



# Northfield and Willowbrae Community Council

## Minutes of Meeting 14th November 2023 at 7.00pm at Northfield Community Centre

### Present

Community Council Members: Gordon MacDonald (GM)(Chair), Nick Marshall (NM)(Secy), Dave Armstrong (DA)(Vice-Chair), Chris Alcorn (CA)(Treasurer), Margaret Bennett (MB)(Engagement Officer), Frances Devlin (FD)(Co-Treasurer), John Nisbet (JN), Charlie Wood (CW), James Keating (JK), Ellie Burroughs (EB - coopted during the meeting)

Councillors: Iain Whyte

Two members of the public

Apologies: Cllrs Alex Staniforth and Danny Alston (added later)

### Welcome and Apologies

#### 1. Minutes of previous meeting (AGM - 19th Sept 2023)

The minutes were approved (Prop: NM Second: MB). Matters arising:

(a) Links to CEC 20 Minute Neighbourhoods information - not yet on FB or website (**AP DA, GM**).

(b) Coffee Mornings - see under item 5

(c) Meeting with Brenda Devlin (Chair Northfield Community Centre (NCC) Mgmt Committee) - several meetings have been held, regarding youth work and other ways of increasing use of the NCC. NWCC will be represented at the next NCC management meeting (**AP MB**).

(d) Banking changes - Bank of Scotland now processing application for changes as described in last meeting. **AP CA** to chase up.

(e) Involving senior years pupils - MB had contacted Deputy Head Teachers at both High Schools (Portobello and Holyrood) and been invited to speak to senior pupils who expressed interest. It was suggested that Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme pupils might be interested as part of their civic involvement. **AP MB** to report back.

(f) Lady Nairne - MB had attended a walkabout with residents, councillors and officials. As a result, some work had been done including overhanging branches cut back and streets and back greens tidied. No action as yet regarding the dangerous garden walls but Councillors are pursuing this matter with council officers. Police had taken action against illegal activities. (**AP: Cllr Whyte** to chase-up officers re walls.)

(g) Morrisons Entrance - Cllr Griffiths had convened an onsite meeting attended by a resident, MB and Gavin Brown (CEC Roads Dept). Cars turning in too fast and scraping their undersides on the raised cushion, and dangers to pedestrians had been observed. Gavin Brown had promised that he would recommend reinstatement of the traffic island in next year's roads programme (this year's being already committed). Morrisons might be concerned but they had indicated previously that they were not responsible for the junction. It was agreed to check on progress with Gavin Brown in May 2024 (**AP MB, EB**).

(h) Information had not yet been compiled on LTNs, LEZ, 20 Min Neighbourhoods for residents. **AP NM** offered to produce this.

## 2. Police Report

GM read out an emailed report from CPO Anna Morrison. There had been more ASB incidents around Royal High Primary (RHPS) and traffic offenses around St Johns and Duddingston Primary Schools. **AP CA** to contact head teacher at RHPS to ascertain what could be done regarding railings, lighting and CCTV to deter vandalism. CEC staff had reported that the Schools Street sign (at St John's Primary) was in the process of being replaced. Once in place, **AP CW** to ask police to renew visits.

## 3. Financial Matters

JN reported that the current account balance stood at £3,698.98, with no income and £969.88 expenditure since last meeting. It was agreed that, since NCC had not charged for hire of the Community Centre for the Environment Fair (entire centre for 8 hrs), NWCC should make a donation of £300 (**AP JN/CA**). JN was formally thanked for his many years of service as Treasurer for the Community Council.

## 4. Management Matters

Ellie Burroughs was coopted as a member of the community council. This brings the number of CC members to 10. **AP GM** to add new members (EB, JK and CA) to email forwarding. It was felt that we need to revise our IT and communications. JK had set up document sharing on Google Drive. It was agreed that there should be an informal Zoom meeting for all members to discuss communications before January (**AP JK, GM, NM to arrange**) and that there needed to be more delegation of subjects to specific people or subgroups (on this and other subjects).

