

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17th February 2009 at the Old Aberdeen Town House, High Street, Old Aberdeen.

1. Present

Christine Burgess (Chair), Katja Brittain, Trevor Stack, Clive Kempe, Dewi Morgan.

Also Present

Angus Donaldson (Aberdeen University), Hilda Meers, Cllr Jim Noble, Hamish Mackay, Cllr Richard Robertson, Kevin Guyan (Secretary).

Apologies

Simon Barker (Vice Chair), Isobel Aitken (Treasurer), Graham Abraham, David Hutchison, Inspector Ed Fitzgibbons (Grampian Police), Shaunagh Kirby (Aberdeen University), Abdul Latif (Aberdeen Mosque), Chris Gane (Aberdeen University), Cllr Norman Collie, Alexander Mess.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Angus Donaldson highlighted that the new nursery may now involve the creation of a new building. Christine Burgess asked whether the figure of £600,000 per year from the University towards outreach programmes at the new library was correct. **ACTION:** AD to investigate.

CB also questioned whether it was felt a meeting “must” be organised with Sue Bruce, Aberdeen City Council Chief Executive, as stated in January’s OACC minutes. It was agreed that this should remain important.

CB also wished to offer further thanks to Morag who, after several years on the Community Council, has decided to resign. Notably, her time as Chair and action relating to the closure of the Post Office were of great local value.

Dewi Morgan noted the need for revised minutes to be forwarded to himself for inclusion on the OACC website.

After changes, January’s minutes were passed. Proposed by DM, seconded by Clive Kempe.

Richard Robertson raised the problem of traffic on the High Street. Jim Noble informed the Council that ACC are currently looking at an effective method of controlling cars gaining access, with the University ready to offer their share of the money. The problem is a safety issue, highlighted in the community’s neighbourhood plan. **ACTION:** RR and JN to investigate.

Hamish Mackay also noted the need for a point of contact to be established with First Bus.

3. Police Report

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Grampian Police were unable to send a representative. The period’s police report was circulated amongst members by email, with little of note. CB highlighted that two new officers are set to start work in the area this week.

4. University Update

AD informed the Council that enabling work on the new library has started.

The Sports Village, which is currently running around 2-3 weeks behind schedule, should be open by September 2009.

The work on the Fraser Noble Building is also near completion.

AD clarified some points discussed at January's OACC meeting regarding University nursery provision. The University is currently evaluating its provision of childcare, with the hope of moving to a building capable of taking 108 children. This is a difficult task with no firm site yet established.

HM suggested the University investigate the use of Old Aberdeen House, part of which housed the public analyst. The building would be shared with St Peter's Primary School, which may be a good idea for a future education complex.

CB asked about the link between the University's Green Transport Plan, Controlled Parking Zone and new library. AD explained that the car parking strategy has gone back out for consultation and the Green Transport Plan is established on paper. The University hopes to encourage more people to use greener forms of transport with, should funding be available, the possibility of running a shuttle bus between King's College and Foresterhill Campuses.

CB asked whether any progress has been made on the old Dunbar Hall site. AD explained that there had been no further progress.

CB also questioned the University's action over 21 High Street, which is in a state of dangerous disrepair. AD informed the Council that the University is meeting with ACC tomorrow to establish the best options. CB reminded everyone that the neighbourhood action plan identifies the need to protect buildings.

AD asked if the Council knew of any progress with the toilet block on the High Street. The toilet block is to be sold by the ACC.

AD also informed the Council that work is continuing on the café on the High Street, with a substantial amount of rot discovered inside the building, making original plans of opening by the end of February very unlikely.

CK asked about the planning application for temporary storage beside the library. AD believes the application to refer to a shelter for book delivery temporarily replacing the soon-to-be demolished central block extension.

5. Controlled Parking Zone

CB explained that the agreement on CPZ has been signed between the University and ACC, with ACC still midway through its process. The next stage will be a car parking survey, then detailed design of the zone (taking into account comments made in the original consultation), the roads department then plan to meet with community representatives before publicising the proposed final scheme across the area.

Trevor Stack asked whether an area has been selected. CB explained that the widest possible area has been drawn-up, with scope for the future reduction of current plans.

