

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Minute of the meeting held on **Tuesday 13th December 2011** at Dunbar Street Hall, Dunbar Street, Old Aberdeen.

1. Present

Christine Burgess (Chair), Simon Barker (Vice –Chair), Dewi Morgan, (Web Admin & Newsletter Ed), Gordon Mutch, Katja Brittain, Irene Henderson – Minutes Secretary

Also Present

PC Lindsay (Grampian Police), residents of Old Aberdeen to include Kirsteen Calder, Brian Keely, Abdul Latif, Bibo Weber, Margaret Sleeman, Mike King, George Wood

Apologies

Hilda Meers, Isobel Aitken (Treasurer), Clive Kempe, Cllr Collie, Cllr, Noble, Omran Al Mahtot, David Hutchison, Trevor Stack and Mrs Buchan

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings and Matters Arising

CB welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the residents for attending on such an inclement evening. The minutes of the November meeting were read and approved by KB and seconded by GM.

KB requested the University of Old Aberdeen be corrected in the November minutes to read University of Aberdeen. CB notified the meeting that she had received the Air Quality Action Plan and had tried to contact the Environmental Health department that morning to discuss what monitoring could take place at the St Machar Drive/King Street roundabout.

Regarding Seaton Park, CB informed the meeting that while every expenditure had had to be reviewed in the light of the forthcoming budget discussions, it seemed that the parks and Seaton Park in particular would not have its funding cut to any great degree and it would not be closed. Cllr Noble had advised CB, prior to the start of the meeting, that no opposition to this was forthcoming from either the SNP or Liberal Democrat parties, so he was optimistic that at the 14th December full council meeting the motion not to reduce park services would be passed.

CB noted that although December was not the right time to push forward with the 'Friends of Seaton Park' proposal, there was a need for proactive campaigning to publicise the project early in the spring and time this with the Seaton and Tillydrone community newsletters, not forgetting the many dog walkers who use the park. DM advocated advertising a Seaton Park email address and face book page in these newsletters. AL suggested CB work with the City Council and the University on this issue.

CB reported she had emailed Prof Rodger to clarify rumours that the University had been in talks with Aberdeen City Council with regard to Seaton Park. She had had a reply from

Angus Donaldson, Director of Estates, who reported the University had long had an interest in how Seaton park was managed, stretching back to when Hillhead was developed, and that the University's position was and remains that they recognise they have an interest in the management and future of the Park and wish to work with everyone involved. CB mooted that the Cathedral could perhaps be one of the main stakeholders in the Friends of Seaton Park' campaign.

KB stressed the success of Sunnyside Community Park then suggested the involvement of Tillydrone Community Council. DM likewise agreed we would hope for the involvement of Bridge of Don CC and Seaton Community groups. GM strongly supported community involvement stating that the Duthie Park project was up and running and the danger was of Seaton being left behind. GW queried if the Seaton Park gardener could be recognised - CB informed the meeting that the former Head Gardner had retired last autumn and had been nominated by OACC for an invitation to the Holyrood Garden Party last summer. MK commented that his son worked for the Parks and was likely to be involved in Seaton Park - CB confirmed she had spoken to Steven Shaw, Environmental Manager at ACC, who advised he was not yet sure if there would be a new head gardener at Seaton Park as the structure of the team was changing but that more gardening staff were to be taken on

CB explained Cllr Noble had notified her that the community council boundary changes had been reviewed at a full council meeting prior to being submitted for public consultation. In addition, it had been agreed that community council elections would in future use the system of the single transferrable vote, thus bringing it into line with other elections in Scotland.

CB thanked DM for his outstanding work, once again, in editing and arranging for the distribution of The Auld Toon News Issue 14 December 2011. KB remarked on how many people read the Newsletter. DM informed the group he had carried out a questionnaire last year and respondents had indicated they preferred a Newsletter to consulting a website.

