

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Monthly bulletin – April 2020

Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, the Old Aberdeen Community Council has been forced to cancel their monthly meetings so we will issue a monthly bulletin to all the people who normally receive our meeting agendas and minutes of meeting. The bulletin will approximately follow our usual agenda structure. We always welcome input, either in response to items in this bulletin, or on anything else of concern or interest to the local community that can be included in the next update.

Police update

Key incidents within area-

- On 9 April 2020 an ongoing housebreaking was reported with two males identified as responsible. Officers searched the area tracing those responsible. The stolen property was recovered nearby. A report was submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.
- On 31 March 2020 a male was reported as trying door handles within the King Street vicinity. A number of officers were deployed to the area whereby the male was traced. Extensive enquiries identified witnesses who indicated that the male was in possession of tools which were also found nearby. It was believed that the male was actively seeking to break into properties. The male has since been remanded in prison.
- On 31 March 2020 a male was traced in possession of 472 tablets believed to be controlled drugs. This male is being dealt with as being concerned in the supply of controlled drugs.
- On 3 April 2020 a male was reported for making efforts to steal a bike with a tool. The male was traced and found in possession of a hammer. It is thought that tracing the male swiftly contributed to further offences being committed.

Community Policing Priorities

Antisocial behaviour, Violence and Disorder:

- There were 4 reports of threatening or abusive behaviour, none of which occurred alongside Hate Crimes. All of these have been detected.
- There were 2 Assaults recorded during this period, none of which involved the use of weapon. Both of these have been detected.
- There has been 1 case reported in relation to possession of controlled drugs, including class A and B. There has also been 1 case reported in relation to supply of controlled drugs. The male responsible has been dealt with and enquiries are ongoing.
- There have been 2 reported domestic incidents during this reporting period which relates to threatening and abusive behaviours. 1 of the crimes has been detected with efforts being made to trace the suspect in relation to the other incident.

Acquisitive Crime:

- During this period, there have been 4 theft by shopliftings and 10 other instances of non-dwelling thefts recorded. 6 instances of dwelling thefts were also recorded. Of these recorded acquisitive crimes, 7 have been detected.

Road Safety & road crime:

- In this time period there was 4 crimes recorded in relation to Road Traffic offences, all of which have been detected. These detected offences include priority offenders who have been charged with dangerous driving, theft of a motor vehicle, driving under the influence of drink and drugs as well as failing to stop for Police.

Community Engagement & Reassurance

- With the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic Locality Officers have been tasked with high visibility patrols to encourage social distancing and compliance with the new Covid 19 legislation. Officers are providing guidance and education focusing particularly on open spaces, such as Seaton Park as well as the University of Aberdeen campus.
- Noting a rise in instances of acquisitive crime, Locality officers supplemented by officers from the Seaton and Tillydrone Community Policing Teams have been conducting high visibility patrols within the Old Aberdeen Community Council area. It is a credit to these high visibility patrols that those conducting crimes in action have been tracing swiftly.
- In order to address instances of acquisitive crime on the University of Aberdeen campus Locality Officers are to meet with University security. Here target hardening advice will be provided, as well as identifying opportunities for co-operative work to lessen criminality in the area.

UoA update

- Johnston redevelopment
Planning application due to be determined by 9 May 2020 – unclear if this will still happen due to Covid-19 restrictions
- King's development
The Project Board has recently confirmed that design development can continue through to and including the submission of a planning application. The timescale for this submission is still to be determined. If we are still in lockdown or other restrictions I will share information with you/OACC in advance of when it is submitted in an attempt to normalise the process.
- King's and Hillhead multi use games areas (MUGAs)
Project suspended due to Covid-19 restrictions
- Old Aberdeen accessible route
Project suspended due to Covid-19 restrictions
- Secret Garden, College Bounds
Recent reports from residents in College Bounds properties of non-resident children (accompanied by an adult) being allowed to cycle over the newly planted beds/flowers, pulling out newly planted bulbs and digging in beds planted with vegetables. Also pulling out signs warning of newly planted areas. This is extremely disappointing for the Secret Garden Society who are working hard to provide an amenity space for the whole community. Should such vandalism continue the University may have to reconsider the access arrangements to the space. Can we ask the OACC's continued support for this initiative and encourage anyone using the space to be respectful.
- Hillhead external open space
Planning approval obtained. No timescale for works being undertaken.

