

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Tuesday 18th February 2014 at 7.30 pm

Old Aberdeen Townhouse

Minutes

1. Present: Gordon Mutch (acting chair), Trevor Stack (secretary), Isobel Aitken, Christine Burgess, Dewi Morgan, George Wood, Jacinta Birchley, Billy Thom (police), Derek Sleeman, Alan Fenwick, Anna Dove, Ramsay Milne

Apologies: Simon Barker, James Martin, Abdul Latif

2. Minute of January Meeting (sent 21 January) and Matters Arising

3. Police Update (Billy Thom)

- 18 crimes in past month, which is spike for Old Aberdeen. BT says that have detected a few of the crimes.
- GM notes that he reported theft of copper wire to 101 number, but there was no response for 24 hours and the Community Wardens had not been informed 2 days later. With regard to Community Wardens, BT explains that they meet only occasionally with them.

4. Seaton Park (CB)

- CB reports flooding again. RM suggests Seaton Park Friends applying to Common Good fund, as Hazelhead Park Friends have done. Derek Sleeman notes that Friends would need expert advice in order to produce detailed plan, though GM notes that Council parks staff might be expected to help. RM suggests that Stephen Shaw would provide assistance though DM notes that Friends of Seaton Park have been waiting for a response from Stephen Shaw for 2 years. GW notes that a year ago he proposed Council staff comparing water level in Don and in flooded area and asked to see doing survey that was done of drains, but has had no response.
- CB also notes that Don is running high but lifejackets have been tampered with. She has reported this to Community Wardens but there has been no response so far.
- Friends of Seaton Park will be holding afternoon tea on 29th March to raise funds.

5. HMOs (GM)

- GM asks if Council will support us in opposing further HMOs in Old Aberdeen, repeating what said in last meeting that RM should be supporting while RM repeats that Planning Commission, on which he sits, is a quasi-judicial body. RM offers support as far as possible although needs to apply planning criteria. DM understands the need to apply planning criteria but insists that situation. GM complains that RM accepted a poorly-drawn up report by a Council officer which he did not need to accept. CB asks for a 6 monthly review, to which RM agrees, and agrees that Council officer should join the

discussion. When JB queries why RM not representing their view, RM explains for example that others such as students are in favour of HMOs. When questioned, RM said he was ambivalent about HMOs.

- DM announces HMO closed meeting tomorrow Wednesday at 7.30 pm.

6. First Bus bird-scarer (JB)

- JB reports that she complained about bird-scarer being used and it has been turned off since complained. DS notes that bird scarer should not be audible so they should change the frequency. OACC agreed to write letter if turned on again.

7. Update from ACC Elected Members

- RM reports that Planning Department are working on improving their service and especially website. DS suggests that Planning look at what other Councils are doing.
- RM has not yet found out what has happened to review of CPZ, requested last month by GW, but promises to do so.

8. Planning Matters (GW)

- Discussion of proposed new entrance to University on Regent Walk – to discuss with Angus Donaldson (item 10).

9. Treasurer's Report (GM)

- Same as last month.

10. Reports of Other Meetings

- Alan Fenwick reports that lights from University sculpture comes into his front room. Council official proposes thicker curtains, but lights have recently been turned off at night time. Planning application is pending – Planning department has said that OACC's objection is not admissible because it is on the grounds of lighting.

11. Correspondence (TS)

- Resident has asked to be co-opted onto OACC – to discuss when comes to next meeting.

12. University Planning (Angus Donaldson)

- Refers to <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/estates/documents/Estates-Strategy-2013-23%20higher%20resolution.pdf> Priority includes need to compete for English students, and will invest in student accommodation as well as sport facilities. Continuing with nursery project, though difficulties, as well as inter-faith centre. Will be refurbishing teaching facilities including New King's. Relocating Rowett Institute to Foresterhill, as well as constructing Energy Institute on corner of Bedford Road and St Machar's Drive. Looking at Pavillion Building as cultural and performing space.
- GM asks about projected student numbers. AD replies that fixed numbers of Scottish students (if take on more students in one year, will need to take in fewer the following

year) but potential for greater numbers of RUK students, though doesn't foresee dramatic growth in next 10 years.

- GW asks what % of students are housed in Hillhead – AD replies that most of 1st year students can be accommodated.
- CB asks about Dunbar Hall – AD responds that still considering accommodation though may be staff accommodation. CB asks that University consult with OACC on plans given potential impact on surroundings.
- CB asks whether could be more provision of tennis courts – AD replies that tennis lobby should make voices heard if felt that facilities inadequate.
- GM notes that no plan for museum despite University's substantial holdings – AD explains that Plan is outcome of intense debates at Court to set priorities for limited funding.
- CB and others query whether possibility to bring in cafes or restaurants that remain open in evening, as Kilau does. AD explains that it has been difficult historically to attract this kind of business to campus, and that the unusual success of Kilau is due to the hard work that the owners have put in.
- GW asks if there is potential for University and Council to collaborate in developing Seaton Park, and AD says that University has expressed interest before. University would like to join discussions with OACC about drafting plan for Seaton Park, not least given shortage of University land for pitches. RM suggests that if have plan for park, possibly including University, could aspire to similar funding to Duthie Park.
- DM draws AD's attention to bright lighting on sculpture by library, which is dazzling drivers as well as shining into adjacent houses. AD thinks that lighting is only off because bulb has gone, but notes the strong objections raised by DM and by resident Alan Fenwick.
- Re. student union, AD explains that current intention is to develop Butchart as union facility.
- Re. Regent Walk entrance, AD clarifies that there will continue to be traffic entrance to Regent Walk, and plans are intended to address student safety issues as well as respond to Council concerns.

13. Consultations

- DM draws attention to a number of open consultations.

14. Date and Venue for March meeting

- 18th March at 7.30 pm in Old Aberdeen Townhouse.

15. AOCB