3. Police Update

PC Lyndsay introduced himself and distributed copies of the latest statistics from Storm and Crime file from 1-30th November, 2011 as well as a Kittybrewster Local Policing Update Newsletter December 2011.

PC Lyndsay remarked during the October OACC meeting statistics were requested for Sunnybank which comes within the Kittybrewster area. He explained that they do not produce the same format of statistics as his district but instead produce a Newsletter. He therefore could not guarantee Storm and Crime file statistics being made available for OACC meetings from Kittybrewster. He proceeded by saying there had been 11 telephone recorded Crime file incidents in Old Aberdeen for November. Crimefile incidents leading on from Storm were a total of 12. The police had been in touch with the University re the safe passage through Seaton Park for students. During the last week there had been more damage through storms than crime and updating road weather conditions had been very time consuming. GM asked if any passing patrols had visited St Machar's Cathedral in view of the recent robbery there, PC Lyndsay could not comment on this issue but personally assured the group he would patrol Old Aberdeen when on late shift as well as bring this matter to the attention of the Inspector. GM informed him the robbery in the cathedral had taken place in broad daylight and was very brazen.

TB described the police had launched a pre-Christmas initiative in Kittybrewster to combat robberies but PC Lyndsay informed the group that Old Aberdeen was split into three sectors with Kittybrewster and Old Aberdeen in different zones. He added Kittybrewster crime

should not affect policing in Old Aberdeen. The exception to this for all sectors was on a Saturday night when officers were seconded from all areas in order to keep the city centre safe.

4. Planning Matters and Third Don Crossing

3rd Don Crossing- GM described the 4 day Public Inquiry at Woodside Community centre that involved looking at the proposed route and data collection etc. and commented on how there was a lot of vested interest on the part of developers who also attended the hearing. In addition, the Head of Planning Dr Bochel was also present for the four days as well as MPs some of whom spoke in favour whilst others were against. It was noted no local councillors were invited to attend the hearing, or were present.

Six community councils including Old Aberdeen, Tillydrone and Grandholm, had sent a written submission against the bridge as all agreed it was essentially a road to nowhere and Old Aberdeen would become an island surrounded by traffic causing greater car use and impacting negatively on health. The report submitted from the Don Crossing Community Alliance including Tillydrone, Old Aberdeen, George Street, St Georges Church, plus community groups to the Scottish Government has a closing date of February/March and regardless it is the Scottish Government who will make the final decision. DM queried if the submission was before or after the Public Inquiry and GM assured DM that the final report was only submitted after taking legal counsel on the issue. It was noted the City Council had their own legal representative namely Morris O' Carol from Edinburgh. GM informed the group the University had also submitted an objection. GM pointed out compulsory purchase orders should prove they are overwhelmingly in favour of the public good but this was not the case in this case. In addition, it is a local bridge but the council does not have the financial resources to build it so are dependent on Scottish Government money through linking it to the western peripheral road. GM confirmed he will attend the DCCA meeting in December.

Planning Applications –DM outline progress in planning applications as follows:

- a) **110991** Bus turning circle on Elphinstone Road PENDING
- b) **110465** 2-24 St Peter's Street building of 28 flats OBJECTION.
- c) **110985** Construction of two parking bays on Regent's Walk PENDING
- d) **111534** 11, University Road application to change windows from traditional to PVC. Recommendation that sash windows be kept. DM feels this should go to the subcommittee. CB reckoned this highlighted the City Council's ignoring the 1993 Conservation Area document that promoted the retaining of traditional doors and windows but SB pointed out that this was not in the Conservation Area so the case was likely to be a lost cause. OBJECTION
- e) **111651** 8, Cheyne Road owners wish to build a large extension that more than doubles the floor area of the property. It was known that some authorities have an informal rule that extensions that increase original floor area by more than 50% should generally be refused. DM also noted that the owner had already obtained an HMO licence for the property and this application could result in a property with at least 8 bed rooms in a quiet residential area. GW added it was

not possible to extend like this in Aberdeenshire and DM advised that OACC needed to respond on behalf of residents many of whom had objected to DM. He has informed neighbours who have already emailed the Council Planning Officer that HMO is not a valid planning objection. GM added it was overdevelopment .
ACTION

It was agreed that DM compile an objection on the grounds of disproportionate area and an unwelcome precedent and then circulate this for opinions.

