

Grange Prestonfield Community Council

Cameron House Community Education Centre

16 May 2018, following the AGM

Minutes

Present: Janet Sidaway (Chair, JS), Mike Hunter (Vice Chair, MH), Andreas Grothey (Treasurer, AG), Tony Harris (TH), Ellen-Raisa Jackson (ERJ), Henry Philip (HP), Cllr Alison Dickie (AD).

Apologies: Ian Chisholm, Maureen Edwards, Eileen Francis, Joe Griffin, Julian Newman, Denis Stevens, Sue Tritton, Ian Murray MP.

Absent: Irene Hood, Philip Murray, William Reid, David Stevenson

1. **Welcome:** JS welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the 2018/19 year

2. **Declarations of Interest:** none

3. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 April 2018:**

These had been circulated. Proposer (HP), Seconder (TH)

4. **Matters arising not covered in the agenda**

JS said that the date on which GPCC had been invited to a walk-about of the area was not September 18th, but sometime in September 2018. JS said she would arrange a definite date with Sarah Burns. It was agreed to discuss at the June meeting what to focus on in the walk-about.

5. **Reports (external)**

a) **Police Report**

It was agreed to bring this to the top of the agenda to enable PC Johnny Wong, who was deputising for PC Neil Mackay and Christopher Harris, to return to duty as soon as possible. There had been a spate of OLPs (theft by opening lockfast places, excluding motor vehicles) and housebreaking mainly in the Prestonfield area. The youths responsible for these had now migrated to Marchmont, Oswald Road and Sciennes where they were breaking car windows and stealing valuables. Bicycles and mopeds were common targets, and angle grinders were used to cut through chains. A cyclist was attacked in Middle Meadow Walk and there had been some domestic incidents in Prestonfield Road but, otherwise it had been relatively quiet in the GPCC area. MH said there had been two house break-ins in his street to steal car keys. HP asked if there was still a problem with motorbikers in Moredun. PC Wong said that this problem would never be solved because it was a policy of Police Scotland not to pursue youths on motorbikes or mopeds in case they were killed or injured in the pursuit. There is a team working on the recovery of bicycles but, when they come upon a cache of stolen bikes, they often find that they have been broken up to be reassembled as new bikes which makes them untraceable. AD said that these thefts were part of a much bigger issue in the Southside where youngsters were being failed through lack of parental care. The big question was, "why do these kids not feel part of society?" Finally, the GPCC regretted that it still had not received crime statistics for the area so that trends could be examined. The answer was that unified statistics are kept for the whole of Scotland and they are not broken down into smaller areas. In summary, however, it was PC Wong's view that things were not getting worse in the GPCC area.

b) **Councillor's Report**

- AD said that there were still some issues around the Prestonfield area. The Street Soccer Scotland proposals for a football-themed complex for the homeless on Morgan Playing Fields was coming up

on the horizon. Because Street Soccer tries to work closely with the community, they were leafleting all households nearby. However, objections to the proposal were coming particularly from the residents of King's Meadow. There will be a meeting of residents on 6th June.

- There have been several homelessness issues in Prestonfield, particularly regarding people having to leave their tenancies because of a reduction of their benefits.
- Though it is located mainly in Southside, youth crime, as reported by PC Wong earlier in the evening was extending into the GPCC area. It is part of a wider problem of youth disaffection and the Council is trying to get to the bottom of the reasons for this.

HP asked if a cutback of community policing was partly responsible. AD responded that the police were concentrating on hotspots but, even then, they were being run off their feet. There was also the issue that local police are sometimes pulled away to provide a bigger presence in other parts of the city, for example, during the Festival.

6. South East Locality Committee

After learning at a very late stage that deputations could appear at the meeting, JS, MH and TH prepared a statement which they made to the SELC. [The whole meeting can be viewed on the Council Webcast.] HP congratulated them on the effectiveness of their performance which led into a very long discussion sparked off by a proposal from Councillor Burgess dealing with how community groups could best be consulted and involved. The meeting ultimately decided that some of his proposals were unrealistic as far as timescale was concerned, and the following motion by Councillor Rose was passed on the casting vote of the Chair:

1. To agree to adopt the option set out in paragraph 3.7.3 of the report as follows: "That communities could feed in to their elected members using existing channels. Items could then be added to the agenda via motions, petitions, through the work programme or raised by deputations".
2. To bring to future meetings more precise detail which gives due consideration to the other 3 options set out in paragraphs 3.7.1, 3.7.2 and 3.7.4 of the report and the suggestions within the motion submitted by Councillor Burgess in order to ensure input from community groups in an efficient way.

JS said she had prepared a note of the meeting, but many members had not received it. She will circulate it again. Their 10-minute statement was followed by many questions from councillors, but the debate did drift on too long. She was concerned that decisions would be postponed and nothing would happen. She also feared that CCs would be bypassed by going direct to organisations such as housing associations. MH added that the Council had not provided specific detail about the consultations that had been held, and GPCC was not the only one not to be consulted. It was suggested that representative from the community councils should meet to discuss how best to make an input.

Before leaving for another engagement, AD acknowledged that Localities were still feeling their way on how best to engage CCs.

TH said he was opposed to the first part of the motion, i.e. always to feed things through the ward councillors. Although its ward councillors were excellent, GPCC cannot run the risk of issues raised being handled in a party political manner.

