

The Southside Association

**117 Nicolson Street
Edinburgh
EH8 9ER**

Founded 1972 Scottish Charity No SCO12262

www.southsideassociation.co.uk

**Members' Meeting
Tuesday 2 April 2019 at 6.45pm
Room 2, Southside Community Centre**

Minutes

PRESENT: Colin Christison (Chair), Maggie Bagan, John Cullen, Jan Fraser, Hilary McDowell, Philip McDowell, Kenny McLeod, Ethel Murray, and Maggie Peatfield; Cllr Alison Dickie; PC Craig Cairns and PC Euan Mackay.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Colin Christison welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Bob Hodgart, Isobel Leckie, May Linton, Dora Lola-Luz, Carol McHugh, and Jo Scott.

2. Police Report

PC Mackay and PC Cairns reported that the force had been very active in the last month, with an excellent solve rate perhaps due to officers being out in force, with some in plain-clothes. Three youths (two of whom had committed numerous assaults) had been apprehended for the murder at Prestonfield. A drugs warrant granted for New Arthur Place had seen a good recovery of drugs, and there were other ongoing initiatives in this sphere. The Nicolson Square area was under more observation now that the nights were lighter, and more attention was being paid to traffic obstruction round the Square. A fixed penalty notice was issued for a vehicle parked on zig-zag lines. A youth caught for persistent theft of pedal cycles had had a 7pm -7am curfew imposed. Arrests had been made after the two thefts of belongings from female pedestrians in Sciennes House Place and Drummond Street; the two culprits were from outside the area. Plain clothes police work in the area including the Meadows, had resulted in 15 youths being caught; these youths are from all over the city, and they had been participating in organised fights, assaults (including staff in Sainsbury's South Clerk Street), and CCTV footage had helped identify them. A window of a police vehicle was broken during the episode of rowdy behaviour, and the culprit caught on CCTV. There were also instances of boy racers in the Meadows and the Innocent Railway tunnel.

Members asked questions and made comments as usual. It was reported that there had been a lot of unruly and anti-social behaviour on Thursday 21 March in the South Bridge-Newington corridor; that a male was regularly seen scouring bins in Hill Place and surrounding streets, and it was believed that he was searching for paperwork which could possibly be used for ID fraud. There was also a report of drugs being sold on and around the steps from St Leonard's Bank to the cycle path leading to the Innocent Railway tunnel. Mention was made of the recent early evening assault in South Clerk Street. There was a discussion about begging in the streets.

The members thanked the officers for attending the meeting. They appreciated the police officers coming just before going out on the streets, again in plain clothes.

3. Minutes of meeting held on 5 March 2019, and matters arising

Agreed; proposed by Maggie Bagan and seconded by Ethel Murray.

- 3.1 *Item 7.2 (Capital Roads Project) – see 7.1 below.*
- 3.2 *Item 6.3 (Barrels outside former public house on Newington Rd) – no action to have these removed in spite of numerous attempts. It is felt that these will eventually end up on the highway. Afternote – barrels removed on 3 April.*
- 3.3 *Item 9.1 (bus shelter on Nicolson St, northbound) – this has not been replaced as the proposed substitute shelter infrastructure will encroach into the cellars beneath the pavement. The Southside Community Council is conducting a survey about the stop and shelter and out of 70 replies received so far, 64% of responders said that they did not want a replacement shelter there.*

4. Chair's Report

- 4.1 The AGM is on Tuesday 7 May. Although the email list is growing all the time, it is vital that we attract new members. Some subscriptions are overdue for the current year. Nominations are invited for the usual list of office-bearers. It was agreed to ask the same auditor to prepare the annual accounts ready for OSCR.
- 4.2 The Management committee of the community centre is also looking for new members. As a centre user, the SA has the right to appoint a representative to the management committee.
- 4.3 The Council's Traffic Orders Administration Officer advised that there will be a number of proposed changes to the operation and nature of parking controls in Zones 1-8. Shared-use parking spaces will be the principal feature of these changes and a consultation will be launched in due course. The proposal as it stands will introduce about 3000 extra spaces for use by permit holders, which is an increase in available space of about 35%. See www.edinburgh.gov.uk/parkingactionplan

5. Treasurer's Report

Hilary McDowell reported that the bank balance stood at £1105.24, with some petty cash.

6. Planning & Licensing matters

No matters of interest.

7. Environmental matters

- 7.1 **Capital Roads Project** – Joan Carter had attended a meeting of the South-east Locality committee on 25 March, and reported as follows:-
 - 7.1.1 Nicolson St (Hill Place to West Richmond St) pavement on the east side, promised in 2016, will progress in 2019/20.

