

THE SOUTHSIDE ASSOCIATION

117 Nicolson Street
Edinburgh
EH8 9ER

Founded 1972

Scottish Charity No SCO12262

Minutes of meeting held in the South Side Community Education Centre on Tuesday 7 February 2012, at 7pm

PRESENT: Sandra McCormick (Chair), Maggie Bagan, Caroline Barr, Tom Bonallo, Cllr Steve Burgess, Pauline Calder, Colin Christison (Secretary), Linda Femister, Jan Fraser, Bob Hodgart, Tom King, Isobel Leckie, May Linton (Membership Secretary), Carol McHugh, Kenny McLeod, Matt McPherson, Ethel Murray, George Pitcher, Molly Ross, Jo Scott, Pamela Spiers, Random Switch, PC Graham Watt, David Wood, and Joan Young.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Vera Anderson, Robert Beaton, Margaret Dalziel, Jean Miller, Robert Ross, Fiona Scott (Treasurer), Lisa Sibbald (Vice Chair), Keith Smith, Louise Smith, Colin Symes and Ola Uduku.

2. Police Report

PC Graham Watt was a former attendee of the dissolved Southside Community Council meetings, and he now hoped to attend all the SA meetings. He has worked in the area for three years. He said that although crime figures were seasonally low, youth crime was rising in Dumbiedykes and around Nicolson Street. There had been an attempt through the courts to evict the 'Occupy' movement from the Meadows, where camping is not permitted, and the courts had given the group until 10 February to get legal advice. A member said that he had been a victim of two robberies in recent days; everyone was advised to be aware of bogus callers, and to take great care when withdrawing cash from automated tellers.

3. Guest speaker: Matthew McPherson, President, EUSA

Sandra welcomed Matthew McPherson, President, Edinburgh University Students' Association. Matt said that EUSA was continuing to engage the community. He said that of the approximately 30,000 students at the University, 10,000 were from Scotland, 10,000 from the rest of the UK, and the remaining 10,000 from overseas. The EUSA employs about 300 members of staff. He gave a detailed presentation about the organisation's activities, especially about its volunteering section called *Connect*, and how the 15,000 students who belong to societies assist their fellow students and the wider community. There are 271 different societies, excluding 71

sports teams. Often volunteering activities are linked to the students' courses. Volunteers assist with, for example, heritage charities, museums, youth work, befriending of the elderly, art galleries, centres for the homeless, accounting for charities, shop work, and cafes. Such work allows students to develop their skills, strengths, and confidence. Proof-reading for international students is an important part of the volunteering work.

Matt went on to describe further features of the Association's role in looking after the welfare of its members. After a short question and answer session, Sandra and the members thanked Matt warmly for his presentation.

4. Minutes of Meeting held on 10 January 2012

Approved; proposed by Molly Ross, and seconded by Linda Femister.

5. Matters arising

- 5.1 (Item 4.1 – hole in pavement in St Leonard St) – still no progress. CC had followed it up and Cllr Rose had reported that the Council were chasing up the contracted blacksmith to find out why there was such a delay in installing a metal plate.
- 5.2 (Item 11.2) – Tom King said that the metal cellar cover outside the former Lismore Rugby Club was protruding and causing a trip hazard. CC to inform the Council.
- 5.3 (Item 11.3) – no response from the Summerhall Venue.

6. 40th Anniversary of the Association

The sub-group had met on 1 February, and had considered the following ideas:

Start a website – Tom King happy is to do this. Registration of name to be confirmed, cost in the region of £6 for two years, with web hosting about £6 per month.

Join Facebook – Lisa Sibbald has already reserved the name. (There is a Facebook photographic site called Lost Edinburgh).

Both the above measures are considered essential to attract new members, particularly younger ones.

AGM - Tuesday 1 May 2012. Host a party with live music in the community centre with savoury buffet, wine, and 40th birthday cake. Apply for an extension to 10pm. Invite former office bearers and members, past and present Councillors, MPs, MSPs, Police, University contacts, former switchers of lights.

Kirk O'Field Church - They are 100 years old this year. Suggestion of a special afternoon service followed by a tea party.

Show the film 'Pull it Doon' as part of the Centre's 25th commemorative week in June.

Exhibition – perhaps jointly with Centre and/or Heritage Group. A local resident, Steve McAvoyn has a vast library of Edinburgh photographs, and it is hoped to enlist his contribution.

Special edition of the Southsider featuring items from the past, and articles by former and present councillors, MPs, MSPs, ministers and so on.

Abstract of minutes – none from 1972, but we have 1975-present with some gaps in the 1990s.

Members were requested to give due consideration to the above ideas. Caroline Barr suggested that P7 from Preston Street Primary School could be invited to become involved, perhaps by compiling a short history of the Southside as a project, and Bob Hodgart wondered if some history students could be approached to write a history of the Association.

7. Secretary's report and correspondence

Minutes of the South Central Environment & Town Centre Forum meeting held on 9 January 2012 (attended by George and Jo, and mentioned at our January meeting) now received.

8. Treasurer's report

Colin, on behalf of Fiona, said that the balance was the same as notified in January.

9. Environmental matters

9.1 Hilary McDowell had sent a report to say that she had again been in touch with Scottish Water about the carriageway at Nicolson Street at the junction with West Crosscauseway, as well as West Richmond Street/Nicolson Street, and other areas. She had obtained a promise that all repairs would be made by 12 February. Bob Hodgart thanked Hilary for her continuing persistence in trying to get these problems resolved.

9.2 Pauline Calder complained about the appalling standard of the pavements all over the area; she had suffered serious injuries after tripping more than once.

10. Question and Answer Session with the attending Councillor

Cllr Burgess referred to a recent enquiry to the planning department from a concerts and events promoter who was interested in acquiring the former *Odeon* cinema. Cllr Burgess, in his reply to the planning department, had outlined the history of the various planning applications and referrals concerning the premises over the past few years; stated that he didn't think there would be much support for late licences; and suggested that the promoter considers attending an SA meeting.

Members described how noisy the area used to be before and after concerts in the 1970s and 1980s and made it clear that a return to late-night disturbance would be most unwelcome.

Historic Scotland issued the following announcement on 7 February:

"Please note that we have commenced consultation on the proposed change of category from B to A with the owners of the former Odeon and with City of Edinburgh Council. The consultation period ends 6 March 2012."

If the category was to be upgraded, consent for demolition would be harder to obtain, although grants would become available for improvement.

It was suggested that someone from the Picture House in Lothian Road could be invited to speak at a future meeting about the impact of their business on local people.

11. Any other business

None.

12. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 6 March 2012.
