

**Minutes of Members' Meeting
Tuesday 6 October 2015 at 7pm
Room 1, South Side Community Centre**

Present: Colin Christison (Chair and Secretary), Lisa Sibbald (Treasurer), Jo Scott, Moira Gibson (Minutes Secretary), Jan Fraser, Tom King, Isobel Leckie, David Wood, Fran Gifford, Hilary McDowell, Bob Hodgart, Sheila Gilmore, Tom Bonallo, James Gilmour, May Linton, Maggie Bagan, Ethel Murray.

Also present: Cllr Jim Orr, PC Neil MacKay, Kevin Hawes (Community Safety Officer, South Central Neighbourhood Partnership), David Spaven (guest speaker from Living Streets).

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Dora Lola-Luz, Maurice Naftalin, Derek Suttie, Colin Symes, Stephen and Joan Carter, Carol McHugh.

2. Police Report from Police Scotland

PC Neil MacKay reported that, over the past month, police patrols had been out and about in greater numbers, including members of the Violence Reduction Unit and police in plain clothes tackling drug use in stairs and graveyards, and the problem of begging. In three house searches, £35,000 worth of drugs had been recovered. 74 people were stopped and searched and just one eviction locally has greatly improved community safety. Of 138 crimes in the Southside, 62 (46%) have been solved.

Issues raised by members included possible drug dealing and needles in East Parkside, St Margaret's and St Leonard's Church, and the Greek Church. Shoplifting appears to be increasing, with thieves attempting quick resales of stolen goods (eg meat) in the street to passers-by.

3. Guest Speaker: David Spaven, Convenor, Living Streets Edinburgh Group.

Colin welcomed David Spaven, who convenes Edinburgh's Living Streets Group.

Living Streets aims to improve the experience for walkers by making it safer, improving road and pavement safety, and generally raising awareness and appreciation of the benefits of walking: healthier, more exercise, reduces carbon emissions, and so on. 35% of journeys by Edinburgh residents are made on foot (compare 2% of all journeys being on cycles) and there are clear economic, environmental and social benefits in prioritising pedestrian movement within a high-quality public realm.

Living Streets works with the Council to promote more and safer walking, and wants walking given the same priority as cycling, on which 10% of the Council's transport budget is currently spent. Cyclists' needs should not trump or overshadow pedestrians' needs and practical design principles could help, as will the introduction and robust enforcement of 20mph speed limits in the city.

David welcomes support from local people and students, particularly in carrying out surveys of pedestrians, pavements and other walking-related matters. This includes the 'privatisation of public space' through use of A boards and 'commercial clutter', huge bus shelters and bins, pavement parking and too much signage and street furniture.

Members expressed concerns about junctions where cycleways seemed to cross pavements, resulting in accidents. This includes paths on the Meadows where the Council refuses to sanction cyclists on pedestrian paths. It is sometimes said that the Access legislation is responsible but Access Officers are misinterpreting the legislation. The idea of pedestrian-friendly Homezones was raised. <http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/local-group/edinburgh-living-streets-group>

4. Report on Environment and Community Safety from Kevin Hawes, Community Safety Officer, City of Edinburgh Council

Kevin has recently been working in Dumbiedykes. One issue that has come to his attention is the theft and dangerous riding of motorbikes – a matter which is being addressed.

5. Minutes of the Meeting of 2 September 2015, and Matters Arising

Approval was proposed by Jan Fraser and seconded by Lisa Sibbald.

