MERCHISTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of public meeting on 15th Sept 2015 at Merchiston Tennis & Bowling Club

Present

Members:	*Councillor:*
Robin Morris (Chairman)	Melanie Main
Alison Edelsten (Secretary)	*Police*:
France Hawarden (Treasurer)	PC Gordon Brewster (Oxgangs)
Ian Clement	PC Sacha Ponniah (St Leonards)
Mairianna Clyde	*Public:*
James Geekie	David Leslie
Sally Lloyd	Richard Lloyd
Bridget Stevens	Chris Paterson
Mike Talbot	Kenny Redpath (Murdoch Terrace & Yeaman Place RA)
Ted Tate	David Urch
	Francis Valentine

Welcome & Introductions

Robin welcomed all present.

Apologies

Members Ian Doig, Tom Graveson; Cllrs Andrew Burns, Gavin Corbett, Sandy Howat, David Keys; Betty Henderson (Fountainbridge Librarian).

Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the business meeting on 16th June 2015 were agreed.

Matters arising

Taken below.

Report - Police

PC Brewster said there were 277 calls to the police in the past month from the North Merchiston/Fountainbridge area of which 46 were recorded as crimes. Three serious assaults occurred; one within an office, a second within a flat between persons known to each other, and the third was a rape. In all three cases a suspect has been identified.

PC Pooniah reported on activities within the Merchiston/Tollcross area. He highlighted anti-social behaviour by an identified group of youths in Bruntsfield/Morningside. Action is being taken in conjunction with Council and schools to tackle the issue. He urged residents to report such incidents.

In response to a question from Ted, arising from a recent incident where an individual was found in a public place apparently suffering from memory loss, PC Pooniah advised phoning 101 (or 999 if urgent) in such circumstances.

Local police in the MercCC area can be contacted by email at:

- edinburghmeadowsmorningsideCPT@scotland.pnn.police.uk
- edinburghfountainbridgecraiglockhartCPT@scotland.pnn.police.uk

The PCs were thanked for their reports.

Matters raised by residents

Overhanging hedges blocking pavements: Francis Valentine asked for advice on tackling owners of properties where passage was impeded. He was advised to contact the Council which can force owners to cut back hedges. The matter will also be taken up by MercCC in the planned walkabout with Council officials on 21st October 2015. **[Action: Robin]**

Street rubbish and disturbance from HMO flats: Francis Valentine relayed concerns from residents in the Leamington Terrace area. He was advised that the Council should respond appropriately if the issues are brought to their attention.

Road safety problems on Colinton Road: David Urch referred to an issue that he raised at a previous meeting on road safety problems on Colinton Road where it narrows west of the Merchiston Campus of Napier University. Suggestions for improvements included:

- widening the pavement outside Napier University so that the width of the roadway is constant along this stretch of Colinton Road;
- re-siting the communal bin to improve sightlines for drivers;
- painting double yellow lines on the south side of Colinton Road;
- seeking support from George Watson's College and Napier University in discouraging parents, staff and students from bringing cars to their campuses.

Councillor Melanie Main suggested the inclusion of work on this problem in an application to the £50k local ward roads/footway scheme (application closing date 30th Sept, with voting on 22nd Oct.). Mairianna also suggested seeking support from the Edinburgh Living streets group [www.**livingstreets**.org.uk/area/**edinburgh** **].** It was agreed to raise this item at the walkabout with Council staff on 21st October. **[Action: Robin]**

Gulls: Chris Paterson sought advice on problems with gulls nesting on the roofs of neighbouring flats at East Castle Road. The history of MercCC's wider efforts on the subject was related by Mairianna. She recommended direct action by getting cooperation of a resident in the flats to gain access to the roof and removing nests at the critical time. Councillor Melanie Main agreed to raise the issue of gull roof nesting with Council colleagues.

Roundabout safety on Spylaw Road: Alison has been contacted by local resident Anna Stevenson regarding her concern. Alison has checked and noted overhanging trees hiding road signs at junctions. It was agreed to raise the matter at the walkabout with Council officials on 21st October. **[Action: Robin].**

Liaison between local Community Councils

Alison reported on an initiative from Tollcross CC to set up a liaison group representing CCs in close proximity and facing similar issues. The aim is to give CCs a stronger voice as well as coordinating efforts. So far the CCs expressing interest are Tollcross, Merchiston, Marchmont & Sciennes, West End and Old Town. It was agreed that Alison should be MercCC representative on the group. Cooperation will be issue based and it is proposed that student accommodation might be one of the first topics.

Publicity & Engagement Group

Sally reported on a meeting, involving her, Bridget and Mike, on improving MercCC engagement with residents. A report from the meeting (previously circulated) sets out recommended actions as well as points for discussion. The recommended actions will be progressed over time but feedback on the discussion items was invited. Options for paid advertising will be considered including hard material, e.g. local magazines, and on-line, e.g. Facebook, Google. Promotional items to hand out at local fairs will also be explored. Statistics on the number and characteristics

of accessions to the MercCC website and Facebook pages will be regularly reported. Mike seeks help with the distribution of flyers in the Shandon area.

