

The Southside Association

**117 Nicolson Street
Edinburgh
EH8 9ER**

Founded 1972 *Scottish Charity No SCO12262*

www.southsideassociation.co.uk

**Members' Meeting
Tuesday 4 June 2019 at 6.45pm
Room 1, Southside Community Centre**

Minutes

PRESENT: Colin Christison (Chair), Maggie Bagan, Joan Carter, Jan Fraser, James Gilmour, Isobel Leckie, May Linton, Liz Logie, Hilary McDowell, Philip McDowell, Kenny McLeod, Ethel Murray, Tim Pogson, Jo Scott, and Colin Symes; Cllr Steve Burgess, and PC Craig Cairns.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Colin Christison welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Bob Hodgart, Dora Lola-Luz, Katerina Marinitsi, Carol McHugh, Maggie Peatfield, and Stuart Tooley.

2. Police Report

PC Cairns described various initiatives; one involves more patrols in an effort to combat youth (mainly from outwith the area) ASB and problems in the Meadows inc the tennis courts, and the Craggs Sports Centre; a second, in association with the University of Edinburgh, is helping with issues at Nicolson Square. There had been recent local arrests and seizures of drugs and cash. Plain clothes officers are monitoring a shop after reports of minors being sold alcohol. Another initiative is targeting motor bike crime - thefts of motor bikes from tourists are on the increase and local hotels and B&Bs are being alerted to warn their patrons to keep bikes in a secure place. Officers were present at the Meadows Festival and other local annual events. PC Cairns mentioned the Pub Watch scheme; participant landlords and staff meet every month to share information on difficult customers or situations. Following some questions and answers, members thanked PC Cairns for his report.

3.1 Guest speaker – Mike Wiles, Operations Manager, Spotlight Cinema

Members welcomed Mike Wiles, and were glad to hear about the progress of the renovation of the former *Odeon* cinema in Clerk Street. He said that he had been in post since December 2018. The premises are owned by the G1 group, which also owns the Scotsman Hotel, and their craftsmen have almost completed the sensitive restoration there; features include a luxury 41-seater cinema. Work at Clerk Street should resume soon. He confirmed that the venue would have five screens, with different levels of service, and that there would be a community feel to it. There is a lot of competition in the cinema world, and their aim is to match some of the amenities which they offer in their Playhouse cinema in Perth, such as screenings for mothers and babies, autistic people, and

the 'silver' generation. He discussed the Vista ticketing system, and how they eventually integrated seating tickets with the food requirements from patrons in their other venues.

Members asked Mike various questions; part of the roof is in poor condition and is being investigated, and the exterior work will come first. Many people ask when or if the cinema is going to re-open but the opening date is not expected to be for at least another year. Joan Carter repeated a previous suggestion that a properly designed notice board detailing what work is happening, and when, should be placed on the frontage. Such communication with potential future patrons about the progress of the renovation would surely be beneficial to the company.

Members thanked Mike for his attendance.

3.2 Guest Speaker – Nigel Muntz, Commercial Director, Out of Hand Ltd

Colin then introduced an extra speaker to the meeting. Nigel has been with the firm for five years. They are based in Bristol, and have an office in Edinburgh's London Road. Apart from printing and distributing flyers, they supply the official street advertising installations such as Heras fencing used for displaying posters, and are responsible for keeping areas free from fly-posting and graffiti. They have a 4-year contract with the City of Edinburgh Council (previous contracts were on a year-to-year basis). The full contract is on our website, and here are a couple of extracts -

In addition to routine maintenance, there are sensitive areas including the High Street/Royal Mile, George IV Bridge, Victoria Street, North Bridge, South Bridge, Bristo Place, Forrest Road, Teviot Place, Bristo Square, George Square, Chambers Street, Clerk Street, Nicolson Street, West Nicolson Street, Chapel Street, Buccleuch Street, (forming areas of the Southside corridor), the Pleasance, Middle Meadow Walk (and the Meadows), and Grassmarket, where the Contractor shall be required to provide daily, additional resources to be deployed to carry out routine maintenance (inclusive of and out with the designated 50-metre radius of advertising sites) to ensure these streets or locations are kept clear of graffiti and unauthorised posters, stickers, etc, at all times, from the commencement of the in-charge display period until 20th September, each year.

The clean-up includes removal of graffiti, flyposting, cards, vinyls, adverts, stickers, gum and residues, cable ties, string, adhesive tape, etc., from various items of street furniture, including (but not limited to) phone boxes and kiosks, police boxes, post boxes, utility boxes, benches, bins, bollards, lamp posts, traffic signs, traffic lights, poles, vacant shop windows, and communal entranceways.

Nigel discussed various aspects of his firm's work and responsibilities. Fly-posting is a huge problem, and they liaise with the Festival Fringe Society and the venues to try and resolve problems. There was a lengthy discussion about the whole subject. It was afterwards confirmed that Out of Hand Ltd will be responsible for the area 50 metres around the advertising sites. Nigel went over the installation and dismantling timetable, and described the daily schedule for clearing and cleaning, and the end of Festival final clean-up. There was some discussion about fly-posting on empty shops. He asked for a list of empty shops and floated the idea of putting Heras fencing in front of them; subsequent communication between the SA and Out of Hand made it clear that this would not be acceptable.

Nigel wants to encourage community feed-back, and will value reports of problems. All the advertising displays feature contact information. Website - <https://outofhand.co.uk/>

Edinburgh suffers greatly from the blights of graffiti, tagging, fly-posting, and the widespread use of small stickers on street furniture etc. Culprits have no consideration for the appearance of Scotland's capital city, and the City Council does not appear to take any effective action to combat and eliminate the problems. The Southside Association and the Southside Community Council have been campaigning for some time about these issues, including taking a deputation to the City Council's Transport and Environment Committee in the autumn of 2018. Those present at the meeting felt that the measures described gave some reassurance and hope that improvements to the city's visual amenity would be apparent, particularly in the Southside.