Dr Gilmour had sought clarification of the minuting of Ben Wilson's presentation at the September 2015 meeting of the Southside Association about student housing. The minutes recorded that:

"Ben was asked whether students living in HMOs would form part of assessing a 50% concentration of students, and also why students didn't pay Council tax. He said that the Council would not be able to calculate student density taking into account HMOs.....". Dr Gilmour obtained a comment from Ben Wilson on the minute in which Ben said that "the Council cannot control student concentration through licensing of HMOs. An HMO license does not regulate what occupants do, and not all households with students are HMOs. In calculating student concentrations for the purposes of assessing planning applications, the Council can and does use the Census data. This includes students living in general housing. This general housing includes flats and houses licensed as HMOs." The September minute should therefore be amended as follows: ***"Ben was asked whether students living in HMOs would form part of assessing a 50% concentration of students, and also why students didn't pay Council tax. He said that the Council cannot control student concentration through licensing of HMOs but, for planning purposes, it will use Census data to ascertain students living in general housing, including HMOs."***

6. Chair's Report

- 6.1 The first meeting of Southside Community Council will be on Thursday 8 October in the Raeburn Room, Old College, University of Edinburgh. Bob Hodgart and Fran Gifford are among the new members; Dora Lola-Luz will represent the Southside Association, and David Wood will represent the Causey Development Trust.
- 6.2 The Christmas Carol Service will be on Tuesday 1 December at 6pm in St Patrick Square. Cllr Jim Orr will be MC, Colin Symes will be celebrant, and a sub-committee will organise the event.
- 6.3 A stock of leaflets to promote the Southside Association is available if people would like to distribute them.
- 6.4 A film-maker called Eric Robinson, who has made a film about town planner Sir Patrick Geddes, is making a film about the changes to the South Side and Edinburgh over the past couple of decades. He is asking whether any local people would be interested in speaking to him: if so, the Chair can put members in touch with him. Willy Roe was suggested as a possible contact.
- 6.5 Sarah Boyack MSP had emailed to notify members about a debate in the Scottish Parliament on the Scottish Government's response to the recommendations of an Expert Review Group on New Psychoactive Substances ('legal highs'). Her contribution, which called for better co-ordination by police, health boards and local councils to tackle this problem, can be found at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10118&i=93397>.

7. Treasurer's Report

Lisa reported that the Association's account stands at £1,878.29, and is still awaiting a refund from Sustrans. The £20 annual Centre charge has been paid. Despite many and various attempts to improve matters, the Clydesdale Bank continues to be unhelpful and sometimes obstructive.

8. Planning and Licensing Report

- 8.1 Planning applications for 24 Potterrow, 12 Chapel Street and 57-59 Clerk Street were discussed. Planning and Licensing will soon become the province of the new Community Council.
- 8.2 A new tool for mapping the density of tobacco and alcohol outlets in Scotland against deprivation and alcohol/tobacco-related disease has been developed by the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. The tool can be accessed at <http://cresh.org.uk/webmap/> and further

information is available at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/2015/alcoholtobacco-061015>. It is hoped that the data will be used by police and local authorities to inform licensing decisions

9. Environmental Matters

9.1 Following the Walkabout on 30 September, the thorough report compiled by Hilary McDowell is circulated with the Minutes.

9.2 In honour of the new Mural at Gifford Park, members are invited to an ‘opening event’ and ribbon-cutting from 10-11am on Thursday 8 October 2015. As well as marking the new ‘Meadows to Innocent Path’ cycle route, it is an opportunity to thank and congratulate all those involved in creating the beautiful new community mural.

10. Report from, and Question and Answer session with, the attending Councillor

10.1 Cllr Jim Orr drew attention to the BBC film on ‘legal highs’ the previous evening which underlined the severity of the issue and the damaging consequences these substances bring.

10.2 An increase in graffiti has been marked and steps are being taken to tackle this.

10.3 The new Southside Community Council meets on 8 October and it is hoped it will work closely with the Southside Association. It will be able to deal with planning and licensing matters, as well as issues such as legal highs and begging.

11. Any other business

Newington Cemetery, which contains Commonwealth War Graves and a Jewish section, is looking for volunteers to help tidy it and bring it back to a more respectable state, as well as some to help with research.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 3 November at 7pm in the Southside Community Centre. The speaker will be Kathy Evans, Community Safety Manager at the City of Edinburgh Council.