

## Secretary's Report – February 2013

### **Correspondence** - see Circulation folder

- Invitation to meeting about the future of Craiglockhart Hill
- Community Council Information Session on how to gather information on our neighbourhood – volunteer to attend? Friday March 1<sup>st</sup> 10.30am.
- Information about possible closure of Strathearn Road Delivery Office.
- Details about a Council Tenants Satisfaction Survey
- List of Organisations providing free (or cheap) goods to CCs
- Invitation to Launch of Age Scotland's Community Transport campaign (Bill Reid will attend for GPCC)
- Email about trees in Newington Cemetery
- Email about Earth Hour and Climate Week

### **SCNP Meeting – Monday January 28<sup>th</sup>** (attended by Sue)

- Presentation from Dumbiedykes "Quality of Life" Group. Good outcomes – much less vandalism and anti-social behaviour in the area.
- Transport Review – new strategy with consultation from Feb 4<sup>th</sup> to March 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Next CC Newsletter** Contributions to Eileen Hewitt by 25<sup>th</sup> February (with photos if possible)

### **HMO Working Group – Thursday February 13<sup>th</sup>** (attended by Sue)

- Table produced (in file) showing that of the 6557 licensed HMOs in the city 23.5% are in Southside/Newington and 30% in Meadows/Morningside.
- Short Let Task Force (led by Kathy Evans) is dealing with the "Party Let" problem and the number of complaints has greatly reduced since this was set up.
- Discussion about neighbour notification of applications for HMO licences – group wanted all neighbours to be given a copy (as is done for Planning applications) – there is a cost implication for this. The notice of HMO applications is being redesigned – members were asked to comment (feeling that information for neighbours should be more prominent while legal details could be in smaller type).

**AAH Reorganisation.** A meeting was provisionally arranged with NHS Lothian for 11<sup>th</sup> February. This was then cancelled by the NHS and rescheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> March. A date for a meeting in September has also been fixed.

**Waste Collections.** Following the January meeting a message was sent to CEC – the message and the reply is attached. I have since contacted CEC about bins still being left scattered after collection. Also, I think I should write again asking that the Brown Bin schedule should be altered to include 2 collections in November and only one in March.

**Strathearn Road Sorting Office – possible closure.** Royal Mail is reviewing delivery operations in the EH9 area and is considering closing this office and moving to the office at 5 Bridge End (see correspondence file). Ian Murray, MP and Jim Eadie, MSP have circulated this information widely and are collecting comments from residents. We have heard a rumour that the office at Bridge End may not be suitable and the move may be to the Slateford Road Office (this has to be confirmed). Should GPCC comment officially?

**Trees in Newington Cemetery.** Following a complaint raised in January about healthy trees being felled etc. the following reply has been received from the Council. *“The trees that have been felled were due to either being dangerous, storm damaged or diseased, we do not fell healthy mature trees within the cemetery as they are all protected. This work was done under the supervision of the Council's Forestry Manager.*

*The condition of the footpath was due to heavy machinery that was required to remove the trees and this will be rectified as soon as possible.*

*We cannot replace trees due to the lack of space as the root system of a felled tree has to remain in place so as not to disturb any graves or remains. Annually we remove any self seeders adjacent to structures to prevent damage.”*

**Dates of Future Meetings** – which may be of interest

**Thursday February 21<sup>st</sup>** – Meeting about future of Craiglockhart Hill

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> February** – Question Time with Sue Bruce (CEC Chief Executive)

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> February** – City Centre and Environment Group

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> February** – Health and Wellbeing Group

**Wednesday February 27<sup>th</sup>** – Meeting about James Gillespies School

**Friday March 1<sup>st</sup> 10.30am** – Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March** – Civic Forum

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March** – Meeting of CC reps with NHS Lothian (AAH/REH matters)

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March** – GPCC meeting

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 8.30pm** – Earth Hour

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April** – GPCC meeting

**Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April** – SCNP Meeting

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May** – GPCC meeting (AGM postponed until the Autumn)

