

**Minutes of Members' Meeting  
Tuesday 2 February 2016 at 7pm  
Room 1, Southside Community Centre**

**Present:** Colin Christison (Chair and Secretary), Moira Gibson (Minutes Secretary), Lisa Sibbald (Treasurer), Jan Fraser, Tom King, May Linton, Tom Bonallo, Maggie Bagan, Fran Gifford, Hilary McDowell, Jo Scott, David Wood, Kenny McLeod, Carol McHugh, Alison Dickie, Jim Davidson,

Tom Pate, Bob Hodgart, Sarah Boyack MSP, Dora Lola-Luz, Mr Lola-Luz, Stephen Carter, Joan Carter, Kaaren Haughton, Isobel Leckie, and one other attender.

**Also present:** PC Paul Gunderson; Cllr Jim Orr; Rob Arthur and Suzanne McIntosh from G1 Group.

**1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

Colin welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Tim Pogson, Colin Symes, Ethel Murray, and Linda Femister.

**2. Guest speaker – Rob Arthur, Cinema Operations Director, G1 Group, accompanied by Suzanne McIntosh, planning consultant to G1 Group, purchasers of the former *Odeon* cinema**

Rob and Suzanne both emphasised how pleased they were to be working on such a great project for which close liaison with the local community would be crucial to success. Rob's role is Cinema Operations Director, and he has worked all over the UK on projects similar to the Odeon restoration; Suzanne's expertise is in planning issues relating to listed and heritage buildings.

G1 is committed to a sensitive restoration of the building using, where possible, original sources of materials. There is close consultation with heritage bodies and the City of Edinburgh Council conservation experts. There will be four screens in total, including one large auditorium with 400 seats, plus a green room, dressing room, lounges and bars. The proscenium arch will be restored and, where full restoration of certain aspects of the building is impossible, contemporary interpretations of the Art Deco style will be implemented. Rob offered either to come back with the architects and their drawings and/or offer a tour of the building, as the project matures. He hopes the refurbished cinema will be open by the end of 2016, if all goes well with planning and licensing.

The 'entertainment venue' will put on a year-round programme. Around 65-70% will be cinema of various kinds and the latest 3D and other technical equipment will be installed. The latest films will be shown, but the management will also respond to local tastes and requests, as far as possible. Festivals and seasons of certain sorts of cinema, e.g. international, could be mounted and there are plans for live broadcasts of opera, ballet, theatre, museum exhibitions, sporting and trade events, etc. Rob hopes to establish local links with businesses, schools, universities, Festival/Fringe and stand-up comedy promoters to support a varied programme.

The new venture is, of course, a commercial enterprise, albeit run with an emphasis on localism and sustainability. They hope to keep ticket pricing affordable, possibly with offers for local people, and to create jobs for local people as well as providing a local meeting place. There will be food and drink on the premises (if the licence is agreed). Rob said there would be no chains/franchises, but rather a commitment to good food at reasonable prices. Staff are trained to a very high standard. In response to a question about late licences and noisy customers, Rob was clear that they would seek to attract a cultured audience who would behave responsibly - "it's not a nightclub" – and they would be sensitive to local concerns.

No name for the cinema has yet been chosen, but members were keen on the *New Victoria* or *New Vic*, to reflect the cinema's past. It was suggested that an attractive temporary 'frontage' be created while renovation works are going on to promote and advertise the new venture.

### 3. Police Report from Police Scotland

PC Paul Gunderson outlined the most recent figures he had for January (though not quite complete for the month). There had been an increase in officers, including plain clothes officers, out on foot patrols. However, despite this, the Southside had seen 125 housebreakings and a further 23 thefts, 27 violent crimes including 20 assaults, 47 anti-social behaviour incidents including 18 misuse of drugs/NPS ('legal highs'), two frauds, one hate crime, four sexual offences and miscellaneous other incidents. Of 148 crime reports, 44% had been solved. On being asked about the new Chief Constable, PC Gunderson said that he had stated his commitment to community policing and this approach was warmly welcomed by members.

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

Unfortunately, Kevin Hawes was unable to attend the meeting.

### 5. Minutes of meeting of 5 January 2016, and matters arising

**Proposer:** Maggie Bagan

**Seconder:** Jo Scott

**Item 5.2** The Chair had attended the drop-in showcase of the plans for the Holyrood Park Distillery in the former Engine Shed building. The plans look promising.

**Item 8** The Chair had written to the Council about the dim lighting on Rankeillor and Montague Streets, but received no response as yet. A second newsletter had been received from

the Homepage developers. Trees have been removed but, as yet, Fran has received no response to her request that they plant more.

**Item 10.2** Bob Hodgart noted the reference to development at the Astley Ainslie and requested that the Association should not only keep an eye on matters relating to access to the site but also be concerned to monitor possible threats to the historic buildings and the green space.

