

Grange Prestonfield Community Council
Cameron House Community Education Centre
Minutes 21st March 2018

Present: Janet Sidaway (**JS**) (Chair), Tony Harris (**TH**), Andreas Grothey (**AG**) (Treasurer), Sue Tritton (**ST**), Maureen Edwards (**ME**), David Stevenson (**DS**), Bill Reid (**BR**), Eileen Francis (**EF**), Ian Chisholm (**IC**), Ellen-Raissa Jackson (**ERJ**), Joe Griffin (**JG**), Doreen Allerton (**DA**), Julian Newman (**JN**), Cllr Ian Perry (**IP**)
Guest: Oliver Glick, EUSA

Apologies: Mike Hunter (**MH**) (Vice-Chair), Henry Philip (**HP**), Denis Stevens (**DeS**), Ian Murray MP

Absent: Philip Murray (**PM**), Irene Hood (**IH**)

1. **Welcome** JS welcomed everyone – and introduced the speaker, Oliver Glick.

2. **Declarations of Interest.** None

3. **Minutes of the Meeting 21st February 2018**

The minutes had been previously circulated – TH was thanked for doing them.

Proposed by DS, seconded by BR.

4. **Matters Arising (not on the agenda)**

- a) IC said he was concerned that the GPCC objection to the Planning Application for 44 Blacket Ave hadn't mentioned the "tree issue". TH explained that he had visited the site and couldn't see a better solution for the proposed driveway than the one proposed and had therefore made a "comment" rather than "objection". IC suggested that GPCC should look carefully at the CEC "Tree Policy" – he would email slides from a recent presentation.
- b) A report from Cllr Cameron Rose was needed about the position of Community Councils on the new Localities committees.
- c) Item 6a - 41 Priestfield Road; TH had looked into the reference to a derelict property in Kirkhill Road and suggested it is No. 38 which has a current approval, granted in 2016, for a 2-storey house. Construction has not started although some work had been done on a previous approval.

5. **Purpose Built Student Accommodation - Oliver Glick (EUSA)**

Oliver Glick said he would concentrate on private student halls rather than those built by the University (such as Pollock Halls); there is no control on rents; the developers are only interested in profit and there is very little, if any, community engagement. He had spoken on the same matter to Southside and Leith CCs. Edinburgh is the fastest growing student economy in the UK and over 50% of students are international who need the accommodation provided by private halls. In some cases the University had paid a subsidy to get the contract and is able to subsidise rents. Private halls are also exempt from the Tenancy Act. EUSA has concerns about private halls and is campaigning for the market to be regulated. EUSA would like all accommodation to be University owned and integrated in the community. He then answered questions:

- a) DA asked what happens during vacations? OG said most halls have a 38week contract but some private halls offer 51week contract.
- b) TH commented that it is a speculative market and a concern of GPCC is that purpose built student accommodation is not suitable for normal rental use. OG replied that there are too many students for the available accommodation and the numbers are expected to grow. He also said that many post-grad students can be lonely and welcome communal living.
- c) Cllr IP commented that there will be student and social housing on the "Sick Kids" site; also that student housing and hotels provided the best profits for developers. JS asked Cllr IP to report to us about Council policy on the matter.
- d) Agreed that Cllr IP would meet OG and TH to discuss the matter.

JS thanked OG who then left.

6. External Reports

a) Police Report: There was no Police presence.

b) Councillor's Report: Cllr IP reported:

- i) The Council budget had been approved on 22 February; at the last minute an extra £10m meant that some cuts could be avoided including the proposed Library closures. Much of the extra money would go to school buildings.
- ii) He is now Convenor of the "Education, Childrens and Families Committee". Edinburgh is a growing city which means more schools are needed. The new Boroughmuir School is already too small and £0.5m has been allocated for an extension. James Gillespie's is the current Gaelic medium high school but there are capacity issues. He noted that there is a house price premium of about £20k for property in the catchment areas of these two schools.
- iii) Community consultation on plans for the "Sick Kids" is now closed; many objections raised at meetings had been addressed (including the building heights); the community still wants a community space.
- iv) The Locality Committee had now met and will talk to CCs about representation. He doesn't know when this will happen but agreed to find out.
- v) ERJ asked if money allocated to schools could be used for e.g. playparks and about plans for Green Routes to school. Cllr IP agreed to find out and commented that Boroughmuir needs a road closure in order to create a safe route.

7. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

TH said that EACC had a presentation from Sarah Hughes-Jones, the Information Compliance Manager who had drafted the CEC guidance.

