MERCHISON COMMUNITY COUNCIL: MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING (BY ZOOM)

Date: 17th May 2022
Chaired by Ian Doig, Chair of Merchiston Community Council (MCC)

PRESENTATION: *Fountainbridge Canalside Community Trust*
Prior to the Business Meeting - Rachel Sedman, Development Manager, reported on the aims and activities of her organisation, with detailed information of their plans for the Edinburgh Canal Festival on Saturday 18 June 2022.

BUSINESS MEETING:
ATTENDANCE:
MCC Members: Ian Doig (ID Chair); Vivien Kitteringham (VK Vice-Chair and Zoom host); Frances Hawarden (FH Treasurer); Joan Houston (JH); Ewan Klein (EK); Roma Menlowe (RM); Declan Murray (DM); Bridget Stevens (BS); Helen Zealley (HZ Minute Taker); Amelie Lacey (Watson's Associate); Henry Reynolds (Watson's Associate).

CEC Councillors: Cllr Neil Ross (Scottish Liberal Democrats) and Cllr Mandy Watt (Scottish Labour)

Apologies: Daniel Cairns (Secretary); Mairianna Clyde (MCC member); Cllr Ben Parker (Scottish Greens); Cllr Val Walker (Scottish Labour).

1 INTRODUCTION
The Chair asked if there were any Declarations of Interest relating to items for discussion. No interests declared.

2 MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING HELD ON 15 MARCH 2022

The Minutes of the Meeting on 15 March 2022 were approved, subject to making the following minor amendments:

Re Item 4: Licensing: BS reported that there had, in fact, been no new relevant alcohol licensing applications. Also, the Dalton's Scrap Metal licence applied for would be for three years duration.

3 CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair reported the Results of recent Local Elections. He referred to the four City Councillors who have been elected to represent Morningside Ward on City of Edinburgh Council:
Marie-Claire Munro (Scottish Conservatives); Ben Parker (Scottish Greens); Neil Ross (Scottish Liberal Democrats) and Mandy Watt (Scottish Labour);
and the three representing Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart Ward on City of Edinburgh Council:

Christopher Cowdy (Scottish Conservatives); David Key (Scottish National Party); Val Walker (Scottish Labour).

The Chair reported that all seven City Councillors had been invited to this meeting, but several were reported to be at political group meetings and unable to attend. He reported that they would all be invited to a Zoom public meeting on 21st June 2022 and would have the opportunity to talk about themselves and their plans and priorities, as well as learning about Merchiston Community Council, actions, and concerns of MCC members and those of residents.

Cllr Neil Ross reported that there would be a full CEC Council Meeting on Thursday 19 May 2022 at which decisions about overall political control of CEC, leadership and Committee membership will be discussed.

The Chair reported from a Meeting of EACC. Community Councils are not encouraged to build up high levels of financial reserves and he asked if there were any further projects that MCC members wished to consider for financial support. He would welcome suggestions offline for consideration.

The Chair also drew attention to the need for the four local Defibrillators to be mapped and for members of MCC to participate in training programmes. JH reported the location of the defibrillator outside Christchurch, which is available 24/7, and that a Training Session was being organised in the attached social centre.

Action: Mapping and volunteers to be identified

4 LICENSING REPORT

BS reported that nothing relevant is awaiting consideration for a liquor licence. She also reported that there had been no change in relation to Dalton's Scrapyard Renewal Licence Application, which is still awaiting a decision by CEC.

DM asked if there would be a liquor licence application related to the Planning Application for the proposed Pizza restaurant at 36-38 Yeaman Place, opposite Dalton's site. BS responded that a licensing application for the proposed restaurant might follow a decision on the Planning Application.

5 PLANNING REPORT

The Chair reported that Mairianna (MC) had, in her absence, sent information about two important items:

5.1 A 'short-term lets consultation has been launched by City of Edinburgh Council (CEC), now that CEC has obtained powers to regulate Airbnbs. Planners are seeking views on what criteria should be used for decision making. Mairianna wishes to encourage all those bothered by 'party flats' to respond to the consultation before 10 June deadline. It can be found at: https://consultationhub.edinburgh.go.uk/sfc/short-term-lets-2022/

5.2 MC also reported that the application for the 'Pizza Place' at 38 Yeaman Place had re-emerged as a Planning Application, but without the access steps to the Canal. MC is concerned that the change from a 9 to 5 shop (Class 1 use) to a fast-food facility (Class

3 use) including providing take-aways will have an adverse noise impact on the neighbourhood – including two neighbouring flats which were created from a former shop. In relation to these properties, she believes that the Planning Department should honour the basis of their 'change of use' decision, which was made while the proposed pizza place was a shop (Class 1). MC has offered to put in an objection on behalf of MCC and encouraged others to do. She believes the closing date is 2 June 2022.

