

# ***The Southside Association***

**117 Nicolson Street  
Edinburgh  
EH8 9ER**

*Founded 1972*      *Scottish Charity No SCO12262*

**www.southsideassociation.co.uk**

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

## ***Minutes***

**PRESENT:** Colin Christison (Chair), Maggie Bagan, Stephen Carter, Bob Hodgart, Kenny McLeod, May Linton, Hilary McDowell, Philip McDowell, Ethel Murray, and Maggie Peatfield; Nancy Jamieson, Laura Marshall, PC Paul Rich, and Cllr Alison Dickie.

### **1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

Colin Christison welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Jan Fraser, Carol McHugh, Tim Pogson, and Jo Scott.

### **2. Police Report**

PC Paul Rich and PC Neil Mackay are the present local Community Officers. PC Rich said that the ASB in Nicolson Square hadn't been so bad in recent weeks. There hadn't been any problems in the area around the Halloween and Guy Fawkes dates. He mentioned various crimes, such as the robberies in the Meadows, and said that curfews are imposed on certain teenage miscreants. The police have the power to disperse trouble-making groups of three or more individuals. There was a discussion about lack of care by some cyclists, particularly those not using lights, and the use of earphones gives the appearance of poor attention and awareness of pedestrians and motorists.

Maggie Peatfield asked if there was any trouble at school gates when schools finish early on Fridays, but PC Rich thought not.

Cllr Dickie and PC Rich discussed the recent spike in reports of ASB due to drug-taking. There are problems in common stairs.

### **3. Guest speaker – Nancy Jamieson, Planning Team Manager, East Local Development and Listed Buildings, City of Edinburgh Council**

Colin welcomed Nancy, and her colleague Laura Marshall, a planning officer. Nancy gave a PowerPoint presentation on how decisions are determined on planning applications for change of use, and Laura gave one on enforcement. Their presentations [can be seen here](#).

#### **4. Minutes of meeting held on 2 October 2018, and matters arising**

Approved; proposed by Maggie Bagan, and seconded by Hilary McDowell.

- 4.1 *Item 6.1* - (Planning application for 58 South Clerk St) – application granted.
- 4.2 *Item 7.1* - (Southside Corridor deep-clean) – after two days of work in the area by the Council, the community was involved on Saturday 27 October, when members of various groups (Southside Association, Southside Community Council, Friends of Nicolson Square Gardens, University of Edinburgh Chaplaincy (Church of Scotland), and Surgeons' Quarter) and members of the public joined council officials and staff, and some police officers at Nicolson Square. Litter was cleared from the Square and surrounding streets, and over 20 bags were filled. Three of the local councillors were present at times. A light lunch was kindly provided by Ten Hill Place Hotel.
- 4.3 *Item 9.1* – (Potterrow recycling area) – the University of Edinburgh provide the following information: - "Colleagues have confirmed that, while the recycling area is on University property, the recycling bins themselves are the property of the Council. The emptying of the recycling bins is, therefore, the Council's responsibility. The University operates and maintains its own recycling facilities separately. We do agree, however, that there is an issue with this particular recycling area – especially in relation to fly-tipping. Therefore, my Estates colleagues are going to liaise with Council officials to see what can be done to better manage recycling facilities in the area, and I will report back to you on any progress we make. In the meantime, our Waste Assistants will be taking photographs of the compound, and sending these on to the Council if it is a mess."

However, Maggie Peatfield said that the place was still in a mess, and that two of the bins were missing lids.

- 4.3 *Item 9.2* – (parking spaces in Hill Square) – Cllr Rose provided the following explanation: - "the ramp was moved some weeks ago. It is proposed to make the natural access at the gate on the East side of Hill Square. It has not happened thus far, because the Traffic Regulation Orders have moved to a map-based system and there has been a pause – because of the technology, and an objection, but those issues have been resolved. There is a change to the parking bays included in the first tranche of changes included in TRO/18/14 which was due to be published mid-October. There is a 3-week comment period followed by a lead time to get contractors to implement – typically a couple of months, assuming no objections. Objections involve further delay and take it into a different stream. The change is to move parts of the Residents' bays at no loss of overall parking space in those bays, to allow permanent access to the gate into Hill Square."

