

## **Annual General Meeting of Craigmillar Park Association**

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

**At 7:30pm in Craigmillar Park Church Hall**

**Present:** Eileen Francis (Chair), Peredur Williams (Hon. Secretary), Ian Murray MP, committee members and advisors: Kay Boulton, Keith Oliver, Ron MacArthur, Christine Simpson, Wilma Elton, Allan Payne, Allen Simpson, Tony Harris, Merrilie Cameron. 40 members of the association.

**Apologies:** Liz Philip (Hon. Treasurer), Daniel Johnson MSP, Hilary Vandore, Alison Daley.

### **1. Welcome**

Eileen Francis thanked all those attending for coming, Craigmillar Park Church for use of their Hall, and Christine Simpson for organising post-meeting refreshments.

### **2. Minutes of the 2016 AGM**

Copies of the minutes were available at the meeting. They were proposed by Ron MacArthur and seconded by Keith Oliver as a true reflection of the previous AGM.

### **3. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising

### **4. Chair's Report**

Eileen Francis began her report by firstly thanking Angela and Tony Harris for hosting committee meetings. Eileen then announced that she was standing down as Chair of CPA at this time, as was Marilyn Higgins (Vice Chair), Peredur Williams (Hon. Secretary), and Liz Philip (Hon. Treasurer). Thanks were extended to the committee for their work over the past year, especially to Allan Payne for his website management. The website is a valued resource that receives regular updates, and Eileen was very pleased that the contact form is frequently being used. Questions raised here are resolved either by personal contact or committee consultation if necessary.

The main task of the committee this year has been responding to planning applications. Peredur keeps the committee abreast of new or resubmitted applications and the website is used to draw the attention of Craigmillar Park residents. Peredur compiles comments to the planning committee with expert advice from Tony Harris. The main event of concern this year was ensuring that the Pavilion in St Mary's playing field was indeed relocated by Millar Homes. This had proved to be a great spectator event, and successfully accomplished in September. Having lost the appeal of developing the whole field, it was pleasing to note that the public space has been ensured.

The next large development in the area will be that of the Blind School. It is understood that residents in West Saville Road have formed their own committee to negotiate with CALA Homes, the contractors. CPA will be keeping a look out for planning applications.

The committee this year commissioned a report on the Nature Strips from an ecology expert, and thank the local residents who have volunteered hours to aid with refurbishment.

The Grange and Prestonfield Community Council link is kept via Tony Harris, and CPA was pleased this year to make a small contribution toward the ongoing development of Newington Cemetery.

### **5. Financial Statement**

As Liz Philip was unable to be present at the meeting, Eileen Francis delivered the Financial Report for the year ending August 31<sup>st</sup> 2017. There were no questions forthcoming. Mark Probert was proposed to independently examine CPA accounts for the forthcoming year by Tony Harris, and seconded by Merrilie.

### **6. Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members**

On an annual basis, the two longest serving members of the association are required to stand down, but can be available for re-election. The members in this category this year are Ronald

MacArthur and Kay Boulton. However, the committee nominated Ronald to take over the position of Chair from Eileen Francis and Kay Boulton to succeed Marilyn Higgins as Vice Chair. These motions were unanimously passed by those present, as was the re-election of Liz Philip to the Hon. Treasurer role. As such, there are several vacancies arising on the CPA committee, including that of Hon. Secretary, and although no-one came forward at the meeting, those present were urged to consider and approach a committee member either afterward in person or via the website contact form. Peredur gave a brief outline of the Hon. Secretary role.

#### **7. Update on Nature Strips**

Wilma Elton presented a brief update on the Nature Strips project, thanking all the sixteen residents who had volunteered to help with the sometimes physical and demanding ground work. Wilma also thanked Mike Shields, the Greenspace Officer who has made his advice available, and Sarah Sigsworth for her detailed ecological report.

#### **8. Guest Speaker**

##### **Ian Morrison from Trees and Woodlands, Forestry Service, Edinburgh City Council**

Ian introduced himself as one of four “Trees and Woodlands Officers” employed by Edinburgh City Council’s Forestry department. He described his role as ensuring the safe management of the city tree stock in Edinburgh’s parks, city walkways, woodlands and gardens, while maintaining biodiversity and amenity values. Ian explained that 43 policies regarding these aims have been issued, but also indicated that the City Council was cutting back on staff numbers and therefore implementation was becoming more difficult.

In the past few years the annual budget for tree replacement has been removed. Normally around 400 trees/year are replaced due to disease or becoming unsafe. A proposal was put forward by the Forestry department and has been successful in establishing an internally managed tree nursery at the Inch Nursery Site, where 2,000 saplings are currently being raised.

A vital part of the officers’ role is the assessment of Dutch elm disease in the City of Edinburgh, a project that began 40 years ago. The Victorians were prolific in their love and planting of a huge number of Elms and cultivars, especially in Edinburgh. On an annual basis 1500 elms are lost in the city due to the disease, but estimates are of 15,000 left, and these of course require special management.

The team also respond to emergencies and these are scaled from urgent, high, medium to low, and response time varies accordingly. Clearing windblown and storm damaged trees obstructing public highways are classified as urgent.

Ian has been involved with the CPA Nature Strips, and has been able to allocate time to survey 1 strip per year. As the strips are numbered 1-5, he planned to visit them in that order, unless concerns are raised regarding the health of particular areas. Ian suggested that the Woodland Trust offers free tree packs that include hedge species, and there is of course scope for obtaining trees from the Inch Nursery that may survive in a Nature Strip environment better than an exposed site. In answer to a question, Ian acknowledged that management of the strips had been neglected in the past but stressed that he was addressing this thanks to co-operation with the Nature Strip volunteers. Ian thought that there would be scope for financial donations to the Forestry Department to fund work at the Nature Strips although such offers were extremely rare and he was not aware of any protocol currently in place.

Ian outlined the benefits of trees in community spaces that apart from encouraging biodiversity and green corridors for animals, provide amenity values and pleasure for residents and visitors alike. There is strong evidence to support the health benefits of trees including increased longevity and improvements to mental health.

#### **9. A.O.C.B.**

There was no other business, and the meeting closed at 20:30 followed by refreshments.