

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Minutes

7.30 pm on Tuesday 19th September 2017

Old Aberdeen Townhouse

1. Present and apologies

Present: Gordon Mutch (chair), Trevor Stack (minutes), Dewi Morgan, Isobel Aitken, Local resident, Ian Leask, Sally Jaspars, Eric Kiltie, Lorraine Grant, Alan Wight (UoA), PC Lyon, Michael Hutchison (ACC), Alexander McLellan (ACC), Emma Morrice (Evening Express)

Apologies: Teresa Harwood, Lewis Macleod (AUSA)

2. Minutes of previous meeting (attached) and matters arising

Minutes corrected and approved.

No matters arising.

3. Police update

- Several thefts since start of term but only few incidents of other crimes. Suggested that police and city wardens work together advise new students to look after possessions.

4. UoA update (Alan Wight)

- Proposed University Science building - need to meet student demand for high-class facilities as well responsibility for public engagement. Will only be laboratories. Will be located at periphery of conservation area on corner of Bedford Rd. and St. Machar Drive. Gross 6000 m² (much smaller than building previously planned) leaving space for possible additional building on corner. Public event next week to introduce plans, at back of ground floor of Sir Duncan Rice Library next Tuesday 26th September from 2 until 8 pm. No booking is required. Comments to be submitted to estates@abdn.ac.uk by Friday 13th October.
- Crombie and Johnston Halls are not currently being used because of low demand, because of lower student intake due to Scottish government cap and because students prefer high-quality self-catered accommodation, which now widely available elsewhere. Students wishing on-campus accommodation instead consolidated at Hillhead. Asked whether this is likely to make for an increase in demand for HMOs, though suggested that first years who would previously have stayed at Crombie are less likely to stay in HMOs.
- Bishop's Table to move out of Crombie though Starbucks will continue.
- Resident notes that application for student bar was not mentioned at June meeting prior to the application, even though Angus Donaldson had written letter in support of application and plans appear to date back to 2015. AW replies that he was not aware of the application at the time of the June meeting. Plans are currently under review by ACC.

5. First Bus update including issues with no. 20 schedule (if available)

- Reply received from David Phillips, First Aberdeen managing director, to OACC email expressing concerns about no. 20 not running on time on new route which goes to Torry. First Bus currently considering going back to old route, which ran from Hillhead only as far as centre of town.

- Several residents report concern about apparently random timing of no. 20 service, and at some Union Street stops there are not even timetables for the service. At previous meeting First Bus was warned that the last time the route was extended to Torry, there were similar delays. Acknowledged that those students living in Torry were happy with route.

6. Great Aberdeen Run – issues

- Resident regrets that what should have been landmark event for Aberdeen caused instead great resentment. The main issue was the cutting down of trees between Don Street and Cheyne Road. Councillor McLellan explained that problem was that car that led the race would be unable to pass. He admits that no notification was given and that it appears there was no legal mandate to fell the trees, though company is pointing to a legal discrepancy and arguing that the trees were not large enough for a Protection Order. Noted that soil was replaced on top of tarmac because race will be run again in future years, and that replaced soil is insufficient for trees even though there is a promise to plant a mature tree. Cllr. Grant notes that a better option might be substantial planters, though resident asks that trees should be replaced on another site, at least. Resident also notes that this is the only occasion this year in which a tree has been removed under the Roads Scotland Act 1984, and thus it appears possible that a Council officer failed to seek the requisite permission and thought only post hoc to look for a legal cover. Cllr. McLellan has raised the concerns with the Chief Executive and will consider whether the reply when received (now overdue) is adequate. Resident stresses that he hopes that if transpires that the removal was not legal, there should be undertaking that this will not happen again in city. Cllr. McLellan also agrees to ask for an additional bollard to prevent cars driving through the gap.
- In addition, change of route was not adequately communicated and little information about alternative parking. Other issues included lack of information given to race assistants who were not even provided with water. One assistant noted her supervisor had not been around and she had not been given her contact details in case of a problem. Moreover, a generator was placed at the top of High Street under a bedroom window, powering a music tent that was supposed to cheer on runners.

7. AUSA reps update (not present)

8. Seaton Park update

- Parkfest was reported a success, despite forecast of rain.

9. HMO issues

- 66 Tillydrone Ave: permission given on appeal but noted that residents were parking in garden, though appears now instructed not to do so.
- Council meeting discussed HMO Overprovision deciding not to introduce overprovision policy (though instructing officers to review options). GM notes that, despite years of campaigning by OACC, none of councillors spoke in support of OACC's position.
 - Cllr. Grant explains that he felt that if they had proceeded with policy it would have been susceptible to challenge, though DM replies that this is true of all policy and that Dundee's policy has never been challenged. DM points out that proposed policy should have followed Dundee policy, which would have made objections less likely, and not clear why did not. Resident reports that Dundee's policy is popular even with landlords, and appears that Scottish government has endorsed it.

- Cllr. Hutchison believes that more important to focus on enforcement of private sector housing, which in his opinion may solve many of the problems.
- Cllr. McLellan was not impressed by policy put before them, and was similarly concerned about possibility of legal challenge.
- Councillors agreed to support OACC in ensuring that the review promised by the Council officers, due to report back to the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee in January 2018, is an adequate one.

10. Planning issues

- No major issues to report.

11. City Councillors' update

- Cllr. McLellan: mentions proposed shrinking of CPZ to create parking in area of St Machar's.
- Cllr. Hutchison: gate on lane on King's Crescent is in process of being removed
 - resident reports that bins are being left on pavement on lane, while cars are parking on pavement during martial arts activity on Thursdays nights - Cllr. Hutchison to ask for bollard to be placed on pavement
 - same resident notes that only rubbish is being picked up, not leaves – Cllr. Hutchison to check policy

12. Treasurer's report

- Nothing to report

13. Reports of other meetings attended & forthcoming meetings

- Community Council Forum pending
- Community Development Trust, Tillydrone: Trust considering resilience before proceeding to next stage of Wallace Tower plans, including whether membership is strong enough

14. Date and venue for next meeting

- Tuesday 17th October at 7.30 pm in Old Aberdeen Townhouse

15. AOCB

- Agreed to accept offer by ACC officer to present Local Housing Strategy at next meeting.
- Resident notes that proposal to be discussed tomorrow by Finance Committee to allow sports field by Fire Station by Mounthooly to be redeveloped as building, which would be regrettable and a betrayal of trust.