MERCHISTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of public meeting on 17th March 2015 at Merchiston Tennis & Bowling Club

Present

Members:
Ian Clement (Vice Chairman)
Alison Edelsten (Secretary)
France Hawarden (Treasurer)
Mairianna Clyde
Ian Doig
James Geekie
Bridget Stevens
Mike Talbot

Councillors:
Andrew Burns
Melanie Main

Police:
PC Ross Stewart (St Leonards)
PC Michaela Mawson (Oxgangs)
PC Lee Burrell (Oxgangs)

Speaker
Rachel Haworth, Planning Officer, City of Edinburgh Council

Public:
Janet Alison
Tom Barron
N Cook
John Husband
David Spaven
James Strachan

Welcome & Introductions

Mairianna, acting as chairman, welcomed all present.

Apologies

Tom Graveson, Sally Lloyd, Robin Morris, Ted Tate, MP Ian Murray.

Review of Merchiston/Greenhill Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Rachel Haworth, from the CEC Planning Department's Built Environment & Place Making Team that is reviewing Conservation Area Character Appraisals (CACA), was invited to talk to the MCC about the review currently being undertaken for Merchiston/Greenhill.

CACAs describe what is special about each area, and help in making decisions on proposals that affect the area's special character.

Since the Merchiston/Greenhill appraisal has not been updated for some time, development pressures and community interest mean that a review is desirable. The CEC Planning Department is seeking the local community's views to ensure the revised appraisal is up-to-date and reflect relevant local issues.

Points of note from Rachel's talk and the subsequent discussion include the following:

- Morningside Road, not previously considered in the CACA, will now be included;
- The review aims to produce a document that is more user-friendly, allowing readers to 'drill down' from the general to the specific;
- It will identify common features that are unique to the area but also common across that area.
- The review will consider if, and how, the 2003 CACA has helped to manage change in the interval;
- The process of eliciting community views is likely to involve an on-line survey followed by a draft document which should be available for consultation by the summer of 2015.
- In discussion it was noted that in Edinburgh there is little or no publicity about conservation areas unlike Glasgow where there are road signs and publicity leaflets.

Rachel was warmly thanked for her excellent presentation.

Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 17th February 2015, as circulated by email, were approved.

Matters arising

Taken below.

Police

PC Stewart said that number of reported crimes in the Merchiston area at 28 were lower than previous months. Half of these crimes have already been solved.

PCs Mawson & Burrell reported that 91 crimes were recorded in the Fountainbridge/North Merchiston/Slateford area of which 32 were already solved.

Responding to questions the PCs told the meeting:

- Cold callers and bogus workmen who cause concern should be reported to the police by phoning 999 if the individuals are still in the vicinity or 101 otherwise;
- Discussions are taking place within Police Scotland on the reintroduction of local beat officers;
- The police hold a weekly drop-in session at Dundee Street library;
- Speeding cyclists on the canal towpath: Under the Road Traffic Act it is possible to prosecute cyclists who act irresponsibly but in practice it is difficult to prove a case.

The PCs were thanked for their informative reports and helpful responses to questions.

Neighbourhood Partnerships

South Central Neighbourhood Partnership: Bridget tabled her report (see attachment below) on proceedings at the Board meeting held on 2nd March 2015.

Cllr Melanie Main spoke about the Participatory Budgeting method of allocating community grants and the positive experiences of Leith Neighbourhood Partnership. A more modest version of this arrangement is to be trialled by the SCNP.

South West Neighbourhood Partnership: Alison tabled a report from Tom Graveson (see attachment) on the SWNP Board meeting held on 24th February 2015.

Ian Doig reported on the results of the SWNP Funding Panel of which he is chairman. Mairianna confirmed that an application for £436 to allow erection of an information board alongside the community herb garden at Harrison Park has been approved.

Planning

Plant Unit at Napier University's Merchiston Campus: Janet Alison voiced concern about the noise from the newly installed plant unit which is located close to the back of her home. The university has attempted to muffle the sound but it has not been reduced sufficiently to satisfy neighbours or planning requirements.

A mistake by the Planning Department meant that residents in the immediate vicinity were not notified about the original planning application which was approved. A retrospective application is now being considered by the planners. Councillors David Keys and Gavin Corbett are understood to be taking up the matter with the Planning Department.

Licensing

Bridget said that the Licensing Forum has had great difficulty in getting someone from City Development to come to Forum meetings and explain what their priorities are in respect of licensing. Cllr Andrew Burns offered to take up the matter.

Accounts

Frances tabled a statement showing a balance of £1235 in the CC's bank account. She will check details of a payment for publicity which may be £81 rather than £80**. [Action: Frances]**

Ian Doig asked, on behalf of a Merchiston & Polwarth Neighbourhood Watch, for support of up to £300 to pay for a publicity leaflet and a banner. The meeting agreed to this grant subject to prominence being given to MCC in the publicity and the group's website. **[Action: Frances]**

Publicity

Mike reported that 170 fliers that advertised the meeting and presentation by Rachel Haworth had been distributed to residents in Greenhill & Church Hill, as well as in Ettrick & Napier Roads. The presence of 6 members of the public at the meeting is a measure of the usefulness of this effort.

