



OLD TOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 12 June 2007 7.50pm - 9.50pm

Edinburgh City Chambers, Dean of Guild Room

MINUTES

Present: : Peter Sharma (Chair), Anja Amsel (Vice Chair), John Stewart (Secretary), Bill Cowan (Treasurer, Planning), Julie Logan (Planning), Sam Piacentini (Licensing), Catriona Grant, Sally Richardson, Bruce Borthwick, Jane Yeoman, John Thompson, Ken Smillie, Graeme Fairbrother, Murray Forgie.

CEC Councillors: *David Beckett (SNP), Joanna Mowatt (Con) and Charles Dundas (Lib Dems).*

Lothian & Borders Police: *Lesley Culbert, Community Beat Officer.*

Plus 2 public visitors

In attendance: *Mark Cummings, Associate Director PPS. Priscilla Heaton-Armstrong, Chairperson, Blackfriars Association and Angela M, Blackfriars Association. Ian Paton, Old St Paul's Episcopal Church and The Ark Trust.*

Peter Chaired the meeting. John Stewart took the Minutes.

1 Apologies: *none*

Action

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (8 May 2007).
Approved as accurate, proposed by Anja seconded by John T.

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING:

The minutes for February were passed to John Stewart from Julie. Remember to pass on minutes to Eileen Hewitt at CEC. **JS**

Page 1 – okay.

Page 2 – Caltongate – Discussion about what was and was not said about the new working group set-up as part of the Caltongate Liaison Group.

Julie said the minutes are accurate, note 2 above minutes approved as accurate.

Bruce suggested Mark Cummings from PPS was treated unfairly by OTCC, however Peter apologised if Mark felt this had happened but it was not intended.

Page 3 - okay

4 CORRESPONDENCE

Anja received a phone call regarding the High School Yards and Grassmarket Nurseries threat of closure.

Jane – 2 years ago the Grassmarket Primary School was set to close.
Anja – the woman on the phone seemed distressed about the situation.
Cat – What were the reasons for the closure, did they say?
Sally – A list of closures is set to be published, not known if true
The school have petitions going about this – where did they get the info from?
Story originated from an article in the Evening News.
Peter – are any of the CEC councillors aware of plans?
Cllr David Beckett – no discussions known about it.
Peter – can I ask the Cllrs to check the Evening News story
Cat - the Old Town used to have 4 nursery schools now one, similar situation with primary schools, if we don't do something we will have no schools in the Old Town. If there are no schools then it would be difficult to attract new families into the area.
Peter – any loss of nursery schools in the area is unacceptable ask councillors to find out. Cllr Charles Dundas agreed the councillors would pursue this.

**CEC
Cllrs**

5 REPORT BY IAN PATON FROM THE ARK TRUST

Ian Paton of Old St Paul's Church and The Ark Trust was invited to give a report on the situation regarding the closure of The Ark Trust's drop-in café service.

Caltongate development promised an entirely new building in which case The Ark Trust will hand over The Ark Trusts building on New Street, however this is now in doubt since Mountgrange are not responding to communications.

At the end of June the CEC cease funding the Café, 90%of the funding comes from the CEC.

Reasons given by CEC are:

1. Strategic change going on didn't see relevance.
2. Report – audit of service – positive revealed Health & Safety reason – didn't like open door policy. Answer closed door and restrict access.
3. Not keeping reporting system updated
4. Financial system not accurate.

All trustees addressed issues since September with professional help. The police and auditors are satisfied.

The CEC has not taken into account the changes made before decision to withdraw funding. The Trustees are very disappointed.

The Café will probably close by the end of July for an unspecified time.

There will be 80-100 people who use the facilities on the street.

The Trustees are looking for alternative sources of funding.

Sam – don't understand the logic since the issue with Hunter Square. This situation would make things worse! The Ark Trust management seems good.

