

Old Aberdeen Community Council

Minutes of the meeting held on **Tuesday 16th June 2009** at the Old Aberdeen Town House, Old Aberdeen.

1. Present

Christine Burgess (Chair), Simon Barker (Vice Chair), Katja Brittain, Trevor Stack, Gordon Mutch, Clive Kempe, David Hutchison.

Also Present

Steve Russell (ACC), Stephen Booth (ACC), Ian Harris (ACC), Valerie Morgan, Gordon Simpson (Grampian Police), Cllr Jim Noble, Dauna Matheson, Abdul Latif, Shaunagh Kirby (University of Aberdeen), Hilda Meers, Kevin Guyan (Secretary).

Apologies

Isobel Aitken (Treasurer), Dewi Morgan, Christopher Gane (University of Aberdeen), Duncan McKay (AUSA), Cllr Richard Robertson, Cllr Norman Collie, Hamish Mackay, Angus Donaldson (University of Aberdeen).

2. St Machar Outdoor Centre / Sunnybank Park

Steve Russell introduced himself and explained his role within ACC, notifying the Council that due to current budgetary constraints the tennis courts, bowling green and putting facilities at the site are viewed as surplus to requirement.

Stephen Booth added that the Local Plan deems the site "open space" with no current plans to change its usage. His report, which will recommend no change to the site's usage, will go to ACC's Resources Management Committee in September.

Christine Burgess explained that the site in question is large and is central to much more than only the sports facilities. Trevor Stack clarified by asking whether it is the land or facilities that are surplus to requirements. SR noted that it is only the facilities.

Simon Barker added that any move by ACC to sell-off the land is a poor resolution to a temporary financial situation, with mothballing the site a wiser step.

Katja Brittain asked about the current usage of the site. SR explained that the usage of the sports facilities was monitored and was comparatively low; however, no survey of unstructured usage of the site has been undertaken.

Clive Kempe suggested better access to the site from College Bounds and a different provision of facilities i.e. an area for BBQs.

TS asked whether the site would be suitable for a football pitch. SR explained that it would not be possible to construct a football pitch on the site adhering to SFA standards.

David Hutchison asked whether there is any scope for skating/biking facilities or perhaps even a 50-metre swimming pool. SR explained that numerous partners are currently pushing for a 50-metre swimming pool for Aberdeen and the inclement weather of the city limits any uptake of outdoor facilities.

CB notified the Council that, had the University Director of Estates been present at these discussions, the University of Aberdeen would have declared an interest in the site as a potential location for its nursery. OACC agreed that any application to change the site's usage from greenspace should be pre-empted and that a letter should be written to Sue Bruce, Chief Executive ACC outlining the views of the meeting. **ACTION:** CB to write to Sue Bruce, Chief Executive ACC expressing OACC's views on the matter.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

Shaunagh Kirby noted that under "Also Present" "Chris Gain" should read "Chris Gane". SK also noted that Old Aberdeen's intention to establish a bid for World Heritage Status has not formally been supported by the University's Senior Management Committee, with Chris Gane only sharing the University Senior Management's general support for the project.

After changes, May's minutes were accepted.

CB shared the good news that First Bus have chose to retain the number 20 service, with the bus continuing to run throughout the summer every 30 minutes and a late night Friday/Saturday service. CB thanked the University for their efforts in this campaign. It was agreed that the Operations Manager of First Bus, Duncan Cameron, should be invited to an autumn meeting of OACC to discuss issues including speed, timing, cost and the size of buses. **ACTION:** CB to send invitation.

CB added that Doug Ritchie, Engineer with the Road Safety and Traffic Management Team at ACC, has assured her that there will be no developments with the Controlled Parking Zone before OACC reconvenes in August.

SK informed the Council that the website for the Sports Village will go live in July, with an open weekend planned for the week beginning August 24. SB asked when exactly the 50-metre swimming pool was removed from the site's plan. Jim Noble explained that the parties involved are currently considering the logistics of the site.

JN noted that the reinstatement of the bell for the Old Aberdeen Town House has been approved by the Resources Management Committee, with the group having now raised enough money for the project.

4. University Update

SK informed the Council that the coffee shop on the High Street should open over the next 3 to 4 weeks. The contractor for the new library will also be announced over the next few weeks. Finally, SK noted that graduations would take place in July at King's College due to the continuing work at Marischall College.

SB asked whether the temporary road created to enable access to the construction site of the new library could become a permanent access route to the High Street. **ACTION:** SK to speak to the planning team about this issue.