- f) **111800** McRobert Building permission for the erection of three antennas.
PENDING

There then followed a discussion regarding the deteriorating condition of the cassies in the area with MK stressing the need to keep pressure on this issue. CB reported she had not written to Heritage Scotland but had contacted Mark Ellington who said he would follow up the case.

GW raised concerns regarding the water collecting on the High Street which he thought would be ignored.

CB told the meeting a complaint had been received from residents regarding the noise from stone cutting on the New Library site during out of hours. No answer on this issue had been received from the University/Council. KB stated this highlighted the need to develop OACC and University relations. DM explained the University had been notified it was breaking the laws so it was up to the Council to take action. MK suggested using section 50/51 of the Pollution Act privately whereas AL recommended contacting the appropriate Councillor.

KB confirmed she had contacted the council re the dumping of materials and was told they had people who could be contacted regarding this issue. DM suggested he put this information on the OACC website.

5. Strategic Development Plan Main Issues Report

Strategic Development Plan 2035

CB explained how this was a Long Term Document introduced by the Scottish Government to replace the present Structure Plan. As well as a Vision Statement and Analysis there were four main areas to include:

Supply of land, Retail, Environmental issues and Transport

CB informed delegates that she had attended a Community Council Forum meeting with a presentation by David Jennings from the Strategic Development Plan Team. He was challenged by Peter Reiss of Milltimber, Bieldside and Cults Community Council, who was sceptical of the whole premise of the report and Bucksburn CC challenged the lack of a plan to improve the rail network. CB asked if the transport strategy was to be integrated and an integral part of the Strategic Plan. This was not possible. The lack of affordable housing was stressed as the emphasis placed on luxury 3/4 bedroomed houses in the shire and 1/2 bedroomed flats in the city had created a gap of provision in the middle market. CB stressed the closing date for discussion on this document was 6th January and Development Planning Meetings were taking place as well as information provided on the website. She added the reference to the 3rd Don crossing in the report caused concern from Tillydrone.

CB also highlighted the Scottish Government's response to gales with the idea of forming

Resilience Committees where community councils might be asked to be the reference points. This was not an idea that went down well with the community councillors present.

ACTION: DM emphasised the need to respond to the Main Issues Report by no later than 6th January.

6. Reports of Other Meetings

None

7. Treasurer's Report

In the absence of the Treasurer, CB informed the meeting that £577.28 was currently in OACC's account. GM suggested that the OACC donate an affordable sum towards the legal costs for the 3rd Don crossing submission report. The figure of £100 was suggested and was approved.

9. AOCB

MK informed the meeting that he had developed an Old Aberdeen Tartan and if anyone knew of any use for this he would appreciate being told. A sample was passed around and MK confirmed 70 yards was considered a viable commercial amount to weave. DM stated he would put this information on the website if MK sent him the appropriate text and picture.

GW informed delegates his area had had a power cut but the power was restored within three hours whereas KB stated she had been without power for 5 days.

BW described how No Parking signs in the Sunnyside area were dangerous due to the colours not showing up in the dark and low positioning made it easy for a tall person to collide into them.

KC noted some lighting on Dunbar Street was not working making it very dark at night. Cllr Noble, who joined the meeting at this point, noted these final two complaints.

CB thanked all the residents for their support and interest and wished everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year. Mince pies and refreshments were then served.

11. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Old Aberdeen Community Council will take place at the Old Aberdeen Town House on Tuesday 17th January 2012 at 7.30p.m.