

OTCC Meeting Minutes 08/07/2025

Present:Carolynn Reddell (CR), Marie Macarthur (MM), Patrick Keady (PK), Paul Penman (PP), John Mitchell (JM), Simon Byrom (SB), Calim Renton (CR), Antonia Rolph (AR), Iona Scrimgeour (IS), Oonagh Gray (OG), Daniel Todd (DT)

Councillors: CFM Councillor Finlay McFarlane, CJM Councillor Jo Mowat

Apologies: Sugan Subbiah, Claire Miller

Welcome and Apologies

Approval of the last minutes

PK approved, OG seconded

Planning and Licensing Update:

- 3 applications for Ross Bandstand - no major interruptions
- Visual inspections of castle rock - still closed, due to Historic Environment Scotland
- Two cafes in Old Town that MM is concerned about.
- JM Scaffolding on Victoria St still out. Any update?

CFM: Resolution on the horizon - owner of the hotel is the issue. Work is progressing, Council has increased charges for scaffold permit. The Council are pushing, as well as builders. First part of scaffolding to come down will be Lawnmarket. Next meeting that CFM is attending is on the 15th July.

- Caledonia signage outside City Cafe - appeal failed, Council to take enforcement action.
- Old Hillcrest building in the Cowgate - still got scaffolding. Potentially currently owned by Apart Hotel?

IS - shared roof dispute in Cowgate. Scran won't pay for 70% of the roof.

Lawnmarket Pedestrianisation (and knock on effect)

- Buses - in Grassmarket, double deckers coming up West Port garden is a nightmare. MM is keeping track of numbers of buses. New bus route has been added too. Buses have increased down the West Port due to Lawnmarket pedestrianisation.
- Currently doing an experimental traffic order. CJM will email details on how is running this experiment - responses are open. This is a second trial.
- CR - very happy with the pedestrianisation.
- Licensing question - Lawnmarket residents can't move out or sublet during Fringe.

Lawnmarket will not be an event space this year - potentially growing in future years. There might be stewards on the Lawnmarket. Buskers will be 9am-9pm constantly.

- Fringe do 'police' the buskers through their discussions (name and shame) each morning in the street performance draw.
- Fringe licenced area - Royal Mile, Blair street, the mound. Fringe street team located by Mercat cross.

Millbank Pavilion Update

- Simon responded to the call.
- Determining deadline on the 14th of July. Over 70 objections so it will go to committee. Could be more than a couple of months as it is a major application. Roughly 6 months.
- There are two campaign groups - they are concerned with saving the open space and the trees. Simon potentially started his own campaign to save the hospital.

Street Cleaning

- First festival without street cleaning. Seems there has been a U-turn.
- Fringe performing area is cleaned by the fringe. No extra cleaning for the rest of the high street and closes.
- CFM taking as an action to check up.
- Benches have been cleaner of bird excrement in the Grassmarket. Numbers of needles have reduced in the High Street and Lawnmarket.

Police conversation

- Set a date with David Duthy, sometime in October and November.
- CR to email David Duthy, either specific meeting or a Q&A with committee members.

AOB

- JM - Managing director of Mercat tours wants to be involved. Zoom needed? Mercat tours setting up a community liaison group. Managing director on the visitor tax. JM wanting to work with her closely.
- Simon Byrom - wants to release a press release for the Dalai Lama's birthday. Want to nominate him as a Freeman of the city. - Needs to be done by the lord Provost. Probably won't happen due to political tensions.
- Hanging rooms - Finlay to give an answer about enforcement on the 'tartan tat' shops.

Next meeting:

12th August (optional meeting at West Port Garden)

9th September 6.30pm-8pm - Daniel Todd chairing

14th October 6.30pm - 8pm - Antonia Rolph chairing