

The Auld Toon News

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Issue 7 - September 2008

The news-sheet of the
Old Aberdeen
Community Council



Local Issues

There are a number of issues on which the Community Council will need to take a position over the coming months, for instance: - the proposed controlled parking zone, the third Don crossing, the on-going review of St Peter's Catholic Primary School. We have summarised what we see as the main issues on pages 2 and 3, along with the stance the OACC proposes to take. The OACC would really like your feed back on what is important to you.

Dunbar Street Hall

Did you know that a major refurbishment and upgrade of Dunbar Street Hall has started this month? This long awaited upgrade will bring the facilities in line with current legislation. And once the work is complete, it will be much more usable for everyone.



The refurbishment includes:

- A completely new kitchen area, so hot and cold food can once again be prepared and served
- New toilets including a disabled toilet
- Redecoration

Why not book the hall for your next family celebration or club event?

Once the hall is up and running again, the OACC plans to start to hold occasional meetings here so that locals who find the Town House stairs too difficult can attend.

Secretary needed!

The Community Council is urgently seeking a minutes secretary who can attend the monthly two-hour meetings, then write up and distribute the minutes.

A modest payment can be offered.

Old Aberdeen Notice Board



Have you seen our new notice board? It's in Dunbar Street, at the side of the Hall. We will try and use this to let you know of forthcoming events in the area, and post up the meeting minutes of the Community Council. You may also want to advertise your local event here - if so, contact the Community Council Secretary or Chair.

New web site!! This issue, we would particularly like to draw your attention to our revitalised and interactive web site at www.oldaberdeen.org.uk . More about this inside... .

Local Issues

There are a number of issues on which the Community Council will need to take a position over the coming months and we have summarised the main issues below, along with the stance the OACC proposes to take. We are very keen to hear your opinions on this as we do want to correctly reflect the opinion of the community.

St Peters Catholic Primary School

Parents are concerned that the future of St Peters Catholic Primary School is under discussion.

The OACC propose to resist any possible closure of St Peters as we believe the retention of a small, quality school within the community is a positive influence we want to keep.

The Third Don Crossing.

This is obviously back on the City Council agenda, as it has been included in the draft Local Structure Plan. While everyone can see there is real traffic congestion each day around the two Don crossings, there is great concern that a crossing positioned between the two bridges will put enormous strain on Hayton, Tillydrone, St Machar Drive and Old Aberdeen and may well cause grid lock during the rush hours, while the roads across to Woodside may turn into rat runs.

The City Council does not appear to have any meaningful long term plan for developing public transport, so while the buses get more expensive by the year (the most expensive in Scotland?) and initiatives like a suburban train line get pushed off into the distant future, the roads fill up with more and more cars and the Council adds on 'improvements' piece-meal.

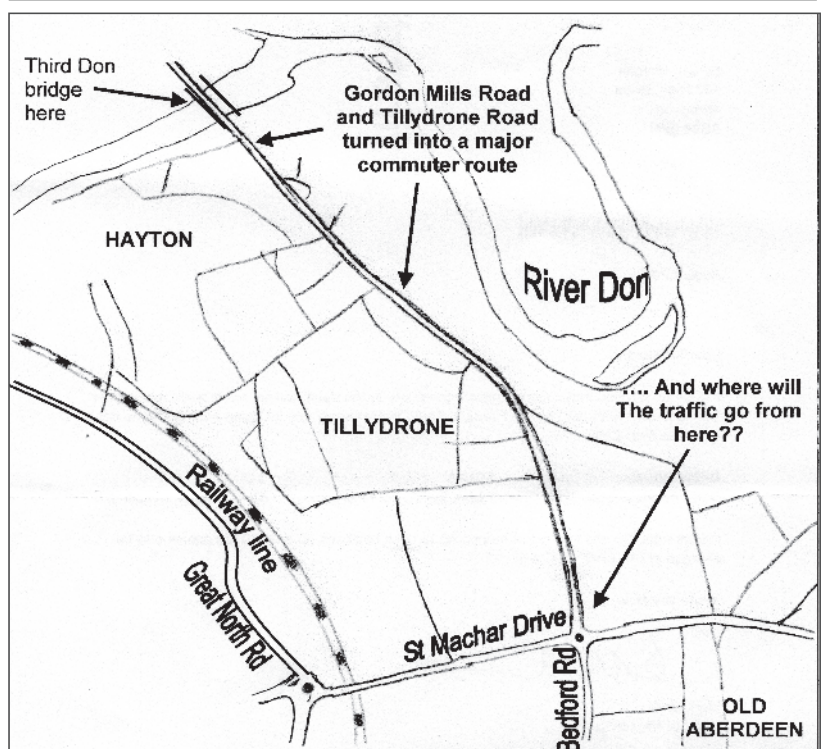
The OACC proposes to resist the third Don crossing unless it is a part of a sensible plan for traffic flow that meets local needs and properly addresses how the traffic will disperse from each side of the bridge. We also want to see the council put much more effort into providing cheaper and faster public transport that will encourage drivers to leave their cars at home.

