

Musselburgh Conservation Society
Minutes of the 291st Executive Committee Meeting
held on
Monday 26th January 2021, at 7:30 pm
by
‘Zoom’

1). *Present.*

Alan Armour (Chair & Treasurer), Alan Stevens (Planning & Correspondence), Gavin McDowall (Membership & Trips), Andrew Coulson (Minute Secretary), Barry Turner (Planning).

2). *Apologies for Absence.*

No apologies had been received.

3). *Minutes of zoomed meeting, 30 November 2020.*

The acceptance of the circulated Minutes was proposed by Alan Armour and seconded by Alan Stevens and carried without a vote.

4). *Matters Arising*

– *Queen Mary’s Mount.* Andrew Coulson had circulated a copy of a letter from Ken and Cheryl Lindsay (Carberry residents) to Buccleuch Estates, the burden of which was that the Estate had not yet satisfactorily resolved a number of issues – of which the most important was the continuing access and damage by mountain bikers – and until this was done, the Springfield Steadings would be justified in not permitting access *via* the Private Road, to the Buccleuch Estates car park. After discussion, the Committee concluded that restoration of the historic site trail could not be envisaged before the question of access and parking was agreed between the parties.

5). *Treasurer’s Report*

The Treasurer presented a written report, which is attached to these Minutes.

Andrew Coulson reported that he had made two further monthly payments to ‘Zoom’ (covering December 2020 and January 2021), of £14.39 each, and the Treasurer undertook to reimburse £28.78.

6). *Planning Report.*

21/00057/ADV 140 High Street (Clydesdale Bank). Display of advertisements (Change of signage to Virgin Money) *Noted*

20/01381/P 175-181 High Street (adjacent to the Hollies). Change of use to beautician & assembly & leisure (fitness & boxing club)

The Committee agreed that it was good to see this building getting more fully used & attracting people into the High Street.

20/01164/LBC & 20/01105/P. 88 North High Street Painting of building & erection of signage (Nail bar) *Noted.*

Macdonald’s Restaurant appeal. Ref. PPA-210-2087. Barry Turner said that he had made further representations on behalf of the Society to the Reporter. A copy is appended to these Minutes.

Proposal for a motor racing track & associated sports facilities at Levenhall Links (Lagoons). Alan Stevens reported that a robust letter rejecting this idea had been sent to W Innes leader of ELC.

7). *Membership Report.*

Gavin MacDowall reported that there were now 83 members of the Society, who had donated £235 in addition to their formal subscriptions, to give a total income of £1065.

8). *Speakers.*

2020-2021 season: Andrew Coulson reported that no confirmation had been received from Archaeology Scotland for a speaker on 8 April. The Chairman said that he would ask Julie Franklin to give us her postponed talk on that date.

2021-2022 season: The Committee agreed to nominate at least one speaker each at the next Committee meeting.

9). *Look-See-Musselburgh.*

Andrew Coulson agreed to draft a ‘flier’ to present this project to the membership: this document will be circulated by email.

10). Design awards – 2019, 2020

The Chairman undertook to contact ELC to inquire about the timetable for the installation of the Award plaque for The Mussel, and to explore the possible ways of installing the plaque at the Archer statue.

11). Any other business

The Committee agreed to take no action in regard to planning a Summer Visit for 2021.

12). Date for Next Meeting.

It was agreed that a Zoom meeting for the Committee would be arranged for 7:30 pm on Monday 22 March 2021.

TREASURER'S REPORT 26TH JANUARY 2021

The last statement received from the bank is dated 18th December 2020. I have not been to the bank due to Covid-19 but am able to reconcile the balance shown at that time of £3293.78.

Balance as at last Treasurer's report was 3416.95. Payments were made to A. Coulson to cover zooming costs £43.17 and £100 was donated to St. Peter's Episcopal Church. £20 was received by way of a sub (£10) and donation (£10). This makes a total of £3293.78. A cheque sent to the Scottish Civic Trust would seem to be still outstanding but may well appear in the next statement for January 2021.

It is unlikely there have been any further subscription payments direct to the bank.

Alan Armour

MUSSELBURGH CONSERVATION SOCIETY

c/o 5 Carberry Close
Inveresk
Musselburgh
East Lothian
EH21 8PP

22nd January 2021

PPA-210-2087

**Fast food restaurant and associated works
Land east of Inveravon Terrace, Olivebank Road, Musselburgh, East
Lothian, EH21 7BQ**

Dear Morag Smith

This is a further representation from the Musselburgh Conservation Society on the above development proposal. We must point out at the outset that any site inspection carried out during a period of lockdown or restricted movement will not show the severe congestion referred to below or reveal the normal use of the Tesco car park.

Traffic issues now

We remain astonished that those representing McDonalds are of the opinion that the proposal will have little or no impact in traffic terms. The claim is incredulous. The results of the applicant's traffic surveys do not match local people's experience of the customary severe congestion at the Tesco roundabout and on Mall Avenue at many times of the day including weekends. Our conclusion is that the traffic data submitted with the application and the methodology behind it is flawed and should be given very close examination by the Reporter.

Impact of proposed developments

Our other concern in relation to traffic is that due consideration has not been given to the impact on the Tesco roundabout of all the development in progress and proposed in and around Musselburgh given that the Tesco store as the town's principal supermarket is likely to be a major traffic objective for many of the new residents. We supplement our original objection with some figures taken from the approved East Lothian Local Development Plan and reference to other relevant development proposals. We would point out that the population of Musselburgh is set to increase by about 50% in the plan period but with no associated highway

improvements apart from those on the A1, and a road network seriously constrained by there being only two road bridges across the river Esk.

a) 1500 dwelling approved at Craighall and 100 at Old Craighall, some of which are now under construction.

