

# Grange/Prestonfield Community Council

Minutes of 16 January 2019

Meeting at Cameron House Community Education Centre

**Present:** Janet Sidaway (JS) Chair, Mike Hunter (MH) Vice-Chair & Secretary, Andreas Grothey (AG) Treasurer, Maureen Edwards (ME), Alan Gilmour (ALG), Tony Harris (TH), Ellen-Raissa Jackson (ERJ), Julian Newman (JN), Bill Reid (BR), David Stevenson (DS), Sue Tritton (ST), Ian Chisholm (IC), Isabel Clark (ISC).

**Apologies:** Joe Griffin, Ian Murray MP, Henry Phillip, Denis Stevens.

**Absent:** Philip Murray, Irene Hood.

**In attendance:** PC Neil Mackay, Police Scotland (NM).

**Members of the Public:** Kenneth Dyer (KD), Brian Bourner.

**1. Welcome and Apologies:** At 7pm JS welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Isabel Clark, who is the new nominated representative of the Craigmillar Park Association (CPA)

**2. Declarations of Interest:** None

**5a) Police Report:** JS stated that with the agreement of the meeting this item would be taken out of order to allow best use of police time. Neil Mackay reported on a range of incidents and arrests in the Southside area. Most recently, he stopped a car on the Grange and seized £1,000-worth of drugs. A man has been arrested in England following an attempted robbery at the TSB cashpoint on South Clerk St. There has been a series of break-ins to businesses and shops (Clerk St, West Nicholson St), including Pizza Hut, where a man was arrested in the act of breaking in. A spate of car vandalism involving tyre slashing (Findhorn Place/Relugas Road) in early December is currently being investigated. Police have been speaking to youths who have been congregating and drinking in Cameron House Avenue. He noted that with the cold weather they might be looking to come into local stairs and that residents should call the police if they have concerns.

Over the Christmas period, police carried out lots of vehicle and driver checks. PC Mackay noted that he was disappointed that 1 in 15 drivers who were breathalysed in the City were found to be over the limit – double the number from last year.

Questions to NM: 1. JS referred to the excellent police report and statistics by ward provided to the SE Locality Committee (SELC) last time, but that we had not received them yet. NM said he would send them to JS to circulate. 2. ST asked whether the number of drink drivers caught was as a result of the lowering of the limit. NM could not say, but emphasized that the new limit is very low and people can be caught the next morning. 3. ERJ asked for an update on a sexual assault in Dalkeith Road in June. NM said he would forward the information to JS. NM left the meeting at 7.20pm.

**3. Minutes of 17 November Meeting:** Approved (with the addition of TH's name as minute taker), proposed by ERJ, seconded by ST.

**4. Matters arising not covered by Agenda:** None

**5b) Councillor's Report:** No councillor was present as Ian Perry had been ill and his apologies had not been received in time. The meeting noted that this was disappointing.

**6. South East Locality Committee:** ST and MH reported on the Local Community Planning Partnerships consultation meeting, which they attended on 10 January. This meeting was for South East Locality only: there appear to have been similar meetings for the other 3 localities. There were about 24 attendees, including 3 CEC Councillors and 4 CEC officials. At least 6 other CCs were represented but the invitation

went out to “a wide representation of the community” – although it was noted that this seemed to be just an email list. It was a concern that there was no record of those attending (or in what capacity) and that the feedback was minimal. A slide presentation suggested that the purpose of the meeting was only to comply with consultation on Community Planning as a requirement of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The proposed structure for this includes Local Community Planning Partnerships (one for each Locality) and Neighbourhood Networks (probably around 4 for each Locality). There was a discussion about the potential positives of neighbourhood networks (particularly that they would be closer to ward level and so more in touch), but a concern that that they would be much less useful than the neighbourhood partnerships as they are not resourced. It was noted that there is no mention of CCs in the new structure. IC questioned whether this was deliberate in order to reduce CC involvement. There was further discussion on the need for groups to register as formal interest groups (according to CEC guidance) and the importance of CCs’ statutory functions. It was agreed that the lack of a formal place for CCs in the structure was a concern and that the consultation appeared to be window dressing. JS suggested that GPCC keep a close eye on developments.

