

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 5 November 2013, at 7pm

PRESENT: Lisa Sibbald (Chair), Margaret Bagan, Tom Bonallo, Sarah Boyack MSP, Susan Brown, Colin Christison (Secretary), Jan Fraser (Treasurer), Moira Gibson, Tom King (Vice-Chair), Isobel Leckie, May Linton (Membership Secretary), Vicky MacDonald, Hilary McDowell, Carol McHugh, Kenny McLeod, Ethel Murray, Cllr Jim Orr, George Pitcher, Tim Pogson, Molly Ross, Pamela Spiers, Random Switch, Marjory Watson, David Wood, and Joan Young.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Lisa Sibbald welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Vera Anderson, Caroline Barr, Linda Femister, Sheila Gilmore MP, Bob Hodgart, Jo Scott, Keith Smith, Louise Smith, Derek Suttie, and PC Graham Watt.

2. Police Report

The police were busy with Guy Fawkes Night, so PC Watt had sent the following report: "there are still changes going on in the Community Police Team, and there has been confirmation that there will be an increase in the number of officers for the south area. Not much to report since the last meeting, but there was a large recovery of stolen pedal cycles in the Marchmont area, and a young male charged with theft. There have been some opportunistic thefts from student accommodation and more thefts of pedal cycles, and housebreaking, in the Grange and Marchmont areas, but not too bad in the Southside."

3. Guest speaker: Sarah Boyack MSP

Lisa introduced Sarah who was making a welcome return to the Association's meeting.

In a summary of her community work over the past six months, Sarah said that the Engine Shed is a fantastic social enterprise, transforming the lives of young people, and helping them to get jobs, and she was delighted to see everyone pull together and save it. She discussed Lothian Health Board's proposals to close Liberton and other hospitals as the buildings are no longer fit for purpose, saying that she had talked with Council officials from Health & Social Care Dept, and Housing Association staff about the matter. A better use of hospital resources and care facilities is required so that people are able to remain independent; funding continues to be a problem. She mentioned her submission to the Scottish Parliament about where people are going to live in the future, and that the various authorities and agencies need to talk more to obtain a mix of choices, while providing high quality care. Personal carers are under huge pressure.

She discussed the problems about the Statutory Repair scheme at length, saying that there was still a mountain of disputed cases even though some had been closed; there were several questions and comments from the floor, including about factoring. It was the case that older tenements in particular needed repairs from time to time, and a system had to be devised so that costs were shared properly.

Sarah also mentioned that she was glad the former *Odeon* cinema premises had reopened; she discussed her work on the problems created by the behaviour of people renting weekend party flats, and how it was hoped that after a seven year campaign, accommodation is now properly regulated; and the closure of certain police stations and public counters; and possible changes to the Fire & Rescue Service operational procedures and use of their premises. She has been working closely with local government representatives to help with funding problems; there is great pressure on services with charges being imposed for things which used to be free, and the Council tax charge continues to be frozen. 20% of Council funding comes from the Council tax, business rates, and charges. In the coming year, the Parliament will be looking at local government funding, regeneration of town centres with on-line shopping taking away business. Community empowerment and renewal will be debated, and the referendum will take place.

Copies of Sarah's recent E-news were distributed. After some further discussion, Lisa and the members thanked Sarah for bringing everyone up to date with her work.

4. Minutes of meeting of 1 October 2013, and matters arising

Approved; proposed by Jan Fraser, and seconded by Tim Pogson.

- 4.1 Item 7.1 (Domino's Pizza shop) – LHC catering licence granted to 2am Sun-Thurs, and 3am Fri and Sat, but 5am for seven days refused.
- 4.2 Item 7.2 (Noor Takeaway) – objection acknowledged.
- 4.3 Item 10.8 (overnight accommodation for the homeless) – none of the local churches participated in the actual scheme, but some of their members were involved in organising the Edinburgh operation. However various churches in the surrounding area were involved. Susan Brown asked if Association members could let her know if they had any connection with the scheme.
- 4.4 Item 10.2 (Fire Museum) – Cllr Burgess had written to say that Cllr Barrie had informed him that the decision lies with the new national fire board, but that the Council is keen to keep the Museum. There is to be some public consultation about the matter.

5. Secretary's Report

- 5.1 NHS Lothian publication Health Link (Autumn 2013) edition distributed. This will come to the SA instead of the SCC.
- 5.2 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – recent structural change has created a single unit instead of eight. They are looking for comments and suggestions for improvements to their service delivery, to be published in the first Local Plan in April 2014.
- 5.3 Guest speakers for 2014 - 7 January: Nancy Jamieson, Acting Development Manager, from Planning and Building Standards; 4 February: Dermot Patterson from LDN

Architects, about the McEwan Hall refurbishment; and 4 March: (to be confirmed) David Sinclair from Victim Support Scotland.

