



# Northfield and Willowbrae Community Council

## **Annual General Meeting** **Date and Time of Meeting: 8th November 2022 at 7pm** **at Northfield Community Centre**

### **Present**

Community Council Members: Gordon MacDonald (Chair), Dave Armstrong (Vice-Chair), Ian Murray, Nick Marshall (minutes), Charlie Wood, John Nisbet

Councillors: none

Others: Andrew White, Sarah Appleby and Margaret Bennett plus several other members of public

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

Apologies from Cllr Joan Griffiths, Frances Devlin

### **2. Approval of minutes of previous meetings**

Last AGM (24th Aug 2021) - approved without alteration (Prop John; 2nd Nick)

No matters arising

### **3. Approval of Annual Report and Accounts (FY 21-22)**

Approved without alteration (Prop Charlie; 2nd Ian)

### **4. Election of Office-bearers**

The following were elected/re-elected without objection:

Chair - Gordon MacDonald (re-elected) (Prop: John; 2nd: Nick)

Vice-chair - Dave Armstrong (re-elected) (Prop: Gordon; 2nd: John)

Treasurer - John Nisbet (re-elected) (Prop: Gordon; 2nd: Nick)

Secretary - Nick Marshall (Prop: Gordon; 2nd: Dave)

Several of those present expressed interest in potentially becoming members of the Community Council. In response to a question about what was involved in being a CC member, it was explained that a wide variety of issues are brought to our attention, including planning, transport (especially buses) and Council consultations. The CC's role is to inform local residents about local issues, gather their views and transmit these up to the Council and other relevant authorities.

It was noted that the CC is not diverse enough and that hopefully this will improve as the CC becomes more widely known.

### **5. Police report**

CPO Steve Paterson and Sgt John Anderson attended in place of CPO Anna Morrison. The main issues were drug taking in stairwells in Piershill Squares (E and W) and vandalism in Baronscourt Park and at the Royal High School. There had been an outbreak of vandalism to bicycles at Duddingston Primary, but the perpetrator had been identified. Problems with parents in cars (parking illegally; ignoring no entry signs) continues to be a problem at St John's Primary but an enforcement week would shortly happen which was hoped to improve the situation.

It was suggested that the removal of shrubs in Baronscourt Park had reduced drug-taking there, but that during a tidy-up in 2021 a large number of security tags from alcohol bottles had been found, suggesting that drinking there was still a problem. It was suggested that the Community Council could use its links with Morrisons to encourage them to improve security in and around their store.

## **6. Planning**

Jocks Lodge Student Accommodation proposal

There had recently been a well-attended (over 100) public meeting (organised by the SNP Councillor) in which attendees were overwhelmingly against the development. Alumno (the developers) did not attend but sent a statement which was read out, which included the suggestion that the building could be reduced from 7 to 5 storeys. A planning application is expected before Christmas.

It was agreed that the CC should take no action for the time being but should be ready to discuss the application when it goes out for consultation. The CC should encourage local residents to respond to the consultation and indicate where there was useful guidance on the Council website. An action group has been formed and the CC should stay in contact with them. It was unlikely that there would be any issues between this development and Meadowbank Village, but Dave would ask the Meadowbank Sounding Board whether it intends to consider it.

## **7. Engagement**

The Environment Fair in September had been quite successful (although attendance was less than hoped). It was agreed that we should consider running more events like this and participate in events run by other groups. The Community Centre is a good venue for such events, and we could also consider Morrisons and Piershill Library.

Other mechanisms for engagement included:

1. Online - Mailchimp, Facebook and the NWCC website
2. Noticeboards - Morrisons, Piershill Library, Trevelen Park (no access to that yet). We could seek to put up noticeboards in Baronscourt Park and Lillyhill Terrace (at entrance to Holyrood Park following a request from residents). We should make use of others' noticeboards - e.g. churches and schools. We should also advertise events in Portobello.

It was suggested that we should make more effort to involve young people, but no consensus about how to do this.

## **8. Any other competent business & Public Forum**

(a) Baronscourt Park lighting

Andrew White (AW) reported on his group's efforts to put lights along the path. Funding (up to 70% of the c£20k cost) is available through Paths for All. The Council had informed AW that consultation with local residents would be required as a next step. It was suggested that the CC could carry out or assist this consultation. AW agreed to check on whether the Council would accept this proposal and what would be required.

There had also been a suggestion to install benches - however there used to be benches which were vandalised and so removed. It was also suggested that the group could form a Friends of Baronscourt Park to be more influential.

(b) Cosy Cuppa

A group of residents was organising a warm space café in the Community Centre on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. The CC agreed to put up their posters on CC noticeboards and agreed to grant them £70 towards printing costs, (to be administered through the Community Centre). The CC felt it might be able to offer more support in future.

(c) Bus services

The 113 is an important service for those needing to get to the Western General Hospital (with one stop at Willowbrae Road Tesco Garage). The 26 has a much reduced service. It was reported that passenger numbers haven't recovered after the pandemic (less use on weekdays but more on weekends). There is also a national shortage of drivers. The council is considering reinstating 12hrs/day bus lanes to improve bus reliability. Those concerned were encouraged to contact (and join) Edinburgh Bus Users Group (<https://edinburghbususers.group>).

(d) Crossing at Morrisons entrance

Pedestrians find the vehicle entrance to Morrisons difficult and dangerous. The pedestrian island was removed some time ago and it is a wide two-way entrance. It was suggested that this was something that could be raised with Morrisons.

**9. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be a regular Community Council meeting and will take place on Jan 12th at 7pm at Northfield Community Centre.