The next SELC meeting is 21 January. JS noted that GPCC members can only observe the proceedings and can only speak as part of a deputation. AIG noted that he could not recommend attending if not part of a deputation. It was further noted that the meeting is webcast, so can be watched at home.

**7. Morgan Playing Fields:** AIG updated the meeting on this. As agreed at our November meeting, a deputation from GPCC, led by AIG and TH, with local resident Mat Lopez attended the meeting of the SELC on 26 November to discuss a proposal to lease this field owned by CEC, which was due to go before the CEC Finance Committee on 4 December. Edinburgh South CFC also had a deputation, but Street Soccer did not appear. The item took 2 hours and the SELC finally agreed that there was a need for further community consultation. Since then Street Soccer has withdrawn its application. Edinburgh South CFC will continue with a yearly let of pitches. This is no longer a planning issue and the field is not currently under threat, although it was noted that other football clubs had taken an interest in the site. JS thanked AIG and TH for their contribution on behalf of the GPCC, and noted that Cllr Cameron Rose’s support on this issue had been very helpful.

AIG also noted that Cllr Rose had been very helpful in attempting to relaunch Prestonfield Residents Association, which has been facing the collapse since the death of long-time chair, Sadie Rooney. There is to be a relaunch meeting on 4 February, 7.30pm at Cameron House. CR has printed leaflets, which he and AIG are distributing. BR noted that he attended PRA meetings regularly but hadn’t heard about this one. AIG explained that Sadie Rooney had had the contact list and that was why the leaflets/relaunch were needed. TH suggested that the PRA register as an interest group and send a representative to GPCC.

**8. Former Royal Blind School Site Craigmillar Park:** IsC reported on the meeting of 10 December, which had been organised by TH to enable local residents to hear Cala Homes present their forthcoming planning application proposals. The meeting was well-attended by residents. IsC ran through the timeline of the site, noting that it is still owned by the Blind School. The proposal is for 52 housing units, with work to build them lasting 3 years. Guide prices for the homes are: £230,000 for a studio flat to £800,000 to £900,000 for a townhouse. Discussion with the CEC was taking place to see if affordable housing could be built off site. The site is intended to have open access for pedestrians. Questions had been raised about parking provision and whether the site residents could apply for permits, which would impact current local residents. The main concern had been the height of the buildings, particularly

impacted on the houses on Mentone Terrace. There were also concerns about the building materials, particularly the bricks at the back of the houses (again, which faced Mentone Terrace). The general consensus was that a housing development on the site was positive, but there were concerns about the details. ST asked that any GPCC comment included concerns about affordable housing and environmental impacts.

TH reported on the planning aspect. Only a demolition application is out for public consultation (closing date 8 Feb). It was agreed that TH would circulate a comment on the application to the subgroup, saying that we did not object to the demolition, but that this should not be taken as consent to any replacement building. It was agreed that GPCC would take a view on the affordable housing implications, to be discussed at a future meeting when the planning application is live. KD asked how affordability was calculated and TH noted that is a complicated form of subsidy.

**9. Roll-out of 20mph speed limit city wide:** MH noted that GPCC had expertise on this, as we had piloted the first 20mph area. The CEC roll-out is now complete and the consultation on its monitoring closes on 1 March. It was agreed that GPCC should respond to the consultation, via a small sub-group made up of JN, ST, AG and MH.