- 5.4 Christmas Carol Service – various arrangements outlined.
- 5.5 Community centre's AGM on Tuesday 12 November, at 6.45pm, and a Ceilidh in community centre on 30 November.
- 5.6 Colin reminded members that he is happy to forward minutes to interested parties, by e-mail or post, and new members are very welcome.

6. Treasurer's Report

Jan reported that the most recent balance was £2104.08. The annual OSCR return was submitted on 31 October 2013.

7. Planning and Licensing Matters

- 7.1 3 South Clerk Street – in response to an enquiry by the SA, it had been established that these premises had been granted a Second Hand Dealer's Licence, which runs until 30 June 2014.
- 7.2 PA 13/04186/ADV – Erect internally illuminated display sign to sit above boundary wall at Parkside Bowling Club; objection lodged, and considered material.
- 7.3 Appleton Tower refurbishment – information e-mailed from LDN Architects. Moira Gibson mentioned that a new entrance will be created from Buccleuch Street.

8. Environmental Matters

- 8.1 Homebase exterior at St Leonard's Street – CC had contacted them again for the fourth time to ask if it is possible for them to tidy the area.
- 8.2 David Doig had written to say that environmental walkabouts can easily be arranged, provided about two or three weeks' notice is given, and that areas and issues be highlighted in advance so that appropriate officers can attend.
- 8.3 Hilary McDowell said that Capital Roads Project proposals had to be submitted by the end of the year, and asked for suggestions for small improvement projects. Last year the SA's bid to repair the pavement on the south side of Montague St was unsuccessful, partly as this work will be done in 2017. A suggestion was made that repairs to East Crosscauseway be put forward. Hilary mentioned the closure of East Preston St to allow work by Scottish Power, and the resultant congestion in neighbouring streets. The Odeon had reopened on 1 November, and is operating as a café; there is still work to be done, and a grand re-opening is to take place later in the month. Regarding the use of the Meadows for large events, there was to be yet another consultation; the restoration this year had been carried out very quickly for a change. The council contractor had used the wrong type of tactile slabs on the North Meadow Cycle path and is currently changing them.
- 8.4 Minutes of MABLAG meeting held on 26.8.13 received. Next meeting is on 25 November.

- 8.5 Minutes of Environment and Town Centre Priority Group meeting, attended by Jo Scott, held on 9.9.13 received. Next meeting is on 2 December.
- 8.6 Random Switch said that a national campaign to stamp out littering would begin on 29 November.

9. Reports from meetings attended

George Pitcher had attended a meeting of the Health & Well-Being Priority Group (a division of the SCNPN) that afternoon, and reported that there was to be a consultation on a new Community Plan for 2014-17. There had been information about a dementia awareness programme, as well as ideas to connect people with similar interests between different communities. Regarding the SCNPN as a whole, he made a plea for greater knowledge of the organisation and its role and functions. Communities have a bigger say through its sub-groups.

10. Question and Answer session with the attending Councillor

Cllr Orr said that the cycleway from Middle Meadow Walk to the Innocent Railway Tunnel, via Gifford Park, will soon be completed. It will then be possible to cycle from Duddingston to Ratho.

He mentioned that the hotel (called 10 Hill Place) owned by the Royal College of Surgeons, is to be extended all the way along the south side of the street. The properties there are used for accommodation at the moment.

He said that problems with drugs in Dumbiedykes had recently been resolved.

Margaret Bagan asked about the provision of a bus service between Dumbiedykes and the Southside, and Cllr Orr said that a report about the subject was expected soon.

11. Any other business

11.1 Susan Brown said that Crisis, the Charity for single homeless people, is providing a Christmas Lunch in the Community Centre on Christmas Day. The centre will be open from 7am to 9pm, with janitorial cover, and volunteers are needed to cover the periods 7am-2pm and 1.30pm-9pm, as well as shifts on Christmas Eve and Boxing Day. This is the first time Crisis has provided such a facility in Scotland, and apart from the lunch, there will be some entertainment and activities, as well as services such as dentistry and hair-cutting. Forms are available from CC.

See <http://www.crisis.org.uk/news.php/723/call-for-volunteers-to-make-christmas-happen-for-homeless-people>

11.2 David Wood, Chair of the Causey Development Trust, reported on the success of the recent *Southsiders* portrait project, and thanked everyone for their support. There will be a consultation about the final design, with funding from Sustrans, the University of Edinburgh, the City Council, and the Edinburgh World Heritage charity.

12. Date of next meeting

Carol Service – 6pm, Tuesday 3 December 2013 at St Patrick Square, and afterwards at the main hall in the Community Centre.

Meeting – 7pm, Tuesday 7 January 2014, usual venue.