

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 18th November 2009 at the Town House, Old Aberdeen.

1. Present

Christine Burgess (Chair), Isobel Aitken (Treasurer), Dewi Morgan, Gordon Mutch, Hilda Meers, Kevin Guyan (Secretary)

Also Present

Cllr Jim Noble, Alan Mulvie (Aberdeen City Council), Paul Brown (Grampian Police), Clair Sutherland (Grampian Police), Christopher Gane (University of Aberdeen), Robin Parker (Students' Association), Helen Martin, Allison Pusateri, Kristian Chapman, Andrea Salvona, Abdul Latif, Albert Craig.

Apologies

Simon Barker, Graham Abraham, Katja Brittain, Clive Kempe, Cllr Richard Robertson, Cllr Norman Collie, Omran Al-Mahtot (Mosque), Shaunagh Kirby (University of Aberdeen), Gordon Simpson (Grampian Police).

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Christine Burgess noted that Andrea Salvona's surname had been misspelled under Section 3. After changes, the minutes were passed, proposed by Hilda Meers, seconded by Gordon Mutch.

3. University Update

Christopher Gane explained that a university health and safety committee had noted problems relating to several streets in Old Aberdeen, this includes cars breaking the speed limit, driving the wrong way on one-way streets etc. Alan Mulvie asked whether this was an issue of poor signage or simply drivers breaking the law. CG explained that it was most likely drivers breaking the law. Hilda Meers added that she finds the turning of the Number 20 bus on High Street/Meston Walk and College Bounds/University Road also an issue of health and safety. CB suggested that OACC wait until the CPZ is finished before writing to ACC.

CG noted that 118 car parking spaces are to be lost after changes across campus, not 260 as reported in the Auld Toon News.

CG clarified that the renovation work on 50/52 College Bounds will mainly involve an internal refurbishment, with the windows and roof also requiring some work. The garden area to the side and rear of the building will also be improved.

Jim Noble raised the problem of poor lighting in certain areas of the campus (ie. behind New King's). CG explained that he has raised this problem with the Estates Office.

4. Police Update

Clair Sutherland shared with the Council the police report for the previous month. CS explained that although 11 thefts in the period does seem high, 3 were from the Spar on St Machar Drive, 5 were at Hillhead Halls and 3 were drive-offs from the King Street petrol station.

Helen Martin asked whether the police would be able to have a presence on College Bounds to stop motorists speeding. Paul Brown explained that there were no plans to organise an operation of this nature at present; however, police in the area are always vigilant of motorists speeding. HM asked whether the figures for those speeding were included in the police report. PB explained that they are not.

PB shared with the Council the success of patrols in Sunnybank Park, police presence has reduced the number of calls relating to vandalism of the pavilion.

5. Neighbourhood Community Bulletin

Dewi Morgan and AM shared information on recent discussions relating to the ACC's Neighbourhood Community Bulletin. AM explained that the key focus of the Bulletin is to provide information to key contacts and groups.

DM added that he was surprised to discover that ACC have drawn-up and issued Old Aberdeen's Neighbourhood Action Plan for 09/10 without consulting OACC. AM explained that the most recent plan should include nothing additional from the 08/09 plan.

ACTION: DM and AM to liaise to discuss how best to work the Bulletin and Auld Toon News. Anyone interested in getting involved should contact DM.

6. Planning

RP noted the poor condition of the path between Seaton Stables and Seaton Park (the wide path entering the park from Don Street). He explained that after recent weather the path has fallen further into disrepair. CB added that the road entering the park is also of poor condition. **ACTION:** JN to flag-up the issue with Steve Shaw, ACC. GM added that Seaton Park seems to be viewed as the poorer sibling of other city parks. JN explained that ACC hope to host more events in Seaton Park and that other parks (ie. Duthie) have other sources of income beyond ACC.

CPZ

CB explained that the process of formal consultation started on 4 November. OACC will host two open events to allow local residents to look closely at the plans on Saturday 28 November from 10am – 11.30am and Tuesday 1 December from 7pm – 8.30pm both at Dunbar Hall. Doug Ritchie, ACC, will attend the meeting on 1 December. The consultation process will close on 9 December, allowing OACC to fully clarify their position at their meeting on 8 December. CB quickly updated the Council on the issues that seem to be most pressing and raised questions from previous meetings, including whether the points from informal consultation were actually listened to, why householders cannot be directly contacted during the formal consultation and whether July and August could be removed from charges?

Albert Craig noted the difficulty of understanding the plans available and explained that he believes many local residents to still be unaware of the proposed changes. HM added that the signs on the lampposts are very difficult to read and are not at all conspicuous. **ACTION:** CB to write to Pete Leonard, ACC, on the inadequacy of lamppost consultations.