Cllr Melanie Main recommended bookmarks as a useful promotional device. She also suggested that Mike might team up with Cllr Gavin Corbett on flyer distribution in Shandon. **[Action: Mike]**

Ian C. is drawing up a list of businesses which are willing to display community posters and he will pass on the list when available. **[Action: Ian C.]**

Other promotional suggestions put forward were:

- encouraging members and residents to bring another person to meetings;
- installing a notice board at the Tesco corner of Holy Corner;
- including on the agenda of public meetings a topic of interest to many residents.

Representation on committees

Robin referred to the list of members who serve on external committees as representatives of MercCC (http://www.merchistoncc.org.uk/about-us/areas-of-responsibility/). He emphasised that anyone who takes part in other meetings in their role as a MercCC member should consult with the Secretary in advance and report back to the CC afterwards. **[Action: All]**

Change of name

The area served by Merchiston CC is wider than the name indicates. It had been suggested that this limits recognition of the CC's role in some districts. Suggestions for alternative names were canvassed and discussed amongst members over recent months. None of these suggestions found wide support. A web poll produced 11 responses, of which 5 supported the current name and 6 voted for alternatives, none of which received more than one vote.

Alison reminded the meeting that a feasible change to the name Merchiston and Districts CC would give essential reference to our wider neighbourhoods and would enable us to continue using the existing email and domain name. Robin proposed and Alison seconded a motion to adopt this name but the proposal was not put to a vote.

Robin said that the practice of listing in publicity material the names of the districts covered by Merchiston CC provided an effective solution to the identity problem. A proposal by Bridget, seconded by Sally, to retain the existing name, was approved in a vote by show of hands. A canvass of residents present at the meeting gave support to the decision.

Report - Planning

Student housing at Dundee Street, near Victor Paris showrooms: Kenny Redpath conveyed the concerns of local residents at the over concentration of student accommodation in the area. It has the effect of creating a community within a community with few if any links between the two.

Grosvenor development at Fountainbridge: Mairianna has responded to the latest planning proposal. Grosvenor made praiseworthy efforts to respond to early input from the public. However her view is that the resulting design submitted for planning approval is unimaginative.

12 Merchiston Place: A second application to replace the existing building has been rejected by planners. The site has now been sold to another developer.

Westside Motors & Blue Goose Pub, Longstone: Though not in the MerchCC area Mairianna drew attention to yet another application for student housing on the sites of these premises.

88 Bruntsfield Place (TriBeCa): There have been complaints from neighbours about fumes emitting from this newly opened restaurant which have caused the Council to close down

operations temporarily. Remedial work has been done but Cllr Melanie Main believes the problems persist.

House in Shandon Crescent: Ted reported on the construction of an extension which is taking access from the Caledonian Railway path without permission from Network Rail. The work involves building a ramp from the path, removing mature trees and disturbing a patch of Japanese knotweed. Ted has drawn the matter to the attention of Network Rail.

Proposed hotel at Old Royal High School, Calton Hill: The AHSS and Cockburn Association are holding a meeting at St Andrew's & St George's West Church on 24th September at 6pm to discuss this proposal.

Report: Neighbourhood Partnerships

South Central Neighbourhood Partnership: Bridget has circulated her report (see attached) on proceedings at the Board meeting held on 7th September 2015.
South West Neighbourhood Partnership: In the absence of Tom and Ian D. there was nothing to report.

Report - Licensing

Robin said that there were no applications of note to report. He attended a recent meeting of the Licensing Forum along with Bridget where there was an interesting presentation on the links between the density of alcohol and tobacco outlets and related health outcomes.

Report - Treasurer

Frances reported that the annual CEC grant of £884 has been received. Subsequently, a further sum of £150 appeared, the purpose of which is unclear. The balance in the bank account is now approximately £2,500.

Letters of thanks for recent donations have been received from FOMBL, 38º, & SWT. The Meadows Festival grant has been passed on to FOMBL. The donation to the Craighouse campaign has been returned as it has been decided not to pursue legal challenges.

Councillors' Notes: Cllr Melanie Main highlighted the following:

- Council ward boundaries are being revised. The proposals broadly bring ward and CC boundaries into line. The public is invited to contribute to the consultation at https://www.consultation.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk/node/12 . Consultation closes on 22 October 2015.
- Consultation on plans for a new primary school in South Edinburgh at http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20103/classes_and_buildings/1335/south_edinburgh_primary_schools_consultation . Consultation closes on 3 October 2015;
- The Council has been persuaded to reinstate a scheme for the removal of abandoned bikes in tenement stairs;
- The statutory notice scheme is being amended to ensure that owners of properties are invoiced for equal shares per unit and not per owner;
- The £50k per local ward for a single Streetscapes (roads/footway/parks) Improvement project. CCs can suggest projects. Suggestions by 30th Sept, with voting on 22nd Oct.
- In response to a question from Bridget, Melanie confirmed that the Neighbourhood Partnerships' Capital Roads Programme is a separate fund that continues, providing grants for smaller projects such as repairs to pavements, roads, potholes, bus shelters etc. Deadline for suggestions for this is 31 December.

