

# Old Aberdeen Community Council

Minutes of the meeting held on **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2010** at the Old Aberdeen Town House.

## 1. Present

Christine Burgess (Chair), Isobel Aitken (Treasurer), Katja Brittain, Trevor Stack, Gordon Mutch, Clive Kempe, Dewi Morgan.

### Also Present

Cllr Jim Noble, Robin Parker (AUSA), Angus Donaldson (University of Aberdeen), Shaunagh Kirby (University of Aberdeen), PC Gordon Simpson (Grampian Police), Kevin Guyan (Secretary).

### Apologies

Simon Barker (Vice Chair), Hilda Meers, Cllr Richard Robertson, Omran Almahtot, Raymond Kelly, Abdul Latif.

## 2. Minute of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Shaunagh Kirby noted that under 'University Update' the wording should make clear that she is happy to report back to the university that OACC wish to be kept informed of proposed building projects, for example the new hall at Hillhead.

Christine Burgess noted that under 'Planning' it should read that the landscape 'around' Old Aberdeen is soon set to change with the demolition of Linksfield Academy and Pittodrie. CB added that in relation to the Third Don Crossing, the hearing would be 'public' rather than 'special'.

After changes, the minute of OACC's September minute was approved, proposed by Dewi Morgan and seconded by Clive Kempe.

Katja Brittain explained that in response to CK's question about the monitoring of public nuisance offences (ie. dog fouling), these figures were held by the Community Safety Department of ACC who oversee the City Wardens.

CB noted that she has received an email from Ross Scaife, ACC, relating to the temporary suspension of the bus gate during the Freshers' move-in weekend. Ross Scaife would prefer that the university does not continue this concession as he also believes it sets a bad precedent. **ACTION:** CB to forward email to Angus Donaldson.

SK asked whether CB had been contacted by Chris Gane or Kris Banks in relation to a visit from Kris Banks to a future OACC meeting to discuss the new library. CB noted that she has not been contacted.

CK noted that he has recently visited the refurbished Butchart Centre and is very impressed, particularly by the new café.

## 3. University Update

AD shared with the Council his belief that the relationship between OACC and the university was not working effectively: AD and SK feel that they are attending meetings to be simply held to account by OACC members rather than engaging in productive discussion. AD noted that some University issues are confidential and cannot be discussed in the public forum of a community council, nor can he be expected to be aware of all issues taking place across campus. OACC acknowledged this. AD called for a reconsideration of the relationship between

OACC and the University, perhaps by creating a new model of dialogue that would allow the two groups to communicate more effectively in the future. AD suggested one potential model was that a group from OACC could meet separately with representatives from the university at regular occasions throughout the year.

SK added that she felt that the September meeting was notably negative, with all issues flagged by OACC (for example, litter, lighting, new Hillhead hall, move-in weekend etc.) simply an exercise in having a go at the university.

CB reminded the meeting that the community council meetings were an open forum with representatives from university, police, councillors and residents attending and thus was surely the appropriate forum for raising and discussing university and Old Aberdeen issues.

Gordon Mutch explained that a sense of surprise and some frustration by Community Councillors might be understandable when the OACC learns late in the day about issues that have been under consideration for some time, but have had to be withheld for commercial or other reasons.

DM added that the a substantial amount of the Old Aberdeen Community Council territory is under the control of the university therefore it was inevitable that many of the issues arising would involve the University. He also expressed his understanding that the University has to balance the opinions of students and the local community against commercial requirements.

AD and SK then left the meeting.

CB questioned how to take this issue forward.

DM expressed his unwillingness for the OACC simply to listen politely to issues that the University wish to discuss without being able to challenge on behalf of the local community, but also stressed the importance of continuing a good relationship with the university.

KB expressed her belief that these feelings may be the result of stress relating to complications associated with ongoing building projects and current financial pressure on universities.

Jim Noble suggested the option of OACC forwarding questions to the university prior to the OACC meeting, allowing representatives time to source relevant information.

**ACTION:** KB to investigate the relationship between Garthdee Community Council and Robert Gordon University.

**ACTION:** CB to organise a meeting with Chris Gane, University of Aberdeen.

#### **4. Police Update**

Gordon Simpson explained that figures for the last period were very low, with 3 STORM fire incidents, 2 reports of vandalism and 1 report of theft from a motor vehicle, which has since been detected.

JN raised the issue of cars parking on the pavements of Hermitage Avenue and Sunnyside Gardens. As there are no yellow lines, this offence is considered an obstruction of the pavement. JN explained that Grampian Police have visited the streets and spoken to the owners of 5 vehicles, there is a need – however – for local residents to be vigilant and report vehicles parked on the pavement. It was suggested that OACC's website and newsletter could help raise awareness of this problem.

Trevor Stack asked the difference between a STORM and a regular crime file. GS explained that STORM reports tend to not fit under a set crime category and are also an indication of everything that is reported to the police.

## 5. Community Council boundaries

CB shared with the Council a recent email from Sinclair Laing, Froghall Community Council, highlighting their community council's desire to bring Sunnyside within their boundaries during ACC's citywide re-evaluation of community council boundaries. CB summarised three possible outcomes to boundary changes:

- (1) OACC's boundaries stay as they are.
- (2) OACC adopts the Froghall area that is within the conservation area, bringing St Martha's Covent and the former St Peter's into the area. Sunnyside could then join parts of Froghall – and possibly Powis – in a new community council.
- (3) OACC and Froghall Community Council fully combine, giving the community council a bigger catchment area, more members and fully covering the city's 'student zone' and conservation area.

