

The Southside Association

117 Nicolson Street

Edinburgh

EH8 9ER

Founded 1972

Scottish Charity No SCO12262

www.southsideassociation.co.uk

Members' Meeting

Tuesday 4 April 2017 at 7pm

Room 1, Southside Community Centre

MINUTES

Present: Colin Christison (Chair), Jo Scott (Vice Chair), Moira Gibson (Minutes Secretary), Jan Fraser, Tom Bonallo, Ethel Murray, Kenny McLeod, Fran Gifford, Bob Hodgart, Colin Symes, Maggie Bagan, Ola Uduku, and Sam Campbell.

Also present: Cllr Jim Orr, PC Neil MacKay, and PC Stuart Fraser.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Hilary McDowell, Philip McDowell, Gordon Duffy, and May Linton.

On behalf of the group, the Chair expressed his condolences to the families of former members David Langridge and Molly Ross, who had both passed away recently.

2. Police Report

PC Mackay reported on four seizures of drugs – three in Dumbiedykes, one in Southside – which resulted in three people being charged. A housebreaker, caught red-handed, has been charged with 76 offences and is on remand awaiting trial. Nicolson Square now has more street drinkers: four have been charged including one with public indecency and two for assault and robbery. They cannot return to Nicolson Square. Discussion ensued about whether the bench in Square should be removed – this is a matter for the Council. A member raised concerns about Deaconess Gardens which now has more drinkers, dogs and fights.

Speed checks in 20mph zones continue twice daily and tickets for speeding are being issued. Cyclists are also subject to 20mph restrictions but there is no enforcement for them. This is an issue on the Meadows where pedestrians are knocked down. Patrols in the Meadows will be increasing and Police Scotland will have a stall at the Meadows Festival. It's up to Council staff to enforce restrictions on barbecues.

Attention was drawn to a public consultation on policing strategy: *2026: Serving a Changing Scotland*. This will cover areas such as use of technology, armed response, street policing. Respondents should visit <https://consult.scotland.police.uk/consultation/2026>.

3. Minutes of meeting held on 7 March 2017, and matters arising

Agreed; proposed by Jan Fraser and seconded by Jo Scott.

- 3.1 Item 8.3 (Air quality monitoring station) – a location has not been found, but it will certainly not be in the community centre’s garden.
- 3.2 Item 8.7 (Pleasance ‘triangle’) – refurbishment continues and soon ready for planting.
- 3.3 Item 10.1 (former Royal High School Planning Application) – the Association had written to object to the latest proposal for a hotel on the site.

4. Chair’s Report

4.1 The Skelf Bike Park

After five years of work by the Braidwood Bike Group the Skelf Bike Park opened on 31 March. Last weekend it was very busy with mountain bikers and skateboarders. It is a great asset to the area, with something for novices and experienced bikers alike www.theskelf.org.uk

4.2 Former Odeon Cinema, Clerk Street

The owner of the site, G1, has a small skilled team that refits its buildings. Specialist companies are used where appropriate but basic work and all restoration is done by their own team. G1 recently bought the Scotsman Hotel which has been starved of basic maintenance for some years and so the team has been withdrawn from the Odeon to deal with those problems. G1 is fully committed to continue restoring the Odeon. Rob Arthur’s role in managing the project has been taken over by Alison Burns. It is envisaged that there will be a future opportunity to visit the refurbished building although it won’t be open for the Festival.

4.3 RSO/16/12 and TRO/16/44 Traffic Regulation Orders in September/October 2016.

Notification from the Council’s Planning and Transport staff: “The Council has met with a number of organisations, residents and individuals. This has provided us with a greater understanding of the issues and more general areas of concern. As a result of these, and follow-up discussions with partner community organisation Causey Development Trust, the Council is proposing not to proceed with the above statutory process, but to put it on hold to allow for further consideration. Your comments will remain on record.

“You will receive further notification in due course and in particular should there be any change to this position. The Council continues to be very committed to helping to bring improvements to these streets and would like to continue the dialogue about possible solutions.”

4.4 Nicolson Street/Clerk Street Town Centre

The City of Edinburgh Council is preparing supplementary guidance for Nicolson Street/Clerk Street Town Centre which will set out where uses of shop units can change and how it plans for a mix of uses to support the town centre.

Draft guidance was approved for consultation by the [Planning Committee on 2nd March 2017](#). This has been informed by a ‘public life street assessment’ - carried out by design consultants for the Council which explored how the town centre could evolve to maximise the potential for benefitting public life - and, as we are aware, a Place Standard exercise.

