

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Tuesday 19th August 2014 at 7.30 pm Rev.1

Old Aberdeen Townhouse

1. Present and apologies

Present: Isobel Aitken, Trevor Stack, Christine Burgess, Gordon Mutch, Jacinta Birchley, J. Forman and J. Gorman (Police Scotland), Theresa Merrick (University)

Apologies: Dewi Morgan, George Wood, Simon Barker, Cllr. Ross Grant, Prof. Albert Rodger

2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

- Due to lack of a project, the minutes of the June meeting will be discussed at the September meeting.

3. Police update

- 18 crime files of which 9 detected.
- BNP leaflet objecting to plans to build Seaton mosque was investigated by Inspector and legal advice sought, but it appears that there is nothing illegal in it. OACC, acknowledging that a resident had expressed concerns about the leaflet, agrees to condemn the leaflet on the grounds that, even if it is not illegal, it is inflammatory. Cllr. Milne adds that in fact no planning application has been made for new mosque.
- Another resident had complained about slow response from police to a break-in to his property. Inspector Darren Bruce had replied to his complaint, and no further objection had been received.
- TS has brought to Inspector Bruce's attention his concerns about the traffic light on High Street, and will await response.

4. University update (Theresa Merrick, in absence of Prof. Rodger)

- George Wood had noted that the University has asked for planning permission to replace some signs. TM believes that the replacement signs will be like-for-like, though the Council queries whether it would need planning permission in that case.
- CB notes that Prof. Rodger has been unable to attend an OACC meeting for a considerable time, and that there are several issues for discussion with the University, such as the Draft Character Appraisal.

5. Draft Character Appraisal update (Cllr. Ramsay Milne)

- Cllr. Milne confirms that Old Aberdeen Draft Character Appraisal was not approved. Committee members will now visit areas, including Old Aberdeen, that are designated Conservation Areas. He believes that OACC members will be able to join the visit and probably express an opinion. He also confirms that the City is developing a city-wide Conservation policy.

6. HMO report update (Cllr. Ramsay Milne)

- Cllr. Milne agrees with OACC letter that draft HMO report was inadequate, and confirms that it was pulled from Housing & Environment agenda to be rewritten. Meanwhile there will be door-to-door visits to assess the numbers of unregistered HMOs in the area.
- TS notes that OACC would likely support additional large student-gearred halls residences in the area, whether University or private, as an alternative to family homes being turned into HMOs, since this is usually irreversible. TM confirms that the University halls of residence are full, and currently being offered mainly to first-year students only. She will look into University plans for building further halls of residence, including on the Dunbar Halls site, as well as asking whether there are further private plans for developments. RM explains that there are a number of applications for private developments under consideration by the Council.
- GM reports from residents' meeting about 2 The Chanonry, where there was consensus that a) even if the owner rents a house to his or her sons or daughters and they look after the house for 4 years, there is no guarantee that the next set of tenants will do the same, and b) a HMO license will create precedent for other houses on The Chanonry to be turned into HMOs, as has happened with other streets. RM observes that every case has to be decided on its own merits, but CB notes that, given the scale of the issue, it is not enough to decide case-by-case – there is a need for a coherent policy for the area as a whole. GM will put OACC's view to the hearing on 2 September. RM believes that a planning application has been made but not yet granted, in addition to the licensing application. Although the property is likely to require planning regulations for a List B property, it is noted that that there is work being done currently on the property.

7. Report from local councillors

- Cllr. Ross Grant was unable to attend but reports by email that he and Cllr. Milne have had regular meetings with officers, individuals and community groups in Powis, Tillydrone and Old Aberdeen, as the start of construction of the Third Don Crossing (1 September) approaches. Meetings include the following:
 - an hour-long session every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at the Tillydrone Library (times tbc) to offer the chance to liaise with ACC officers
 - a full weekly meeting each Friday at the Tillydrone Community Centre (times tbc) to liaise with ACC officers *and contractor reps*
 - a full programme schedule prior to works starting
 - a weekly mailing list will be collated to advise of the following week's schedule – OACC asks to be added, and TM asks for University to be included.
- RM agrees to push for traffic review within 6 months of closure of Bedford Road.

8. Treasurer's report

- Nothing to report.

9. Reports of other meetings

- CB reports on behalf of Friends of Seaton Park that Britain in Bloom judges were very impressed by the state of the park. RM adds that he has put in request for funding for improvements for the park, especially the drainage. Scottish Rugby Union has expressed

an interest in using the park as extra space for a rugby event, although it seems there is little funding committed in relation to this. Meanwhile, there are proposals to plant trees that can absorb some of the water and therefore ameliorate the problem. CB insists that the starting point would be conducting a survey that would, among other things, provide a quotation for the drainage work, although RM notes that the survey itself might be costly. To be discussed further at the September meeting.

10. Correspondence

None.

11. Date and venue for next meeting

Tuesday 16 September at 7.30 pm in Old Aberdeen Townhouse

12. AOCB

None