

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Tuesday 21st April 2015 at 7.30 pm

Old Aberdeen Townhouse

Minutes

1. Present: Gordon Mutch (chair), Trevor Stack (minutes), George Wood, Christine Burgess, Dewi Morgan, Jacinta Birchley, Cllr. Ramsay Milne, Ronald Leith, Helen Leith, Alan Wight (UoA)
Apologies: Isobel Aitken, Lekky Shepherd, Cllr. Jean Morrison
2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising
 - Minutes approved of AGM and March meeting
 - Matters arising: none
3. Police update
 - Person responsible for Brig of Balgownie graffiti has been arrested and charged, and there has been no further graffiti in the area since then. RM thanks on behalf of ACC since there had been many complaints.
 - Operation Rowan is ongoing.
4. HMOs
 - GM reports on recent meeting with City Council, where it was evident that Council had already decided not to respond to OACC's concerns about HMO over-provision in Old Aberdeen. OACC have since then sent an email objecting to this to the 6 local councillors and Kevin Stewart MSP.
 - RM proposes that OACC should press ACC to set upper limits for % HMOs in specific postcode districts, since unlikely to do so for whole of Old Aberdeen. He explains even this would be difficult, because there is currently no will in the Council to take action, but it might be feasible since there are already % reported for each postcode district, and some of them are high.
 - CB points out that in her own street, 50% of houses are already HMOs, and asks what % would be considered the upper limit. She also asks whether it's worth going to upcoming licensing hearings, since it appears that the outcome is already given.
 - RM explains that the current legislation does allow for refusing HMO licenses due to "over-provision" but this has not been defined, and Scottish Executive have not clarified this. GW points out that best way of clarifying this is in court, where "over-provision" would need to be defined by judge. RM responds that HMO providers tend to have good lawyers. He repeats that currently no political will among councillors to clarify, and University is likely to oppose more specific policy (although Jacinta points out that it poses a problem for Uni staff

family accommodation). HL counters that Dundee has more specific policy and have not faced legal challenge, although RM believes this is to be explained by lower rents in Dundee, such that HMOs are less lucrative to begin with.

- Agreed to continue writing letters of objection to ongoing HMO licensing applications, including in CB's street, while RM investigates the possibility of developing a more specific policy—and will report on this to CB before the next licensing meeting (May 12).

5. Mitchell Hospital update

- Trustees have said that if community can find way to raise capital, they will consider proceeding. They are also looking at proposal to charge modest rent, although some see this as violating principle of Trust.

6. Seaton Park update

- Cakefest raises funds for Seaton Park Friends.
- ACC plans to work on drainage this summer, as well as play area.

7. Aberdeen (Proposed) Local Development Plan 2015

- GW to read.

8. Next Old Aberdeen newsletter

- DM invites articles, including on HMO provision—CB and GW agree to do this.

9. Planning issues

- OACC submitted objection to Crombie Hall proposal.
- 66 Tillydrone Ave proposed extension: draft letter of objection circulated.
- Objection raised to plan to fell trees in Cruickshank Garden.
- AW explains that UoA capital plans have been suspended, pending approval of 2015-20 Strategic Plan.
- DM reports on meeting of neighbours of Butchart, who were supportive of refurbishment of building but objected to granting of drinks license. Richard Baker MSP was planning to speak to the Principal.

10. AUSA reps update (including Butchart redevelopment)

- Emily Beever provided update by email:
 - Further meeting on Butchart is pending UoA's capital projects being resumed.
 - AUSA have conducted litter pick up and would be happy to offer garden maintenance.
 - AUSA proposes student community partnership strategy, possibly involving RGU and NES College, following model of York University.

11. City Councillors' update

- RM explains that decrease in electors registered in Old Aberdeen, which has led to decrease in OACC annual grant, is likely to be due to poor registration drive by Electoral Commission. CB proposes that incoming AUSA President looks into ways to encourage students to register.

12. Treasurer's report

- Finances remain healthy.

13. Reports of other meetings

- See reports above.
- Tillydrone Community Development Trust is working on 5-year building plan for Wallace Tower. Balfour Beatty has agreed to provide in-kind support, which may also help to secure funding.

14. Forthcoming meetings

- Friends of Seaton Park to hold AGM at 7.30 pm on 11 May in Dunbar Hall.

15. Correspondence

- None.

16. Date and venue for next meeting

- 7.30 pm on Tuesday 19 May in Old Aberdeen Townhouse.

17. AOCB

- JB reports building work in her vicinity with noisy generator that starts at 7.30 am. TS to request developer to use less noisy generator or alternative supply, especially since registered as Considerate Constructors.