Julie – I live opposite the drop-in café, the service has improved. This service is a lifeline. I would hate to see the service close. There is no point in having the service outwith the city centre, there is no CEC service for them.

Peter asked what is the running cost - £167,000 per annum.

Anja – valuable service – could new council take on board reversing the decision to withdraw funding?

Bruce – discussed desirability of drop-in centres last year also throughout the day, I support your efforts!

One member of the public at the meeting said they used the service and

relied upon this service for food and support at a time when they needed it.

Cat – concerned over the lack of responsibility and accountability of the CEC and their attitude in serving the people who have a drink or drug problem. I would like to know how the CEC are going to respond to the needs of the people who currently use the service which they plan to close?

Meg – concerned about the pub below her re-opening (Holyrood Tavern).

Peter – issues have to be addressed. Cllrs should look at this and take on board the general feeling of the OTCC and users of the service, where would the users go if the service was to close?

Charles, Joanna and David said the decision was made by the previous CEC so they are not bound by it. Charles will request the financial information from the CEC used as the basis to withdraw funding and will share this information with the OTCC. I need to get the information explaining why this decision was made, but I am not promising anything.

Anja – welcomed this decision but concerned about the timescale.

Charles – says will work as fast as I can to ascertain the reasons, but we need information first.

Bruce – if funding withdrawn, the CEC will be responsible for looking after the users, what's going to happen?

Cllr Joanna - also concerned, been in touch with the police, need to have a meeting with Charles to discuss this. Even if a short term reprieve but councillors need to get together to discuss the situation. We will have a response for the July meeting.

**CEC
Cllrs**

6 LOTHIAN & BORDERS POLICE – Community Beat Officer Report

Lesley Culbert is the Community Beat Officer for our area. She is based at the West End Police Station. This is her first meeting at the OTCC.

There was a public meeting about Hunter Square and a policing plan has been created to deal with the Hunter Square problems – police will be present every hour and Currubers Close will be checked and cleaned regularly by CEC staff. Police are checking the area around the Canongate Venture building.

Sally – what are the procedures for reporting drug use in stair ways, when reported to the police it takes a long time for officers to attend.

Lesley – if you can't get out of your stairs or you feel threatened then you should phone 999.

Bruce – are police boxes going to be looked at? Unlikely due to cost.

Cat – also spoke about the problems as a neighbour of Sally.

Lesley – said she would arrange to visit Sally and her neighbours.

LC

Meg asked what is happening about the pavements on St Mary's Street. One side has had new paving laid but the work has stopped and the other side has not been touched. Peter and Anja had received information, the work was more difficult than expected, therefore took longer. The work will be completed after the main tourist season/festival period has finished, autumn. Funding is in place to do the work.

7 CALTONGATE LIAISON GROUP

Discussing Cats concerns.

OTCC has to be liaised with by statute. When OTCC attends the Caltongate Liaison Group (CLG) meetings they are treated as equals to other groups such as residents associations.

She is concerned the only way we are consulted with is through the CLG. She has issues about the decision making – there is no voting.

The secretariat is provided for by Mountgrange, there is a dearth of democracy.

This shouldn't be the only way.

Anja – purpose to take in as wide a response as possible doesn't take away anything from the OTCC.

Bruce – would be very annoyed if Mountgrange circumvent responsibility to consult with the OTCC.

Ken Smille – Secretariat should be provided by the CEC as they would be impartial.

Julie – concerned about the role – specific terms of reference agreed process of consultation NOT doing the consultation. She then quoted the document about the new Neighbourhood Partnerships and their role. OTCC excluded from working group to discuss the community space to be provided by Mountgrange as part of the Caltongate Development.

Mark from PPS responded to concerns, not here to negate statutory bodies or responsibilities.

Cat – CLG doesn't feel fair or equitable.

Peter – item on agenda to discuss these at the next meeting.

PS

8 BLACKFRIARS RESIDENT'S ASSOCIATION

Priscilla Heaton-Armstrong, Chairperson, Blackfriars Association

Angela M, Blackfriars Association.

