

# THE SOUTHSIDE ASSOCIATION

117 Nicolson Street  
Edinburgh  
EH8 9ER

*Founded 1972*

*Scottish Charity No SCO12262*

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## Minutes of meeting held in the South Side Community Centre on Tuesday 7 October 2014, at 7pm

**PRESENT:** Lisa Sibbald (Chair), Moira Gibson (Minutes Secretary), Colin Christison, Kenny McLeod, May Linton, Margaret Bagan, Tim Pogson, Tom Bonallo, David Wood, Pam Spiers, Bob Hodgart, Dora Lola-Luz.

Also present were: Councillor Cameron Rose; PC Liam Chapman, Police Scotland; Kevin Hawes, Community Safety Officer.

### **1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

Lisa Sibbald welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from George Pitcher, Hilary McDowell, Jo Scott, Colin Symes, Isobel Leckie, Susan Brown, Tom King (Vice-Chair), Jan Fraser, Ethel Murray, Linda Hendry, Linda Femister.

### **2. Police Report**

This item was taken later on in the meeting, as PC Chapman was a little late in arriving.

### **3. Community Safety Report**

Kevin Hawes from the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership's Environment and Community Safety Team reported that the ongoing work by the police to curb legal highs and needle use was yielding great results. Numbers of needles found had fallen from 391 in July to 34 in September, with none found so far in October. Tim alerted Kevin to the presence of needles in Dalkeith Cemetery in East Preston Street.

Community Improvement Partnerships (CIPs) involving the Council, the Police, the NHS and others, deal with issues such as motorbikes, legal highs, street drinking and beggars. If Southside Association members have concerns about these activities, they should feel free to contact Kevin.

Kevin's team was also working on the problem of beggars. An 18-month survey of beggars had shown that many, including women, were linked to Big Issue sellers. However, these sellers were not officially licensed by the Big Issue but used fake ID and worked shifts. Begging itself is not an offence, although aggressive begging is. In the build-up to Bonfire Night, Kevin's team was offering safety advice.

### **4. Minutes of Meeting of 2 September and Matters Arising**

4.2 Moira fed back responses from the University to questions asked at a previous meeting. Unfortunately, the University had no funds to support the Christmas Party since its funding was ring-fenced for teaching and research. In relation to discounts for Southsiders using the Office of Lifelong Learning (OLL), a new Head of the OLL will arrive in January and will review all its activities, including the charging procedures. Moira will report back on this. Finally, it is difficult to separate students with addresses in the Southside from students who come from the Southside and, currently, the University has no easy way of identifying 'local' students although it will investigate whether this might be possible.

- 7.2 Lisa noted that a local resident had lodged an action for a judicial review of the Scottish Government Reporter's decision on Lutton Court. It may take between 6-12 months before the outcome is known. The sale of Lutton Court was subject to planning permission so, if this is not granted, the property will revert to the City of Edinburgh Council.
- 7.3 Hilary, Tom King and Tom Pate met with Rory Alexander, a Council lawyer, to look at the legalities of the decision to build student accommodation at the rear of the Odeon. It appears that it is impossible to stop this development as it meets the letter of the law. If the Southside Association is dissatisfied with the handling of this decision, it can make a formal complaint. Cllr Perry is trying to get access to the building to check its condition. David suggested that it might, if necessary, be put on the 'At Risk' buildings register.
- 7.4 Tim and Lisa reported that they had met with Clare Halliday of the Castle Rock Edinvar (CRE) Housing Association to discuss whether this organisation could play a part in meeting the desire of Southside Association members to see more affordable housing built locally for older people and families. Currently CRE, working with the Council to identify needs, lets out about 1500 properties on the Southside but it can't afford to bid for land against developers of student housing.

Tim Pogson proposed approval of the minutes, seconded by Tom Bonallo.

## **2. Police Report**

This item was taken on the arrival of PC Liam Chapman who reported 36 recorded crimes during September, including drugs offences, four housebreakings, an assault and robbery (for which a man was jailed), and one incident of vandalism. There has been an increase in bike thefts, probably coinciding with the arrival of new students, and local people are being asked to check basements and cellars for evidence of use by drug takers.

## **10. Question and Answer session with the attending Councillor**

This item was taken out of order as Cllr Rose had to leave before the end of the meeting.

Cllr Rose encouraged comments on Unite's application to build student residences on the Homebase site. So far, 44 objections had been received.

The waste collection scheme was changing and Cllr Rose asked members to phone the Council's official number first and to call him only if they remained dissatisfied. His attention was drawn to several cases of unemptied bins, including a blue bin overflowing near the Deaconess Hospital. Kevin offered to help sort these out.

