

# ***The Southside Association***

**117 Nicolson Street  
Edinburgh  
EH8 9ER**

*Founded 1972*      *Scottish Charity No SCO12262*

**www.southsideassociation.co.uk**

**Members' Meeting  
Tuesday 4 February 2020 at 6.45pm  
Room 1, Southside Community Centre**

## ***Minutes***

**PRESENT:** Colin Christison (Chair), Maggie Bagan, Jan Fraser, May Linton, Liz Logie, Dora Lola-Luz, Hilary McDowell, Philip McDowell, Kenny McLeod, Ethel Murray, Maggie Peatfield, and Jo Scott; PC Paul Rich.

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

Colin Christison welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Daniel Fisher, Carol McHugh, Colin Symes, and Stuart Tooley.

### **2. Police Report**

PC Rich said that 8,687 drivers had been stopped in December and 580 (1 in 15) were found to have been under the influence of drink or drugs.

After an appeal two males aged 26 and 50 had been arrested and charged with the theft of £7,000 from the cabin at Bristo Square on 1 January. An Asian student was assaulted at Bauks View on 17 January; two 15 year old males had been arrested, and measures put in place to keep them from further criminal activity.

A road safety initiative started in January at most schools in south Edinburgh, including dealing with inconsiderate parking, often by parents.

More patrols are taking place in south east Edinburgh following break-ins to houses and garages; some arrests made.

Drug dealing and abuse problems were tackled in Pleasance, Roxburgh Place, and Drummond Street; measures included the installation of a steel door at a block of flats.

Police Scotland is continuing the process of community engagement.

Members asked some questions and made some comments – it was wondered if community payback could include cleaning graffiti and removing fly posters; the Council look after this, not the Police. The subject of double parking in Lutton Place was raised again, and it now seems that

minicabs are using part of the street as an unofficial 'taxi' rank. Drivers persist in making illegal right turns into the street from Newington Road. The 20mph speed limit in certain streets is being broken all the time, and the police would like to spend more time trying to enforce it. During a discussion about begging, it was noted that the police should be informed if there is aggression, which includes shaking tins etc at people.

A question was asked about Sciennes Primary School - whether the police are ever present during the start and end of the school day when no vehicles are supposed to drive past this school. It would appear that it is left to parents to 'police' this. A significant number of drivers completely ignore the notices. A police presence, even on an intermittent basis could be quite effective at deterring these drivers, many of whom are businesses. The police said they hadn't been for some time but would try to do so.

### **3. Minutes of meeting held on 7 January 2020, and matters arising**

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

- 3.1 *Item 7.2* (shop change of use without consent) – planning cannot enforce as renovation not complete and the premises not yet reopened.
- 3.2 *Item 7.4* (flyposting by Holyrood Boxing Gym) – the posters which are mounted on thick pieces of wood are still all over the area, up to Cameron Toll, and beyond. A local resident complained to the Council, writing to the four Councillors and ten officials, and had no reply.

### **4. Chair's Report**

- 4.1 The management committee of the community centre is seeking new members.
- 4.2 Christmas event 2019 – still no sign of the community grant. CC to remind Sarah Burns. Thanks expressed to the staff of the centre for their helping with printing, accommodation, and co-operation on the day.
- 4.3 No update on the next Neighbourhood Network meeting.
- 4.4 CC said that much of the meeting is devoted to general environmental issues, some of which have been dragging on for a long time, and which are a source of frustration to us all, particularly Hilary McDowell who is untiring in her efforts to resolve matters. That said, there are some issues which get resolved speedily, and thanks are due to the supportive staff in the Council who get things done.

### **5. Treasurer's Report**

Balance remains at £721.00.

### **6. Planning & Licensing matters**

- 6.1 Salisbury Hotel – owners failed to comply with instructions from the Planning Dept to remove the large wooden construction which had been erected without consent by 10 January, and which was understood to have housed a Lebanese restaurant. Construction has stopped but very little has been taken down, and enforcement measures are to be started. There is another new construction in the front garden.

- 6.2 19/03972/FUL - Change of use from Class 1 (Shop) to Class 3 (Restaurant) at 47A South Clerk St, EH8 9NZ; granted.
- 6.3 The convenience store at 80 Newington Road has taken out the blue 'halo' round the cash machine after a complaint was put in again. They had been told before to remove the previous blue lighting but had reinstalled it some months later.

## 7. Environmental matters

Report from Hilary McDowell - part of the following report describes a serious lack of progress on issues raised many times before.