Action: After an extended discussion it was agreed to ask MC to submit a formal objection to both the proposed pizza restaurant and to respond to the short term lets consultation on behalf of MCC.

5.4 DM referred to uncertain progress with the proposal for student flats to replace Dalton's scrapyard in due course. Comment was made that Dalton's may withdraw their application to extend their scrapyard licence to sell the land for houses/flats to be built on the site.

6 TRANSPORT REPORT

6.1 DM referred to a discussion he had had with colleagues in Morningside CC to undertake a survey on how people travel to shop in Morningside Road. DM has suggested that it would be of more interest to Merchiston CC if the survey could be extended from Churchill up to Bruntsfield. JH reported that she had seen an excellent large poster about the Morningside project in the Red Cross shop, including a QR code. DM agreed to represent Merchiston CC on the survey planning group.

6.2 VK referred to recent discussion on the possibility of re-opening the Edinburgh South Suburban Railway for trains or lightweight tram/trains.

Councillor Watt reported that Labour is supportive of the proposal.

ID stated that he had for many years advocated a reopening of the South Suburban Railway, which is an under-used transport facility. It is hoped that there could be re-opened stations at Craiglockhart/Colinton Road, Morningside Clock and Gorgie.

A petition and further information are available at: https://chng.it/8pLwTkRs

7 POLWARTH PAVEMENTS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

RM confirmed that MCC had received a grant of £3,975 from CEC for this project, to cover the cost of the project, including support from Planning Aid Scotland (PAS). RM and DM are working out details of the Project which will include liaison with local businesses; a walkabout in June with CEC Officers and City Councillors to discuss 'issues', with a focus on residents and regular visitors in the area. DM reported that they plan to have a stall at the Union Canal Festival on 18th June and the Canal Bicentenary Celebration on 20 May 2022 to inform people about the Project.

8 UNION CANAL CELEBRATIONS

8.1 Bicentenary Celebration: BS referred to a report she had been involved in producing to describe the Bicentenary Celebrations planned for 20th of May, including a brief history of

the Canal. The publication was circulated to MCC members after the meeting. There will be a flotilla of boats travelling from east to west, with a stopping off point at Harrison Park Boathouse.

VK drew attention to plans for an MCC Table at the event with MCC promotional material. Those members of MCC who are available were encouraged to contribute to the promotional work at the Table – including getting names of participants interested in the work of MCC.

8.2 Canal Festival 2022: BS reported that the Festival will clearly be different from previous years – as reported in Rachel Sedman's pre-meeting presentation. ID agreed to write to the organisers to request a table at the event and EK agreed to 'co-ordinate' and organise a MCC stand.

Action: ID to write to organisers of Canal Festival

9 CEC WASTE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

ID reported that he had not received the promised follow-up to his letter to Cllr Lesley Macinnes, Chair of the CEC Transport and Environment Committee, apart from a brief acknowledgment. It was reported that in parts of the New Town, CEC have given a reprieve on implementation of the proposed 'bin-hubs' roll out while other options are considered.

Councillor Watt reported that the Pilot Schemes would be reviewed before any plans for a wider roll-out.

10 TREASURER'S REPORT

FH referred to the circulated Financial Reports which summarise the minimal recent activity, including a regular contribution to FOMBL, a donation of £50 to EACC, and payment of Public Liability Insurance. FH also drew attention to the Draft Audit Report which is awaiting sign-off by the auditor.

DM asked if it would be possible for the cost of Zoom meetings to be paid directly from the MCC bank account rather than from his personal bank account, for which he then has to make an application for reimbursement. ID explained that this would not be possible because all spending transactions should be implemented solely by the Treasurer, after spending decisions were agreed at public meetings.