Further fliers will be available for distribution at the Spring Fling on 11th April.

Councillors

Andrew Burns said that the great majority of issues raised with him relate to five substantial building developments in Fountainbridge including:

- Boroughmuir High School which is on schedule to open August 2016.
- EDI development of mixed business/residential/cultural units at the former McEwens brewery site alongside the canal;
- Grosvenor's development of mixed residential properties for renting;
- At canal basin end, Quay 2, a planning application has been submitted for an apartment hotel and commercial premises;
- Mecca site for which a planning application has just been submitted for student flats.

In response to a question from Frances about health and social care, Andrew said that a draft scheme for a joint board which integrates health and social care had just been agreed by the CEC and is being submitted to the Scottish Government for approval. This board would be responsible for a budget of £500 million.

Any other business

Consultation on student housing: The CEC has published a consultation document on student housing which estimates there are 60,000 students in Edinburgh with only 10,000 places available in dedicated student flats. The document indicates a preference for housing students in specialised accommodation. Mairianna urged a more balanced approach with a mix of student and long-term residential units.

Caledonian Corridor / Linear Park: It is being proposed to CEC that a community-based group take responsibility for looking after these pathways.

Date of next meeting

The AGM will take place on Tuesday 19th May 2015 commencing 7pm at Merchiston Tennis & Bowling Club. The next regular meeting is due on 16th June 2015 with the same venue and starting time.

3.05.15

SOUTH CENTRAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP

Report from Bridget Stevens on Board meeting held on 2 March 2015

Presentations on

(1) Parks & Green Spaces including The Meadows. 26 wildflower meadow sites already established across Edinburgh, some as urban pollinators in association with University of Edinburgh. Local residents invited to become involved. L**indsay.grant@edinburgh**.gov.uk

(2) Royal Ed Campus redevelopment. Work started 6 weeks ago, with generous Scottish Government funding. Due for completion in 2020. Disruption to traffic on Myreside Road regrettable but inevitable. PM Dick Fitzpatrick said patients consulted all along and local residents welcome to view the work. Horticultural centre plus garden shop etc to be retained. No closing date yet for Astley Ainsley.

Refurbishment of Meadows Jawbones underway offsite. Very good response to public fund-raising appeal; only final £4K still needs to be raised. Tree-planting programme also ongoing.

Security lighting assessment undertaken following recent attack. Police advising. CCTV not feasible on account of tree canopy coverage and size of park. Other options under consideration include improved/additional lighting, lit bollards along Jawbone Walk to create a "safer route", public safety signboards. All to be referred to Community Safety Action Group. MCC members invited to submit views to Ian Doig or Bridget Stevens who sit on this group.

I am going to a "themed" meeting of the Edinburgh Partnership on Thursday, described as follows:

Edinburgh Partnership Themed Meeting

The Edinburgh Partnership Community Plan 2015/18

The wide membership of the Edinburgh Partnership has been involved in refining the strategic priorities to support delivery of the EP's strategic outcomes:

- *Edinburgh's economy delivers increased investment, jobs, and opportunities for all*
- *Edinburgh's citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health*
- *Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential*
- *Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric*

Please join us to reflect on whether the new Community Plan fulfils the combined will of members to address the EP's vision whilst being mindful of prevention and sustainability and tackling the 'wicked' issues in the city:

Edinburgh is a thriving, successful and sustainable capital city in which all forms of deprivation and inequality are reduced

South West Neighbourhood Partnership

Report from Tom Graveson on Board meeting held on 24th February 2015

Participatory Budgeting

The meeting began with a talk from Anna Herriman about Participatory Budgeting a method of deciding community grants which was intended to balance the low public involvement in neighbourhood partnership meetings. The maximum grant under this scheme is £1000 and the scheme grants account for 50% of the grant budget.

Grant decisions are made by public participation at an annual event and by votes cast in Libraries etc.. Around 30% of applicants are unsuccessful but can re-apply via the traditional route to the funding panel. The speaker was unable to say whether or not more full-time official time was required.

SWNP consider this scheme about a year ago and Councillor Corbett said that part of the value of the scheme lay in wider public participation. Cllr Milligan suggested that the issue be reconsidered.

Children's Services

Sean Bell spoke about the success of the early intervention / joined-up approach to children's services in the SWNP area (illustrated by the much lower SWNP children in secure care figures). This joined-up approach included the use of adult services input e.g. housing

Action Groups

Community Safety – no report meeting due 16/03/14

Health Inequalities – no report (no chair)

Transport & Environment – Cllr Corbett spoke about distilling the community plan into action; canal maintenance; community groups; easy movement in the SW and funding for cycles.

Funding Panel

The funding position was noted (14K of 22K allocated). There were sufficient applications pending to use surplus (no carry over allowed).

Police

Insp Innes described Operation Peleton and possible home safety events. Some CC members complained about the absence of police officers at meetings post Police Scotland.

Voluntary Sector

Voluntary Sector Forum are holding an open space event in April (25th) and are planning a voluntary sector showcase in June.

Community Councils

WHCC reported on the new underpass link and the new Centre bus stop. Wildlife walks will start soon.