



RESPONSE TO COMPLAINT MAY 2019

Northfield & Willowbrae Community Council
chair@northfield&willowbrae.org.uk

Dear xxxxx

The Community Council have read through your complaint and here is our response.

1.

The request for financial information was made verbally to our treasurer though an email address for response was indeed provided. For our use of the complainant's home postal address rather than the provided email for our response and for publishing of our response without satisfactory redaction of the complainant's address on our website, we apologise unreservedly. Further we have taken the following actions:

- We have fully redacted the response on our website.
- We have, to the best of our knowledge, removed the complainant's address and any other information held relating to the complainant from our lists and databases.
- We have agreed that, in future, we will wherever possible respond to requests for information by using the same or requested method of contact.

2.

The community council have listened to and discussed all comments made relating to the Meadowbank meetings on the 20th and 27th of February 2018 and have taken several lessons from them. These meetings were organised jointly with Craigentenny and Meadowbank Community Council, as they were the statutory consultee on this.

For example, one issue raised relates to the admission policy at the February 27th meeting. We realised that the room we had was unlikely to safely accommodate everyone who came along, so we took a decision to prioritise locals, i.e. those from either our or Craigentenny and Meadowbank CC's area. Regrettably this did mean excluding others who were not CC constituents, including staff from the Edinburgh Evening News.

In future we will give more consideration to the size of venue for meetings, to ensure that everyone is accommodated. For our recent meeting on Treverlen Park we used a large venue in a local primary school to ensure we could accommodate everyone.

The issues raised in this complaint concerning the Meadowbank meetings have all been raised and considered previously at our meetings and so we feel there is no further action to take. We now consider this matter closed.



3.

Questions or requests from the floor are generally answered by any one of the community councillors who feels able to respond. If any other community councillors feel they have more to add, or indeed disagree, then they can answer too. Collectively, we all feel that we are all able to speak freely at meetings and there is no need for any member to explicitly “canvas the views of fellow community councillors” on anything they may say, tacit agreement being sufficient for us to move on.

The complaint states that one or more community councillors have ‘repeatedly failed to declare a personal interest in a matter’, however it is not clear from the complaint to whom the complainant expects such declarations to be made. Any possible conflicts of interest, including the one alluded to in the complaint, have been disclosed and openly discussed within the community council, and any necessary actions taken.

This section of the complaint also references an item being given insufficient time on the agenda at our meeting in December 2017. Since we did not hold a meeting in December 2017, and since the complaint does not give any details as to the agenda item was, we cannot identify or comment on it.

4.

We are acutely aware that we are unable to do everything that our constituents would wish. Our understanding is that while we have a duty to accurately represent the views on our constituents in any response we make, we are under no obligation to make a response on every planning application or issue that may come up. We fully understand that some constituents will be disappointed when we decide not to act on something that they are concerned about, but as a group of volunteers with limited time and resources we have to make such decisions.

We are also aware of issues of engagement with our community, which is made more difficult by the lack of an obvious geographical or social centre in the area we cover.

5a

We take the views and ideas of locals very seriously. Having a designated time at the end of our meetings should help to allow the public’s ideas to be heard. We now make sure to post the minutes on notice boards.

5b

The request for an item to discuss changes to the Treverlen Skatepark to be added to the agenda came in on last day for publishing the agenda, by which point a draft has already been created with no time left over. Our response was not to add it to the agenda as, at the time, we had received no information on any changes to the park design. We suggested the requestor contact their councillors in the first instance. However, we subsequently decided to add a short agenda item to note the issue and gather any information or issues



concerning the park brought to the meeting. When it became clear at the meeting that several people with an interest in the skatepark had come along to discuss it, the item was moved up the agenda and given more time, resulting in a useful discussion with which those who came along seemed happy.

5c

While we have tried in good faith to address all of the items raised in this complaint, we find this last one to be a personal and subjective viewpoint.

Yours sincerely

Sam Rutherford