

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF CRAIGMILLAR PARK ASSOCIATION
THURSSDAY 20th October 2022
at 7.30pm in CRAIGMILLAR PARK CHURCH HALL

PRESENT: Christine Simpson (Acting Chair), Liz Philp (Treasurer), 4 members of the committee, Councillor Tim Pogson Tony Harris of the GPCC and 40 members of the association and the public.

APOLOGIES: Ian Murray MP, Daniel Johnson MSP, Merrilie Cameron, Willie & Fanny Grieve, Iain Gordon & Maja Waldhausen, Andy & Jackie Johnson, Tom & Gwen Kinghorn, Ron Macarthur, Allan Payne, Diana Philipson, Allen Simpson, Charles Swainson.

1. WELCOME

Christine Simpson thanked members for coming to the meeting following two years when we had not been able to hold an AGM due to the Covid-19 pandemic. She 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 2019 AGM

Copies were available at the meeting. Their approval was proposed by Wilma Elton, seconded by Simon Gage and accepted by the meeting as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING. None.

4. VICE CHAIR'S REPORT

Christine outlined the role of the Craigmillar Park Association. We look very closely at all planning applications in the CPA area every week, working closely with Tony Harris of the Grange Prestonfield Community Council, who is most expert and knowledgeable in these matters. We support the volunteers who work on the Nature Strips in the roads between Craigmillar Park and Mayfield Road. Matters of concern in our area at present include the proposed developments at Cameron Toll Shopping Centre, the bike lanes with consequent difficulties for both buses and other vehicles and the removal of bus stops. Christine also explained that at present the CPA has no Chair, Vice-Chair or Secretary and the committee is reduced in numbers due to people leaving the area or resigning, thus the future of the organisation is in jeopardy

5. FINANCIAL STATEMENT and REPORT FROM TREASURER

Receipts and Payments accounts for the past three years were circulated, there having been no AGMs during the pandemic years. Liz Philp, Treasurer, reported that there was £5,184.32 in the account on 31st August 2022. For the past two years our only expenditure has been on website maintenance, our subscription to the Architectural Society of Scotland and continued support of the Nature Strips. Subscriptions were waived during the two pandemic years and the committee had decided to waive them again for the year 2022-2023 since the future of the CPA was in question and we are in a good financial position. The accounts were accepted by the meeting, (proposed by Liz Philp and seconded by Simon Gage). Willie Grieve was appointed as Independent Examiner (proposed by Liz Philp and seconded by Christine Simpson).

6. NATURE STRIPS

Wilma Elton explained that in 2016, with funding from the CPA, a biodiversity study was commissioned to examine the habitat of the five strips of land in Granby, Gilmour and Suffolk Roads. Their maintenance was nominally the responsibility of the Council, but for many years work was only carried out if the public was in danger from falling branches. They looked forlorn, overgrown and neglected. A group of volunteers was formed who over the years since then have removed overgrown plants, notably laurel, have planted bulbs, shrubs and other plants and now these areas are flourishing. The CPA has been generous in providing funds for tools and plants. Mike Shields, the Parks Manager for Central and Southern Edinburgh, provided manpower and trucks to take away the piles of waste created when clearing the strips. Conversations were held with Ian Morrison from the Council's department for the care of trees in Edinburgh and he granted permission for the removal of laurel, box, rhododendron, brambles etc but was clear that on no account should volunteers touch the mature trees. This we have obediently done. Some, but not all, fencing has been removed. In autumn the volunteers gather up fallen leaves, Wilma said that if anyone would like to join in this fun activity, they should let her know.

7. SPEAKERS. T

(i) Tony Harris of the Grange Prestonfield Community Council

Tony explained that Community Councils have a statutory responsibility to monitor planning and thus planning applications in our area are looked at every week. Time is of the essence if objections are to be made, only two weeks allowed for comments before the closing date. It is difficult to get news out to residents during this short period of time.

(ii) Councillor Tim Pogson

Councillor Pogson said that the four councillors for our area representing the SNP, Labour, Lib Dem and Green parties work together very well on behalf of all residents. The Edinburgh City Council has a minority Labour administration so good cooperation between parties is essential. Tim is Chair of the Health & Social Care partnership but always willing to listen to concerns about other matters such as planning.

(iii) Questions from the Floor

Several concerns were raised. In response to a query about the cleaning of roads and clearing blocked gullies Tony said it was the responsibility of the roads and traffic department and they are not obliged to inform residents when they are coming. Much concern was expressed about the continuing disruption to traffic caused by the erection of student residences at the southern end of Mayfield Road by the Braid Burn, which is taking far longer than expected. The difficulties caused by the new bike lanes were discussed, including the removal of the bus stop between Lygon and Wilton Roads, due to bus lanes not LRT's policy to have further distances between stops generally. The bike lanes are to remain in place for 18 months, then the situation will be reviewed. Great concern was expressed about the proposed developments at Cameron Toll. If the plans are approved the work would cause massive unacceptable disruption to traffic on Lady Road, a major route especially for ambulances. The plans would involve loss of parking spaces, the buildings proposed are too tall, mature trees are to be felled, the Dunedin School will be badly affected, the list goes on and on... Tony explained that the Planning Committee have to stick to planning laws, it is not enough to say we don't want yet another budget hotel etc. Unfortunately the site is outside the Craigmillar Park Conservation Area, although immediately adjacent to it. If planning consent is refused the developers have a right of appeal to the Scottish Government, who send in a Reporter, Cllr Pogson said that, sadly, in 50% of cases the decisions of democratically elected local planning committees are overturned and the public have no right of appeal in these cases.

7. FUTURE OF CRAIGMILLAR PARK ASSOCIATION

As explained in the Vice-Chair's report in item 4 above it is difficult to foresee how the CPA can continue without Office Bearers, we desperately need some new committee members and hopefully in the fullness of time some of them might fill those vacancies. Liz Philp said that as the only remaining office bearer she felt rather like the guy on the deck of the Titanic playing his violin while it sank beneath the waves. We are a registered charity and Liz had been in touch with OSCR to ask for advice. The procedure for dissolving a charitable organisation altogether is that a meeting of all members shall be called with one month's notice given. Such dissolution shall be confirmed with a two thirds majority of those voting at this meeting. After settlement of all debts any remaining funds shall not be disbursed among members but shall be donated to charitable organisations having similar objectives to the association as determined by the committee. The association shall then be declared dissolved. There is, however, an alternative, the CPA could continue to function but without charitable status. OSCR has a procedure for this, after which there is there is nevertheless a legal duty to ensure that assets of the organisation continue to be used for charitable purposes, and there must be an annual independent examination of the accounts.

Happily one member who had sent apologies had indicated by Email that he would be happy to serve on the committee and three further noble people at the meeting also volunteered so, to much relief all round, we were able to proceed to Item 8.

8. ELECTIONS OF OFFICE BEARERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following new Committee members were elected:-

Charles Swainson, proposed by Liz Philp, seconded by Wilma Elton

Ian Wright, proposed by Phil Wight, seconded by Tom Wightman

Dervil Dockrell, proposed by Simon Gage, seconded by Wilma Elton

May Khorshid, proposed by Ian Wright, seconded by Liz Philp

9. A.O.C.B. None

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