

Chair's Report – 19th October 2021 Public Meeting

- **Membership.** I thought it useful to provide an update on the membership of MCC in light of departures of members and new Associates.

Maximum Members are laid down in CEC's Scheme for Community Councils, as follows:

- Elected members 16 (currently 13 as below, with 3 vacancies)
- Nominated members 8 (currently none. CEC criteria apply)
- Maximum members 24.

Current MCC Full Members:

- Ian Doig (MCC Chair and representative on EACC)
- Vivien Kitteringham (Vice Chair and Communications and Outreach Group Leader)
- Daniel Cairns (Secretary)
- Frances Hawarden (Treasurer)
- Mairianna Clyde (Planning Lead)
- Bridget Stevens (Licensing Lead)
- Joan Houston
- Ted Tate
- Ewan Klein (co-opted)
- Roma Menlowe (co-opted)
- Declan Murray (co-opted)
- Navid Saberi (co-opted)
- Helen Zeally (co-opted)

Next CC elections will be in 2023 (exact date not yet fixed). MCC could our fill 3 vacant member posts by further co-options prior to elections. This requires the prior approval of CEC, which I have obtained. Suggestions of residents who might wish to join MCC are invited.

Associate Members. This is a separate category, outwith MCC's membership limits. MCC has used this category to appoint representatives from a range of local schools with the aim of bringing in younger people's perspectives. Associates are appointed on a one-year basis.

Associate members for 2021-22 are:

- Boroughmuir High School – Marcia McSween and Hannah Douglas-Walker
- Rudolph Steiner's School – Roseanna Holbrook
- George Watson's College – Vacant - nomination awaited
- Bruntsfield Primary School - Ros Classe (Chair of Parent Council)
- (Craiglockhart Primary was also previously invited to nominate an Associate from Craiglockhart Primary Parent Council, but no representative was forthcoming).

- **Communications and IT Issues** – The departure of Jake Horsburgh to university is creating some gaps and uncertainties about “who is responsible for what”, including responsibility for website's overall management, protocols and responsibilities for website postings, including taking down out-of-date-postings. Another gap is future responsibilities for media communications, which Jake previously managed.

Recent discussion also identified a need for a publicly-accessible archive on MCC's website of formal representations that MCC has made on issues such as Planning issues, Licencing issues and Traffic and other consultations etc.

My preference would be to have one member act as MCC's overall webmaster, who would manage overall website protocols and consistency, supported by a few other members who have posting access for specific subjects.

I suggest that coordination of IT and communications tasks and a review of 'who does what' responsibilities are areas that MCC's Communications and Outreach Group should review urgently.

- **Format of Future Meetings.** CEC continues to hold its meetings virtually using Teams. MCC agreed we would review the format of meetings – virtual

using Zoom or in-person – for the beginning of next year. Some other CCs are moving to in-person meetings and/or hybrid meetings where some members are in a meeting room and other participants log in remotely.

If MCC wishes to revert to meeting in person at Merchiston Tennis and Bowling Clubhouse, a key issue may be the availability of Wi-Fi in the clubhouse.

I would welcome the advice of members with more IT knowledge than me on whether hybrid meetings using laptops, and/or other options, are possible. This needs further exploration before the end of this year. Possibly another topic for our Communications Group to explore?

- **EACC Meetings.** I act as MCC's representative on the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils (EACC), an independent umbrella organisation for all the CCs in Edinburgh. Recent meetings. Current meetings:
 - 23rd September – Urban Diversity – Discussion about Edinburgh's approach to urban diversity, compared with that of Copenhagen and Oslo.
 - 21st October - Update and progress report on Edinburgh Partnership meetings; City Plan 2030 and period for representations; National Care Service.
- **Fire and Smoke Alarms** – A reminder that new fire and smoke alarm regulations (postponed from Feb 2021) will become mandatory for every house (owned & rented) in Scotland from 1st Feb 2022.

Not all fire alarms on the market comply with the British Standards specifications in the regulations – one well-known alarm system is specifically identified as not compliant with the required BS.

There is a risk that residents may inadvertently not be covered by their home and contents insurance in the event of a fire if they are not fully compliant with the new fire and smoke alarms regulations.

Official information and advice:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fire-and-smoke-alarms-in-scottish-homes/>

- **UK Parliamentary Constituencies in Scotland** – Consultation has just started. The stated aim is: “*to make each UK Parliament constituency more equal*”. Consultation closes 8th December 2021.
Information: <https://www.bcs2023review.com>

MCC’s area is divided between 2 UK Parliament constituencies:

- **Edinburgh South Constituency**. Proposals would add a small additional area at the east of existing boundaries (at Prestonfield).
 - **Edinburgh South West Constituency**. No boundary changes are proposed in the initial proposals.
- **Police Scotland Reports** – As reported previously, MCC has been without any in-person Police participation and local crime reports to our public meetings since lockdown in March 2020. This has been a big loss in exchanging intelligence about local crime statistics and trends, and opportunities to ask questions of Police officers. MCC has received a further generic October Police South West (E Division) Community Councils Newsletter – but this is a poor substitute for in-person attendance by a local Police officer. No response at all from South East Police Division.

It would be helpful if our CEC Councillor colleagues could facilitate Police participation and specific local crime reports for future MCC public meetings.

Ian Doig. MCC Chair.