

COUNCIL MEETING: 26 JUNE 2007

Minutes of meeting held at 7:00pm in the Colinton Mains Community Centre.

Present: G Lighthouse (Chair), L Linn, G Hunter, A Hunter, S Wilson (LBP), J Napier (Mins Sec), P Wright (Sec) part meeting

Apologies: H Levy, S Dagleish, E Barry

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting: held on 24 April 2007

Approved by L Lynn and seconded by A Hunter.

a) Matters Arising*(i) Flood Prevention / New Bridge works*

Following on from this meeting and with the near completion of this first phase of the flood prevention work, a request had been made to the CEC for information on the number of complaints received from residents during the period that the work was being carried out, if any. The request has been acknowledged but still waiting on information.

LL reported she was currently involved in a dispute on the re-instatement of her garden. Chair to make enquiries.

2. Police Report – S Wilson

Inspector Wilson gave a statistical report highlighting a 14% reduction in crime. Vandalism has been an ongoing problem and a number of cases were cited including St Mark's Nursery where outside play equipment has been vandalised 3 times over the last 6 months. Other incidents reported were a case of a cycling flasher, fire-raising at Oxgangs House and a break-in at a house in Colinton Mains Crescent.

Much to the disappointment of the personnel involved the open day event that was due to be held at Oxgangs Police Station on Saturday 16th June had to be cancelled due to poor weather conditions.

A member raised his concern regarding public safety on footpath that runs along the side of the burn between Colinton Mains Drive and Oxgangs Road North. The condition of the hedges along the path would make this a secluded place for any would-be muggers, etc., to hide. The Inspector noted the member's concerns and the Chairperson indicated he would make enquiries regarding maintenance of the path.

Concerns about young people hanging about in large groups prompted a discussion on the Youth Action Team and it was reported that despite a substantial increase in the in the size of the area now covered by the Team, comprising of 3 officers, there had been no increase in the staff resources.

3. Report on Weekly Planning Bulletins – J Napier

In this reporting period, up to the 18 June, there had been only one planning application submitted for work in the Firrhill ward. During the same period 3 applications had been granted and one withdrawn. Items worth noting are:

McCarthy and Stone's application to build a block of flats for the elderly on the site of the old petrol station at Oxgangs Road North had been withdrawn.

Tesco, Colinton Mains Drive, had made application, during the previous reporting period, to extend their existing dot com facility to allow increased storage and servicing and this has been approved. (Colinton ward)

The Chair referred to the need to ensure that the playing field between Oxfangs Road North and the rear of Colinton Mains Green be re-instated after the contractors for the bridge works move out. Discussion on use of that area as a works site for the next phase of the flood prevention works.

4. Meeting Reports – G Lighthouse and P Wright

a) Neighbourhood Partnership Inaugural Business Meeting

GL attended a meeting with the new South-West Neighbourhood Team to agree a constitution and business arrangements for the 'Pentlands' Neighbourhood Partnership forum. The draft constitution and business arrangements were agreed on the basis that they will be open to review in 6 months time. It was noted that the schedule of meetings would be monthly and that this was considered to be an advisory group.

The Chair raised concerns that the funding for the SW Neighbourhood Team staff may come from the financial budget previously allocated to the Local Development Committees for funding local community development works.

He expressed the view that the Partnership boundaries were not correct, citing that Firrhill had more in common with Craiglockhart than Balerno and that this may lead to a lack of support between the different community groups on local issues.

He also reported that Community Council representatives on the Neighbourhood Partnerships were objecting to the need to agree to and sign a code of conduct. This required the representatives to reveal for public audit, personal information on lifestyles and finances.

b) Neighbourhood Partnership Induction Day

PW attended an all-day seminar at the Murrayfield Stadium and submitted the following report.

After a welcome and introduction from Cllr Charles Dundas, senior City Council official Graham Kitching from the CEC department 'Services for Communities' (SfC), who will be South West (i.e. "Pentlands") Neighbourhood Partnership Manager, gave an overview of the day, followed by "*Engaging Communities*", which was addressed by Mark Turley, Director of SfC and Ronnie Liddle, a commander in the Lothian and Borders Police.

Delegates then went into small discussion groups of about six with each group discussing some of the 22 standards and principles of the *Neighbourhood Partnership (NP) Charter* (a valuable tool to be used by NP Boards, which forms part of the basis of a positive working relationship between partners involved in the NP).

Peter Strong, SfC Neighbourhood Manager North, then talked to delegates about possibilities for a "*vision statement*" [new name for a 'mission statement'] and/or slogan, ie., "*what we are about*" and illustrated this with slides of various well-known or more obscure slogans for discussion.

At the start of the afternoon session the groups reformed and completed a questionnaire on '*Equalities, Diversity and Harassment*' then a representative from Cymbiosis Diversity Consultants discussed the answers and talked about Community diversity and "*social cohesion*".

John Sturt, City Council Secretary, then addressed the subject of the Partnerships' legal requirements including its code of conduct. This originated from the Scottish Parliament in

2000 as “*Ethical Standards in Public Life*”, a model code of conduct for members of devolved public bodies. However this proved contentious as the delegates, who are volunteers in community service, were being asked to sign what was broadly the same Code of Conduct applicable to City Councillors, requiring signatories to divulge their personal financial information. A number of delegates objected, stating there was no legal basis for signing and the matter was left in abeyance. The main message that came across from Council officers was the importance of Board members to act in the interests of the neighbourhood as a whole and not just their own “patch”.

The induction day finished with Don Naismith, Senior Learning and Development Officer, telling the delegates of the many NP training sessions which have been planned for July and August. The first NP Board meetings will likely take place in September, several months later than originally intended.

5. AOCB

a) Pentlands Community Centre

A new full-time worker has recently been appointed which should benefit the work being carried out within the Centre.

b) Edinburgh Association of Community Councils

The Chair expressed his concern about the aims of this group, which tends to act as a forum for presenting new information rather than seeking to actively pursue community issues.

6. Correspondence

- a) *PostWatch, Scotland, booklet*
- b) *Info re Neighbourhood Partnership Inaugural Business Meeting, 25 June (item 4a refers)*
- c) *Info re Neighbourhood Partnership Induction Day, 26 June (item 4b refers)*
- d) *Email from Association of Scottish Community Councils: appointment of new administrator – Eileen Capaldi*
- e) *Gender Equality Scheme, CEC Licensing Board: Draft consultation*
- f) *Private Housing Strategy 2007-17, CEC: Draft consultation*

7. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Firrhill Community Council will be held in the Colinton Mains Community Centre on Tuesday 28th August 2007 at 7:00pm. It should be noted that in accordance with normal practice, there will be **no** meeting held in July.