- 7.1.2 The zebra crossing at Bernard Terrace (2017/18) is intended to progress in 2019/20 also, probably to cost under the £30,000 initially estimated, but is delayed due to further design work needed.
- 7.1.3 A useful budget summary was made available; some of the projects selected in 2017/18 were significantly underestimated initially so it was decided by those councillors present that the money available for 2018/19 (as not already committed as it never came to communities to apply for) be used to cover the costs of the older projects promised to be done. We would all just skip a year of selecting new projects in order to complete 5 old, promised ones.
- 7.1.4 There is also a Project Bank- a list of ideas, ready for assessing further when money comes available. These are ideas submitted by Councillors, CCs, community groups etc. The list includes Salisbury Road, east end, where safety improvements at the crossing are needed.
- 7.2 Measures to improve the amenity and security at **Haddon's Court** – plans are now progressing to install brighter lighting in the Gibb's Entry and Haddon's Court pends, and the existing light fixtures there will be moved to the locations on the west of Haddon's Court. The power source for these lights is still to be confirmed, and if any restoration or repainting is necessary, the Council will pay. CCTV is likely to be installed in Haddon's Court with the cost being met by the residents.
- 7.3 **Starbucks**, Nicolson Street – possible murals on the recessed blocked up at window spaces at East Crosscauseway. There is a huge problem with graffiti and tagging here. The district manager for Starbucks sought advice from the SA, and Kate George, the artist who painted the three local murals, together with HM and CC, met him and discussed the planning aspect, as well as ideas to take the project forward. Customers will be asked to suggest designs for the murals, which are likely to be painted on boards elsewhere, and attached later. They will be painted by local volunteers/members of the community.
- 7.4 Following the letter to the Council about the SA's major concerns about graffiti and fly-posting in the area and the city as a whole, a reply had been received from Sarah Burns, acknowledging the problems, and expressing appreciation of the community's help, especially from the SA. It is a challenge to take enforcement action, and difficult to identify and prosecute offenders, and the Council won't remove tags from private property. She acknowledged that the Council's approach to dealing with fly-posting and graffiti needs to be reviewed.

Sarah wrote "Officers have recently reported findings from a Graffiti Working Group to the Culture and Communities Committee on 29 January 2019 promoting the development of a Graffiti Action Plan. In addition, a current review of our transport and environmental warden services is exploring the creation of a team focussed on street-scene enforcement. This will provide us with an opportunity to consider our approach to enforcement of environmental crime such as flyposting and graffiti. This is at an early stage but I can provide more information on this in due course."

She mentioned some local initiatives, past and present, and said that the Southside is treated with priority in the South East Locality, and support is offered to local groups. They are aware of the areas of concern, and work is ongoing. Sarah also mentioned the Capital Roads Project – see 7.1 *above*.

7.5 Hilary McDowell reported on some other items:

- 7.5.1 More planters due for West Crosscauseway any time (one large trough and 2 smaller hexagonal ones).
- 7.5.2 Possibility of more murals in the area, this time for the pend at the north end of St Patrick Square. The designs have been completed by Kate George. The housing association which owns the buildings needs to apply for planning permissions and get the walls rendered to be flat before work can start. The residents are keen to see this happen as there is a lot of graffiti in this area.
- 7.5.3 A trial clean-up of street furniture in the area of St Patrick Square due to start, which will be followed by a larger area if it is considered satisfactory.
- 7.5.4 Bins are not being emptied adequately. Food waste bins on street seem to be only emptied when complaints are made. Recycling bins on Salisbury Road houses were 9 days late being emptied and only after repeated reports sent very widely. Garden waste collection service is also chaotic for this area.
- 7.5.5 Flyposting by the 'Missionaries of the Way' appears to have stopped. I removed 8 last week. No idea if any action has been taken against the group.
- 7.5.6 No action on dark street lights in the area, in spite of repeated reporting. *Afternote* – four of the lights on Newington Road were replaced later that evening.
- 7.5.7 Documents from the Transport and Environment Committee make clear that dispensation for trade waste (food and glass) to be stored on pavements was only temporary and will be phased out.

8. Report and Q & A with the attending Councillor

Cllr Dickie had participated during the meeting. She also mentioned that she was going to have a meeting with the Police about drugs crime. Work was continuing on the Carnegie Court regeneration. The Friends of Nicolson Square have arranged a garden tidy-up and planting day on Saturday 20 April. A grant has allowed the group to purchase bee and other pollinator plants.

9. Any other business

- 9.1 Kenny McLeod asked about the *Spotlight* (former *Odeon*) cinema. When we last enquired, we were told that the manager overseeing the restoration of the building had left suddenly and her replacement had been appointed and was expected to start work this Spring. An update will be asked for.
- 9.2 Maggie Peatfield queried the cost of annual parking permits for local businesses, which appeared to seem a bargain in comparison to the cost of parking for locals and visitors.

10. Date of next meeting

Annual General Meeting - Tuesday 7 May.

Future Dates – Tuesdays – 4 Jun, 3 Sep, 1 Oct, 5 Nov, 3 Dec