AUSA reps update

From a representative for the Secret Garden Society (the garden is at the back of College Bounds, accessible from the Butchart):-

- Gatherings by the Society have been suspended (since mid March) and most of our members (students) returned home for the summer. The students left have been given simple tasks to do in the garden by themselves or with a member of their household.
- There have been complaints about people meeting in the garden.
- Another issue we have encountered is children using the water from our collection tanks (which are now empty, because it hasn't properly rained in more than a month). A note has been added to the tank in front of the shed for clarification and hopefully it will rain again soon.
- Lastly some of the flower bulbs planted at the back of the garden (North strip) have been pulled out of the ground. It's a shame this happened and I think it would be great to remind the neighbours that we are trying to create a welcome and flourishing environment for them as much as for us.

Seaton Park update

- The park remains open to provide the much-needed green space for the community. Those members of FoSP who have continued to use it have reported social distancing is being generally well observed.
- Work within the park was halted with the gardeners, Derek and Kat, being sent home at the start of lock-down.
- Judging for all the annual awards (Britain in Bloom etc etc) has been put on hold.
- Green flag reassessment may be done as a desk-base exercise (using data from earlier in the year plus previous submissions) with some 'mystery shopper' visits where possible from staff living in the locality.

Planning issues

The following table summarises the extant planning applications and the **red text** denotes changes since our last Bulletin.

NO.	SUMMARY	CONSULTATION EXPIRY DATE	OACC COMMENTS
200022/DPP	75 University Road. Erection of single storey extension and demolition of outhouse to rear.	13 Feb Refused! See note below.	No comment
200034/DPP	6 The Orchard, Spital Walk. Installation of replacement of front door.	24 Feb Withdrawn by applicant	'Neutral' comment submitted by OACC.
200072/LBC	St Machar's Cathedral. Internal and external alterations including removal of doors and installation of timber louvre; re-slating of pitched roofs; etc. -	24 Feb Approved	No comment
200074/DPP	Botanic Gardens UoA. Formation of ramped access, erection of gates and bin storage area. -	12 Feb Pending	No comment
200163/LBC	UoA Humanity Manse, 19 College Bounds. Demolition of a freestanding timber garage.	6 March Approved	No comment
200269/DPP	Macrobert Building (roof-top) – UoA. Installation of roof-top radio apparatus and alterations to existing telecommunications installations with ancillary works.	18 March Pending	No comment

NO.	SUMMARY	CONSULTATION EXPIRY DATE	OACC COMMENTS
200273/DPP	The Studios, Nether Don. Installation of replacement window (retrospective)	01 April Pending	No coment
200314/DPP 200316/CAC	UoA Johnston Halls of Residence. Demolition of refectory and erection of business school. Refurbishment and change of use from halls of residence (sui generis) to office accommodation for university staff and students and associated landscaping and works	08 April 10 April	No comment proposed
200380/DPP	39 King's Crescent. Erection of shed to rear and enlargement of window to form door (retrospective)	22 April	Some strong differences of opinion within OACC as to whether we should object and if so on what basis. No objection was submitted.
200391/DPP 200392/LBC	10 The Chanonry Aberdeen. Alterations to convert to a single dwelling; erection of single storey extension and installation of rooflights to rear; alterations to windows and doors; alterations to boundary wall; internal alterations to doors and partitions with associated works Open for comment icon	05 May	Circulated for discussion. OAHS have flagged up their concerns regarding the modern style extension at the rear.
200404/PAN	152 Don Street Former UoA OTC Building. Major residential development of circa 86 flats, car parking, amenity space, ancillary works including demolition of existing building	'Further consultation required'	No comment
N/A	22 April. Received an informal pre-application consultation regarding a proposed new Vodafone 5G mast on King St near the former OTC building	Response requested within 2 weeks	Circulated for discussion.

200022/DPP Erection of single storey extension and demolition of outhouse to rear at 75 University Rd

The following 'Reason for Refusal' is very decisive and provides a clear precedent for limiting large extensions within the Conservation Area:

"Whilst some aspects of the proposal are considered acceptable, the erection of the single storey extension would effectively create a prominent, modern conservatory, constructed of a poor quality material which would be unsympathetic to the design and form of the original building. The proposed extension would detrimentally affect the character and appearance of the area and therefore fails to comply with the Householder Development Guide, Policy D1 (Quality Placemaking by Design), D4 (Historic Environment) and Policy H1 (Residential Areas) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

The unsympathetic extension would fail to integrate with the original building, which would be visible from a public viewpoint. Alterations to properties in the surrounding area largely reflect what is currently existing at No. 75 University Road and therefore, this modern addition would be at odds with the context of the area. The extension would have a detrimental and therefore negative impact on the character and appearance of the Old Aberdeen Conservation Area and therefore, fails to comply with Scottish Planning Policy, Historic Environment Policy for Scotland and Policy D4 (Historic Environment) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

Additionally, down-takings from any demolition work will not be retained or re-used within the proposal or development site. Therefore, the proposal fails to comply with Policy D5 (Our Granite Heritage) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan.