AM explained that ACC's process of consultation follows a set model, with the formal consultation asking for objections rather than feedback. He added that OACC must continue their work promoting the importance of the issue among local residents.

AM asked whether OACC had considered writing a template letter for local residents to sign? CB emphasised the importance of individual letters above petitions but did not feel that a generic letter

would best fit the situation. **ACTION:** a template letter, with a range of alternative viewpoints, to be drafted for the open events.

AS asked whether the CPZ could affect Old Aberdeen's ability to apply for World Heritage Status, as adequate parking is one of the criteria. DM stated that the CPZ would actually create pay and display parking around the Cathedral and on the High Street, making the area more accessible to visitors.

RP noted that the issue of the CPZ had not really been discussed among the student body, though he was aware that his predecessor had written on the issue.

CG raised question over what will happen should the costs of the CPZ be less than the amount given from the university to ACC prior to the start of the project. He is yet to receive feedback from ACC on this issue. GM raised the wider issue of why the planning application of the new university library was tied to the implementation of the CPZ. Abdul Latif asked whether OACC knew the planning application was tied to the CPZ. CG explained that there had been no secrecy over the issue, with the application and what it entails open to the public. JN added that himself and Cllr. Robertson had also asked for the implementation costs of the CPZ. **ACTION:** JN to try and source figures before OACC's December meeting.

Helen Martin asked where revenue from the CPZ goes. JN explained that the upkeep of the machines, cost of patrolling the area etc. absorbs any revenue. AM added that he has heard from colleagues in the Roads Departments that schemes of this nature simply cover their own costs. **ACTION:** JN to source revenue figures for the next meeting.

7. St Machar Outdoor Centre / Sunnybank Park Update

CB reported that ACC's Finance and Resources Committee had accepted ACC's report granting the local community six months to develop a community action plan for the park. A steering group has been formed, with Clive Kempe and HM representing OACC on the group. The group is open to any interested local residents and next meets on 24 November at Sunnybank Primary School. HM thanked CB for her efforts in relation to the park.

CB confirmed that the pavilion would be taken down, as the costs to repair the building are too high. It may be possible for the foundations and gas/water supplies may be kept, however, so that a building could be erected on the site in the future.

CB added that the report from the Finance and Resources Committee explains that the notes of interest on the site will not be taken forward at this stage.

RP informed the Council that he has asked Student Association committees for any ideas in relation to the use of the park. He also suggested that the steering group speak to the Student Association's Charity Committee, as they would be happy to consider an application for funds. The Dirty Weekenders may also be keen to assist with any physical work in the park.

8. Treasurer's Report

IA informed the Council there are no particular changes with the accounts this month, though the invoice has now arrived from Mackenzie Print. IA explained that the accountant Robin Keemer is happy to audit OACC's accounts again this year. OACC agreed to offer Robin £30 pounds of book tokens as thanks for his support.

IA explained that OACC's Annual General Meeting cannot be called until the year's accounts are finalised. This may make an AGM in February difficult to organise. It was agreed, however, that

OACC would aim to hold their AGM in February and that IA should if possible be ready to present the annual accounts for the approval of the OACC at the January meeting.

IA asked whether any money was required to purchase refreshments for OACC's December meeting. CB explained that there should be ample amounts of refreshments remaining from OACC's previous social event.

9. Reports

Civic Forum – CB reported that the last meeting focused on the reorganisation of neighbourhood community planning. She explained that she is not particularly interested in this aspect of the Forum so if anyone else is keen to attend, they are more than welcome.

Community Council Forum – IA explained that the last meeting looked at drafting a constitution for the Forum and Community Councils. The Forum next meet on 7th December.

Main Issues Report – RP highlighted key points from the meeting, with an emphasis on the expansion of the limits of the city. RP added that Old Aberdeen does include several brownfield sites that have the potential for housing, including the site of Linksfield Academy, Don Street, Hillhead, St Peter's Nursery etc. **ACTION:** GM to draft a response letter relating to these issues.

Health – Katja Brittain attended this Civic Forum event but was unavailable to provide a report.

10. Newsletter and Website

DM explained that the newsletter is currently being distributed.

DM added that he has nothing to report in relation to the website.

11. Correspondence

- Invitation to Community Councillors to attend a welcome meeting at the Town House on 25 November from 7.30pm.

12. AOCB

- RP raised the idea of having a farmer's market on the High Street. OACC gave their full support for the idea but would be unable to assist in the organisation of the market

13. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of OACC will be on Tuesday 8 December at Dunbar Hall – Leslie Room at the rear.