ignored. The eagle eyed traffic warden spotted it and quite a few "innocent" parkers have been booked. However help maybe at hand in that Fife Council seems to acknowledge that the area in question should not have been so regulated and are seeking to deregulate the parking area. It is therefore assumed that those who were ticketed may well be absolved. Lucky people.... We still await the double yellow lines at the Ship.

The Doctors will see you now.....



Elie and Pittenweem practice are part of a training scheme to address the recruitment crisis for GPs. Our practice will have 7 or so trainee GPs in a scheme called SCOTGEM which is an acronym (what else!) for Scottish Graduate Entry Medicine. The graduates in other disciplines will do a four year transfer course to become GPs specialising if possible in a rural environment. Part of that training will include engagement with the community in which they serve so they will wish to take part in community activities so far as possible. We assume this is to give them a flavour of Dr. Finlay-like involvement with the community although we expect that they will not know what we are talking about...even humming the signature tune is not likely to make them feel any more at home.

Holiday Time.....



Whilst on the subject, there is an impression that the villages were not as busy this summer as they have been in past years. Some local businesses have reported a downturn during the usual hectic months of July and early August. Was it that the weather was too good and the majority of holiday makers were confined to the beach? Is the demand for rental houses for a fortnight falling off or has the price reduced the market? Is there another reason for this year being apparently less busy? It seems more and more people are using the village as a weekend short break destination. It might be that value for money makes the weekend break better than paying over four figures for a week in high season. It is an excellent vehicle to get wide spread families together for an occasion. We can all stand our relatives for a long week end if no longer. If that is the growing trend how about looking at having weekend events to bring more people in during the off-season. The Scarecrow Festival is successful although numbers of exhibits were down slightly this year. The weekend of the festival brings people in - can we think of other such events to attract people for weekend breaks? [See later]



The Wee House



That's the property behind the Town Hall which was auctioned off a few years ago. It was sold with a right of access along the lane at the back but NOT a right to fence off and annexe the grass area. The proprietor of the Wee House has erected a fence thereby restricting access to the grass area which he does not own. Hopefully Fife Council will address this especially with the Town Hall Improvement Scheme currently proposed (*vide infra* or is it *ultra*? whatever).

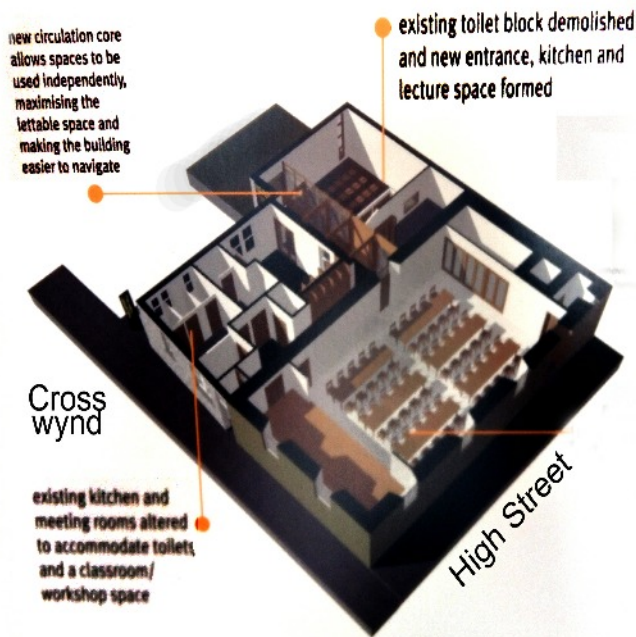
Chain Walk



It has been an eventful summer for the emergency services at the Chain Walk or more correctly Kinraig Point. Some have been rescued having climbed up the crumbly rock and there have been a couple of falls. It is not and never has been a gentle amble - you need to be fit, wear the right shoes and take your time. An attempt has been made to provide education by publication of a leaflet which is available from the newsagents. However the RNLI want to increase awareness of the dangers and seek to have the leaflet widely circulated. They would hope to have distribution points at either end on the beach and caravan park.

History Society Autumn Programme Thursday 11th October - "Earlsferry Links" - its history Graham Johnston - November 8th AGM followed by The story of the Dutch East Indiaman Kemmerland in 1664 Quiz Night January 10th 2019

TOWN HALL REGENERATION GROUP



Meeting

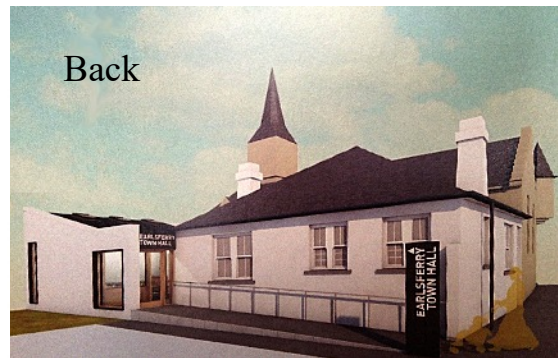
There was an open meeting on 16th August when the steering group presented their findings and discussed further action. The crux is that consultants have advised that there is a viable business plan that can be put forward to facilitate a community buy out of the Town Hall. At this stage the proposals are still rather tentative but architects have given an idea of what could be done to upgrade the facilities. It seems that a rough estimate of 450K to 600K could bring the facilities up to a reasonable standard.

