Open Letter to Ayr Residents – Ayr Town Center and Burns Statue Square plans

For those of us who have not yet managed to catch up with what South Ayrshire Council are planning for Ayr Town Centre and Burns Statue Square, we have highlighted a few points below. We hope you will find it helpful.

We are talking about many, many millions of pounds of PUBLIC MONEY – OUR money, and SAC should act accordance with our wishes – but we MUST make our wishes known!

If you have concerns, as we do, that the regeneration funding for Burns Statue Square is NOT being used in the best way, please register your concerns to the SAC Planning office before 10th November 2026. Links to this process can be found below.

If we, as residents of Ayr, do not make our individual views known, then SAC can quite rightly hide behind the results of a questionnaire which only considers the submissions from a minority of the people.

So without further ado :-

- Plans to pedestrianise Burns Statue Square have been approved with work commencing early 2027. These plans include re-structuring the square to create pedestrianisation where the current road is, and moving the access road in front of the cinema resulting in the loss of parking and disabled parking in that area.
- There are also plans under a separate planning application to remove the South African Ware Memorial from Burns Statue Square
- Traffic will be reduced to single lanes including over the Railway Brig – begging the question, how on earth will emergency services manage in the event of an emergency? Not to mention general gridlock!
- SAC inform us that emergency services have been consulted on this, but the Council do not appear to be willing to make public the results of that consultation. We should all ask them to.
- The projected timeframe for this work to complete is two years with a strong possibility that within that two year time frame, the footfall around the top of the town will reduce significantly leaving our small independent shops at strong risk of closure (for those of us old enough to remember the pedestrianisation of Ayr High Street – how long did that take, how inconvenient was it for us all and how much damage was done to the shopkeepers at that time). SAC say that businesses have been consulted and their responses assessed – where is the detail on this? Let's all ask them!
- There will be changes to bus routes. At a recent meeting in the Grain Exchange, the Councillors in attendance were unable to provide Stagecoach's views on the changes – why? Apparently, Stagecoach's view has been 'assessed' during the design process – so why are they not aired publicly? Let's all ask them!

- The High Street and Sandgate, like Burns Statue and the Railway Brig will also be reduced to single lane traffic – again begging the question, how will emergency services gain access to any incidents occurring at peak travel times?
- How much disruption and delay will there be for motorists both during the work and forever after?
- The cycle lanes all around the town centre have NOT been removed from the plans although it appeared initially that the Council had rejected them – this is untrue and they are very much still on the table.

FHMCC are not in any way against improvements to the town BUT they have to be designed for maximum enhancement for our shops and shoppers. Our town should NOT be designed to the specification of people who do not live here – eg spend it this way or your will not be granted the funds – in our view that smacks a little of blackmail? Again we mention – these are PUBLIC funds – OUR money. Alterations to our town should be to benefit the town centre businesses and the populace of the town. We should not be forced to accept other's diktats.

FHMCC would like to remind everyone of the deeply unpopular cycle lanes debacle on Holmston Road. When the people of Ayr got together to voice their thoughts it forced a re-think, the cycle lanes were removed, and this essential, arterial road into the town was re-instated to its' original design

Things can be changed when a community comes together.

Please contact the Planning office with any concerns you may have regarding the Burns Statue Square plans.

https://publicaccess.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple

Type in Burns Statue Square and hit return to access the correct pages.

Burns Statue Square - Public realm works to Burns Statue Square and adjacent car park

Reference	26/00615/APP
Alternative Reference	100768126-004

Removal of the War Memorial

Reference	26/00676/LBC
Alternative Reference	100768126-008

Then click on the Comments tab.

Help us make a difference!

Kindest regards,

Forehill, Holmston & Masonhill Community Council