



# OLD TOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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## Committee Meeting

**Tuesday, 11 March 2008, 7pm, Edinburgh City Chambers**

### MINUTES

**Present:** : Peter Sharma (Chair), Anja Amsel (Vice-Chair), John Stewart (Secretary), Bill Cowan (Treasurer, Planning), Julie Logan (Planning), Sam Piacentini (Licensing), John Thompson, Jane Yeoman, Catriona Grant, Sally Richardson

**CEC Councillors:** *Cllr Joanna Mowatt (Con)*

**Scottish Parliament:** *No one present*

**Lothian & Borders Police:** *Lyle Downey and Bruce Burke Community Beat Officers.*

**In Attendance:** *Pricilla Heaton-Armstrong, Blackfriars Residents Association.; Mark Cummings..... For Mountgrange*

One public visitor

*Peter Sharma* Chaired the meeting *John Stewart* took the Minutes.

1 **Apologies:** Bruce Borthwick, Murray Forgie (Licensing), Ken Smillie, Sarah Boyack MSP, Cllr David Beckett

**Action**

2 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING** (12 February 2008).

Last page last word missing of minutes should be 'didn't'. Date mentioned for next meeting should be 11 March 2008.

Minutes of previous meeting agreed with these amendments.

3 **MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING:**

a. **Publicity** – Newsletter – Cat had computer problems which meant she couldn't do what she intended for this meeting. Bill offered to help with computer problems. Cat still needs to 'drop' some photos into the newsletter and distribute a draft copy. John S asked if Scott Oliver from Lothian & Borders Police had been in contact or if she had contacted him, "no". This was about getting an article for the newsletter.

**CG**

Notice boards – Ken had not responded to e-mails from John S. John S will progress this with the help of John T.

**JS  
JT**

b. **Away Day** – as agreed at the last meeting John S e-mailed everyone to gauge interest in having an 'Away Day'. The results are: 6 people did not respond; one said "no"; 2 are now not available on the agreed day and 4 said 'yes'. Julie stated we should do the constitution as a matter of urgency, before May for the AGM. Peter said we have a 'model constitution' supplied by CEC and quoted text written in the CEC document 'Scheme for Community Councils' Cat stated Peter has not told us anything we don't already know or have already discussed. Jane

**CG  
Cllr  
CD**

- suggested we contact other Community Councils to see their adjusted documents for discussion. Bill asked if John S could circulate again a copy of our proposed constitution as given out by John S in Autumn 2007. John S agreed. JS
- c. Johnston Terrace** - no update. We planned to discuss this and other traffic management issues with Andrew Holmes last month when he agreed to come along or to send a representative, but he failed to attend and with no apology. So no progress with Johnston Terrace issue. Joanna stated with Andrew Holmes retiring maybe we should contact the new Head of Transport. Joanna agreed to approach this person. Cat suggested we should write to the CEC Chief Executive to complain about no representative coming to our meeting. Cllr JM
- d. Royal Town Planning Institute** – Julie circulated, via e-mail, her report on this meeting for which we paid for her to attend.
- e. Christmas Lights** – Cllr Charles Dundas and Cat are in contact with each other but have not met. Plan to meet by the end of March. Will report back for the April meeting. CG Cllr CD
- f. Number 60 bus** – Peter is in contact with Southside Community Council. Southside Community Council are meeting this month and will discuss how we could link up on this issue. Can we have a timetable for this since this issue has been ongoing for some time? Can we contact Sarah Boyack MSP about this since she looked into this issue before? Joanna stated the issue of 'supported bus services' will come up at the next CEC meeting this week and she thinks there will be some 'movement' on the issue. She would be happy to take this forward. Agreed PS Cllr JM
- g. Declaration of Interests** – As agreed at the last meeting John S distributed Declaration of Interests forms via e-mail and the supporting document. Nobody had returned these via e-mail. John S handed out printed copies of the forms at the meeting. Peter stated he had completed one of these last year and passed it to CEC. John S asked for a copy. Peter completed a new form at the meeting. John S asked Julie about the copy she needs to do for the next meeting of the Neighbourhood Partnership on 20 March 2008, she said she would have it done. ALL JL
- h. The Scotsman Steps** – John S created electronic copies of the letter and briefing paper sent to Anja from David MacDonald of Edinburgh World Heritage (EWH). These papers were e-mailed to everyone. Grant funding is available, up to £5,000 from the Neighbourhood Partnership. David is asking us to support EWH in their efforts to have a feasibility study done. He would like us to write a letter of support, investigate the possibility of securing funding from the Neighbourhood Partnership and being represented on the panel deciding upon the appointment of a conservation-accredited architect. John S supports the idea of jointly working with EWH to conserve the Steps, however he expressed concern over securing funding to give to another organisation, surely they should be applying for funding directly, with our support. We should only be applying for funding for projects which we will manage. John S also pointed out that if you look at the application for grant funding from the Neighbourhood Partnership, you can see it requires the applicant to submit a copy of their constitution, we do not have an adopted constitution. We should look at other projects which we could support and let them know about this grant. Anja stated there are a lot of funds available if we have a constitution, it is vital we get the constitution sorted. Cat asked how are we are going to find out who needs funding? John S asked do the CEC publish leaflets or do they rely on Community Councils to advertise grants? Julie said The Neighbourhood Partnership is looking at the issue of

