

Grange Prestonfield Community Council
Cameron House Community Education Centre
20 June 2018 at 7.00pm
Draft Minute

Present: Janet Sidaway (Chair, JS), Mike Hunter (Vice Chair, MH), Tony Harris (TH), Ellen-Raissa Jackson (ERJ), Julian Newman (JN), Maureen Edwards (ME), Joe Griffin (JG), Sue Tritton (ST), Ian Chisholm (IC), Cllrs Cameron Rose (CR) and Mandy Watt (MW).

Apologies: Henry Philip, Andreas Grothey, Denis Stevens, Eileen Francis, Ian Murray MP.

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

1. Welcome: JS welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Declarations of interest: As a resident TH indicated a potential interest in the development of the former Royal Blind School. It was agreed that any objections to the plans by the GPCC would not be signed by TH.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 May: These had been circulated, and were approved with minor corrections. Proposer TH, Seconder ERJ.

4. Matters arising not covered in the agenda: JS indicated that a walkabout with representatives of the South East Locality Committee (SELC) was being arranged. 18 September was agreed but this may have to be changed. The focus would be on Dalkeith Road and Prestonfield/Priestfield.

5. Reports External

a) Police Report

PCs Neil Mackay and Paul Gunderson were present. PC Gunderson indicated that Operation Agora focussing on pedal cycle theft in south east Edinburgh had resulted in the recovery of 32 cycles in one house. A further 9 had been found elsewhere. An 18 year old male had been charged with multiple thefts of cycles.

The police had recently attended an event at Two Wheels in Peffermill Road giving advice on motor cycle security.

Under the auspices of Scotland Challenge, the police had been involved along with the University of Edinburgh, students and local residents to re-design Nicolson Square in order to reduce anti-social behaviour.

There had been a rise in house breakings in the locality, particularly the Grange and Blacket areas. A sixteen year old had been charged.

b) Councillor's Report

CR indicated that Councillors had been involved in a number of walkabouts round the city, many with an emphasis on housing.

He raised the issue of the new system to charge residents from 8 October to have their garden waste collected. Garden waste collection was not a statutory function so a charge was possible. £25 had been set. The on-line system of registering was somewhat complicated, a point supported by IC who had just completed it.

ST and ME raised the issue of usage and signage of disabled parking places. CR undertook to look at this.

6. South East Locality Committee

Councillor Mandy Watt, chair of the SELC, who had been invited to the meeting, introduced the item. She addressed how 'Locality Committees' linked in to Community Councils. At the same time, there was an ongoing review of the Edinburgh Partnership arrangements of which the local Neighbourhood Partnerships were part. Her strong view was that the majority of Community Councils felt that the creation of Locality Committees reduced their involvement in City affairs. The structure and strict time rules did not fit well with Community Council arrangements.

CR made the point that LCs were extraordinarily bureaucratic. They needed more powers over decisions and budgets. The problem with Neighbourhood Partnerships, which in his view had not worked well, was that any recommendations with financial implications could only be agreed by Councillors alone. Hence the LCs as executive rather than advisory were comprised exclusively of Councillors.

TH made the point that the best way Community Councils could impact on LCs was by establishing an advisory forum of Community Councils within the LC area although there was a risk of it being another talking shop. There was general support for the forum idea and the GPCC would seek ways to involve other Community councils within the SELC area.

MW said the SELC was feeling its way on participatory budgeting, particularly given the pressures on Council resources. She welcomed the discussion which had been very helpful.

7. Morgan Playing Fields, 73 Peffermill Road, EH16 5JW

JS introduced the briefing note on this issue which had been circulated to GPCC members. The Morgan Playing Fields were a community resource, under Edinburgh City Council ownership, for local sporting use. This use had been confirmed and the pitches improved as a *quid pro quo* for losing some of Prestonfield Park to build the current Cameron House. In particular they were used by Prestonfield Primary School and for local football games. There was now an application under the Community Asset Transfer legislation for the transfer of the Morgan Playing Fields to two organisations, Street Soccer Scotland and Edinburgh South Football Club. The intention was to provide 'Change Centre' facilities, namely accommodation for homeless people and 5-a-side football pitches for some of Edinburgh's homeless but also allow continued use of the amenity by local residents. It was noted the GPCC had not been formally contacted about the proposal.

