MERCHISTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Public Meeting on 19th November 2019 - Draft.
Venue: Merchiston Tennis and Bowling Club.

Present:

MCC:

Ian Doig
Peter Brett
Helen Zeally
Ted Tate
Bridget Stevens
Vivien Kitteringham
Ewan Klein
Joan Houston
Daniel Cairns
Mairianna Clyde
Jake Horsburgh
Auley McCaffer

CEC Councillor:
Cllr Neil Ross

Police Scotland:
PC Brian Leavy (Edinburgh South East Police)

Public Attending:
Declan
Suzanne

Apologies:

Apologies received from Cllr Melanie Main, Cllr Gavin Corbett, Cllr David Key, Frances Hawarden, Ian Clement.

1. **WELCOME and INTRODUCTIONS.**

Cllr Ross initially acted as Chair and welcomed all present. He explained that Cllr Melanie Main, CEC Returning Officer for MCC elections, was unable to attend and that he would substitute to finalise the appointment of Office-Bearers etc.

2. **APPOINTMENTS:**

2.1 **Office Bearers Appointed:**

Chair - Ian Doig appointed as Chair

Vice Chair - Vivien Kitteringham appointed Vice Chair

Secretary – Daniel Cairns appointed Secretary

Treasurer – Frances Hawarden appointed Treasurer

2.2 **Co-options Appointed:**

Dr Helen Zeally

Ewan Klein

2.3 **Associate Members Appointed:**

Jake Horsburgh, Steiner School
Auley McCaffer, Boroughmuir High School
Jasmine Blyth & Caitlin Pryde, George Watson's College
Ankit Duggal, Napier University

2.4 **Other MCC Appointment.** It was explained that Michael Lugton, a local resident, had applied to become an elected member of MCC, but through an IT problem at CEC, his nomination had been lost within CEC.

Decision: It was agreed that Mr Lugton had complied fully with the election procedures and was therefore appointed a full member of MCC.

3. **BUSINESS MEETING.**

Ian Doig, the new Chair, chaired the meeting from this point.

He thanked MCC members who had stood down; Tom Graveson, the previous Chair, Jim Geekie for his long service, Guillaume Evrard, previous Secretary, and Hugh Halcrow.

MCC now had a strong team and looked forward to further progress in supporting residents and the local community and safeguarding public interests.

4. **MINUTES.** Minutes of previous MCC public meeting on 15th October 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

5. **POLICE REPORT.** PC Leavy explained that it had been a busy time for Edinburgh Police, with local Police resources often diverted to attend city centre incidents.

   Merchiston issues discussed included: Complaint of anti-social late-night noise by tenants in Merchiston Crescent (written complaint from a resident presented to Police); complaints 101 calls to Police not being answered promptly and that not all mobile operators allow 101 calls (complaints about 101 can be registered on Police Scotland website); speeding complaints around Colinton Road; bike thefts (Police reported they are working collaboratively with schools and universities to reduce thefts); housebreaking incidents (advice to residents to ensure doors and windows are locked at all times).

   It was suggested that the Police could obtain useful local intelligence about crimes and suspicious behaviour from Merchiston Neighbourhood Watch (www.neighbourwatch.org.uk) and from NextDoor Merchiston Community Network: (https://merchiston.nextdoor.co.uk)

6. **PLANNING REPORT.** A report by Mairianna Clyde was read out by the Chair on behalf of Mairianna, who joined the meeting later. Main point: Victor Paris site application for student housing appeared to have lapsed.

7. **LICENCING REPORT.** Bridget Stevens reported on licencing developments. Holy Corner (the former bank site) conversion to a pub is proceeding, with controversial long opening hours, to which MCC had objected and succeeded in reducing the excessive licencing hours.

   Development was proceeding and expected to open soon. Cllr Ross agreed to provide further update information on the controversial licence dispute in due course.

   Road safety concern was expressed that vehicular access and exit at this development would increase safety risks for pedestrians and motorists at this already difficult and very busy junction.

   Reinstatement of the previous pedestrian right-of-way across the corner site had not been resolved.

8. **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE REPORT. No report.**

9. **COMMUNICATIONS GROUP REPORT.** No report. This group would welcome additional members to replace previous members who have left.

10. **TREASURER'S REPORT.** Treasurer was unable to attend, but an updated financial statement was presented, and no significant financial issues were reported.

    MCC had donated £100 to the Canal Festival 2020.

11. **COUNCILLORS REPORT.** Cllr Ross reported:

    - Christmas Market – Controversy over CEC's contract with Underbelly, the contractor. Problems with planning permission and safety issues had arisen late in the approval process, because Underbelly had gone ahead without obtaining full permissions.
      CEC pays Underbelly to organise the Market and CEC does not receive direct income from Market, but considers there are wider economic benefits for tourism, hotels, restaurants, shops and employment;

    - Communal Bins clear-up. Cllr Ross was congratulated on his success in a pilot project to

get CEC to remove fly-tipped rubbish dumped around communal bins (photos circulated);

- CEC Tourism 2030 Strategy. Consultation open until 15th December and comments invited: https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/ce/edtourism2030/

- Traffic Order Proposals. Consultation closes 26th November. Information at: **https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/traffic-order-proposals**

- Street Lighting Complaint 1 - A complaint was made about inadequate lighting along the canal towpath, especially east of Harrison Park. Lighting improvements were requested because of safety and security risks.

- Street Lighting Complaint 2. A member of the public complained about inadequate lighting in Watson Crescent. Lighting improvements requested because pavements at Watson Crescent feel very unsafe.

- Street Lighting Complaint 3. Concern expressed about inadequate lighting on the public footpath along the former Caledonian Railway line, reported to be “pitch black”.

12. OTHER POINTS DISCUSSED.

- EACC AGM. Peter Brett agreed to attend to represent MCC.

- It was suggested that it is useful for MCC members to attend EACC and other Community Councils’ meetings occasionally, to hear about other community initiatives and gain useful contacts.

- Helen Zeally reported a successful volunteer leaf gathering exercise in the Grange. She suggested it might be worth considering a similar volunteer leaf clearing initiative in Merchiston next autumn.

- Jake Horsburgh suggested that Steiner School would be interested in providing volunteers to

assist with community projects in Merchiston, such as clearing up leaves. Contact Jake to discuss any potential projects.

- Gorgie City Farm Closure. Gorgie City Farm is a well-loved local amenity. It operated as a charity but became insolvent because of lack of funds and is currently in the hands of a liquidator.

  A fund-raising target of £100,000 is likely to be reached soon. Around 10 bids have been submitted to take over the Farm.

  While Gorgie City Farm cannot continue in its present form because the charity is insolvent, hopes are rising that a successor operator will be appointed to reopen the farm on similar lines.

- Shandon Street Parking. Concern raised by residents about parking on double yellow lines. Consultation has finished, but suggestion that objections could be raised when new Traffic Order is proposed.

- Jake reported that Steiner School had complained about cyclists cycling too fast along the Union Canal towpath. Steiner School took up their complaint up with Union Canal authorities and metal chicanes were installed to slow down speeding cyclists.

- Steiner School would be willing to accommodate MCC meetings after January 2020, without charge. Daniel to liaise with Jake re dates etc.

13. **ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS** – None.

14. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**:

- 15th December 2019 – Informal Private Meeting
- 21st January 2020 – Public Meeting
- 18th February 2020 – Public Meeting
- 17th March 2020 – Public Meeting