Policies in the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2020 substantively reiterate those in the Adopted Local Development Plan and therefore the proposal fails to comply with the relevant policies of both plans”.

‘Community Vision for Old Aberdeen’ - progress update

Enhancement of Tourism

An informal steering group comprising representatives from Old Aberdeen Community Council, University of Old Aberdeen, The Cathedral Church of St Machar and the Old Aberdeen Heritage Society.

1. Wayfinder maps and public benches
 - Submitted pre-application request for written response regarding installation of wayfinder maps and their locations. Have received reply.
 - Submitted pre-application request for written response regarding installation of public benches and their locations. Awaiting response.

I will circulate ACC’s comments once I have received their reply regarding benches.

The UoA Media Services department has volunteered to have a go at drawing up the wayfinder maps. Early drafts look good and progress continues.

2. Cycling issues

This is focused on two issues; cyclists on pavements, and the poor quality of the design of the existing cycle routes. Having discussed the issues at length with Aberdeen Cycle Forum and University of Aberdeen’s Campus Cycling Officer, a number of issues were raised with ACC in October. A response was received on 20th March. The contents of the ACC reply will be considered and responded to in due course.
3. Dog mess on the pavements.

This issue is awaiting resources to develop and submit a proposal to ACC for temporary signage.

Other Community Vision for Old Aberdeen Issues

Community Vision for Old Aberdeen issues not yet commenced:

- Identify streets with major problems with bins left on pavements
- Assemble team to develop a conservation area leaflet – OAHS, ACC, OACC.

Other local issues

1. Chanonry road surface and possibility of adoption by ACC.

Issue is sitting with owners of the frontage properties. OACC providing support as required.
2. Proposed Local Development Plan.

Awaiting its issue at which time we will need to review and comment, particularly regarding the issue of HMO limits.

City Councillors’ update

Present priority for the Council and Councillors is the Corvid-19 epidemic and its huge impact upon the city residents, so no Councillor update presently available.

The following items remain in the ‘pending’ basket.

- Update on missing College Bounds bus gate camera.

Bus gate with registration identification camera was to be provided and promised by July 2019. Still outstanding. Cllr. AMcL to clarify status and resolution.
- Repair of Town House clock - miss-striking and light out.

Apparent fund shortage prevents execution of the work until new financial year (April?). Cllr. AMcL to progress.

- Police have been contacted regarding possible speeding on Spital. However main feedback from residents regarding speeding has been regarding Don Street on the stretch Seaton Park entrance to Hillhead.

Cllr Macdonald forwarded an update on Aberdeen City Council's priority work areas:

Last week, ACC focused on

- Protecting front line workers through the enhanced capacity for testing
- Protecting vulnerable populations by making over 5,300 calls to those in the shielding category
- Preparing for the extension of business grants and support to the self-employed.

Focus for this week:

- Getting ready for our young people to return to our digital classrooms
- Launching Domestic Abuse Victim Support guidance for our staff, because there are specific challenges and potential risks for those experiencing domestic abuse as a result of staying at home
- Continuing our focus on sourcing and distributing PPE and providing clear escalation routes for all staff in case of shortages or concerns.

Treasurer's report

Not received.

Hopefully progress is being made towards getting annual accounts for 2019 approved.

Reports of meetings, opportunities etc.

Other meetings

Nothing to report

Open consultations

ACC website

- Essential Digital Skills Postal Version. Closes 30 June.

ScotGov website

- Nothing at the moment but Police Scotland are inviting responses to the following survey which focuses on how they are dealing with the CORVID-19 situation:

<https://consult.scotland.police.uk/surveys/your-police-2020-2021/>

(Closes 31 Mar 2021 but input is reviewed regularly).

Representations from members of the public and AOB

Nothing received.

Report by Dewi Morgan, OACC Chair 23 April 2020