

Old Aberdeen Community Council Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 19th March 2019

Minutes

1. *Present*

Gordon Mutch; Dewi Morgan; Isobel Aitken; Eric Kiltie, Daniel Warren, Lekky Shepherd; Teresa Harwood; Dell Henrickson

2. *Apologies*

Trevor Stack

3. *Minutes of last year's AGM*

Accepted and approved. Proposed: GM; seconded: DW

4. *Chairperson's Report*

Report attached

5. *Treasurer's Report and review of audited Annual Accounts*

There is a small uplift in funds we receive from the council based on population. OACC only gets by financially because of the good grace of the University allowing free use of the Town House for meetings.

Report accepted and approved: proposed: DM; seconded: TH

6. 5. *Confirmation of Office Bearers & tasks*

- Chairperson – Dewi Morgan
- Vice Chairperson - Isobel
- Treasurer – GM until March 2019, handing over to Erik Roslyayev
- Secretary – Trevor (in absentia)
- Web Admin – Daniel Warren
- Planning – Eric Kiltie
- Rep on the CC Forum – Isobel, Daniel, Dewi
- Rep on Civic Forum – Daniel Warren

7. *AOB*

Old Aberdeen Community Council Annual Report: 19th March 2019

(For the period January to December 2018)

Meetings:

The Community Council met throughout the year on the 3rd Tuesday of the month in the Old Town House. These meetings were well attended by members of the public from our area, our elected city council members, the police, Aberdeen University and student representatives.

OACC was also represented on the City's Community Council Forum.

Outreach to the community; by newsletter, notice board and website:

Keeping in contact with our local community is a key priority and much of the year's business is involved in reviewing and commenting on community planning issues. Whatever the issue, our intention is to reflect the wishes of the community within the requirements of local and national legislation and guidelines, while adding local knowledge and information where necessary.

Two issues of our newsletter 'The Auld Toon News' were distributed in May and in October, our Notice Board outside Dunbar Hall in Dunbar Street was updated as required and our website remains the key repository of past community council meeting minutes and newsletters.

Policing:

We had a regular monthly report from Police Scotland officers, who are based at Tillydrone Police Station. Our local police officers are informative and ready to engage with local issues.

Seaton Park:

The Friends of Seaton Park along with the gardeners continue to keep and improve Seaton Park in great condition, which over the last few years has seen a significant increase in people using the park.

Once again the Friends accrued a basketful of awards and during 2018 they accrued:

- Green Flag re-awarded
- Visit Scotland – 3 star Visitor Attraction (Quality Assurance Grading Report)
- It's Your Neighbourhood – "Outstanding" + Certificate of Distinction ("Certificate of Distinction" which recognises groups which have consistently grown and improved over the years from Keep Scotland Beautiful)
- Eco-City Award – Clean-Up Champion (Organisation)
- Royal Horticultural Society, Britain in Bloom – Gold in the City Category
- Royal Horticultural Society, Britain in Bloom – Judges Discretionary Award – Excellence in Growing Communities

The RHS awards are a part of the Aberdeen City Council application but the others are on our own merit.

The Friends also designed and painted a mural on the side of the Gardener's Bothy to discourage graffiti; successful, so far.

A table tennis table was installed near the car park area. This has been successful, but the hope to be able to provide tennis balls and bats has proved impossible with bats being wantonly broken.

The Friends continue to fight the litter problems with more bins, but what is needed is folk to just take their litter home

Not part of the Friends' activities but very much part of the Park; the Kayak landing area was comprehensively refurbished with a robust jetty and considerable efforts to stabilise the bank in this area.

The only major disappointment was that the popular 2018 ParkFest had to be cancelled. A number of factors forced this decision: there had been an increase in the regulations and paperwork for such events plus Aberdeen City Council this year cannot supply gazebos and furniture, together with the manpower for their erection. This created too much work for the small core management committee which, this year, is presently seriously depleted. The committee recognized that it was impossible to overcome these challenges in the timescale, and reluctantly decided to cancel.

Planning applications:

For all planning issues, the community council seeks to balance the need to sympathetically retain the heritage, charm and sheer variety of the Auld Toon area with the needs of its inhabitants and modern life.

Over the year as a statutory planning body we have continued to examine and comment on proposals within our area. 2018 was relatively quiet on this front, overall, but with a few significant applications.

- The refusal in 2017 of the planning application for turning the Georgian house at 15 High Street into a pub was appealed to the Scottish Government in 2018. The Old Aberdeen Community Council, along with a great number of other interested parties and individuals objected and, ultimately, the appeal was refused. We were particularly pleased to note that the Reporter recognised the High Street area as being an 'established residential enclave' that should be protected.
- The former Bank of Scotland building was acquired by Aberdeen University and reconfigured into a Student InfoHub. This raised a number of sound attenuation issues that needed to be addressed. While this usage keeps a highly visible building in use, it does also take up the last substantial retail outlet available on the High Street.
- A major planning application by the University progressed during the year for a Science Teaching Hub, to be located adjacent to St Machar Drive and Bedford Road.

I think it is worth noting that of the 55 applications that were introduced for the Old Aberdeen area during 2018, the community council felt comment was necessary for just five.

It is also worth mentioning that during 2018, The Shelter Café was finally completed and opened at year end, transforming what had been a (council owned) long term eyesore.

St Peter's School:

It is generally acknowledged that the current facilities at St Peter's are no longer able to meet the governmental requirements for the number of children now attending. The outcome from the consultations carried out in 2017 would appear to be a Council decision that the school shall move into the present Riverbank School facilities, once a new building has been built for that school

On that basis, a further consultation was instigated to consider various incremental options, but all associated with a move to Riverside. The Community Council regrets that St Peter's would be moving out of Old Aberdeen and away from the University, with which it has long been associated.

The Great Aberdeen Run:

Well, this was somewhat better organised this time.

Still unresolved is the temporary garden across Don Street at Cheyne Road.

The organising group was also somewhat lax in removing temporary signage.

And lastly:

I would like to welcome our new community councillors who joined us in October and I hope that they will find the opportunity to get involved to be as interesting, and educational, as I still do!

I would like thank all the members of the Community Council who give up their time to read documents, attend meetings, write letters and distribute newsletters. I would also like to thank local residents, our city councillors, the police, university staff and students for their continuing commitment to the Auld Toon.

Dewi Morgan

Chair of Old Aberdeen Community Council

19th March 2019