

Grange Prestonfield Community Council Chair's Report, January 2012

Astley Ainslie and Royal Edinburgh Hospitals

NHS Lothian plans to re-build the Royal Edinburgh Hospital on its current site in Morningside, turning it into a 'modern, state-of-the-art facility'. In doing so it will also make space for many of the current rehabilitation wards and facilities at the Astley Ainslie. This will make much of the Astley Ainslie site surplus to requirements.

All the Community Councils in the area, particularly us, Marchmont Sciennes, Morningside and Merchiston have come together to meet regularly with the NHS to discuss these proposals and plans as they develop. We have expressed an interest in both the services that will be provided and what this will mean for patients and the planning issues that arise with such major developments.

The minutes of the first meeting have been circulated separately with the agenda. The meetings will become a regular event, with the next meeting due in February.

Access to Astley Ainslie

I have had further correspondence with NHS Lothian's Acting Director of Facilities, who states they will not be acceding to our suggestion to keep one gate open on British Heart Foundation Lane off South Oswald Road. The reason now given is the safety of pedestrians and cyclists from vehicles manoeuvring in the Lane.

He adds that they discourage people from using the site as a short-cut as this brings additional risks they cannot manage. They consider there are better ways in and out of the site for hospital visitors and that safety takes precedence over 'green' initiatives in this instance.

I have been trying to gather views of local residents. I suggest it would be best to discuss this with the other Community Councils and tackle the issues the letter raises in the aforementioned meetings with NHS Lothian.

Capital Roads Funding

We submitted the following schemes for next year's South Central NP round of Capital Roads funding.

- Rankin Drive - re-surfacing of carriageway (re-submission)
- Findhorn Place - re-surfacing of remaining parts of carriageway
- East Mayfield - re-surfacing of carriageway
- Oswald Road - re-surfacing from railway bridge to corner of Oswald Court
- Cross-roads at Kilgraston Road and Strathearn Road. Although not part of our CC area, it was drawn to our attention by a GPCC resident, and Marchmont Sciennes CC have been informed.
- West Savile Terrace - repairs to footway on south side at Blackford Avenue end. Submitted by Savile Area Residents Association.

We raised concerns about cycle safety re a welcome proposal to widen the pedestrian refuge island at Charterhall Road at the entrance to Blackford Pond. After correspondence

with the Roads Department we were satisfied there would be sufficient width for cyclists as well as cars at that point.

20 mph Pilot

Preparatory work for the pilot is beginning. Signs have been placed at the junctions of Wilton and Lygon Roads with Mayfield Road; they may have appeared elsewhere as well. The Council expects to have the scheme operating by the end of March.

The Council is preparing an advertising campaign to publicise the pilot. It is also starting an evaluation. It has done surveys of the current volumes and speed of traffic. It will be conducting a survey of 1,000 residents to get their views about the streets, how they use them, their safety and their views on the pilot.

Quality Bike Corridor

We have received a drawing of the proposed new layout at the junction of West Mains Road and Mayfield Road to accommodate cyclists turning right to enter the King's Buildings. We will seek a meeting with Council officials to get a full explanation and then consult on it with members and residents' associations.

Prestonfield Community Garden

We have had an e-mail from Edinburgh Backgreens Association saying they were disappointed by the result of their original initiative to start a community garden in Prestonfield. They would be willing to try again if we wished to support such an effort.

The further point about this initiative is that an application was made to the NP's Housing Area Board, which distributes Environment Programme money to be spent in areas with Council housing. We currently have no representative on this subgroup.

Publicity

I was kindly invited by Mike Hunter to speak at the AGM of the West Blasket Association on the work of the Community Council. As there always seems to be a great deal of work, I was able to go on at length. We have also received an invitation from a group that meets at St Columba's on Upper Gray Street.

I think we need to increase our publicity, to let more people know about the Community Council, and to make sure people think it worthwhile to put their names forward when we next elect members in September this year. It would give The Community Council real credibility if there were enough people standing to require an election.

John Palmer
Chair