

Southside Community Council

Chair's Annual Report, May 2016

The newly formed Southside Community Council held its first meeting under the chairmanship of Cllr Jim Orr in the Raeburn Room, Old College, on 8th October 2015, during which office bearers were elected, but we lacked a secretary, so Deborah Charlesworth, who had been secretary of the community council before it folded in 2011, was approached, and co-opted as secretary.

We have appointed Joan Carter to represent us at meetings of the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils, Robert Hodgart to represent us at meetings of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links Advisory Group (MABLAG), and Tim Pogson to represent us on the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership. Concerned by the lack of any student representation on the council, we approached Jonny Ross-Tatam, president of the Edinburgh University Students Association, who agreed to be co-opted as a member of the council.

Since then the council has organised itself into 3 working groups – Planning & Licensing, Environmental, and Communications. A website has been set up and the associated mailing list has attracted 47 subscribers, and our Facebook page has attracted 15 likes. In conjunction with the Edinburgh College of Art we had a logo competition, and saw some interesting logo ideas, but in the end decided to adopt one designed by ourselves. The Southside Association has produced a post card of the Gifford Park Mural, and kindly offered to include information about the Community Council on the back. 2000 copies of the post card have been distributed, including to all pupils at Preston St Primary School, and a further 3000 have been requested. Printing is being funded and carried out by the University of Edinburgh.

The Environmental Group has identified certain priority areas, including rubbish bins, pavement clutter, bicycle parking and bus shelters. They are liaising closely with the Southside Association and Council staff.

We have had regular reports from the local Police officers informing us about crime in the area and what action is being taken. We are pleased that the recent action on New Psychoactive Substances has had such a positive effect in the area.

Our meetings have attracted a number of visitors, including Conservation Architecture students and Alison Dickie, SNP candidate for the Holyrood seat of Central Edinburgh. We have had talks from Angus Calder of the Skelf Bike Park, and Dan Rous of the Greyfriars Charteris Centre.

We have had some discussion about our aims and objectives, and hope to have a clearer idea of what the local community is most concerned about after our Community Day on 14th May.

P McDowell
Chair, May 2016.