

Old Aberdeen Community Council Rev1

Minutes of the meeting held on **Tuesday 21st August 2012** at The Old Aberdeen Town House, Old Aberdeen.

1. Present

Christine Burgess (Chair), Gordon Mutch, Isobel Aitken (Treasurer), Clive Kempe, Trevor Stack.

Also Present

PC Craig Scott (Grampian Police), P.C. Ross Hay (Grampian Police), Cllr. Ramsay Milne, Hazel Christie (Visitor) Cllr. Jim Noble.

Apologies

Simon Barker (Vice Chair), Dewi Morgan (Web Admin & Newsletter Ed), Hilda Meers, Abdul Latif, Cllr Ross Grant.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

CB welcomed everyone to the meeting. The minutes of the June meeting were read and approved by Christine Burgess and seconded by Isobel Aitken.

Matters Arising from Minutes:

HMO: CB noted that, following the Scottish Government's update to the Statutory Guidance on HMO Licensing for Scottish Local Authorities, the report prepared by Ally Thain at Aberdeen Council had just been released and would be discussed at the Housing and Environment Committee meeting on 28 August 2012. Section 131A on Overprovision now gives the local authority the discretionary power to refuse to grant an HMO licence if it considers there is or the granting of a licence would result in overprovision of HMOs in a locality. It is for each local authority to decide what constitutes 'overprovision' and, critically, what constitutes 'locality' with, for example, ward boundaries, postcode areas, community council neighbourhoods all being potential 'localities'. CB noted that there could also be an overprovision in one type of accommodation, or in one street and not in another. Existing HMO licences have been mapped but the report recognises that there may be properties that currently do not have licences and so there is at present insufficient evidence to establish the existence of overprovision.

Cllr. Milne stated the illegal rentals are the ones which are causing the problem and CK commented that a critical mass was needed to support families, e.g. with primary schools, and that converting bungalows was not suitable and downgraded family provision.

It was expected that the Committee would agree to discuss the report again after a certain period of time and in the meantime consultations would take place with existing HMO landlords, universities, colleges, student representative organisations and "other interested parties". CB queried if Community Councils will be consulted on this issue and both Cllrs. Noble and Milne confirmed that they would be.

PRUNING TREES: CB noted there had been a lively exchange of letters and emails between Old Aberdeen Heritage Society, OACC and the Planning Department on the matter of the tree pruning in Bede House Court. DM had written both to Duncan McGregor, Arboricultural Planner at ACC, regarding the severe pruning and to Dr Bochel regarding the lack of consultation with OACC. Mr McGregor acknowledged that the work carried out at Bede House Court was not acceptable arboricultural practice, Dr Bochel advised in her response to OAHS that there was “no statutory restriction on the felling or lopping of a tree on land in a conservation area in the occupation of the planning authority (ACC in this instance) providing it is done by or with the consent of the authority” Mr McGregor noted he had not been informed and, though it seems to be ACC’s understanding that community councils are informed of pending tree work, no notification had been received by OACC.

DM wrote again to Dr Bochel after a tree in St Machar’s churchyard had also suffered the same severe pruning to ask for clarification of the process involved in tree work in conservation areas. The tree in this instance was an elm and had been found to be infected with Dutch Elm disease. Therefore, under section 160 (6) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act which states the removal of any tree that is ‘urgently necessary in the interests of safety’ is exempt from Conservation Area control, the work to remove the tree was exempt from the requirement to notify the planning authority.

CB noted that ACC should now be aware that OACC and OAHS were monitoring tree work in the area and noted also that the trees in Bede House court were sprouting.

ACTION: CB to contact the Warden at Bede House to learn what is planned re the trees.

3rd DON CROSSING: GM stated this issue was in the hands of the Council. He added the majority of the Council were in favour of the crossing. Cllr.Milne stated he was not sure as the statutory processes were proceeding and the judicial process was taking place with a resident from Tillydrone taking the issue to the Court of Session. He added there were issues regarding numbers for and against it. CK stated the long waiting period was very stressful for owners. GM informed the meeting he would have more information on this topic for the next meeting.

3. Police Update

P.C. Hay notified the group there would be no police hand-outs that evening but he could report that crime rates in Old Aberdeen were lower than Tillydrone or Woodside which had had a problem with motor bikes. IA said she had realised the number of motor bike incidents had dropped significantly in Old Aberdeen. P.C Hay stated 6 reported calls were logged in Old Aberdeen regarding drinking/drugs and public nuisance. The Police had dealt with 1 attempted theft, 5 possessions of drugs, 4 thefts of motor vehicles and 4 vandalisms which was half the number at Tillydrone and Woodside. He added the crimes in the Old Aberdeen area related to motor vehicles. IA then told the members that the Catholic Chaplaincy had had an attempted burglary but nothing had been taken. P.C Hay informed the meeting that Inspector Fitzgibbon was no longer their superior officer but it was now Inspector David Forsyth. CB added she had had a delivery failure notice with Inspector Forsyth. P.C. Hay corrected our email address for him and it now reads dave.forsyth@grampian.pnn.police.uk . CB thanked the constables for attending the meeting.