AOB: Ian C. mentioned that NHS Lothian is seeking greater involvement with community groups.

Date of next meeting: Tues 20th Oct 2015 from 7pm at Merchiston Tennis & Bowling Club.

MEETINGS ATTENDED REPORT

From Bridget Stevens

MEADOWS FESTIVAL

6/7 June. Excellent community event – weather dependent.

LICENSING

On 25 June I attended the launch of a new Alcohol website. www.cresh.org.uk/webmap Presentation of interesting research into links between density of tobacco and alcohol outlets and related health outcomes. Licensing Forum also concerned with alcohol-related behaviours.

FOMBL

AGM on 26 June. Chair Heather Goodare gave review of year's activities, highlighting work done by volunteers and urging members to be vigilant about new developments eg the Underbelly on the Meadows in August, installation of new advertisement drums. HG keen to find successor.

CANAL FESTIVAL

27 June. Another very successful community event, with MCC sharing CCs stall with Tollcross.

DIG-IN

30 June and 28 July Management Committee meetings.

PLANNING AID SCOTLAND

17 June. Interview with PA(S) Intern Lisa Czerkawska on role of CCs in planning process.

DIG-IN COMMUNITY COHESION GROUP

17 June. Meeting. This group hitherto mainly concerned with marketing; I stressed desirability of also engaging with local community.

MCC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP

4 September. First meeting of Sally's reconstituted group. Written report circulated.

SOUTH CENTRAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP

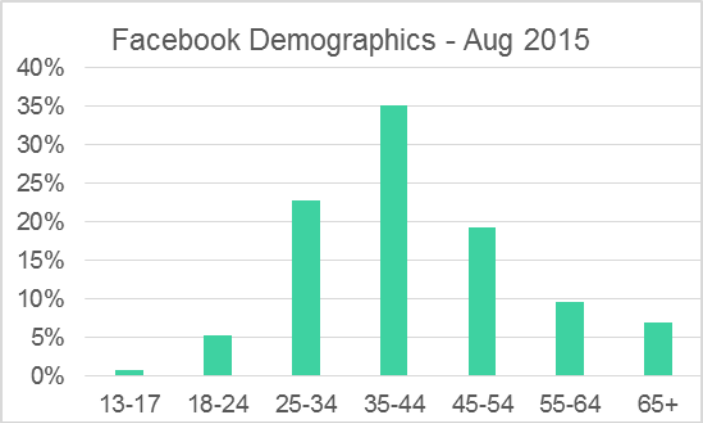
7 September. Board meeting. Presentation on CEC plans for new parking arrangements incl. restrictions on Sundays on main roads and bus routes. Consultation over next 2 months, report back to TIE Jan 2016, legal consultation Spring 2016. Formal confirmation of reinstatement of community police officers, two per ward. Christmas Tree lights: CEC will support this year, with rationalisation of dates; not guaranteed in future. Acknowledgment that level of support/subsidy varies between CC areas.

Also attended special meeting to review summer events on the Meadows. General satisfaction with Underbelly but unhappiness with last-minute extension, without consultation, of rental period. Also with CEC's policy on reinstatement of grass. Everybody urged to take part in current consultation/ review at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ParkEventsReview2014-2015

Merchiston Community Council – Social Media Statistics

Facebook Stats (01 August 2015 – 31 August 2015)

Number of fans	112
Reach (organic)	500
Total impressions	1315

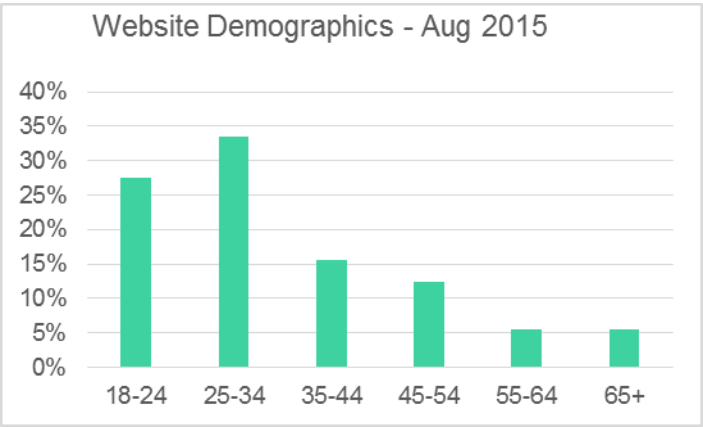


Twitter (31 August 2015)

Number of fans	141

Website Views (01 August 2015 – 31 August 2015)

Sessions	472
Users	335
Pageviews	754
Pages/Session	1.6
Avg Session Duration	01:44
Bounce Rate	73.52%
New Sessions	67.16%



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