

## **Glasgow Civic Forum**

### **Minutes of meeting 15<sup>th</sup> June 2012, 11am – 1pm**

Held at SCT offices, The Tobacco Merchants House, Miller Street

Present:

John Pelan, Scottish Civic Trust

Gemma Wild, Scottish Civic Trust

Ann Laird, Friends of Glasgow West

Brian Johnston, Dennistoun Conservation Society

Niall Murphy, Pollokshields Heritage

Laura Moodie, Strathbungo Society

Ruth Johnston, Friends of Glasgow Necropolis

Sally White, Alexander Thomson Society

Apologies:

Gordon Barr, Maryhill Burgh Halls Trust/Cinemas and Theatres Association

Simon Chadwick, New Glasgow Society

#### **1 Introduction and welcome**

JP welcomed those present. Outlined intention of meeting i.e. to discuss the merits of and appetite for a Glasgow Civic Forum. Those around the table represent civic groups affiliated to SCT in Glasgow.

#### **2 Edinburgh Civic Forum**

GW gave a brief summary of how the Edinburgh Civic Forum operates as set out in paper attached to agenda.

AL asked if Edinburgh has a Community Councils (CC) discussion group, as Glasgow does? GW wasn't sure (UPDATE: they do have an Edinburgh Association of CCs which hold meetings, Q&A sessions and events throughout the year)

What gap do we perceive there to be in Glasgow that we need to fill with this forum? Forum would be part of a bigger network of organisations and discussion groups. How does Glasgow's network compare to other areas? NM suggested that in Glasgow there are plenty of strong groups which communicate informally, but the network is disjointed. Idea of rolling out regional forums across Scotland was discussed and supported.

#### **3 Glasgow Conservation Forum**

AL talked about the existing Glasgow Conservation Forum. Conveners from Friends of Glasgow West & Pollokshields Heritage both had other commitments and wanted a group 'lite' with no office bearers. The forum is a talking shop for conservation organisations. Groups can come together then take discussion points back to individual groups. Meetings (1-2 per year) included not only civic groups but professionals, providing additional expertise. Community engagement has improved in that time and lots of new groups continue to be formed. CCs in Glasgow have been 'revamped': interest has increased, Glasgow has CC discussion group and 3 fulltime CC liaison officers.

#### **4 Discussion**

JP talked about the SCT annual conference as a vehicle for presenting best practice from other local groups. The forum could be another opportunity to do this. It was agreed that there is a need for a unified approach to some issues in Glasgow and that a forum would be useful for this purpose.

LM suggested that the forum would need to be wider than just heritage organisations, which was agreed.

Types of organisational/governance issues which it would be useful to share knowledge/experience of were discussed. Need for transparency in groups (including forum) to raise awareness in the wider public and prevent an 'us and them' perception.

RJ noted that Dennistoun CC has associate members, other organisations which come along to meetings. Along the same lines as a forum and is considered to be useful.

Administration/management of the group was discussed. Forum needs to be well managed to ensure that member groups are engaged and the forum is effective.

NM noted that Glasgow has no overarching group equivalent to the Cockburn Association in Edinburgh to facilitate city-wide discussion. M74 extension was discussed as a development that could have benefitted from discussions in a city-wide forum. AL suggested that Glasgow as a city region is perhaps too big for the kind of city-wide group that the Cockburn represents. Instead a forum of smaller groups could be effective.

The ability of local groups to engage with national policy initiatives such as the National Planning Framework, Architecture Policy consultation and Historic Scotland's Historic Environment policy review currently being undertaken was discussed.

It was suggested that this is the gap the forum could fill – big strategic issues in Glasgow and nationally. The recent consultation on changes to VAT relief for approved alterations for listed building was discussed as another example of a national issue that the forum could have engaged with.

The idea of a joint response from the forum members on certain issues was discussed and the importance of publicising responses. JP noted that SCT is good at social networking and information can be disseminated this way.

## **5 Next steps**

It was agreed that a Glasgow Civic Forum should be set up. SCT can provide meeting space at the Tobacco Merchants House and some administrative help from GW acting as secretary, initially at least.

First meeting would need to focus on remit of the group etc. GW will draft a remit for circulation. The Architecture Policy consultation was also suggested as a good topic to start with– perhaps over a series of meetings this summer. **GW**

It was generally agreed that evening meetings are most convenient, approx 7-9pm. GW will arrange a date for the first meeting. **GW**

Attendees were asked to suggest groups that might be interested in attending the forum. **ALL**

**Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> July 7-9pm, The Tobacco Merchants House.

