
Northfield and Willowbrae Community Council

Minutes of meeting held on 12th November at 7pm at Northfield and Willowbrae Community Centre

Present: Chair- Gordon MacDonald.
Treasurer - Chris Alcorn.
Engagement Officer - Margaret Bennett.
Dave Armstrong, James Keating, Charlie Wood.

Also Present: Cllr Alex Staniforth, Police representatives, 8 members of the public.

Apologies: Ellie Burroughs, Nick Marshall, Cllr Joan Griffiths

1. The Chair gave the apologies above and welcomed all those present.

2. Police Report.

Two officers from Police Scotland reported, on behalf of PC Morrison, on a number of issues in the area and the police response:

- a. Antisocial behaviour incidents, youths outside the Community Centre, possible vandalism and fire raising. Youths often wear balaclavas and abscond upon seeing Police.

Police patrols in the area and regular contact with the staff at the Community Centre. Portobello High school Police Liaison Officer and staff made aware of the incidents as it is suspected the individuals involved attend that school.

- b. Issues with drug dealing in Piershill area as well as Northfield Drive.

Ongoing work between Police and CEC to address the properties and tenants involved.

- c. Ongoing issues with parking around School Streets in the Duddingston Road area.

Traffic initiative in collaboration with the Traffic Wardens planned to take place in the next few weeks

A question was asked by a member of the public about fire raising at the community centre and suggested the presence of the free library may exacerbate this. Cllr Staniforth suggested that moving the library to an overlooked location may help.

3. Hamilton Terrace & Hamilton Drive Road Safety.

This had been brought to the community council by a resident concerned about road safety, particularly for pupils of the two nearby primary schools, in the areas of Hamilton Drive and Hamilton Terrace, including Hamilton Park.

The community council had flyered these streets in indicating that we'd seek views on this at this meeting, and as a result some eight members of the public came along.

Consensus was that there was a problem, and some action was needed. One person felt that there was not an issue. Key points.:

Inconsiderate parking by school run parents, Air Force cadets and their parents, and people attending Park Run is a real issue, particularly around driveways and the crossings between Figgate and Treverlen Park. Sight lines, particularly for smaller people, were greatly reduced.

Through traffic is an issue at all times, the streets being used as rat-run to avoid the controlled junction at Duddingston Road.

Existing parking restrictions, and the schools streets scheme, are not enforced.

The junction of Hamilton Terrace and Duddingston road is wide, presenting a long crossing for pedestrians and encouraging vehicles to turn in quickly.

Filtering the street at the junction of Hamilton Drive and Hamilton Terrace was not seen as practicable for a number of reasons.

Raised and narrowed crossings between the parks, with clear pedestrian priority would provide a safer crossing and potentially deter use of the streets by through traffic. Similar could be done at the ends of Hamilton Terrace and Hamilton Drive. This, and other interventions, may present a minor inconvenience to residents, though this was seen as an acceptable trade-off.

The update on the Hamilton Terrace School Streets sign saga was given during this discussion, as it was relevant to the discussion: A meeting with the manufacturers was scheduled for mid October and has taken place. Cllrs Kate Campbell and Alys Mumford (Portobello & Craigmillar) have followed up on this. Cllr Campbell reported that, despite a motion to full council to provide an update to ward councillors, the parent councils and community councils being passed, no update has yet been made. We will keep pressing on this (CW)

4. Matters Arising

a. Letter to CEO / Lady Nairne Wall / Piershill Flat

Letter sent to Paul Lawrence giving details of the lack of response from Council Officers and the two specific cases of the Wall and the Piershill flat. This resulted in a response from Paul Swan-newly appointed North East Area Housing Manager, inviting MB to a meeting to discuss these two particular cases. This took place last Wed 6 th Nov and lasted 2 hours (including a site visit to the two neighbours to view the damaged wall. PS had taken over these cases from two other officers who had left the Council and was still trying to unearth the full paper trail so the meeting enabled him to fill in some blanks. He gave assurance that the budget for clearing the undergrowth had been approved and would begin on the 17 th Nov. It has now actually started this week. Once this work has been completed a full assessment of the wall will be possible . He was unable to say at this point whether the Council would accept responsibility for the repair and wished to ascertain which parties had ownership.

The structural survey of the flat was still pending but there was no guarantee that it could be retained for Community use in view of the Housing emergency. MB reported on the extensive community engagement on this and the positive community benefits that would ensue, and asked for the opportunity to make the case at a higher level. PS undertook to investigate possible staffing and how the running costs could be met.

b. Environment Fair

This year's event was our biggest yet and attracted a much wider range of participants. The addition of stalls selling crafts, Jams and Chutneys, books, bric-a-brac and toys was very popular as was the music provided by the Down's Syndrome Scotland Choir, Parson's Green Primary Choir and Scottish Duo, Mike McGeary and June Nelson. As well as our usual environmental and community groups, this year attractions for kids included U-Think who provided free Pizza and outdoor games, the Fire Brigade who brought their engine and there were craft and henna hand painting sessions and puppet stories.

c. Local Place Plan

The results so far and a display of photos and questions was on view at the Environment Fair and in the Coffee Lounge. These comments have been recorded and will be added to the overall plan. Further opportunities to contribute are planned until April next year, including at the High School.

d. 69 Bus

Shortly after our last meeting Cllr Aston sent a copy of the new tender for the bus, including the proposed route. It appeared to follow the one suggested by our Lady Nairne residents although it was not clear about whether this was circular and in which direction. It was hoped that a November date for starting could be achieved but there has been no further information.