#### **5. Chair's Report**

- 5.1 **Community Centre** – it was reported at the September meeting that user groups would have to leave the building by 8.45pm; the Centre's management committee has now said that from January 2019 meetings must be over by 8.30pm. This is because of reduced FM cover by the Council. At present we pay for our meeting room from 6.30pm to 8.45pm, and that period will have to be reduced by 15 minutes. It was agreed that future meetings will start at 6.45pm from January.

- 5.2 **Christmas Event** – various consents pending. We are delighted to have been awarded £570 from the Community Grants Fund. The MC on 4 December will be Cllr Steve Burgess, the Carol Service will be led by the Rev Dr Liam Fraser, Church of Scotland Campus Minister to the University of Edinburgh, and the festive lights at St Patrick Square will be switched on by Mrs Moira Gibson, the former External Affairs Manager at the UoE and former member and minutes secretary of the SA.

## 6. Treasurer’s Report

Hilary McDowell said that the bank balance stood at £739.91. The underspend of £114.24 from the University of Edinburgh’s Local Community Grants scheme had been returned to them. Website maintenance fee and insurance/public liability bills had been paid.

## 7. Planning & Licensing matters

- 7.1 18/08050/FUL (proposed alterations of existing buildings to provide improved accessibility and facilities at 138 Pleasance, EH8 9RR) – representation of support lodged.
- 7.2 18/03995/FUL – proposed flatted development at 3 Simon Square: application refused on many grounds.

## 8. Environmental matters

- 8.1 Sarah Burns, South East Locality Manager, had provided the following report on Nicolson Square on 24 October.

“I thought it would be helpful to give you an update on the work that has been going on to improve the Square.

### Enforcement

I know that antisocial behaviour continues to be a concern in the Square and causes a significant problem for local residents and businesses. The Police have been taking a more robust approach recently and have reviewed how they are using powers and processes, such as those under the “drinking byelaw”, to help support the work they are doing to address the issues in and around the Square. They are working hard, together with colleagues in the Council, to take action on those whose behaviour is causing the most concern and, while there is limited information we can share on the detail of this as I’m sure you will appreciate, I would like to assure you that they have had some positive results and there is a lot of continuing work and focus being given in this area.

### CCTV

You will be aware that there is a CCTV camera in the Square. This can provide helpful information and evidence for the Police. However, it has been identified that it could be used more fully to provide this support and the Police have been working with our colleagues in the CCTV monitoring unit to improve the way that it is being utilised to ensure it is being used to best effect. There is potential that an upgraded camera could be put in place in Nicolson Square in the future; this would allow the staff in the CCTV unit to monitor the camera on an ongoing basis rather than requiring to be alerted that they want the images to be live monitored. There is a review of CCTV provision citywide being carried out and while this will not bring in additional CCTV cameras, it will allow us to relocate cameras from elsewhere if the supporting equipment is in place and there is a greater need. I have asked that one of the upgraded cameras is positioned in Nicolson Square and I fully expect this to be agreed. The timescales for this are currently for next financial year however as there is a lot of work to be done in completing the review. I will keep pressing on this to see if it can be accelerated but please be assured that CCTV is being used in the Square and, having met on site with the Police and the CCTV team, it is positioned currently in the best vantage point that it could be.

### Support

An important aspect of the work that has been ongoing this year has been to engage with those who are using the Square and to provide support to those who may be in need of it to, for example, help them find accommodation or get support from other support providers. You may recall that Streetwork did a lot of work in the early summer and Invisible Cities have also recently got involved to provide additional support in this area. Staff from Invisible Cities have visited the

Gardens several times in the last few weeks to carry out their engagement work and are keen to speak to residents and businesses too, so you may see them around the Square.

#### **The Friends group**

You might be aware that the local community has established a Friends group for the Gardens – Friends of Nicolson Square (FONS). The group has set up a Facebook account <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FONSedinburgh/> and Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/fonsedinburgh/> and would love the community to get involved. Congratulations to the FONS, this is a great way for the local community take ownership of the local public space.

