

THE SOUTHSIDE ASSOCIATION
117 Nicolson Street
Edinburgh
EH8 9ER

Founded 1972 Scottish Charity No SCO12262

www.southsideassociation.co.uk

**Minutes of meeting held at the South Side Community Centre
on Tuesday 2 June 2015, at 7pm**

PRESENT: Colin Christison (Chair/Secretary), Lisa Sibbald (Treasurer), Moira Gibson (Minutes Secretary), Maggie Bagan, Carol McHugh, Colin Symes, Tom Bonallo, Ethel Murray, Jo Scott, Fran Gifford, Stephen Carter, Joan Carter, Dora Lola-Luz, Maurice Naftalin, and David Wood.

Also present: Cllr Jim Orr and Kevin Hawes, Community Safety Officer.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Colin Christison welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Sarah Boyack MSP, Susan Brown, Jan Fraser, Tom King, Nancy Lynner, Hilary McDowell, Tim Pogson, Derek Suttie, Isobel Leckie, May Linton, Linda Femister, and Linda Hendry.

Alison Neathey, a former member of the Southside Association had hoped to be able to attend the meeting, but had been delayed. Lisa summarised Alison's proposals for the former Engine Shed. In conjunction with Simon from the Craggs Sport Centre, she is proposing a community and social enterprise in the building formerly occupied by the Engine Shed. Alison has support from the local business community and is planning to use the building as follows: the top floor for Craggs' offices; the middle floor for a cafe and market, including an outside catering service in conjunction with the Edinburgh Larder in Blackfriars Street; and the ground floor as a bakery (working with Bread Share Community Bakery in Portobello) offering skills training. The car park could host a Farmers' Market and herbs could be grown in the garden. A bid for the property has been submitted and tenants are already lined up if it is successful. If their bid is not the preferred bid, she hopes to make a 'social good' case to the Council's Finance & Resources Committee in August, if she can garner sufficient support. Alison is seeking support from the Association and from individual members: further details on how to do this can be found on www.stleonardsyard.org.uk. **Afternote:** their bid was not a preferred bid.

2. Police Report from Police Scotland

Unfortunately, no one from Police Scotland was available to attend the meeting.

3. Report on Environment and Community Safety from Kevin Hawes, Community Safety Officer, City of Edinburgh Council

Kevin and his team are continuing to work with the Police on issues resulting from legal highs, with daily lifting of needles from stairwells and gardens. Five substances have been banned recently and it remains to be seen whether this will make a difference. The Graffiti Team are out daily removing tags from public places; owners of private property are not obliged to remove unsightly graffiti. A 2010 audit of beggars showed 72 across the whole city, but numbers have now increased, particularly with well-organised Eastern European gangs who beg in shifts, often close to ATMs. There are concerns about links to human trafficking.

4. Minutes of meeting of 7 April 2015, and matters arising

Approved; Proposer: Maggie Bagan; Seconder: Jo Scott

5. Chair's Report

- 5.1 The Association had written to the former MP for the constituency, Sheila Gilmore, to thank her for help with various issues over the years. Sheila had expressed an interest in becoming a member of the Association, and this was agreed.
- 5.2 The Chair had thanked the Royal College of Surgeons for a most interesting talk and tour of their buildings and facilities after the May AGM, and for their hospitality.
- 5.3 Ideas for future speakers were submitted. Possibilities are:
 - A speaker from Living Streets Edinburgh Group
 - A possible visit to the Kelpies in Old College
 - A visit by the new MP for the area, Tommy Sheppard
 - A visit by the manager of the University's Free Legal Advice Centre

6. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer mentioned that, as previously, the Association's bankers, the Clydesdale Bank, have been unnecessarily difficult in helping the Association change signatories on cheques etc, when office bearers had changed. However, the matter had eventually been resolved and funds now stand at £1,896.25, although a £50 charge for photocopying for the Auditor has yet to be deducted. Further annual subscriptions are welcome.

7. Planning and Licensing Report

- 7.1 15/01342/FUL: venue at 2 Roxburgh Place – the Roxy - application to remain open until 1am Monday-Sunday – Refused.
- 7.2 15/01730/FUL: Change of use from office (class 2) to café (class 3) with ancillary retail, training and takeaway with associated alterations to interior and front elevation at 80 Nicolson Street Edinburgh EH8 9EW (was previously Albemarle Pawnshop) – no objection by the Association
- 7.3 15/01886/ADV: Four free-standing post-mounted display cases with internal illumination at Queen's Hall, 85-89 Clerk Street, Edinburgh, EH8 9JG. The Association wrote a letter of support which had been acknowledged.