4. Planning Matters

No 20 Chanonry: OACC had objected to the location of the garage and suggested it be set further back. DM had then noticed that the original comments from the Roads department (entrance not acceptable) had been removed and replaced by a later set of comments to the effect that it could be acceptable if ‘stand-outs’ were created. He wrote and the original letter was reinstated and he was assured that fresh documentation within the same application would be required.

ON GOING.

47 Spital: CB showed a photograph of this site and explained that the application concerned a property that had once been one of two shops with no 49 Spital to the rear. One shop had since become a garage. The plans submitted were to turn the shop on the other side into a studio flat with a stand up roof. Discussion centred mainly round the aesthetic appearance of the proposed plans and the loss of balance the raised roof would entail. CK commented on the lack of imaginative architecture in Aberdeen compared to other Scottish cities. He added there was scaffolding up at present as the building looked as if it might collapse. CB noted that DM had not submitted a letter to planning but had sent her comments both for - recovering a derelict property - and against - spoiling the visual balance of the two shops that frame no 49.

No 47 Spital will not be in the OACC area until October so at present OACC can only write and express our opinion. It was agreed the OACC were happy something was being done to the property but they were concerned about the appearance/balance.

ACTION: CB to write a letter on behalf of the OACC on this issue.

CPZ: CB informed the meeting she had spoken to Doug Ritchie regarding the CPZ review and was informed they are reviewing complaints and that a Beat Patrol would start in September when students return.

Bus Gate at College Bounds: CB was told this would be operational in two weeks. Due to solid concrete having been discovered under the cassies when they were lifted, the new signal control box would be mounted on the pavement.

ACTION: CB to get in touch with Doug Ritchie concerning what plans there were to review for effective operation of the system.

Scottish Government Planning Reform: The feedback on this issue was submitted by the 23rd May.

ACTION: CB will email Professor Rogers re the Police Station owned by the University and what their plans are regarding this building.

5. Community Council Handbook

CB notified the meeting that this document is very long and in depth. Comments are required on it by 23rd September

6. Treasurer's Report

IA informed delegates that the present OACC balance stands at £825.70. She noted everything was paid except for £15 due to the Community Council Forum.

7. Reports of Other Meetings

Seaton Park: CB stated the Friends of Seaton Park were up and running and there had already been several 'Weedathons' She encouraged people to check out the new website and apply to become a Friend. It was noted that two members of the steering group had met with the Britain in Bloom Contest judges and given a full account of the community involvement. It appears this is an important criteria. CB welcomed the establishing of the Friends group just in time for the judges.

8. Elections and Newsletter

CB explained that nomination forms for the community council elections could now be downloaded and have to be submitted by 4 pm on 20th September to the Election Unit in the Town House. Nominees, as well as proposers and seconders, have to be resident in the community council area and on the electoral register. She had had notice of a meeting for those interested in becoming community councillors that was to take place on Wednesday, 5 September at 6 pm in the Town House, Broad Street. CB asked everyone present to encourage people to be nominated, particularly those in the new extended area.

CB explained the newsletter was now at the printers and DM would undertake to sort out the distribution, a larger than normal one due to the extended area. CB thanked DM for his efforts in compiling the Newsletter and getting it to the printers in time for distribution at the beginning of September.

9. Correspondence

- Community Council leaflets GM
queried if this would be featured in the press. CB to ask Karen Riddoch if this will appear in the press and Cllr. Milne will find out the Council action regarding publicity)
- Gambling Policy Statement consultation:
- First Bus Network Review: No changes to the no 20 service but the withdrawal of the no 6.
ACTION: CK to write a letter on behalf of the OACC to thank First Bus for responding positively to the hydrogen bus initiative.
- Consultation Planning Briefs: deadline extended until 21 August
- Cash Back For Youth Funding
- Surgery Circular from Cllr. Mine and Cllr. Ross
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10. Any Other Business

Community Empowerment Bill: Feedback is required by 26th September

Air quality on King Street : CB asked councillors present to find out what the statistics for air quality on King Street at the Housing and Environment meeting the following Tuesday. Cllr. Milne added that the Western peripheral route would be expected to reduce pollution.

Café Kilau will finally open its cafe/bistro doors next Monday all going well.

11 Date and Venue of Next Meeting

Next meeting to take place on Tuesday 18 September at 7.30 pm in the Old Town House.