



**FORT, SEAFIELD & WALLACETOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL
(FSWCC)**

Minutes of Monthly Meeting – Wednesday 8 April 2026, 19:00

The Grain Exchange (SAC Thriving Communities entrance –
Newmarket Street), 81 High Street, Ayr, KA7 1QL

Chair: I. MacLeod

Minutes: I. MacLeod

Voting Members: C. Fisher, M. Hitchon, I. MacLeod, R. Singer, D. Sommerville (departed item 7.6.2), F. Watson

Ex-Officio Members: Elaine Stewart MP, Cllr G. Weir

South Ayrshire Council (SAC): D. Porte (Link Officer)

Members of the Public: N. Larkin; B. McCann (employee of E. Stewart MP); S. McCrindle (arrived item 7.6.2)

Apologies: Voting Members: M. Anderson, A. Roseweir. Ex-Officio Members: Siobhian Brown MSP.

1. Welcome and Introductions

I. MacLeod (new Chair) opened the meeting and welcomed members of the public.

2. Apologies

Voting Members: M. Anderson, A. Roseweir.

Ex-Officio Members: Siobhian Brown MSP — declined to attend, noting her term as MSP had concluded pending possible re-election. No formal apologies were received from other elected members.

3. Declarations of Interest

No new declarations from voting members present.

Standing declarations noted: R. Singer — Pride in Place (family member on board). A. Roseweir (absent) — Pride in Place (sits on board).

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Meeting of 11 March 2026

The draft minutes of the meeting of 11 March 2026 had been circulated in advance to voting and ex-officio members.

Members agreed the minutes were a substantially accurate record. The minutes were formally approved.

5. Matters Arising

All matters arising were either covered elsewhere on the agenda or deferred. No matters requiring separate action were raised.

6. Correspondence

6.1 Pavilion Festival (2nd & 3rd May 2026) — Community Engagement

Information previously distributed to members from the Pavilion Festival engagement officer was noted. Key points: a letter drop to residents in the immediate vicinity was planned; no public consultation meeting this year (low prior attendance); some road closures changed versus previous years — Wellington Square still closed. No concerns were raised by members.

6.2 Burns Statue Square — Member of Public Seeking Update

A member of the public who had raised concerns about the Burns Statue Square redevelopment at the March 2026 meeting sought an update on the outcome of the SAC full council meeting of 26 March 2026.

I. MacLeod noted that no draft consultation had been published as yet. The matter was referred to agenda item 7.7.1 for full discussion.

7. Reports

7.1 Treasurer — M. Hitchon

7.1.1 Monthly Statement

Current balance: approx. £124. Reduction from March (approx. £325) due to payment of Zoho email subscription and website monthly update.

I. MacLeod urged D. Porte to press SAC to expedite the new annual administration grant allocation (approx. £800) — no reason for delay.

The administration grant has been frozen at £800 since 2004. With rising costs (bank charges now approx. £57; ICO registration costs), the real value has fallen significantly. FSWCC receives the maximum allocation based on size. M. Hitchon suggested £1,200 would be appropriate. I. MacLeod noted that SAC's annual review of community councils later this year presents an opportunity to seek an increase.

Action: *FSWCC to raise administration grant level with SAC at annual review.*

7.2 Planning — F. Watson

7.2.1 Savoy 5 Building Works

No retrospective planning application had been submitted to date (F. Watson). Cllr G. Weir confirmed he had been in contact with SAC Planning, which is awaiting the retrospective application before proceeding.

The premises operates on a wider occasional licence until a full licence is approved, which requires planning to be in order first. Licensing officer Katrina Andrews confirmed two months ago that licensing is waiting on planning.

Action: *F. Watson and I. MacLeod to continue to pursue; no further action required at this meeting.*

7.2.2 Ayr Town Centre Shop Fronts — Signage Compliance

M. Hitchon's query, raised via Kyle & Carrick Civic Society (of which he is a member), yielded a response from Kirsteen Rutledge (SAC enforcement officer) confirming that SAC is aware of a significant rise in unauthorised signage in Ayr High Street and surrounding areas, and is currently engaging with shop owners regarding improvements.