#### **10. Reports of Interest Groups:**

**a) Planning:** TH stated that the report had been circulated. TH has drafted comments on: 143 Mayfield Rd – an application for front garden parking. ST noted that such applications take away road parking. It was agreed that TH submit an objection. Historic application at 1 Mentone Terrace for houses to replace lock-up garages - it was agreed that TH would resubmit our original objection. 20 Duncan St Hendry and MacDonald Garage conversion – the new applications are not yet out for public consultation, but KD has invited GPCC and West Blasket Association on a site visit. It was agreed that ST, TH, IC and MH would visit on 23 January at 12.30. KD emphasized the contribution that the garage makes to the community, carrying out over 1,000 MOTs for local residents every year. He explained that the business will move to more modern premises in a new location, but will remain local. He explained that the current premises cannot be heated and are unsuitable for working in. He asked that the GPCC remember that the family business is also part of the community and wants to work with us to improve the application. He noted that they had taken on board many of the points made by TH on behalf of GPCC as part of the planning process and that the proposals had many positives. He added that they want the student accommodation to be high quality and that they plan to build and operate it as a family business. ME congratulated KD on his comments and it was agreed that KD's engagement was very positive and welcome. TH noted that the GPCC can only comment on applications and does not make the decisions. Our involvement is also dictated by the planning timetable. All welcomed the invitation for a site visit and the spirit of consultation. ST noted that the Sick Kids application is going before the Development Management subcommittee on 6 February. Marchmont Sciennes CC will be the lead objector and the GPCC comments have been forwarded to MSCC. JN noted that the decision on the Abercorn Guest House HMO was disappointing and raises questions about the point of the planning system.

**b) Licensing:** Nothing to report.

**c) Roads/Transport:** JN submitted a written report to the meeting on the Pothole Survey and bus overcrowding and it was agreed that this should be attached to these Minutes. It was agreed that JN would draft a letter from GPCC to ward councillors informing them of the results of the pothole survey for comment and action. JN circulated a response from Ian Bieniowski, network performance manager for Lothian Buses, which explains that the full buses are a systemic problem. IB had offered to talk to

GPCC and it was agreed that JN should invite him to the March meeting.[Note: the invitation has been accepted.] TH noted that membership of EBUG helped us better understand the wider transport issues affecting our area. ST reported progress on the removal of a particular disabled bay which was no longer needed. Cllr Ian Perry had circulated a letter to Grange Terrace residents.

**d) Communications/Publicity:** MH reported that the GPCC Facebook page continued to show an appreciable number of hits and the advert had reached 491 people, many of whom were under 25. It was agreed that we would discuss the newsletter and election communications at our next meeting.

**e) Environment (including Astley Ainslie Hospital Site):** ST circulated the Grange Association newsletter, which included a report on the successful leaf clearing operation. Details can be found on page 5 at the GA website: <http://gaedin.co.uk/wp/newsletters>. ST reported that there will be a public meeting on the Astley Ainsley on 14 February at the Eric Liddell centre, primarily to explain the difference between the AA Community Engagement Group, which is working on the development brief for the site and the AA Community Trust whose primary aim is to achieve community ownership of all or part of the site. It was agreed that GPCC would contribute up to £50 for the cost of hall hire for the meeting (assuming other CCs involved would also contribute).

**f) Newington Cemetery:** ERJ reported that she had been informed that the decision on the Community Grants Fund application had been delayed until February. A Snowdrop Walk is planned for Sunday 24 February. FONC has been given a donation to pay for publicity for this. TH noted that the Newington Cemetery website has been updated with further archive material and clickable map: <https://www.newington-cemetery.org.uk/index.html>.

#### **11. Reports from Office Bearers:**

**a) Chair:** JS thanked everyone for their hard work.

**b) Treasurer's Report:** AG reported that we have £3104.03 in our bank account. GPCC has paid £40 for our Cockburn Association membership and the Newington Cemetery group has spent £77.50 and received a donation of £50. It seems unlikely that Fraser Graham, a former GPCC councillor will ever cash his cheque for £52.

