

COUNCIL MEETING: 25 MARCH 2008

Minutes of meeting held at the Colinton Mains Community Centre.

Present: G Lighthouse (Chair), P Wright (Sec), G Hunter, A Hunter; B Brand; J Napier (Mins);

In Attendance: J Rust (Cllr)

Apologies: M Jarvis; E Aitken (Cllr). D Crawford (Oxgangs Police)

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting: held on the 22nd January 2008

BB requested that it be noted she had submitted her apologies prior to the last meeting but it had not been recorded. With this amendment the minute was approved as a true record (Prop: G Hunter; Sec: A Hunter)

2. MATTERS ARISING:

- (a) Item 2(a) – Pentlands Community Centre – with regard to the faulty water heater, Cllr Rust reported that the parts to effect a repair had been supplied to the Centre.
- (b) Item 3 – Disused Hunters Tryst Primary School – Cllr Rust also reported that steel shutter had been fitted to the ground floor openings.
- (c) Item 3 – BB reported that she had seen children playing on the roof of the nursery at St Marks Primary School.
- (d) Item 3 – AH reported that children were vandalising doorbells by removing the bell push from the doors. Whilst it seemed a minor prank it would result in a substantial cost to persons affected in replacing cordless doorbells. (see Police report).

3. Community Police Report: D Crawford (written report)

In view of my absence at the above, please accept my apologies. I would request that all or part of the following report be read out for the information of those in attendance.

LOCAL ISSUES.

Masts have been erected in the vicinity of Oxgangs Broadway re the introduction of CCTV. It is believed the arrival of CCTV in the area is now imminent as an updated list of CCTV sites in the city received at the station now has Oxgangs Broadway included. It is hoped this measure will assist the local businesses, residents and police to work towards reducing the number of Youth related issues currently being experienced at this location.

The City of Edinburgh Council recently re-introduced the concept of the “Walkabout” across the city. Various local interested parties, including the police, were invited to attend and I recently accompanied the council representative on the first such walkabout, which are scheduled to take place 2 times per month. Oxgangs will be covered on a Tuesday afternoon, whilst Firrhill will be attended to on a Thursday morning. The aim and benefit of these walkabouts appear obvious in that various matters designed to improve the amenity of the area can be highlighted and actioned.

In previous meetings I have highlighted the intention for additional street work to be carried out in the area by outreach workers attached to Morningside Baptist Church. This is now up and running and will take place on 3 Fridays out of 4, each month. Two workers are involved on these evenings and I have been told the process is at the “getting to know” stage at present. I have asked to be kept up to date with their progress.

Continuing the “Youth Theme”. I have been invited to and will be attending a meeting hosted by Dunedin Canmore on 16th April 2008 re the establishment of a “Youth Café” in the area. This apparently forms a part of this Organisation’s commitment to “Community Initiatives”. It is an inaugural meeting and various bodies including local schools will be represented. No doubt there will be numerous questions to be asked and I can report further on another date.

Again as previously mentioned, work was started and is now nearly complete in lowering the wall that borders “The Vennel” in Oxfangs Avenue. Previously it stood 4-5 feet in height and offered perfect cover for those that congregated there to drink, annoy and throw items at passing vehicles in the Avenue. Although cast iron guarantees cannot be given as far as potential future incidents are concerned, this simple and cost effective answer provides a useful crime prevention measure to an area that through the years has caused the public and police alike some concern.

It appears that an annoying and at the same time baffling mini trend has arisen whereby youths are removing the plastic door bell covers from various locations in the area. The first incident was highlighted last week in Colinton Mains, and now appears to have spread to the central area in particular Oxfangs Place and Crescent. Several complaints have been received of youths congregating in stairs and following contact with several residents, I am attempting to deal with this activity and the overall nuisance behaviour associated with it.

CRIME

Over the past few weeks, a number of vehicles have been broken into as well as a rise in the number of stolen vehicles being reported. These are not new crime types, however the current frequency is concerning. Work is ongoing to further identify the trend and those responsible. It is also a timely moment to re-emphasise the need for simple crime prevention by keeping easily removable items out of sight if being left within the vehicle. Also, with the advent of better technology, the type of cars stolen tend to be older models which do not possess the current anti theft measures now fitted as standard. Owners of older vehicles should consider some form of anti theft device as a precautionary measure. Many cost effective devices are now easily available on the open market.

These are the main issues worthy of inclusion and are merely in addition to the routine issues of local complaints, neighbour disputes, vandalism and anti-social behaviour that appears to be an all too common part of modern life. However, I’m sure the meeting needs to progress rather than grind to a halt if these matters were outlined and they can perhaps await an airing at another date.

If any matter requires my attention, then please feel free to get in touch.

4. Councillors’ Report: Cllr Rust

Cllr Rust confirmed the disused Hunters Tryst Primary School demolition programme was being delayed due to asbestos.

