

The Southside Association

**117 Nicolson Street
Edinburgh
EH8 9ER**

Founded 1972 *Scottish Charity No SCO12262*

www.southsideassociation.co.uk

**Members' Meeting
Tuesday 6 February 2018 at 7pm
Room 1, Southside Community Centre**

Minutes

PRESENT: Colin Christison (Chair), Maggie Bagan, Tom Bonallo, Jan Fraser, Fran Gifford, Bob Hodgart, May Linton, Dora Lola-Luz, Hilary McDowell, Ethel Murray, Maggie Peatfield, Jo Scott, and Colin Symes; and PC Paul Rich.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Moira Gibson, Isobel Leckie, Philip McDowell, and Carol McHugh.

2. Police Report

PC Rich said that a gang of local youths, with five ring-leaders, and with about a dozen or so more from outwith the immediate area, all pupils at a local high school, had been causing disruption with abusive and anti-social behaviour, assaults, breach of the peace, and thefts in the Southside, particularly on the east side of Nicolson Street. ASB in the streets and shops has been a huge problem. Following 18 crime reports, they had been identified and charged with 26 offences. Things had calmed down a bit, but there had been a recent instance of police officers being mobbed by the group. The statutory age for prosecution had been raised from 16 to 18, making it even harder to achieve meaningful convictions.

Extra patrols will be made during half term from 12 February in the Southside and at Cameron Toll shopping centre (where security staff have been assaulted), with a dedicated initiative to combat ASB.

He said that ASB in Haddon's Court had diminished. The issue of an individual who had been sending derogatory letters to shop-keepers had been resolved.

Maggie Bagan said that letters delivered by the police advising residents of a break-in at an address in Howden Street had been delivered to all the flats in a block, but that the letters had not been put through the letter boxes properly, possibly advertising that some flats were unoccupied. This flew against police safety advice.

Maggie Peatfield expressed concern about the large metal gates at Hill Place which give access to the back of KFC, the Bingo Hall, and to some of the premises owned by the Royal College of Surgeons. These are left unlocked and there was dubiety about key holders and responsibilities. Security of the adjacent flats in Nicolson Street could be compromised by anyone gaining unauthorised access through failure to keep the gates locked, and Maggie had made fruitless efforts to resolve the problem. PC Rich said he would help.

3. Minutes of meeting held on 9 January 2018, and matters arising

The minutes were agreed. It was pointed out that, in 7.5, cycle hoops were available in many different colours.

- 3.1 *Item 4.3 (Meeting held on 22 January to discuss Nicolson Square)* – attended by Jo Scott, who reported as follows: - Cllr Dickie opened the meeting. She appeared to have instigated the meeting and had asked local residents, shopkeepers and police as well as other possibly interested group representatives such as Street Work and the Salvation Army. Alison then invited Sarah Burns to explain the format of the evening. Alison was determined actions would result from the meeting.

We were invited to spend 15 minutes discussing good points about the square, with one to put forward at the reporting session. The consensus at the reporting session seemed to be that Nicolson Square is a very important green space in a busy, urban area with much traffic and many pedestrians.

We then had to spend 15 minutes discussing what we saw as problems in the square. Main ones put forward seemed to be disadvantaged people who occupy the square, the lack of care of the square (litter, weeds in the planted areas, damage to toilets and occupation of toilets by drug users), too many vehicles parked and moving around the square causing hold-ups to buses were some of problems mentioned. The next 30 minutes were devoted to discussing suggestions for improving the square.

Looking at some ways of helping the group of people who occupy the square (trying to alleviate health and social problems), getting a cafe to provide tables and serve in the square (perhaps a police box cafe or a cafe from Elephants and Bagels) so that others occupy the square, removing some taxi stances and enforcing the parking restriction to allow better traffic movement.

The discussions went well and people seemed to think the evening could be productive.

- 3.2 *Item 2 (Police Report)* – since the meeting, one of our members, Dora Lola-Luz, had almost been run over at the pedestrian crossing near the Bank of Scotland at South Clerk Street. There are plans to upgrade the crossing to a Puffin or Toucan one as part of the forthcoming road improvement works. A feature of these types of crossing is that they incorporate detectors, focused on the crossing, that extend the crossing time while pedestrians are detected on the carriageway. Drivers are also shown a red, red/amber, green sequence rather than using the flashing amber signal that can introduce an element of conflict between drivers and pedestrians. Others reported similar near-misses.

- 3.3 *Item 7.1 (Roads Proposal)* – the closing date for voting was 26 January, and to date the outcome had not been announced. It was considered that the methods of capturing votes from members of the public in person (as opposed to online voting) were very badly

organised, and it was noted that Council personnel did not remain in at least two of the advertised venues (Warrender swimming baths and Tesco Metro) until the time specified.

- 3.4 *Item 7.3.1 (possible mural for Gibb's Entry)* – the application for funding from the University of Edinburgh was unsuccessful; however they have asked to meet us to consider alternative ways of making the project come to fruition. In the meantime an application for funding will be made to the SCNP.
- 3.5 *Item 7.3.2 (possible mural for Haddon's Court pend)* – the application for funding from the Council's Local Events Fund was partly successful, in that we have been awarded £3385 instead of £4725. An application for the balance is being prepared for the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership. It was agreed to submit an application to the SCNP for funding for the Gibb's Entry mural.
- 3.6 *Item 7.4 (proposals for a TRO in and around West Crosscauseway)* – these have now been advertised. Members should respond if they so wish before the deadline in early March.

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/download/2457/rso1801 - west_crosscauseway

4. Chair's Report

Spotlight Cinema (former *Odeon*) – as reported in the SA's minutes in April 2017, the G1 Group which owns the property had acquired the Scotsman Hotel. Their small skilled team which refits its buildings had been seconded to the hotel to renovate it. However they hope to restart work on the cinema in March 2018. The frontage will be tackled first, and the intention is to replace the white terracotta tiles which have been lost over the years.

5. Treasurer's Report

Hilary reported that the bank balance stood at £800.61 with £43.89 cash in hand.

6. Planning & Licensing matters

- 6.1 17/05868/FUL: 2 - 3 St Patrick Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9EZ – various components in this application, including the formation of a new entrance platform, and with tables and chairs to be sited on the elevated pavement there. These will form obstacles. People in wheel chairs and with buggies would find it difficult to negotiate and it would complicate things for the poorly sighted and blind. The SA will object.
- 6.2 17/05656/ADV: Illuminated sign (as amended) at 80 Newington Road, Edinburgh EH9 1QN – application refused.
- 6.3 Locals had been informed that a block of flats was to be built on the small garden area on the north of Brown Street. CC will ask the councillors about the veracity of this.
- 6.4 Maggie Peatfield said that the Royal College of Surgeons has purchased the Empire Bingo Hall and the premises occupied by KFC and McColl's. The whole area is to be called 'The Surgeons' Quarter'.

7. Environmental matters

Maggie Peatfield said that rats were in evidence in Hill Place.

8. Report and Q & A with the attending Councillor

No Councillor present.

9. Any other business

Jan Fraser reported that there had been huge late night noise from a party at the Unite building in St Leonard's Street, and would complain to the concierge.

10. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 6 March 2018 at 7pm.