



OLD TOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 14 October 2008, 7pm, Edinburgh City Chambers

MINUTES

Present: : Anja Amsel (Vice Chair), John Stewart (Secretary), Julie Logan (Planning), Catriona Grant, Sally Richardson, John Thompson, Bill Cowan (Treasurer).

CEC Councillors: *Cllr Joanna Mowat*

Scottish Parliament: *No one present*

Lothian & Borders Police: *No one present*

Public visitors: None

Alan Montgomery and Beverley Wood from the Salvation Army to give a presentation.

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

- 1 **Apologies:** Bruce Borthwick, Murray Forgie, Pc Lyall Downie, *Community Beat Officer*, Sarah Boyack MSP

Action

- 2 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING** (9 September 2008).

The minutes were accepted as accurate, proposed by Sally, approved.

- 3 **MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING:**

A) Publicity: Notice boards – The Business Manager for the Royal Mile Primary School got a quote for £500 but needs the cheque before commissioning the work. It was agreed the cheque should be provided. Julie stated it would be sited just inside the playground. John and a few others were not happy that we and the public would have to enter school grounds to see the notice board. Julie thought the notice board was a replacement for the previous school notice board. This has never been the case, it was always to be a shared notice board mounted on the railings to be viewed from outside the school. Sally asked why can't it not be mounted on the railings – Julie stated that it makes it more complicated regarding planning permission. It was agreed the notice board would be shared equally between the OTCC and the Royal Mile Primary School. It would be mounted on the railings facing to the street and accessible at all times by providing a key to the Secretary of the OTCC and to the School. All agreed. Julie will continue with this and Bill to provide a cheque. The other sites for our notice boards are being looked at by the Neighbourhood Partnership and are with the Planning Department (Police Boxes, and Jeffery Street railings) John S to keep updated with these.

**JL
BC**

JS

- b) Traffic** – When will someone come and speak to us about the traffic strategy? We never got a response to Cllr Mowat's e-mail or letter. Cllr Mowat not happy with the lack of response. She will follow-up for us. Johnston Terrace continuing to be one-way is an issue, we are still waiting

Cllr M

for an answer from last year! Marshall Poulton is working on a traffic Strategy for the city, he needs our input to make this strategy meaningful to the people who live in the City.

- c) **Christmas Lights 2008** – no update. Another year and no lights! Bruce’s sentiment from the last meeting was repeated – “if the council cannot get their act together to get the flags up in June what hope have we of getting lights?” Cllr Dundas has been on board and working on this and he cannot get anywhere. Can we take this to the Neighbourhood Partnership? Joanna suggested this might be a good way forward. It was suggested we could get lights on the trees on the Canongate Kirk similar to the Grassmarket trees and those on Waverley Bridge. Can we get funding for the Kirk? Cllr M
- d) **Number 60 bus** – new operator taking over the service. However, problems will still exist since it will be a reduction in service compared to the last one. Are their equality issues since the groups of people most in need of this service will not be able to use it after 2.45pm, which is the last bus from Dumbiedykes? Could this issue be taken up by the Neighbourhood Partnership? Agreed to take to the Neighbourhood Partnership. JT
- e) **Membership** – neither Blackfriars Residents nor St Giles have submitted their applications to become nominated groups and therefore become members of the Old Town Community Council. John S contacted Eileen to check to see whether applications had been received. There had been no communication.
- f) **Common Good land discussion** - Julie gave information from last month. Bill asked what can we do? Probably write to the Scottish Parliament. It was suggested we might do an audit ourselves but an audit is a huge job which we cannot do ourselves. However, the CEC should be doing it as instructed by the Scottish Parliament. Julie suggested we could write with examples of how the CEC do not pay the rents paid to them for the use of Common Good property/land into the Common Good Fund. Julie/Sally to write the letter and John to sign and pass onto the Parliament. SR
JL

4 CORRESPONDENCE

- a. **Salvation Army emails** – presentation as below
- b. **CCTV Centre visit** – agreed would be interested, John S to contact Cllr Beckett to arrange date and time. JS
- c. **Proposed Waiting Restrictions** – Bill would like a discussion on CEC policy on parking. We want to know what the strategy is – is it to punish the motorist, collecting revenue? Julie believes the revenue should be going into the Common Good Fund. Will be on the agenda for the November meeting. JS

Rev Alan Montgomery of the Salvation Army came to give a presentation on plans to develop a centre on Niddry Street.

The Salvation Army have purchased a property on Niddry Street. It is at the Planning Stage; an application was submitted in May 2008 to the CEC Planning Department but Environmental Services wanted to check the facilities. Hot food will be provided, therefore, an extraction system will need to be installed as recommended by the Planning department so the planning process will take some time.

