



Southside Community Council

Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting on Monday 13th June 2022, 7pm at Charteris Centre

Present

CC Members: Alex Alderton (Minutes), Stephen Rodger Benson (SRB), Daniel Fisher (DF), Liz Logie (LL), Philip McDowell (PM), Philip Pinsky (PP), David Wood (DW).

Councillor: Pauline Flannery (PF).

Members of the public: Stuart Aitken (SA), Ines Alvarez Villa (IAV).

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

SRB welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies from Joan Carter, Bob Hodgart, Betty Offerman.

2. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on June 8th 2021

The minutes of the last AGM were approved.

3. Chairperson's/Secretary's Annual Report

SRB presented a Review of the 2021-22 Session, including a summary of significant items such as: the Low Emissions Zone; the Holyrood Distillery, an ongoing matter; the East Newington Place student accommodation proposal, which is now in the appeal stage; the Bernard Terrace zebra crossing, which is now complete after 14 years of campaigning; the City 2030 plan; the Scottish Widows building; and hustings for the local council elections in May.

Issues that are still ongoing are the Holyrood Distillery and the Salisbury Court student accommodation noise complaints. SRB noted that now that SCC meetings are in person again it was hoped to resume having monthly police reports, but this may not happen due to lack of funding for community police officers.

4. Treasurer's Annual Report

PM presented the SCC's accounts from April 2021-March 2022. It was noted that the SCC's bank balance currently stands at £3304.61 and it is therefore not in financial difficulty. DF asked about the webhosting platform. LL asked about the liability insurance and PM confirmed this is insurance for when members are carrying out activities on the SCC's behalf.

5. Engagement Report

PM presented the Engagement Report, noting the various ways the SCC has tried to engage with the public in Southside including the website, mailing list, social media and notice board. PM holds the key to the noticeboard so any local residents or groups who would like to add a poster or notice can enquire through him. Attention was drawn to public-facing events such as the hustings and the table at the Meadows Festival which was shared with two other Community Councils. It was suggested that more leaflets should be made for distribution at such events. DW offered to potentially support with the Twitter account to increase reach through this platform.

6. Demit of current office bearers/election of office bearers

CLlr Pauline Flannery chaired this agenda item.

DF elected as Chair, nominated by LL, seconded by PM. DF would need to check with Charteris Trustees whether he can take on this role. There was some discussion around the role of the Chair, with many members being happy to chair meetings, but it was pointed out that the role of Chair is more than that and the SCC can't function without someone in this role. DF was elected for the time being, with SRB to assist with monitoring emails.

JC re-elected as Vice Chair, nominated by SRB, seconded by DF. JC was not present but had made her agreement known prior to the meeting.

SRB re-elected as Secretary, nominated by DW, seconded by PP.

PM re-elected as Webmaster, nominated by DF, seconded by LL.

PP elected as Treasurer, nominated by PM, seconded by SRB. PP is in the process of obtaining the necessary permissions and bank access from the previous Treasurer.

7. Date of next AGM - 12th June 2023



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1. Ascertain issues brought by members of the public: determine when and how to deal with them

SA expressed concern regarding the Scottish Widows development. An open session was held in the building and he discovered that they propose demolishing a lot of the existing buildings and building five tower blocks including over 200 new flats, on a relatively small site, and parts of the office building will also be kept. The land near East Parkside is also theirs and has some wild land which will be flattened. The development is currently in the pre-planning stage and Stuart would like to see how the SCC can support challenging and inspecting their planning materials. There is an online consultation on 8th July but no community meeting is planned yet. The consultation period ends on 20th July.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 10th May 2022 and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th May were agreed.

