

Grange Prestonfield Community Council
Cameron House Community Education Centre
Minutes 20th January 2016

Present: Tony Harris (**TH**)(Chair), Mike Hunter(**MH**) (Vice-Chair), Sue Tritton(**ST**)(Secretary), Andreas Grothey (**AG**) (Treasurer), Barbara McNaught (**BM**), Maureen Edwards (**ME**), Eileen Francis (**EF**), Doreen Allerton (**DA**), Julian Newman (**JN**), Gilly Dennis (**GD**), Janet Sidaway (**JS**), Derek Howie (**DH**), Hazel Dunn(**HD**), Graham Dann(**GSD**), Bill Reid (**BR**), Cllr Steve Burgess (**SB**)

In Attendance: PC Neil Mackay, PC Paul Douglas

Apologies: Sergey Gorobets (**SG**), David Stevenson (**DS**), Denis Stevens (**DeS**)

Public: Louise Drumm

Absent: Graham Muir(**GM**),

1. Welcome - Introduction and Apologies

TH welcomed everyone and introduced Louise Drumm who would talk about “Playing Out”. Louise described the project which involves closing a street on a regular basis (possibly once a month). The street would be closed with barriers which would be manned by local residents who would explain what was happening. Access for residents would be permitted. This is to try to recreate the facilities enjoyed by many adults when children but now not permitted due to safety concerns – including traffic. Adults and children living in the street would be encouraged to mingle, enjoy unstructured play, ride bikes or play with balls, enjoy cups of tea (or a glass of wine) together and generally mix with neighbours. Scottish legislation allows annual closure but not more frequent closures. The idea has support from the City Council which is supporting a Public Meeting on 9th February at 7.30pm in the City Chambers. TH thanked Louise for her presentation and wished the group luck in taking the idea forward.

2. Election of New Chair

TH reminded everyone that he had intimated his intention to resign as Chair at the January meeting. He then proposed Janet Sidaway as the new Chair, seconded by AG. There were no other nominations and JS was elected by acclamation. TH would remain as planning spokesperson. It was agreed not to change bank signatories until after the new elections in the autumn. TH then handed the Chair to JS. JS wished to formally record the thanks to TH from all members for all his hard work and appreciation that he would continue to deal with planning applications.

3. Declarations of Interest. None

4. Minutes of the Meeting 18th November 2015

The minutes had been previously circulated; proposed by GD, seconded by AG.

5. Matters Arising (not on the agenda)

ST had bought wine and chocolates for the Com Ed staff as a thank you.

6. External Reports

a) Police Report: PC Mackay reported:

- **Grange area:** There had been 78 crimes – 27 were solved. There was an increase in house break-ins in the daytime – particularly in the early evening when lack of lights indicates that the property is empty. 5 house break-ins had been solved and 5 were unsolved; currently three known burglars are remanded in custody. Additional resources have been committed to this area in the past two months with additional officers on overtime.
- **Sciennes Road knifing:** A 15 year-old male has been reported for 5 robberies – Social Work involved.
- **Prestonfield area:** 28 crimes including 4 house break-ins – especially early evening.
- **Action Days:** A couple of action days are planned for early February together with CEC.
- **Festive Period:** Activity focused on shoplifters in the Southside corridor. Police presence led to a reduction in antisocial behaviour.

In response to questions:

- DH asked if the same people are involved in housebreaking. PC replied that the police know who is in and who is out of gaol so they know who to target.
- GD asked if the figures are higher than last year. PC said it depends who is in gaol – probably much the same.
- AG asked about solvency rates. PC said about 60% for house break-ins.
- ST asked about 20mph enforcement. PC said officers are being trained; some drivers have been booked and fines issued from Howdenhall. GD asked where the fines go? Cllr SB said he would find out and report back.

b) Councillor's Report:

Cllr SB reported that he was attending in place of Cllr Perry who had an urgent meeting with the Com Ed staff who were concerned about possible cuts in the Council budget.

- **Council Budget:** This is a challenging situation – Scottish Government has hit Edinburgh with another £16m cuts – argument about whether Osborne or Swinney to blame for these cuts. Social Work will be badly hit – e.g. kids with behavioural difficulty etc. There are proposals for a reduction in Community Learning and Development support; end to free Music tuition; reduced frequency of gully cleaning. Budget meeting is the next day – Greens will be proposing an increase in Council Tax to bring in about £10m and reduce some planned cuts. He noted that the 8-year Council Tax freeze had meant that CEC had “lost” about £250m compared to the receipts it would have got if they had been allowed to increase Council Tax in line with inflation. He also noted that 63% of those who had responded to the Budget consultation exercise were in favour of a Council Tax increase rather than cuts to services.

