

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Minute revised 4th November 2010

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 21st September 2010 at the Old Aberdeen Town House.

1. Present

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

Also Present

Cllr Jim Noble, Robin Parker (AUSA), Shaunagh Kirby (University of Aberdeen), PC Scott (Grampian Police), PC Grant (Grampian Police), Kevin Guyan (Secretary).

Apologies

Isobel Aitken (Treasurer), Katja Brittain, Trevor Stack, Gordon Mutch, Angus Donaldson (University of Aberdeen), Christopher Gane (University of Aberdeen), Cllr Richard Robertson, Cllr Norman Collie, Raymond Kelly, Abdul Latif.

2. Minute of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Minute of OACC's August meeting was approved, proposed by SB and seconded by Hilda Meers.

Christine Burgess noted that Morley Hutchinson, the Chair of Old Aberdeen's Heritage Society, unfortunately passed away in August. She highlighted the important role Morley Hutchinson and the society have played in the community over the past 20 years.

3. University Update

Shaunagh Kirby explained that Freshers' Week is currently ongoing, with over 3000 new students on campus. SK highlighted that there is no problem with lack of student accommodation this year and that student support services are now open within The Hub. Planning permission has been submitted for a new student hall at Hillhead, planning permission for the new swimming pool has also now been submitted. Dewi Morgan noted that although he is pleased about the new build, OACC have been kept in the dark on this new hall until the submission of the planning application. **ACTION:** SK agreed to feed back the need to keep OACC informed of planned projects. SK explained that work on 23 High Street has started, with the intention to take down the building and then rebuild it. SK also noted the trial of a shuttle bus for university staff from King's campus to the university site at Foresterhill. Robin Parker added that the license for the bus does not allow members of the public to use this service nor does it allow students who may require transport between the two sites.

RP explained that Butchart is now open in a new phase, with members of the public welcome to visit the building and enjoy a coffee in the new café.

SB highlighted the current litter and overflowing bins around campus and reminded the university that they must keep on top of student mess.

DM noted problems relating to the high traffic density in Old Aberdeen during the move-in weekend for new students and questioned whether the special permit, allowing cars to drive through the College Bounds bus gate into the High Street for this period, sets a bad precedent and creates more confusion than benefit. DM added that satellite navigation systems fail to provide drivers with correct information on the High Street. **ACTION:** SK to share with the Council the information provided to parents who will be dropping-off students at Crombie-Johnston Halls. RP added that staff were present at Hillhead to direct traffic, although a problem with traffic lights on the King Street / Don Street junction did lead to traffic jams of around 45 minutes.

DM explained that the university plan to submit applications for new lighting on campus had been withdrawn and the university intends to submit several smaller applications rather than one overarching application. DM had reviewed the original application and noted that the inclusion of information relating to wattage, light type, colour etc. would aid in the review of the application. RP added that AUSA have raised issue over inadequate lighting in certain areas of the campus, with visually impaired students also requesting white rather than yellow light. **ACTION:** DM to email his comments to RP.

CB asked whether the university had made any progress relating to a new nursery. SK noted no further developments. RP suggested that the project may now be on the back burner and is not considered a top priority by the university.

RP asked whether ACC could address the poor condition of certain paths in Seaton Park. Jim Noble explained that he has spoken to the relevant officers and they are currently looking into the work required.

4. Police Update

PC Scott introduced himself and PC Grant before distributing the latest crime report. Figures for Old Aberdeen remain low, with eight crimes reported during the last period.

Clive Kempe asked whether any record of problems like dog fouling and litter is kept. PC Scott explained that these problems are very hard to catch people in the act of doing and are mainly tackled by City Wardens.

5. Planning

CB noted that with planning applications for the demolition of Linksfield Academy and Pittodrie Stadium both now submitted the landscape around Old Aberdeen will soon change drastically.

Sunnybank Park Update – HM noted comments received on the excellent job that has been done so far with the park. HM explained that neither CK or herself are on the management committee. JN highlighted his efforts to finalise the lease agreement between the park's management committee and ACC.

CPZ – SB questioned whether there was any point replying to the most recent letter received from ACC on the CPZ as ACC continue to act as they wish, regardless of the opinion of OACC and the local community. SB added that the process has highlighted huge problems, not in relation to the amount of communication with ACC officers but the mixed messages being relayed. JN agreed that in future councillors would be more cautious about the delegation of responsibilities to officials and other bodies.

