

## **Old Aberdeen Community Council**

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2009 at the Old Aberdeen Town House, High Street, Old Aberdeen.

### **1. Present**

Christine Burgess (Chair), Simon Barker (Vice Chair), Isobel Aitken (Treasurer), Graham Abraham, Gordon Mutch, Trevor Stack, Clive Kempe, Dewi Morgan.

### **Also Present**

Shaunagh Kirby (Aberdeen University), Chris Gane (Aberdeen University), Hilda Meers, Hamish Mackay, Cllr Richard Robertson, Keith Paterson (ACC), Phil Sanderson (All Nations Christian Fellowship), Peter Reid, Abdul Latif (Aberdeen Mosque), PC Tracey McGowan (Grampian Police), Kevin Guyan (Secretary).

### **Apologies**

Katja Brittain, Duncan McKay (AUSA), Cllr Jim Noble, Cllr Norman Collie, Morag Paterson, Angus Donaldson (Aberdeen University), Alexander Mess.

### **2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

Christine Burgess highlighted that an addendum had been added to December's minutes regarding the Controlled Parking Zone and plans for Elphinstone lawn.

Simon Barker questioned whether the word "pranksters" was suitable to describe the vandalism of cars on the High Street. It was agreed that the wording should be changed to reflect the damage caused by people walking home from the City Centre at night.

After changes, December's minutes were passed.

Isobel Aitken raised the use of the word "dull" in December's minutes to describe the lawn in front of Elphinstone Hall. Chris Gane explained that nothing has been finalised regarding the lawn and, if anything were to go further, OACC would be fully notified. He emphasised that the lawn is seen as both integral to the University and to the local community.

Hamish Mackay explained that - after investigation into the reasons behind Fairer Scotland's decision to reject funding for his proposal regarding Seaton Park – he plans to resubmit. **ACTION:** HM to continue with current application.

It was noted that scaffolding has now been erected at the site of the new café on the High Street.

CB clarified that the public toilets on the High Street were deemed unnecessary by Aberdeen City Council and will soon be sold-off.

### **3. Police Report**

As PC Steve McKenzie has moved areas, PC Tracey McGowan represented Grampian Police.

TM reported that recent figures show a fall in motorcycle theft in the area, compared to this time last year. Other points of note were an incident of vandalism and attempted motor vehicle theft, both so far unsolved.

TM also reported that break-ins to the Zoology buildings, Taylor buildings and Cathedral, resulting in the theft of computing equipment, have been solved, with the items recovered and culprit reported to the Procurator Fiscal.

PC Ross Lindsay and PC Fraser Urquhart are set to start work in the area over the next few weeks and will represent Grampian Police at future OACC meetings.

**ACTION:** KG to email Ed Fitzgibbons, Grampian Police, to gather contact details for the two new officers.

SB highlighted that the recurring theme of crime on the Channory and at the Cathedral must be kept on the Grampian Police's agenda. TM agreed, raising the issue of poor lighting in the area. TM added that all suspected crime should be reported, allowing the force to concentrate efforts on known crime spots.

### **4. University Update**

Chris Gane updated the Council on the construction of the new University library. The enabling work on the project is set to begin from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January, hopefully lasting around 3 months. During this period the through road between Bedford Road and Elphinstone will be closed. Pedestrian

access is likely to be unaffected. Actual building work should begin in April 2009.

CB asked whether enabling work on the project could go ahead before the University and ACC's agreement on the CPZ.

CG explained that an agreement had been reached between the University and ACC, allowing the project to go ahead as planned.

CB raised the issue of the poor consultation offered by ACC prior to the decision to implement the CPZ, with views of local residents ignored and opinions of local representatives disregarded. RR added that the consultation was hugely flawed; for example, asking residents whether they would be in favour of a CPZ without informing them of the inevitable charges.

Dewi Morgan suggested ACC stagger the CPZ charges, similar to schemes in other cities, allowing those on the periphery to pay less.

SB asked CG whether the University would be willing to apply pressure to create a right hand lane access from St. Machar Drive to Elphinstone Road with the closure of the through road from Bedford. CG agreed that this would be a wise idea.