CK noted that he would like to see Froghall Community Council and OACC amalgamate as he is aware that Froghall Community Council are struggling with members and failed to take action in relation to First's new depot. TS reminded members that Sunnybank have a Key Contacts Group and would also need to be consulted on any changes to community councils. RP asked whether there were a set number of residents ACC liked to have within a community council. JN noted that there was no figure, with the preference being boundaries that represent coherent communities. JN cautioned that a larger community council area may not always properly support all constituent areas and mentioned that in one local Community Council residents from a single locality made up a perhaps over-high proportion of the Council.

CK asked how finances would be affected by amalgamating. IA explained that finances are calculated per capita.

**ACTION:** CB to write letter to Froghall Community Council, Sunnybank Key Contacts Group and ACC's Interim Community Council Liaison Officer stating OACC's position.

## 6. First Bus

Representatives from OACC reported on a recent confidential meeting with First Bus, during which a number of potential route changes were discussed effecting the Old Aberdeen area. A formal written response was later submitted to FirstBus.

## 7. Planning

**Sunnybank Park Update** – it was noted that they are now very close to having the lease signed between ACC and the park's Management Committee and that a planning application had now been submitted for converting one section to allotments.

**CPZ** – JN explained that there was nothing new to report.

**Third Don Crossing** – CB explained that the public hearing would take place on 14 December. GM agreed to make a representation at the meeting on behalf of OACC. CB questioned whether ACC would be able to have the meeting, as it takes place before the deadline for comments for the finalised Local Development Plan. CB also expressed concern that the ACC own the land, wish to develop the land and are ruling on the decision.

**ACTION:** DM to contact Planning Aid for advice on the timing issue.

**ACTION:** GM to contact Kate Dean, ACC, to establish the format of the public hearing; whether it would be a forum for discussion or would our representation simply be limited to a 10 minute speech. CK questioned whether there were a set number of representations required before a

public enquiry would take place.

CB shared with the Council the desire of the Don Crossing Communities Alliance to hire a traffic consultant to develop a legal case against the project. DCCA require £1000 to fund this cost and have asked OACC to contribute £200. It was agreed that if this plan were to go ahead, OACC would contribute the money required. All members in attendance unanimously supported this decision.

CB noted that there is now a list of the many organisations/people that will be served Compulsory Purchase Orders required to build the bridge and supporting roads. DM noted that this information is not available online.

**College Bounds** – CB noted that ACC now support the installation of ‘no entry except buses’ sign at the bus gate at the junction of college bounds and uni road with a ‘cyclists dismount’ sign. They are currently investigating whether this change can be made without altering the traffic order. It was hoped that this decision would see the traffic lights turned off or removed.

**Local Development Plan** – CB explained that the draft version has been released for comment. Meetings will take place at the Bridge of Don Library on 25 October and the Central Library on 15 November. Comments must be submitted by 17 December.

### ***New Applications –***

**Hillhead** – DM noted that the proposed building is slightly higher than the adjacent Wavell House. He added his concern that the building may be visible from the other side of the river. DM concluded that he has no overall objection to the plan but would like to ask the ACC to ensure that the builders do not exceed the presently proposed height.

**107 High Street** – DM explained that he has submitted an application to take down and replant two trees at his property. There were no objections.

**22 Orchard Street** – Request to change existing windows with PVC alternatives. It was agreed that objection depends on whether the building is new or old. No objections

**109 Sunnyside Road** – A similar request to change windows. Again, it was unsure whether the building was new or old. No objections

**Auld Toon Cafe** – DM noted new signage erected but no planning application has been noted. DM reminded members that the 1993 Conservation Area Report suggests non-luminated wooden box style signage, although this is not currently uniform across Old Aberdeen.

**ACTION:** CB to contact Paul Pilaff.

**ACTION:** CB to source whether a final decision has been reached on the current Keystore sign.

## **8. Reports**

The Civic Forum has not recently met and there was nothing to report from the Community Council Forum.

## **9. Treasurer’s Report**

IA noted that there is currently £2582.29 in the account, minus the £1800.00 still to be claimed by ACC for the repainting of the train in Seaton Park. CB added that she has recently spoken to Jim Nichol, ACC, in relation to this payment who explained that in the relocation of their office the cheque was lost. OACC is still awaiting a request from ACC for a replacement cheque. Excluding this amount and cheques still to be cashed, OACC has £562.29 in its account.

CB noted a request from the Sunnybank Group for £300.00 to help develop projects in the park. It was agreed that OACC does not currently have enough finances to contribute £300.00 but would offer £100.00.

#### **10. Correspondence**

Invitation from ACC for either the Council Leader or Deputy Leader to speak at a future OACC meeting on their five year business plan. It was agreed that a representative would be invited to attend our next meeting on 16 November, offering the date of 14 December also should this not be possible.

**ACTION:** Kevin Guyan to email ACC.

#### **11. Newsletter**

RP agreed to write an article on AUSA's relocation to the Butchart Centre. Other articles include the CPZ, Third Don Crossing, Sunnybank Park, 19 High Street Museum and College Bounds. The deadline for the submission of articles is mid November.

#### **12. AOCB**

- TS noted that he is currently working with a PhD student who would like to attend future OACC meetings as part of their research.
- CB noted an email received requesting information on how to deal with issues of antisocial behaviour and noise in the Sunnybank area. JN explained that ACC have a Noise Unit that can be called to address this problem.
- RP noted that, following an issue raised at OACC's September meeting, the overflowing bins and rubbish on the High Street during Freshers' Week may be the result of AUSA / University of Aberdeen's inability to stop organisations distributing flyers as this is a public street.
- CB noted that she has received an email from Raymond Kelly relating to the parking of tradesmen prior to the implementation of the proposed CPZ. JN noted this query and will respond.

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

OACC will next meet on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30pm at Old Aberdeen Town House. The December meeting will take place on 14<sup>th</sup> December at Dunbar Street Hall.