

## Old Aberdeen Community Council

Minute of the meeting held on **Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2011** at the Old Aberdeen Town House.

### 1. Present

Christine Burgess (Chair), Clive Kempe, Dewi Morgan, Gordon Mutch.

#### Also Present

Cllr Jim Noble, Gordon Simpson (Grampian Police), Kevin Guyan (Secretary).

#### Apologies

Isobel Aitken (Treasurer), Hilda Meers, Katja Brittain, Trevor Stack, Cllr Richard Robertson, Cllr Norman Collie, Robin Parker (AUSA), Abdul Latif, Raymond Kelly.

### 2. Minutes of Previous Meetings and Matters Arising

The minute of OACC's March minute was passed, proposed by Gordon Mutch, seconded by Christine Burgess.

The minute of OACC's April minute was passed, proposed by Dewi Morgan, seconded by GM.

CB reported that she has spoken to Jo Martin, Headteacher at St Peter's Primary, who explained that the school is doing as well as can be expected during this period of cuts. CB explained that should OACC be of any assistance, she should feel free to get in touch.

CB noted that she has emailed Bill Farquhar, ACC, with OACC's concerns regarding the Northern Lights Festival, adding that Steven Shaw, Environmental Manager, ACC, was carbon-copied into the email and has responded noting that the concerns of the community council mirror his thoughts. Jim Noble added that he recently spoke to Rachel Sandison, one of the event's organisers, about the need to ensure that all local residents are fully notified of the festival.

CB explained that she has also recently contacted Doug Ritchie, ACC, about the planned action regarding the College Bounds bus gate and is awaiting a reply. However, Angus Donaldson, University of Aberdeen, has emailed CB noting the university's support of OACC's position on the matter.

The owner of Brig House contacted OACC to explain the situation regarding the property's wall, after reading of the discussion in our latest minute. It was explained that the wall has not increased in height and work strictly followed the heritage guidelines of ACC. CB expressed her gratitude to the occupant for getting in touch and answering OACC's queries.

CB reported that OACC has now received its annual grant for the year ahead.

CB expressed thanks on behalf of OACC to DM for his efforts in producing and organising circulation of the most recent edition of Auld Toon News, the newsletter of Old Aberdeen.

CB noted that community councillors are invited to visit the new High Street Museum and meet with Neil Curtis, University of Aberdeen. It was agreed that Tuesday 24 May at 6.30 pm would be a suitable time and date. **ACTION:** Kevin Guyan to circulate. CB added that she has also spoken with the Personal Assistant of Chris Gane, University of Aberdeen, about an invite to visit the new library and Chris Gane's next meeting with representatives of the local communities,

dates are yet to be finalised.

### 3. Police Update

Gordon Simpson distributed copies of the most recent Police Report.

GS highlighted the relatively low figures for the Old Aberdeen area and explained that certain figures in the top table may not always correspond with similar figures on the bottom table; this is usually due to legal distinctions (ie. substance abuse does not always involve illegal drugs). It was highlighted that the four fires during the last period may be linked to BBQs in Seaton Park.

GM asked whether the theft from a motor vehicle occurred at St Machar Cathedral as he was aware of an offence of this nature being committed during Sunday service. GS explained that this is not the crime in question but took note of the need for officers or community wardens to monitor this area during events at the Cathedral.

CB noted that Robin Parker, AUSA, requested that a rise in bicycle thefts be brought to the attention of Grampian Police. GS noted that crimes of this nature are not included in the distributed Police Report but will endeavour to contact Robin Parker about these concerns. DM asked whether marking bicycles with invisible postcodes would be of any benefit. GS noted that this does make the process of returning stolen items easier but that students at Hillhead would also need to mark their room number as they all share the same postcode. **ACTION:** KG to forward Robin Parker's email address.

### 4. Planning

**CPZ** - It was highlighted that a meeting has been held at Sunnybank Primary to discuss the Controlled Parking Zone. JN explained that he attended the meeting and was surprised by how little many residents knew about the scheme and the current stage of the process. It was noted that those organising the meeting intend to deliver a petition to ACC and make a deputation at the next planning meeting. There was agreement among OACC members that these actions are unfortunately too late to make any difference to ACC's plans. The possibility of streets being removed from the CPZ was also discussed, although this would require changes to the scheme at a national level as the current boundaries are legally established. JN added that this may not benefit border streets as car owners will simply flock to the nearest 'free' street. Charges are to be set at £80 for one vehicle and £120 for two vehicles per year. Those living on streets on which work is set to take place should receive notification of the proposed work and the scheme should be completed by 1 September, commencing alongside university parking charges and the opening of the new library.

