

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Minutes of the meeting held on **Tuesday 8th December 2009** at Dunbar Hall, Old Aberdeen.

1. Present

Christine Burgess (Chair), Simon Barker (Vice Chair), Isobel Aitken (Treasurer), Kevin Guyan (Secretary), Dewi Morgan, Hilda Meers, Trevor Stack, Clive Kempe.

Also Present

Cllr Jim Noble, Gordon Simpson (Grampian Police), Ross Lindsay (Grampian Police), Shaunagh Kirby (University of Aberdeen), Angus Donaldson (University of Aberdeen), Robin Parker (Students' Association), Albert Craig, Mark Bruce, Kristian Chapman, Abdul Latif.

Apologies

Gordon Mutch, Katja Brittain, Cllr Richard Robertson, Omran Al-Mahtot,.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Dewi Morgan outlined certain changes he had suggested for November's minutes that reached Kevin Guyan too late to be included. DM proposed the minutes, HM seconded.

Jim Noble noted that he has spoken with Steve Shaw, ACC, regarding Seaton Park and any fallen trees should soon be uplifted. JN also noted that ACC has managed to secure £100,000 for the repair of the roads in the park. Work should commence when the finances are secured. JN added that he is still waiting to find out the figures relating to the CPZ.

Christine Burgess highlighted the on-going traffic management issues at College Bounds and University Road, also at High Street and Meston Walk. Angus Donaldson added that he has written to Gordon Macintosh to assess what actions can be taken. Isobel Aitken added that the problem is not necessarily one of signage as some cars simply ignore signage that is clear. Ross Lindsay also noted the confusion of the traffic lights on the High Street. **ACTION:** a meeting to be arranged to discuss the issue in 2010. **ACTION:** JN to contact relevant ACC contacts.

AD raised the question of lighting on campus and potential problems relating to some broken lights on Don Street. He added that poor lighting is a particular problem for people with reduced visibility. Robin Parker noted that a representative from AUSA, Estates and the university's Disability Officer had met to discuss the issue.

Gordon Simpson explained that he is currently waiting on speed monitoring equipment from NESAMP, which will be able to record and report the actual speed of vehicles driving up and down College Bounds, Elphinstone Road and any other street where there is thought to be a problem. This will enable the police to determine if cars are actually exceeding the speed limit, or whether this is just a subjective impression. GS added that he has nothing further to report relating to Sunnybank Park. JN asked whether GS knew anything further about the proposed restructuring of Grampian Police. **ACTION:** GS to update OACC on Grampian Police's restructuring at their meeting in March 2010.

DM shared with the Council his discussions with Alan Mulvie, ACC, and hopes to integrate the Auld Toon News and ACC's Neighbourhood Bulletin whenever possible. It is hoped that ACC might be able to provide funding to cover the inclusion of their information in the OACC newsletter.

CB updated the Council on the two recent community meetings relating to the CPZ, both were well-attended and gave local residents the opportunity to field questions to the relevant officials. CB expressed her thanks on behalf of OACC for the efforts of DM in organising these two events.

3. University Update

AD noted that ongoing projects include the new library, the planned internal refurbishment of 50/52 College Bounds and involvement in the plans for the Sports Village's new swimming pool.

AD wished to clarify that the third party bid on Sunnybank Park was from the university, with interest expressed in the site for many years. He added that he supports the community's interest in finding a use for the space.

AD noted that Professor Diamond will start as the university's Principal in 2010 and has expressed an interest in developing community engagement.

AD questioned whether anyone had heard anything relating to changes to number 20 bus service. **ACTION:** JN to ask relevant officials at ACC. It was discussed whether a representative from First should be invited to a future OACC meeting. **ACTION:** RP to forward contact details for First's communication officer to KG. **ACTION:** a potential meeting to be discussed at OACC's January meeting.

CB asked whether the university had made any progress sourcing a new site for the nursery. AD explained that they had so far been unsuccessful.

CB asked RP whether he would be willing to present AUSA's plans for Butchart at a future OACC meeting. **ACTION:** RP will present AUSA's plans at OACC's February meeting.

4. Police Update

GS distributed crime figures for the past month. GS explained that the reported break-ins to vehicles on Chanory and Don Street had been detected and a man now faced an appearance in court. GS added that overall the crime figures for Old Aberdeen are low compared to other parts of the city and appear to be down from the previous month.

