

Grange Prestonfield Community Council
Minutes of meeting held on 15 May 2019
in Cameron House Community Education Centre
immediately after the AGM

Present: Janet Sidaway (Chair, JS), Mike Hunter (Vice-chair and Secretary, MH), Andreas Grothey (Treasurer, AndG), Tony Harris (TH), Bill Reid (BR), David Stevenson (DS), Sue Tritton (ST), Isabel Clark (IC), Ian Chisholm (IanC), Maureen Edwards (ME), Henry Philip (HP), Alan Gilmour (AIG), Cllr Ian Perry (IP).

In attendance: Sgt Barry Mercer and PC Craig Cairns (for Item 1), and Stuart Tooley (StuT), Community Relations Manager, Edinburgh University.

Apologies: Julian Newman (JN), Ellen-Raissa Jackson (ERJ) and Joe Griffin (JG)

Absent: Denis Stevens

After welcoming everyone, JS proposed that the Police Report should be brought to the top of the agenda to enable the policemen to return to their duties on the streets of South Edinburgh as soon as possible. This was agreed.

1 Police Report:

PC Cairns said that this was the first time he and Sgt Mercer had attended GPCC. They were both based at Howdenhall. He apologised for there not being a report at the last meeting, but officers had been deployed dealing with an environment protest in the city centre. Community Police officers had recently spent two successful days in Prestonfield Primary School talking about community policing and careers in the force.

Various offenders had been charged with housebreaking, car theft and breaking into sheds in the Meadows area, assault and robbery in Causewayside, careless driving following a collision on Dalkeith Road, and speeding offences on Grange Road. Following anti-social behaviour in the Meadows involving drugs and alcohol, there will be increased policing there up to and during the summer holidays. Two drugs warrants had been issued and £4,000 of heroin seized on the south side of Edinburgh. A 45 year old female and an 18 year old male had been charged. Rough sleepers have been moved on. Officers also assisted in the clean-up and planting event in Nicolson Square. A visit to premises in Newington Road apprehended three Vietnamese who were being trafficked. ST commented that the police vehicle had been very popular with children at the Grange Fair the previous Saturday.

Referring to the recent problems of young people gathering in the Meadows and Moredun areas, IP asked if there was any indication that this was moving into the GPCC area. The police were not aware of anything and no one at the meeting had noticed anything new. In answer to a question from IC about anti-social behaviour in general, PC Cairns said that it was an issue that the police kept working on so that it did not get out of hand. The aim was to prevent civil offences becoming criminal.

IanC noted that break-ins in the Blacket and Grange areas had declined and he thanked the police for their efforts there.

HP pointed out that funding the fight against routine crimes was the responsibility of Police Scotland, but that Edinburgh Council paid Police Scotland £2.3 million to fund two dedicated

community police officers per ward. PC Cairns said that the community officers for Ward 15 were PCs Neil Mackay and Stewart Fraser.

2 Declarations of interest: None

3 Minutes of meeting held on 17 April 2019: Approved. No matters arising.

4 Councillor's Report:

IP said that the partnership of traders and the community to clean up Nicolson Square was a great success. There have been a number of meetings, and these have been attended by Edinburgh University and the police. The aim is to shape the Square and talk about how to use it again.

In the previous minute, it was stated that waste collection had improved, but the recent shift patterns had caused problems in some areas. MH questioned the timing of the collections. Bins could not be put out overnight but, if you didn't, they could be missed because of early collections. There were other teething problems such as bins being left strewn all over the place.

The new Neighbourhood Networks: The Council has for many years been trying to involve local communities in decision making. It first tried Neighbourhood Partnerships on which councillors, community council representatives, the police and the Health Board sat as a committee which focused on Council services. However, devolving decisions on services proved difficult because regulations stipulate that only councillors can do that.

At the start of the present Council, Locality Committees were introduced on which only councillors sat and took decisions about local services. However, that disenfranchised community council reps who could attend but not take part in the discussion. The CCs were unanimously against Localities.

Community Council reps return to the new Neighbourhood Networks which are based on Council Wards, but they mirror the Neighbourhood Planning Partnerships where local groups, such as residents associations, are invited to join on an equal basis. It is an attempt to move away from council-centred decision making on local issues. The first meeting will be on Monday 20 May.

MH said that the email inviting reps to Monday's meeting was very vague about who was invited.

It was agreed that ST should represent GPCC on 20 May.

ST asked if the meetings were open to the public. IP said he would check.

5 Revised Scheme for Community Councils:

GPCC submitted its initial comments in January. The draft scheme was approved at full Council on 2 May, but there will be a final consultation period from 6 May to 3 June. TH highlighted the main changes: (a) the duration will be 4 years instead of 3, and (b) the introduction of a formal Complaints Procedure. GPCC decided not to make a further submission, but individuals are free to do so.

