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# THE SOUTHSIDE ASSOCIATION

117 Nicolson Street

Edinburgh

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## Minutes of meeting held in the South Side Community Education Centre on Tuesday 11 January 2011, at 7pm

**PRESENT:** Carol McHugh (Chair), Atif Ahmed, Margaret Bagan, Caroline Barr, Tom Bonallo, Colin Christison (Secretary), Linda Femister, Jan Fraser, Bob Hodgart, May Linton (Membership Secretary), Cllr Gordon Mackenzie, Kenny McLeod, Ethel Murray, Molly Ross, Fiona Scott (Treasurer), Jo Scott, Lisa Sibbald, Keith Smith, Pamela Spiers, Random Switch, Ola Uduku, Marjory Watson, and Joan Young.

### 1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Carol welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Vera Anderson, Robert Beaton, Margaret Dalziel, Mary Devine, Tom King, Isobel Leckie, Jean Miller, George Pitcher, Ruby Player, Robert Ross, Louise Smith, Colin Symes, and Maggie Wilson.

### 2. Guest Speaker:

Carol introduced Atif Ahmed, Tesco Metro Nicolson Street Community liaison representative, or 'Community Champion'. He has worked for the company for nearly five years, and has lived locally for over eight years. In addition to his work as checkout supervisor, he became Community Champion six months ago. There are about 200 such posts in the company's stores, with plans to have one in all stores in due course. Their role is to reach out into local communities, via schools, amenity groups, voluntary groups, charities, and so on, to see what happens, and how Tesco can help out. They want to help bring people together and are prepared to help with funding for projects and events. Many of the staff are keen to get involved. He pointed out that larger stores are able to use their car parks for outdoor events, or their staff rooms for talks and get-togethers, and said that the size of the Nicolson Street shop meant that he did not have these options. He said he was looking for ideas and gave some examples such as gardening and healthy eating projects, and community safety.

Random said that the Southside was unlike other areas in that it had a broad mix of people, including the elderly, students, families, underprivileged, and visitors, and Atif agreed that this presents challenges which would not arise in other areas.

After further comments, questions, and suggestions, (involvement with the Craggs Sports Centre, refurbishment of St Patrick Square, helping the elderly with shopping, etc) members thanked Atif for his presentation.

### **3. Police Report**

No officer present.

### **4. Minutes of Meeting held on 2 November 2010**

Approved; proposed by Maggie Bagan and seconded by Molly Ross.

### **5. Matters arising**

None.

### **6. Secretary's report and correspondence**

6.1 As everyone was aware, the Southside Christmas Lights Event had been cancelled because of the bad weather, as had most of the other ones in the city. Most of the arrangements will be carried forward for 6 December 2011.

6.2 Former *Odeon* cinema – the closing date for offers was on 5 January, and it was thought that four offers had been received. The result was awaited, but the general feeling was that if Duddingston House Properties rejected all the offers, the Association would support any attempts to prevent them from demolishing the building.

6.3 Speaker 1 February – Helen Campbell. Director of Voices of Carers, and a homeopathy specialist.

Speaker 1 March – to be announced. May Linton had an organisation in mind.

Speaker 5 April - Colin Symes, on his street pastor work.

### **7. Treasurer's report**

Fiona said that the most recent balance was £1122.44. A sum of money from the John Ross Memorial Fund which had been bequested to the Association a considerable time ago would soon become available, and it was hoped to use some or all of this for specific local projects.

### **8. Environmental matters**

Covered in Item 9.

### **9. Question and Answer Session with the attending Councillor**

There was a lengthy discussion about how the area had been affected by the recent and ongoing bad weather. Much anecdotal evidence about roads, pavements, dropped kerbs, gritting or lack of gritting, and public transport was provided by members. It was felt that contingency plans could be improved in some instances. Cllr Mackenzie confirmed that various council staff members had been redeployed where necessary,

and that community service people were helping clear snow. He asked if bins had been emptied recently, and it appeared that collections were back to normal.

Ola said that there had been no official neighbour notification to the eight flats concerned from the planning dept for an application to convert a garage into a dwelling space at Hamilton's Folly Mews, and that the Deed of Conditions which stated that such a conversion was prohibited had been disregarded, and that complaints to the dept had been ignored. Cllr Mackenzie noted her complaint, and said that he had heard of similar reports.

#### **10 Any other business**

Keith announced that that next South Side Community Tea Meeting would be held in the Centre's café on Wednesday 9 February, from 5.00pm until 6.30pm, and all were welcome. The speakers will be Kathy Evans (Service for Communities) and Inspector Andrew McLaughlin (L&B Police) and they will outline the work they do in promoting community safety in the area, and give examples of their partnership working.

#### **11 Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 1 February 2011.

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