

**Grange/ Prestonfield Community Council**  
**Minutes of meeting 20 November 2024**

Meeting held in person at Prestonfield Community Centre and via Zoom

**Office Bearers -**

Chair - Ian Chisholm; Joint Vice Chairs - Paul Rowllings, Ellen-Raissa Jackson;  
Secretary- Raphael Bleakley; Treasurer - Paul Rowllings;

**Members present:**

Ken Robertson, Peter Jones, Stanley Bird, Sue Tritton, Alan Gilmour; Ian Wright; Cllr Tim Pogson; Ellen-Raissa Jackson

**Members present on Zoom:**

Sally Griffiths

**Members of the public on Zoom**

Denise Fisher

**Apologies:** Paul Rowllings ; Andreas Grothey

**Absent:** Bill Reid

1. **Welcome.** – Ian Chisholm welcomed members to the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest** – None

3. **Minutes of 18 November 2024**

- Minutes were agreed as accurate.

**Actions:**

- Planning Vacancy – continued
- Newington Cemetery wall – is nearly there – work to be done on the internements to be completed. Other wall to be kept under review.
- Fireworks – actions around bonfire night. Cllr Pogson need to keep at that next year and let communities know that can apply for Fireworks Control Zones in future.
- Blackford avenue Passivhaus development – complaint about pavement space – Council officers looked into this and the development is in-line with agreed plans.
- Grit bins – who to contact for a grit bin to be installed on Blacket Avenue near Belville lodge. – Cllr Kumar responded to Stanley. Stanley has passed this on.
- Development of council policy in relation to electric charge points in conservation areas – Cllr Kumar passed query to council officer – however the response didn't really address issues relating to Conservation areas. Is a planning issue in Conservation areas where residents want to knock down walls to create a drive on their property. Cllr Pogson to identify relevant team within the Council for this issue.

- Areas lacking full fibre broadband, including Blacket – City Fibre had started work in Blacket but no progress on this.
- Noticeboard – Paul gives update in Communications and Publicity section.
- Rollerbanners – have been paid for and in use.
- Publicity for CC elections – have been following up locally. Ellen-Raissa raised disappointment that the Council have not organised a drop-in event for this area. Is one in Central library and in Gilmerton. Ken organising information in Newington Library and attendance on Tuesday 11th & Tuesday 18th February at 6:30pm for an hour.
- Newington Cemetery benches – Sally sent information to Ellen-Raissa about recycled benches.
- Priestfield and Prestonfield Road trees – Raphael followed up with Council officials. Council officer advised that the final design is still to be finalised and this includes information such as tree species. Then will be in a better position to attend a future meeting. They are currently working through all the relevant traffic and redetermination orders needed to make changes. Also trying to address all of the objections received as part of the public consultation.
- Cllr Pogson said 330 responses received. 12 opposed. Includes revisions to the area to the back of Prestonfield School and improving access to the school playground. Is the most significant part of the work. Implementing an effective road closure here is challenging. Hoping to get started with the work in Summer 2025. Other main concern is ongoing maintenance of the trees. Volunteers have come forward to adopt trees. Other comments sought maintenance free solutions in the long-term. Cllr Pogson commented that this is a positive development.
- Ellen-Raissa raised that there is only one tree officer, who is hard to get hold of. Are there plans to recruit another tree officer? Cllr Pogson said that in terms of this project, this will not be dependent on that member of staff. Denise Fisher, raised issues with lack of maintenance on lack of gutters etc.
- Gift for Cameron House staff – chocolates bought

#### **4. Notice of Matters Arising -**

None

#### **5. Reports (External) – Cllr Pogson updated:**

- The main issue that Council are looking at is the visitor levy. Special meeting of the Council on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> January to consider how this is taken forward. Due to start in 2026. All parties behind this and may generate £50million. Rate of levy to be discussed. Proposal of 5% for five nights. Other parties seeking a higher levy. The industry is generally welcoming of the proposal as will lead to an enhanced tourist experience. Implementation timescales are being challenged by the industry. If don't proceed reasonably, risk that the policy could end up in court.
- Major cabling project. Installing a new power cable from Astley Ainsley sub-station on Whitehouse Loan to Shawfair. Works will affect the ward, Grange, Blackford road, etc. Will take 15 months, the work is due to start this summer. Procurement to be completed by March 2025. Likelihood of slow moving roadworks through the area. Scottish Power have been in contact. Raised that local associations need to be kept informed.

- Upcoming Cameron Toll closure 3<sup>rd</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> March.
- Peter Jones raised lack of public toilet spaces in Edinburgh in the context of the visitor levy. Is this something that's going to be addressed? Cllr Pogson said that toilets have been mentioned as part of the conversation with the visitor levy. Raised that there are new toilets coming into the Meadows. Toilets in Nicolson Square closed for many years due to them attracting anti-social behaviour. Ken Robertson raised that other Community Councils have suggested that funds should also go towards improving facilities for residents in the city. Cllr Pogson said that £5million to be set aside for affordable housing. Housing would only be let to people working in the tourist industry.
- Alan Gilmour raised numbers of CCTV cameras in the area (two). Cllr Pogson suggested that there is a network of cameras, but not all operated by the Council. Would need to look into the figures.

