

**Grange Prestonfield Community Council**  
**Minutes of 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019 meeting**  
**at Cameron House Community Education Centre**

**Present:** Janet Sidaway (JS) Chair, Mike Hunter (MH) Vice-Chair & Secretary, Ian Chisholm (IC), Maureen Edwards (ME), Alan Gilmour (AIG), Tony Harris (TH), Ellen-Raissa Jackson (ERJ), Julian Newman (JN), Henry Philip (HP), David Stevenson (DS), Cllr Steve Burgess (SB).

**Apologies:** Bill Reid, Joe Griffin, Andreas Grothey, Sue Tritton, Ian Murray MP, Tommy Sheppard MP.

**Absent:** Isabel Clark, Irene Hood, Philip Murray, Denis Stevens.

**In attendance:** PC Paul Rich, Police Scotland (PR).

**Members of the Public:** Kenneth Dyer (KD), Stuart Tooley, University of Edinburgh (StT).

**1. Welcome and Apologies:** JS welcomed all to the meeting.

**2. Declarations of Interest:** None

**5. Reports (external)**

It was agreed to receive the Police Report before other business.

**5a Police report:**

PC Rich gave an overview of local crime trends in the based on recent statistics.

Robberies were up by 12% - this largely reflected a spate of offences by one individual.

Offences of Housebreaking to domestic premises were down by 14% while break-ins to garages and sheds were down 50%, possibly reflecting better security measures on the part of residents, including improved locks and bolts, security lighting and CCTV.

Break-ins to Motor Vehicles were up 40%: this appears to reflect the activities of two main offenders, who had been arrested within the past couple of months. An individual had also been identified as responsible for a large number of bicycle thefts.

Offences relating to supply of illegal drugs were down by 20%. Assaults in general were down by 8% but assaults on emergency workers were up by 18%.

Police Scotland were planning to conduct a number of Road Safety Days within the next couple of months.

Discussion and questions on Police report:

Statistics by Ward are provided to the SE Locality Committee every 6 months. JS had circulated GPCC members the latest, issued in 31 December 2018, covering the period 2/04/2018 - 30/11/2018. It was agreed that the pages relevant to Southside/Newington (Ward 15) would be placed in the Circulation Folder.

HP enquired whether the police officers were aware of what happened to the miscreants after they had been charged? PC Rich said this was not necessarily the case, and outlined the somewhat complex route through which a case might progress: in the case of juveniles, the case would go to the Children's Reporter and in the event of a conviction the decision on sentencing would depend on the offender's previous record; it appeared that only a person with a very substantial record of previous offences would end up in a Young Offender's Institution. TH commented that, in other words, the answer was 'there is no way for us to know'.

JS thanked PC Rich for his contribution.

**3. Minutes:** The Minutes of 16 January 2019 (previously circulated) were proposed by TH and seconded by IC, and approved.

#### **4. Matters Arising from the Minutes:**

##### *a) Revival of Prestonfield Tenants' and Residents' Association*

AlG reported that 50 people had attended the meeting to revive the PT&RA, which would henceforth be known as Prestonfield Residents' Association. A committee of 10 members had been elected by the meeting, and AlG had accepted the role of Secretary.

The news was warmly welcomed by GPCC, and the PRA committee was urged to take the necessary measures to obtain recognition by CEC as a local body with the right to nominate a representative on the Community Council.

##### *b) Starting time for GPCC meetings*

It was agreed to continue the practice of starting GPCC meetings at 7 pm. The Chair reminded members of the subgroups that the point of their existence was to progress business between meetings so that full meetings could conclude expeditiously. This could be achieved by email or by face to face meetings as appropriate.

#### **5. Reports (External)**

##### **b) Councillors Report**

SB explained that on the following day (21<sup>st</sup> Feb) the City of Edinburgh Council would be setting its budget. The budget proposals had only been published this day (20<sup>th</sup> Feb). These proposals involved major cuts, including significant job losses in the Economic Development Department and the removal of many nursery teachers some of whom would transfer to Primary schools.

#### **6 South East Locality Committee**

##### **a) Southside/Newington Ward Subcommittee Meeting, 24<sup>th</sup> Jan 2019**

SB had undertaken to update GPCC on the situation with respect to the resurfacing of the East Mayfield footway, funds for which had been voted by the Neighbourhood Partnership in the 2017 Participatory Budgeting exercise but the work for which had not yet been undertaken. SB explained that the formal approval of matters formerly under the Neighbourhood Partnership had been remitted to two subcommittees of ward councillors, one for Southside/Newington ward and one for Morningside ward. Southside/Newington subcommittee agreed to approve the original allocations, but Morningside subcommittee blocked this as councillors were concerned about a backlog of projects. It was noted that the backlog on East Mayfield dates back at least 11 years. SB confirmed that Southside/Newington councillors would continue to press for the community decisions made through the Neighbourhood Partnership to be implemented.