The '**No Right Turn**' notice on South Clerk Street outside the Queens Hall alerting traffic travelling north that they are not permitted to turn right into Montague Street is facing the wrong way so is not visible. This was first brought up at the SA in September 2019, and reported three times via the local road engineer who passed the information on to the lighting department; a senior Council official who attended SA meeting in October said he would try to get the matter remedied; mentioned at every meeting since, and full details given to Cllr Dickie; and we have spoken at length to a member of staff in the correct department who said that he had all the details but still nothing has been done. There is a number on the pole but it isn't clear as some tape is stuck over part of it - perhaps 16CC. It is important because there are quite a number of vehicles, especially professional drivers such as taxis, which make this illegal turn here, and also at Lutton Place. And the sign actually at the corner of Montague Street needs a new light bulb. Any driver caught by the police could legitimately claim that they hadn't seen either sign. It was agreed to make a formal complain to the Council for their lack of action about a relatively simple matter.

There has been a great deal of **flyposting** to advertise events in February and April at Teviot Union. Although they are removed by us, they are replaced daily. The Edinburgh University Representative on the Southside Community Council has been emailed via the SCC to ask EUSA to instruct the student which runs the union that this is illegal and unacceptable. She has passed on this but the flyposting is continuing as heavily as before. The other nightclubs aren't advertising much in our area at present. We really need the revival of the *Unight* scheme which worked to control such flyposting by the clubs. Funding was withdrawn by the Council. It should really be funded by the clubs themselves as it is advertising their events.

A series of Freedom of Information questions were submitted to the Council to try to get some answers and action on the **zebra crossing for Bernard Terrace**. *The submission is copied below* and the Council is obliged to reply within 20 working days. There appears to be no urgency by the Council staff to get this done or any will to reply to emails hence the FoI which must legally be answered. We also wish to know if there is any money for future projects. There have been questions to us and the SCC from Preston Street School as their children and parents need to be able to cross roads safely. We have submitted a request for a phasing of the traffic lights outside the Commonwealth Pool to be altered to allow a safe time to cross Salisbury Road at that end. We have no idea if there is any money for 2019/2020, how many if any other projects were submitted and when there might be any voting and by whom.

*Subject: Proposed zebra crossing - Thank you for your request for information which was received on 31/01/2020. In your request you asked for the following; Does the Council have any records of the meetings held with various groups including representatives of the then Southside Community Council for a safe means to cross Bernard Terrace at the Spittalfield Crescent end? This was 10 or so years ago. Various suggestions were made by us including a zebra crossing, pedestrian controlled lights, a set of traffic lights with a pedestrian phase, a pedestrian refuge but all were refused. All that was offered was a pavement bulge on the southwest corner which was to narrow the carriageway at that point. We were told that if this didn't prove satisfactory it would be reconsidered. Can you provide the date when this bulge was put in place? The Southside Association asked the SCC and parents of the children who attend Preston Street School to support us in our application for a zebra crossing as part of the Road Capital Investment Programme 2017 /18 by which residents can apply for a particular small project to improve the roads/pavements in our area. The zebra crossing came out top of the*

*list when the voting was carried out in January 2018. However we still seem to be no nearer to having this zebra crossing installed. Communications with the Roads department has been very difficult with many months of waiting for any sort of replies to questions. Reminders have to be sent and the few answers received have not been particularly illuminating, hence this Fol request. In June 2019 it became clear that nothing had been done in house. Has any work been done since to progress this? If so, by whom? Are there plans that we can see? Is there a date for the work to be complete? How realistic is it that this will be fulfilled? Will the installation be done by council staff or a contractor? Has the 'pot of money' allocated for this project been ring fenced or are we going to have to wait for more funds to be allocated? Is a TRO going to be required? Has work started to obtain this? If required how quickly is this likely to come through?*

There are still some **cafes, take-aways and restaurants leaving out their bins** all the time. Kevin Jones from the Waste Compliance team has visited some of those in our area several times and is now escalating the pressure on these businesses.

Edinburgh University has been contacted about **graffiti on the student residence** on Causewayside which backs on to Blackwood Crescent. A reply came quickly from the Estates Department to say that they have asked the Council to deal with this. Presumably they have a contract with the Council to provide this service.

