

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF CRAIGMILLAR PARK ASSOCIATION**  
**WEDNESDAY 30th October 2019**  
**at 7.30pm in CRAIGMILLAR PARK CHURCH HALL**

**PRESENT:** Ronald MacArthur (Chair & Acting Secretary), Liz Philp (Treasurer), 5 members of the committee, Councillor Cameron Rose and 36 members of the association and the public.

**APOLOGIES:** Ian Murray MP, Daniel Johnson MEP, Councillor Ian Perry, Councillor Steve Burgess, Pete Bottomley, Hilary Vandore, Willie Grieve, Tony Harris, Merrilie Cameron.

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**1. WELCOME**

Ronald MacArthur thanked members for coming, and also said that thanks were due to Craigmillar Park Church for letting us use their hall - enabling us to offer refreshments at the end of the evening.

**2. MINUTES OF THE 2018 AGM**

Copies were available at the meeting. Their approval was proposed by Ronald MacArthur, seconded by Liz Philp and accepted by the meeting as a correct record.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

The application to turn the Abcorn Guest House at 4 Mayfield Gardens into an HMO for 15 people was granted by the Council Planning Committee.

**4. CHAIR'S REPORT**

The Chair outlined the role of the Craigmillar Park Association. He explained that as a result of our constitution we look very closely at all planning applications in the CPA area every week. We work closely with Tony Harris, of the Grange Prestonfield Community Council, who is most expert and knowledgeable in these matters. In the past year we have made 10 objections to planning applications – 5 were granted (including the Abcorn Guest House in spite of 111 objections), 8 refused and 2 withdrawn. The Character Appraisal for the Craigmillar Park Conservation Area, last updated in 2006, is currently being reviewed. Allen Simpson, in consultation with Tony Harris, has carefully examined this and submitted comments to the council. The Chair pointed out that our constitution limits us as to what donations we can make to other bodies but we have this year made donations to the Friends of Newington Cemetery, the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland and the Nature Strips in our area.

**5. FINANCIAL STATEMENT and REPORT FROM TREASURER**

A Receipts and Payments account for the year ended 31st August 2019 was circulated at the meeting. Liz Philp, treasurer, reported a surplus of £232.31. Subscriptions are slightly down but we are nevertheless in the healthy position of having £5,232.80 in the bank. We spent £846.61 on the Nature Strips but received generous donations specifically for their refurbishment and upkeep amounting to £800. The accounts had been independently examined and will be submitted to OSCR if accepted by this AGM. The accounts were then duly accepted by the meeting, (proposed by Christine Simpson and seconded by Stephanie Bell). Willie Grieve was appointed as Independent Examiner (proposed by Liz Philp and seconded by Allen Simpson).

**6. ELECTIONS OF OFFICE BEARERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

A composite motion to re-elect Liz Philp as Treasurer and Wilma Elton and Simon Gage as Committee Members was proposed by Ainslie Thin and seconded by Louise Baker and accepted by the meeting.

**7. MILLER HOMES - EAST SUFFOLK ROW**

The Chair reported that all the homes except two on this site are now complete and several occupied. He reminded the meeting that in spite of the original refusal of the application by the Council's Planning Committee this was over-ruled on appeal to the Scottish Government with the strict proviso under Section 75 of the Town & Country Planning Act that the surrounding part of the site, including the pavilion, should be open to public access. Miller Homes agreed to this legally enforceable ruling. Nevertheless persons viewing the show homes on the site were told that the area was to be private. Emails to Millers on the subject have not been answered. Both our MP and MSP are supportive of our concerns. We have been

given to understand that the Council are still negotiating with Millers about maintenance. Until the final home is completed the agreement under Section 75 is not enforceable by the Council.