HP said that, in his experience, doing anything through the council was very slow. The main trouble with Councillor Burgess' proposal was that he wanted CCs to be told in advance the issues that were likely to arise in the Locality meetings, but officers said that they had to follow a specific timetable. Everything depended on the timing of the APMs (agenda planning meetings). HP had therefore asked the Chair of the SELC for the dates of these meetings, because it seemed to him that, if the GPCC wanted to influence the agenda of Locality meetings, it might have to consider changing the dates of its own meetings so that it might submit ideas before the APM met. That is the only way that the CC can influence things rather than just reacting to decisions already taken. Several CCs in the South East Locality could even meet on the same night without causing problems for the councillors, since they operated on a rota basis. Issues could

be discussed by email if necessary, though that posed difficulties. He was putting the idea on the table and not asking for an immediate decision.

JS reported that Councillor Mandy Watt, Chair of the South East Locality Committee, had offered to attend the meeting of GPCC on 20 June. It was agreed that this would be very useful.

Newington Library: Towards the end of the Locality meeting, there was a report on the complaint about the noise from the air-conditioning in the Library. It already complied with the regulations, but modifications had been made which it was hoped would reduce the noise level. It will be monitored and a report will come in due course.

7. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

JS had collated comments on her first draft and produced a final draft, which will be published on the GPCC website.

She also tabled a Statement and Privacy notice developed by the Friends of Newington Cemetery which is on their website (www.newington-cemetery.org.uk).

MH said it would be easier to comply if there were stand-alone email addresses for all the office bearers. It was agreed that MH, AG and JS should work on this over the summer.

8. Reports of Interest Groups

(a) **Licensing:** TH drew attention to an application for a late hours catering licence for the garage on Ratcliffe Terrace. Since it had been operating for many years without causing problems it was agreed not to raise any objection.

(b) **Planning:**

TH said that no decisions were called for. GPCC should be pleased that the application to build 25 student flats at 20 Duncan Street had been rejected.

The proposal to convert the pre-school nursery at 4 East Suffolk Road into six dwellings had also been rejected after appeal, but a further appeal has been lodged.

Julian Newman had prepared a good report on the Transport, Mobility and Placemaking Workshops and it had been circulated to the committee.

JS expressed concern that three resident parking places would be lost because the application for the Certificate of Lawful Purpose at Hotel Caledonia had been approved. The parking authorities cannot overturn planning permissions. TH said that Certificates of Lawful Purpose are not open to public consultation and it is a loophole that is being exploited.

(c) **Roads and Transport:** MH had received an email from the Council stating that there was a proposal to put in an improved traffic island on Ratcliffe Terrace between Grange Loan and Duncan Street.

(d) **Publicity:** Six people had opened the Facebook entry about our AGM. The number used to be in the teens. ERJ suggested that spending £2 to ensure wider Facebook circulation would be money well spent.

JS reminded the meeting that we usually send out a newsletter every two to three years to every household in the GPCC area. and we should therefore budget for between £1,000 and £1,500 to be spent on that in 2019, since we would probably have to pay for most newsletters to be delivered.

(e) **Environment:** TH reported that the Astley Ainslie Site Forum met on 26 April. Its membership consists of representatives from CCs in South Edinburgh, NHS Lothian and HUBCO South East (which is the executive contracting arm of the Scottish Futures Trust). The enigmatic discussion seemed to reveal that HUBCO now proposed to proceed in such a way that there would be no public consultation. The Secretariat (provided by the Grange Association) has sent an email on behalf of all the community representatives to NHS Lothian and HUBCO seeking clarification. Daniel Johnson MSP had received different answers and had also sought clarification.

The Forum is concerned that there should not be a repeat of the fiasco surrounding the sale of the Sick Kids. They fear that NHS Lothian and HUBCO are backtracking on statements they made a year ago when the Forum was set up, probably for financial reasons. Relations are strained at the moment.

(f) **Newington Cemetery:** ERJ reported that the GPCC working party has had a good meeting with the Parks Department. Inch Community Centre is going to hand over any unsold plants from a plant sale they are about to have.

GDPR compliance has been updated.

9. Reports of Office Bearers

- **Chair:** Nothing new to report
- **Treasurer:** In the last bank statement (dated 23 April) there was a balance of £2,488.75 with one uncashed cheque for £249.95, giving a net balance of £2,238.80. That includes £299.75 belonging to Newington Cemetery.
- **Secretary:** Nothing to report

10. Reports of Outside Groups

- The EACC met on 18 April and much of the discussion centred on school developments in the west of the city. The general view was that the Localities weren't working very well.
- At the SCNP meeting there was also unhappiness about the lack of involvement of community councils in the Localities process. However, councillors said they were determined to find a solution to this problem. Sarah Burns pointed out that consultation about the Edinburgh Partnership would continue into the autumn.
- An email had been received from Sarah Burns about community grants applications for the current year. The only time-limited application received was from the Meadows Festival for £5,000 to support the Festival on 2-3 June 2018. The GPCC supported this application.

11. AOCB:

JS had received a letter from King's Building asking if they might make a presentation to the CC. It was agreed to ask for more clarification about the purpose of the request.

12. Date of next meeting: 20 June 2018