Action: *M. Hitchon to forward SAC correspondence to FSWCC inbox.*

M. Hitchon and F. Watson have not yet completed a walk of the High Street to identify specific cases.

Action: *F. Watson and M. Hitchon to identify signs they consider may breach planning rules and verify whether planning consent was obtained.*

7.2.3 Month's Planning Application List

Three applications noted:

- High Street at New Bridge Street: application for signage and improvement to small public realm area (former phone box) — welcomed.

- 21 Burns Statue Square: F. Watson submitted an FSWCC objection to a short-term let (STL) change-of-use application.
- 37/39 Miller Road: STL change-of-use application for garage/outbuilding at rear, accessed via a narrow lane. D. Sommerville proposed noting a concern (not a formal objection) to planning regarding pedestrian and user safety. Agreed.

Action: *F. Watson to ensure FSWCC objection to 21 Burns Statue Square STL application is on record with SAC Planning.*

7.3 Licensing — F. Watson

7.3.1 Month's Licensing Application List

Temporary and occasional licences had been granted to several public houses for football screening events. F. Watson had observed the licensing board meeting. Conditions applied by the board:

- No under-18s.
- Ticketed entry only.
- Food to be served.
- Licence-holder required to attend.

One application was adjourned because the applicant was not present.

7.4 Short Term Lets (STLs) — F. Watson

7.4.1 Month's Application List and Update

STL change-of-use applications dealt with under item 7.2.3 above (21 Burns Statue Square; 37/39 Miller Road).

Cllr G. Weir noted that an appeal against a council refusal of an STL change-of-use application had been upheld by the appeal authority, confirming the council's refusal. This was seen as a positive sign of improving policy direction.

SAC STL policy review: officers were given six months (from approximately October deadline) to produce an updated policy report. Cllr G. Weir noted the process has been significantly tightened following sustained lobbying by FSWCC and others; STLs are no longer being granted automatically.

Action: *I. MacLeod to place a placeholder on the May 2026 agenda to check whether SAC council has an STL update report scheduled.*

7.5 Police

7.5.1 Month's Report

The police report, compiled by the community police officer covering beats overlapping the ward, was noted. The report records crimes, not incidents.

F. Watson raised the matter of break-ins in Arrol Drive and Clark Avenue.

Action: *F. Watson to email Sgt Stuart Slavin requesting an update on Arrol Drive/Clark Avenue break-ins and to include a query regarding anti-social behaviour at Blackburn Road / Esplanade car park (see item 7.6.2).*

7.6 Roads

7.6.1 Dalblair Road Speeding

Background: residents reported persistent speeding on Dalblair Road. An ARA speed survey confirmed a significant proportion of drivers exceed the limit — sufficient to meet the threshold for initial action (repainting of road markings etc.), which has been completed.

A second speed survey is required to meet the threshold for vehicle-activated signs (VAS). I.

MacLeod had sent an inquiry to the Head of ARA; a response was received via her PA confirming the traffic team would be asked for an update on the second survey.

Action: *I. MacLeod to continue to press ARA for a date for the second speed survey.*

7.6.2 Blackburn Road / Esplanade Car Park — Anti-Social Behaviour

D. Porte (Link Officer) provided an update. A multi-agency stakeholder forum (police, neighbourhood services, ARA, community safety, members of public) continues to meet regularly.

Barrier situation:

- all three barriers (north/motorhome side; middle dividing barrier; south/car side) were destroyed by vandalism.
- Bollards have been installed on the pavement to prevent vehicles driving round the south gate — this has been completed.
- SAC had previously withdrawn staff rostered to manually close the south gate due to risk to their safety from anti-social behaviour. SAC/ ARA propose to reinstate like-for-like basic barriers.
- Closing time: SAC is considering 6pm (rather than 8pm in summer); police raised concerns this could displace gatherings to surrounding streets. Police and ARA to discuss.

FSWCC expressed scepticism: the barriers demonstrably failed before, and SAC had been forced to withdraw staff precisely because of the threat from car culture anti-social behaviour — reinstating the same barriers and the same closing process is therefore unlikely to be durable. Higher-grade barriers, urgency and named officer accountability preferred.

D. Porte acknowledged FSWCC's scepticism about barrier durability and asked for time for the stakeholder working group to produce a plan.

