

The Southside Association

**117 Nicolson Street
Edinburgh
EH8 9ER**

Founded 1972 *Scottish Charity No SCO12262*

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Annual General Meeting

Chair's Report 2017-2018

In 2017-2018 we held the customary nine meetings including the AGM, and the Christmas Lights Carol Service and community party.

We now have 24 paid members which is an increase of four. Average attendance at meetings was 17, up slightly from the previous year.

Councillors attended all but two of the meetings, and as always we appreciate their input, and for taking forward queries and matters of concern.

Police officers gave us reports at all of our meetings and we are grateful for these, and for the opportunity to ask questions and to exchange information with them.

Guest speakers included a Crime Prevention Officer, PC Greig Stephen, who discussed domestic and business security matters; Sarah Burns, the Manager of the South East Locality, who gave us a presentation on the Local Improvement plan for that area; and Dan Rous from the Greyfriars Charteris Centre described the proposals for the redevelopment of the Centre at 138 Pleasance.

At the 2017 AGM we referred to the possibility of creating some new murals in the area. We have been fortunate enough to have been awarded grants from the University of Edinburgh's Community Grants scheme for a mural at Gibbs Entry, and from the Council's Local Events Fund and the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership for a mural further along Nicolson Street at Haddon's Court. Kate George, the artist who created the Gifford Park mural,

attended our April meeting, and many ideas for the content of the murals were exchanged with those present.

The Christmas Event was again very successful. We thank Colin Symes from the Community Church for officiating at the Carol Service, Councillor Dickie for acting as MC, and to Alex Arthur for switching on the lights. This event brings much of the community together, including pupils and staff from Preston Street Primary School, students from the University of Edinburgh, local businesses, and several generations of residents. Thanks for the donations from local shops, and to all the volunteer helpers on the day.

We are always very active on environmental matters, and regularly report issues concerning refuse and recycling, street lighting, pavements and roads, trees, pedal cycles, graffiti, and various other items. Thanks as ever to Hilary McDowell for her determination in pursuing most of these, and making positive suggestions for improvements. We have liaised with the Council about some of the aspects relating to the current upgrading of the A7, and we greatly appreciate the availability of Steven Blacklaw, and his willingness to consult with us about as many of our priorities as possible.

As usual, we have made representations on some planning and licensing matters.

The Association can make a difference to community living by assisting people with numerous issues, through the Council and other organisations, and we are always willing to help.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to the other office bearers and committee members; and to the members of the Association for their ongoing interest in the Southside area.

Colin Christison
Chair/Secretary

April 2018