VK requested authorisation for the purchase of MCC promotional items: Tabards (£35/£36); Promotional pencils (£192); Maps of the area (£30-ish). JH requested authorisation for the purchase of additional keys for the Eric Liddell Centre Notice Board (£12).

Decision: All those financial requests were agreed.

Action: Remitted to VK and JH for action, in conjunction with supplying receipts to Treasurer.

11 CITY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Cllr Ross reported that there are further delays to the completion of work at Warrender Baths – with so many problems it is impossible to predict a completion date.

He also reported progress with the development of a walking/cycling route from the Meadows to George Street.

Cllr Watt reported that not much is happening because the new Council is not yet fully established.

In response to a question, ID was assured by Cllr Watt that previous CEC policies and initiatives will be continued. ID then referred to the frustration of residents to the numerous roadworks in operation and the appalling state of some roads and pavements.

RM then asked about the rules relating to Planning Enforcement and described work in a neighbour's garden that had surprised her, given the Conservation Area status. She had had no response to an enquiry to the Council. Cllr Watt advised her to contact her or another local Councillor. BS added that Planning Enforcement is often ineffectual, but enforcement is irrelevant if there has been no Planning Application.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A Zoom meeting will be held on 21 June 2022 to which all local Councillors will be invited, and which will incorporate a brief AGM.

ACTION LIST: continued from 15 February 2022 Public Meeting
Actions from March and May meetings added
PLUS updating, as at 17/05/2022, of earlier items on Action List

Date started	Action	Owner	Status/target date
2022-05-17	Respond to CEC short lets Consultation	MC for MCC + others	by 10 June 2022
2022-05-17	Submit objection to Pizza Place	MC for MCC	
2022-05-17	Agreed plans for MCC Table at Canal Bi-Centenary Celebration + cost of promotional items	VK and volunteers	
2022-05-17	Request MCC Table for Canal Festival Celebration in June	ID	
2022-03-15	Submit donation of £400 via DEC to Ukraine Humanitarian Relief	FH	
2022-03-15	Create map of local defibrillators	Volunteers needed	as at 17/05/22 Still needs vol. JH reported defib @Christchurch + Training
2022-03-15	CEC SW Community Grants Funding Panel	RM & DM to present case for	as at 17/05/22 grant of £3,795

		Polwarth P'ment Improvement Plan	reported
2022-03-15	MCC to make grant to EACC	FH	Done. Grant of £50
2022-02-15	MCC to write to Transport and Environment Committee about Communal hub bins	MCC to draft letter; and ID to send	no reply as at 17/05/22
2022-02-15	To pass bin maps to ID	RM EK to post on MCC website	Done
2022-02-15	To engage with Morningside CC on their Travel Survey of Morningside Road	DM	Done. DM sought extension of Survey to include Bruntsfield. On 17/05/22 agreed DM to represent MCC
2022-02-15	To brief EACC on climate Emergency work	DM & EK	?
2022-02-15	To update website on Climate Emergency declaration	EK	Done
2022-02-15	MCC to contact New Town & Broughton CC about bin hubs	?	?
2022-01-18	ID to write to Police about anti-Social behaviour and press for Police representation at MCC Meetings	ID	Ongoing
2021-10-19	Consider response to move by Private hire taxi group to be Given access to bus lanes and Bus gates	NS	?

Merchiston Community Council

Chair's Report – May 2022

1. **City Council Elections** – Elections for all City Councillors took place on Thursday 5th May**.** Merchiston CC area straddles two CEC Wards; Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart (Ward 9 with 3 Councillor places) and Morningside (Ward 10 with 4 City Councillor places).

   City Councillors who were elected for the MCC area are:
   Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart - Ward 9 (Turnout 49.8%):
   - *Cristopher Cowdy - Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party (2,399 votes)
   - David Key - Scottish National Party (2,051 votes)
   - *Val Walker – Labour and Co-operative Party (2,026 votes)

   Morningside - Ward 10 (Turnout 54%):
   - Mandy Watt – Scottish Labour Party (3,145 votes)
   - Neil Ross – Scottish Liberal Democrats (2,877 votes)
   - *Ben Parker – Scottish Green Party (2,854 votes)
   - *Marie-Clair Munro – Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party (2,390 votes)

   (Note: * denotes a new councillor elected):

   MCC extends its congratulations to all seven local City Councillors who have been elected and we look forward to working constructively with them. All Ward 9 and Ward 10 Councillors are automatically invited to attend and participate in every public meeting of MCC.

