

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Annual Report - February 2012

Meetings

The Community Council has met throughout the year on the third Tuesday of the month in the Old Town House or in Dunbar Street Hall. We have been regularly joined at these meetings by Cllr Noble and the police and from time to time also by local residents.

Though the University no longer has a representative at our monthly meetings, we do have discussions every three or four months with a Senior Vice Principal on issues of mutual concern. It is currently Professor Albert Rodger who holds the remit for community engagement and we were pleased to welcome him to our November meeting which was, on this occasion, held in the New Library.

OACC is also represented on the Community Council Forum which meets every two months and the Civic Forum which meets quarterly. As such we also have input into city-wide issues and have a forum to highlight our issues which may be of wider concern.

Newsletter and web-site

Much of the year's business has centred around reviewing and commenting on the community planning issues that arise, and so keeping in contact with our local community continues to be a key priority. We have published two issues of The Auld Toon News over the year, in May and in December. In addition, in May we issued a questionnaire inviting residents to highlight the issues that most concerned them. As well as providing valuable feedback and focus for us, it was heartening to know that people read and appreciate the newsletter. Our web-site www.oldaberdeen.org.uk also contains a great deal of local information and is regularly updated with the latest local planning applications and any major planning issues affecting Old Aberdeen.

Controlled Parking Zone

The CPZ which has been on our agenda for the last two/three years finally came into operation in the Autumn, roughly coinciding with the opening of the University's New Library. It will be reviewed in the spring and we outlined in detail in the December newsletter what changes might be possible at this stage for residents unhappy with major or minor aspects of the scheme.

College Bounds bus lane

The situation at the junction of College Bounds and University Road remains as confusing as ever: cars and vans regularly flout the No Entry signs and the no 20 bus on its journey to town is having to drive through a red light. Pending sufficient funding to establish a bus lane with camera enforcement, a new device which should be able to detect buses and turn the lights to green only for them is about to be implemented.

Sunnybank Park

Over the year the Sunnybank Park group has secured both the lease for the Park and Climate Challenge funding and has continued to grow and evolve - fencing has been erected, paths established and the allotments are now up and running. There is now a Friends of Sunnybank Park and a Sunnybank Park allotments group.

Seaton Park

Concerns were raised late last year over the future funding of Seaton Park as Aberdeen City Council reviewed its budget and listed the park as a potential target for closure. We were relieved when it was decided that Seaton Park and the other parks in the city were not to have any substantial cuts in funding. This did, however, highlight once again the need for a community body to help safeguard the future of the Park and raise its profile.

Boundaries

The changes to our boundaries outlined in last year's report have now been passed by the City Council and, unless objections are received from residents, they will come into force from September with the election of the new Community Councils. The revised boundary will result in the following changes: the Sunnybank area will come under the remit of the Froghall and Sunnybank Community Council and OACC 's area will extend down to Mounthooly Way and cover the rest of the Conservation Area.

Individual planning applications

Over the year as a statutory planning body we have examined and commented on proposals for local signage, lighting, bicycle shelters, the siting of CCTV cameras, the condition of road surfaces, upper storey extensions, replacement windows, radio masts and bungalow extensions.

We have had two meetings with planning officials: one with Paul Pillath, ACC's Conservation Officer, to convey our concerns about the seeming lack of concern for heritage issues in our Conservation Area; the second with Dr Maggie Bochel, Head of Planning, following the discounting of our detailed submission on the application for the new pharmacy at 519 King Street. This latter meeting brought to light the importance of objecting to proposals when we wish our points to be followed up and investigated.

Strategic Development Plan Main Issues Report / Third Don Crossing

At the beginning of January we submitted our comments on the Main Issues Report 2035 taking issue with the whole premise of the report and its growth forecasts, the overly influential role of ACSEF, the lack of a bold commitment to developing public transport and last but certainly not least the rolling forward of the Third Don Crossing from the Structure Plan despite all the opposition and despite the lack of any apparent funding.

OACC has continued to oppose the Third Don Crossing and in November took part in the Scottish Government Inquiry into the Compulsory Purchase Orders that have been issued to residents in Tillydrone. The report has not yet been published.

And lastly a thank you

I would like to thank all the members of the Community Council who so willingly give up their time to read documents, attend meetings, write letters and distribute newsletters. I would like to thank everyone for their energy and their continuing commitment to Old Aberdeen.