information dissemination. Carol Duncan, Head of Services for Communities is a useful contact.. John S summarised the questions before us regarding the Scotsman Steps: do we send a letter of support? Do we look into the issue of Grant funding on behalf of EWH? Do we want representation on the Panel? Answer from all is "yes" but we wanted to ensure other steps in our area are also looked at.

PS

School Yards steps was discussed. However, the campaign to have something done about the anti-social behaviour at these steps resulted in the CEC blocking off the steps. There was no investigation as to what could be done. Cat said we should engage with the residents of this area since they may be happy the steps are blocked off! Julie said a feasibility study should also be done for these steps, the same as for the Scotsman Steps. These issues would be included in the study.

#### 4 CORRESPONDENCE

- 1) Cllr Beckett supplied an email reporting on three issues which John S read out:
  - a. He is holding the council's first youth surgery on Wednesday 19 March at 7pm in the City Chambers, Dean of Guild's room. If anybody knows of anybody who would like to go or has any suggestions as to which organisations they think should hear about this please ask them to get in contact with him.
  - b. The council has introduced the new Neighbourhood Action Units, he will talk about these at the next meeting.
  - c. He is still awaiting a response from the Convener of licensing regarding Priscilla's question.

- 2) John S received information by post about the Edinburgh Award. He created electronic copies and then e-mailed everyone about it. He asked for nominations to be sent directly to the organisers.

- 3) Bill Cowan received documents about the Cowgate fire site. He has been invited to a presentation and is going as the representative for the Old Town Association. He wanted to know if he should represent the OTCC also. Yes. Julie also wanted to go so her name will be put forward as attending. The issue of licensed establishments in this area was brought up here and the CEC policy of no more new licenses. Joanna explained the CEC policy is not that there is an outright ban but more in keeping that a restaurant will probably be granted a license but a nightclub would not, however, applications are still considered on a case by case basis. Bill spoke about how new license applications will be assessed under the new arrangements. This would apply to the question Pricilla posed at the last meeting.

BC  
JL

#### 5 DISCUSSION ITEMS

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

The next Neighbourhood Partnership 'walkabout' for the Old Town will be on 31 March 2008 5-7pm, meeting point to be confirmed. John S circulated information and asked for issues people would like raised. Sally was the only person that responded to the e-mail with a list of issues. Sam asked if Bruce from Lothian & Borders Police (LBP) had been asked to attend. John S said I did not know if the organiser had approached the police but

that he had included Scott Oliver in his last e-mail for information. Julie and John S are available to attend, Peter and Anja are not. John T and Sally said they would like to come along. John S stated it was to be a small group to make the walkabout manageable so others should pass on issues to those attending. LBP will have someone there too.

**Lothian and Borders Police** – Bruce Burke Community Beat Officer from West End Station commented on one of the issues at the moment which may have an impact on our area, fruit and vegetables being displayed for sale on the walkways. The police concern is one of safety when these displays obstruct the pavement, especially in areas where there is a potential for an increase in foot traffic due to the road diversion because of the Tram development. There has been one Notice issued but the shop owner has defied the ban. The Police went along with a CEC Council official to remove the offending goods and spoke to the owner. However, the owner believes he is responsible for the space on the street above the glass brick work, which is his, and is therefore entitled to display goods on this area. Part of the problem is the goods also extend onto the pavement. The issue is not being resolved as quickly as the police would like. This may impact on other areas. If the OTCC feel this is a problem they should contact Jenni Brown of the Neighbourhood Partnership.

Graffiti has been an issue where they have received numerous calls. CCTV can be installed to help identify and catch the individuals. So if people can see areas where CCTV can be installed they would be interested to know, the main issue would be access to a power supply. The police want to catch them and send a clear message that this is unacceptable.

John T, on behalf of Old St Paul's Church Development Committee thanked the police for their efforts in getting the graffiti removed from Old St Paul's Church and is now calling for action on the close being used as a toilet.