They are moving from the Bread Street property since the property’s owner doesn’t want to renew their lease because they want to use the property for something else. They have also out grown this property. The Bread Street property was opened in 1997 at the time when the Pleasance property was

closed for refurbishment.

They plan to provide service users with hot food, clothing and advocacy. They will be in partnership with other organisations to provide housing support. The Royal Edinburgh Hospital will provide onsite therapeutic support.

They estimate 30-40 people per week will use the service.

Beverley was a previous service user and came to lend her support to the presentation. She explained how the service helped her move on from her situation to where she is now; she started as a service user then came back to volunteer her time and since then has become a member of staff.

Funding is in place to run the centre on lower Niddry Street (no service from South Bridge as per previous application, this will not happen).

It was agreed the OTCC are supportive of their plans and offered our support in future if required.

5 DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) Official/Community Group Reports

Lothian and Borders Police – Pc Lyall Downie's police report was circulated by e-mail, full copy at Appendix 1. No one present for further discussion.

Licensing – no reports

b) Planning

Canongate – 'Caltongate' Development – a meeting was arranged by Mark Cummings of Invicta Public Affairs on behalf of the developers Mountgrange. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the provision of community facilities under Mountgrange's Section 75 agreement with the CEC as part of the Caltongate Development. It was at their office at 10 Old Tolbooth Wynd. Peter, Anja, John S, our 3 CEC councillors and Sarah Boyack MSP were invited to attend with Nick Berry of Mountgrange and Mark Cummings. Anja, John S, Cllrs Mowat and Dundas, Nick Berry and Mark Cummings attended. The papers of the meeting and a note of what was discussed were distributed by John S and e-mailed to all in the OTCC. Hard copies were made available at the OTCC meeting.

Julie stated she thought none of the options were acceptable since the ongoing management and funding of any facility would be a problem. Cat wanted to know what others thought since she believed the development would not happen given the current global banking problems. She also believed it was a waste of time talking to the developers about it.

Anja felt option 4 was the best option. John S agreed. John S asked Bill what he thought – Bill asked who will staff a facility under options 1-3. It was suggested the CEC should be discussing the options with Mountgrange since we have no legal contracts with the developers, however the CEC do. The CEC should then present the options to us.

There was no agreement on which option was the best.

Julie stated she was more concerned with the demolition consent being issued since the leases for the hotel and other spaces have not been signed. John S put forward a fifth option for discussion – a financial settlement equivalent to the cost of providing a fully kitted out facility as part of the

development. This money would be held in trust for the community. The community would decide at a later date on how best to use this money. This was acceptable to all present.

Grassmarket – the official decision about the trees has not been made public, however the ‘grapevine’ says “the best value is to replace the trees now”. Joanna doesn’t know since she spoke to everyone she knows and even the people higher up and no one is talking to the City Councillors. The City Development people will decide. They can guarantee the new trees will have a longer future than leaving the older trees which are estimated to have 20 years life, although probably less, given the impervious nature of the new surfaces to be installed so existing trees will not have sufficient water to survive, also, 2 of the trees are too close to the water main (legislation regarding work within 6 metres of a water main). Scottish Water will not replace this water main now saving disruption later. The new trees will be better suited to this environment and require less maintenance.

General Planning Applications – Bill stated the **SoCo Development** (Cowgate Fire Site) applications have been registered. The actual planning applications have not been seen although they are on the portal. E-mail notification of the application has not been received by Julie she is waiting on the hard copy of the plan.

BC

The former ‘Edinburgh Bagel Shop’ premises on Canongate – an application for change of use to an office has been lodged. Bill to object on the grounds of loss of retail space.

The former ‘Forrest Fire’ shop on St Mary’s Street - change of use to restaurant – again Bill to object on grounds of loss of retail space. Bill has been speaking to the Planning Officials and they do not know the Council policy that these premises are in a protected area to protect retail space from changing to other types of use.

BC

Argyle House – the development is still on hold. John S distributed a paper by e-mail. This was provided by Barbara Cummins of the CEC Planning Department. It was given out at a Neighbourhood Partnership sub-group meeting. The information in it was the same as supplied at previous OTCC meetings. Cllr Mowat proposed to put a motion to the Planning Committee regarding getting a development brief for the CEC land next to Argyle House. John S asked Cllr Mowat to refer to the minutes of the Planning, Performance and Communication sub group minutes, since it was discussed there with Barbara.

6 OPEN FORUM

Cat questioned how the OTCC engage with the public. Also, concerned with OTCC members not attending meetings.