## 5. Engagement

Community Coffee Mornings: Three had been held to date, with varying numbers of residents attending. The last (14 Oct) focussed on Piershill, with leafletting of the area in advance of the event. Even so, attendance was low, with only 3 Piershill residents attending, but there were useful discussions which suggested better ways to approach the community. It had been agreed at the last meeting to continue the coffee mornings through 2024 (dates - added later - 10 Feb, 6 April, 8 June, 3 Aug, 5 Oct). It was agreed that coffee mornings could be used for specific consultations or other activities as needed.

Democracy Matters (DM) Consultation: This is a Scottish Govt consultation aimed at finding the public's views about local democratic representation and how it could be improved in future. Any group can set up a discussion and submit comments gathered to the Govt. MB proposed to organise 2 sessions targeted at residents from areas with specific problems and opportunities:

- 9th Dec at Piershill Library focussed on the Piershill area

- 27<sup>th</sup> Jan at Duddingston Church Hall focussed on the Lady Nairne area

Cost would be around £475 for the two events. This expenditure was approved. It was hoped that a grant from Scottish Govt would cover this, but there was no certainty that the application would be successful. **AP MB, EB to progress.**

It was agreed that, in addition to these events, the community council should make its own submission to this consultation and encourage residents to do so. **AP GM, DA** to put links to DM consultation from SG website on to NWCC website and FB. **AP NM, MB** to arrange meeting in Jan/Feb 2024 for CC to discuss its response.

Environment Fair: There had been two annual Fairs both successful in different ways. It was agreed to hold another next year, however it could be broadened to include other themes. Suggestions

included Culture, Community Wealth Building, Greenspaces, Green Deal, sale of arts and crafts, childrens' activities. The successful Multicultural Event organised some 5 years ago by the community council was mentioned. It was suggested that it might be possible to get another community grant for next year's event, and that free pizza was a good way of increasing attendance. Theme(s) would need to be agreed by early 2024 and this item should be on the agenda of the January NWCC meeting (**AP NM**).

## 6. Planning

Historic Environment Scotland Draft Outline Strategy for Holyrood Park: Holyrood Park forms 1/3 of the CC area and so is extremely important. The strategy will set the broad direction of management of the Park for the next 10 years and will be followed by more detailed plans for key subjects. Main issues for our response are closing roads to through traffic, use of the lodges and reopening of the Radical Road path. We have drawn attention these issues but not taken a position, since there is no clear community view. We do, however, encourage HES to explain its thinking on the Radical Road path as there is no mention of its closure or re-opening in the document. We have also provided HES with points where the strategy could be improved. **AP CA** to finalise over next 2 weeks, recirculate to members and submit by 19 Dec deadline. **AP CA (GM and DA)** to put final version on website and FB).

### Planning Applications:

Security fence at Iceland - it was agreed to object to this because the size and design are entirely out of keeping with the streetscape and contravene the POLO plan and Local Development Plan (LDP)(**AP CA**).

Short-term Lets (STLs)- A review of the Planning Weekly List in last 4 months had shown the number of STLs in area increasing. It was agreed to object to two STL applications as change of use from residential to short term lets contravenes the LDP (**AP CA**). It was pointed out CEC had recently declared a Housing Crisis. Living Rent have created a useful app to help residents with STL applications. **AP JK** to get link, **GM, DA** to put link on website and FB.

## 7. AOCB

Cllr Whyte reported that CEC Transport and Environment Committee was considering a subsidy for the number 69 bus route that might result in its partial or full reinstatement, depending on the result of tendering. These discussions were at an early stage and it was proposed that NWCC could carry out a survey of residents to ascertain demand for the service. **AP MB**

## 8. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be a regular Community Council meeting and will take place on 16th Jan at 7pm at Northfield Community Centre.

(Added later: Other dates for meetings in 2024: 12 Mar, 14 May, 16 July, 10 Sept and 12 Nov. AGM TBC but probably May)