### 6. Chair's Report

6.1 The Chair reported that things had been fairly quiet since the last meeting, with no major concerns arising. The Gifford Park Mural postcards would soon be printed, ready for distribution.

6.2 The Chair had been notified by the Council that the number of local parking spaces around Pleasance was to be reduced. Some members expressed concern that this would lead to a 'free for all', making parking impossible. Cllr Orr will investigate as he had also received complaints from Dumbiedykes residents.

#### 7. Treasurer's Report

The balance remained exactly the same as reported last month, i.e. £1,548.39.

#### 8. Planning and Licensing Report

8.1 Previous complaints about a shop painted pink had gone unanswered, but the shop has now gone out of business so the hope is that the new owners can be prevailed on to alter the colour.

8.2 There had been no reply from Planning Enforcement about the colour scheme of the Clerk Street public house; CC would ask again.

#### 9. Environmental Matters

Hilary McDowell reported as follows:

9.1 A water leak at the corner of East Preston Street is disrupting traffic flows. Scottish Water has been contacted and hopes to fix the leak soon.

9.2 The Council promised to remove commercial bins from the Southside by 8 January: many were removed but, unfortunately, not all. Subsequently, more commercial bins have re-appeared on the street and black plastic bags are being put out. Robert Turner and his assistant, who were rolling out the scheme across the city, have both left the council and it is unclear who is now leading and enforcing the policy. Equally unclear is the role of Environmental Wardens in enforcing sanctions as deadlines and threats are routinely ignored. The Council's poor record in relation to waste disposal is a constant concern at every meeting of the Southside Association and the reorganisation may make things worse.

9.3 Domestic waste disposal continues to be a major concern. Recycling and landfill bins are overflowing, especially by Monday, and the lids of many are missing or broken. These bins should be emptied more frequently. Christmas trees remain uncollected on the streets. The introduction of glass recycling bins is to be welcomed, as long as collections are frequent.

9.4 Hilary has reported a dozen gullies that need to be serviced and will monitor the situation.

9.5 Many local roads are in a very poor state, with the junction of Newington Street with South Clerk Street particularly bad. We have been promised that East Preston St will be 'rebuilt' in March. However, it is impossible to find out when the work will be done. None of the trip hazards or defects noted on the September 2015 Walkabout with council staff and councillors has been attended to nor has the bus shelter on Buccleuch St been replaced as promised. We had also been assured that there would be a campaign to reduce street clutter such as A-boards and unauthorised tables and chairs. A follow up was promised for May 2016 so Hilary will write to set this up and ask for immediate action.

9.6 Both David Wood and Jo Scott commented on the disgraceful state of West Newington Place Lane and requested a visit from an Environmental Warden so that its filthy condition could be assessed and, they hoped, remedied.

- 10. Report from, and Question and Answer session with, the attending Councillor**
- 10.1** Cllr Orr was in attendance. In response to Hilary's frustration with the Council's lack of response to the environmental walkabout and recent requests for specific improvements, he offered to investigate and address her top three concerns, and report back. Hilary agreed to supply these.
- 10.2** Cllr Orr stated that the new Council budget had been agreed and there would be no cuts to community policing, noise teams or community centres. Kaaren Haughton said that a useful role for community centres would be to provide a more local and better link with Council services through some face-to-face 'drop-in' provision; this would particularly counter the Council's increasing move to online-only interaction which was disempowering for many.
- 10.3** It was likely that a licence would be granted to the Underbelly to run a Fringe venue on the Meadows again this year, as per the terms of their original lease.
- 10.4** Cllr Orr spoke about the new powers coming soon to local communities as a result of the Community Empowerment Act. Sarah Boyack MSP said she had been active in the passage of the Bill to ensure that local people would benefit it. Both thought it would be useful for the Association to learn more about the new Act and suggested that a speaker – possibly our local MSP, Marco Biagi – could be invited along to talk about it.
- 11. Any other business**
- 11.1** Dora Lola-Luz's flat sits between Lutton Court and the Homebase site and is affected by early morning construction noise from these sites. The Council's guidance to contractors' permits noise between 7am and 7pm Monday to Saturday, but Dora feels that, while this is convenient for contractors, it does not reflect the wishes of the citizenry who have a right to a family life. Dora contacted both contractors who have, until now, been reasonable in not starting noisy work before 8am, but she does not want to be put in the position of begging the contractors. She suggested that 8am-6pm limits would constitute a more reasonable approach, with some room for flexibility in exceptional circumstances. She asked Cllr Orr to investigate how the guidance was arrived at and whether it can be changed, and report back. He agreed to liaise with Dora on this matter.
- 11.2** Maggie Bagan enquired why there is no lighting in Holyrood Park between the gates at Pollock Halls and Dynamic Earth. Cllr Orr will find out more.
- 12. Date of next meeting**  
Tuesday 1 March 2016 at 7pm at the Southside Community Centre.