#### **“3 days of action”**

You may have already heard about the Southside “3 days of Action” which is taking place this week. On Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> and Friday 26<sup>th</sup> October, various Council services are being deployed to give a focus on improving the environment in and around the Southside Corridor. The Council and partner agencies are working together to undertake tasks such as cleaning down litter bins, removing graffiti and removing street clutter. On Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> there is an opportunity for volunteers to get involved in this work and Council staff will be based in Nicolson Square Gardens handing out equipment to anyone who wants to help out with activities such as litter picking, removing fly posting and gardening. Officers from Police Scotland and the Council will be around to speak to members of the community. Please come along on Saturday if you want to get involved – it all starts at 10.30am and will go on until around 2.30pm. The Southside Association, Southside Community Council and newly formed Friends of Nicolson Square have been helping with getting the community involved and in promoting the event on Saturday.

#### **Re-design of the Square?**

Concerns have been raised about how Nicolson Square works as a people friendly place and I’m aware that many are keen to see a redesign of the Square. This would be a large-scale project that requires significant resources and would be a longer-term objective, but we are keen to continue looking at potential options for taking this forward and hearing views. A group of students from Edinburgh University carried out a project earlier in the early summer looking at some possible visions for the Square and they will be displaying their work on Saturday in the Gardens (weather permitting!). They have some interesting ideas and observations, please pop along if you can to see their creative work and let them know what you think. These are not “proposals”, but some thought-provoking ideas.

Specifically on traffic, we have had concerns raised about the volume of buses moving through the Square and have raised this with Lothian Buses but are seeking to have a meeting to discuss further with them and with our colleagues in the Lothian Buses Public Transport team. I’ll provide feedback from this meeting as soon as possible.

I hope you have found this update helpful. I plan to set up a meeting in the coming weeks to allow everyone the opportunity to get together again to discuss what has been happening in and around the Square. I’ll be back in touch shortly to let you know when that is taking place. In the meantime if you have any comments or questions please let me know.”

## **8.2 Hilary McDowell gave the following report**

The **deputation to Transport and Environment committee** on flyposting was well received. It consisted of Cllr Rose, Joan Carter of the SCC and Hilary McDowell of SA. A PowerPoint presentation of some 20+ photos showed examples of flyposting on and around official advertising. Cllr Burgess spoke on our behalf too and will bring a motion, if necessary, to a future committee meeting. The new contract will be discussed by the Culture and Communities committee.

**The 3-day clean up** by council and public was a disappointment. It mostly seemed to have been a litter pick. We had hoped to have seen more of a difference. We have been told that a contractor is to be brought in to clean up street furniture and remove stickers etc.

There has been some input from SA, SCC, and residents’ groups into the new contract for the firm dealing with **advertising for groups** putting on shows during the Edinburgh Festival, and subsequent cleaning and removal of posters. As there was considerable dissatisfaction by many in the community with the clearing of flyposting during and at the end of the Festival the contract is being amended to try to address some of these issues. Complete streets are being listed as ‘sensitive’ and it is hoped that they will be cleared and cleaned, on a daily basis.

Additional **bicycle racks** have been requested for Gibb's Entry.

Some reduction in the number of **A-boards** noted as new rules came into force on 5 November. Enforcement to start in city centre and will spread out.

**Council advertising 'wraps'** to be kept away from junctions and not placed on narrow pavements in future.

There's a tentative plan for a **mural** for the tennis court pavilion at the Meadows. The manager has been given contact details for Kate George, who designed the Nicolson Street murals.

**Abandoned bikes** - now a scheme working to label and remove after due notice.

3 **planters** are due to be delivered on to the roundabout on West Crosscauseway. Parks dept. will provide compost, bulbs and shrubs and local residents have offered to look after them.

## 9. Report and Q & A with the attending Councillor

Cllr Dickie had participated in the various discussions. She mentioned that she was still involved in two major local projects – Nicolson Square and Carnegie Court. A great deal of work was happening behind the scenes. A survey of the Carnegie Court buildings is taking place. There was a discussion about the many initiatives at Nicolson Square (see 4.2 and 8.1 above). There was also a brief discussion about the social enterprise group *Invisible Edinburgh*.

<https://invisible-cities.org/cities/edinburgh>

## 10. Any other business

10.1 Maggie Bagan asked if the Nelson Hall lease had been signed; Cllr Dickie thought not.

## 11. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 4 December, for 6pm, at St Patrick Square, followed by community get-together and buffet in the main hall.

**Future Dates** – Tuesdays – 8 Jan, 5 Feb, 5 Mar, 2 Apr, 7 May (AGM), 4 Jun.