**c) Secretary:** Nothing to report.

#### **12. AOCB:**

(i). Start time of GPCC meetings. ST suggested that the start time of GPCC meetings should be brought forward to 6.45pm in order to allow more time for discussion. JS said that the point of having sub-groups was to allow more time for discussion on strategic issues at GPCC level. Conveners of sub-groups could arrange sub-group meetings if they wished, as well as liaising by email. It was agreed that written reports also help speed up discussion. JS agreed to consult members on the start time by email.

(ii). TH raised the point that members who do not attend a certain number of meetings, are then considered to no longer be members of the CC, and members who are at risk should be sent a reminder. This was agreed.

#### **13. Date of Next Meeting:** 20th February 2019.

JS closed the meeting at 8.50pm

Meeting minuted by ERJ

Appendix: Roads/Transport Report

## GPCC Roads and Transport Report January 2019

- (1) It was agreed by GPCC officers that 20 mph limit should be a separate agenda item
- (2) Two main topics are addressed under this report
  - a. Road defects study
  - b. Edinburgh Bus Users' Group

### Road defects study

The road defects study has identified 54 serious roadway defects within GPCC which is an alarming number considering that the report covers only 10 streets. Very few of the surveyed footways have been well repaired or maintained, notable exceptions being the footway on the east side of Mayfield Gardens between Peel Terrace and East Mayfield (which had a rocky start but is now in pretty good state) and the footways in Upper and South Gray Street. Pedestrian hazards resulting from poor surface maintenance and recurrent cracking are to be found at several crossings, both light-controlled and without lights.

At bus stops, and also at junctions where buses and heavy vehicles are obliged to brake hard, there is a tendency for the additional pressure on the roadway to cause it to subside – particularly near the pavement under the near-side front wheel. In many places this creates a wave-like formation in the tarmac, which sometimes spreads over the kerb and onto the pavement. These wave-like deformations usually lose control of the roadstone of which they are composed, and lumps of stone/tarmac/aggregate get scattered across pavements and roads, in a way that is potentially hazardous to both pedestrians and cyclists. Even greater danger to cyclists comes from deep potholes near the verge, which may be impossible to avoid without swerving into the path of traffic coming from behind. These and other potholes may also be a threat to car suspensions.

One section of extensive re-surfacing was undertaken on the west side of Minto Street after the survey was conducted. Part of the west side of Mayfield Gardens was re-surfaced before the survey, and has so far held good. Many isolated repairs, however, are already breaking up.

We should consider the question whether it is worth continuing to collect such information, and if so what lessons have been learned from the exercise. JS has commented that it has the merit of making us look more carefully at the roads and footways. One possibility is that we should systematically look at the experience, before trying to recruit a larger body of involved citizens into any follow-up study.

### *Brush up your Potholes*

JS kindly drew attention to an interesting programme on Potholes: "In Business" on BBC Radio 4 13/01/2019 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0001ydx>

Many interesting tidbits including research at Brunel which shows that pre-heating the road before filling a pothole improves the bond between the old and new material, thus preventing water getting in and recreating the pothole. Moreover, we thought that distinguishing potholes from other defects was ever so sophisticated: what we didn't know was that there are 15 different types of crack (which can be detected by robots if not by us).

### Edinburgh Bus Users' Group

Following concerns expressed about buses being already full before arriving in our vicinity during rush hours, owing to the expansion of new communities on the periphery, EBUG put me in touch with Iain Bieniowski, Network Performance Manager for Lothian Buses. He has sent a longish reply which I'll circulate, and has offered to come to chat to GPCC at one of our monthly meetings. I think we should think carefully how to make best use of this offer.

EBUG is currently heavily involved in consultations about the remodelling of George Street. I am not sure that this is of direct concern to us, even though it might marginally impact some of the services some of us would use. I propose we just note it and keep an eye on developments.

I have flagged up with EBUG our concerns about possible changes to bus-stop spacing. The general view is that CEC will probably kick the issue into the long grass – but we should look out as it could adversely impact some of our less mobile residents.

Julian Newman, 15/01/2019