

# Old Aberdeen Community Council Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 20th March 2018

## Minutes

1. *Present*
2. Gordon Mutch; Dewi Morgan; Isobel Aitken; Lekky Shepherd; Teresa Harwood; Michael Hutchison [Cllr]

### *Apologies*

Trevor Stack

2. *Minutes of last year's AGM*

Accepted and approved. Proposed: DM; seconded: IA

3. *Chairperson's Report*

From his report (attached) GM highlighted the sense of frustration over the year, particularly no resolution of the HMO problems and lack of resolution of the situation re St Peter's School: consultations are simply paying lip-service – the situation remains at an impasse.

4. *Treasurer's Report and review of audited Annual Accounts*

There is a small uplift in funds we receive from the council based on population. OACC only gets by financially because of the good grace of the University allowing free use of the Town House for meetings.

Report accepted and approved: proposed: DM; seconded: TH

5. Confirmation of Office Bearers & tasks
  - Chairperson – Gordon (to continue until elections)
  - Vice Chairperson - Isobel
  - Treasurer – Gordon (to continue to next CC elections in October though noted that ideally Treasurer should be separate from Chair)
  - Secretary – Trevor (in absentia)
  - Web Admin - Dewi
  - Planning – Dewi
  - Rep on the CC Forum - Isobel
  - Rep on Civic Forum?
6. AOB

# OACC Annual Report: March 2018 (For Jan – Dec 2017)

## **Meetings:**

The Community Council met throughout the year on the 3rd Tuesday of the month in the Old Town House. These meetings were well attended by members of the public from our area, our elected city council members, the police, university and student representatives. OACC was also represented on the City's Community Council Forum.

## **Newsletter, Notice Board and Web-site:**

Keeping in contact with our local community is a key priority and much of the year's business centred around reviewing and commenting on community planning issues. In this our intention is to reflect the wishes of the community and the requirements of local and national legislation and guidelines, while adding local knowledge and information where necessary.

Two issues of our newsletter 'The Auld Toon News' were distributed in May and in December. Our Notice Board outside the Church Hall in Dunbar Street was updated as required. Thanks as ever to Dewi Morgan for maintaining and updating our website throughout the year.

## **Policing:**

We had a regular monthly report from Police Scotland officers, who are based at Tillydrone Police Station. Our local police officers are informative and ready to engage with local issues. Our thanks to Inspector Mark Stephen for continuing to support the Community Council with our monthly updates.

## **HMOs:**

In August the "HMO Overprovision Policy – Report on Public Consultation" went to full council for consideration. Submissions were made by a local landlord and the Aberdeen Students Association for the status quo of no overprovision policy. OACC proposed an overprovision policy be put in place. The council officers responsible for the report recommended (as they have done in every other occasion) that nothing be done & no overprovision policy be put in place. It should I suppose be unsurprising with an option to do nothing Aberdeen City Council chose to do exactly that! The part OACC found particularly galling was that none of the seven local councillors who serve our area or any from those other areas with high HMO densities spoke up for us. Our assumption is that the concerns of the long term, voting, local residents have been discounted in favour of University Pressure? Student Appeasement? Total lack of interest? To date we haven't had a clear answer from our Local City Councillors.

## **Seaton Park:**

The Friends of Seaton Park along with the gardeners have turned Seaton Park into a park we can all be proud and in doing so have raised its profile in the city and nationally. So much so that in 2017 the park was successful in winning 6 national awards and retaining its coveted Green Flag. The Friends Group as well as weeding, planting trees and crocuses held their successful Cake Fest and Park Fest events. Last but not least our steam engine Mr Therm returned from his holidays in Kilmarnock looking like new, all bright and shiny ready to attract and amuse another generation of Aberdonians. A big thanks to Aberdeen Harbour Board and others for their financial help for this £60,000 refurbishment.

**Individual planning applications:**

Over the year as a statutory planning body we have examined and commented on proposals for local signage, windows, house extensions, development of houses mostly for letting and HMO purposes plus some major developments such as the proposed new University Science Building.

Certainly, the most commented on planning issue was the proposal to turn a historic B listed domestic building at 15 The High Street into a pub. OACC objected at length to this application as did very many of our residents.

We have attempted as a group to balance the need to sympathetically retain the heritage and charm of the Old Aberdeen area with the needs of its inhabitants.

**St Peter's School:**

Is overcrowded and in need of better facilities to bring it up to a decent modern standard. Through the year the parents and the school endured a series of poorly run and delivered consultations by ACC in which the views of the parents were noted but given little respect. The only option they were given was a move to the old Riverbank Primary which was not the outcome the school & parents wanted or could accept. OACC have assisted and attended meetings as required.

**The Great Aberdeen Run:**

This proved to be a misnomer certainly for many of our residents. This is particularly galling given this event had the potential to be embraced & enjoyed by all. There was no pre-engagement with the community, confusion over route, unnecessary parking restrictions, inadequate access / egress arrangements (particularly for elderly residents), poor positioning of power generators, nuisance music and last but not least a green area at the corner of Don Street and Cheyne Road was stripped of its trees.

In summary, ACC and the organisers caused considerable community resentment over an event which should have been embraced and enjoyed.

A meeting was held with residents and the City Council officials – we hope that lessons learned will result in early consultation and a successful event in 2018.

**And lastly:**

I would like to thank all the members of the Community Council who so willingly give up their time to read documents, attend meetings, write letters and distribute newsletters. I would also like to thank local residents, our city councillors, the police, university staff and students for their continuing commitment to Old Aberdeen.

Gordon Mutch  
Chairman