MERCHISTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Annual General Meeting & Monthly Business Meeting held on 17th May 2016 at Merchiston T & B Club

Present

Members:
Robin Morris (Chair)
Tom Graveson (Vice-Chair)
Ian Clement
Mairianna Clyde
Ian Doig
James Geekie
Bridget Stevens
Mike Talbot
Ted Tate

Police Scotland:
PC Ross Stewart (St Leonards)
PC Gordon Dempster (Wester Hailes)
PC Stephen Clarke (Wester Hailes)

Public:
Alistair Adams
Margaret Adams
Ann Burgess (Grove Community Garden)
Hamish Davidson
Vivien Kitteringham
Margaret Mill
Susanne Mueller (Grove Community Garden)
Lynne Stanford (Health in Mind)
Francis Valentine
Logan Vaughn (Health in Mind)

Annual General Meeting

Welcome & Introductions

Robin welcomed all present.

Apologies

Frances Hawarden, Sally Lloyd; Cllrs Andrew Burns & Gavin Corbett; MP Ian Murray

Minutes of Annual General Meeting on 19th May 2015

Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Ian D., seconded by Ian C., and approved.

Matters arising

Taken below.

Report – Chairman

Robin paid tribute to members who have served the CC in various ways during the year including:

- Taking the lead on planning and licensing;
- Serving as representatives on Neighbourhood Partnerships;
- Acting as treasurer, providing IT support and the recording of minutes.

The workload is currently carried by a few members. He urged others to be more proactive and, in particular, to play their part in email communications.

Sally has told Robin that she will not continue as a member after the September meeting.

Report – Treasurer

In the absence of Frances, who was indisposed, Robin presented audited accounts for the financial year ending 31st March 2016. After allowing for unpresented cheques the net assets held

by the CC was £1,599. Bills due since the year end include £450 for logo design, £157.50 for web site changes, an auditor's fee, publicity printing costs, and a contribution to the Meadows Festival.

Report - Engagement

Flyers: Mike tabled a report on the distribution of posters and flyers in the past 3 years. Over this period at least one flyer has been distributed to most homes in approximately two-thirds of the 119 streets in the MercCC area. The streets that remain to be leafletted are primarily those with tenements where access to flats is more difficult. Mairianna and Ian C. offered help with some of these streets.

Publicity & recruitment of new members: Ways of encouraging better attendance at meetings and of recruiting new members were discussed. It was suggested that having a CC stall at the Fountainbridge Library a week or so before our meetings may be effective. Ian C. offered to investigate if this is feasible. **[Action: Ian C.]**

Mike supplied members with packs of leaflets encouraging membership of the CC and asked that these be distributed to friends and neighbours who may be interested in becoming members. **[Action: All]**

Matters raised by members of the public

None

Election of Officers

It was agreed to postpone the election of CC officers until at least the first meeting of the new CC in the autumn. [**Note:** Nominations for membership of CCs are open from 5th to 26th September]

Any other business

None

Date of next meeting

To be arranged.

Monthly Public Business Meeting

Minutes of previous meeting on 15th March 2016

Agreed.

Matters arising

Taken below.

Report - Police

PCs Clarke & Dempster, speaking on behalf of the ward officer, PC Pennycook, reported on policing in Tollcross/Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart. Over the past month there have been several break-ins in the Tollcross/Fountainbridge area targeting ground-floor flats. Other reported crimes included an attempted robbery in Bryson Road. Talks on home security took place at Chesser Community Centre. Ward officers have been involved in discussions on the new building for Boroughmuir High School.

PC Stewart reported on policing in Meadows/Morningside. The **introduction of the** new psychoactive substances (NPS) regulations has already led to a significant lowering of drugs related crimes in the city. House break-in numbers are still high though slightly down month-on-month. Motor vehicle offences are up.

Q&A:

- The drop-in centre, where residents can speak with local ward officers, continues to operate at the Eric Liddell Centre from 1 to 3pm on the last Monday of the month;
- PC Stewart reassured an enquirer that reports about an individual linked to the Polwarth Mosque will have been handled appropriately by the police.
- PC Stewart said that the transfer of some officers from community to response roles should ensure that community officers are not taken away from their designated tasks as has happened in the past.
- Worries were expressed about fire-raising incidents along the canal over the past year.

The police officers were thanked for their contributions.

Matters raised by residents

Scottish Canals' proposal for new residential moorings at Polwarth: Margaret Mill and Margaret & Alistair Adams voiced the concerns of residents about a prospective planning application from Scottish Canals to create residential moorings for canal boats at the rear of houses in Polwarth Grove. Access would be by a walkway from behind Polwarth Parish Church past the houses in Polwarth Grove.

Scottish Canals held a pre-planning public consultation meeting on the 13th April at Polwarth Parish Church at which Robin and other MercCC members were present.

Home security and privacy are the principle issues but other points raised were:

- Arrangements for sanitation;
- Out-of-date street plans (1896?) being used in the proposal documents;
- Residential boat owners can avail of council services but do not pay council tax;
- Many canals in England & Wales do not allow residential moorings;

- Polwarth Parish Church is to be allocated a mooring;
- The financial viability for the scheme was questioned.

Robin urged all concerned to make known their views to local councillors even before a formal planning application is submitted.

Seeking a new site for the Grove-Fountainbridge Community Garden: The Grove is a mobile garden of beds on standard pallets that are currently located in Fountainbridge on a site awaiting development. (www.grovecommunitygarden.wordpress.com). Part of the site is to be cleared for development work by September 2016. The organisers are seeking a new site. Ann Burgess and Susanne Mueller said that they had identified two potential sites in the Merchiston area and sought advice and support from MercCC. The possible sites were:

- The car park, currently leased to Merchiston Boys Club, adjacent to the football pitches in Harrison Park;
- The Caledonian Corridor/Linear Park.

