

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Minute of the meeting held on **Tuesday 21st June 2011** at Dunbar Hall, Dunbar Street, Old Aberdeen. *Revision 1, 16 August 2011*

1. Present

Simon Barker (Vice Chair), Isobel Aitken (Treasurer), Hilda Meers, Dewi Morgan.

Also Present

Robert Shand (Grampian Police), Ashleigh Barbour (Press & Journal), Abdul Latif, Kevin Guyan (Secretary).

Apologies

Christine Burgess (Chair), Gordon Mutch, Clive Kempe, Katja Brittain, Omran Al-Mahtot, Jenny Batty (AUSA), Raymond Kelly.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings and Matters Arising

Simon Barker welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that, in the absence of Christine Burgess, he would be chairing tonight's meeting.

SB noted that he submitted apologies for OACC's May meeting.

As there were not enough community councillors present to make the June meeting quorate, the passing of the May minute was postponed until OACC's August meeting.

Robin Parker's email address was forwarded by Kevin Guyan to Grampian Police in relation to the problem of bike thefts on campus.

Jim Noble investigated the reasons behind the delay in granting planning permission for the work at Kilau Coffee Shop, planning permission has since been approved under the condition that the outside area is closed by 10pm.

JN also investigated the siting of trees on pavements but is yet to establish the regulations in regards to this. Hilda Meers added that shrubs on Sunnyside Avenue, Hermitage Walk and other streets in the Sunnybank Area require attention. **ACTION:** SB to forward notification of problem to ACC.

3. Police Update

PC Robert Shand introduced himself and distributed copies of the most recent Police Report.

RS explained that figures for the last period were fairly healthy, with only 10 crimes reported. Currently two of these crimes have been detected, with the hope that further will be detected after the results from analysis of drugs etc. are known.

DM noted that recent acts of vandalism at the Sunnyside allotments are not included in the report. RS noted that these crimes will be reported in the next report and will be included in the Kittybrewster figures, rather than those for Old Aberdeen. **ACTION:** Grampian Police to include figures for other areas covered by remit of OACC at future meetings.

RS was asked whether he was aware of what the future holds for the Police Station on the High Street. RS explained that he was not fully sure of the situation but was aware that most officers that currently cover Old Aberdeen are based at Tillydrone Station and not on the High Street. SB agreed that closure of the building may not bring much physical change to police presence in Old

Aberdeen but argued that the station does serve as a positive feature of the High Street. RS added that he is aware that officers based in Seaton do sometimes use the building. **ACTION:** RS to respond to OACC with best person to contact at Grampian Police about this issue.

DM shared with the Council confusion over the road markings at the left hand side of Old Aberdeen Town House, as one approaches the High Street. It is believed by some that the current signage is not legally enforceable, although it claims to state access only for cyclists. SB added that similar problems are increasing on Elphinstone Road, with cars driving along the road in the wrong direction. Isobel Aitken asked if one-way rules also apply to cyclists. RS noted that one-way rules do apply to cyclists as they are also considered road users. SB stressed that to address this confusion better clarification of the rules is required and not increased signage.

SB asked RS for Grampian Police's perspective on the issue of the College Bounds bus gate and shared with the Council signage spotted in the UK that would be perfectly applicable to the situation at this site, in which buses, taxis and cyclists are permitted but not other road users. **ACTION:** RS to feedback information on the issue to OACC.

4. Planning

Third Don Crossing – SB shared with the Council his knowledge of recent developments, including the drilling of holes across the site to test the land. Abdul Latif added that the attitude of ACC towards the Third Don Crossing might change following the potential shift of leadership from the Liberal Democrats to the SNP. Regardless, it was agreed that it continues to be important to put pressure on the administration to oppose the Crossing. Hilda Meers asked if there is anything we can realistically do about proposals at the moment. SB suggested that there are a lot of opportunities to voice opposition coming up in the future, notably compulsory purchase orders.

CPZ – Painting of lines and installation of machines and signage has started in the Sunnybank area. HM expressed her astonishment that some residents remained unaware of the CPZ until very recently. DM added that the CPZ is on schedule to be completed by September.

