

NORTHFIELD AND WILLOWBRAE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting 16 July 2015: 19:00 Northfield Community Centre

Present:

John	Fayrer	Chairman
Margaret	Alexander	Treasurer
George	Callaghan	
Dave	Ferguson	
Christine	Kerr	
Stewart	Kerr	
Dave	King	
Gordon	Macdonald	
Geoff	Pearson	Secretary

Ex Officio:

Stefan	Tymkewycz	Councillor, CEC
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Several members of the public were present.

Apologies

1. Apologies were received from Ian Murray, and Councillors Joan Griffiths and Alex Lunn.

Minutes of Meeting

2. The minutes of the meeting of 18 June were approved.

Matters arising

3. The Secretary reported that progress on consulting on notice board sites was hampered by the holiday season. Council officers were helping identify the planning process required for each site.

4. Portobello Road was being repainted from Jock's Lodge to Northfield Broadway to provide a better lane layout and that programme would give more detailed consideration to implementing minor road layouts for the Morrisons and Baronscourt lane entrances.

5. The Friends of the Figgate Park had accepted the grant offer of £100.

Financial Report

6. The Treasurer reported that £2859.68 was held in the Community Council's bank account and the annual grant from the Council was expected in July.

The New Park

7. The Community Council welcomed Ross Woodside, Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust, which has been commissioned by the City Council to conduct consultations for the design of the new Park on the site of Portobello High School and St John's Primary School.

8. Mr Woodside explained that the consultation would launch formally the following week, seeking views from 4 community councils, and groups across the area. A leaflet drop would be made to the properties around the site. There would be a website, Facebook and Twitter accounts. This phase, identifying ideas and preferences for the Park would end in October, to be followed by publication of perhaps 3 design options on which there would be consultation and a decision process (perhaps including voting) concluding by the end of the year. Recommendations would be made to the full Council for final decision in early 2016 and then a design and build contract would be let by the Council. There would be a separate process for identifying a name for the Park.

9. In discussion it was noted that:

- This was a highly unusual opportunity to do something of significant quality, and comparisons were made to projects in Berlin and Barcelona. It would be important to present a strong positive message and not lead with the chin on proposals that would cause immediate negative reactions.
- Many local people would not find it easy to find or respond to information supplied electronically – a comprehensive paper document should be provided as had been done for the school location consultation in late 2014.
- The interaction between the school design and the Park was important – if the school were to have a playing pitch it should not be necessary to provide this again in the Park.
- The views of all sectors of the community, including young people, should be heard in a balanced way.
- It was recognised that the site was closely surrounded by many houses which would feel the impact of any unsympathetic development.
- The new primary school layout and design was not yet settled and this might affect the detailed design. The layout currently shown would provide an access to the school from Hamilton Drive which would be likely to extend and exacerbate the school run traffic problem, currently being tackled by the School Streets pilots.

10. The Community Council thanked Mr Woodside for his presentation and awaited the launch of the consultation.

Craigentenny and Telferton Allotments

11. The Chairman explained that although these allotments were outside the N&W area, a number of the allotment holders came from the area and the issue merited consideration by the Community Council. He welcomed John Nesbit and colleagues from the Allotment Holders Association.

12. Mr Nesbit reported that the site had been owned by the old Edinburgh Corporation and allotments had been on the site since 1923 when the Association was formed which now was a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. Currently there are 85 allotments, including some provided to local schools and charities. About 20 years ago the land was acquired by Betts Homes, for a sum around £244,000, and there had been two planning applications to build on the land which had been turned down on appeal. The Council regard the site as protected open space, zoned for allotments.

13. Avant Homes, for Betts, were now conducting a pre-planning application to build 48 houses and flats on the site and re-providing 38 allotments. No rent has been sought by Betts for the existing allotments. Avant held a local exhibition in June primarily to seek views on the housing proposals and were seeking written comments by the end of July. The expectation was that they would submit a planning application soon thereafter.

14. The Association had indicated to Betts that it would like to buy the site recognising that the principle of so doing was central to the Community Empowerment Bill which would become law in September. The Bill contains provision on community buy-out and on provision of allotments but no timetable for bringing these into force had been set by the Government. One formal step has been taken by the Association in making an application to the Council for a Certificate of Lawfulness which would recognise the current use.

15. The Community Council agreed in principle to support the retention of the allotments. Specifically, it agreed to:

- Offer to Craigentenny and Meadowbank Community Council (as the statutory consultee) to work in partnership on the formal processes if a planning application is made.
- Make comment to the pre-planning consultation being run by Avant.
- Work with the Association on the terms of objections to a planning proposal.

Baronscourt Park

16. The Secretary reported that the meeting between Morrisons and CEC officers in June had resulted in Morrisons announcing that they were to appoint an architect to design the pathway from the store site into the Baronscourt Park. Morrisons hope that the Council will

agree to provide lighting for the path as it passed through the Park. Both parties appeared keen to make early progress. Morrisons were interested in providing a site for a community notice board.

17. The Community Council welcomed these developments.

18. In the Park itself, the Community Council noted that the City Council appeared to be carrying out works, such as planting fruit trees and installing goal posts, which did not accord with its earlier statements about future works. It was agreed to write to the Council seeking a report.

Any Other Competent Business

19. Gordon Macdonald reported that progress was being made with the Community Council's proposals for new cycle routes which would be discussed with the City's new cycling officer.

20. Concern was expressed about the disruption to bus services by the gas mains works in Willowbrae Road and the lack of information from Lothian Buses. The Chairman agreed to continue his conversations with Lothian Buses.

21. NHS Lothian had included the Community Council in its consultation on restricting the catchment area of the Craigmillar Medical Practice. It was agreed that no useful comment could be offered.

Date of Next Meeting

22. The next meeting would be on 17 September at 7pm.

23. The Chairman closed the meeting at 20.45.

Geoff Pearson
Secretary