

The Southside Association

117 Nicolson Street

Edinburgh

EH8 9ER

Founded 1972

Scottish Charity No SCO12262

www.southsideassociation.co.uk

Members' Meeting

Tuesday 1 October 2019 at 6.45pm

Room 1, Southside Community Centre

Minutes

PRESENT: Colin Christison (Chair), Maggie Bagan, Daniel Fisher, May Linton, Hilary McDowell, Philip McDowell, Kenny McLeod, Ethel Murray, Maggie Peatfield, Jo Scott, and Stuart Tooley; Matt Davis, PC Johnny Wong, 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, and Colin Symes. He explained that there was an additional guest speaker at the meeting – Matt Davis (see 3b below). Colin had asked the Council's Waste Dept for a speaker for a future date, and they had responded on 30 September to say that Matt could attend the October meeting, which meant that he did not feature on the agenda.

2. Police Report

PC Wong was welcomed back to an SA meeting. Although he is a community policeman for the area and is based at St Leonard's PS, he had worked in the city centre during August. He had a report for the meeting prepared partly with the help of colleagues in the area, and the following also includes some questions and comments from members -

- Operation Threshold had concluded after a 6 month period, with drugs worth some £1.2M, and cash amounting to £270,000 seized from addresses in the area
- 95 people aged between 16 and 58 had been arrested during the action to disrupt the supply of drugs. Good news for the whole city
- The police and Council, and the charity 'Aid and Abet' had been working together to support vulnerable people
- He reported on various house breaking crimes, and there were many reports of stolen pedal cycles
- There was an extradition from Germany in connection with a serious sexual assault in Salisbury Place 3 years ago
- Many thefts from Festival and Fringe venues in August
- Groups of youths causing vandalism and ASB identified and ring-leaders caught, with some getting curfew orders. One of the youths is not permitted to come into Ward 15 until his trial

later in the year. Visits made to parents often with housing officers in an attempt to curb the problems. This joint approach seems to help as tenancy rights can be compromised

- He mentioned the graffiti task force and its new manager
- There was a discussion about graffiti removal kits, some of which are available from St Leonard's PS
- People residing in tents around Middle Meadow Walk and elsewhere – social work and homeless team are aware
- No right turn signs - there are 2 signs, on either sign of Clerk Street to indicate that no right turn is permitted into Montague St. Both signs have been turned so that they cannot be seen by traffic approaching the junction. Taxis and businesses are making much use of this. Residents have been challenging the drivers and reporting them to the police. No action from various Council departments despite several requests; PC Wong hopes to assist.

Members thanked PC Wong for his attendance.

3a. Stuart Tooley, Community Relations Manager, The University of Edinburgh, on strategy for the next 10 years, with special reference to the University's Social and Civic Responsibility

Members welcomed Stuart, a regular attendee at our meetings.

He said that the University of Edinburgh has just launched an ambitious new strategy which sets out a clear vision for what we expect to achieve over the next ten years, and explained further

“Our approach is rooted in our values, with a focus on four key areas: **People, Research, Teaching and Learning**, and **Social and Civic Responsibility**.”

Over the next year, we will be arranging a series of events showcasing key initiatives informed by our strategy, and I will let you know more about them in due course. In the meantime, however, I wanted to highlight one of our key focus areas: **Social and Civic Responsibility**.

We see our integral role in the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal being part of our civic responsibility. We are collaborating with local schools, colleges and universities, public authorities, and business partners to support the City Region Deal's ambition for Data-Driven Innovation and inclusive growth. At the same time, we are also focussed on reducing our climate impact; buying locally when we can; supporting volunteering; building public engagement, and being a good and welcoming neighbour to the communities in which we are based.

We aim to demonstrate our commitment to Social and Civic Responsibility by 2030 through:

- Leading Scotland's commitment to widening participation
- Delivering inclusive growth, by providing data skills to at least 100,000 individuals, and creating new companies and solutions for global challenges
- Being on track to be a Carbon-Zero University by 2040”

Members were pleased to hear from Stuart. Hilary McDowell expressed thanks to the University for liaising with the Southside Association, noting in particular that Stuart's predecessor in the post, Moira Gibson, had laid the foundations for the good mutual relationship by her regular attendance at our meetings for a number of years before she retired; and that members appreciated Stuart's presence and approachability.

See www.ed.ac.uk/strategy-2030

Stuart said that there will be a formal request for help in due course.

3b. Matt Davis, Waste Operations Manager, City of Edinburgh Council

Colin introduced Matt, who described his responsibilities in his new post with the Council. He is in charge of the three recycling centres at Craigmillar, Seafield, and Sighthill, and the two new waste transfer stations at Seafield and Sighthill. He described the present recycling arrangements for Edinburgh's 123,000 individual households (various bins with differing collection periods), and the 115,000 communal (tenemented) households (with street bins). The introduction of on-street containers had been very piecemeal so it has become necessary to do some rationalisation.

A full review of all the city's recycling practices has taken place. From 2020 there will be improved appearances of the bins, with many new or rebadged bins, and how they are clustered in the streets. The present bins for paper, and cardboard/metal/plastic will be merged. Bin clusters will feature four bins for disposal of general waste, food, glass, and dry items such as paper/cardboard etc. There will be optimal locations for bins, bearing in mind safety aspects and walking distances. An ongoing review will be made about the number of different bins in each location and adjustments made as required. Capacity needed to be examined for each street as it was not well balanced in places. These capacity ratios should improve recycling.

From 9 October greatly improved web services will be rolled out, with simplified forms for on-line reporting of issues, including special collections, fly-tipping, instances of dog-fouling etc.

There were many comments, questions, and suggestions from the floor.

