

# Southside now have a new community council



by Councillor Jim Orr

Some great news for people who live in the Southside is that the Southside Community Council is now back up and running.

The Old College kindly hosted the SCC's first meeting since falling into abeyance around 4 years ago, and I had the honour of chairing it earlier this week as the returning officer for the re-establishment process.

Communities often need challenges to unite around, and the Southside certainly has these. Many residents feel that increases in the numbers of Homes of Multiple Occupancy and student residences (with more planned) have so reduced the proportion of long term residents and families that the right balance has been lost.

Increased drug taking has also been an massive concern for well over a year with used needles and other paraphernalia easily findable in many local graveyards and other hidden spots.

An we have our heritage to protect, with the old Odeon on Clerk Street still out of use. The interior remains in a reasonable condition and could potentially be a great evening venue again if a plan for the necessary refurbishment can be put together.

There is also much to be proud of in the Southside.

Summerhall is one of Europe's biggest independent Arts venues and runs all year round. The Causey project is coming on apace. The Dumbiedykes area recently won a £1/4m improvement fund, alongside the opening of the new community shop at the

Braidwood and the thriving Craggs social enterprise sports centre. The world class University, and its staff and students, bring wonderful diversity and help support the local economy. And access to the old town as well as many beautiful parks and open spaces remains unrivalled.

All the new Community Councillors were excited about the prospect of working together to improve the community. The atmosphere was one of optimism and positivity. It'll be exciting to see where it leads.

Councillor Cameron Rose Conservative councillor for Southside & Newington Ward said "It is good to see local people coming forward to serve local people via the Southside Community Council.

"Improving the vibrancy and quality of the area as a place to live, work and relax is a challenge worth taking on. There is so much that is good in the Southside. But in some areas it can be better. I wish the Community Council well in all the work it will do."