500 dwellings at Whitecraig, 200 now with approval.

Given possible alternative food shopping destinations (e.g. M&S at Fort Kinnaird and Asda at the Jewell) perhaps something like half of the traffic generated would feed into the Tesco roundabout.

b) 140 approved dwellings on the former Brunton's site which will directly feed into Mall Avenue.

c) Well over 1000 new homes are approved and under construction on the eastern side of Musselburgh. In spite of good access onto the A1 the Musselburgh Tesco store is likely to be a destination for many of the new residents. (Up to 300 dwellings are also proposed on the eastern side of the town at Goshen Farm, not a Development Plan allocation, and are currently the subject of an appeal).

In addition to the above:

a) A care village accommodating about 478 people has recently been approved at Kirk Park, Inveresk and its access road will link directly into the Tesco roundabout.

b) There is a tentative housing development of about 150 dwellings at Old Craighall, now at PAN stage, on a site which is not a Development Plan allocation.

c) A major business park is proposed adjacent to Queen Margaret University and a proposal for a crematorium is at PAN stage at Old Craighall. Both have the potential to add traffic to the Tesco roundabout which is on the direct link between each and Musselburgh town centre.

With unacceptable congestion levels now it is hard to imagine what things will be like at this junction when all this development comes to fruition. In traffic terms alone it is not a location where a 'drive thru' McDonalds adding to the serious issues here should be contemplated.

Parking capacity

Another assumption that we query is that there will be spare capacity in the Tesco car park enabling this proposal to go ahead. Already at Christmas time and other busy times of the year the car park is almost full. Any capacity that does exist at normal times will be taken up by demand from the new housing developments referred to above. Indeed we believe that with the 'drive thru' in place demand will considerably outstrip supply and parking will be displaced to nearby streets where right

now spaces are limited. Apart from presenting issues within the car park we are concerned that this will lead to dangerous and possibly illegal parking outside it with a detrimental impact on residential amenity. We really cannot afford to lose this amount of parking from the car park, the size of which was deemed necessary when planning consent was granted for the Tesco store. (I was Convener of the Planning Committee at the time).

Access arrangements

Having looked afresh at the internal traffic circulation arrangements associated with this proposal we have concerns about safety in that there will be more conflicting traffic movements than at present, especially given the proximity of the petrol station exit and the exit from the 'drive thru'. Turning right out of the petrol station is already difficult, emerging into traffic exiting the car park at a sharp bend. Add to this, the pedestrian route between the store and the access road from the roundabout will encounter two additional vehicle crossings potentially making it a less safe route than at present.

Impact on Musselburgh High Street

We believe the proposal will have a negative impact on Musselburgh High Street, not only by potentially introducing more traffic where air pollution is already a problem but more especially by taking trade away from established food and drink outlets. We appreciate that transfer of trade is not normally a planning consideration but the High Street is a special case. We all know that our town centres are under threat. The council is taking action to make the High Street a more attractive place to spend time and we have recently seen and welcomed the establishment of new cafes and eating places as shopping units have closed. Post COVID this is where we want people to congregate so as to keep our High Street alive, not on the edge of the Tesco car park.

Lack of consideration of other key objectives

It is most regrettable that under the planning system it is not possible to consider all seemingly relevant and important matters in determining planning applications and appeals such as this. Many people have expressed their concerns about the proximity of the proposed fast food outlet to Musselburgh Grammar School's rear exit given that very large number of pupils eat out at lunchtime. Such concerns have been expressed in the knowledge that healthy eating for young people is a prime concern and one that is reflected in both government and local council policy and actions. The McDonalds would be by far the closest fast food outlet to the school. They are also concerned about potential

littering given the experience of such in the town during school lunch breaks. And yet they are told that this proximity cannot be considered because it is not a planning matter. It would surely make sense for it to be so given that the general wellbeing of the population is otherwise something that planning would normally seek to address. In the circumstances, given the level of local concern, we ask the Reporter to give some consideration as to whether there is some way in which this issue can be linked to either national or local planning policy in this instance.

Based upon information from the police in respect of activity outside certain premises in Musselburgh we believe that there could be yet another problem with anti social behaviour here resulting from groups of youths gathering outside the 'drive thru' in the evenings attracted by the availability of Wifi in the building. I accept that this is not a matter for due consideration for this appeal but I have taken the view that the Reporter should be made aware of it.

Yours sincerely

Barry Turner MRTPI (retired)

Committee member, Musselburgh Conservation Society

Addendum:

The Society wishes to point out in respect to the proximity of the appeal site to Musselburgh Grammar school that the fast food restaurant is likely to attract very large numbers of its pupils (possibly in the hundreds) at lunchtime. Access arrangements are such that going to and coming back from the restaurant they will have to pass through the Tesco car park. There are significant issues around safety associated with this, with conflict between moving vehicles and throngs of young people who are not known for orderly procession. Whilst proximity in itself may not be an issue for the Reporter's consideration, we believe that these safety issues are. To get an idea of the scale of the problem we would urge the Reporter to witness, once the whole school has returned, the movement of young people between the school and existing local food outlets at lunchtimes.