e. Cavalry Park

This site meeting took place on 4th October and included Cllr Staniforth , MB, NM and CA as well as Mrs Wilson, the resident . This resulted in a request for a meeting with all the various parties who own, lease or use the facilities and the land in the vicinity so that everyone could gain a fuller understanding of the multiple difficulties caused by the unregulated use of the area. Jen Bell ,CEO of Edinburgh Leisure, has agreed in principle to a meeting and a briefing paper is being prepared. It is hoped to send out a doodle poll of possible meeting dates before the end of November.

f. Baronscourt park (CA)

Grass cutting - CA had a site meeting with Scott Thompson and Cllrs Staniforth & Whyte about proposed new path lighting. Issue possibly not as bad as reported at the last meeting, but Scott Thompson said he'd monitor. Anecdotally, the grass in Treverlen park had been cut the week before the meeting and the cleanup appeared very thorough.

Bench - Bench has been ordered, we may have surplus from the funding to put towards installation.

g. Lillyhill Terrace Notice Board

Martin Gray, Ranger and Visitor Services Manager with HES, will attend our next meeting to discuss.

h. Grants

CA tabled a short paper on potential schemes the Community Council could apply for via the Ward Community Grants Fund +/- or other external grant schemes in 2025/26 - e.g.; Community Centre Cooker replacement / 4 or 5 Heritage Information Boards / Royal High Nursery School wildlife garden. It was agreed to submit an application by the mid-December deadline for CEC Ward Grants for the wildlife garden, after consultation with the Nursery. Decision should be known by mid-February 2025.

i. Financial Report

CA tabled a note on the current finance for the Community Council: Outgoings since last Community Council meeting in mid-September = £812.13 / Pending = £449.44 / Incoming = £882.39 / Available = £3,163.62 (but £5,313.88 when CEC grant of £2,600 for Environment Fair & Local Place Plan arrives). Received CEC Annual Grant to CC of £876.88

Still due purchase Baronscourt Park bench from CEC Grant of £1,750.00 (if CEC Parks install for Free, as they have offered), but not purchased as concern at ability to pay invoice within 28 days due to Bank of Scotland ongoing on-line 2nd verification problem. Company asked for quote.

Annual Insurance costs from Keegan & Pennyki at £102.05 paid in early October. Recurring annual costs still due i.e; Northfield Community Centre Room hire for bi-monthly meetings: two - January & March 2025 = £60. NCC Saturday Hire for Local Place Plan / 'coffee mornings' in early 2025 (possibly Saturday 8th February) = c£100.00 if they proceed.

And £1,000.06 of available funds restricted for Willowbrae Noticeboard, still to be erected, as from a CEC grant in May '23, but action underway to arrange site meeting with HES Manager & Architect and resident who originally raised project, to agree board location.

Application to CEC 'Place Based Initiative Programme' (PBIP) Fund for Street Trees replacement delayed by CEC till Winter '24 / Spring '25 to await if Scottish Government funds available.

j. Planning Matters

Summary of planning applications to CEC over 8 weeks from mid-September to mid-November 2004: 18 Granted / 10 submitted since mid-September (of which 3 Granted + 7 awaiting Decision) / 1 Refused / 2 TPO – Ok'd.

4 Applications of interest:

a) Submission of Pre-Application Notice for another major Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) at Unit 2, 25 Jock's Lodge, Willowbrae (24/04795/PAN)

Briefing meeting held with applicant's consultant architects & planners (6.11.24), at their request, before public consultation starts 13.11.25. Planning application due in January 2025 for 360 units / 5 storeys with 6th storey set back / pedestrian access from London Rd via courtyard and service access from Smoky Brae.

b) Granting of "Demolition of existing garage and erection of Apart-hotel (Sui Generis) with associated front and back of house areas, landscaping and access" at 3 Piershill Terrace

(24/03370/FUL) in early October, but Community Council's 2 observations (Better treatment blank gable – public art? / more bat, swift & bee boxes), not taken up by CEC Planning, but query on jobs created seems to be c5 positions to be provided.

c) Refusal of Short Term Let at 5 Meadowbank Crescent, Willowbrae (23/05769/CLEST), submitted in Autumn 2023.

d) Application by British Telecom for “installation of 1 No. BT Street Hub while removing 4 No. existing BT phone kiosks from the street scene” at 15 Metres South of 161 Piersfield Terrace Mountcastle (24/05031/FUL). N&W CC Letter of comment submitted on 6.11.24 related to: proposal effects adjacent Craigentiny CC with removal of 2 Kiosks / off-centre location for new Hub queried / & suggested use of Hub by local businesses & CC needs clarified.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting.

Minutes of the September 12th meeting were approved. Proposed MB, seconded CA.

6. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 15th January 2025, 7.00pm at Northfield Community Centre.

Draft A

Actions

Action	Who
St John's RC PS street signage.	CW
Set up Hamilton Terrace site meeting with CEC Road Safety officer and invite residents.	MB & CA
Update on Lady Nairne Wall clearance of undergrowth to allow survey.	MB
CEC NE Area Housing Officer Paul Swan to investigate Piershill Flat possible staffing and how the running costs could be met.	MB
69 Bus restart due in mid-December update.	MB
Cavalry Park meeting of various parties to be arranged	MB
Baronscourt Park bench to be ordered	CA
Lilyhill Terrace noticeboard site meeting to be confirmed and if HES Manager can attend January or March CC meeting	CA

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