- 7.4 An application had been lodged for a café downstairs in Jordan Valley Health Foods – no objection by the Association.
- 7.5 An application had been lodged for the former bicycle shop at 57-59 Lutton Place to become a bistro bar. No objection.
- 7.6 Arising from several recent applications for yet more cafes and bars, a member recalled that there used to be a Council policy about concentrations of any one type of business. This seems to have disappeared. Would it be possible to ask for a restriction on opening hours to reduce noise and anti-social behaviour? This is a particular issue when premises are located beneath residential property: eg in the summer, one can't open the windows because of the noise of people outside/below and the cigarette smoke which rises up.
- 7.7 There has been huge disappointment that Homebase is to be lost and that the premises are to become another student residence. Members agreed that Policy and Guidance were insufficient to stop this and that legal constraints needed to be embedded in the Local Plan. Could the Association ask Marco Biagi MSP and/or his Community Empowerment Bill help with this issue?

8. Environmental Matters

- 8.1 Hilary McDowell was unable to be present but had reported that work on the cycle way is running late, so the mural will also start late. Preparatory work on the wall will be required before painting can begin and volunteers are still needed. The litter bins have not yet been placed in St Patrick Square. The railings there are not what was promised and if the project had been properly scoped and costed, false promises would not have been made.
- 8.2 Jo Scott volunteered to find out what had happened to the memorial seat for Jackie McPherson, a supporter of the Southside Association.
- 8.3 In order to reduce serious accidents and increase safety, almost every street in the city centre will now be a 20mph street, with arterial routes at 30mph. The cost of signage and implementation will approximate £2,000,000 and members commended the 'Slow Down' type of flashing sign as effective. Police will enforce the limit with speed guns but members asked what would be done to limit speeding cyclists?

9. Report from, and Question and Answer session with, the attending Councillor

- 9.1 Cllr Jim Orr updated members on his efforts to re-establish a Southside Community Council. He reiterated his view that a Community Council, with its powers and focus on planning issues in particular, would be a safeguard against undesirable developments in the neighbourhood. He is grateful for support from the Southside Association and asked members to spread the word.
- 9.2 Police Scotland banned five 'legal high' substances in mid-April and this appears to be having a beneficial effect. However, there are still problems with shoplifting and smashed windows, so traders are working with the police to catch the culprits. In other countries, such as New Zealand and the Republic of Ireland, blanket bans on psychoactive substances (apart from alcohol, caffeine etc) have been imposed but it's not yet clear whether that could be the solution in Scotland and the UK.

- 9.3 The bins at Gifford Park continue to cause nuisance: they are messy and overflowing. A rollout of the scheme to remove business/trade waste bins should be coming within the next six months. He is aware of particular problems at Drummond Street and will report these. Jim feels frequent collection (little and often) is the best solution for business waste.
- 9.4 Underbelly's circus tent will replace the Ladyboys at the East Meadows, generating greater income and under tighter restrictions. This is a one-year trial with an option to extend the lease for a further year.
- 9.5 Members will have heard that Marco Biagi has stated his intention not to stand again at the Holyrood elections. Tommy Sheppard is the new MP (SNP), replacing Sheila Gilmore (Scottish Labour).
- 9.6 The £250,000 Spirit of Dumbiedykes award will be spent on a variety of initiatives to combat anti-social behaviour, including sport, volunteering, cultural pursuits, plus environmental improvements such as beehives on roofs. The Craggs will also benefit.
- 9.7 Cllr Orr drew attention to the good work done by Colin Symes and the King's Hall Church in distributing food to those in need. Colin added that the foodbank was mainly for those referred by social workers or housing associations, but also for drop-in locals in dire need. Approximately 12-15 clients were helped weekly with basic foodstuffs, in association with Edinburgh City Mission. Crisis also offers friendship and support.
- 9.8 The bus shelter on Buccleuch Street has been removed and a new one is awaited.
- 9.9 Following up from the report on trade waste bins, members asked Cllr Orr why there wasn't stronger Council enforcement when bins were overflowing or put out at the wrong times. Apparently, in Stockbridge, bins must be put out within a three-hour window only, otherwise traders are fined. Apart from bins being unsightly and possibly unhealthy, pavements are for people, not bins.

10. Any other business

- 10.1 The AGM of the South Side Community Centre is on Saturday 27 June at 11am followed by a barbeque from noon until 2pm.
- 10.2 Moira Gibson, on behalf of the University of Edinburgh, apologised for disruption in South College Street and Drummond Street. This was due to roadworks connected with the installation of a new Combined Heat and Power System, to reduce the University's carbon emissions.

11. Date of next meeting

Due to refurbishment of the South Side Community Centre, the September meeting will be held on Wednesday 2 September in the Gray Room in the Nelson Hall. Please note change of day from Tuesday to Wednesday, and the change of venue.