

THE SOUTHSIDE ASSOCIATION

117 Nicolson Street
Edinburgh
EH8 9ER

Founded 1972

Scottish Charity No SCO12262

Minutes of meeting held in the South Side Community Centre on Tuesday 2 April 2013, at 7pm

PRESENT: Sandra McCormick (Chair), Vera Anderson, Margaret Bagan, Caroline Barr, Tom Bonallo, Colin Christison (Secretary), James Ewen, Linda Femister, Alan Fowler, Jan Fraser, Sheila Gilmore MP, James Gilmour, Linda Goodman, Linda Hendry, Bob Hodgart, Tom King, May Linton (Membership Secretary), Cedric Maynard, John McCormick, Kenny McLeod, Ethel Murray, Cllr Jim Orr, Tom Pate, George Pitcher, Stewart Reid, Cllr Cameron Rose, Molly Ross, Jo Scott, Lisa Sibbald (Vice Chair), Keith Smith, Pamela Spiers, Stan Turner, PC Graham Watt, David Wood, and Joan Young.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Sandra welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Susan Brown, Moira Gibson, Isobel Leckie, Hilary McDowell, Carol McHugh, Robert Ross, Fiona Scott (Treasurer), Louise Smith, Derek Suttie, Random Switch, Colin Symes, and Marjory Watson.

2. Guest speaker: Mr Gerry Boyle, on his plans for the former *Odeon* Cinema

Sandra welcomed Gerry Boyle, who said he was delighted to have the opportunity to meet local people and bring them up to date with progress on the re-opening of the former *Odeon* site. He is the singer Susan Boyle's brother, and he described his career as a producer of television and theatre shows, and how his production company (Instant World Arena) plans to operate the venue as a cinema and theatre, with cabaret shows being streamed live using the latest digital technology to 3000 cinemas in London, the USA, and the Far East, and to provide restaurant and bar facilities. There is no intention to copy other mainstream cinemas, or to apply for a late liquor licence, and there will be no gambling and fruit machines in the Las Vegas style, as had been misreported.

Initial refurbishment work costing about £250,000 starts in May, with an expected re-opening date of 2 August 2013. The premises will be open to all, with a coffee bar, Champagne-sponsored bar, and restaurant, all employing local staff. The crush area will be used for shows. On Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays patrons will be able to enjoy a meal and a variety show, London Palladium style, with top entertainers. Other nights will host films, chat shows, comedy festivals, and films for children will be shown on Saturday mornings. A film studio and a dance rehearsal space will be created. Numerous showbiz stars have offered to help get the place open, and others who added their voices to the campaign to re-open it will be asked for their endorsement. It is hoped that the reopening will have a positive socio-economic impact on the regeneration of the area.

Once the format has been established successfully the entire building will be refurbished. The Art Deco front and the star-spangled ceiling will be kept. The 600 seat auditorium will be opened.

There were many questions from the floor which covered items such as: the lease (10 year lease from Duddingston House Properties, with an option to buy the premises for £2.5M at the end of the each year; the scale of the refurbishment; the strengthening of the stage; fire escapes; retaining the name *Odeon* (answer was no, and it was suggested that the former name *New Victoria* could be used); cost of tickets for shows (around £25); parking; air screens; choice of films (suggestions welcome from the public); cost of full refurbishment (£4.5M - £5M); personnel - in-house production team, dancers and musicians will be used; using existing office space; and, in conjunction with the Skipton Building Society, there will be an online business start-up support scheme.

3. Police Report

Sandra introduced PC Graham Watt. The new Scottish Police Force came into operation on 1 April. 'E' Division is Edinburgh city, and 'J' division is the rest of the Lothians, and the Borders. Changes will be made slowly, and updates will be given as these changes happen. He reminded members of the new '101' telephone number, for non-emergency calls to the Police. He said that March had been fairly quiet.

Sandra McCormick said that there were problems in the area with youths taking drugs in stairs, and rough sleepers in stairs. Graham acknowledged the problem, adding that some people are forcing their way into stairs, and asked that such activity be reported to the Police; a lot of the rough sleepers refuse support from the various agencies.

George Pitcher asked about the compatibility of the IT systems following the amalgamation of eight Police forces into one; Graham said that the systems were all different, and it would possibly take years to integrate them, but the end result will be better. E-mails systems are already integrated.

4. Minutes of meeting held on 5 March 2013, and matters arising

Agreed; proposed by Margaret Bagan and seconded by Linda Femister.