6 Reports of Sub-groups:

(a) Planning (TH):

- **Former Blind School:** CALA had submitted revised proposals. TH recommended that GPCC's comments should be largely neutral. However, since CALA had not changed its proposal on affordable housing, he proposed that GPCC should continue to object to that because the Local Development Plan states that affordable housing should be

integrated on the same site as other houses. Window frames are a complicated issue. Many years ago, the Blind School were allowed to change the original window frames to plastic against conservation rules, and so CALA is entitled to replace these with plastic frames on a like-for-like basis. It would be difficult to object to the non-listed building also having plastic frames. A positive feature of the new proposals is that lowering the roof heights of the blocks and making them flat-roofed has totally changed the layout and means that the original building is much more dominant than the new build. The meeting agreed with these comments and TH agreed to prepare and circulate a final draft which would reiterate GPCC's objection to CALA's proposals on affordable housing.

- **King's Buildings:** Under the Nucleus Hub proposals, there was now a separate planning application for a bus shelter outside the student accommodation. TH suggested that GPCC should object to this because it involves a change to the turning circle of the buses, the removal of three trees and the crown lifting of yet more trees. The loss of trees is a continuing concern.

There is also a rush of new telecom poles to upgrade the telecom system. Statutory notices had been posted and no appeals were possible.

AndG expressed concern about the location of the bus shelter and pedestrian safety. It would involve even more walking on roads. StuT said that the proposals were temporary, to which TH reacted that the proposals did not say so. StuT undertook to have this clearly stated in the proposals. He also said that the ultimate aim was for buses to go through the campus with multiple bus stops instead of going to the turning circle and exiting by the same route. The changes are necessary to accommodate the erection of the new Engineering building and will take approximately two years.

- The Council is proposing to charge developers for pre-planning advice but it will not apply to household developments.
- ALG said that, at the last meeting of their Residents Association, it was reported that a Maharishi Transcendental Meditation Centre was to be set up in Clearburn Crescent. TH said any change of use would require planning permission.
- Peffermill developments: JS said she was concerned about inconsistent messages coming from different experts. StuT undertook to circulate a copy of written information provided at the public meetings.

(b) Licensing: Nothing to report

(c) Roads and Transport:

JN had circulated his report. The inaugural meeting of Edinburgh Bus Users Group (EBUG) had been held on 2 May. It was agreed that GPCC should write to Cllr Lesley Macinnes (with a copy to Lothian Buses and the Ward councillors) expressing concern about (a) bus stop relocation proposals, (b) overcrowding on Route 30, (c) the loss of speaking information on some buses, (d) the fact that the exit door on the 100 seater buses does not lower.

ME said that, despite the meetings with Scottish Widows, parking in the Priestfield/Prestonfield area was still chaotic. ALG said that his Association had issued maps of the area and asked residents to mark on them areas of concern. A walk-about with an

official would follow. TH said that following the last consultation the Council did make changes for the better, but possibly the issue needed to be reviewed again.

(d) Communication and Publicity:

MH said that the first draft of the Newsletter had been prepared using the same format as the last one issued in 2016. HP had criticised the draft on the grounds that the text was crammed with too much information, and that the font was too small. Research showed that, when householders picked up a leaflet behind their front door, only a few seconds elapsed between their decision to open it or bin it immediately. Pictures and headlines attract attention; dense text does not. The proposed front page which listed the various stages of electing community councillors was probably the least appropriate. He said that the GPCC had to decide what the aim was. Was it to persuade as many as possible to read it and become interested in the work of GPCC or to make it available to the small number who wanted lots of detail? It was agreed to ask the contributors to prune their articles if possible and to put something attractive on the front page, but to stick with the present overall design.

£653 was spent on the 2016 newsletter. A budget of £1,000 was set for printing and delivery.

(e) Environment:

ST had attended the inaugural meeting of the Rankins Triangle Group but had heard no more. GPCC agreed not to re-open the thorny issue of parking restrictions in the area.

TH said that NHS Lothian and the city planners would hold a meeting on 27 May about the future of Astley Ainslie. Representation from the Community Engagement Group would be limited to three.

(f) Newington Cemetery:

TH reported that ten days previously about 40 people had taken part in a Bird Song Walk guided by experts in bird song. On 11 May, for the first time, Newington Cemetery had a stall at the Grange Fair. It was well worthwhile in that it brought the cemetery to the attention of a large number of people. The theme for Doors Open Day this year will be Global Connections.

JS said that 40 Korean Pastors had asked to visit the grave of the Rev Dr John Rees at 830am on 3 June. His was the most visited grave because of his work translating the New Testament into Korean.

7. Reports from Office Bearers:

AndG updated the financial position at 20 April. Since the end of year statements, there had been outgoings of £558.66 so that there was now £2,137.72 in the account.

8. Date of next meeting: 19 June 2019.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

Minutes written by HP