Cllr Rose was invited by Colin to compère the Christmas Party on 2 December in St Patrick Square. Colin said it could well be the last year of the Christmas lights in the Square, which Tom Bonallo would be asked to switch on. The grant from the Neighbourhood Partnership would cover costs and we hoped for a contribution from Tesco, as in previous years.

## **5. Secretary's Report**

Correspondence had been received about the following matters:

- News from the Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links that the Transport and Environment Committee had decided to continue to allow events on the Meadows to be present for a month, rather than the 15 days suggested by local groups. However, a tendering process will be created which, it is hoped, will reduce damage to the grass.
- Council notices about amendments to waiting restrictions for cars, and about changes to bus lanes.
- News from the Causey Development Trust that it is preparing a final design, fundraising to implement it, opening for Doors Open Day, and seeking a volunteer PR person.

- A notice from the Neighbourhood Partnership that Grow Wild is awarding grants to community groups wanting to sow and grow UK native plants in communal areas.
- A Council notice inviting the public to have their say on the Meadows to Union Canal cycle route, plus notice of a police bike-marking session at Middle Meadow Walk on 29 October from 3-6pm.
- A notice of a consultation meeting at 7pm on 23 September in the City Chambers about the proposal to implement a 20mph speed limit on most city centre roads.
- Notice of a Young Leaders Programme run by CRAGS
- The How to Write a Good Funding Application workshop is on Wednesday 29 October from 2.30-4.30pm and must be booked through [margaret.campbell@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:margaret.campbell@edinburgh.gov.uk)

## **6. Treasurer's Report**

- 6.1 The financial situation remained the same as it was in June.
- 6.2 The grant of £600 from the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership for the Christmas Party was due soon. Lisa mentioned that, as a result of the meeting with Castle Rock Edinvar, it might be possible to apply for a grant for the Association website. She would pursue this.

## **7. Planning and Licensing Matters**

- 7.1 An objection to Unite's proposal to develop the Homebase site had been lodged by the Southside Association. Members were encouraged to make individual comments, if they wished. It's not clear whether the legal action will hold up planning decisions. The Association would like to receive copies of comments from politicians such as Sheila Gilmore and Sarah Boyack.
- 7.2 The Royal College of Surgeons are proposing a café, which we won't object to.
- 7.3 No one had yet heard the outcome of the proposal to turn the Empire Bingo Hall into a Wetherspoons.

## **8. Environmental Matters**

Hilary sent apologies but delivered her report as follows:

- 8.1 A meeting to progress plans for the Gifford Park murals is being arranged.
- 8.2 Flyposting is still a problem and has been reported to the Environmental Team. The main offenders are two companies holding events at Meadowbank. The posters have not yet been removed nor is there any evidence of the companies being fined.
- 8.3 The request to have Holyrood Park Road included in an adjoining conservation area was refused this time, as it is not a high priority. Hilary suggests Councillors press for conservation status to avoid a repeat of the hoardings fiasco.
- 8.4 Following requests, the Council plans to upgrade the traffic lights at the Salisbury/Newington/Minto junction so pedestrians can see clearly when it is safe to cross. A request was made that the road surface be repaired at the same time.
- 8.5 The large amount of rubbish (mattresses, black bags) dumped on pavements at this time of year by landlords is very evident. A call to Task Force staff on 0131-664 8330 should help.

8.6 May reported that many YES posters on the Pleasance had still not been taken down and Lisa promised to alert Kevin.

8.7 The Causey's newsletter (see section 5 above) announced that design work would be getting under way to improve the Causey.

**9. Reports from meetings attended**

No meetings since the last report.

**10. Question and Answer session with the attending Councillor**

See above – item taken earlier.

**11. Any other business**

11.1 A sub-committee to organise the Christmas Party will be convened by Colin.

11.2 The number of paid-up members is 18, down 50% on this time last year. It would be good if members could encourage others to join.

11.3 Lisa said that membership might increase if more people knew about the Association and its activities. Promotion is essential and this could include a new website (possibly with a grant from Castle Rock Edinvar), leaflets, posters and so on. She suggested that a new communications sub-group would be helpful in delivering this, and appealed for members.

11.4 Suggestions for speakers at the Southside Association meetings who could talk on matters of local interest were sought and some suggestions were forthcoming:

- Clare from Castle Rock Edinvar
- A speaker from the Royal College of Surgeons
- A speaker from the Trams/Transport for Edinburgh.

**12. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 4 November at 7pm.