

Members' Meeting
Tuesday 3 November 2015 at 7pm
Room 1, South Side Community Centre

MINUTES

Present: Colin Christison (Chair and Secretary), Moira Gibson (Minutes Secretary), Jan Fraser, Carol McHugh, Fran Gifford, May Linton, Maggie Bagan, Kenny McLeod, Ethel Murray, Joan Carter, Tom Bonallo, Sandra McCormick, John McCormick, Hilary McDowell, Jo Scott. **Also present:** Cllr Ian Perry, PC Neil Mackay, Kevin Hawes (Community Safety Officer, South Central Neighbourhood Partnership), Kathy Evans (Guest Speaker and Community Safety Manager, City of Edinburgh Council).

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Tom King, Lisa Sibbald, Colin Symes, Stephen Carter and Ola Uduku.

2. Police Report from Police Scotland

PC Neil Mackay reported that a recent operation to target 'legal highs' and organised crime had been very successful. 170 officers had visited over 70 addresses locally, made over 20 arrests, and seized £100,000 worth of heroin and £10,000 in cash. In addition, there had been 48 recoveries of drugs and weapons in South Edinburgh. Of 163 crimes in the previous month, 86 (53%) had been solved. Properties known to the Police are under constant surveillance. All this activity is having a positive impact on the community, making it much safer.

3. Guest Speaker: Kathy Evans, Community Safety Manager, City of Edinburgh Council.

Kathy Evans has been with the Council since 2001, and working in the South Area (Wards 15 and 10) since 2008, so she has a very good understanding of the issues of concern to local people. She deals with a wide range of matters including anti-social behaviour, neighbour/noise disputes, graffiti and flyposting, and youth disorder in places like the Meadows and Dumbiedykes.

In relation to begging, which is an issue of concern locally, she works in conjunction with the Police to map activity, profile individual beggars and understand their patterns of behaviour, eg how often they change locations. Begging is not an offence unless it is aggressive. While several beggars are part of Eastern European (mainly Romanian) organised 'gangs', there is a small rise in the number of homeless/ex-Forces beggars, not just in the Southside but also in the city centre. Kathy works with Simon Porteous, her counterpart in the city centre area, as well as with Police Scotland.

An attempt to outlaw begging in Aberdeen in 2006 by passing a by-law failed. If beggars are moved on, they simply relocate to another pitch as happened with the Hunter Square dispersal order a few years ago. A Community Improvement Partnership is being investigated.

There is plenty of help for people (eg StreetWork) so they have no need to beg and should not be given money on the street. Big Issue vendors are not as tightly managed by the Big Issue as they should be, and Kathy will ask them to review their regulations.

Anyone who has any concerns about needles, beggars, crime, or intelligence which can help strengthen community safety, should contact Kathy or the SCNP on 529 5151. She and Kevin will send us a detailed list of appropriate contact numbers.

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

Kevin's report formed part of Kathy's presentation (see above). He is working with Kathy to produce a contacts list which he will send us for distribution.

5. Minutes of meeting of 6 October 2015, and matters arising
Agreed; proposer: Jan Fraser, seconder: Ethel Murray.

5.1 Item 6.4: The film project mentioned at the last meeting has had three expressions of interest from Keith Smith, Robert Beaton and Fiona Murray, and the promise of further contacts. Others are welcome to get involved.

5.2 Item 9.2: Gifford Park Mural Opening. Hilary reported that the Opening Ceremony in October has been very successful, with Cllr Lesley Hinds performing the honours. The commercial bins are to go and a temporary bollard is in place, pending a permanent one.

6. Chair's Report

6.1 In Dora Lola-Luz's absence, Hilary McDowell reported that the meeting of the Southside Community Council (SCC) had been well attended and the organisation is establishing itself. A Treasurer has been appointed and a Secretary is in place. The next meeting of the SCC is at the Nelson Hall at 7pm on Monday 9 November 2015.

6.2 The Odeon cinema has been purchased by the G1 entertainment and leisure group. They already own a cinema in Glasgow and several high-end restaurants. They plan to run a cinema and restaurant in the Odeon, and undertake to deliver a sensitive restoration of the building. Their press release mentions an awareness of previous community concerns about the building so we may decide to invite a company representative along to present their plans.

6.3 Arrangements for the Christmas lights switch-on at St Patrick Square are as follows: Cllr Orr – MC; Colin Symes – Minister; Lord Provost – switcher on via the 'big button'. A PA system, stewards, First Aider, University choir and carol sheets are organised. The Square will not be closed to traffic (keeping costs down) and everyone will go in the gardens. We will ask the Council to hose down the grass so it is clean. Refreshments at the after-party at the Community Centre will be provided by the usual band of workers, to whom thanks are extended. This year, there will be no Santa or sweets, as the refreshments will be plentiful.

7. Treasurer's Report

Lisa Sibbald, Treasurer, sent a message to say that the most recent bank statement showed a balance of £1858.29. A cheque had been received from Sustrans for £202, for reimbursement of the planning application cost for the Gifford Park mural and the artist had eventually

received her fee. The annual public liability insurance bill had been received.

8. Planning and Licensing Report

8.1 'The Doghouse' across the road from the Odeon has been painted in too garish a colour. The Southside Association will write and object.

8.2 Members are asked to respond to the Council's consultation on student housing. Some suggestions as to wording have already been emailed to members.

9. Environmental Matters

Hilary reported that, following the extensive report discussed at the last meeting, follow-up actions are being chased. The pavement between Drummond Street and the Surgeons' Hall needs to be in Caithness stone.

It was suggested that the Southside Association and newly-formed Southside Community Council agree a way of liaising on planning, licensing and environmental matters, particularly in relation to the Council's budget for road and pavement repairs and upgrades.

10. Report from, and Question and Answer session with, the attending Councillor Cllr Perry drew members' attention to the ongoing consultation on the Council budget. £128m will have to be cut over the next four years, of which approximately 60% will be staff cuts (around 2,000 staff).

Commercial bins are still an eyesore and obstructing the pavements but, following the successful pilot in Rose Street, Southside is next in line for ensuring that these are removed and/or better regulated.

The review of events sites in the Meadows is ongoing, with no immediate plans to change things.

Cllr Perry agreed to report back on why no notice was given for road closures relating to the 10k race the previous Sunday.

11. Any other business – none.

12. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 1 December, 6pm, St Patrick Square – the Christmas Party!