

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF CRAIGMILLAR PARK  
ASSOCIATION  
THURSSDAY 19th October 2023  
at 7.30pm in CRAIGMILLAR PARK CHURCH HALL**

**PRESENT:** Ian Wright (Chair), Liz Philp (Treasurer), 7 members of the committee and 46 members of the association and the public.

**APOLOGIES:** Charles Swainson, Ron MacArthur, Willie & Fanny Grieve, Deb Hawthorn, Barbara Horn, Tina Kelly, Peter & Kathleen Ramsay, Margaret Robb; Siobhan McGovern & Kevin Thomson, Ian & Janette Murray, Michael & Sya Simpson.

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### **1. WELCOME**

Ian Wright thanked members for coming to the meeting in inclement weather. He drew attention to the fact that, with the retirement of Tony Harris, the GPCC is urgently seeking someone with expertise in planning matters to replace him.

### **2. MINUTES OF THE 2022 AGM**

Copies were available at the meeting. Their approval was proposed by Christine Simpson, seconded by Dervil Dockrell and accepted by the meeting as a correct record.

### **3. MATTERS ARISING.**

Wilma Elton reported on the moving of bus stops on Craigmillar Park. She drew our attention to the radical plans for bus and cycle lanes between Craigmillar Park and the Bio-Quarter. Google “Cameron Toll to BioQuarter Walking & Cycling Route”.

### **4. CHAIR’S REPORT**

Ian outlined the role of the Craigmillar Park Association. We look very closely at all planning applications in the CPA area, we support the volunteers who work on the Nature Strips in the roads between Craigmillar Park and Mayfield Road. We have a website <https://craigmillar-park.org.uk> with a link if people wish to alert us to any issues affecting our area.

### **5. REPORT FROM BRIAN CAMERON**

Brian reported on the Clark Construction site, the building of student accommodation at the foot of Mayfield Road. This large US owned company were initially not very co-operative in respect to communication, but this is now sorted even though the project is behind schedule. Phase one had major issues with water problems and a partial planned re-opening of Mayfield Road had to be shelved. The road closure has caused considerable chaos and had a very negative impact on the nearby streets. In addition an important element, totally ignored, is that the Lady Road/Esslemont corridor is the main route for ambulances out of Peffermill that need to exit to the west and centre of town. Poor traffic light sequencing at KB also contributes to the problem. The first building is now occupied and work has begun on a second one behind it, but there are major issues including uncharted underground cables, also it is understood that there is a very major water link underneath the Phase Two site which if breached could cause severe damage and supply issues to a major number of houses in South and East Edinburgh. These problems these have retarded the whole project, the best prediction for completion is August 2024. Brian also reported on road cleaning in our area – many roads are not cleaned at all and several drains are blocked, the difficulty is that parked cars prevent motorised cleaning. The CPA carried out a full study of parking in the B6 area earlier in the year. A workable

solution that meets the needs of Residents and the Council has to be found! The potholes in our area and throughout Edinburgh are horrendous – we are a World Heritage Site, but also the Pothole Capital of Europe! Councillors Pogson & Flannery know of local concerns and are trying to find a solution. Where the Council has failed is in not taking the contractors to task about their completion work standards. Concerns have been raised about the 20mph speed zones which, whilst they may reduce accidents, will create health hazards through emissions until all cars are electric or hybrid – this is not going to happen any time soon, it was pointed out that there are no electric charging points at Cameron Toll, Fort Kinnaird, the Gyle and other obvious locations. Brian expressed the view that the £24.6 million profit raised by the council from parking fines should be earmarked for fixing the potholes.

## **6. FINANCIAL STATEMENT and REPORT FROM TREASURER**

Receipts and Payments accounts for 2022-2023 were circulated. Liz Philp, Treasurer, reported that there was £4,639.330 in the account on 31st August 2023. In the past year expenditure has been on website maintenance, our subscription to the Architectural Society of Scotland, continued support of the Nature Strips a couple of retirement gifts and last year's Newsletter & AGM.. Subscriptions were waived during the two pandemic years and the committee had decided to waive them again for the year 2022-2023. Since we were in a good financial position. A vote from the floor agreed that now that we again have the annual expenses of the Newsletter and AGM we should reinstate subscriptions as from the financial year 2024-2025. The accounts were accepted by the meeting, (proposed by Liz Philp and seconded by Ian Wright).

