MERCHISTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of public meeting on 15th March 2016 at Merchiston T & B Club

Present

Members:	*Councillors*
Robin Morris (Chair)	Gavin Corbett
Tom Graveson (Vice-Chair)	Mark McInnes
Sally Lloyd (Secretary)	
Frances Hawarden (Treasurer)	*Police Scotland*
Ian Clement	PC Leslie (St Leonards)
Mairianna Clyde	PC John Pennycook (Oxgangs)
Ian Doig	
James Geekie	*Public:*
Bridget Stevens	Alan Aithey (Abbotsford Court RA)
Mike Talbot	Joan Houston (Abbotsford Court RA)
Ted Tate	Michael Billinghurst
	Richard Lloyd

Welcome & Introductions

Robin welcomed all present.

Apologies

Cllr Andrew Burns

Minutes of meeting on 16th February 2016

Agreed.

Matters arising

Taken below.

Report - Police

PC Pennycook, newly appointed, Council-funded, ward officer for Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart, spoke about policing in the area. The trend in number of recorded crimes is down for most categories of offences apart from house break-ins of which 13 were reported in the past month. An 'open surgery' is planned for Fountainbridge Library where members of the public can consult with police officers.

PC Leslie reported that crime figures for Meadows/Morningside were down last month compared with the same month last year. However house break-ins had increased with 95 reported this February. A series of talks on home security will take place at the Eric Liddell Centre on 24th March from 6 to 8 pm.

Q&A:

- Michael Billinghurst voiced the concerns of business owners in the Bruntsfield area following a spate of robberies. He observed that in the past community police officers visited local shops on a regular basis but this no longer happens. PC Leslie will take the matter up with the ward officers.
- Vehicles abandoned on private property should be reported to the police (phone 101) and steps will be taken if the car is stolen. Otherwise action by the police is not possible.

- Parking on private property without authorisation is a matter between the property and vehicle owners.

- Problems with youngsters misbehaving in the street and in tenements should be reported to the police either by phoning 101 or by contacting the school police link officer if the school is known.

PC Pennycook and PC Leslie were thanked for their contributions.

Matters raised by residents

Alan Aithey and Joan Houston spoke about problems with vehicles exiting from Abbotsford Court on to South Ettrick Road. They asked if a parking bay on each side of the entrance could be removed to improve sightlines. Mark promised to take up the matter with Council officials.

Report – Neighbourhood Partnerships

South West Neighbourhood Partnership: Tom reported on the Partnership meeting held on 23rd February. Presentations included: the role of the new CEC Localities teams which will coordinate services to communities; the small sites programme for affordable housing that has been initiated in Wester Hailes.

Robin expressed frustration that MercCC straddles two NPs, and now two Localities areas, leading to duplication and extra work for CC members.

Although the CEC's Localities structures apply from 1st April information on their role and personnel is not widely available. Gavin offered to seek this information and circulate.

Tom will respond to a request on dates and times for a meeting on South West Parks **[Action: Tom]**.

Ian Doig spoke about the SWNP Grant-a-Grand scheme where £10k of the £50k allocated by the SWNP Funding Panel was set aside for applications from youth-focused groups. Sixteen applications were received for 10 awards of £1k each. Some 600 young people voted to choose the winners with unsuccessful applicants being directed to other funding opportunities.

South Central Neighbourhood Partnership: Mike circulated a report on the Partnership meeting held on 14th March [See attachment below].

Report - Planning

4a Merchiston Crescent: The rationale behind the decision to approve this application was not understood. Representations from neighbours, the Community Council, and local councillor appear to have been ignored.

Concern was expressed that planning procedures are increasingly being weighed against objectors. The time allocated for CCs seeking a voice at meetings has been reduced from 10 to 5 minutes. Local ward councillors are no longer invited to address the planning committee at the end of discussions with the developer now getting 'the last word'.

Report - Licensing

Robin attended an event at the City Chambers organised by the charity Alcohol Focus Scotland to publicise a very useful document showing how the licensing process works in Scotland. The publication can be viewed at http://www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk/

Report - Treasurer

Frances tabled accounts showing a bank balance of £1599 after two payments in March, one for five meeting room hires totalling £150 to Merchiston Tennis & Bowling Club, and the other, £50, to the Scottish Police Benevolent Fund. The annual grant for 2016/17 is expected in August.

MercCC is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and expects to pay £35 pa under a debit arrangement. No payment has been taken for the past two years. It was agreed not to pursue the matter for now.

