

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Minutes of the meeting held on **Tuesday 16th February 2010** at the Old Town House, Old Aberdeen.

1. Present

Christine Burgess (Chair), Isobel Aitken (Treasurer) (part time), Katja Brittain (part time), Dewi Morgan, Hilda Meers, Clive Kempe.

Also Present

Cllr Jim Noble, Alan Mulvie (ACC), Clair Sutherland (Grampian Police), Gordon Simpson (Grampian Police), Angus Donaldson (University of Aberdeen), Abdul Latif, Kevin Guyan (Secretary).

Apologies

Trevor Stack, Gordon Mutch, Shaunagh Kirby (University of Aberdeen), Robin Parker (Students' Association), Cllr Richard Robertson, Christopher Gane (University of Aberdeen), Raymond Kelly.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

January's minutes were passed with no changes, proposed by Dewi Morgan, seconded by Isobel Aitken.

Christine Burgess explained that Robin Parker will now present on AUSA's plans for the Butchart Centre at OACC's April meeting as it is hoped Bob Dorr, First Bus, will attend OACC's March meeting.

CB reminded members that OACC's AGM will take place on Tuesday 23 March at Dunbar Street Hall from 7pm.

CB explained that she has been informed that the number 20 and number 9 bus services will now not merge, with timing of the services also remaining the same.

Katja Brittain noted that Marc Ellington would be giving a presentation at RGU University in relation to the historical importance of the architecture in Old Aberdeen. **ACTION:** KB to forward information to Kevin Guyan who will share with OACC mailing list. CB added that she has not spoken to Marc Ellington in relation to the World Heritage bid since OACC's last meeting.

CB explained that representatives from Kilau are unable to accept OACC's invitation to the Queen's garden party.

CB noted that she has responded to the Bus Information Strategy Consultation on behalf of OACC.

3. University Update

AD highlighted issues relating to the condition of roads and trees on campus and is working with ACC to remedy these concerns. AD added that he has met with Doug Ritchie and Gordon Macintosh, ACC, in relation to traffic issues on Elphinstone Road. AD explained that they are now waiting for ACC to undertake a survey monitoring the speed of vehicles on this road. Dewi Morgan highlighted the need to gather statistical evidence of speeding before ACC take action to limit the speed of vehicles.

AD explained that the university are in the process of applying for a warrant to make safe and reinstate the derelict property on the High Street. CB noted that this would be an ideal opportunity for the university to take action and make something of the building.

KB asked about the progress of the new library. AD explained that the project is currently running around four weeks behind schedule.

4. Police Update

Gordon Simpson distributed the crime figures for the last period. GS noted that the figures for Old Aberdeen were very low, with only two annoyance calls and one report of vandalism.

GS shared with the Council information relating to the arrest of a male who has admitted to 14 thefts from vehicles across the local area. The male has now been reported to the Procurator Fiscal.

GS noted that there have recently been three reports of indecent acts in Seaton Park. GS explained that there has been an increased police presence but has little further to report.

5. Treasurer's Report

CB explained that OACC's Small Improvement's Grant had not been spent in its entirety. As suggested at the last meeting, CB has approached Bede House Court and the residents noted that their common room currently has no television and that an offering from OACC would be very welcome. Isobel Aitken noted that this contribution would balance the money spent on child play facilities in Seaton Park. OACC agreed to spend the remainder of the Small Improvement's Grant – amounting to £600 - on a television and stand for the residents. Clive Kempe asked whether the residents would be exempt from paying for a television license. CB explained that the residents are willing to cover this additional cost and that it would be unlikely that they would be exempt from paying the fee.

IA distributed copies of the Treasurer's Report. CB suggested itemising payments under the heading 'newsletter printing'. CK asked whether OACC were exempt from paying VAT. Alan Mulvie explained that OACC are not exempt from VAT payments. IA noted that she believes OACC should receive between £800 and £900 for our next annual grant as we have fully used our previous year's grant. **ACTION:** IA to forward final report to DM for circulation.

6. Planning

DM shared with the Council photographs of Aberdon House, the proposed site for temporary homeless housing. Jim Noble explained that this issue was recently discussed by ACC, with the motion to site the housing at this site passed. ACC now aim to seek a HMO license. JN explained that ACC have a statutory obligation to house homeless people, with the city currently operating under the expected provision. The new site would also operate differently from the Crown Street site, with more staff, increased reporting etc. JN added that Cllr. Richard Robertson wished to express his thanks to CB for her representation on the issue. DM asked whether proposals for a site on West North Street had been abandoned. JN explained that he was not sure but was aware that the current condition of the site would require the building to be demolished before anything could be constructed. Hilda Meers shared with the Council feedback on the issue from the Senior Citizen's Forum. HM highlighted the need for clear and comprehensive information, particularly due to the emotive nature of this issue. CK noted that the Aberdon site is not close to city centre amenities and appears to go against ACC's regeneration plans for Tillydrone.