2.1 Item 10.1 Dumbiedykes Green Space Proposal: There is a Dumbiedykes Working Group and the next meeting is on Wednesday 29th June 3pm at the Crannie. DF attends and will mention the SCC's interest and Green Space Proposal. One of the topics for the working group has been to restart the Dumbiedykes Residents' Association, but funding is an issue. **Action: PM to give DF Sam Hughes, who attended in May, contact details, so DF can tell him about the Dumbiedykes Working Group meeting.**

2.2 Item 2.1 Southside Community Centre Garden: PM has not had any more information from Nahid so has not been able to publicise the project, but LL has sent her the details of Friends of Nicolson Square and Mike Shields. DF was under the impression some Arts funding had been acquired to deal with the gardens.

2.3 Item 4.3 Scottish Widows Signage: Signage is now in place saying they are looking for a leak.

2.4 Item 4.4 East Newington Place: An appeal has been made against the refused permission. The Council has sent all the comments given to the reporter so the SCC's objection will be included in that. It was agreed that there was no point repeating previously made points in a new objection, but DW pointed out they will argue a case so a response could be made to that. PF advised going back to the

original reason why it was refused as the appeal will address this, so any response needs to argue they are still not complying with the reason for the refusal. There will probably a tight deadline; the appeal has been lodged already so it should be possible to view the caseworker's phone number and proposed date of closure. Individuals can also request to go along to site visits. **Action: SRB to circulate the appeal case information.**

2.5 Item 4.5 South Clerk St: Since the withdrawal of the previous applications, another application has been put in to make five attic bedrooms which may be very overcrowded. They already have permission for four and PM suggested objecting to the 5th; most members were in agreement. DW pointed out that it is quite common in other parts of the world to have large numbers of attic bedrooms and the application is unlikely to be refused and expressed surprise that they need permission at all for an internal change. PF pointed out the social impact is more convincing as an objection, such as noise, since wellbeing is given much more attention in recent times. **Action: PM to submit another objection.**

2.6 Item 4.8/11.1 Low Road/Radical Road: A meeting with Edinburgh World Heritage has been arranged on Wednesday 15th June at 6pm at the Charteris Centre to talk about their funding priorities for the Southside. There are a number of community buildings that could use funding. The Low Road/Radical Road issues could also be discussed.

2.7 Item 11.2 Birds in Nicolson Square Gardens: The SCC's letter to the Council received a response saying unless there's a large buildup of faeces there is not much they can do. LL pointed out that monkeypox is now in the UK and can be spread through rats, which are encouraged by pigeons, so the health risk is increased. DW suggested that if the park were looked after a bit better people would respect it more. PP pointed out it is mainly one man doing the feeding. **Action: LL to chase up with Cllr Steve Burgess to see what progress has been made from his enquiries.**

2.8 Item 11.3 Planning Enforcement: PM wrote a letter to the Council and got a response (included in the meeting papers) explaining the progress of various enforcement notices on local business and why they have not been actioned yet. The sign at Happy Hot Pot has been changed. There are a number of deadlines coming up for various businesses so if these pass without further enforcement, the SCC can consider taking action again.

3. Councillor's report

Pauline Flannery presented a report. Regarding the Scottish Widows building, there is a public consultation online at the moment and it would be good for everyone to make their thoughts known. PF has seen the site but needs the residents' views to give her contributions weight. There are concerns from Parkside Terrace around the height of the building, as mentioned by SA. One other main concern is around social housing as this will be within a large block containing 67 units. They will keep five of the hexagonal structures for offices, and the rest will be three sets of 7 floor private housing and some hexagonal-style L-shaped units. The document for the online consultation is long but PF suggested page 41 contains lots of relevant information. They will have to refer back to people's concerns in the application so giving feedback in this pre-planning stage is well worth doing.

At the moment there is permit parking for dwellings on Carnegie St but there will soon be a more extensive parking zone there for the Festival.

The Council group of four Southside councillors has met and pledged to work together and cooperate across parties. Half the Council is newly in post so there is a lot of energy. The councillors have reached out to Primary Schools so they will have representation at their Parent Council meetings. The Low Emissions Zone is a big concern for a lot of people so this will also be a priority for the councillors.

