

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Minutes of the meeting held on **Tuesday 18th May 2010** at the Old Aberdeen Town House.

1. Present

Christine Burgess (Chair), Simon Barker (Vice Chair), Clive Kempe, Dewi Morgan, Katja Brittain, Hilda Meers.

Also Present

Cllr Jim Noble, Robin Parker (AUSA), Ron McPherson (City Warden), Peter Stuart (City Warden), Abdul Latif, Hamish Mackay, Raymond Kelly, Kevin Guyan (Secretary).

Apologies

Isobel Aitken (Treasurer), Trevor Stack, Gordon Mutch, Angus Donaldson (University of Aberdeen), Shaunagh Kirby (University of Aberdeen), Laura Russell (City Warden).

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Clive Kempe noted that he is mentioned in both present and apologies. CK was present at April's meeting.

Christine Burgess explained that the HMO license application for Aberdon House would be discussed by ACC at a meeting on 20 May.

CB noted that First Bus does intend to run a 30 minute Sunday service over the summer on the Number 20 route. Dewi Morgan added that the timetables around Old Aberdeen have not been updated, he has notified First.

CB explained that she has received information from Grampian Police relating to the boundaries of the beat zonings. **ACTION:** CB to bring information to June meeting.

CB added that she has recently toured the Butchart Centre and believes the building to have a lot of potential under the control of AUSA.

3. University Update

A representative from the University of Aberdeen was unable to attend.

4. Police Update

A representative from Grampian Police was unable to attend.

Ron McPherson, City Warden, introduced himself and his colleague, Peter Stuart, and outlined their remit. CB asked whether their attendance at OACC meetings was in lieu of Grampian Police. RM explained that although they work closely with Grampian Police they do not attend community council meetings on their behalf.

RM noted that City Wardens in Old Aberdeen are currently keeping an eye on vandalism in Sunnybank Park. Jim Noble added that the contract for the demolition of the pavilion has been awarded and should be taken down shortly.

RM stressed the need for local residents to contact City Wardens should they have any concerns.

5. Planning

Sunnybank Park Update – Hilda Meers explained that ACC have agreed to handover the lease of the park to the Sunnybank Management Committee for a five year period. CB congratulated the group on their success and noted that this could be a positive precedent for future green spaces in the city. Katja Brittain added that the success of this group shows that progress can be achieved, in a relatively short space of time, should the right people be involved.

HM noted that a recent picnic in the park had been successful, with around 40 people attending.

HM added that most members of the Steering Group have joined the Management Committee and a constitution has been passed. The group are now planning to apply for charitable status.

CPZ – A meeting of ACC's Environment, Planning and Infrastructure Committee will take place on 31 May, in which the CPZ will be discussed. OACC will make a deputation at the meeting. AUSA and – most likely – Tillydrone Community Council also plan to make deputations. Robin Parker explained that he is keen to highlight travel alternatives, notably issues relating to buses. CB clarified the key issues she plans to raise at the meeting: the process, cost of permits, operational times of the zone and heritage concerns of the chicanes on College Bounds.

CB added that the university has a copy of its Green Travel Plan available on its website. RP added that the plan is overly focussed on university staff rather than students.

Third Don Crossing – A letter concerning the Third Don Crossing written by William Walton on behalf of Don Crossing Communities Alliance was distributed among members. CB asked whether OACC should fully support the letter, support a modified version of the letter or step-back from the campaign.

CB outlined the key points of the letter and noted two sections that she believes should be edited or removed. SB added that he also believed those two sections to be unnecessarily inflammatory.

CK expressed concern over the relationship between improvements to the Haudagain roundabout and the Third Don Crossing.

DM noted that the letter would benefit from greater clarity over the number of homeowners who would be affected by compulsory purchase orders should the plans go ahead. It was also agreed that certain references relating only to Tillydrone should be tidied-up.

CK asked whether it would be possible to gauge the wider opinion of the community on this issue. SB believed there to be too little time and may not be beneficial as the letter is only at a draft stage. Letters of representation must be submitted by 11th June.

RP asked whether OACC still intend to send an individual letter to the Scottish Government on this issue. DM explained that William Walton's letter would be used as a basis for OACC's letter.

ACTION: DM to make changes to letter and send.

CB also noted that the Don Crossing Community Alliance intend to print 2000 postcards publicising their concerns. OACC agreed to donate £60.00 towards the £200.00 cost of printing the postcards.

College Bounds – CB explained that she has received an email from Doug Ritchie, ACC, noting that ACC plan to implement the bus lane and camera option. However, funding for the implementation has been deferred to a future budget. CB explained that she plans to respond acknowledging ACC's financial situation but requesting the area is made safer prior to the funds for the bus lane and camera being made available.

91 High Street – DM explained that the bank's request to change its signage has been approved by ACC. **ACTION:** DM to respond requesting further information on their decision.

New Applications –

17 High Street – The University of Aberdeen has applied for a change of use of the former bank to a temporary museum/exhibition space. Everyone agreed that this proposal should go ahead.

Multiple Occupancy – DM presented figures to OACC showing that around 10% of the homes in Old Aberdeen have HMO licenses. DM added that this fails to take into account home of multiple occupancy who do not have licenses or homes in which the number of residents does not require a license. DM expressed his concerns that this suggests as much as 50% of the housing served by OACC may be flatted property. DM noted that with the university in our midst, a high proportion of the flats are likely to be inhabited by students who tend to be transient and seasonal. It is not at all clear that OACC is adequately reaching or serving these tenants.

RP countered that there is no link between homes with HMO licenses and seasonal residents, citing his own residence in an HMO property as an example. RP noted that the bigger concern is the cost of attaining HMO licenses and monitoring that landlords comply with the health and safety regulations tied to the license. **ACTION:** DM to forward figures to RP.

6. Community Council Forum

CB noted that herself and DM attended the recent meeting of the Community Council Forum relating to the accountability within the whole planning process. A letter to Sue Bruce on the Forum's concerns was drafted, though CB was unsure whether the letter was actually sent due to disagreement among members relating to the Union Terrace Gardens proposal.

KB noted that she plans to attend the Civic Forum meeting on 20 May relating to housing and homelessness.

7. Treasurer's Report

Isobel Aitken was unable to attend. However, Kevin Guyan noted that OACC's account currently stands at £885.84.

8. Correspondence

- Booklet on the Development Plan Scheme 2010 – 2011.
- Invitation to attend Aberdeen City Heritage Society's annual lecture on 22 June.

9. AOCB

- JN noted that the former public toilets on the High Street are now for sale.
- HM noted that Word Fringe events now plan to be held in the autumn. Hamish Mackay added that he thought this year's Word Festival was successful, though it was agreed that there seemed to be a smaller line-up.
- Raymond Kelly asked whether anyone was aware of plans for the university Principal's house on The Chanory as the new Principal does not intend to live there. **ACTION:** CB to investigate. **ACTION:** CB to invite the new principal to a future OACC meeting.

10. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

OACC will next meet on Tuesday 15 June May at 7.30pm at Old Aberdeen Town House.