SB then informed the meeting that not only were Neighbourhood Partnerships to be abolished as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, but that Locality Committees were to be abolished from the same date. Officers would however continue to work in Localities. Neighbourhood Networks will be set up, operating within the same boundaries as the former Neighbourhood Partnerships. GPCC members expressed concern that there was no clear process of communication between the Neighbourhood Networks and the Community Councils. SB stated that there is supposed to be a consultation with Community Councils about their relation to Neighbourhood Networks.

As SB was present TH referred to the related matter of an email to Ward Councillors last autumn to which only SB had responded. GPCC is seeking to explore whether specialist forms of housing such as purpose built student housing, HMOs and short term visitor lets could overall in some areas be crowding out family and market housing. TH for GPCC wanted to explore what statistics might be available to show if there is a trend over time or Ward, accepting that figures would probably not be available down to specific CC areas. SB said he would try to find out what figures might be available from departments such as housing or social work.

**b) Community Council Scheme Review.** JS reported that the response submitted to this formal consultation had been circulated to members. TH explained that on the following day EACC would discuss the CC scheme review and also the latest version of the Local Development Plan. SB stated that there is supposed to be a consultation with Community Councils about their relation to Neighbourhood Networks.

**7. Proposed re-development of Royal Blind School site.** TH gave a brief report on further developments. ME expressed concern about the proposal that the affordable housing element should be provided off-site, which appeared contrary to the aims of the policy. TH explained the outline of Cala's case, which was to do with the alleged difficulty of providing the affordable housing on site in a cost-effective manner.

**8. Astley Ainslie.** To be discussed under 'Environment' subgroup.

**9. Roll out of 20mph speed limit city wide.** We have been asked to comment by March 1 and have agreed to provide input to the evaluation, since this area was the focus of the initial pilot trial. MH, with input from other members of the Roads/Transport subgroup, had drafted a response which was submitted to the meeting for discussion and/or approval. ERJ felt that the tone of the draft placed insufficient emphasis on the positive aspects of the 20mph scheme for pedestrians. IC thought it was inappropriate for us to comment without seeing the evaluation data; JN pointed out that our response was supposed to be part of the evaluation data. MH agreed to redraft the submission to better convey the sense of the meeting, particularly as regards the pedestrian benefits of even a gradual fall in traffic speeds.

**10. Pedestrian Crossing Evaluation – Prestonfield Avenue.** CEC's rejection of the case for a controlled pedestrian crossing in Prestonfield Avenue was met with disappointment. AIG suggested that we should investigate the feasibility of installing railings to prevent children running out at the junction between paths and the road. SB suggested that if the new site was being approved for development, a community contribution to improve the safety of pedestrians should be made a condition of planning approval.

**11. Plans for Newsletter to be published Summer 2019.**

The following agreed to form an ad-hoc subgroup for the production of a Newsletter in summer 2019: MH, ME, ERJ, AG, HP, JS.

**12. Reports of Subgroups**

**a) Planning/Licensing**

It was noted that Planning and Licensing are separate and unconnected so should be treated as separate agenda items even though we have seldom if ever been required to comment on a licensing issue – it is nevertheless one of our statutory responsibilities.

TH reported that the Planning subgroup had agreed to draft a 'neutral' response (precirculated) to the revised proposals for the development of 20 Duncan Street as a student residence. The approach advocated was to make it clear that GPCC did not oppose the revised planning application but flagged up certain matters for consideration by the Planning Department. The neutral response was approved.

In response to a verbal comment from TH about approved changes to the CEC scheme for delegation on planning, IC queried the difference between Local and Householder Developments. TH said that Local meant any development below Major, the latter for instance covering housing of 50 dwellings or more. At "Local" Development level CEC has a further category "Householder" which covers matters such as house extensions, dormers, attic conversions etc, which of course could have an impact on neighbours or the streetscape etc. TH understood that the change to number of representations from 6 to 20 to trigger a reference to CEC planning committee only applied to "Householder", but hoped to provide more information in due course.

### **b) Roads/Transport**

JN had written to the Ward Councillors summarising the findings of our 'Pothole Survey', and had already had a helpful response from Cllr Rose who is pressing for CEC to arrange trials of equipment called a "Road Mole".

Ian Bienieowski of Lothian Regional Buses will address our meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March.

### **c) Communications/Publicity**

See above under item 11.

### **d) Environment**

In the absence of ST, TH reported that there had been an attendance of about 200 people at the meeting in the Eric Liddell centre, Holy Corner, about the Astley Ainslie site. It was emphasised that there are two different groups concerned with public response to the situation, one is concerned with consultation between the adjacent communities and the developers and NHS, and the other is working to try to arrange a community buyout of whole or part of the estate.

JS advised that those wishing to know more about the consultation should contact ST or TH, while those interested in the buyout proposal should contact Robin Harper who is leading it.

### **e) Newington Cemetery**

ERJ reminded members that the annual snowdrop walk in Newington Cemetery was to take place on 24<sup>th</sup> Feb, it had been a great success in previous years and a superb opportunity for people to appreciate the cemetery at its best.

### **13. Reports from Office Bearers**

The Chair thanked all for their hard work.

There being no other competent business and no more time, the meeting adjourned at 8.50 with a reminder that we next meet at 7.00 on 20<sup>th</sup> March.

**Minute Taker JN**