



# OLD TOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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## Committee Meeting

**Tuesday, 12 February 2008, 7pm, Edinburgh City Chambers**

### MINUTES

**Present:** : Anja Amsel (Vice-Chair), John Stewart (Secretary), Bill Cowan (Treasurer, Planning), Sam Piacentini (Licensing), John Thompson

**CEC Councillors:** Cllr Charles Dundas (LibDem) Cllr David Beckett (SNP)

**Scottish Parliament:** No one present

**Lothian & Borders Police:** Sgt Scott Oliver

**In Attendance:** David McDonald of Edinburgh World Heritage, World Heritage Site Project Manager.

6 public visitors including two people from Blackfriars Residents Association.

Anja Amsel Chaired the meeting. John Stewart took the Minutes.

- 1 **Apologies:** Bruce Borthwick, Sarah Boyack MSP, Peter Sharma (Chair), Murray Forgie (Licensing),
- 2 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING** (8 January 2008).  
Minutes of previous meeting agreed and approved as accurate
- 3 **MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING:**
  - a. **Publicity - Notice boards** – no progress reported, Ken not here to report back. Concern again expressed at the lack of progress. John S agreed to contact Ken and if Ken cannot do this task to ensure it is progressed. **JS**
  - Newsletter** – no progress reported, Cat not present to report back.
  - b. **Away Day** – Group arranged to meet but only John S was present, Cat e-mailed her apologies in advance since it was of the evening of the CEC Planning Committee discussing 'Caltongate' application. No response from Peter. How to progress? John S agreed to e-mail everyone and ask if people are interested in having an Away Day. **JS**
  - c. **Johnston Terrace** - no update
  - d. **Royal Town Planning Institute** – Julie not here and "briefing paper" she offered to do was not circulated.
  - e. **Christmas Lights** – Cllr Charles Dundas and Cat did not meet, however Charles did meet with staff from Winter Festivals. Although they were not forthcoming they did not say 'no'. There may be no funding from CEC. John S suggested doing a walkabout round the various streets where we would like to see Christmas lighting in place for 2008, have a person who does the CEC lighting present to suggest possible lighting solutions. All agreed to keep this as an agenda item.
  - f. **Number 60 bus** – no update Peter not present **PS**
  - g. **City Development** – Andrew Holmes nor his representative attended,

**Action**

**JS**

**JS**

**PS**

although Bruce did e-mail him on what we wanted him to talk about and he agreed to attend.

**h. Attendance** - Peter received Graeme Fairbrother's letter of resignation as a Community councillor.

#### 4 CORRESPONDENCE

##### From the Agenda:

- a) Parks and Gardens Community Grants – John S circulated a document to all community councillors for information and to consider proposals. John S agreed to re-send this to Anja. Anja suggested 'Campbell's Close' off Canongate. She will continue her contact with them to find out what they are planning and to ensure they know about the Grant. She will also check on the time scale, since closing date is 29 February 2008. Julie suggested by e-mail before the meeting, Princes Street Gardens. However the meeting discussed this and thought it too 'public' we would be better focussing on more 'local' areas.
- b) Community Engagement Fund – Cllr David Beckett spoke about this fund and if we had any ideas. The Scotsman Step's is not appropriate since the fund is for 'community engagement'. David will convene a meeting with those interested about this – John T, Anja and John S showed interest.
- c) Setting up of 'Friends of Princes Street Gardens' topic for discussion. This was discussed at a) above.

JS

Cllr  
DB

Anja expressed her concern at a document she received; CEC Children & Families Review about Adult Daytime Classes. She understood they were under threat of being cut back. David asked where she got this notion of 'cuts' since there is nothing in this document about reducing services – it is just rumours. Anja expressed her relief!

John S received a letter from the CEC Secretary about the Code of Conduct and Register of Interests in relation to the Neighbourhood Partnership. Julie has not completed one of these forms. She needs to, otherwise we will be asked to nominate another member who is willing to sign the papers. Anja suggested we should all sign the papers and we did not want to lose Julie as our representative on the Partnership. Agreed. John S will get the papers for us all. He will also reply to the CEC Secretary.

JS

##### Follow-up from the previous meeting:

- 1) Attendance at the Edinburgh Civic Forum on 12 February 2008. Bill and Julie said they would attend – Bill was unable to attend and Julie not here to say if she was able to go.
- 2) Recycling facilities at Panmure Close - John S asked Cllr David Beckett if there was an update to the facilities being installed here. David said yes they had been installed.

#### 5 DISCUSSION ITEMS

##### a) Official/Community Group Reports

**Lothian and Borders Police** – Scott Oliver (Sgt) introduced himself. He commented on noise problems in the Lawnmarket. The police have powers to deal with this, buskers, but is mainly the pipers. This affects the quality of life for residents. Offenders are given an official warning letter.

This has worked but the real test will be when the weather improves. Regarding the problems with approximately 100 young people (Emos, Goths) congregating around the Hunter's Square area, there is now in place a protocol with residents and businesses covering problems such as noise and litter, associated with this large group. A time frame is set with time extensions at weekends. Anyone not complying with warnings will be issued with Anti-social Behaviour Orders.

Chessel's Court – Graffiti problem. The Police are setting-up a vandalism issues team and they will be looking at other good practice to deal with this issue. If graffiti is noticed in other areas let the Police know. They oppose putting gates over Chessel's Court and the closes.

Anja expressed her appreciation for Scott's attendance and report.

