

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 29 May 2012, at 7pm

PRESENT: Sandra McCormick (Chair), Vera Anderson, Maggie Bagan, Caroline Barr, Tom Bonallo, Cllr Steve Burgess, Colin Christison (Secretary), Linda Femister, Moira Gibson, Sheila Gilmore MP, Bob Hodgart, Tom King, Isobel Leckie, May Linton (Membership Secretary), Carol McHugh, Kenny McLeod, Cllr Jim Orr, George Pitcher, Molly Ross, Fiona Scott (Treasurer), Lisa Sibbald (Vice Chair), Pamela Spiers, Random Switch, Colin Symes, PC Graham Watt, and Joan Young.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Sandra welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Sarah Boyack MSP, Jan Fraser, Jean Miller, Rose Mongan, Louise Smith, and David Wood. The meeting was held a week earlier than usual as the centre would be closed on the first Tuesday in June for the Diamond Jubilee.

2. Police Report

Sandra welcomed PC Graham Watt, who gave an update on the following matters. Operation Arable had been completed, and had resulted in about 60 arrests for alleged assaults, robberies, thefts of mobile phones, and thefts from people withdrawing money from cash-dispensing points. The next project will be policing during the Edinburgh Festival and Fringe, and eight officers will patrol the Meadows, George Square, Nicolson Square, the Southside corridor, Pleasance, and so on, watching for anti-social behaviour etc. There had been complaints about traffic violations around the Pleasance theatre complex in previous years, and attention will be paid to taxi drivers. He said that crime goes up in good weather, and there had been problems in the Meadows, with thefts, fights, drunkenness, people urinating in public, and barbeques being lit on the grass rather than the designated areas. George Pitcher pointed out that there used to be a 'Country Code' and it was a pity a similar one couldn't operate in the Meadows, and he felt that increased signage was necessary. It was not clear if there was a sufficient police or park warden presence on the Meadows, particularly in the warm weather, and the Council would like volunteers to help cover parks and squares. There were still numerous thefts from charity shops, which tended not to have much security, and were staffed by part-time volunteers. Funding for tagging pedal cycles (£5 each) was running low, and it would be difficult to obtain more.

After some questions and discussion, Sandra and the members thanked Graham for his report.

3. Film: 'Pull it Doon'

The film, made in 1996 by the Southside Association, describes how in the 1970s, property (especially flatted accommodation) in the Southside was demolished to make way for redevelopment by the University, and to create a six-lane motorway, as well as charting how the many light manufacturing businesses disappeared around the same time. It is an important social archive of the period. The film was shown after the business meeting.

4. Minutes of Meeting held on 3 April 2012, and matters arising

Approved; proposed by George Pitcher and seconded by Molly Ross. Matters arising:

4.1 Item 6.1.1 Planning Application for HMO – consent given.
Item 6.1.2 Planning application for coffee shop – consent given.

4.2 Item 10.5 Lothian Buses Services 2 & 14

In their letter to Colin, LB said that the change in routing was due to demand, and that services are operated in relation to the data obtained, as well as commercial viability. In their letter to Sheila Gilmore MP, the company said that the reason for the switch was because of the tramworks and the diversion via York Place etc. People can get to Haymarket more quickly using Service 2, and as more people use the Clerk Street corridor, that Service was moved there. (They also point out that Service 14 provides a late evening service, unlike Service 2). Change might not be permanent. It appeared that some people were happy with the re-routing of the services, and others weren't. It was suggested that perhaps both services could use the St Leonards route in future.

5. Secretary's report

5.1 Information from Age Scotland about the 'Message in a bottle' Scheme, developed by the Lions Club, was distributed. People are advised to keep a note of their medication, next of kin, and any other relevant information in a small plastic bottle in the door of the fridge in order to guide anyone attending in the event of illness.

5.2 AGM of Causey Development Trust held on 14 May. Talk from l'DGO (Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors) – about the importance of well-designed public spaces. This organisation would be an ideal speaker for the Association, and Isobel Leckie also suggested that Living Streets Scotland would be a good choice.

- 5.3 Minutes of the meeting of the South Central Community Safety Group held on 23 May. George Pitcher had attended, and reported that the group hadn't yet decided who should chair the meetings; it was felt that an elected member should do so, but his view was that a community representative should be Chair. He stressed that the police depend on the community for information and said that a much bigger attendance at the meetings was desirable.
- 5.4 Butane gas abusers – eight shops in the Newington area were visited by Trading Standards and Community Safety Officers on 23 May, and advice given about the sale of butane gas to known solvent abusers in the area. Information packs were given to the shopkeepers, and it was made clear that the supply of gas to known abusers was an offence.

6. Treasurer's report

Fiona reported that the most recent balance was £2029.04. The Annual OSCR return had arrived for completion.

7. Membership Secretary's report

May said that the number of paid members was about 20. Some members renewed after the meeting.

8. Planning and Licensing

- 8.1 Colin had written to complain that a letter of representation about a café had been ignored; this letter was in turn unacknowledged, so he e-mailed to complain about both, and had received apologies. It was felt that the general standard of response from planning was poor, and Sheila Gilmore MP felt that things had slipped.
- 8.2 Consent given to development of 148 Pleasance (Deaconess House).

9. Environmental matters

- 9.1 George had attended a meeting of the Environment & Town Centre Group, at which it had been reported that there was no available funding for improving the Southside corridor. There was about £40,000 for the refurbishment of St Patrick Square, although more information was to follow.
- 9.2 Molly Ross complained again about the rubbish around the former Pillans & Wilson (Woolfson) building in Bernard Terrace, and Cllr Burgess said he would investigate. The premises were up for sale by the Council.
- 9.3 George said that there were far too many 'A' boards and other street furniture cluttering the streets, and while people were being encouraged to

take exercise by walking, the various obstacles in their way could put them off. Tom King pointed out the 'A' boards have to be licensed and have to conform to size and positioning regulations, and that some businesses relied on them for trade. It was agreed to write to the Council about the proliferation of street clutter and signage.

- 9.4 Molly said that cigarette ends were causing an eyesore in numerous places, and not just outside public houses, a view echoed by Fiona. Persistent offenders should be reported to the Environmental wardens.

10. Question and Answer Session with the attending Councillor

Cllr Burgess explained the new configuration of the City Council, which is a Labour/SNP coalition. The various committees had been set up; Cllr Perry is Chair of the Planning Committee, and Cllr Rose continues to be a member.

11. Any other business

- 11.1 Carol McHugh said that people were pleased with Sheila Gilmore's 'roving' surgeries; Sheila said that she was happy to arrange home visits.
- 11.2 There were reminders about imminent events – Meadows Festival, Kirk O'Field 100th Anniversary service, and the community centre's 25th Anniversary celebration.

12. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 4 or 11 September. Exact date will be advised in good time.