Meeting with Paul Pilath, ACC Head of Conservation – Katja Brittain, Christine Burgess and DM recently met with Paul Pilath. DM noted the need for Paul Pilath to be accountable in the future, currently his comments on planning proposals remain private. DM cited the example of Golden Square that was discussed at the meeting: inappropriate signage and advertisements were gradually removed from the area with every new planning application forbidding the repeat of previous mistakes. Poor planning decision of the past should not set a precedent for the future direction of an area. SB expressed his belief that ACC intend to only meet their minimum requirements in regards to the planning process.

A full minute of the meeting will be circulated following any comments from Paul Pilath.

New and Ongoing Applications –

50 – 53 High Street – work is ongoing.

Kilau Coffee Shop – application for internal work and renovation of the garden has been approved on the condition that the garden is closed to the public by 10pm.

Fume Ducts, Zoology Building – no objections.

CCTV cameras across campus – DM highlighted the university's intention to increase their CCTV coverage of the campus, some of which will be sited on historically sensitive buildings. AL asked how intrusive these new cameras would be. DM explained that they cannot legally film private spaces and noted the overarching debate between intrusiveness versus safety/crime prevention. DM suggested that OACC respond to the application requesting that the cameras

are painted a buff colour so that they are not detrimental to the look of historic buildings. SB added that the university should also be willing to offer footage to Grampian Police should a crime take place on campus.

Signage at Old Aberdeen Gift Shop – extension of the building to include the former Carmen Beauty Salon.

It has since been discovered that the signage is intended for advertisements and is not in keeping with the surrounding area. OACC to object to proposal.

5. Reports

Meeting with Chris Gane, University of Aberdeen – KB, DM and IA attended a recent meeting with Chris Gane with discussion mainly focussing on the new library. IA highlighted the apparent eagerness of the university to engage with local community and suggested OACC wait until the library opens before asking about the nature of this engagement.

SB explained that he appreciates the university's presentation on the library but there is a need to remind the university that community engagement is central to the project and was one of the founding arguments put forward when seeking planning permission.

6. Questionnaire on Local Priorities

DM shared with the Council the results of the recent questionnaire circulated with the most recent newsletter and available on the Old Aberdeen website. There were a total number of 24 responses. Overall the issues of most importance to the local community appear to be protection of local heritage issues, potholes and dog dirt. It can be argued that this mirrors OACC's interest in heritage, cleanliness and quality of streets/roads. The responses also indicated that many local residents never visit the website, highlighting the importance of the newsletter as a means to keep in contact with the community.

Comments also included suggested additions to the website, including local tradesmen, events in Seaton Park, articles on local characters etc.

7. Northern Lights

SB explained that Christine Burgess has spoken to Bill Farquhar, ACC Events Team, who explained that a meeting between Grampian Police, ACC and the organisers of the event would take place soon and that OACC would be advised of the date. Questions continue regarding who pays for any damage to Seaton Park, the clearing of litter outside the park etc. There have also been complaints from neighbours of the park who have not been informed about the event.

The Northern Lights Festival has since been cancelled due to poor ticket sales.

8. Treasurer's Report

IA noted that there is £974.81 in OACC's account.

9. Correspondence

- Information on Aberdeen Horticultural Show at Duthie Park.
- Invite to attend the first meeting of River Don Communities Network, organised by Sustainable Urban Futures. Gordon Mutch to attend.
- Information on the zero waste-planning forum.

- Invitation to event offering information on how community councils can access funding sources.

10. AOCB

- SB expressed his thanks on behalf of OACC to KG for his efforts as Minute Secretary for the past three years and wished him well with his departure from Aberdeen to study postgraduate history in London.
- Ashleigh Barbour, Press and Journal newspaper, introduced herself and encouraged those to get in contact if there is anything people feel she can assist with.

11. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Old Aberdeen Community Council will take place on Tuesday 16 August at Dunbar Street Hall from 7.30pm. Christine Burgess to confirm booking nearer the time.