

The Southside Association

**117 Nicolson Street
Edinburgh
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**Members' Meeting
Tuesday 3 April 2018 at 7pm
Room 1, Southside Community Centre**

Minutes

PRESENT: Colin Christison (Chair), Maggie Bagan, Sam Campbell, Jan Fraser, Kate George, Moira Gibson, Fran Gifford, Hilary McDowell, Philip McDowell, Ethel Murray, Maggie Peatfield, Jo Scott, Colin Symes, and six local residents; and PC Johnny Wong.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Colin Christison welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Tom Bonallo, May Linton, Dora and Nino Lola-Luz, and Carol McHugh.

2. Police Report

Colin introduced PC Wong, who described the continuing efforts to resolve the ASB problems (including running fights with youths) at Nicolson Square and beyond. Extra patrols are being deployed, and plain-clothes officers are active in the area to help combat these issues and drug dealing.

The Police are liaising with the Holyrood Park Rangers about motorists contravening the rules regarding driving in the park on Sundays when certain areas are closed to vehicles. It is considered that better signage is required.

There was a discussion about the long-standing ASB and drug problems in the Haddon's Court area. While the City Council and the Police are well aware of the issues, it was felt that CCTV cameras, better lighting, as well as increased patrols by the Police and Environmental wardens would help enormously. People gaining access to stairwells to take drugs and or make mischief was discussed. Police are unable to respond quickly enough to reports of 'minor' crimes.

3. Guest speaker – Kate George

Colin and Hilary recounted the history and processes involved in creating the widely admired mural at Gifford Park, which had transformed that part of the street, making it much more pleasurable to walk through; and they introduced Kate George, the artist responsible for the work. As mentioned in

previous minutes, and at 4.1 (below), funding has been secured from the University of Edinburgh's Community Grants scheme to create a mural at Gibb's Entry (next to the Tesco Metro shop), and another mural further along Nicolson Street at Haddon's Court, with funding from the Council's Local Events Fund, and the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership. Planning consent has to be obtained, and provisional drawings have to be submitted as part of the Planning Application, which we hope will be in the next couple of weeks.

Many neighbourhoods suffer from the blights of graffiti and tagging, and Kate described how the installation of murals can have a beneficial impact, especially when the wider community is involved in the work. At Gifford Park, there had been a huge amount of interest from local residents and businesses, as well as from passing pedestrians, and many offers of help from a wide section of the community had been gratefully accepted. Such involvement helps lend a sense of pride in the area. Tagging tends not to happen on murals, and it was noted that there had only been two significant instances of graffiti there in about three years; the SA has a supply of graffiti removal solution, and this can be used in the event of problems at the two new proposed sites.

Kate outlined some ideas she had considered for the two murals, and invited comments and ideas from those present at the meeting. There was great enthusiasm and many suggestions. In a nutshell it was felt that the Gibb's Entry mural should have an educational theme, and Scottish wildlife and horticulture theme at Haddon's Court. These will be used for the planning application, and there will be room for numerous further ideas.

If we are successful in obtaining planning consent, and the preparation work is completed, we hope that painting can take place in the last two weeks of June and the first week of July. Durable masonry paint will be used, and the murals coated in a high quality varnish.

Kate was thanked for presenting her initial ideas. More thoughts are very welcome – please e-mail the address at the top of these minutes.

4. Minutes of meeting held on 6 March 2018, and matters arising

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

- 4.1 Item 5.1.1 – (*Haddon's Court mural*) – the SCNP had awarded the SA the £1340 required to complete the funding for this mural.
- 4.2 Item 7.2 (*the publishing of names and addresses of those making planning representations*) - this development had taken many people by surprise, including some Councillors, and the response from planning was as follows

"In response to your email of 7 March concerning names and addresses of people commenting being published on the planning portal. I accept that this has also been applied retrospectively. However, the [Planning and Building Standards Customer Charter](#) sets out that comments on planning applications cannot be treated as confidential. In addition, our guide to [Commenting on Planning Applications](#) states that representations may be made available on the Council website with any personal information, other than names and addresses, redacted to comply with the Data Protection Act. A link to this guidance is provided before you make a comment on the planning portal. These documents have been available for some years and should leave the person commenting in no doubt that their names and addresses may be published.

This is not a policy but an operational change to prevent duplicate comments and confusion on the planning portal. It is in full compliance with the Data Protection Act and allows greater public transparency in the planning process. The actual comment will normally only be made public if the application is determined by the Development Management Sub-Committee.

There is no proposal to change the system and revert to names only.”

5. Chair’s Report

5.1 There is a possibility of further funding initiatives from the University of Edinburgh

6. Treasurer’s Report

Bank balance same as previous month.

7. Planning & Licensing matters

7.1 17/03933/FUL – Change of use from C2 Beauty Salon, to C3 Restaurant, at 58 S Clerk Street – PA now granted.

7.2 Numerous changes to the planning system in terms of performance and service improvements are under consideration and will be decided upon at the June full Council meeting.

7.3 18/01113/FUL - *internal refurbishment of the lower three levels of the existing building, a new single-storey accessible entrance extension opening out onto Bristo Square, a new window opening at first floor on Marshall Street, redecoration of the existing facades, and new rooflight and lift overrun at roof level at 7 Bristo Square Edinburgh EH8 9AL –*

This is the refurbishment of the Richard Verney Health Centre at Bristo Square – disabled access will be brought up to standard; and a new counselling centre will be created, as well as other improvements. There will be space for the GP practice to expand.

7.4 It was noted with satisfaction that the planning department are refusing the ‘blue halo’ lighting component of applications for cash-dispensing machines.

8. Environmental matters

8.1 Vinyl wraps will cover local street litter bins in the near future, in an effort to discourage littering; this is part of the #OurEdinburgh campaign to reduce litter, and it is claimed that bins so adorned in the city centre attracted up to 40% extra use.

8.2 It was noted that there is widespread frustration at the difficulty in getting bins emptied as per schedule.

8.3 **Road works on A7 between South Bridge and Newington Road- 1.5 k distance.** Big project costing £1m, and should be worth the short term chaos. Preliminary work all done well within schedule. There’s not sufficient time to get the Puffin crossing moved to the north of the Lutton Place junction, but there will be engineering work to slow down traffic leaving Lutton Place. There’s also a plan to improve pavement slabs outside Tesco etc as part of

major work as well as the Lidl stretch and Caithness stone opposite Festival Theatre. Wobbly slabs reported in other places.

- 8.4 Various issues were raised concerning the Haddon's Court area. One of the cafes piles cardboard etc on top of their bin and it blows away, and in spite of residents' complaints, the practice continues. General waste bins which are supposed to be stored indoors are left outside. There are dispensations for food and glass bins. There is persistent parking on the footpath outside 108-110 Nicolson Street (to the rear at Haddon's Court), which is causing considerable concern.

9. Report and Q & A with the attending Councillor

No Councillor present.

10. Any other business

None.

11. Date of next meeting

AGM – Tuesday 1 May 2018, followed by the ordinary meeting.