CR explained the three stage procedure of the Community Asset Transfer legislation. The purposes of the proposal must meet the requirements of the Community Asset Transfer legislation. A business case had to be submitted to the Council where an assessment of the realism of the proposal would be made, in particular whether the proposal met the community benefit test. Finally if these tests were met the Finance and Resources Committee would consider the proposals for financing the scheme. Finding the capital costs of some £5million would be problematic. A firm proposal was expected to be submitted in the next 2-3 weeks, which would then be assessed by a CEC committee including all 4 local councillors.

There were others with an interest apart from the Council. Wimpey had some interest in the site having had permission to build 86 houses on half the site in 1996. There had been an undertaking by the Council that the remainder would be kept as playing fields. Morgan Playing Fields is part of the Fields in Trust charity, which works with landowners to protect green spaces in perpetuity.

TH indicated the proposed new use of the site was problematic. It was a community resource within the green belt listed in the Council's Open Space Audit Strategy. Flooding was also an issue as the site was part of flood plain management.

Two members of the public who attended summarised the concerns of local residents. At a recent public meeting organised by local residents a significant majority of those present were against the proposal. Public consultation had been very limited. Football interests had predominated. Local residents had not been properly consulted and hence had organised their own meeting.

Local residents were concerned about the loss of public amenities for recreational purposes. They were opposed to housing development on the site. The proponents had indicated that local residents and the school could still use the facilities but this would be only when other users were not doing so and on a charging basis. For the proposed numbers predicted to use the new facilities the number of parking places was insufficient.

It was agreed that the GPCC should wait for the formal proposal for Stage Two of the Community Transfer process, and if the timescale allowed, hear the views of the developers. Meanwhile individuals with strong views for or against should contact our CEC councillors who will be involved in the decision process.

8. Dalkeith Road

ERJ spoke about safety concerns near the shops in Dalkeith Road as a result of the number and location of communal bins. There were too many bins often in stupid locations. The 30mph limit was also a problem in that part of Dalkeith Road. There had been a trial in Leith of fewer bins with more frequent collections and it was suggested this was an option for this part of Dalkeith Road, perhaps as a follow up trial. It was agreed that the issue could be considered during the walkabout with the SELC in September.

9. Reports of Interest Groups

a) Planning/Licensing

TH supplemented his report as follows:

He indicated the proposal for 25 student flats at 20 Duncan Street had been refused but the owner was appealing.

An exhibition had been held of housing proposals for the site of the former Royal Blind School. It was agreed the GPCC would not comment until the detailed planning application had been submitted.

In relation to the King's Building major development, TH successfully argued that the GPCC should support in principle but make detailed comments on the planning application when submitted.

ST indicated that the 'Sick Kids' hospital site proposals, which was adjacent to the GPCC area, may come up in the summer but any issues could be dealt with through correspondence.

b) Roads and Transport

Nothing to report. JN would report on progress on the pothole survey at the next meeting.

c) Communications/Publicity

The agenda for this meeting had been posted, as usual, on our FB page. Boosting this post within a 1 mile radius, at a maximum cost of £1, had resulted in it being viewed 73 times.

d) Environment(including Astley Ainslie)

ST indicated that there had been rather unsatisfactory communications from NHS Lothian to the AA group considering proposed developments. A professional planner had now joined the group. Another group had been established to consider a community buy out of AA. There had been delays and lack of clarity from NHS Lothian on what was happening.

e) Newington Cemetery

ERJ said things were going well. She sought some £200 from GPCC resources to plant round the war memorial area. This was agreed.

10. Reports of Office Bearers

Chair's Report: nothing additional to report.

Treasurer's Report: Andreas had sent apologies

Secretary's Report: this had been circulated

11. Reports of Outside Groups

TH indicated that there had been some discussion in the EACC about its role in the Edinburgh Partnership Review. There had also been discussion of the idea of a Community Councils forum in the various LCs as highlighted in the SELC agenda item.

12. AOCB. There was none.

13. Date of next meeting: 19 September 2018