The guidance:

- identifies groups of shop units within the town centre where the proportion of units in non-shop use should not fall below a set level
- identifies appropriate uses within the defined town centre
- suggests potential changes to the town centre boundary – this would extend protection in one case – around Nicolson Square - and remove protection south of East/West Preston St.

Once finalised the guidance will be used to decide planning applications for change of use from a shop use to a non-shop use. It is intended that the formal consultation period will run between 18 April and 30 May. The Council will write to Community Councils and other bodies in advance of this with details of how people can take part in the consultation.

4.5 Meadows Festival

This takes place on Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 June this year.

5. Treasurer's Report

The balance is the same as last month.

6. Planning & Licensing matters

- 6.1 Planning Application from St Peter's Church. As staging does not constitute a material consideration, there are no grounds for objecting. There was some discussion about flexible options for staging.
- 6.2 There was discussion about Unite's signage being inappropriate for a residential area.

7. Environmental matters, from Hilary McDowell

7.1 Murals - We now know the owners of properties at Gibb's Entry, Haddon's Court and the pend between St Patrick Square and Buccleuch Street and can proceed with plans for the three murals. We will contact them, apply for planning permission and find funding (possibly from Neighbourhood Partnership grants or local businesses). Since we can demonstrate a successful result at Gifford Park, this should convince people that murals are a good means of preventing graffiti. A meeting of the owners and/or occupiers, in due course, would probably be helpful in deciding themes. The membership agreed to support further progress.

7.2 Manhole covers - the very noisy BT manhole cover outside the Festival Theatre was fixed on Sunday 26 March. Hilary is still chasing up two Verizon covers which is very difficult as the company's website doesn't seem to accept that they have any dealings outside the USA. Scottish Water also being pursued over another noisy cover and is more responsive.

7.3 Flyposting - The CCP company, who came to speak at our last meeting, is following up complaints about flyposting on our behalf. They may have more clout than the Council in that they can refuse to handle advertising from events promoters. They have written to complain to the Bongo Club about flyposting on Newington Road. Hilary has been given by CCP a ballpark figure for the cost of cleaning fly-posted windows and treating with wax and has passed this on to the company who are renovating the shop on the corner of Newington Road.

7.4 Tree grilles around the bases of the trees on the east side of St Leonard's Street are now damaging the trees, which have outgrown the guards. It has been established that the Council owns

the trees outside the Police Station. Enquiries have been made to Castle Rock/ Edinvar about the trees outside their buildings.

7.5 Pedal cycles – efforts are continuing to establish the official Council protocol on removing the many apparently abandoned and dilapidated bikes which clutter the streets, as well as in tenement stairs. New racks are being installed in the city when existing ones are taken up with abandoned bikes, which is not cost-effective.

7.6 Replacement trees on Lutton Place – Hilary, assisted by Fran Gifford and Cllr Rose, is pursuing this issue with various Council staff, assisted by Fran Gifford and Cllr Rose.

7.7 Several empty shops are now being fitted out for new tenants. The former Chilli Connection is to be a pizza takeaway run by a young man who has another in Stockbridge. The shop next to this is to be taken when the Kodak shop moves across the road into apparently smaller premises. The former Planet X is to supply home furnishing such as lamps and fabrics from Turkmenistan as far as I can tell. No news of a tenant for the shop on the corner of Newington Road but a lot of money being spent.

7.8 A query was raised about the man who feeds the gulls in Deaconess Gardens and whether this constitutes anti-social behaviour? It was thought not, but perhaps it should.

8. Report and Q & A with the attending Councillor

Cllr Orr will be standing down at this election and was thanked by the Association for his service to the community. He, in turn, wished the Association well and commended its efforts to improve things for local people. He encouraged members to keep up their pressure for improvements (eg street surfaces, pavements, abandoned bikes) as he felt that often it was those with the loudest voices who got the attention and the service.

He drew particular attention to the issue of licensing and feels that too many licences are being issued to the detriment of the local area and the city. There is an opportunity for the Association to get more involved, and Colin Symes, a former Street Pastor, strongly agreed.

9. Any other business

9.1 Bob Hodgart spoke about the possible legal challenge to the Council's ruling on India Buildings and its decision to permit a hotel to be built beside the Central Library. A public meeting will be held on 5 April at 7pm at the Grassmarket Community Centre.

10. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 6 June at 7pm.