#### **8. CALA HOMES - FORMER ROYAL BLIND SCHOOL SITE**

The Chair reported on the two public meetings organised by the GPCC at which strong concerns about the plans for this site were voiced. CALA's representatives showed good will and seemed sympathetic to the concerns, most notably from residents of Mentone Terrace regarding the height of proposed buildings on the north boundary next to the railway line. Subsequent to the meeting amended plans were submitted omitting one very tall block and reducing the heights of others. This compromise seems generally to have been accepted by local residents. Unfortunately, the objection by ourselves, the GPCC and AHSS to the use of UPVC for windows in the Victorian building has not been heeded because the material was used by the Blind School in a previous refurbishment although it is not at all in keeping with the original. To offset the requirement for social housing CALA have paid £293,000 for such housing on another site. Planning consent having now been granted, work on the site is due to commence in April 2020.

#### **9. HMOs in our area**

Isobel Clarke, a committee member and resident of Bright's Crescent said that while she is not against HMOs, since clearly people need homes, local residents are concerned about the density of these properties in our area. All councils in Scotland are required to house people but the Edinburgh Council do not seem to have considered the overall impact of this change of use in our residential conservation area. Bright's Crescent has 3 HMO properties at either end of the road. The properties are not being kept clean and tidy, hedges are overgrown, there is litter on the ground, police attend on a regular basis to deal with disturbances. The Council have been asked to confirm their policy on the distribution of HMO housing within the Southside but they only provided very limited information about 29 HMO properties. Our observation is that they are gradually spreading from Minto Street down Mayfield Gardens towards Cameron Toll. Both the CPA and GPCC have requested that the Planning Department take appropriate steps to limit the number of HMO properties in our area. An HMO is licensed for a period of three years and the council have an enforcement department - if a property is causing problems they can refuse to renew its licence, but in practice this does not seem to happen. Councillor Cameron Rose said that he was very aware of the problem and both he and the CPA are keeping a close eye on the situation.

#### **10. NATURE STRIPS**

Wilma Elton spoke about the work which has been undertaken by a group of a dozen public-spirited volunteers over the past year. A very full report by Wilma was published in the newsletter. The removal of the overgrown laurel bushes and planting of native species, ground cover and bulbs have had excellent results making the strips attractive and attracting bees, other insects and birds. Concerns about anti-social behaviour and dumping of rubbish have on the whole been unfounded apart from some trade-waste dumping and the lighting of fires in Suffolk Road Lane, which was reported to the Council. The CPA has agreed to provide signage to say that the Nature Strips are maintained by volunteers and also to purchase some birdboxes. Wilma urged people to join the volunteers, they work hard but are a friendly group. The Chair expressed the Committee's admiration of all the work done - a sentiment echoed by the assembled members

#### **11. A.O.C.B.]**

\* Wilma commented on the litter on pavements especially at bus stops and outside the Travelodge. There were comments from the floor about private hire taxis which hover in the area in the middle of the night with radios blaring. Councillor Rose suggested taking the numbers of offenders and reporting them.

\* There were queries about the proposed Cycle Path along Craigmillar Park and Lady Road and thence to the Royal Infirmary. Recent work on gas pipes showed that reducing from two to one lane on these roads resulted in chaos and massive tailbacks of traffic and it was felt that to reduce these roads to one lane was completely impractical. Councillor Rose recommended writing to the council to express this view.

#### **12. MRS JOCELYN CUNLIFFEE - ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND**

Mrs Cunliffe's illustrated talk was most interesting. With a motto of "Speaking for Scotland's Buildings" the society evolved from its founding in 1956 as the Georgian Group of Edinburgh. It now has over 1,000 members throughout Scotland and its objectives are the study and protection of Scotland's architecture and the advancement of its protection. She quoted William Morris who said "We are only trustees for those who come after us." The AHSS organise lectures and study tours. Mrs Cunliffe showed pictures of the appalling proposals for the development of the Royal High School which has attracted massive opposition. She also showed pictures of the little-known Phoebe Anna Traquair murals in the Royal Hospital for Sick Children's mortuary chapel, which it is hoped can be preserved and opened to the public.

**There being no further business, the formal meeting ended at 9.15pm and was followed by refreshments.**