Outline Plan

The above plan shows an outline proposal for reformation. This would mean making a new entrance with disability ramp at the back of the hall and redesigning some of the internal rooms. There are no plans to divide the main auditorium space although the other smaller rooms could be used for small gatherings. The enthusiasm of the steering group has been infectious and the hall is now being used as it has never been used for many years. The difficulty is that the business case is probably based upon this increased use. The increased use of the space has been largely due to the individual efforts of the committee but it remains to be seen if that level of use can be sustained in the longer term. The business case apparently suggests that initially it might be financially viable to employ a caretaker/hall keeper but there would on the current projections be insufficient income to fund this long term.

Community Buy Out ?

It seems that money could be available for a community buy out and to refurbish but on going costs may be more difficult to finance unless the hall charges are increased which would result in less use.



There is a suggestion that expectations of use on plan A, let's say, often later change and turn into a plan B when the original ideas are shown to be less effective. That might mean that the space which is being created for use by the community with **these** proposals will change as demand changes. We all hope that the efforts of the group are successful both in the short term getting the hall refurbished and the longer term to sustain its viability.

Alternatives

So what other alternatives might there be for the space thereby created? The stage area is to be retained on the current proposals so that would mean drama productions could still be viable.

Many years ago Earlsferry Town Hall was a stopping off point for touring productions and prior to the advent of television they seemed to have been very popular. A comeback for the Fol de rols? So what of the future? The library might be moved to the Hall and there might be space for a small heritage centre or the like. If the library were to be moved to the Town Hall some space would need to be found for the History Society archive collection. Whilst these uses might prove efficacious in the short term consideration has to be given to (wo)manning the premises and a degree of supervision. Without a full time caretaker it seems that the burden would have to fall back once again on willing volunteers. Provided that pool continues there is no problem but if it dries up there will be.



The Charette



Seems to be almost complete. Information and suggestions swimming pool, Macdonalds or KFC, clearly high on everyone's wish list....

The Second Homes Debate

Perhaps as a result of the meeting held in the Town Hall in April awareness of the second homes problem (?) has increased. The Scottish government is considering some of the suggestions put forward, including the change in business rates but where do we stand as a community in the debate?

At the meeting in the Town Hall it may have seemed that there was a ground swell against second home owners. We are not sure if that is fair. The second home owners, provided they use their homes for other than their fortnight's holiday, do bring trade and revenue into the village. Even if it is only half terms and the easter and summer holidays it is better than nothing. Of course there are a number of enterprises which own property purely for letting purposes. They are dependent on the market to occupy their properties. The trend, if it is one, towards long weekend family type get togethers may well be the blue print for increased commerce and footfall in the village and subject to the weather there is little to beat a brisk walk along Elie beach in the autumn or even winter followed by a good drink at The Ship or a roaring log fire at home where tea and crumpets complete the ensemble.

WeekEnd Breaks

Should we be thinking about encouraging these types of weekend breaks by, as a community, arranging activities specifically for the weekender? Would the proprietors of the houses - second and rental homes - consider making the price of such a weekend off season more attractive? What types of events could be fostered? Perhaps a literary week end in September/November at which authors are invited to give workshops and talk about their books. The Town Hall could be ideal for that..... Even a comedy week end perhaps after the Edinburgh festival before all comedians go back down south.

Conferences

Could we think about conference type meetings? Whilst we do not have the bulk accommodation to cater for this market, with the increase in bed space in a number of houses recently observed in the planning applications parties of upwards of 10 could be accommodated in three or four houses. Could we promote music workshops, congresses on other matters using the available halls for meetings and demonstrations? Crail has its food festival Pittenweem its arts festival and we have a scarecrow festival but could we do more to encourage the off season visitor? Of course that rather begs the question as to whether we **should** do more? At the meeting in April there was mention of how nice it was to enjoy all the facilities of this lovely place without the crowds. But we have to be realistic. Businesses, especially the catering establishments, have to struggle to survive during the off

season and perhaps an occasional weekend of activities would stimulate their clientele and their turn over. One suggestion was to have a Beach Festival in the summer



- say early August. We could have all sorts of activities on the beach from beach volleyball demonstrations, tide fights, sand yachting, football and even beach Olympics.

“Ah”, you say, “but what about the weather?” Its unpredictability suggests we would have to cater for alternatives. We could have a few mini film festivals in the Town Hall. Cookery and baking demonstrations over a week end—the list is seemingly endless but is it practical and is there likely to be an appetite for organising these things? We are sceptical. Can we afford to be complacent ?

Summer Displays



There has been, we hope, a noticeable increase in the flora displays in the villages and there have been favourable comments on the various planters around the place and also those put out voluntarily by householders. Thank you very much those that did and well done for keeping them moist when conditions favoured against it. Silver Gilt from Beautiful Fife. We would welcome feed back as to whether we have it right, could do more and any suggestions more than welcome....and thank you also for dropping the occasional coins into the piggies in the shops - it all helps and we guarantee that all the money goes towards the flower display and nothing towards administration. EAG

History Society App

You may have heard that in addition to the funding for the story boards at Chapel Green funding was also for a mobile telephone app. This has now been completed and can be downloaded free at Google apps if you have an Android phone or tablet and the app store of Apple if you're on Apple. It is intended to give a broad history of both of the villages with still photographs, text and audio/video footage. The History Society would be very pleased to receive feed back from users and we urge you to advise you family and friends who may have an interest in the village to down load it and enjoy. There are also two songs on the app. One, the weavers song and the other composed especially by Gordon Douglas the Mars Boys historian for the app.

*Talepiece



The advertisement for the visiting theatre production *infra* shows that (Sir)Tyrone Guthrie, Moultrie Kelsall among others trod the boards of Earlsferry Stage...hard acts to follow.....