

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 1 April 2014, at 7pm

PRESENT: Lisa Sibbald (Chair), Tom Bonallo, Colin Christison (Secretary), Claire Gibson, Moira Gibson, Bob Hodgart, Tom King (Vice-Chair), Hilary McDowell, Carol McHugh, Ethel Murray, Tim Pogson, Cllr Cameron Rose, Jo Scott, PC Ross Stewart, Fiona Wardle, and David Wood.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Lisa Sibbald welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Vera Anderson, Margaret Bagan, Caroline Barr, Sarah Boyack MSP, Susan Brown, Linda Femister, Jan Fraser (Treasurer), Isobel Leckie, May Linton, George Pitcher, Molly Ross, Keith Smith, Louise Smith, Pamela Spiers, Derek Suttie, Random Switch, Marjory Watson, and Joan Young.

2. Police Report

Lisa welcomed PC Ross Stewart, who reported that there had been 106 crimes in the area in March, with over half solved. The new 'diary car' was being used regularly, with 25 appointments made in the last month. Appointments are booked in advance, and can be made 7 days a week, from 8am to 9pm. Operation RAC was continuing. Police patrols had been increased around East Parkside, where there had been some break-ins, or attempted break-ins. Following over 20 thefts from lockers in the female locker room at the University gym in Pleasance since November, a female student had been arrested.

3. Guest speaker: Claire Gibson, Chief Executive, Streetwork

Lisa introduced Claire Gibson, who in turn introduced her colleague Fiona Wardle. Claire said that the Streetwork charity was a street based organisation, which had been in existence for 22 years. They help people who find themselves living on the streets, or who are at risk from the streets. She stressed the complexities of the problems; living on the streets and facing homelessness is not often the result of a choice freely and willingly taken. Other needs and issues are factors, such as breakdown of relationships at home; escape from physical, mental, or sexual abuse; addiction to alcohol or other drugs; prostitution; crime; redundancy and unemployment; poverty; political and economic refuge; inequalities; gender and other discrimination, all leading to chaos and crisis which is hard to escape. These can all be complicated further by poor mental and physical health, which can mean further deterioration.

Teams from Streetwork pro-actively seek people living on the streets, and seek to help them back from crisis and vulnerability towards an independent life beyond the street. There is a harm reduction approach, and it is sometimes difficult to get people to accept help, at least for a while, and it can take years to build a relationship. Mediation is offered to get runaways to return home. They advise that people should not give money to beggars.

The various services have been developed to meet the needs over the years. Funding from the City Council enables the provision of a 24 hour service, and fundraising is also carried out. Claire said that in 2013 around 1,400 people accessed the service, and 30,000 instances of help were given. 70 staff work in shifts.

There were numerous questions from the floor, and a full discussion of related matters.

Lisa and the members thanked Claire and Fiona for their talk.

Crisis Service, 20 Holyrood Road, EH8 8AF Helpline 0808 178 2323
www.streetwork.org.uk

4. Minutes of meeting of 4 March 2014, and matters arising

Approved; proposed by Tim Pogson, and seconded by Tom Bonallo.

5. Secretary's Report

5.1 AGM – Tuesday 6 May.

5.2 2011 Ward Census Profile – copies distributed.

5.3 The newly refurbished City of Edinburgh Methodist Church, Nicolson Square, will reopen towards the end of May.

6. Treasurer's Report

Balance same as March (£1827.30).

7. Planning and Licensing Matters

Lutton Court – application for student accommodation refused.

8. Environmental Matters

8.1 It was noted that the prevalence of graffiti is increasing throughout the area. Dog fouling also seem to be increasing

8.2 Hilary McDowell made the following report:

- Pavement improvements on Buccleuch Place and Causewayside
- Council requested to remove pavement studs outside Blackwell's bookshop
- She hoped to meet Marco Biagi MSP to discuss the use of the Meadows for large-scale events
- The new Meadows drainage was twice as deep as the previous system

- The three 'No right turn' notices at Hill Place, Montague Street, and Rankeillor St had eventually been repositioned correctly
- Long-standing overflow at Haddon's Court, the source of which seems to have been impossible to establish over numerous years – Environmental Wardens had delivered letters to residents. The flow seemed to have lessened a bit, and an extension was attached to the pipe so that the water didn't continue to run down the wall
- Large commercial waste containers – another effort to get these removed from the pavements was under way, following the success of the new arrangements in Rose Street
- HM had asked if there were plans to do any repairs to the main route between Cameron Toll and Princes Street. However all the 'capital spend' money for the foreseeable future is to be spent on the Morningside corridor, north to Tollcross and south west beyond Morningside. The 'hot repair/patching' team are due to be available for this area and the east over the next few months so if we identify areas that are in a bad state we should be able to get something better than the temporary repairs done. It would be helpful if the 'bus dip' on the west side of the road at Nicholson Square was on the list, plus other suggestions. Buses are destroying the surface, probably as they are heavier now.
- The Fire Service has been asked to turn off the fire hydrant on Holyrood Park Road that has been dribbling for at least two weeks.

8.3 The meeting to discuss the Capital Roads Project proposals would take place on 3 April (the SA had suggested repairs to East Crosscauseway/Howden Street). CC would attend.

9. Reports from meetings attended

George Pitcher had attended the recent SCNP meeting. The 2014-2017 Action Plan would concentrate on: 1) making people feel safer both personally and in the community; 2) aim for a reduction in feelings of isolation amongst older people; 3) work with young people to improve access to outdoor spaces and other services; and 4) improve the quality of life in Dumbiedykes. The Environmental and Town Centre group had been disbanded.

10. Question and Answer session with the attending Councillor

Cllr Rose said that there had been 572 responses to the recent review of parks survey, and the results would be out in June. Replacement drainage was being installed in the Meadows, which should be more resilient than the existing arrangements. A Neighbourhood Partnership group was looking at cycle paths in the Meadows, especially at pinch points and other places where there is conflict between pedestrians and cyclists. He said that the refusal of consent for the advertising hoarding at Holyrood Park Road was still under appeal. The City Council is discussing the future of the small plantation at Hill Square with the Royal College of Surgeons, and it is hoped that the Council will maintain and manage the Square, so that it will be possible to hold small scale events there.

11. Any other business

11.1 Carol McHugh said that there were numerous potholes again at Bernard Terrace; Cllr Rose would ask about repairs.

- 11.2 There was a lengthy discussion about various matters as they affected the Southside, including planning and licensing laws and regulations, the proportion of supermarkets, the proportion of students and student accommodation, the size of shops, number of takeaways, etc.
- 11.3 Former *Odeon* cinema – see www.instantworldtelevision.tv
- 11.4 Jo Scott wondered when the renovation of St Patrick Square would be achieved.

12. Date of next meeting

The Annual General Meeting will take place on Tuesday 6 May, at 7pm., followed by a light buffet and refreshments.