TS asked what was proposed by a Heritage Suite at the new library. SK explained that it would be a new building adjacent to the library that will house equipment specialising in the preservation of old books. This development is possible due to the contributions of an American philanthropist and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

5. Police Update

Gordon Simpson introduced himself as the new Neighbourhood Officer for Old Aberdeen.

GS explained that the recent crime figures for Old Aberdeen are relatively low compared to other areas.

GS noted that he has spoken with the Headteacher at St Peter's school regarding the congregation of youths in the playground at night. It was reported that this problem continues, with GS planning to investigate.

GS also noted that he is currently investigating a spate of vandalism on motor vehicles on Don Street and the High Street. JN added that crimes of this nature have occurred around 3 times over the past month.

KB asked whether it was possible to access figures relating to community safety. It was understood that OACC has never received any figures of this nature.

DH informed the Council that as part of a local neighbourhood watch scheme, he receives the local crime figures by email weekly. If anyone wishes to be added to this mailing list, please speak to DH.

6. Planning Applications and Traffic Issues

CK informed the Council that 629 King Street has submitted an application for the construction of a dwelling house. **ACTION:** CK to investigate.

High Street Bollards - CB addressed the issue of the bollards on the entrance to the High Street. ACC have identified four options (installation of bollards, blocking the High Street entirely, installing a camera and bus lane or retaining the status quo), favouring the introduction of a camera and bus lane. CK suggested the enforcement of a 10 mph speed limit on the High Street, discouraging drivers from using the route as a rat run. JN added that discussions between ACC and Grampian Police regarding the citywide monitoring of bus lane cameras has currently reached a stumbling block and is not yet resolved. SB emphasised the need to “bag” the traffic lights for the interim, to stop the lights encouraging drivers onto the High Street by changing to green when approached. **ACTION:** access to the High Street to be added to the August agenda. There was a general consensus amongst OACC that the bollards were the best option. **ACTION:** CB to email Doug Ritchie, Engineer with the Road Safety and Traffic Management Team at ACC, expressing OACC’s concerns.

College Bound Chicanes - TS asked whether there was anything new regarding the possible addition of parking spaces on College Bounds as a method of limiting traffic speed. This proposal may not result in any reduction of street furniture and simply retain the status quo. TS suggested the installation of bollards at the divide between College Bounds and the Spital as a possible answer to the problem. **ACTION:** OACC to make a representation to ACC asking for the chicanes to be removed and a new approach to be taken to tackle the problem of speeding cars.

7. Access from the North Consultation

Maps for the Access from the North Consultation were available to view at the meeting.

CB explained that there were 3 key issues facing transport in Aberdeen: the Haudagain roundabout, the Third Don Crossing and the Berryden Corridor. Currently, the Labour Group are against the Third Don Crossing, the Liberal Democrat Group support the plans and the SNP Group support the plans if other traffic management plans are followed. **ACTION:** CB to write a letter stating that proposals do not challenge the problem of traffic and, again, emphasise OACC’s opposition to a Third Don Crossing.

8. Treasurer’s Report

Isobel Aitken was unable to attend the meeting, though reports that total figures as of May 11 2009 are £3250.12.

The passing of the Treasurer’s Report and AGM minutes were deferred until the next meeting. **ACTION:** the passing of Treasurer’s Report and AGM minutes to be added to August’s agenda.

a) *Small Improvements Grant Update* –

CB informed the Council that vouchers were to be purchased for the Head Gardener at Seaton Park after the decision to award funding at last month's meeting.

OACC decided that after consideration of other voluntary and more cost effective options, it would be best to continue with the proposal to fund the repainting of the train in Seaton Park by ACC contractors.

9. Elections – Dates and Process

CB explained details of the Community Council elections. CK emphasised the need to publicise the elections widely, enabling a broad range of people to get involved with the Council. **ACTION:** the Auld Toon News to help publicise the elections.

10. Newsletter

CB expressed the need for a newsletter before the Community Council elections. **ACTION:** everyone to consider articles for the next newsletter.

11. Correspondence

No correspondence.

11. AOCB

- CB explained that she has spoken with Mark Ellington and plans for a World Heritage Status bid are moving forward.
- Hamish Mackay is planning to re-submit the Seaton Park Initiative application to the Fairer Scotland Fund at the end of the month.
- DH shared with the Council St Peter's School's Summer Fete, which will take place on Saturday 27 June from 10.30am.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of OACC will be on Tuesday 18 August at the Old Aberdeen Town House.

The Council will then meet the third Tuesday of every month, with an AGM and Open Meeting taking place at Dunbar Hall. **ACTION:** Kevin Guyan to book the Old Aberdeen Town House for next year's meetings.