



OLD TOWN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 9 September 2008, 7pm, Edinburgh City Chambers

MINUTES

Present: : Peter Sharma (Chair), John Stewart (Secretary), Julie Logan (Planning), Sally Richardson, Bruce Borthwick, John Thompson

CEC Councillors: *No one present*

Scottish Parliament: *No one present*

Lothian & Borders Police: Pc Lyall Downie, *Community Beat Officer.*

Plus 3 public visitors 2 from Blackfriars Resident's Association

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

1 **Apologies:** Anja Amsel (Vice Chair), Catriona Grant, Cllr David Beckett, Sarah Boyack MSP

Action

2 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (8 July 2008).**

Peter e-mailed the minutes the night before the meeting. They were not supplied to John S in time to allow him to distribute.

Accuracy: Julie was present at the last meeting. Otherwise the minutes were accepted as accurate.

3 **MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING:**

a) **Publicity:** Newsletter - there was discussion about a newsletter. However, John S reminded everyone that at the June meeting the idea and the practicalities of a Newsletter were discussed and subsequently we decided not to have a newsletter but an information sheet, 'info sheet', based upon the design John S did for the Neighbourhood Partnership meeting in May. Peter asked if we should add to the leaflet or update it? John S stated there was nothing to update since the leaflet only had basic information about our meetings. We could add other information and re print when required. It was agreed we would all take a few for distribution.

Notice boards – John S gave update on progress of finding suppliers for notice boards but also stated lack of local suppliers. He had contacted Alan Dean of the Neighbourhood partnership by email and then again at the Neighbourhood Partnership meeting. He asked if he could be put in touch with CEC contacts for supplying and fitting notice boards. Alan agreed. The Neighbourhood Partnership are also looking into installing notice boards in the area and John S asked if we could be part of this plan. Julie asked if she and Sally could be tasked with getting the notice board for the Royal Mile Primary School. Julie and Sally are School Board Members. The school could arrange installation and Planning permission. Peter suggested £500 budget, but if more, they need to come back to a meeting for further approval. John S stated his research showed prices of £600 for the sizes agreed previously, excluding fitting. It was agreed by Peter, John T and

**JL
SR**

Bruce to go ahead with Julie's plan.

- b) **Traffic** - The agreed letter from Joanna Mowat was sent on 25 June 2008. It was sent to Mr Anderson. John S was sent a copy. There has been no reply.

Julie stated the school warning sign next to Canongate Kirk is pointing the wrong way. JS will report to NP. Lyall will report also. Sally will report to Roads Department.

LD
SR

Julie – New Street lights not working again and on East Market Street. This issue has been taken up with Insp Bruce Johnstone since it is an issue affecting crowd dispersal after the clubs close on Market Street. John S said he had reported the issue to Alan Dean of the NP and will follow-up again and mention Police concern.

JS

The netting under the railway bridge at New Street/Calton Road has been damaged for some time, it has not been repaired. Why was it removed instead of being repaired? Can we get it repaired; Bruce will contact City Development.

BB

- c) **Christmas Lights 2008** – no update. There was a discussion about the flags on the Canongate not being put up in June.
- d) **Number 60 bus** – there was a meeting at Dumbiedykes to which over 50 people attended, although there was nobody representing Lothian Buses. A number of OTCC members were there. The meeting discussed the ending of such a vital service through lack of money. There will be a CEC decision meeting in September. Peter is to write supporting the retention of the Number 60 bus route. Addressed to Phil Wheeler. Alternative options were discussed at the meeting of asking for the 35 to be re-routed to include other areas. However, the number 60 goes to the doctor's surgeries on and near The Pleasance, the 35 will never include these in its route. Peter suggested we all write as individuals before Friday to Cllr Phil Wheeler and circulate to CEC Councillors. Dumbiedykes has a petition of over 200 signatures supporting the retention of the bus.
- e) **Declaration of interests** – at the last meeting it was stated that this issue had been concluded, however, John S pointed out that Julie and Sally had not completed their declarations. John S handed them forms and they completed these for the end of the meeting.
- f) **Membership** – It has been concluded Ken Smillie has left since he has not replied to communications.

PS

ALL

Common Good land discussion - Julie gave latest information: Paper went to CEC meeting. CEC decided it was too difficult to research properly and was too expensive. They said "We will check title deeds when we sell property. We will change delegation scheme to Director of City Development and Director of Finance, we will not need to go to Committee". This is not what the Scottish Parliament asked all Local Authorities to do. We will discuss further next month.

4 CORRESPONDENCE

- a. **Post Office Closure emails**, forwarded to all. It was noted Anja did a lot of work with Postwatch to secure the future of St Mary's Street Post Office. This happened some time ago.
- b. **Edinburgh Association Newsletter** received and available at the meeting
- c. **Edinburgh Community Council Newsletter** - received and available at the meeting. Item 4e from the last minute John S said he did not

intimate his intention to go to the Edinburgh Association of Community Council's meeting.

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. This report covers a 2 month period. Hard copies available at the meeting.