Priscilla and Angela came to address the OTCC for help and support over their concerns about new hotel being built at St Patrick's Church, also about St Ann's Community Centre which is at their courtyard.

There's been a lack of consultation – none taken place.

They will be building what they call a 'community hall' but is in fact a church hall.

We already have a community space it's St Ann's Community Centre.

Concerned about the noise which will be created in and around the area.

Concerned about the possible side effects to neighbouring buildings of the excavation work.

No communications about the work or assurances about standards of work.

Bill - he was misquoted in the press. The Old Town Association (OTA) objected to the previous application on this site and the application was withdrawn.

OTA objected to it on the grounds of height and the new plan on the look of the proposed building.

He recommended speaking to the CEC Clerk of Works and to photograph existing cracks so any new movement or damage can be reported and proved.

David – said he wanted to meet the residents to discuss the situation, they exchanged details to arrange a meeting.

Bruce – asked if there were special conditions covering church land.

Julie – not for outside the church building, same planning rules apply.

DB

9 SUBGROUPS

Publicity group

At the last meeting the Publicity Group agreed to meet.

John S and Cat attended meeting. Bruce and Ken didn't attend.

John S is looking into the website and Cat is going to produce a template for the newsletter. No progress on notice boards. Work continuing.

**JS
CG
BB**

10 PLANNING

07/02032/ADV 300 Cowgate advertisement (flag and sign) Charbon Hotel Growth Fund.

07/02157/LBC Paterson's Land 39 Holyrood fit platform lift, within stairwell

07/01480/ADV 30A Chambers Street Individual letters + logo, double sided sign

07/01719/FUL 18-19 Market Street Part change of use, alteration and extension of existing office building to form mixed use development comprising flatted residential accommodation (2units) and ground level office

07/01844/FUL 29-30 South Bridge Change of use to restaurant

07/01991/LBC City Chambers Replace railings to edge of flat roof

07/02033/FUL 64 South Bridge, 3 Drummond Street Part change of use and sub-division (from Ciao Roma restaurant and Rutherfords bar) to form restaurant and bar on ground floor with toilets in basement and new bar with dance floor in basement level entering from Drummond Street

07/01425/LBC 56, 58 St Mary's Street Install new lighting units on existing fascia

07/01472/ADV 4 Old Toolboth Wynd Company name and logo

RESULTS

07/00798/FUL 9,10,11,12,13 Market Street Terraced/external drinking area on the first floor **GRANTED**

07/01168/LBC 12 (3f2) St Mary's Street Proposed valley-roof link **REFUSED**

07/00461/FUL 20 Holyrood Road Change of use to public house and

alterations **REFUSED**

07/00654/ADV 549 Castlehill External signage / information signs Camera Obscura **REFUSED**

06/02788/LBC 44 Chambers Street Redevelopment of museum including new entrances, stairs, lifts and internal alteration **GRANTED**

06/05237/CON 2 forrest Road + 11B Bristro Place Demolition of existing two story research building on south part of application site and two porches on existing poor house Hotel Du Vin. **GRANTED**

11 LICENSING

Sam - there is a change to the licensing of outside tables and chairs. At the moment tables and chairs have to be taken in before 9pm. There are plans to relax this for the festival period as a trial. It will apply to all areas of the City until 11pm. However, premises will still have to apply for a license and the licenses will be given on an individual basis. Sam suggested this won't really be a trial since the festival time is not a true reflection of what happens in the outside seated areas for most of the year.

OTCC – we don't want an extension to the current rules which will exacerbate existing problems. **PS**

Joanna – said should use powers we have on a 'carrot and stick' approach for well run and poorly run establishments. I will keep a close eye on this. **JM**

NEXT MEETING

*Tuesday 10 July 2007 – Edinburgh City Chambers
Venue booked by Cllr David Beckett.*

NO MEETING IN AUGUST