Questions:

- **Waste problems:** Several people mentioned continuing problems with waste collection – including missed collections, non-supply of promised recycling bins and bins left scattered after collection. JS asked people to send details of complaints to ST who would collate and forward to Cllr SB.
- **Road signs:** DH asked why signs advertising road works are placed on pavements, causing obstruction, rather than on the road itself. JN commented that these often blow over and cause further problems. Cllr SB said he would check who is responsible for these signs and where they should be placed and would report back.

7. Reports of Interest Groups

a) **Planning:** A report had been circulated. TH reported in addition:

- **Minto Hotel 16-18 Minto Street:** Proposal to convert hotel into 8 flats plus 3 new town houses. As there had been complaints about noise from the function room the change of use would be welcomed. Concerns included the dominant new glazed link between the two original villas and overlooking concerns. Also concerns about overdevelopment and density and that this might set a precedent for further developments in the area. The meeting agreed to object - TH would circulate a draft response on behalf of GPCC.
- **KB – School of Biological Sciences:** PAN notice has been advertised giving details of public events about proposals to extend and redevelop the Darwin building and associated works. The events will be in the James Clerk Maxwell Building on February 15th and 16th from 2-7pm. GPCC has attended earlier discussions about the proposals and all are encouraged to attend the exhibitions.
- **Gas pipes on frontages:** The Grange Association was alerted to the Gas companies replacing gas pipes on the fronts of buildings. These are not permitted in Conservation areas and the companies have said they will respect this in future.

b) **Roads and Transport:**

- **East Mayfield:** The resurfacing is now complete. GSD agreed to thank CEC for (at last) doing this work and for doing the whole street.
- **Proposals for Capital Roads programme 2016/7:** The two proposals had been submitted on behalf of GPCC – pavements in East Mayfield and (part of) Priestfield Road.
- **20mph extension:** Formal TRO expected soon.
- **Marchmont-KB cycle route:** Formal consultation should appear soon.
- **New street lighting:** ME said that the new low-level LED lighting is causing problems in, for example, Prestonfield Avenue and Gardens. Cllr SB asked those with problems in specific streets to contact a councillor – it should be possible to increase the level of lighting.

c) **Licensing.** Nothing to concern us in our area.

d) **Publicity.** Nothing new to report. A newsletter for delivery in July/August should be produced in time for the CC elections in the autumn. Ideas for articles etc. can be submitted to MH.

e) **Newington Cemetery:** JS reported:

- **Working Party:** This continues – especially clearing undergrowth near the catacombs – despite being very muddy.
- **Second sign:** This, slightly smaller, sign will feature nature in the area.
- **Management changes:** Charlie Holt about to retire and Stuart Fagan retiring soon. The Cemetery team is being merged with Parks. Cllr SB said there is a reduction in funding for Parks and Green spaces – so local groups may become even more important.

8. Office Bearers Reports

a) **Chair's Report:** Nothing which doesn't come up elsewhere.

b) **Treasurer's Report:** We have currently £1891.01 in the account (£40 for Cockburn association membership has come out since November); Cheques for £42.21 (secretary expenses), £77.49 (website) are outstanding. That leaves £1771.31 available to spend.

c) **Secretary's Report:**

- **Correspondence: "4 Localities"** – invitation to event on Feb 2nd – TH volunteered.
- **Newington Library:** Baffle to reduce noise of air-conditioning unit installed on Christmas Eve – neighbours still not satisfied and have asked for another meeting.
- **Litter on path near Innocent Railway:** email received from a local resident concerned about amount of litter and asking if there could be a "community clear up". ST to email "Parks" to find out who is responsible for this area.

9. Reports of Outside Groups

a) **SCNP:** Monday on December 7th - attended by ST. Report on "Securing street wheelie bins" following the GPCC motion to the June 2015 meeting. Main problem is finance needed to replace damaged bins.

b) **SCNP Action Groups:**

- **Older People's:** Nothing to report.
- **Community Safety Group:** Next meeting February 23rd.

c) **EACC matters:** TH said there is now a full complement of office bearers (Eric Dobbie Chair; Allister McKillop, Vice-chair; David Bewsey, Secretary; Judy Wightman, Treasurer). A new constitution has been adopted. TH continues to hold the planning brief for the EACC and, with others, today met CEC planning officer Nancy Jamieson. He also learnt that the Planning Help Desk will now only be open in the mornings (900-1300 daily). The EACC is forming other subgroups and will try to work with the new localities. The next committee meeting is on Feb 11th.

10. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 17th February 2016

11. AOCB and Open Forum

Dalkeith Road shop: ME said the shop which had been causing problems and was a possible candidate for a community buy-out has been refurbished and painted. She asked if the owner has been identified and who did the work.

The meeting closed at 9.07pm