Inspector Bruce Johnstone is retiring on Friday. We all agreed he will be missed. His successor will be Gavin Philip; hopefully he will continue the good work Bruce started/progressed.

Neighbourhood Partnership – John T attended as our new representative on the Neighbourhood Partnership and reported; the Scotsman Steps will be repaired by CEC. The Scotsman Hotel dissuades people from using the stairs by covering the public signs and sometimes having door staff standing outside. When repaired the council propose closing the stairs between midnight and 5am. Hunter's Square toilets have been re-opened. Possible extension of hours to 10pm. There was a lengthy report on 'City for all Ages' which is a progress report on the joint plan for older people. The next meeting of the NP is on 6 November 2008. There were no further discussions on Argyle House development.

Licensing – no reports

b) Planning

Canongate – 'Caltongate' Development – Julie reported the CEC Planning Department missed out part of the public consultation so had to issue previous objectors with further opportunities to comment on the plans, however it was done in the middle of the Festival period.

Planning Committee approved to go to Parliament for further approval. However, the demolitions have been given the go ahead. Will Mountgrange be able to deliver the proposed development given the current financial global situation?

Grassmarket – Nothing to report.

General Planning Applications – Nothing to report

6 OPEN FORUM

A-boards –CEC officials removed a number of A-boards which were placed in breach of regulations

NEXT MEETING

14 October 2008: Venue: Edinburgh City Chambers. Time 7pm.

11 November 2008

Appendix 1



Old Town Community Council Meeting

Meeting Date: Tuesday 9th Sep 2008, 19:00 hours.

Police Report: PC Lyall Downie, Community Beat Officer.

Police Beat: CE21

Dates: 1st July 2008 to 31st Aug 2008

There have been 260 reported crimes in the area over July. Only 146 of these offences have been solved at this time. 349 in August with 167 being solved at this time, enquiries are being conducted into the remaining unsolved crimes.

In my last report I mentioned the increase in pickpocket offences. A number of persons were identified and reports forwarded to the Procurator Fiscal. These persons were part of a group travelling to Edinburgh on a daily basis, they were intercepted on route to Edinburgh and turned back to their place of residence.

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 the pipers taking heed of possible prosecution.

On investigating a complaint in Spring Gardens, the offender was warned and subsequent enquiries led to him being reported for Driving without a licence or insurance. (Unlucky white heather)

Someone has reported the Scotland shops to the Performing Rights Society (PRS) regarding the playing of music in public areas. In 2006 another company was taken to court by PRS and fined £40,000, in respect of their staff playing radios in their workplace in earshot of customers.

HOUSEBREAKINGS

There have been several Housebreakings in Drummond Street, Abbeyhill areas with small items such as phones, cameras, cash and laptops being top of the list.

Hotel thefts, there have been a number of thefts from hotels and several males have now been reported and remanded in custody to appear at a later date. Approx 40 Hotels are now part of a link called 'Check In', whereby they are sharing information regarding regular fraudsters and fraudulent booking.

VANDALISMS

A new officer has now been appointed to take charge of crimes of Vandalism. Most of the reported vandalisms reported have been windows being broken or damage to cars.

After the large number of persons being charged last month for graffiti offence, there has been a marked decrease in reports of graffiti.

THEFTS

Shoplifting is still occurring, a plain-clothes unit are targeting a number of individuals and on their apprehension, and they build a good case, which often results in the accused being jailed.

There are still a large number of theft Shopliftings occurring within the City Centre. This is due to the number of people with Drug or Alcohol addictions who shoplift / steal to buy drugs or alcohol to feed their addictions.

AUTO CRIME

After the successful initiative in Market Street, using the CCTV to detect vehicle offence we will be running several more in other areas of the City Centre.

DRUGS

After success somewhere down the line by Customs / drug officers there has been a shortage of Heroin and users have been looking for alternative drugs.

There have been several operations through out the city with large quantities of drugs in some locations.

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

LICENSING

Several licensees have been approached by the Council Wardens regarding the Tables and Chairs sited outside their premises, either for too many persons at the tables, incorrect usage, exceeding measurements and over the time stated on licence.

2 others have been advised regarding the noise emitting during the evenings, which has affected nearby residents. The Licensing board is currently investigating these reports.

Despite the late opening hours during the Festival many of the offences reported were out with these hours.

ASSAULTS

There were a large number of assaults over the 2-month period, only 3 of which were serious assaults. A number of these can be attributed to the school holidays with juveniles being involved in a lot of the unsolved crimes.

Most of those involved in the assaults, accused / victims, are males aged 17– 30 years. The assaults have consisted of punches being thrown with little or no injuries sustained.

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.

Due to the number of persons “feeling sorry” for the poor person begging and giving them their loose change, beggars will continue to sit on the street corners and use the funds to purchase drugs or alcohol.

Very few beggars are homeless, having subsidised accommodation provided, on full benefits, free prescriptions and free travel, (disability travel pass)

Enquiries are still ongoing with many 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 Torphichen 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

CBOs have now been tasked with providing Crime Prevention Surveys for victims of House Breakings. If required, I can provide advice and or leaflets with further information on making your property more secure.