4. Minutes of ordinary meeting held on 7 May 2019, and matters arising

Agreed; proposer by Jan Fraser and seconded by Hilary McDowell.

- 4.1 *Item 3.2* – (Advertising trailers on Holyrood Park Road) – two trailers advertising storage facilities for students come and go here, and also on Chalmers Street, near the Unite student accommodation building. This has been happening for several years and despite numerous reports and complaints to the Council by a local resident, there has been no effective action taken to remove these trailers.
- 4.2 *Item 3.3.1* – (Continental markets licensing applications) – no update. *Afternote* – Licensing sub-committee meeting is on 17 June.
- 4.3 *Item 3.6* – (Planters on East Crosscauseway) – still not in place.
- 4.4 *Item 3.6* – (Lighting at Haddon's Court and Gibb's Entry pends) – two replacement light fittings on the south walls of each pend have been installed. Black cabling has been fitted across murals in both pends to provide additional lighting on Haddon's Court.
- 4.5 *Item 3.6* – (Tables and chairs permits) – list now again available online. This is http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20023/licences_and_permits/792/view_existing_tables_and_chairs_permits

5. Chair's Report

- 5.1 CC attended the first meeting of the Southside Newington Neighbourhood Network on 20 May. Council staff, three councillors, a police sergeant, a representative from the University of Edinburgh, and representatives from 11 local groups were present. The definition of a Neighbourhood Network is *'a space for community groups to work together, and with service providers, to develop solutions to improve the quality of life for people that live here and make the community a better place to live.'* And it was noted that *'It is not a Council service, meeting, or committee, and it's not a place to make service requests or raise complaints about service.'*

Membership is made up of community groups, third sector groups working in the area, and the four elected ward members. The four networks (City Centre, Southside/Newington, Meadows/Morningside, and Liberton/Gilmerton) in the locality are linked to the South East Local Community Planning Partnership. The interim Chair of the SNNN is Clare Jamieson, Children and Young People's Programme Manager, Canongate Youth Project. A significant number of local groups were not present, and efforts will be made to ensure that there is a larger attendance at the next meeting.

The definition of the South East Locality Community Planning Partnership is *‘where partners from public bodies and other organisations come together to discuss issues in the locality and agree actions to implement to address them (e.g. NHS, Fire, Police, Council etc). It is accountable for delivery of the Locality Improvement Plan **.* It takes into consideration the community knowledge and influence of the Neighbourhood Network. A community representative from each NN will sit on it’.

In the near future, the SNNN will be expected to choose such a representative, for period of 12 months, but it was noted that Community Council elections are due to take place in October of this year, which might prove difficult for a decision to be made quickly. Only community groups are able to propose nominations for the post. Each community group can make a nomination if they wish.

** The Locality Improvement Plan – the new LCPP will review this, with priorities of addressing street drinking, begging, rough sleeping, and substance misuse; improving youth engagement and services for young people, reducing loneliness and social isolation; and improving local communications.

5.2 The AGM of the Southside Community Centre is on Saturday 22 June at 11am.

6. Treasurer’s Report

Hilary McDowell reported that the bank balance stood at £1196.46. The annual return to OSCR was submitted and accepted on 24 May.

Jan Fraser reported that the new and renewed membership stood at 16, with more to renew. (2 renewed after the meeting).

7. Planning & Licensing matters

None.

8. Environmental matters

8.1 There will be no murals on the East Crosscauseway walls of the Starbucks premises for the time being.

8.2 The proposed installation of a zebra crossing at the east end of Bernard Terrace has been delayed again. This is an extract from an e-mail from a Council officer -

“After clarifying that we’d progress the zebra proposal on Bernard Terrace rather than deferring until Road Safety could consider a signal controlled crossing, it had been the intention to have our Transport Design & Delivery or Active Travel team design and implement the crossing in accordance with the Council’s Street Design Guidance. Unfortunately, due to other commitments, resources are not currently available to take on the scheme, but I have had preliminary discussions with external design consultants, Capita, to design the crossing and progress through tendering to the construction stage. I will update once I have further information and hopefully will be able to give an idea on the programme timescale.”

Cllr Burgess said that the work is not sourced ‘in house’, and there was a backlog of projects needing to be completed.

9. Report and Q & A with the attending Councillor

Cllr Burgess had participated fully throughout the meeting.

10. Any other business

- 10.1 Maggie Peatfield had sent a message to ask again about the inaction on Potterrow where a new building has been surrounded by scaffolding for a year and a half.
- 10.2 Maggie Bagan asked again about whether a lease has been signed by the tenant of the Nelson Hall; Cllr Burgess would enquire again. *Afternote* – it seemed that the lease remains unsigned.
- 10.3 Maggie Bagan asked about a garden wall at 46 West Richmond Street, where a vehicle had crashed and knocked down many of the coping stones. Safety barriers placed there by the Council are often lying flat and covering the pavement. *Afternote* - Cllr Burgess had ascertained that an insurance claim was in progress.
- 10.4 Liz Logie said that more and more of the yellow safe covers were appearing on the streets. While they were there to cover holes, and to prevent trips and falls, they were trap hazards in themselves.

11. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 10 September. This is a week later than usual to allow the community centre to be returned to normal after its use as a Fringe venue.

Future Dates – Tuesdays – 1 Oct, 5 Nov, 3 Dec