

Firrhill Community Council
Environmental Get-together
Thursday March 24th 2011,
Oxgangs Neighbourhood Centre.

Background

The Firrhill ward has been going through an eleven year regeneration programme- the demolition of three tower blocks and development of 254 new homes, shops and community offices; demolition of St Hilda's church and the development of 36 new flats; development of 28 new flats for McCarthy Stone in Colinton Mains Drive; and approximately 500 new families moving into the area. Creation of six new football pitches, new pathways and lighting, a new bridge and two new play areas within Colinton Mains Park. Flood Defence, Reach 1-5: 50% of all construction work has taken place within our area.

Aims

It was felt that it was a good time to review what developments had occurred, what was still to occur, and their environmental impact - as well as any outstanding issues.

Environmental Impacts

Flood Defences has had the biggest environmental impact with the loss of trees and shrubbery and the pooling of water in areas that never used to be water-logged. There is also uncertainty over what can now be planted in the areas where there is new piping, pumps and flood defence embankments, and what impact this will have on house owners, e.g. will new piping etc be listed in future surveys warning that only shallow planting can occur in these areas? There is uncertainty as to when this work will be completed. On the plus side there is now a Firrhill Orchard and there have been two bulb-planting events (12000 in total) carried out within Colinton Mains Park and the Orchard, as well as along Firrhill Drive and the Lochan, which is attracting lots of wildlife.

A new Sports Pavilion is to be built at the Oxbgangs Road North edge of Colinton Mains Park, work commencing in June 2011.

Event Format

There was a good cross-section of people attending the meeting, list attached; they were able to sit at any table they chose and the professionals were encouraged to spread themselves evenly over the four tables. All felt this format allowed everyone to have an equal say and fully engage with the discussions. The topic and format attracted people who would not normally engage in such events. Below are the comments gathered:

Table 1

How would you Change/Enhance your Green/Open space?

Cut the grass, trim the edges and pick up grass cuttings

More bulb-planting

More plants and trees to encourage more wildlife

Community recycle compost bins

Reinstatement of green space/gardens after reconstruction/development work

Clean out the burn

Issues

Trolleys in the burn

Litter

Dog fouling in the park (Colinton Mains Park)

Solutions/Actions

Target Hot Spots with Environmental Wardens - targeted patrols

More bins

Salt buckets

Engage with young people on litter in the area

Trolley security system - in Tesco at Colinton Mains

Competition between the primary schools

Table 2

How would you Change/Enhance your Green/Open space.

Oxgangs Crescent Play square developed.

Complete Phase 3 of Dunedincanmore High rise development

Encourage people to look after their gardens/green space

Mapping local green space and exploring kerbside pieces of land and how these can be better used

Issues

The old shops: when will the demolition occur and completion of phase three of housing development be completed? The pigeon mess in the same area: who is responsible and what impact does this have on people's health?

The section of fence around the old shops has been removed - is now a danger as it is roughly a 10ft drop - temporary railings around the shop insecure.

Green triangle: opposite Lochan, what's happening with this space and how is it going to be used?

Over-grown bushes/hedging across paths?

The old parts of Oxgangs e.g. the Chatterrig path and play square have gone down-hill of recent years e.g crumbling and broken paving.

49 Oxgangs Ave: own large garden but not used - could this be sold to council/project to be used as a community allotment?

Pot- holes

Blocked drain outside ONC: Clarence had been notified last September '10

Dog muck and litter

Huge park (Colinton Mains) not used for anything

Solutions/Actions

Consider Bonfire Night: this is how the Green triangle is used locally already.

Is there an opportunity to utilise the barracks land?
 Flower box initiative
 Use of larger unused gardens for community allotments for growing crops and sharing produce.
 Identify older people or others who need help to keep gardens
 Environmental walk-about groups
 Energy efficient schemes and more recycle points
 Community health flat
 Duck notice boards: have more natural wildlife notice boards to let people know what lives in/inhabits their community/area.
 Comiston House free: is there space around this?

Table 3

How would you Change/Enhance your Green/Open space?

More seating areas
 Community clean-ups
 Wildlife information boards
 Erect a Life Saving Ring @ Lochan

Issues

Giant Hogweed
 Poor lighting at the bridge in the park and on the burn side of the park: there have been instances of dog fighting in this dark area.
 Access to path at the top of the green triangle.

Actions/solutions

Plant /seed swop
 Wild flower garden

Table 4

How would you Change/Enhance your Green/Open space?

Create a Fruit Hedge
 Create designated/secure wildlife areas

Create more flower areas within the park
Create an avenue of trees along park foot paths

Issues

Sub- station when will this be completed?

Dog fouling

What are the guidelines for planting near new drainage/pipes etc?

Areas that now flood after flood defence work

Poor relationship with McKenzies, latest flood defence contractor

Loss of planting due to flood defence work

Re-instatement of green space/gardens after flood defence work

More seating areas

Actions/solutions

Seating could be something as simple as logs: project work for A4E?

Scrap wood is available for bat & bird boxes from building and development work: project work for A4E and schools?

Small grants are available for bat and bird boxes also bee cafes

Look for quiet sheltered areas to create a plant nursery

Create a willow/hazel sculpture

Contact Bill Elliot, Scottish Water, for info re concrete piping in park.

Health Event

There was a 'Health Event' that took place two weeks prior to this 'Environmental Get-together' and at this event there was a 'Graffiti Board' with one question, which asked "If you had one wish to improve the area what would it be?" Out of the 39 responses 20 people gave the following responses.

- more flowers, meadow park, less grass. 5
- Less Dog Mess. 4
- More Seating. 4
- Improved Lighting. 3
- Over grown bushes/trees. 1

- Develop Green triangle. 1
- Permanent Dog Warden. 1
- Upgrade Play Park at Pentland CC. 1

None of the people who gave these responses attended the Environmental Get-together.

Recommendations

1. FCC to create an environmental group made up of a cross-section of the community.
2. Create a Plan
3. Submit this report and an Action Plan to the Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership to hopefully be included in the updated Pentland Community Plan.
4. Submit this report and an Action Plan to other relevant organisations/depts.
5. Publish summary in next FCC Newsletter.

APPENDICES

Planting Year Plan
Attendees List
Action Plan

Planting Year Plan

January-2011	Bulb plant
February	Bulb plant and tree plant
March	
April	Cheery tree seedlings collected
May	
June	
July	
August	
September	Bulb plant
October	Bulb plant and tree plant
November	
December	
January-2012	
February	Tree plant
March	

Firrhill Community Council
Environmental Get-together
24-03-11
Attendance

Name	Organisation	E-Mail	Phone
H. Levy	Firrhill C.C.		
A. Hunter	Firrhill C.C.		
G. Hunter	Firrhill C.C.		
P.I. Podd	Firrhill C.C.		
John Spence	ONC		
E. Barry	Councillor		
E. Aitken	Councillor		
C. Dunlop	CEC, Parks		
G. Budd	PNP,		
Jim Grainger	CEC, Flood Defences		
D.Crawford	L & B Police		
Fiona Tait	Community Member		
Matt Cohan	CEC, Rangers		
Louise McGuire	Fairmilehead CC		
Irene Cosgrove	ONC Vice chair		
Bill Hannah	NHS		
Ian Boettcher	A4E		
Alison Sweetland	A4E		
Sharon Laidlaw	Community Member		
Lilian Martin	Community Member		