JN noted that the tender for works relating to the CPZ has not yet been released. JN also noted that due to the current financial climate, any money leftover from the scheme's

implementation would most likely be taken back by the university.

CB asked whether the new library was on target for completion by September 2011. SK noted that it was on target. SB questioned what was meant by the university's plans for engagement with the community in relation to the new library. SK explained that at this stage nothing is finalised but stressed the need for the community to be involved in the planning of community programmes, with suggestions welcome. RP noted the need for the focus of the new library to remain on student usage, with problems of lack of study space and shortage of books an ongoing problem at the Queen Mother library. HM asked whether residents not at university would be able to use the library's resources. RP explained that schemes currently exist allowing non-students to borrow resources and imagined that this would continue to be offered. **ACTION:** SK to invite Chris Banks, University of Aberdeen, to attend a future OACC meeting to discuss the new library.

Third Don Crossing – CB explained that Gordon Mutch has agreed to be OACC's representative with the Don Crossing Communities Alliance and attended the most recent meeting in August. CB added that 660 representations are not currently considered sufficient for a public enquiry, though if people refuse to sell land required for the project a public enquiry would be necessary. CB advised that the DCCA has secured the services of Alan James, a specialist in habitats law, environmental aspects and roads network arguments. He will work for the DCCA in the upcoming Special Hearing, which is set for sometime November/December, but has asked for £1,000 for his services, which would have to be split between the community councils. It was agreed in principle that the OACC should continue to support the DCCA and accept the need to take part ownership of this cost. The actual cost to OACC was not discussed at this time. CK noted the tactics of those opposed to the Trump scheme, with many people buying small areas of land required for the project. **ACTION:** CB to circulate the most recent email relating to the Third Don Crossing.

New Applications –

Brig House, Don Street – Installation of a satellite dish. There were no objections. CB noted that she recently spotted a wall in the area of Brig House that does not seem to fit with the rest of the area. **ACTION:** DM to write to ACC asking whether this wall has planning permission.

Butchart Centre – DM noted a request for new signage, notably the erection of a five metre sign on the building's gable end. CK suggested increased greenery around the building, lessening the visibility of the signage. There were no objections.

Sunnyside Avenue – Request to convert a garage into a property. As the application mainly involved internal alterations there were no objections.

Don Street – Request to convert a garage into an annexe. CK noted that this might be a stealth tactic to build a new house, potentially lessening the attractiveness of the property to families in the future. There were no objections.

Grubb, The Spital – CB noted a request to change the license previously held by The Creperie allowing them to sell hot food. JN explained that he has looked at the application and cannot remember any significant changes.

Old Aberdeen Gift Shop, King Street – DM noted a request for new signage, although no images were yet available.

JN explained that the site of St Peter's Nursery on The Spital has been up for sale and bids have now been received.

6. Reports

CB noted that Katja Brittain had circulated her report on the most recent meeting of the Civic Forum.

DM explained that the Community Council Forum is filing a complaint against ACC due to their continual failure to respond to their queries.

HM explained that she was unable to attend the most recent meeting relating to First Bus.

7. Treasurer's Report

Isobel Aitken was unable to attend. However, CB noted OACC's account currently stands at £2707.11. CB added that the cheque for the painting of the train in Seaton Park (£1800.00) was not cashed and has now expired.

8. Correspondence

- Letter from Charles Lowe, ACC, noting that he has resigned. JN added that his position would be filled at a later date.
- Letter from ACC asking community councils to review their boundaries, number of required members and community council name.

9. AOCB

- JN noted that he has met with the new university Principal and brought to his attention key issues in the local community. **ACTION:** CB to invite Professor Diamond to a future OACC meeting.
- DM explained that four Open Space events remain and leaflets have been distributed.
- DM noted that a newsletter would be produced soon. RP offered to write an article updating the community on the work of AUSA. **ACTION:** newsletter to be included in OACC's October agenda.
- RP informed the Council of a meeting taking place on 27 September in Union Terrace Gardens relating to government cuts.
- HM informed the Council that the Fire Brigade offer a free fire safety inspection of people's homes, with those over the age of 80 or disabled offered a free smoke alarm, which includes a ten year battery.

10. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

OACC will next meet on Tuesday 19th October at 7.30pm at Old Aberdeen Town House.