## **7. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

Willie Grieve was appointed as Independent Examiner (proposed by Frances Lindsay and seconded by Christine Simpson).

## **6. NATURE STRIPS**

Wilma Elton reminded those present that, in liaison with Edinburgh Council's Greenspace team, some local volunteers have been working hard in five strips of land – 1 in Granby Road, 2 in Suffolk Road and 2 in Gilmour Road – for the past six years. They are following guidelines in Sarah Sigsworth's Biodiversity and Conservation Report, commissioned by the CPA in 2016. You can read the entire report on the CPA website. The main comment was that there was too much laurel impoverishing the soil and blocking sunlight, thus inhibiting the survival of ground species. About 50% of the recommendations have been carried out and in the coming few months a concerted effort is being made to eradicate laurel from the Granby Road strip, allowing more biodiversity and the survival of self-seeded native species. Our excellent new Green Space Officer is David Kyles; his team will deal with the laurel and provided bulbs and seedling trees and bushes for volunteers to plant. David's team will also replace rotten fence posts and tighten the fencing. Unfortunately, this cannot be removed altogether as there is no pavement and cars would just park on the soil and the plants. Residents are grateful that he organised the removal of the unsightly, sagging chicken wire (the original elegant railings were removed during WWII) on one side of Suffolk Road. In contrast, any attempts to discuss tree matters with the Council's forestry department have been completely unproductive. It seems that Ian Morrison's time during the past year or so has had to be devoted to inspecting and dealing with infected elm or ash trees. There is simply not enough manpower. Volunteers also cut back vegetation from the pavement, remove litter and try to maintain order, in a natural kind of way. New volunteers are always welcome.

## **8. ELECTIONS OF OFFICE BEARERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Ian Wright (proposed by Merrilie Cameron, seconded by Christine Simpson) was re-elected as Chair. Liz Philp (proposed by Ian Wright, seconded by Wilma Elton) was re-elected as Treasurer. The following committee members (proposed Ian Wright, seconded Liz Philp) were elected unanimously:- Brian Cameron, Dervil Dockrell, Wilma Elton, Kenny Kemp, May Khorshidi, Christine Simpson, Charles Swainson, Hilary Vandore.

## **7. SPEAKERS. Tibor Farago & Zoltan Sinka from XKY Energy**

Tibor and Zoltan talked us through the many aspects of installing heat pumps, admitting that, although ultimately greener and, in the long term, having an expectation of lower energy bills, every client's circumstances are different and many challenging. In houses such as those in our area, with stone walls which are difficult to insulate, high ceilings and often single glazing, installing heat pumps and associated changes to radiators and hot water pipes is extremely difficult and very expensive. Also planning laws do not permit solar panels in most houses in conservation areas. There are limits to what can be done, all schemes require an MCS certificate (Microgeneration Certification Scheme). Noise is an issue – heat pumps are not permitted within one metre of a neighbour's house, nor three metres from bedrooms. Heat pumps require a large hot water tank – difficult for people who have removed their tanks and have gas-fired combi-boilers. Government grants are not available for those in the highest council tax bracket. It is possible to have hybrid systems, using heat pumps for most of the year but retaining gas boilers for the coldest months. The difference between air source heat pumps and ground source heat pumps (which require digging down 200 metres) was explained, the latter being even more expensive than the former. There were many questions from the floor which Tibor and Zoltan attempted to answer. Many people were concerned about the noise issue and also about insulation and having to replace radiators and pipes. To a suggestion that we should only heat one room in the house and go to bed with a hot water bottle, it was pointed out that every time you open the door of the said room a massive amount of heat escapes. Zoltan said that gas fires are amazingly expensive to run a lot of the heat escaping up the chimney and creating draughts. "The energy we don't use is the greenest" he quoted. While undoubtedly the best way forward for new build houses, heat pumps are a difficult option for houses in an area like Craigmillar Park. Technology is developing all the time, so there may be hope for the future.

## **9. A.O.C.B. None**

**There being no further business, the meeting ended at 9.20pm. Most of those present hurried home due to the inclement weather, so refreshments were cancelled.**