

CRAIGMILLAR PARK ASSOCIATION
Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 28th November 2018
at 7.30pm at Crawford Road

PRESENT: Ronald MacArthur (Chair), Christine Simpson, (Vice Chair),
Liz Philp (Treasurer & Minutes Secretary), Stephanie Bell, Peter Bottomley,
Isabel Clark, Wilma Elton, Simon Gage, Hilary Vandore.

IN ATTENDANCE: Tony Harris.

APOLOGIES: Allan Payne, Allen Simpson.

1. CO-OPTING OF NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The co-option to the CPA Committee of Stephanie Bell, Isabel Clark and Simon Gage was proposed by Wilma Elton and seconded by Christine Simpson and was agreed unanimously. A new CPA representative on the GPCC is needed following the resignation of Eileen Francis. Isabel Clark, proposed by Liz Philp, seconded by Stephanie Bell agreed to be our representative.

2. WELCOME

Ronald MacArthur welcomed the three new committee members. All committee members then introduced themselves one by one. It was interesting to hear people's brief life histories in relation to their connection to the Craigmillar Park area.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the committee meeting held on 27th September 2018 at Crawford Road were approved, proposed by Ronald MacArthur, seconded by Christine Simpson.

4. MATTERS ARISING None not dealt with elsewhere.

5. AGM ANALYSIS

Ronald MacArthur reported that the AGM, held on Thursday 25th October at Craigmillar Park Church Hall at 7.30pm on the whole went well. The meeting was attended by 52 members and others and Councillor Cameron Rose. Ian Murray MP sent apologies after the meeting, which he was unable to attend due to a delayed flight into Edinburgh Airport. There was one person who objected vehemently about the work done on the Nature Strips, but everyone else at the meeting seemed to thoroughly appreciate the work of the volunteers, Wilma received a round of applause. The talk about Bridgend Farm was very interesting. Ron apologised for not introducing all the committee members and promised to do so next year.

6. FINANCE & MEMBERSHIP

Liz reported that there was £5,591 in our account. Subscriptions amounting to £644 have been paid in so far this financial year, plus donations to the association of £133. In addition donations to the Nature Strips have been made amounting to £600 (many of these from people who have signed Gift Aid forms, so the eventual total will be £750). We have made payments for the Nature Strips in the current financial year of £616.86 and we had already agreed to use CPA funds to support this project, so we can certainly authorise Wilma to spend at least a further £300. The Gift Aid on the Nature Strip donations of £150 will be reclaimed at the beginning of next financial year. Meanwhile a Gift Aid repayment of £232.37 for the financial year 2017-18 has been received

The membership situation is less cheerful. We have 87 paid-up households, including 12 new members, but 77 households have not renewed. In many cases they have probably just forgotten. Liz passed round lists of those who have & have not paid, asking members of the committee to try to remind people they know well enough to ask to consider renewing their membership.

7. MILLERS & CALA

Playing Field. Building work on this site is progressing. The first house was supposed to be completed by 1st October but is still not finished, so the proposed March finishing date for the whole development is very unlikely to be achieved. The vexed question of the public access park was discussed. The Planning Permission granted by the Reporter made it quite clear under Section 75 that the provision of a public open space is mandatory, but until the last house is completed nothing needs to be done. We need to be very vigilant about this.

Royal Blind School. Jim Orr of Orbit Scot, a PR company, had invited members of both the GPCC and CPA committees to attend a private viewing of the plans for this site. Both Tony and Ron were opposed to this meeting. Instead there is to be a meeting open to the public in Craigmillar Park Church Hall on Monday 10th December at 7.30pm. This meeting has been organised and paid for by the GPCC, NOT the PR people or CALA. A representative from CALA will, however, be present and detailed plans will be on view. Christine Simpson agreed to ask those who distributed the CPA newsletters to deliver flyers about this meeting to addresses near the Blind School.

8. PLANNING MATTERS.

(i) Abcorn Guest House, 4 Mayfield Gardens - application for change of use of to a 13 bed, 15 person HMO. This application has so far had 111 letters of objection. There had been discussion of this application at the AGM. It is worrying especially to residents of Bright's Crescent. At the AGM Councillor Cameron Rose gave some background information on the matter – such a large development is effectively for a hostel. Edinburgh Council are under a statutory legal obligation to house people who have become homeless, a task which is becoming increasingly difficult. While we are aware that homes need to be provided for those in need, too many in one area can create problems. The reason for the concentration of these HMO / Hostels in the Southside is because it is no longer profitable to run traditional Guest Houses in our area, due to the rise in AirBnB and city centre cut-price hotels. Thus there is a great temptation to turn these large buildings into HMOs. An HMO with more than 6 beds requires a licence from the council and the council are supposed to inspect them, but it is known that they often do not do this, thus litter, drug detritus etc accumulates. The proliferation of these HMOs and the large amount of student accommodation reduces the availability of normal domestic family accommodation in our area. The GPCC is trying to gather factual information on this whole subject.

(ii) 4 East Suffolk Road (formerly Playdays Nursery). The Reporter upheld the decision of the planning committee to refuse the application to convert the building into 6 flats, however the owners have slightly tweaked the plans and have re-applied. Although very small, in the smallest permitted category of dwelling, these flats do comply with regulations, but we originally made an objection due to the piecemeal over-development of the whole site over the years, which is not appropriate in a conservation area. It was agreed that we should make an objection to this new application.

(iii) It was agreed that we need make no objection to the application to create a “Happy Body Studio” below the Mango Tree Chinese Takeaway in Mayfield Road.

7. WEBSITE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ron exhorted committee members to write articles for the website. It was suggested that Isabel might like to write an article on antisocial and illegal behavior with reference to the proliferation of HMOs. Pete offered to write an article about whom one should get in touch with on the council about problems regarding things like defective street lights, overflowing wheelie bins etc. Ron agreed to contact the Cockburn Association about a possible article, Wilma will similarly contact Bridgend Farm. It is hoped that the Cockburn Association might be able to provide a speaker for next year's AGM. All articles should firstly be submitted to the Chair, who would check their content and then forward to Allan for the Website.

9. NATURE STRIPS

Wilma Elton reported on the work which had been achieved recently. New trees and shrubs have been planted for Strip no 5 (south end of Gilmour Road) – rowan, hawthorn, hazel, cherry & cotoneaster. Wilma feels that Ian Morrison is never going to be able to fulfil his promise about cutting down trees in strip no 1 (Granby Road). The idea with all the strips is to provide native trees, good ground cover and spring bulbs.

10. AOB

Pete reported an incident in Suffolk Road Lane when he encountered a suspicious character at the back of Louise Baker's house – the next morning Louise found that her car had been broken into. Ron advised the formation of a Neighbourhood Watch Area, which works very successfully in Crawford Road.

Tony reported that the Newington Cemetery had had a good Open Doors Day. There will be a Snowdrop Walk in February. A Working Group meets on the last Monday of each month. 800 spring bulbs have been planted. The group encourage bio-diversity and wildlife habitats rather than a neat formal approach. Access from Ventnor Place was discussed. This would be possible but local residents object to the idea.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 13th March at 13 Crawford Road.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 10.05pm