

THE SOUTHSIDE ASSOCIATION

117 Nicolson Street
Edinburgh
EH8 9ER

Minutes of meeting held in the South Side Community Education Centre on Tuesday 4 October 2011, at 7pm

PRESENT: Lisa Sibbald (Vice Chair), Maggie Bagan, Caroline Barr, Cllr Steve Burgess, Colin Christison (Secretary), David Doig, Linda Femister, Jan Fraser, Sheila Gilmore MP, Bob Hodgart, Tom King, John Lague, May Linton (Membership Secretary), Kenny McLeod, George Pitcher, Molly Ross, Fiona Scott (Treasurer), Jo Scott, Keith Smith, Pamela Spiers, Random Switch, Colin Symes, and Joan Young.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Lisa welcomed everyone to the meeting.

A minute's silence was held in memory of Maggie Wilson, who died on 27 September. Maggie was one of the founder members of the Association in 1972, and she chaired the group for many years. Keith paid tribute to her, mentioning her many achievements for the Southside.

Apologies for absence were received from Sandra McCormick (Chair), Vera Anderson, Robert Beaton, Tom Bonallo, Sarah Boyack MSP, Margaret Dalziel, Mary Devine, Carol McHugh, Jean Miller, Ethel Murray, Cllr Ian Perry, Robert Ross, Ola Uduku, and Marjory Watson.

2. Guest Speaker: David Doig, Local Environment Manager

Lisa introduced David, who had attended the meeting to discuss the forthcoming refurbishment of St Patrick Square garden. He distributed plans which featured suggestions from the Council, but stressed that these suggestions were not being imposed, and that ideas from local people were being sought so that they could be incorporated into the final design after a further period of consultation. Capital funding of £30,000 - £35,000 had been secured. The garden was in great need of renovation, and some of the proposals involved the removal of the three existing trees (hawthorn, acer, and sorbus), and the planting of some rowans at the north and south ends of the square. Also proposed is a new gate to the west, which would mean a slight reconfiguration of the parking; permanent annual bedding plots; perhaps some new stone signage; and new bow-top railings (600mm high) to be placed in the coping stones (which would be repaired or replaced as required), rather than at the back of the stones as at present, where the railings trap litter. Planters and a single bench would also feature, as well as another notice board.

There were numerous questions and ideas from the floor, including queries about the species of replacement trees (perhaps cherry trees and silver birch as well as rowans to aid biodiversity), the height and rooting behaviour of new trees, the possible involvement of a local school to help maintain the garden, and a sensory garden. Some members wanted the return of a temporary Christmas tree each December, rather than the instalment of LCD lights on the existing or replacement trees.

David left a large scale plan of the square to allow members to add their comments and suggestions, which CC would return to him in due course. Work wouldn't start until after Christmas. Lisa and the members thanked David for his presentation.

3. Police Report

No officer present.

4. Minutes of Meeting held on 13 September 2011

Approved; proposed by Linda and seconded by Maggie.

5. Matters arising

None.

6. Secretary's report and correspondence

6.1 Lisa Sibbald, the Association's representative on the Southside Community Council had tendered her resignation from that group, together with most of the other members. It was unclear at this stage how matters would evolve, and therefore....

6.2It was suggested that, in the meantime, the SA examines planning issues again, and makes representations if appropriate, and this was agreed. Colin would e-mail the planning lists to members who wished to see them. He would ask if the group could also receive licensing applications.

6.3 The Southside Green Ceilidh will take place on Saturday 8 October, from 7pm – 11pm at St Peter's Church Hall.

6.4 Edinburgh Tenants' Federation are holding a conference on Saturday 8 October at Norton Park Conference Centre from 9.30am.

6.5 It was hoped to show the short film "Zombie or not Zombie" at the November meeting. This had been made by Pilton Video on behalf of People for Places Scotland, Care & Support, and a number of locals featured in it. The director would be invited to attend.

7. Treasurer's report

Fiona reported that the most recent balance was £2526.37. Statements are only sent when there have been any transactions. George enquired about the status of the account as he understood that Treasurers' accounts had been discontinued, and Fiona agreed to investigate.

8. Environmental matters

8.1 Molly again raised the subject of the poor state of the pavement on the south side of Montague Street. The SA had been informed in the past that there was no funding for any repair; Cllr Burgess said that he would ask the roads dept to look again as they are about to inspect Drummond Street.

8.2 George enquired about the use of blue recycling bins for glass. Some people had them and others not. Shelia Gilmore MP said that flats where there were houses on collection runs could obtain them.

9. Question and Answer Session with the attending Councillor

9.1 Cllr Burgess said that he had held a meeting with the Head of Planning about the former *Odeon* cinema, and learned that there were on-going discussions with Duddingston House Properties about its future. A possibility was that the organisation could develop the site themselves, provided that the listed parts were retained.

9.2 In response to queries from the September meeting, Cllr Burgess made the following comments:-

Bark for paths at Brown Street nature garden - the parks manager Mike Shields has agreed to provide the chippings and has tried to contact Tom to arrange delivery.

Pavements at the rear of the national museum - These have been confirmed to be in poor condition and have now been put on the list to be completely replaced next financial year.

Pavements on Drummond Street - the roads dept have looked at photos of the pavement; it seems there is some damage so they are now going to make a site visit this week and report back with their findings. They said if the pavements are listed for complete replacement this wouldn't be in the coming financial year. However if only some flags need replaced this could be done more quickly.

Drain outside the 'Black medicine' cafe on Drummond Street producing a bad smell - the roads dept is going to inspect the drain this week, when they look at the pavement, and see what can be done.

Recent flooding at Hill Place due to a blocked drain - South area local environment manager informed, the drain now cleared.

10. Any other business

10.1 Bob Hodgart suggested Marco Biagi MSP as a possible speaker for a future meeting.

10.2 John Lague said that if the Southside Community Council had indeed ceased to exist, alternative arrangements for the public liability insurance for the Christmas Lights Event would require to be found. CC would investigate.

11. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 1 November 2011, at 7pm.
