

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Tuesday 17th February 2015 at 7.30 pm

Old Aberdeen Townhouse

Minutes

1. Present: Gordon Mutch (chair), Trevor Stack (minutes), George Wood, Jacinta Birchley, Dewi Morgan, Christine Burgess, Cllr. Ramsay Milne, Cllr. Ross Grant, Alan Wight (UoA), Emily Beever (AUSA), Dominic O'Hagan (AUSA), Veronika Hofmann (AUSA), Edward Stevenson, Laura Paton (HMICS), PC Amanda Wright, PC Kirsty Macdonald, David Phillips (Managing Director, First Bus Aberdeen)

Apologies: Isobel Aitken, Lekky Shepherd, Cllr. Jim Noble

2. Minutes of previous meeting: approved and seconded, with minor corrections

Matters arising: RM to chase up Mark Reilly about bins on Spital (item 6)

3. Police update:

- 19 offences but mainly traffic incidents
- Brig O'Balgownie graffiti still undetected, but press release may help

4. Seaton Park (update)

- Tamsin Morris (Walk the Talk) will be giving presentations (including online) to seek feedback on plans.
- Friends of Seaton Park are concerned that things are moving too quickly for effective public input, since the Council are working against funding deadline, and that insufficient information is available, though RM points to website that shows different scenarios. CB notes that since funding may not be available for "totally dry" option, perhaps this should not be advertised as an option.
- RM explains that part of the funding will come from the Common Good Fund, though the final amount is yet to be determined.

5. Presentation by David Phillips of First Bus Aberdeen, followed by Q&A

- No plans to change no. 20 schedule, though will try to improve timetables displayed at bus stops.
- Higher fares in Aberdeen owe largely to higher pay for drivers, since has been hard to recruit, and slow traffic has also been an issue, though fares haven't risen for a while. Has been some investment in buses, relative to other places. DM notes that fare collection is inefficient, relative to London with Oyster cards, which is slowing down routes. RM notes that part of problem is that Traffic Commissioners insist that buses can't be late, which means need to schedule for rush hour, and have to drive slowly at off-peak times.
 - AUSA rep queries figures given for wages relative to Glasgow, which is being used to explain higher fares—these don't correspond to the wages he has been quoted for Glasgow. DP will provide up-to-date figures.
- 4 hydrogen buses coming into service in March on x40 route. RM explains that being heavily subsidised by EU, because still so expensive.

- AUSA reps express concern about
 - lack of maps and other information in bus shelters. DP explains that bus shelters are not directly responsibility of First Bus, but will pass on to Council official.
 - structure of fares for students who are living further from university, as increasing numbers are— DP will discuss this separately with students, in response to data submitted by them
 - sporadic nature of the number 2—DP will check whether schedule is better adhered to.
- RM notes that fares are typically highest in poorest areas, and CB asks whether community is notified before route is withdrawn when not commercially viable. DP notes there is possibility to apply for PTU funding if there is a social need identified.
- DP provides his contact details: David C Phillips, Mobile 07748 933139 and email david.phillips@firstgroup.com

6. University Energy Building Pre-Application Consultation – issues (GW)

- GW and DM raise several issues about advertising of University Energy Building Pre-Application Consultation, as well as information provided during it. AW notes that meeting was advertised in press, and leaflets were dropped though targeted in areas more directly affected, along Bedford Road, including on lampposts, as requested by Council.
- AW explains that, as project develops, there will be another open forum meeting in a few weeks. GW requests that presentation of scale of building should be 3D, and AW replies that this is now standard practice.
- GM notes that proposed building will extend to pavement. AW acknowledges that Tillydrone has also raised concerns about proximity to pavement, and confirms that University will seek to leave as much of a margin as possible.
- GW appeals to ACC to examine how Pre-Application Consultations are being conducted, since not clear what currently trying to achieve—and especially, whether genuinely interested in public input. GW also observes that RM, who spoke at the forum, appeared to imply that ACC would approve the project, though RM denies this was what he meant. RM notes that not all Councils are conducting Pre-Application Consultations, and ACC continue to review conduct of them.

7. Old Aberdeen Conservation Area: inclusion of houses on Don St/Cheyne Road (GW)

- 88 Don Street owner has objected to ACC plans to include her house in Conservation Area (together with 14 Cheyne Road and 106 Don Street). OACC does not intend to support objection.

8. Old Aberdeen Character Appraisal (DM)

- CB thanks RM for agreeing to 6-week extension to deadline for submission of Old Aberdeen Character Appraisal, while corrections proposed by OAHS and OACC are considered.

9. CPZ Enforcement (GW)

- GW has requested information about enforcement, but City Wardens are unable to provide information specific to Old Aberdeen. Not clear how being enforced, if at all.

10. ACC Planning Failures issues – proposed meeting with ACC Chief Exec (GW)

- GW explains that Kevin Stewart MSP has offered to set up meeting with ACC Chief Exec to discuss Planning issues. CB proposes that OACC take up offer.
- RM explains that Planning is under-staffed and that performs better than many other Councils in Scotland, though JB observes that community is still being disadvantaged.

11. Planning issues

- JB reports that contractors were working at St Peters Square on Sunday, though this violates condition of planning permission. RM will follow up.

12. AUSA reps update

- EB reports that architect of refurbished Butchart Building is available for meeting on Monday 23 March at 5 pm in Butchart Building.

13. City Councillors' update

- RG reports that
 - Councillors are keen to get input from wider community about maintenance issues across Old Aberdeen and Tillydrone, including ongoing graffiti problem as well as fly-tipping in Tillydrone.
 - Wallace Tower development (including café and multi-purposes spaces) now has planning permission. Funding and other support is being sought, including from Marks & Spencers (who were responsible for moving the building from the city centre), as well as ACC, University and Balfour & Beatty.
- RM reports that toilet block on High Street now has planning permission, and is on the market.

14. Treasurer's report

- GM is waiting for audit of last year's accounts. £246 left in account but now expecting around £800 annual grant.

15. Reports of other meetings

- GM reports on Tillydrone meeting where planning permission for Wallace Tower was confirmed (see item 13).

16. Forthcoming meetings

- Further devolution – Stakeholder event: to take place on 19 Feb at 8-10 am in Copthorne Hotel.
- Forthcoming Friends of Seaton Park event to be posted on website:
www.seatonpark.oldaberdeen.org.uk

17. Correspondence

- CB and others have received invitation to sign up for online Old Aberdeen community. RM explains that this appears to be national organisation, which offering this to neighbourhoods across country.

18. Date and venue for next meeting: Tues 17 March in Old Aberdeen Townhouse, which will also be AGM.

19. AOCB

- AW reports that University is now preparing for refurbishment of facilities in several buildings on campus. Plans to build on Dunbar Halls site as well as Chaplaincy Centre are still in initial stages.