Action: D. Porte to produce update report prior to next FSWCC meeting (May 2026)

7.7 Ayr Town Centre Regeneration

7.7.1 Burns Statue Square — SAC Council Meeting 26 March 2026

I. MacLeod observed that the [SAC council meeting proposal of 26 March 2026](#) included provision for consultation with retailers in the vicinity of Burns Statue Square — which was precisely what FSWCC had intended to request. The proposal also confirmed that commencement of works has slipped to January 2027.

Media reported SAC full council meeting 26th March approved the proposal: Progress to consultation and preparation generally.

Cllr G. Weir, who attended the council meeting, cautioned that the development's large aspect of roads alterations might not require as extensive process as buildings planning consent.

S. McCrindle (member of public/local trader) raised concerns: no clear cost-benefit analysis or business case presented; risk of construction disrupting trade to the point of business failure.

I. MacLeod remarked that SAC's Ayr town centre regeneration budget commitment of approximately £20–25 million, maintained through the change of political composition at the 2021 elections, appears to be spent on peripheral projects (Citadel leisure centre and Burns Statue Square) rather than on the High Street itself or adjacent streets, which many would regard as the town centre proper.

I. MacLeod invited S. McCrindle to keep in touch with FSWCC and share trader views, which would need to be factored into any formal consultation response

E. Stewart MP noted that the Scottish Affairs Committee (MPs) is to visit Ayr High Street next month.

Action: E. Stewart to explore whether the Committee could meet FSWCC and a wider trader group.

7.7.2 Arran Mall and Former Hourstons Building — SAC Council Meeting 26 March 2026 (Members Only Item)

FSWCC's position: the site should primarily be used for non-residential purposes — leisure, education, and similar uses capable of attracting footfall and stimulating trade on the High Street. FSWCC had previously written to SAC requesting officers appraise the site for non-residential complementary uses.

A response from Chris Cox (SAC senior officer) confirmed officers are aware of and considering mixed uses. SAC is looking to engage third parties (potential developers) with a mix of residential and other uses possible.

Cllr G. Weir reported under limited disclosure, noting his obligation to preserve commercial sensitivity: Officers are looking at options and costings. Disposal options are not exclusively residential — other uses alongside potential residential are being considered.

I. MacLeod cautious — will await official publication of proposals before drawing conclusions.

7.7.3 Pride in Place Programme — A. Roseweir (update via email)

A. Roseweir was absent but had sent an email update. The Pride in Place board meets monthly; the next meeting is Friday 10 April.

A. Roseweir intends to present his strategic funding model paper at that meeting and hopes it will be approved. The board is awaiting full details of current capital spend (Ayrshire Growth Deal; and SAC-administered projects committed to in the SAC budget).

Geographic scope: a query was raised as to whether Pride in Place funding is specifically for north of the river and therefore excludes Ayr High Street. E. Stewart MP stated firmly that the funding does include Ayr High Street.

R. Singer and S. McCrindle noted the need for Ayr town centre businesses (High Street, Sandgate, Newmarket Street and surrounding streets) to form a collective lobbying body. Both were encouraged by I. MacLeod to take this forward; I. MacLeod willing to make it a future agenda item.

7.8 Elected Members Reports

7.8.1 E. Stewart MP

E. Stewart MP distributed her account of central government investment and economic stimuli in Ayrshire.

7.8.2.1 Cllr G. Weir — Citadel Leisure Centre Diving Pool

Cllr G. Weir reported on the proposal to close the Citadel leisure centre diving pool. His view: the relatively small annual deficit obscures the major capital investment that would be required in due course, for a facility not heavily used by South Ayrshire residents.

7.8.2.2 Cllr G. Weir — Other SAC Budget Matters

Cllr G. Weir reported further on the 2026–27 SAC budget: fee increases for golf and allotments; SAC's rejection of a proposal to privatise parking management (though the matter has not gone away).

8. Ayr South Beach Sand Ingress

8.1 Historical Record and Zones of Service — presented by I. MacLeod on behalf of A. Roseweir

A. Roseweir was absent. I. MacLeod summarised the matter, which arose from the March 2026 discussion about bin scarcity on the Southern Promenade (Ayr Esplanade to Millennium Bridge).

A. Roseweir has raised the matter of sand ingress affecting properties and drains between the Pavilion and the residential area, with photo evidence from multiple residents via the Nextdoor app. On the day after the March meeting, SAC deployed vehicles and staff to address sand.