7. CPZ

CB asked JN if he had any information relating to the implementation costs and potential revenue the scheme could create. JN explained that he suspects implementation costs will be under £600,000 – though this figure is subject to change as the implementation of the scheme has not yet been put out to tender. JN added that potential revenue is harder to predict as it is dependent on how many passes are purchased etc.

8. Sunnybank Park Update

CK noted that the group are making positive progress and hopes that a strong submission will soon be made to ACC on the future of the park. CK added that the Sunnybank group are currently in the process of constituting itself, with a suggestion that the group produce a flyer to help publicise their work. DM suggested coverage in the next edition of Auld Toon News and – if the group wished – a section of the OACC website.

CB updated the Council on a potential Climate Change application that may assist the Sunnybank group. OACC are unable to take the lead in the application, as it had not been on the OACC agenda and it was agreed that the Council should not apply for funding on behalf of another organisation or group. CB expressed good luck to the Sunnybank group on behalf of OACC.

9. Third Don Crossing

DM shared with the Council a map of the latest proposal in relation to the Third Don Crossing, CB noted that very little has changed from previous proposals and that OACC's objections remain the same. CB added that she has received a letter from Lewis MacDonald MSP – who remains against the plans – which states that Aberdeen seems to be the only city wishing to attract traffic into its city centre. **ACTION:** OACC write another letter restating their objections.

10. Neighbourhood Community Action Plan

AM, Neighbourhood Community Planning Officer, explained the current status of the new Action Plan. He has revised the table structure to match the format that will be required for this year's Plans. ACC's intention is that the Action Plan should be better structured so that there is better clarity regarding why an action is required and what outcome would provide a satisfactory resolution. ACC also plan to focus on actions that they can resolve. CB suggested that this might allow ACC to report a 100% success rate in achieving its objectives if certain proposals are omitted, with the Plan sounding more like ACC's rather than the product of local neighbourhoods.

A previous meeting with AM had raised hopes that the Auld Toon News could be used to circulate the quarterly Neighbourhood Bulletin. However, AM has since spoken to his line manager about possible financial contributions to pay for the additional newsletter pages. Unfortunately, ACC are unable to offer any financial assistance. **ACTION:** AM to meet with DM to discuss the Action Plan further.

11. Planning

DM shared with the Council photographs of 31A Don Street, noting that OACC's objection to PVC windows has been refused by ACC.

DM shared photographs of 247 Don Street and explained that a request to add Velux windows, with plans to adapt the building for multiple occupancy, has been submitted. DM highlighted his objections, the style of the window suggested and the potential problem of multiple occupancy homes being rented by students who vacate the property over the summer months. DM added that Old Aberdeen Heritage Society have submitted objections. OACC agreed to DM's points, feeling a stronger emphasis should be made in relation to the style of the windows.

CB explained that she has reported to ACC the newsagent's change of signage on the High Street, which seems to have gone ahead without planning permission.

DM noted that 2 Sunnyside Gardens have submitted a request for a multiple occupancy license, although the property appears to have insufficient car parking spaces. **ACTION:** DM to forward to CB who will share with David Wemyss, ACC.

12. City Square Project

DM enquired whether OACC should express comment in relation to the proposed City Square project. CK noted that increased car parking in the city centre would lead to increased traffic flow through the Old Aberdeen area. CB suggested leaving the issue to the Community Council Forum and Civic Forum, as they are the best vehicles for channelling the views of all community councils.

13. Reports

Civic Forum – Has not recently met.

Community Council Forum – Also has not recently met, due to bad weather.

14. Newsletter and Website

DM shared content for the next newsletter. CB suggested more information on planning and the efforts relating to Sunnybank Park, with less information on the City Square project. CB added that an article could be written on the proposed High Street bus gate. It was also discussed whether an article on the Word Festival could be written. **ACTION:** CB to make enquiries in relation to the Word Fringe festival. Circulation of the newsletter is planned for the first week in March.

15. AGM

OACC's AGM will be held on 23 March at Dunbar Hall starting from 7pm. DM suggested that there is a need to confirm future meeting dates, particularly their location

16. Correspondence

Letter from Sue Bruce, ACC, acknowledging OACC's letter in regard to Aberdon House.

17. AOCB

Nothing to report.

18. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of OACC will be on Tuesday 23rd March at Dunbar Hall from 7.00pm.