- 4.1 Item 5.7 (Preston St Primary School): Bob Hodgart had attended and described how the enthusiastic children from P6 and P7 had run a little café in the school gym, with everything being done in French.
- 4.2 Item 7.2 (Sainsbury's liquor licence application): Letter of objection sent. Sheila Gilmore MP had forwarded a copy of her objection. The application had been heard and continued until 29 April for a local anti-social behaviour report from the Police.
- 4.3 Item 8.4 (Events on Meadows): All the big events have been given consent for 2013. The views of local groups had been sought at the last minute, and the Council now agreed that the decision-making process on applications to use the city's park needs to be reviewed. The Director of Services for Communities will conduct a review and bring forward a proposal for consultation with Councillors and the community. As it is likely that applications for large events will be made in August of this year for 2014 an early review and consultation is highly desirable.
- 4.4 Item 8.5 (Briery Bauks steps): Colin had e-mailed the Council, and was waiting on a reply. George Pitcher would pursue the matter through a specific funding channel.
- 4.5 Item 8.6 (St Leonard's St): Colin had written to Homebase, and spoken to the Manager, who was optimistic that the area would be tidied up.

4.6 Item 10.5 (various licence applications): Colin had written to Licensing. No reply.

5. The Southside Association's Constitution

The list of suggested minor amendments had been distributed at the March meeting. One comment had been received from a member. Susan Brown considered that under Clause 5 (Termination of Membership) no terms of reference were set out to define "any good and sufficient reason" for terminating a membership. Accordingly, it was proposed to insert a new Clause 6 (with the consequent re-numbering of the remaining clauses) to read

"6 Code of Conduct

Members are expected to behave in a positive, respectful, and non-discriminatory manner, be willing to listen to one another, and to speak one at a time. The authority of the Chair must always be recognised."

Members supported the amendments and the adoption of the revised constitution will be proposed at the AGM.

6. Secretary's Report

6.1 Traffic Regulation Order for Bowmont Place – two public parking spaces to be replaced by two Car Club spaces.

6.2 The anniversary of the start of the First World War is in 2014. Keith Smith had contacted Colin with the information that the Southside and St Leonard's areas had suffered one of the highest percentages of loss of life in the city, and suggested that some commemoration of the fact be made, perhaps in conjunction with the Heritage Group. Possible places for some sort of memorial are Nicolson Square and St Patrick Square. There are World War Two memorials in the area.

6.3 Membership subscription level is presently £3.00 per annum, although many members add £2.00 as a donation. The cost of postage alone for members receiving papers by post is at least £5.00 pa (although those who have e-mail offset this cost), and Colin suggested that a new subscription level, perhaps £5.00 pa, be proposed at the AGM, with members being free to add a donation as they wished.

7. Treasurer's Report

The balance remained the same - £1289.83.

8. Planning and Licensing matters

8.1 The City Council's Planning Committee approved the following consolidated guidelines in December 2012: Guidance for Householders, Listed Buildings & Conservation Guidance, and Guidance for Businesses. These may be viewed at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/planning

8.2 PA 13/00125/FUL Outdoor Market near the RCP – application granted, but restricted to Sundays only, and limited to six months.

8.3 There was a discussion about a planning application for change of use to form a four bedroom HMO flat by extending existing flat into shop at 49/55 Montague Street, and it was felt that no comment was required.

9. Environmental matters

9.1 Numerous kerbstones had become detached some months ago from the Caithness granite pavement near the foot of the Pleasance Hill, on the west side, resulting in the paving slabs becoming loose and rocky, constituting a trip hazard. However work had started that morning to repair the pavement.

9.2 Neighbourhood Environment Programme: Roads meeting on 11 April. Colin will vote for the Montague St pavement renewal.

9.3 May Linton suggested that a speaker be invited to describe the Council's various domestic recycling schemes.

10. Question and Answer session with the attending Councillor

No matters were raised.

11. Any other business

11.1 Bob Hodgart had attended the special meeting of MABLAG on 25 March about the provision of sites for barbeques on the Meadows; it had been agreed that the dedicated sports areas should be BBQ free, and a stronger cluster of BBQ sites at the east and west ends. It was felt that more substantial sites were not suitable for the Meadows.

11.2 Jo Scott had attended a meeting of NHS Lothian to inform Community Council representatives about the upgrading and other changes at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital; minutes to follow.

12. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 7 May, Annual General Meeting. Nominations for office bearers and committee members to be sent to Colin. After the AGM there will be a light buffet and refreshments, and some vintage newspapers and magazines will be available for viewing, courtesy of Tom King.