## **6. Reports of Interest Groups -**

### **a. Planning -**

- Ian raised a planning issue in the Blackets. Have had a retrospective HMO application for one of the hotels. Blacket Committee took the view that it wasn't done well, but had no objections. A lot of objections put in locally to the HMO application for the terms of use. Issues linked to disorder and noise, and suitability in Conservation areas.
- Cllr Pogson commented that this goes back to the pandemic. There was an emphasis on getting rough sleepers into available accommodation as part of infection control measures. Individuals moved into various hotels throughout the city. This practice has continued due to increase in homelessness. Not resolved the problem of substantial homeless people. Issue is that it's not appropriately licensed – if multiple homeless people, it ceases to be a hotel and becomes an HMO. Legal advice is that this issue needs to be resolved. Set a date by the end of November 2024 to resolve this issue. One way would be to move people out into appropriate accommodation. Other way is to seek HMO applications for some hotels. The situation here is complicated. 1. Is a license application to become a HMO and a 2. Planning application for the development at the rear of the hotel going through at the same time. There is a history of that hotel changing planning applications etc. In terms of licensing, nothing different is happening in the hotel. If he has a license, this needs to be renewed annually. Any complaints will be taken into consideration as part of the re-licensing process. Concern has been raised by residents.
- Ian Wright New Darwin building in Kings Buildings received planning permission, with work to start in the summer.

### **b. Licensing – None**

### **c. Roads/Transport – Alan updated:**

- Extension of 20mph areas in Edinburgh. Including Peffermill Road and Dalkeith Road. In future planning Cameron Toll and Minto Street, Mayfield Road etc.

- Council still looking for a new e-bike hire scheme.
- Ken raised the clock at the church at Marchmont St Giles – attempts to repair clock is that there are masts – can't get contractors in. Also raised garden wall on Blackford Avenue, gap where the wall has fallen down. Temporary fencing is dangerous. Cost of £100k that is being argued over. Issue ongoing for two years. Cllr Pogson said, with the Church – mobile units in church spire, no work can happen while they are live. Need to switch off in order for the repairs to go ahead. Contractor discovered H&S issues within the church towers. For the wall is a matter for the owners and factors. Council is in contact on a monthly basis. Council could rebuild the wall as a very last resort
- Traffic Restrictions on Waiting, Loading & Unloading. Sally raised the new traffic restrictions Came in on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024 for six months. Will this push delivery vans into side streets? Not easy to follow the traffic order. Looks like a significant change. Cllr Pogson to look into this and come back to Sally on this.

**d. Communications/Publicity** - Paul updated via email:

- Website: A few small changes and a couple of new contacts registering interest. Nothing more to report.
- Ken asked about promotional material. Digital toolkit, social media in there. Ken to print both types. A4 material. Distribution of sheets. Resident associations. Parents associations. RB to send material to GPCC. Contact Stuart Tooley to circulate. Student association.

**e. Environment**

- None

**f. Newington Cemetery** – Ellen updated:

- Had a working party – discussion about siting a bench at the top of the catacombs. Is how they will spend money. Contractor needs to be employed to clear the brambles . Is quite hazardous and can't use power tools. Looking at how to recycle benches on materials that have been used. Tennis Club have offered some bench ends which could be repurposed. Will have to pay for installation. Getting two more planters for the entrance area. Tony and Angela Harris wrote a book about James Finlayson – have installed a new headstone which also recognizes his wife. Would like to have a ceremony (28<sup>th</sup> April). Local Councillors have been invited. Friends of Newington Cemetery have contributed £500 to the cost of the headstone

**7. Reports from Office Bearers**

a. Treasurer Report – Paul updated:

Bank balance is £9,447 made up as follows:

- GPCC Account Balance - £4,859
  - No new income.
  - £644 of expenditure (website, Zoom, Cockburn, CEC planning fee)
- Newington Cemetery Balance - £4,588
  - No new income or expenditure

b. Secretary.

- Civic Reception to Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Community Councils - Monday 24th February . Ian and Stanley to attend.

**8. Reports from external groups**

- EACC – Next meeting on xx January.

**9. Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 19 February 2025.**

## Action list

<b>3 Actions ii)</b>	<b>Planning vacancy</b>	Continued for updates
	<b>Newington Cemetery wall</b>	Continued for updates
<b>5.</b>	CCTV cameras in the GPCC area	Cllr Pogson to consider the figures and come back with further information.
<b>6.c</b>	Traffic Restrictions on Waiting, Loading & Unloading	Cllr Pogson to come back with more details of this initiative
<b>6.d</b>	Noticeboard	
<b>6. f</b>	Newington Cemetery April event	Continued for updates Councillors to be invited.