Historical context: in the 2000s, SAC demarcated the beach into amenity beach (higher service standard, frequent litter picks) and recreation beach (serviced only within seven days of notification). The residential area beach was classified as recreation beach. A. Roseweir believes the original classification was misconceived and inadequately consulted; an audit panel agreed, finding insufficient prior consultation and asking SAC to review. That review remains open and unresolved. Immediate issue: sand ingress into drains as well as properties; rubbish cleared from the beach being left on the beach rather than removed.

Action: A. Roseweir to re-present formal paper requesting SAC provide a formal response on the status of the audit panel review.

9. Venue(s) for 2026–27 Meetings

9.1 Venue Assessment and Request to SAC

D. Porte secured this venue (The Grain Exchange) for this meeting, contingent on his availability. Members expressed a strong preference to continue here — good size, town centre location, acceptable acoustics.

Town Hall: SAC will not provide staff to facilitate evening bookings. Cutty Sark: commercial bookings only, no free use for community groups. Ayr Grammar Primary School: offered by SAC as alternative; members broadly sceptical based on previous experience (cold, poor acoustics). I. MacLeod to decline SAC's offer of alternative rooms at Ayr Grammar Primary School.

N. Larkin (member of public) agreed that FSWCC's meeting venue should be in the town centre. Agreed: meet at The Grain Exchange again in May and for rest of 2026-2027.

Action: I. MacLeod to update FSWCC website to state venue for 2026-2027

9.2 Meetings in July and August

I. MacLeod proposed that FSWCC meet every month of the year, including July and August. Proposed: I. MacLeod. Seconded: R. Singer. Decision: Approved — 3 votes in favour, 1 against.

10. Questions from the Floor

Questions from the floor were received and integrated into relevant agenda items throughout the meeting.

11. Any Other Competent Business

Station Hotel: F. Watson asked for an update. E. Stewart MP and Cllr G. Weir confirmed the position as already reported — the owner is being pursued through the courts; legal clearance has been obtained in Malaysia; outcome cannot be forecast.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 13 May 2026, 18:30.

Meeting closed at approximately 20:25.

ACTION POINTS SUMMARY

Item No.	Main Item	Sub-Item No.	Sub-Item Name / Action Wording	Responsible	Deadline
7.1.1	Treasurer	7.1.1	<u>Administration Grant</u> : Raise administration grant level with SAC at annual review.	I. MacLeod	At SAC annual review (later 2026)
7.2.1	Planning	7.2.1	<u>Savoy 5</u> : Continue to pursue retrospective planning application and licensing with SAC.	F. Watson, I. MacLeod	Ongoing — report May 2026
7.2.2	Planning	7.2.2	<u>Shop Fronts</u> : Identify non-compliant signs; verify planning consent; forward SAC letter to FSWCC inbox.	F. Watson, M. Hitchon	Before May 2026 meeting
7.2.3	Planning	7.2.3	<u>21 Burns Statue Square STL</u> : Ensure FSWCC objection to STL change-of-use application is on record with SAC Planning.	F. Watson	Before May 2026 meeting
7.4.1	STLs	7.4.1	<u>STL Policy Update</u> : Place placeholder on May 2026 agenda to check whether SAC council has STL update report scheduled.	I. MacLeod	May 2026 agenda
7.5.1	Police	7.5.1	<u>Break-ins / Blackburn Road ASB</u> : Email Sgt Slavin re: Arrol Drive/Clark Avenue break-ins and Blackburn Road / Esplanade car park anti-social behaviour.	F. Watson	Before May 2026 meeting
7.6.1	Roads	7.6.1	<u>Dalblair Road Speed Survey</u> : Continue to press ARA for date of second speed survey.	I. MacLeod	Ongoing — report May 2026
7.7.1	Ayr Town Centre	7.7.1	<u>Scottish Affairs Committee</u> : Explore whether Committee can meet FSWCC and wider trader group during Ayr High Street visit.	E. Stewart MP	Before May 2026 meeting
8.1	Ayr South Beach	8.1	<u>Sand Ingress — Audit Panel Paper</u> : Ask A. Roseweir to prepare formal paper requesting SAC formal response on status of audit panel review.	I. MacLeod	For May 2026 meeting

END OF MINUTES