It was suggested letting graffiti 'artists' use hoardings around the numerous development sites in our area. This would develop their skills and reduce the 'tagging' that takes place.

Joanna wanted to emphasise the 2 types of graffiti 'vandalism' and 'artistic'. The artist express themselves so there needs to be clear action for both. Bruce (LBP) wants to attend as many residents meetings as possible and encourage people to complain/report issues to the police, 'don't just moan amongst themselves about problems'. The more calls the police get the better since they can take action if repeat calls come in on particular problem.

**b) Licensing** – The meeting Murray was organising which Sarah Boyack agreed to Chair had little response for those invited. Former CEC Councillor Chris Wigglesworth contacted Sam to try to arrange a meeting. Joanna said that someone will be co-opted onto the Forum and this will be discussed at the next meeting of the Forum on 18 March 2008. Chris Wigglesworth had also contacted Anja about the issue of nobody representing the Central Area on the Licensing Forum. Chris has volunteered to be a member. Joanna said the Convener of the Forum will ask us to nominate a member since there are three Community Councils coming together on this very important issue.

Sam asked Joanna if she could ensure he was sent a copy of the licensing applications that will be discussed at the April Licensing Board meeting. Sam also stated he had a meeting with the Licensing Police about the

Cllr  
JM

issues in the area.

### c) Planning

**Caltongate** – the last application was passed by CEC Planning. The applications are going up to Scottish Ministers to look at and decide whether they will call it in. The OTCC objections remain since the changes that have been made are minor.

Joanna commented on the changes as approved at the last meeting; 5 one bed flats will remain in CEC ownership. Mark Cummings added these flats will have a separate access also retained by CEC. He also stated the plans have gone to Scottish Ministers and Mountgrange are awaiting acknowledgement. He said the Section 75 agreement, provision of a community facility is an outstanding issue.

Julie said the OTCC will consider this when the plans have been approved. Mark Cummings stated it would be reasonable to put this as an agenda item for further discussion since the OTCC may lose the authority to decide the facility and the Scottish Ministers may do it.

**Grassmarket** – the development is a month behind. This is partly due to the weather and in finding new underground utilities which they didn't know were present. These utilities need to be treated as though they were 'live' until proved otherwise. Also, unstable ground where new concrete had to be poured and left to harden. There were also security issues regarding the perimeter fencing.

The developers want to work on Sundays, reserving 'quiet' work for this time. They want tolerance from residents to do this.

Noisy Sunday working should be avoided to give residents a break from building disruption.

Trees need to be protected. The Vennel needs a retaining wall repaired and power for the lights.

New trees are coming in from Germany!

Concern was expressed at the meeting over the non-retention of trees over 10 years old.

Joanna stated there is a public meeting on Tuesday at 7pm in the Beehive. The stakeholders are quite positive but didn't want to approve this until the Public Meeting. The previous CEC had an independent report on the trees before any work was done. This will be discussed at the public meeting.

**General Planning Applications** – Bill made a point about 'set' policies for certain types of planning applications similar to the Old Town Association. Protected shop areas is an issue for the next meeting.

Julie commented on ongoing changes in the Planning System as a whole. She suggested we should be commenting on these. This should be an agenda item for future discussion.

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

## 6 OPEN FORUM

Priscilla of **Blackfriars Residents Association** said the old newsagents at Blackfriars Street is now open as a kebab shop. Julie nor Bill have seen a planning application for this.

Cat asked the question; do we fill the vacancy left by Graeme leaving the OTCC? Perhaps this should be on the agenda for future discussion? John S stated we have space for 12 elected members and 6 nominated.

**Attendance:** John S commented on the attendance falling below what is expected for community councillors John S should write to Jane and Ken about this.

**Canongate Community Forum** had secured funding to do some Action Research. They had secured a shop at 8 St Mary's Street and were having a drop-in session on Sunday from 12.30 to 5pm. It would be helpful if the OTCC want to get involved.

**NEXT MEETING**

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

## **Appendix 1**

OTCC LIST of PLANNING APPLICATIONS up to Tuesday 11th March 2008

08/00813/ADV 235 High Street The Filling Station New externally illuminated projecting hanging sign

08/00392/FUL 3 Johnston Ter. c/u restaurant OBJECTION PLACED

08/00036/FUL 13 West Port c/u take-away OBJECTION PLACED

**RESULTS**

08/00035/FUL 18 South Bridge Streetwork UK., c/u Change shop to office space. GRANTED

07/03368/ADV 44 North Bridge Boots lozenge internally illuminated aluminium fascia sign with acrylic Boots lozenge GRANTED