There is a consultation on the 'Spaces for People' initiative, to see if any of the experimental routes should be retained or re-looked at. The public consultation is live online until 3rd July. Most people are for the concept but not the entire route, as some points are dangerous for cyclists and need rethinking.

DF pointed out that before Covid the Councillors used to have regular surgeries in the area; if any of these take place again it would be good for the SCC to be informed so that it can be shared within members' networks and on the website. It was suggested to have these on rotation in different areas.

4. Reports from Committees and meetings attended

No reports.

5. Planning and Licensing Applications

5.1 BT Hubs: After a few applications in recent weeks, another application has been made. So far all the ones SRB is aware of have been refused. These are advertising panels replace old phone boxes with Wifi; they are brightly lit and disruptive. It was agreed to object to this application as well. **Action: SRB to object and pass details to DF to investigate possible compromises.**

5.2 Short Term Lets: Due to the imminent change in legislation in Edinburgh there are lots of applications coming in for short term lets. JC had raised the question over email of what the SCC could do about these. Soon people will have to apply for Change of Use to let properties short-term so many people are trying to get permissions now before the change. DW suggested having a standard objection to be used for the SCC to use for all such applications as there may be several thousand, and pointed out the importance of objecting individually in case of appeals and looking back at records. DF suggested hiring an administrator to do this on a short term basis. There was a feeling many of the applications would be refused anyway. There was a discussion of the issues caused by such short-term tenants. DF pointed out this may also be driving the many student accommodation applications, as there is not enough long-term housing. There was a suggestion that the SCC write a general letter to the planning department objecting to all such applications, rather than submitting them individually, or trying to arrange a meeting with the planning department. PF pointed out there will be a new scheme from September to consult bottom-up so there will be more opportunities to work with the Council then, and that the planning department may be reluctant to have such a meeting. One application at the moment is not in our area and it was agreed that whilst it is possible, the SCC should not object to applications outside Southside. **Action: PF to contact the planning department to share the SCC's feelings and suggest a meeting.**

5.3 Public entertainment licences. DF pointed out that organisations now need a licence for more situations than they did previously. A lot of companies didn't notice the change until recently so there will be a lot of these applications at the moment but this is all for ordinary festival activity and is of no concern.

5.4 East Newington Place appeal: This topic was discussed at item 2.4.

6. Public Question Time, if agreed at agenda item 1.

The SCC visited the Scottish Widows building in March and at that time there were no firm plans for the development. The SCC was under the impression they did care a lot about getting things right so now it would be good to respond to the consultation. One of the challenges is they are obliged to build housing, and keep the pond and the hexagonal structures due to the listed nature of the building. It would be good to get more responses from residents. SA has engaged a lot with the company already. There was an idea that they might be able to reduce the number of storeys. DF pointed out that Scottish Widows is a pension fund and needs to make the land commercially viable without selling it. It was suggested that if residents have pensions with them they could lodge an objection from that angle too though, ownership has been transferred. SA's main objection is the height and expanse of the complex. SRB pointed out that sometimes with listed buildings you have to make it clear the development is not part of the original building. The deadline for the consultation is 22nd July, following which the application will be made. **Action: DF to arrange a public meeting with Scottish Widows for residents.**

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Causey Development Trust: DW is linked to the Causey Development Trust which went to a hearing. The proposals have been upheld; the Council still has to go back to Committee about the road proposals but it is a positive outcome from the perspective of the Trust.

7.2 Residents' Association: There is currently no representative on the SCC from Southside Association. **Action: DF to contact Colin Christison, investigate whether they have restarted and invite them to join us.**

7.3 Emails: PM had requested support for the Meadows Festival a few weeks ago and received very few responses; there are a lot of emails going round but it is good to know whether members receive them or not.

8. Date for Next Meeting, 12th September 2022, venue to be confirmed