Councillors' Notes:

Cllr Gavin Corbett: Reported on some items from his case load.

- Earlier in March he took part in a very worthwhile tidy-up of the Caledonian railway path by a group of 30 volunteers including members of the 19th Pentlands Scout Group.
- He has written to Network Rail expressing concern about heavy lorries using Harrison Place to access the nearby rail depot.
- He has recently visited the Ashley Terrace Boathouse at the invitation of Andy Davenport, chairman of the Edinburgh Canal Society. The Boathouse, which is owned by the ECS but erected on Scottish Canals property, is in such poor structural condition that public access is no longer allowed. He has written to Scottish Canals to enquire if help is available for renewal work. It was agreed that the ECS should be supported in efforts to restore the boathouse.

Q&A : Michael Billinghurst asked about lighting in Harrison Park along the path leading from Watson Crescent. Gavin will take the matter up with Council officials.

Cllr Mark McInnes: Spoke about items from the CEC Transport, Infrastructure & Environment committee meeting held earlier in the day.

- He had a motion on the agenda of the TIE meeting on gull de-nesting, to which Kay Smith spoke in support. The committee agreed to ask the South West and South Central Neighbourhood Partnerships to consider if a pilot project is a priority for these groups. It was also decided to set up a working party to see how the Council and local residents can find a way forward with the problem. The aim is to get another pilot project, possibly in the North Merchiston area, which will provide clear evidence on costs.
- The Committee also considered the Parking Action Plan and decided to introduce paid parking on Sunday afternoons in the city centre (zones 1 to 4). Parking controls are to be extended from 6.30 to 7.00 on evenings in the city centre. There will also be more shared use bays and residents will be able to purchase visitor permits in these zones. There is no change for parking controls in the MercCC area. However, there is pending a city-wide increase in parking charges as notified by posters on lamp posts.

Q&A: Frances enquired about parking permits for carers. Ian C. asked about parking bays on the bend at Bruntsfield Place near the Konditormeister Falko premises where bus movements, in particular, are being restricted. Mark will take up both these issues.

Engagement

Logo & website changes: Sally had previously circulated a quotation from the Kin team to develop a brand image for MercCC at a cost of £450 and to update the website for £157.50. It was agreed to ask Kin to undertake these tasks. Sally invited members to offer ideas for the new logo **[Action: All]**.

Virtual 'blue plaque': Robin asked that an estimate be sought for the work of incorporating the proposed Merchiston Memories pages in the MercCC website **[Action: Sally].**

Fliers: Mike tabled copies of a flier aimed at encouraging new members to join the CC.

Spring Fling: Robin is to coordinate the recruitment of volunteers to staff the CC's stall on the 9th April **[Action: Robin]**.

AOB

None.

Date of next meeting

Tues 17th May 2016 from 7pm at Merchiston Tennis & Bowling Club.

10.04.16

South Central Neighbourhood Partnership Meeting on 14.03.16 – Report by Mike Talbot

Open Spaces strategy: Andrew Smith made a presentation on updating the Council's 2010 Open Space Strategy. The strategy aims to set standards expected to be met when making decisions on open spaces. For example, one criterion is an open space within a 5-minute walk of most residents. There is a separate strategy for each NP. Details are at http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20178/park_management_and_rules/427/open_space_strategy . A workshop will be held in May and public consultations will take place in the autumn.

MABLAG: David Doig spoke on a new remit for the group and attendees. There is still one rep from Merchiston CC. Cllr Rose proposed that MABLAG be discontinued. However, it was agreed to proceed with the new remit for now but return to the topic again following consideration of arrangements for other parks.

Community grants programmes: The SCNP is running an event where members of the public can vote on how they wish three pots of Council funds to be allocated. The 'pots' include community grants (£24k), roads and housing. The event takes place at the Methodist Church Hall, Nicholson Square, on Saturday 30th April. Only 2 projects so far submitted for community grants. Closing date for submission is around 25th March.

Localities Working: Sarah Burns spoke about the new Council structures for coordinating services to communities. The city has been divided into four localities each with a leadership team drawn from the Council, NHS, police, fire service and integrated health & social care. Merchiston CC area straddles two localities, South East and South West. South East includes 3 NPs and covers city centre, Southside, Meadows, Morningside, Newington, Liberton, Gilmerton. Sarah Burns will be the SE localities manager with Council executive lead Paul Lawrence.

AOB: The next meeting of the SCNP is scheduled for 6th June with Cllr Godfrey in the char.

15.03.16