Controlled parking zone



The City Council is hoping to bring in a very large controlled parking zone on the back of the planning permission granted for the new university library. The reason given is that the University will lose over a hundred existing parking spaces as part of the development, this will push students and staff to park in the surrounding streets. Controlled parking could be a good idea as it would help to ensure that residents will be able to find a parking spot close to their homes, - but is it reasonable that everyone should pay £50 a year for their parking, which is the current rate in the rest of Aberdeen? This could apply not just to Old Aberdeen, but possibly in Seaton and Tillydrone as well.

Why should residents over a wide area have to pay more to have a car, just because the University wants to build a new, large library on their car park? Consultation is still some months off, so we would very much like to hear your comments so we can accurately reflect community opinion.



Map showing route of previous proposal

Local Issues (continued)

Security for students

This is an issue that has been championed by the University student representative for some time and that the OACC has been pleased to support.

New lights have been installed along the High Street - shown below, and other improvements have been made on the walking route to Hillhead.

The OACC will continue to ensure that the lighting improvements promised along Don Street will indeed be progressed to completion.



Students should remember that the safest way to walk back to Hillhead late at night is along Don Street, not through Seaton Park.

Small Improvements Grant

Each year since 2006 the Community Council has been given a small grant to enable it to fund small projects within the community. So far we have been able to help St Peter's Primary School buy playground equipment and support Dunbar Street Hall with its renovations.

This year's grant has still to be allocated and we would very much like to hear from you with any ideas you may have for projects or improvements or equipment that might be needed and that will help folk in the Old Aberdeen Community Council area. Enquiries to mail@OACC.org.uk

Other local issues

The OACC will also be keeping our eye on the following issues which have been raised as concerns within the community:

- The University appears to be 'land banking' significant amounts of property in Old Aberdeen, allowing some of it to fall into a ruinous state.
- The empty site in Don Street - where the Dunbar Halls of Residence used to be.
- Traffic using The Spital / College Bounds / High Street as a rat-run.

If you feel we have left out something important, or if you think we should change the priorities; - let us know your views.

We do particularly want to hear your opinion on these or any other issues that are important to you because the Community Council exists to focus and represent the wishes of the community to the City Council and other relevant bodies.

Perhaps the lighting in your area not good enough? Or is your street being used as a rat run? Do you feel that the City Council is not meeting your needs?

The Community Council has been involved for several months with Community Planning Officials in drawing up a Neighbourhood Community Action Plan.

This is nearing its final draft form and will be an important focus document for the whole community. We will post the draft version on the web as soon as we can but in the meantime if there is anything you feel strongly should be included, please do get in touch with us. The plan will be discussed at the next meeting of OACC on 23 September, why not come and join our discussion? (7.30pm, at the Old Aberdeen Town House).

This is *your* Community Council - do use us.

Our web site

(www.oldaberdeen.org.uk) - has been completely re-designed over the last several months and is now up and running, though it will continue to develop as more information is added.

The site is divided into a number of sections: Local Facilities, Community Council, Tourist Information and Heritage & Conservation.

The intention is to develop a resource that should be useful and of interest to the local community, incomers, tourists; and the casual web browser too.

Within the Community Council section, we will keep you posted on all the issues relevant to the area, - the OACC monthly meeting minutes, plus any other documents that might be of interest to the community. You will also find a list of all the local planning applications.

An important change to the website is that it can now be used as a forum for feedback and comments from

anyone in the Old Aberdeen Community area. Anyone can sign up and start posting on this site. For those not too familiar with the internet, this means you can write a response to anything you read on our web site. Your comment, in turn, can be read by others and commented upon too so, when the process works well, it is possible to build up a dialogue on issues of interest to all in the community.

If all this internet stuff is new to you, you will find an article on the web site (under the Community Council tab) that will take you through this process, step by step, or if you are still having difficulties, you could drop a line to web.admin@oldaberdeen.org.uk and we will do our best to help.

There is also room for us to add a news item about any public event you are holding - just drop a line to web.admin@oldaberdeen.org.uk.

Please take time to have a look at the web site and let us know your thoughts ... and please start using the site!!