It was agreed for the next meeting we would discuss the possibility of having a community event.

NEXT MEETINGS – Edinburgh City Chambers, 7pm prompt.

11 November 2008, 9 December 2008, 13 January 2009, 10 February 2009, 10 March 2009, 14 April 2009

Appendix 1



Old Town Community Council Meeting

Meeting Date: Tuesday 14th Oct 2008, 19:00 hours.

Police Report: PC Lyall Downie, Community Beat Officer.

Police Beat: CE21

Dates: 1st Sep 2008 to 30th Sep 2008

There have been 215 reported crimes in the area over Sep. This is a considerable drop compared to the previous 6 months. 116 of these offences have been solved at this time. Enquiries are being conducted into the remaining unsolved crimes.

The following is an over-view of reported crimes in the immediate area of the Old Town Community Council area.

NOISE COMPLAINTS.

These complaints appear to be on the decrease this month, with only 2 reports of pipers being spoken to and requested to move on. 2 other noise complaints have been passed onto the Noise reduction team, City of Edinburgh Council.

HOUSEBREAKINGS

There have been several Housebreakings in Abbeyhill and 1 attempt Break-in to a shop premises on the Canongate. Again, small items such as phones, cameras, cash and laptops being top of the list.

VANDALISMS

Persons identified recently for graffiti offences have been appearing at court, all have so far, pled guilty and will be sentenced later this month.

THEFTS

Shopliftings are down however they are still occurring, the plain-clothes unit are out every day targeting known individuals and on their apprehension they are able build a good case, which often results in the accused being jailed.

There have been a small number of reports of thefts from persons i.e. in the street, unfortunately due to poor descriptions or considerable delays in reporting the incident, the offenders have not yet been identified.

Hotel thefts are being detected more due to CheckIn, a hotel watch system whereby hotels are encouraged to pass on information regarding known offenders and CCTV relating to the offences. 12 offences were detected and 3 persons were remanded pending court appearance.

There has been a slight increase in theft reported by some of the backpacker hostels again with small items, including laptops being stolen.

AUTO CRIME

1 person has been reported for Drink driving and 2 others for driving with out a licence, MOT or Insurance.

DRUGS

Supplies of Heroin and Cocaine are still down and the users are continuing to seek alternatives such as Diazepam or Methadone being sold on from prescription obtained sources.

There have been several operations through out the city and County Divisions with large quantities of drugs in some locations. A number of dealers were arrested recently in connection with a recent operation carried out in Midlothian.

As a result of this there have only been a small number of persons reported to the Fiscal regarding possession.

LICENSING

No update from the council regarding a planned initiative to check on the issue of tables and chairs.

ASSAULTS

There were a number of minor assaults over the period, only 1 of these was a serious assault. A number of persons were reported in some cases both parties involved in the assault.

STREET DRINKERS / BEGGARS

Street drinkers are being continually displaced from the City centre with the use of the Hunter Square being an alcohol free designated area. They are also being discouraged from using the closes and stairwells (Op Armour)

Beggars, they are actively moved away from sitting in close proximity to ATMs and if suspected to be concerned in the supply of drugs are "requested" to stop begging in the area.

There has been a drop in the number of beggars around North Bridge area, this is possibly due to the supply of drugs in the area being curtailed through other police activities.

OTHER OFFENCES

Officers are making more use of their PDA (electronic Notebooks) to issue "on the spot " tickets for minor offences such as urinating in public or minor cases of a Breach of the peace. These tickets are a £40 fine, payable within 28 days. If the fine is not paid, the offender receives a summons to court where the fine can be increased.

Officers on a new initiative are targeting unlicensed Window Cleaners. They are required by law to be licensed due to their necessity of entering gardens and buildings under lawful authority. 3 have since been charged with operating without a licence.

Enquiries are still ongoing regarding some of the above crimes. If you feel you have any information regarding any of these crimes please do not hesitate to contact me at the West End Police Station 3-5 Torphicen Place, Edinburgh EH3 8DY tel 0131 221 2040 (direct dial). Or via email at lyall.downie@lbp.pnn.police.uk

If you have any information or suspect a crime has been committed you can contact Crime stoppers and pass the information anonymously. 0800 555 111

CRIME PREVENTION

I have been approached by several housing officers from the various Housing Associations advising me that residents have informed them of drug dealings in their properties. The residents have gone on to advise the housing officer that they do not wish their details passed to the police.

I would urge anyone who has information regarding any offence to contact crimestoppers. The informant can remain anonymous or if they wish, can give their details and receive a reward if information merits one.

Call Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111 – IT'S A FREE PHONE No