

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Minutes of meeting held on 5th May 2009 to discuss proposed coach parking outside St Machar Cathedral

Present:

Christine Burgess	OACC Chair
Dewi Morgan	OACC
Mr. R Williamson	Representing the interests of St Machar
Mr. Hugh Gibson	Resident of The Chanonry
Mrs. Jenny Gibson	Resident of The Chanonry
Mrs Woolridge-Gordon	Resident of The Chanonry
Mrs M Sleeman	Resident of The Chanonry
Mrs V Morgan	Resident of The Chanonry
Cllr Jim Noble (p/t)	
Cllr Richard Robertson (p/t)	

Time:

Meeting was held in the back room of Dunbar Street Hall on May 5th 2009. The meeting commenced at 19:30hrs and was closed at around 21:30hrs.

Points noted:

CB & DM This special meeting was called to discuss the proposed provision of dedicated parking space for two coaches plus turning space outside St Machar's Cathedral with the objective of providing a combined front that met the requirements of all parties. The OACC was not involved in the earlier phases of consultation regarding the proposal; this is not in compliance with the statutory process. While the proposal refers to provision of parking facilities for coaches in three different areas of Aberdeen, this meeting is only concerned with the proposal that is applicable to The Chanonry.

The proposal is to provide space for two full size coaches to be able to park and turn around immediately outside St Machar. This will entail space being taken that is currently available for unrestricted parking, plus will include blanket no parking on the west side of the road, to enable one coach to pass the other.

We understand that proposal has been floating around for some time, and came from Aberdeen tourist guides.

Strategies that we might wish to adopt include:

- Modification of the proposal to lessen the impact on private car parking
- Request to delay the process and incorporate within the impending Controlled Parking Zone discussions.
- Request the banning of coaches from The Chanonry on the basis that the road is simply not suitable for such large vehicles (and other heritage sites do ban unsuitable traffic).

RW RW clarified that while he was present to represent the Cathedral, he could only speak informally, as the Kirk Session is the formal body. He was not aware of St Machar having received any previous notification regarding these proposals.

The Cathedral is the oldest building in Aberdeen and is open to the public all day, 365 days a year, unlike any other church in Aberdeen. St Machar received some 26,000 visitors last year, excluding services, weddings, funerals and concerts.

Individual tourists arriving by car or foot contribute significant donations and constitute a significant income stream for the church, which receives no money from the Council, despite being one of the main tourist attractions for coach tours. Unfortunately, these tourist

coaches bring in very little income as such tourists seem to think that the cost of the tour is 'all in'. However, coaches are being increasingly used for wedding parties. The Cathedral therefore feels it is important that coaches should continue to be able to drive up The Chanonry despite the difficulties.

HG, JG, Residents of The Chanonry have no place for visitors to park. Since the University has begun reducing the parking spaces available to students and staff, a lot of cars are parked in the area by St Machar as this is one of the few non-regulated parking areas near to the university.

WG Sometimes the parking along the road is so dense it is very difficult for her to turn out into the road from her drive

The meeting agreed that car parking usage in this area includes:

- Visitors to Seaton Park
- Visitors to St Machar
- Workers at St Machar
- Wedding guests and funeral attendees
- Church worshipers
- Students and staff of the university

The proposed bus parking and coach turning facilities will halve the number of cars able to park in this area, from around 40 to perhaps 20 or so.

The meeting discussed what response would be most appropriate, with the main options being to either:

1. ask for the process to be delayed until the CPZ is under discussion, or
2. to ask for the scheme to be cut back, perhaps to facility for one coach only to reduce the impact.

There was concern that an outright rejection of the proposal would be discounted, but after some discussion, and with support from our councillors for this strategy, it was agreed that we would ask for the parking restriction, as it related to The Chanonry only, to not be implemented at this time on the following basis (the following text is taken from our letter, submitted next day by the OACC to the City Council):

We ... object to the current traffic order as it relates to The Chanonry on the grounds that the development of new parking restrictions should now only take place in the context of the whole CPZ process and the forthcoming public consultation.

Furthermore, in view of the lack of prior consultation with designated bodies and parties of interest as noted above, we reject the proposal on the grounds that 'due' process has not been followed.

In closing, all present were strongly encouraged to write individual letters to the City Council, expressing their own views.