The Old Aberdeen Community Council area

If you live in the area between Bedford Road and King street, and between Sunnybank Road and the River Don, then you are part of the Old Aberdeen Community and the OACC is here to support you.

Next OACC meetings

The Community Council meets (usually) on the third Tuesday of every month at 7:30pm, usually in the Old Aberdeen Townhouse:

- September 23rd
- October 21st
- November 18th
- December 9th

Dates may change, and we may hold the December meeting in Dunbar St Hall if it's ready - so please check for updates

Do arrive before 7:30 as we have to lock the door!

While the Town House is our main meeting place, we also want to hold Council meetings in Dunbar Street Hall, perhaps once every 3 months, as this will provide an opportunity to attend for those who find the Town House stairs too difficult. We can't let you know which meetings will be in Dunbar St Hall yet, until the refurbishment is complete, but we will post the details on our web site and on the notice board, but if you are not sure, just drop us a line or talk to one of the OACC members.

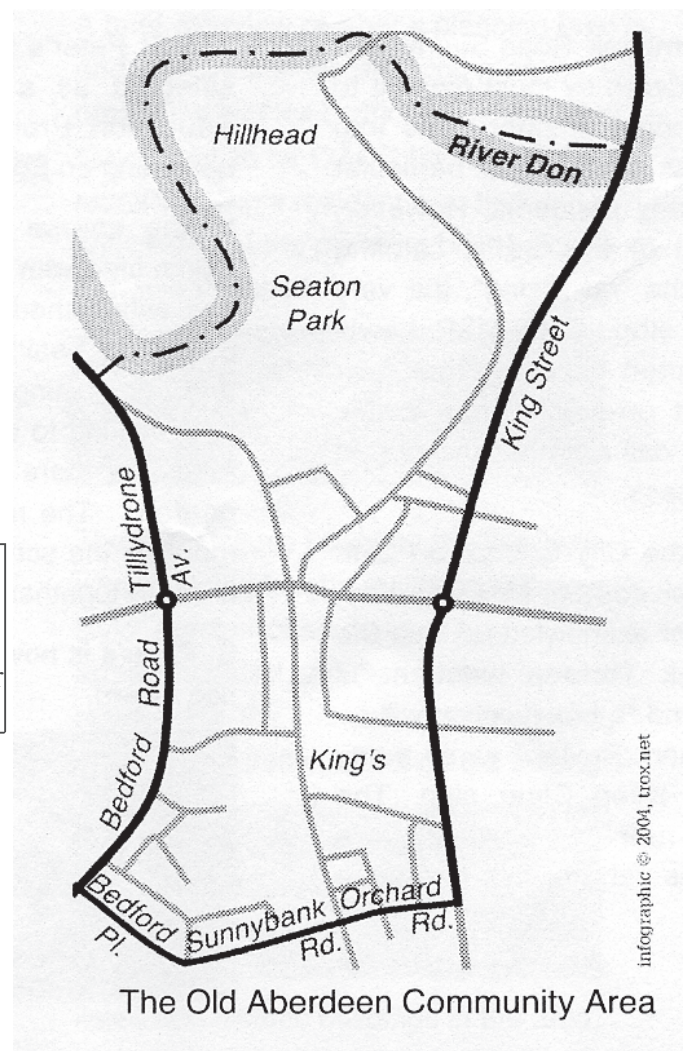
These are always public meetings and you will be very welcome, whether it is to raise a specific issue, or just to see what is going on.

**** This is *your* Community Council ****

Meet the Old Aberdeen Community Council: -

The Community Council can be contacted at: mail@OACC.org.uk, or speak to any of the members:

Christine Burgess	Chair	6 St Machar Place, Old Aberdeen AB24 3SF
Simon Barker	Vice chair	5 High Street, Old Aberdeen AB24 3EE
Isobel Aitken	Treasurer	1 High Street, Old Aberdeen AB24 3EE
Clive Kempe		7 Sunnyside Terrace, Aberdeen AB24 3NB
Gordon Mutch		5 The Chanonry, Old Aberdeen AB24 1RP
Morag Paterson		28 College Bounds, Old Aberdeen AB24 3DS
David Hutchinson		51 Don Street, Old Aberdeen AB24 1UH
Graham MacKechnie		8 Harrow Road, Old Aberdeen AB24 1UN
Graham Abraham		Netherdon, Don Street, Old Aberdeen AB24 1XP
Dewi Morgan	Web Admin (co-opted member)	107 High Street, Old Aberdeen AB24 3EN



Don't forget to check out our web-site at www.oldaberdeen.org.uk