JN asked whether there was anything further to report on the robberies at the Brig O Balgownie and in Seaton Park. GS noted that there was nothing further to report but that officers would be sited at Hillhead and on campus to share personal safety advice with students.

5. Planning

DM noted that a property on Don Street have submitted an application to replace their wooden windows with PVC windows. OACC expressed fears that this application may set a precedent for PVC windows in the area and that there was a general need for the area's conservation report to be updated. **ACTION:** this concern to be noted.

DM shared with the Council worries over a large crack in the external wall of a property on Don Street.

DM noted proposed plans for the consolidation of RGU buildings at their site in Garthdee, adding a substantial amount of parking spaces to their site. Clive Kempe applauded the University of Aberdeen's decision to not follow this trend and instead remove parking spaces.

6. Third Don Crossing

DM outlined OACC's position on the Third Don Crossing. **ACTION:** a letter to be written to Kate Dean, ACC, emphasising OACC's opinion on the matter.

CB asked whether the university has a position on the Third Don Crossing. AD noted that the university currently has no position on the matter. JN reminded the Council that the process is still in its infancy and work in the city centre must first be addressed before tackling a Third Don Crossing. JN added that in principle, however, the plan is supported as it's included in the Structure Plan.

7. CPZ

DM distributed a draft of OACC's letter to ACC in relation to the CPZ. A draft of the letter had been circulated among members, with proposed changes noted. CK noted that he would like the mention of loss of car parking spaces reworded, as there was a need for a step-change in relation to the attitude towards car usage. HM suggested that the letter ask for a guarantee that the cost of permits will not increase. HM added issues raised at a meeting of Sunnybank Key Contacts, notably issues relating to the times covered by the CPZ and OACC's call for an increase in pay-and-display charges during the day. RP suggested that the letter ask ACC to adopt a harder line in relation to public transport in exchange for the introduction of the CPZ.

Simon Barker summarised by thanking those involved in the process of drafting the letter and asking for the letter to be submitted as presented to OACC, retaining the flow of the document and not highlighting member's individual concerns.

8. Sunnybank Park Update

HM updated the Council on the work of the group looking at the future use of the park. HM added that there has been interest for several organizations and many local people are keen to get involved.

9. Treasurer's Report

IA informed the Council that the OACC account currently stands at £1158.69, minus the secretarial fees for the last three months and an invoice from Mackenzie Print. IA also noted that she is still waiting to receive an invoice for the Small Improvements Fund in relation to the painting of the train in Seaton Park.

10. Reports

Civic Forum – CB reported that the last meeting focused on the future of Union Terrace Gardens, with the situation appearing to have reached an impasse. A consultation is planned in relation to the matter in early 2010, though it was agreed that this might be too late to save the plans relating to Peacock Visual Arts.

CB also noted that she had attended a meeting in relation to Community Hubs and the closure of Linkfield library. CB added that ACC were considering the idea of running a 'micro library' in the area.

TS notified the Council that he attended the Civic Forum budget meeting, in which Sue Bruce, Chief Executive ACC, outlined plans for further extensive cuts to almost all services. CK asked whether there had been any mention of parks or open spaces. IA explained that there was no particular mention of parks or open spaces.

Community Council Forum – IA explained that the last meeting looked at community council protocol, with hopes that ACC will become more accountable to community councils.

11. Newsletter and Website

Nothing to report.

12. Correspondence

- Letter from ACC notifying OACC that the public toilets on the High Street are now deemed surplus to requirement. It was agreed that this is understandable due to current budgetary constraints.
- Letter from St Machar Cathedral explaining that the cathedral will be closed briefly to allow work to be done on the heating system.

- Information on ACC's Open Space Audit, more information can be found on the ACC website.

13. AOCB

- DM highlighted the need for the local community to be involved in the 2010 / 2011 Community Action Plan for Old Aberdeen. More information can be found on the OACC website.
- HM noted that Froghall now has enough potential members to establish a community council. IA added that this was declared at the CC Forum and the Froghall Community Council is now official.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of OACC will be on Tuesday 19 January at Old Aberdeen Town House from 7.30pm.