**King Street Pharmacy** – DM explained that Katja Brittain and himself recently met with Margaret Bochel, ACC, to discuss issues with planning. DM noted that he raised concerns outlined at previous OACC meetings, notably the requirement to formally object to applications in order for them to be reviewed by officers, the difficulty of criticising applications on aesthetic grounds, the changes that can be made to planning applications between the planning process and the actual building work and problems with ACC's website, particularly the absence of any means for identifying recent alterations to submitted plans, thus necessitating an exhaustive search every week. DM noted that the letter he received from ACC in response to the meeting supported, in principle, the idea of adopting this change to the website. Overall, it was agreed that discussions around the King Street Pharmacy application have been useful in flagging-up how best to approach planning issues and serves as a reminder to ACC that OACC are keeping an eye on local developments. CB suggested that DM's share his findings with the Community Council Forum.

Clive Kempe asked whether the frontage of the proposed pharmacy is aligned with the neighbouring buildings. DM explained that the walls of the new building will be in line with the King Street and University Road frontages - the 3D plans are misleading but the plans show the proposal correctly.

### ***New and Ongoing Applications –***

***Kilau Coffee Shop*** - JN noted that Kilau's application to extend their coffee shop has been referred to ACC's full planning committee and was unsure of the reasons behind this decision. DM had heard rumour of concerns about the development's likelihood to increase competition in the Old Aberdeen area. It was agreed that this claim was way off the mark and this would not be an appropriate reason to withhold planning approval. **ACTION:** JN to investigate.

***High Street Museum*** – DM noted that he submitted an application requesting that the signage not be illuminated and that it should follow a historical style in-keeping with the local area. He has since discovered that due to a technical error his submission was not received by ACC, he has since contacted the University of Aberdeen with his comments.

There was discussion over whether Paul Pillath should be invited to a future OACC meeting or whether a few interested community councillors should arrange to meet with him outwith our monthly meetings. **ACTION:** DM agreed to contact members to see whether there is enough interest to justify his attendance at a monthly meeting.

CK highlighted the need to be cautious of blindly supporting traditional designs in Old Aberdeen and highlighted the aesthetic benefits of some bold and modern designs. CK added that there is a need to liaise with experts aware of how buildings will work with the surrounding area and apply a broader lens when considering historic versus modern design.

***19-21 High Street*** – DM highlighted the ongoing work at the site and noted the need for the chimneys to remain naked brickwork and not be harled, as was the case with the chimneys above Kilau. DM added that he believes an internal wall may have been reconstructed using breezeblocks; this follows a previous request from OACC for re-erected walls to reuse the original hand-made bricks.

*DM has since contacted Angus Donaldson, University of Aberdeen, and has been advised that the chimney stack will remain brickwork and that west gable wall that appears to be breeze block is in fact now built up with breezeblock in the internal side but original brickwork on the external face. Further, Angus Donaldson advised that the roof will be reinstated with pantiles.*

## **5. Reports**

Nothing to report.

## **6. Treasurer's Report**

Isobel Aitken notified CB of OACC's current financial position, with £1114.76 currently in the account.

## **7. Correspondence**

- Letter from Aberdeen City and Shire on Publication of the Development Plan Scheme

2011-2012.

- Invite to attend a presentation by the Armed Forces on The Army Today. The event takes places at King's College on 7 June.
- Letter from Robin MacIntosh, Friends of Union Terrace Gardens, offering to speak at a future meeting of OACC or offer content for our newsletter. **ACTION:** DM to contact to discuss a possible contribution to Auld Toon News.

#### 8. **AOCB**

- JN noted discussions around the formation of a Girls Guides group, based at Dunbar Hall. JN explained that he is currently looking to see if any small funds are available to help get the group established.
- JN reported on the progress of the sales of the High Street toilets and the St Peter's site. Negotiations regarding the former toilets have been delayed due to a dispute over what exactly is included in the sale, this should hopefully be resolved shortly. The St Peter's site, however, looks likely to collapse as the bidder is experiencing financial problems. JN was unsure of what the application for the site entailed.
- CK asked whether the planting of trees in planting spaces on pavements is a problem. **ACTION:** JN to investigate.

#### 9. **Date and Venue of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of Old Aberdeen Community Council will take place on Tuesday 21 June at Dunbar Street Hall from 7.30pm.