GPCC needs to go through the guidance in detail and with some scepticism and he suggested a small working party. This could be an opportunity to "tidy up" GPCC activities – in particular the relationship of the Newington Cemetery group with GPCC. JS suggested the same group who had looked at the Secretary position. This was agreed.

8. Reports of Interest Groups

a) Planning: TH had circulated a report. He particularly mentioned:

67 Prestonfield Avenue: Revised drawings show that the path is to remain open – this met GPCC's main objection.

41 Priestfield Road: This was refused on 16 March

86-88 Mayfield Road: Approved apart for the ATM.

7 Mayfield Terrace: Proposed rooflights look like mini-dormers – a reason for objection. IC will look closely and liaise with TH.

Planning Applications and Scheme of Delegation: Full details about objectors now appear immediately on the portal (previously only names were listed). TH has been pursuing this and the issue of applicants hiding behind the names of agents. CEC Planning Service has stated they will not review the first issue and the second has been referred to CEC Legal services. The Planning Committee on 14th March took a decision that 20 objections are now needed in order to refer an application to committee for decision.

AirBnB: Conference arranged by Cockburn Ass on 14 March.

ST had attended – she reported that it had really turned into a debate on the "Short-term let" market. Examples had been given of cities which have introduced regulation (including Barcelona, Berlin, Paris and Amsterdam). Examples of advantages included better use of unused accommodation when more rooms for a growing tourist trade are needed. Disadvantages included disturbance for residents (especially in tenements), loss of long-term rental accommodation and loss of community. Cllr IP said that a registration scheme is needed – MSPs to be lobbied to include this in the Planning Bill.

b) Roads and Transport: JS reported the information (previously circulated by email) that 71 new RPP spaces would be provided in the area and expressed the thanks of all on GPCC to Graham Dann for his hard work on this. She also noted that the work on the pavement in East Mayfield had been supported by a grant from the SCNP.

Due to the retirement of Graham from GPCC there is a vacancy for convenor of the Transport Group and she asked for volunteers for this position to contact MH.

ERJ asked if anyone had contacted Scottish Widows about the reduction in free parking spaces in B7 – JS said she would check.

c) Communications and Publicity: Fraser Graham had not yet been able to update GPCC on his initial work on the new website.

d) Environment and Astley Ainslie site: ST reported that a meeting of the Community Council group with NHS Lothian had taken place on 22 February. The main matter to report is that the NHS is reviewing plans for the transfer of patients and staff currently on the AAH site – this review also involves other NHS sites. The result of this is a delay in the disposal date for the AAH site – NHSL will produce a revised timeline.

e) Newington Cemetery:

1. **Working Party:** The previous Monday had been postponed for a week due to the snow.
2. **Susan Falconer (CEC Biodiversity Officer)** had visited on 12 March to talk about wildlife areas in the cemetery and was very enthusiastic.
3. **Snowdrop Walk:** About 50 had attended and the weather was good.
4. **GPCC and Cemetery group:** There was discussion about the pros and cons of the Cemetery group separating from GPCC and forming an independent “Friends” group. It was agreed that this should be decided by those involved in the Cemetery group.

9. Reports from Office Bearers

a) Chair’s Report: A report on the role of the secretary had been circulated. The document was noted and the following agreed:

- i. Taking of minutes would rotate around members (AG has agreed for April 2018).
- ii. The person inviting an outside speaker would be responsible for all arrangements.
- iii. Someone is required to deal with publicity for meetings.
- iv. Agreed to co-opt a representative from the Prestonfield Residents Association.

There was some discussion about whether the same agenda items were needed at all meetings.

b) Treasurer’s Report: AG reported that the current balance in the account is £3425.14. The main change is that the private donation for the restoration of the JVS Taylor grave has come out. Cheques have been issued but not cashed leaving GPCC with about £2100 to spend.

ERJ mentioned the cost of posters for the Snowdrop Walk – agreed to pay for these.

c) Secretary’s report. Nothing to report.

10. Reports from Outside Groups:

a) SCNP and subgroups: There had been no meetings.

b) EACC: TH reported about the meeting on 22 February when GDPR had been discussed. EACC is due to have an enhanced role in the Edinburgh Partnership and the Licensing Forum. EACC had made comments on two CEC Consultations on the Edinburgh Economy Strategy and on Developer Contributions and Infrastructure Delivery.

11. AOCB and Open Forum - Nothing was raised.

12. Date of next meeting– Wednesday 18th April 2018

The meeting closed at 9.00pm