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June** – GPCC meeting

**Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September** – SCNP Meeting

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September** – Meeting of CC reps with NHS Lothian

# Grange Prestonfield Community Council

January 2013

## Suggestions for improving Waste Collections

*(black text sent by SBT for GPCC after Jan meeting. Blue text – CEC response)*

The CC had received a complaint from a resident living on Blackford Hill about waste collections over the Christmas period. He said that the Brown Bin collection, scheduled for January 4<sup>th</sup>, had never happened despite phone calls from several residents. On investigation it was ascertained that this date was in the “Christmas” period when Brown Bin collections were suspended. This led to a discussion at the CC meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> January and the following points (intended to be helpful) were made. In general, most people seemed to think that the Christmas collections had gone well.

- 1. Advertising Christmas Collections:** Although available on the Council website it was apparent that many residents in many parts of the city were not aware of the (changed) collection dates – this resulted in bins being left out for several days. It was suggested that, as the Council sends annual collection timetables to most households, if these details were distributed in December details of the Christmas arrangements could be included. It might also help if firm collection dates in the timetables over the Christmas/New Year period were either omitted or advice given to check final arrangements over this time.

The new collection calendars were produced prior to the service changes in September. At the time Christmas collections were not confirmed and a note was added to the calendars advising residents to check local press and the Councils website for festive collections. Some calendars were produced showing certain collection on certain days however this information should not have been included in the final draft of the calendar.

Unfortunately when public holidays fall mid week over the festive period then we are unable to make plans for collections until mid December. This is mainly due to staffing issues, however as we would not be able to finalise a new calendar and have it sent out in time, I agree that collection dates should be omitted from the calendar and advice given to residents to check with local press and our website closer to the time.

- 2. Bins left on streets.** In many places bins seem to be left out for several days. This causes particular problems for blind people and those in wheelchairs or with buggies. Could offending householders (those who do not take their bins in within a day of collection) be advised about this and/or given a fixed penalty notice if they continue to offend.

If residents contact us regarding bins being left on the street after collection then a letter is sent to offending householder advising them that bins should be removed from the public highway and returned to the confines of their property as soon as possible after collections. If this approach does not work then the local roads team will visit the site to determine if the bins are causing an obstruction. If this is the case then the local roads team will take the appropriate action.

- 3. Bins left scattered.** The recycling bins and boxes are, in many areas, returned neatly next to garden walls. However, the green bins are generally left randomly scattered over the pavement causing additional problems for many people.

Crews are reminded to return bins to the collection point and to return them in a way so they do not cause an obstruction. A collective instruction will go out to all crews to remind them of their duties.

- 4. Brown Bin Schedule.** There are fortnightly collections in 8 months but only one collection in November – February inclusive. Much leaf fall now occurs in November and a lot of pruning, clearing up etc. is done in November. Also, very little garden waste is produced until late March. It has been suggested that providing two collections in November and only one in March would help gardeners while not increasing the number of brown bin collections.

Collection of the Brown bins should be 4 weekly between November-February however I am aware that in some areas one collection was cancelled over the Festive period. This was not ideal but resources were needed for domestic waste collections. This will be reviewed for the next festive period to ensure residents do get this collection.

- 5. Christmas trees.** This is a difficult one. Keeping trees until the scheduled January collection (or even February in some cases) causes problems for those with trees to dispose. Also, trees left out on the street cause problems for many pedestrians. Would it be possible to have a “tree collection day” in early January? Or, could local points be advertised where owners could take trees for collection?

Due to resources we are unable to put on additional collections for Christmas Trees. If residents can't wait for the collection then they can take trees to any of our recycling centre. They are listed on our website and we also listed them on the festive collections page this year.

A meeting is scheduled with senior management this week to discuss collections over the festive period and other lessons learned. I will discuss the points you have made and thank you for taking the time to highlight your concerns.

Euan Calder