Hilda Meers highlighted issues raised at the Senior Citizen's Forum, with people most concerned over the cost of charges and a lack of information on what potential costs will be. HMe also suggested the possibility of staggering charges, with those living on the periphery paying less. CB explained that, as it stands, there would be a flat rate of £80 per year for the first car and £120 per year for the second car. There are no planned discounts for senior citizens.

AD suggested money accrued through CPZ being invested back into the community, rather than lost within ACC's wider budget.

RR notified the Council that the detailed financial plan for the CPZ might be beneficial to see. **ACTION:** JN and RR to investigate getting a copy of the CPZ's detailed financial plan.

CB also reminded the Council that Old Aberdeen is a conservation area, with the possibility of ACC asking the Scottish Government to deem the High Street a special area, relaxing the rigid rules of the CPZ with regard to street furniture and street markings..

6. Neighbourhood Community Action Plan

The Plan has now been signed off.

CB raised one issue relating to the Draft Structure Plan, ACC's response to OACC's view over the third Don crossing. ACC see the third Don crossing as a fundamental element of both regional and local transport strategies. HMe shared feedback from her submission, with a greater focus on the quality of life and environmental damage of a third Don crossing.

RR believed there was strong support for a Third Don Crossing

HM asked for a letter to be sent to Keith Patterson, thanking him for his hard work in the development of the Plan.

7. Planning Update

CK noted an application for replacement windows on a house on Don Street. ACC are dealing with the application so should follow suitable heritage guidelines.

JN raised the application for Orchard Cottage, with the original application to build a garage now changed to a shed. Questions were raised over the design of the shed. **ACTION:** CK to investigate.

8. Treasurer's Report

As Isobel Aitken was unable to attend tonight's meeting, no report was available.

CB explained that, with the Small Improvements Grant, we have purchased two springer toys for Seaton Park and one springer toy for Sunnybank Park, with money from planning gain being used to pay for soft surfacing around Sunnybank's springer. HMe remarked that the purchase of permanent fittings for the community is a wise idea and more beneficial than funding one-off events.

The Small Improvements Grants have now been abolished. Instead, councillors will now receive £1000 annually to spend in their ward at their discretion. HM calculated that this move will have potentially saved ACC over £20,000, with our local councillors sharing their ward budget amongst several community council areas.

9. Social Evening – 24th March

CB expressed her concern about bundling a social evening and Community Council annual general meeting together. It has therefore been decided to continue with the social evening in March and have the AGM in April. DM circulated a draft plan for the social evening, everyone agreed with the proposal.

ACTION: Kevin Guyan to send out letters to invitees.

10. Newsletter

DM had created a delivery system, dividing the work of newsletter distribution. The work was divided amongst those at the meeting with delivery set to take place the second week of March.

11. Correspondence

- a) Letter on the Green Townscape Heritage Initiative.
- b) Information on the Aberdeen Local Licensing Forum.
- c) Quarterly progress report from Sue Bruce, ACC Chief Executive.
- d) Information on Grampian Police's Community News page on their website.
- e) Information regarding saving money on gas and electricity.
- f) Aberdeen Local Plan and accompanying maps.

12. AOCB

CB distributed draft plans, by ACC Chief Executive, Sue Bruce, for the fundamental restructuring of ACC. The plans highlight the removal of North, South and Central divisions.

HMe shared her surprise at discovering her street, Sunnyside Avenue, is covered by another Neighbourhood Community Action Plan. CB shared her confusion and has already tried to correct the problem.

CK noted the poor state of the pavements during the recent heavy snow. It is important for ACC to remember to keep the pavements safe as well as the roads.

CK also explained that he has spoken with the Imam from the Mosque who seemed unkeen to accommodate a Word event within the Mosque. TS added that the 2009 programme is now in the process of being drawn-up, making it too late to develop new plans. **ACTION:** reconsider plans for next year's Word in September 2009.

RR suggested changing the venue of where OACC meet as the Old Town House has poor acoustics and poor access. CB suggested having one in three meetings in the Old Town House, with the other two at Dunbar Street Hall. CB also asked whether the AGM should be held at the Old Town House or Dunbar Street Hall. The Council favoured Dunbar Street Hall.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at 7.00pm on Tuesday 24th March 2009 at Dunbar Street Hall.