Richard Grant, a member of Spokes, the local cycling campaign group, has drawn our attention to the fact that there is no clear way to **report abandoned bikes**. The cycle racks are filling up with 'dead' bikes and there is nothing on the Council website to tell you how to get them removed. You can report abandoned vehicles, missed bin collections, dark street lights etc but not abandoned bikes. It has proved very easy to get new bike racks in our experience but much harder to get them clear of these unwanted bikes. Abandoned bikes are reported to Derek Roden and he asks the local inspector to check them out. He has to visit, attach a letter giving notice that they will be removed by the council staff if they are still there in four weeks and then go back with an angle grinder to cut the lock off. The bikes are then stored at a building at the Inch Nursery in case an owner claims that their bike has been removed against their will. This all takes a long time as it isn't a priority. In some areas it doesn't seem to happen at all. Richard Grant is campaigning for reporting of dead bikes to be much easier. Photographs and addresses of 11 'dead' bikes photographed today are to be sent to Richard Grant.

It was noted that that our **beautifully resurfaced main street is currently being dug up again** by various utilities, in spite of the pledge not to do so for two years. The Council told all the utilities that they must make sure they had done all the maintenance work on their cables etc before work started and there should be nothing other than emergencies to deal with for 2 years.

There have been a number of problems with the **communal bins** at the Dalkeith Road end of Salisbury Road. The bins are blowing across the carriageway from the pavement bulge on the north side and ending up on the south side of the carriageway, blocking the traffic. If the brakes don't work properly they need to be fixed and if it is a case that the staff aren't putting on the brakes they need to be instructed to do so every time. The bin outside 13 Salisbury Road is often replaced incorrectly so that it is left partially blocking the pavement.

When it rains hard the **gully at the north end of Sciennes** doesn't cope and the road floods. Recently the gully at the end of Melville Terrace also appeared to be blocked so the whole pavement area opposite Summerhall was flooded. These gullies need to be cleaned much more frequently. Ideally the area needs to be investigated to find out why it floods every time it rains heavily. It is extremely difficult for pedestrians to cross Sciennes when it floods.

One of the **bollards by the mural on Gifford Park** has been knocked down again, a month after it was last re-erected. Presumably this is happening because refuse vehicles are failing to see the bollard when reversing in to service the bins.

Kevin Jones is going to visit the Maki and Ramin restaurant on West Richmond Street to ask them not to clutter the pavement with their used cooking oil containers. The thoughtless way of presentation makes it awkward for wheelchairs and buggies to get past.

There are two **keysafes** attached to the railings at the entrance to Holyrood Park, which are for flats at East Parkside. These railings are the property of Historic Scotland.

A suggestion has been made to Historic Environment Scotland that we need a **path** laid across from the corner of the Park at Holyrood Park Road to the crossing through the trees as that is the way that most people walk. The path which is beside the road there floods frequently. A quantity of hard core could be easily laid in this location.

The **wall between the block of flats in Brown Street and the back of the Charteris Centre** has been unstable for some time. Barriers were erected recently but they blew down and are now stacked up. There has been a discussion with the council as to who is responsible for this wall - both sides say it is the other.

Various **telephone boxes** have notices in them about possible removal. As most of the modern boxes seem to be mostly used for purposes other than making phone calls there are good reasons for them to be removed. Many seem to be a main location for flyposting. However, there is one old style box on West Richmond Street which is missing a door, has no functioning phone in it and has flyposting on the outside. It has been like this for months, and will be reported to BT.

## **8. Report and Q & A with the attending Councillor**

No Councillor was present.

## **9. Any other business**

- 9.1 There were several window-smashing vandalism incidents in and near East Parkside from early December until late January. These include car windscreens and windows in doors at the entrances to flats, and to windows of storage areas.
- 9.2 Jan said that she had noticed work being done at the former cinema on Clerk Street on a few recent occasions.
- 9.3 Jo said that she will attend a funding fair arranged by EVOC; and the next planning meeting of the University of Edinburgh's community engagement strategy (others may attend if they wish, contact CC for info).
- 9.4 Liz referred to the concerns about the Waste Depot at Cowan's Close, where there is now light pollution as well as previously voiced complaints about ripe language and smoking from the staff, early morning noise, so close to Hope Cottage Nursery School.
- 9.5 Maggie Peatfield said that the January meeting of the SCC had included a presentation from Mike Shields, the Parks and Greenspace Officer, South East, City of Edinburgh Council, who gave an interesting talk about the Meadows.
- 9.6 It was noted that the Council had cut down crocuses and snowdrops in the small community garden at Bauks View. <https://www.edinburghoutdoors.org.uk/featureDetails.php?id=528>
- 9.7 Liz said that she had been present on a tour of the Millerhill Recycling and Energy Recovery Centre (RERC) - see <https://www.fccenvironment.co.uk/green-energy/millerhill-merc/>

## **10. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 3 March.

**Future Dates** – Tuesdays – 7 Apr, 5 May, 2 Jun, 8 Sep, 6 Oct, 3 Nov, 1 Dec