- Abuse of household bins by businesses – being addressed
- Washing of bins, especially food ones
- Housing for bins to improve the visual amenity
- Need for replacement of broken and missing lids
- The quality of service provided by the recycling centres where there are often long queues – layouts and signage are to be improved
- More skips are to be provided at Bankhead (Sighthill)
- It was noted that Craigmillar depot works well
- A new mini-roundabout will be provided at Seafield to stop people having to queue
- More staff will be available to assist the public at the centres to allow them to move through them more efficiently and quickly
- Commercial vans are not allowed at Craigmillar but people with vans can provide ID to prove they are resident in the city
- Concern was expressed that as businesses are not allowed to store refuse in the street from 1 October 2019 they will use communal containers – officers will be looking for this, but it is not known if enforcement will be carried out
- Could bin crews remove fly-posters from bins?

Members thanked Matt for attending the meeting, and felt encouraged by the information provided.

4. Minutes of meeting held on 10 September 2019, and matters arising

Agreed; proposed by Jo Scott and seconded by Hilary McDowell.

- 4.1 Item 4.1 – (Southside Newington Neighbourhood Network) – CC attended the second meeting of this group on 17 September. There was discussion about the role and responsibilities of the group, and a further meeting will be arranged.
- 4.2 *Item 4.2* – (Community Council) – the SA registered with the Council as a local interest group for the Southside Community Council. The meeting agreed to nominate Maggie Peatfield as its representative on it.
- 4.3 *Item 7.1* - (cleaning of gullies) – Cllr Rose had received the following information from the Council - they currently have 3 gully vehicles and a full-time driver for each to undertake both cyclic maintenance (approx. 65,000 gullies) and flooding reports. There is a default 24-month cycle of clearing but that there are also many which are on a 12-month cycle, and also special requests are dealt with.
- 4.4 *Item 7.4* - (person residing in boxes) – Streetwork are helping.

5. Chair’s Report

Christmas Event – date and time confirmed as Tuesday 3 December, at 5pm in St Patrick Square, and then in the hall in the community centre. Please note that is an hour earlier than usual. Colin Symes from the Community Church will officiate at the Carol Service, and the choirs have been booked.

The various consent applications have been submitted, as well as an application for a community grant. Other arrangements are in hand.

6. Treasurer’s Report

Hilary McDowell said that there was no change from the figures given at the meeting on 10 September.

7. Planning & Licensing matters

- 7.1 19/03530/FUL – create a mural on the pavilion building adjacent to the Meadows Play Park – representation of support sent.
- 7.2 16/05952/FUL – the decision about a representation of objection made over three years ago was received towards the end of September. The application for change of use from Class 1 Shop to Class 3 Café, snack bar, and takeaway had been granted. There was surprise at the length of time taken for the decision to be notified.

8. Environmental matters

Philip McDowell had attended a meeting connected with a ‘Doors Open’ day event. An architect and a surveyor had discussed the problems caused in tenements by the lack of a proper maintenance programme. It had been suggested that a regular 5-year inspection of buildings be instigated, and that some form of agreement between the owners of flats in stairs should be established. A serious issue is stone decay, leading to masonry falling from buildings, of which there are around 20 incidents a month in Edinburgh. Often simple remedies such as regular clearing of gutters and pipes are all that’s needed. Please see this link -

<http://www.sccedinburgh.org.uk/FP/tenementliving.html>

9. Report and Q & A with the attending Councillor

Cllr Dickie had taken part in the meeting, and also discussed her role in helping tackle the very serious ASB associated with drug use in the city, especially in the Southside. It was considered that a lack of multi-agency work with the consequent non-sharing of information had not helped with the problems, but she was pleased to report that some progress was being made, with enforcement and support. She said there were many issues which needed attention in Carnegie Court and she was making an action list. She also mentioned that a transport safety audit is to take place in Nicolson Square before any changes to the road and parking etc are made there.

Afternote - Maggie Peatfield had asked about HMO Licences. Cllr Dickie's assistant later sent the following information and link

"Following your question to Cllr Dickie at the Southside Association I have spoken to licensing and they have advised that The Landlord Register system was created as part of the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) 2004 and provides the contact details of all private landlords whether or not they hold an HMO licence or not. Landlord details can be viewed online at www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk. The site requires each property to be checked individually to balance rights of neighbours and tenants against the privacy of the landlords and general abuse of the database. The HMO licence register was created in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006. Since this postdates the Landlord Register the information on the register is limited by law in the information it contains, with the contact information made available by the Landlord Register."

10. Any other business

- 10.1 May Linton asked about the loss of the northbound bus shelter at Nicolson Street. This has not been replaced as the foundations required would encroach into the pavement section of the basement of the adjacent shop.
- 10.2 Problem at 29 Blackwood Crescent - the ground floor flat at the corner of Blackwood and West Newington Place issue is that much fly-tipping is happening there. Initially it was debris from the illegal excavation to extend the basement. Then once that was cleared more appeared and keeps doing so in this front garden space. This has been going on for some years. (At least since May 2017 according to Google Street view. The previous view was in 2015 and it was fine then.)
- 10.3 Cllr Dickie was reminded about the urgency of dealing with the double and triple parking by inconsiderate drivers at the junction of Lutton Place and South Clerk Street. The street layout here needs to be redesigned, bins moved etc to allow pedestrians to cross this road safely.
- 10.4 Greyfriars Charteris are waiting for a building warrant so that they can start work. It was promised for 16 September.

11. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 5 November, at 6.45pm, in Room 1.

Future Dates – Tuesdays – 3 Dec at 5pm in St Patrick Square, 7 Jan, 4 Feb, 3 Mar, 7 Apr, 5 May, 2 Jun.