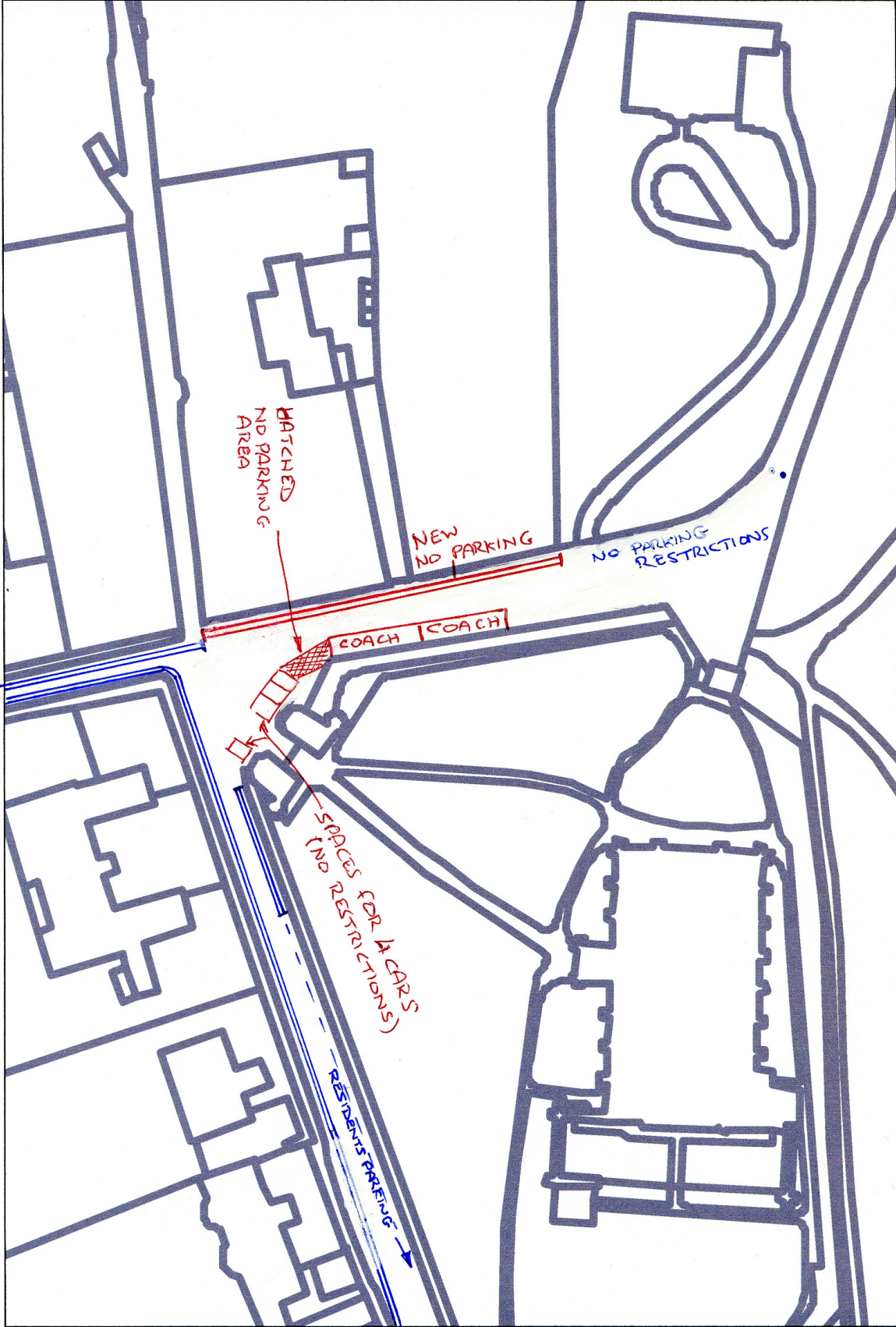
Attachments: A photograph of the posted notice of the proposal
An approximate map of the proposal (drawn from memory)



Council coach
parking notification.jp



Map of coach parking
proposal.jpg



ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL
ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984

THE ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL (BEACH BOULEVARD/ESPLANADE/THE CHANONRY) (PARKING SPACES
FOR BUSES) ORDER 2009

Aberdeen City Council proposes to make the above-named order in terms of its powers under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

In simple terms, the intended order would provide reserved parking bays for the exclusive use of tourist coaches at the three locations identified in the schedule below. No vehicle other than a tourist coach would be entitled to wait at any of those three locations, and even a tourist coach would have to abide by the maximum stay requirement in each case.

Full details of the arrangements are to be found in the draft traffic order, which, together with maps showing the locations of the reserved bays and an accompanying statement of the Council's reasons for promoting them, may be examined during normal office hours between Friday, 17 April and Friday, 8 May, 2009, in the offices of the Traffic Operations Team on the second floor of St. Nicholas House, Aberdeen.

It is recommended that anyone visiting St. Nicholas House to view the document should call (01224) 523477 to make an appointment to do so, in order that a member of staff can be present to offer an explanation if necessary. Anyone unable to visit St. Nicholas House should telephone the same number for assistance.

Anyone wishing to object to the order should send details of the grounds for objection in writing to the undersigned during the statutory objection period which also runs from 17 April until 8 May, 2009, inclusively. Any objection should state (1) the name and address of the objector, (2) the matter to which it relates, and (3) the grounds on which it is being made. The signatories of petitions or standard forms will not be treated as objectors (in the sense in which statutory objectors are contacted by the Council about the possibility of informal negotiations, etc) but petitions and standard forms are always brought to the attention of the relevant Committee.

Every person who submits an objection should note that, as a rule, the correspondence will end up in the public domain. Generally, this is because the Committee agendas are public documents, available in libraries and also distributed to the press. Also, when objectors are sent papers later in the procedure, these papers may refer to the complete set of objectors' names and addresses, along with summaries of their observations. If any member of the public is concerned about his or her objection entering the public domain in this way, this should be stated clearly in the objection submitted. Otherwise it will be assumed that an objector has no such concern. It may also be appropriate to indicate that, in fact, objections are very rarely publicised beyond their being read by Councillors, and so, unless any member of the public has a strongly-held or distinctive concern about confidentiality, it is probably in the public interest to observe that there is an element of technicality about this part of the statutory notice. However, all objections in the public domain are presented in redacted form so that signatures, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers are blocked out. Guidance on these issues can be obtained from Democratic Services at 522523.

Roderick MacBeath
Head of Democratic Services
Aberdeen City Council
Town House
Aberdeen

PARKING SPACES FOR BUSES

SCHEDULE

Beach Boulevard

South side from a point 109m east of the extended eastern kerbline of Hanover Street eastwards for a distance of 45m. Maximum stay 4 hours.

Esplanade

South side from a point 12m east of the extended eastern kerbline of New Pier Road eastwards for a distance of 30m. Maximum stay 1½ hours.

The Chanonry

East side from a point 18m north of the extended northern kerbline of The Chanonry northwards for a distance of 30m. Maximum stay 1½ hours