

# Old Aberdeen Community Council

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at 7.30 pm

Old Aberdeen Townhouse

## Minutes Revision 1

### 1. Present and apologies

- Present: Isobel Aitken (chair), Trevor Stack (minutes), Christine Burgess, George Wood, Dewi Morgan, Lekky Shepherd, Helen Leith, Cllr. Ross Grant, Danny Mackay (Evening Express), Daniel Laird (First Bus), Paul Foy, Gail Fletcher-Grasby, Robert Fletcher-Grasby, Amanda Pappin, Terry Farquharson, Barbara Ellis, Sally Jaspars, Kathleen Coull, Linda Winstone, Holly Bruce (AUSA), Genna Clarke (AUSA), Kelly Green (Police Scotland)
- Apologies: Gordon Mutch, Cllr. Ramsay Milne, Alan Wight (UoA)

### 2. Minutes of previous meeting: Approved

Matters arising: None

### 3. Police update

- Minor crimes including attempted robbery on Meston Walk.
- Resident reports issues with cars parked on pavement on King's Crescent.

### 4. Issues raised by residents of Orchard Street neighbourhood

- Resident A reports several incidents at night, at different addresses, including noise, urination, littering and damage to property. Noise abatement officers at ACC referred to non-emergency police number, but police unable to come out to call. Has attempted contact with students, as well as with landlords, with varying degrees of success. Asks if possible to use Anti-Social Behaviour legislation, and what other strategies considered. On the basis of this experience, previous experiences in the area and the location of Butchart, Resident A would oppose AUSA plans to obtain a licence.
- Resident B mentions student had thrown bottle out of house, nearly hitting her. Stresses that happy to have students in community, and that has not had such problems in future years.
- Resident C said after last night's disturbance that had never felt so intimidated in her own home. Had called 101 but no response, though eventually police did come when it was reported there seemed to be a danger of a fight. Kelly Green (Police) explains that often difficult to respond to non-emergency calls due to staffing. Resident D had asked 101 operator to be put through to station sergeant, but this request was refused.

- Cllr. Ross Grant asks if this is particular group and it seems that it is. Residents explain that not only is their behaviour extreme, but their response to being challenged is arrogant and abusive.
- Resident A notes that University should have disciplinary code to govern such cases, and she mentions example of Newcastle University's partnership strategy. Genna Clarke (AUSA) agrees to raise this at Court, on which she sits.
- George Wood is appalled that police would not come out to such a call, and asks why ACC noise abatement officers are refusing to come out.
- RG notes that typically when ASBO team come out, residents tend to lower volume until they leave, which is frustrating, and he promises to contact ASBO team and housing officers, as well as UoA's student affairs officer.
- Christine Burgess notes that HMO licenses can be refused if there are records of calls to police complaining about noise, and advises them to ensure that their calls are being recorded. CB also asks that AUSA writes to these addresses, pointing out that their actions are causing anger among residents. GC agrees to this, and especially since one of the groups had identified themselves as Aberdeen University Basketball Society.
- Holly Bruce (AUSA) notes that this issue is distinct from the issue of the proposed Butchart license, but the residents disagree with this and note that Butchart is only metres away from their houses.
- GW observes that there is purpose-built student accommodation directly behind his home, and yet he has hardly ever been disturbed by noise from this accommodation, which suggests that part of the problem is the conversion of family homes to HMOs, rather than building purpose-built accommodation.
- Resident D plays recording that he made inside his house of noise from the neighbouring house.
- On a separate note, Resident E objects to posters being placed all over campus, including on personal property, and not being removed. HB explains that these are mainly the work of nightclub's PR teams who come onto campus. GC proposes AUSA organize litter picks to remove some of these posters.
- GC reiterates that Butchart bar would, unlike rented houses, be regulated, giving example of St Andrews Students' Union, where there is similar space. Residents query whether it is possible to control consumption by students at bar, and note that St Andrews Union is advertised as the cheapest alcohol in town. Resident E observes that even if it were possible to regulate consumption and behaviour within Butchart bar, it will not be possible to regulate their behaviour outside the premises, when students leave.