   Thanks for their support are extended to previous City Councillors who were not standing for re-election; Melanie Main, Nick Cook and Andrew Johnston.

   Appointments of CEC Councillors to committees, and the appointment of committee conveners, have apparently not been decided to date.

   Overall political control of Edinburgh City Council is likely to change because of the election results, but the outcome is not yet clear.
   Scottish local authority elections are conducted using the Single Transferrable Vote (STV); this is a proportional representation electoral system which was specifically designed to minimise chances of any one political party dominating a council, and therefore coalitions would be required. Press reports indicate that in the recent elections around 28 of Scotland's 32 local authorities have resulted in no overall control, including Edinburgh.

2. **"Meet Your City Councillors"** – I am organising this session for next MCC public meeting on 21st June. The intention is to invite all 7 of our newly appointed City Councillors in the MCC area to participate. This presents a good opportunity for our local City Councillors to raise their profile, and also to participate in an open discussion about service priorities and views of MCC members and residents.

   I suggest we invite each Councillor to talk for around 5 minutes to outline their perspectives and priorities for CEC services in MCC's area in their period of office. Then open the discussion up to questions from MCC members and residents.

   This session is subject to availability of our local City Councillors and to firming up time management and other arrangements; some Councillors may have other commitments and be unable to participate.

3. **AGM –** I am also organising a brief AGM of MCC at our public meeting on 21st June, to meet the formal requirements of the CEC Scheme for Community Councils.

   Organising the AGM involves a lot of preparatory work, especially for the 4 office bearers. A key component will be the preparation of the draft accounts by our Treasurer, Frances Hawarden, together with Frances' arranging completion of the independent audit of MCC's accounts, which is required before the accounts are submitted to a MCC public meeting for formal approval and adoption. Frances hopes this can be achieved for 21st June; however, this is dependent on progress with the auditor.

4. **Office Bearers Nominations for 2022-23** – A further key component of the AGM will be the appointment of the 4 office bearers (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) for the forthcoming year, which is also required by the CEC Scheme for Community Councils.

   If any member wishes to put their own name forward, or to nominate another MCC member for one of the 4 office bearer posts, please let me know not later than Friday 10th June. (Secretary Daniel has notified me he is abroad at present).

5. **MCC Membership Vacancies –** MCC currently has 4 vacancies available for co-option of residents living in Merchiston who are interested in participating in community issues. If you know of anyone who might be interested, please put them in touch with me for further information.

6. **CEC Finances –** MCC finances are healthy and sustainable at present and CEC discourages community councils from building up large balances. Therefore, I suggest MCC considers whether there are any worthwhile community projects which MCC could finance or contribute to. Suggestions for discussion welcome!

7. **Contribution to Edinburgh Association of Community Councils (EACC) –** I reported at MCC's March meeting, that EACC (Edinburgh Association of Community Councils) had written to all community councils in Edinburgh to request a financial contribution towards the running costs of EACC, which does not receive grant support from CEC or Scottish Government. MCC Members were supportive of the current good work of EACC. A contribution to EACC was agreed in principle; however, the appropriate amount was unclear, so it was remitted to me as Chair to consult MCC members and EACC.

   Through post-meeting consultations, it was agreed that MCC should contribute £50 to support EACC's running costs. £50 has been paid by the Treasurer and thanks received from EACC.

8. **Defibrillators –** MCC discussed defibrators at our February public meeting and the suggestion of mapping local defibrillator locations and identifying any gaps was well supported. No progress on this since no volunteers have come forward.
   A project leader plus volunteers would be needed – so volunteers (including members of the public) are invited to enable this project to take place.

   Defibrillator information: https://www.sja.org.uk/get-advice/i-need-to-know/defibrillator-guide-for-first-time-buyers/

9. **Chair's Meetings:**

   - 26th May – EACC (Edinburgh Association of Community Councils) – Business meeting. I shall be away, so I am arranging that Vivien Kitteringham, our Vice Chair, will substitute to represent MCC.

   Ian Doig. MCC Chair. 14th May 2022.