It was agreed that the car park at Harrison Park would be a good choice but may not be available until the lease comes up for renewal.

Ted, together with Ann & Susanne, investigated sites on the Caledonian Corridor and identified possible locations where trees from the Grove Community Garden might be placed.

Ann & Susanne thanked members for their support and agreed to follow up on the suggestions.

Presentation by representatives of Health in Mind - a local charity

Logan Vaughn and Lynne Stanford spoke about the work of the Edinburgh-based charity, Healtn in Mind (www.**health-in-mind**.org.uk) which aims to provide support for those who may be socially isolated or who have mental health problems. Help is provided to approximately 3,000 people each year across the Lothians in a range of ways including counselling, guidance, befriending, services for older people, and trauma support. A web site (www.edspace.org.uk) provides a source of information on mental health and well-being issues.

Lynne and Logan asked members to bring their services to the notice of persons who may benefit and, also, to encourage volunteering in roles such as befriendering.

Report – Neighbourhood Partnerships

South West Neighbourhood Partnership: In conjunction with CEC officers, Tom and Ted organised the quarterly neighbourhood walkabout in the Shandon, Harrison Park, Polwarth, North Merchiston & Fountainbridge districts to look at issues that concern local residents.

South Central Neighbourhood Partnership: Robin & Bridget took part in the South Central Decides event on 30th April where people living in the South Central area were invited to vote on the allocation of funds to projects that benefit the local community. There was also the opportunity to vote on local environmental improvement projects from which a MercCC proposal for work on the pavement in Granville Terrace was selected to go forward. Margaret Campbell and CEC colleagues were congratulated for the smooth running a very worthwhile event.

Bridget attended a recent meeting of the Meadows & Bruntsfield Links Advisory Group. Proposals for a revamp of the Group are in prospect.

Report - Planning

EDI site at Fountainbridge (India Quay): Mairianna reported that EDI, the property development group, is about to submit a detailed planning application for the site which it owns at Fountainbridge. The Fountainbridge Canalside Intiative has expressed its dissatisfaction with elements of the proposals.

Ettrick Hotel, Ettrick Road: The hotel has been sold for development into 10 apartments subject to planning permission being granted. A planning application has been submitted and Bridget has viewed the plans. A substantial extension to this Victorian villa is proposed that would overlook and overshadow immediate neighbours who have expressed their strong concerns.

Unauthorised tree work: Ted has received reports from the Shandon/Colonies district of residents felling trees without approval from CEC's planning department. The CEC has produced a guidance leaflet on the matter but Ted was told that it is not feasible to target distribution to specific areas. Residents concerned about tree work should contact a CEC Trees Officer via the main telephone switchboard at 0131 200 2000,
[**Note**: For further information and to check if tree work has permission see http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20013/planning_and_building/1203/privately_owned_trees].

Report – Licensing:

Nothing of direct importance to Merchiston to report

Report – Treasurer:

Reported at the AGM

Councillors' Notes:

Cllr Gavin Corbett: He sent his apologies as he was attending a meeting of Craiglockhart CC but had submitted a note on current issues which is attached below.

AOB

Logo design & website changes: The design group Kin has offered three outline options for the logo. Robin reported that the majority of members favour option 2. He asked that members send Sally comments and suggestions on how this option might be improved. **[Action: All]**

Virtual 'blue plaque': Robin hopes that the proposal can be progressed in the near future**.**

Edinburgh Association of Community Councils: Ian C. reported briefly on the EACC meeting held on the 28th April 2016. [**Note:** Papers from the meeting are at http://www.edinburghcommunitycouncils.org.uk/.]

Parking Action Plan: Robin asked that thanks to Cllr Mark McInnes be recorded for his presentation at the March meeting on the changes to parking regulations. Thankfully, these did not directly affect streets in the MercCC area.

Unauthorised use of Blue Badges: Reports have been received of drivers using blue badges to park in Morningside Road when they may not be entitled. Suspicions about this practise can be drawn to the attention of a traffic warden, or to a police officer, who can ask to inspect the blue badge registration document.

Parking at Bruntsfield Place near Iyengar Yoga Centre: Ian C. continues to pursue the issue of vehicle parking which hampers the movement of buses.

Date of next meeting

Tues 21 June 2016 from 7 pm at Merchiston Tennis & Bowling Club.

29.05.16

Note from Cllr Gavin Corbett on matters arising from his case load

1. Residents in Dundee Street have been in touch about several problems with Tian Tian restaurant and I believe a report is being prepared for Licensing Committee on its suitability.

2. I was lucky enough to get a tour round the emerging Boroughmuir High School recently. It has a long way to go before pupils start in it in January but it is taking shape. Scottish Canals have recently told is they have funding to improve the "join" to the towpath along the new school and Fountainbridge Green and will be on site in the summer.

3. Ted and Tom (I think!) attended the parks and greenspaces workshop that I chaired at the end of April with a view to looking at ways in which we can strengthen community engagement with parks and greenspaces. This will be reported to the annual review of SWNP and then taken forward.

4. I am sure others of the CC who attended will feed back on the outline plans for new moorings on the canal along from Polwarth Church. Clearly, Scottish Canals have a job on their hands to persuade local residents of their merits. I also fed back to SC, my views on impacts on biodiversity and the canal side and practical use of the waterway.

5. I know it is a bit out of boundary for MCC but I have been in fairly active dialogue with Friends of Craiglockhart Woods and council staff on the transfer of land on Easter Craiglockhart Hill to public ownership if and when the Craighouse development starts on site (supposed to be this summer….)

Gavin Corbett

Green Councillor for Fountainbridge - Craiglockhart