**Neighbourhood partnership** – Julie not present so no update on the last meeting.

**Edinburgh World Heritage** – David McDonald, World Heritage Site Project Manager asked to come along and make a case for our support for a conservation project for the 'Scotsman Steps', which are A-Listed. He would like to include this project in their plan for the coming year. A letter of support is what he would like. However, it will take a long time to progress partly since it is not clear who actually owns the steps. He would like us to apply for a grant from the Neighbourhood Partnership (Community Grants Fund). The meeting agreed to support this and help to progress the restoration work.

Bill made the point about other steps in the area in worse condition some are closed off to the public – steps opposite new hotel on the Cowgate at St Patrick's Church. Perhaps money should be spent on wider area. EWH have been looking at other 'closes', but in terms of priorities the Scotsman Steps are of a greater priority.

Anja Suggested we support this but then look at the other closes and steps for restoration. Closing off closes and steps is not an option since permeability is very important to the character of the Old Town and it's history.

**Licensing** – e-mail sent to Anja from Murray about his proposal to have a joint meeting with Tollcross and Newton & Broughton Community councils aiming to force the CEC Licensing Forum to include representatives from both our community councils. Sarah Boyack MSP has agreed to Chair the meeting. Dates proposed are 10 or 11 March. John S pointed out we meet on 11 March, so 10 March was the agreed date. It was agreed Murray should proceed with booking a room at the City Chambers via Cllr David Beckett.

Advocate's Close application was dismissed for the second time since it was an incorrect application.

The new hotel on the Cowgate at the back of St Patrick's church applied for a license and it was granted.

## **b) Planning**

**Caltongate** – the Planning committee had their all day meeting to consider all the plans and approved the development. Bill stated due process was not followed. Some very good objections were not given 'due weight'. Encourage everyone to write to their MSP and ask for this application to go to a public inquiry.

**Grassmarket** – Jane asked for the 'Big Screen' proposed for the Grassmarket to be discussed, as per the Evening News article, Jane not

present. Cllr Beckett said the situation for the screen has not been decided. The newspaper article is inaccurate – the story is that the CEC have been given a £2m screen for which they would pay the maintenance costs, £50,000 per year.

**General Planning Applications** – ‘Boots’ internal illuminated sign; the Old Town Association has objected. We agreed to object and Bill to comment on fairness, since Studio XIII Tattoo shop on Jeffrey Street were forced to remove their internal illuminated sign.

**Calton Hill Gardens** of interest but no comment.

**St Mary’s Street (8)** – office turned into a Day Nursery. The application say the children will remain in the basement and there is an emergency exit. We object on the grounds of change of use due to loss of retail, this is a protected area for shops (CEC policy). Also, not suitable for use.

**West Port (13)** – the hairdresser shop changing to kebab shop. Object on grounds of loss of retail. However it is not a protected area for retail.

See **Appendix 1** for the full list.

## 6 OPEN FORUM

Blackfriars Residents Association: Priscilla Heaton-Armstrong gave us an update on the building work affecting their area. The Hotel is complete, at the back of St Patrick’s Church on Cowgate and has been granted a license. Work on the underground church hall has started. They are concerned with the work being so close to the A-listed buildings – noise and disturbance (to the buildings). They are also concerned over the future uses with regards to noise and the possible licensing of functions. The developers have not re-instated the cobbles to the roads after the work had been completed.

They are planning to improve their community rooms by applying for grants to install heating and have the drainage repaired since it is causing flooding. They want to improve the quality and uses of the courtyard, they are looking into grants for this.

A member of the public came along to see the OTCC and was impressed by the meeting. She heard about it through the campaign against ‘Caltongate’. She thought we could have done more to complain. Anja sated we did a lot. David said we should not stop campaigning, David intends to call for a public inquiry.

The lack of traffic management was a huge issue for us, we repeatedly asked for CEC officers to attend and give a satisfactory input. We arranged for Andrew Holmes or his representative to attend and he agreed but didn’t attend.

## NEXT MEETING

*11 March 2008; Venue: Edinburgh City Chambers.  
8 April 2008 7pm*

## Appendix 1

### LIST of PLANNING APPLICATIONS up to Tuesday 12 February 2008

- 08/00036/FUL 13 West Port c/u to cold food and hot food take-away point  
08/00216/ADV 57 - 61 High Street Projecting sign  
08/00035/FUL 03/01/2008 18 South Bridge c/u un-occupied shop to office space.  
08/00042/FUL 04/01/2008 8 St Mary's Street c/u from office to private day nursery  
08/00163/FUL 18/01/2008 51 George Iv Bridge Replace shop frontage  
07/03357/FUL Flat 3 68 Grassmarket Reinststate false window to front & change rear window to form french door  
07/03589/FUL Calton Hill, London Road Gardens + Hillside Crescent Gardens Upgrades to path surfacing, planting, lighting, site furniture and metal work  
07/03368/ADV 44 North Bridge internally illuminated acrylic Boots lozenge  
07/03417/FUL 1, 2 - 3, 6 India Buildings Change of use to form hotel Gregor Shore Ltd  
07/03256/FUL 81 Holyrood Road Erection of a glazed extension  
07/03050/FUL 158 Canongate Restaurant - extend trading hours till 10pm

### RESULTS

- 02/03306/FUL 55-61 Jeffrey Street Former tannery site; flatted residential, hotel bedroom extension and mixed commercial use, as amended. **DECISION Granted**  
07/02404/FUL 116 Cowgate car park Society of Solicitors **DECISION Granted**  
07/02965/FUL 2 - 3 India Buildings C/ to coffee shop with kitchen, toilets servery backpackers hostel on upper floors G Shore Ltd. **DECISION Withdrawn**  
07/01235/FUL Mountgrange ( Caltongate ) Limited., Delegated Decision **WITHDRAWN** 30 January 2008  
07/00552/FUL Canongate Place recycling Committee Decision **GRANTED**