TS asked why it was felt by the University that the scale of the CPZ is too large for the new library. He also questioned what benefit the library would bring to local residents. CG explained that the size of the building project and size of the CPZ do not equate: the parking spaces gained and lost by the two projects don't add up. He also clarified that the new library has always been seen as something both for students and the wider community. The University plan to invest £600,000 per year in outreach programmes and events held at the library, with local residents also able to enjoy facilities on the ground floor of the building.

CB concluded the discussion by deciding that a meeting with Sue Bruce, Chief Executive ACC, must be arranged, with input from Seaton and Tillydrone communities also. **ACTION:** CB to contact community representatives from Seaton and Tillydrone to discuss the issue.

Graham Abraham asked if there was any progress on Dunbar Hall and the Nursery. CG explained that there were no plans for Dunbar Hall and, although it is recognised that current child care services do not match the University's needs, the extension of nursery provision would not entail new building work.

Shaunagh Kirby asked the Council what is the best way for the University to publicise events within the local community. DM suggested emailing information to himself to be included on the OACC website.

## **5. Neighbourhood Community Action Plan**

Keith Paterson distributed copies of the Plan amongst the Council before summarising the Plan's contents.

**ACTION:** once the Plan is finalised, KP to forward the link to DM for inclusion on the OACC website and newsletter.

SB raised the danger of stating that the CPZ has the backing of the local community. After discussion, it was agreed that it would read, "secures the approval of the local community".

CB thanked KP for all his hard work on the Plan.

## **6. Planning Update**

Clive Kempe explained that there are plans to erect a polytunnel in a garden in Cruickshank Gardens. The Council agreed this seems fine.

The building of a sign beside the Lloyds TSB on King Street for student accommodation was discussed but was disregarded as it falls outwith the Council's area.

## **7. Treasurer's Report**

IA noted that there is currently £3529.63 in OACC's account, of which around £2500 is available for the Small Improvements Grant.

It was agreed that some play equipment in Seaton Park and Sunnybank Park needed repair. As it is the wrong time of year to undertake painting work, and the Grant must be spent by Spring, it was decided that money would go towards buying new equipment for both parks aimed at toddlers.

DM asked whether there was the possibility of giving some money to the new High Street café, as this would be a community facility. CB asked IA to check with Charles Lowe as to whether there would be monies forthcoming next year from the Small Improvements Grant Fund before the community council discussed this further. **ACTION:** IA to speak to Charles Lowe.  
**ACTION:** contribution to High Street café to be added to February's agenda.

The Council decided to donate £200.00 to Old Aberdeen Heritage Society towards the cost of restoring the Old Town House chimes.

### **8. Social Evening / World Heritage Bid / Word Fringe**

CB explained that Dunbar Street Community Hall is now operational, with the renovation work looking fantastic. She proposed incorporating OACC's Annual General Meeting and a social evening in the Hall on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2009. This would mean putting the date of the March meeting back a week.

The evening will provide an opportunity for a speaker to discuss the issue of Old Aberdeen applying for World Heritage Status, using the groundwork established in the book *The Lost City*.

Community Councillors will also have the opportunity to share with local residents and community members the issues they have discussed over the past year.

The need for OACC to be involved in 2009's Word Fringe was discussed, with the possibility of an event with the Mosque. **ACTION:** TS/CB/CK to discuss further plans with Abdul.

### **9. Newsletter**

DM expressed his need for contributors for the next newsletter. All articles should be submitted by the middle of February, with distribution taking place the first week of March.

### **10. Correspondence**

- (a) A letter asking OACC for a nomination to the Queen's Garden Party in Edinburgh. It was agreed that Bob Rutherford, retired Head of Cruickshank Gardens, should be nominated.

### **11. AOCB**

Katja Brittain notified CB of the East Grampian Coastal Partnership Community Grant Scheme. This scheme should be investigated and may fit with HM's funding plans for Seaton Park.

Morag Paterson has formally resigned from OACC.

**12. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2009 at the Old Aberdeen Town House.