#### 5. First Bus update (Daniel Laird, manager First Bus Aberdeen)

- GW asks why no. 20 route was changed without consultation. DL explains that there is notification of route changes, although it appears that only ACC were informed, and neither OACC nor AUSA. DL agrees to consult any further changes to no. 20 route with OACC and AUSA. He adds that increase in service frequency is of benefit to community, although HL notes that the service has become unreliable, seemingly since it has been rerouted via Torry. DL agrees to review changes to the route in the near future, and welcomes feedback from OACC.

- Other residents object to high price of fares. DL claims that some fares have come down, although this is disputed.
- CB asks why it has not yet been possible to issue the equivalent of an Oyster card, which would also reduce delays and therefore costs, and DL replies that this is currently high on his list of priorities.
- DL asks if residents would prefer to reroute the no. 20 back to Schoolhill, and they said it would be preferable, because the no. 1 and 2 buses already go to Union Street.
- HL queries about sale of land on King's Crescent for construction of student accommodation, but DL explains this is not the responsibility of First Bus Aberdeen, although he will make enquiries. HL and other residents note that it would be irresponsible, due to noise and other pollution issues, to build an accommodation block so close to the depot.

#### 6. Issues raised by residents of College Bounds

- Have to use communal bins of corner on Orchard Walk, and found that builders had dumped waste there. When they called ACC to request an uplift, they were told that Orchard Walk was a private road. RG will take this up with ACC officers.

#### 7. AUSA reps update

- HB reports on progress with Student Community Partnership, modelled on U York's, and invites input on issues to be addressed. Reiterates that they will follow up on the complaints by residents in Orchard Street area, including by speaking directly to them, and apologizes on behalf of those students.
- GC reports that AUSA has offered 4 refugee scholarships, and that AUSA charity activities have raised £420K in recent years for local charities.
- HB is making plans for Torcher parade, which is to include primary and secondary school children.
- With regard to Butchart, GC explains there was a project meeting in early September, and now they are drawing up a business case, prior to consultation.

#### 8. HMO Consultation

- CB explains that consultation is now being done via Survey Monkey. She explains that in Dundee different areas of the city are graded according to HMO overprovision, and this is used in deciding HMO license applications.
- HMO office is proposing a limit of 15% within designated areas taken from census, though GW and others query why this is not done using postcodes or other more familiar districts, since these would be easier for residents to monitor. CB notes that 15% is also a high percentage relative to other cities.

## 9. Planning issues

- GW notes further discrepancies in information available on Planning website, including 39 University Road. DM notes of 39 University Road that it will reduce the sunlight for surrounding houses, and green space.
- New student hall at Hillhead: similar height to other buildings, though it is possible it will make Seaton Park footpath darker and wetter. HL asks if the building can be moved back at all from the footpath, and DM suggests that path could be improved as planning gain. Will be discussed by email.
- Re. proposed King's Crescent development by Ardmuir Developments, only minimal information has been given at this pre-application stage, not enough for an effective consultation. CB will put in general comment from OACC. GW has written to Kevin Stewart MSP to ask what information is required by law at pre-application stage.
- Re. 39 Kings Crescent, GW notes the pillars are still not appropriate for a listed property.
- GW refers to letter which he circulated recently concerning un-minuted verbal assurances given by planning officers in pre-planning meetings, which applicants later discover are in contravention of ACC planning regulations, often wasting applicants' time too, as well as exceeding remit of planning officers.
- To discuss Conservation Area review document at November meeting. HL raises concerns, in particular, about appropriateness of endorsing UoA's Strategic Plan in the document, and asks OACC to write letter to request removing all references to UoA policy, since this is not germane. GW proposes that concern is raised with Ramsay Milne.

## 10. City Councillors' update

- To be submitted in writing.

## 11. Treasurer's report

- GM reports by email that finances are healthy.

## 12. Date and venue for next meeting

- Tuesday 17 November at 7.30 pm in Old Aberdeen Townhouse.