He also reported that he had attended a celebration to mark the 25 years that Dennis Williams’ general store in Oxfangs Broadway has been trading.

Participated in the walkabout with PC Crawford to view communal parts and note areas for action/improvement.

Reported that following a presentation to the full City of Edinburgh Council on the 18 Bus Service by a deputation which included representatives of this Community Council, the decision of the Council was to remit the matter back to the Transport Committee. (see under Meeting reports)

5. Treasurer’s Report: H Levy

No report due to absence.

6. Planning Report: J Napier

Report on the Weekly Planning Bulletins for Ward No.08. The period covered is from 25 February to 17 March 2008, during which only 3 applications and 1 decision related to property within Firrhill Community Council's area is reported in the Bulletins:

- A planning application has been registered to carry-out an attic conversion.
- A planning application has been registered to install an ATM at No. 82 Colinton Mains Drive (Post Office)
- A planning application to demolish and rebuild an electrical sub-station at Firrhill Drive was granted.

7. Meeting Reports – P Wright

a) City of Edinburgh Council Meeting, 13th March 2008

P Wright, A Hunter and G Hunter representing Firrhill Community Council formed part of a deputation to plead for retaining the Sunday subsidy on the No 18 bus route attended a meeting of the full Council in Lothian Chambers. The leader of the deputation, Irene Paterson, from Hunters Tryst Residents Assoc spoke about the necessity of the bus for use by patients, visitors and staff at the ERI and Marie Curie Hospice, as well as other care homes on the route. She also said how important it is for shoppers and shop employees. Peggy Wright concentrated on access to leisure facilities, reminding Councillors that this community had never been given the swimming pool promised 50+ years ago and that, when the latest one was included in a Leisure Centre at Gracemount, we were told this area does not need one now as we have easy access to those at Gracemount and Wester Hailes. PW pointed out that this is not the case for anyone relying on public transport: they are both on the No 18 route, which does not have a meaningful evening service (the last bus leaves Wester Hailes in this direction at 6.45 pm), and, if the Sunday service is again withdrawn, we will feel that we are being given a very raw deal. Questions were asked by Cllrs Jason Rust and Eric Barry (Colinton & Fairmilehead) and Cllr Gordon Buchan (Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart) in whose Ward the No 38 bus is also under threat, about alternative bus routes/journey times and the cost of taxis to/from the ERI - not options for so many in our community who are elderly and/or infirm or have young families - as well as where Lothian Buses get the figures to claim that the 18 is a loss-making route.

No decision was taken at this meeting; it was referred to the Transport Committee for review.

8. Correspondence

The following correspondence has been received since the date of the last meeting:

1. Repair to Boilers at Pentlands Community Centre – email from Cllr Rust dated prior to last meeting but not accessed until after. Property Development Officer confirms that the instruction for Property Care to proceed with works to pump and pipe have been put through. Start date for works will be passed on when known.
2. “The Community Councillor” (from the Association of Community Councils)
3. “Spokes” leaflet.

4. Consultation on Forestry Commission Scotland's draft Climate Change Action Plan 2008-10. A copy of the plan can be viewed on the Internet: www.forestry.gov.uk/ccapsotland. Tel: 0800 77 1234 or email fcs.climatechange@forestry.gsi.gov.uk. To give comments by 6 June.
5. Queensbury Bus Shelters leaflet.
6. SEPA: Information Seminar on thermal treatment Criteria, 1st April at Perth (see Secretary for more information.)
7. Scottish Government: Planning Modernisation – Consultation and Electronic Strategy. Consultation Papers on <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Planning/Modernising>.
8. Edinburgh Tenants Federation new address: Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, EH7 5QY
9. NHS: Better Acute Care in Lothian; copy of report on info collected in Rezoning Workshop, 5th February 2008.
10. "Care & Repair Edinburgh Ltd" - (leaflets to distribute).
11. Edinburgh Leisure: Gracemount Leisure Centre (leaflets to distribute)
12. Community Councils Joint Meeting: 24 April. 7 pm. Waverley Court. Main focus: Partnership Working and the Developing Role of CCs. Presentation on recent developments relating to CCs in Scotland. [Two reps allowed from each CC]
13. Community Councils Training Programme 2008: Info sheet/booking form for each member.
14. Forestry Commission: Forest Enterprise Scotland - Framework Strategic Plan. Plan on Internet at www.forestry.gov.uk/fesplans . Consultation in Edinburgh, 28 April (venue/time info on 0146 323 2811).

9. A.O.C.B.

AH reported that the tarred surface of the road at Colinton Mains Drive was badly rippled near the bus stop at the Braid Burn and was liable to be a hazard for pedestrians crossing the road.

Secretary noted that the annual general meeting of the Community Council is due to be held on 27 May 2008. It was normal practice to invite a speaker to the meeting and she proposed that in view of the work done by Oxfams Care in the community that they should be invited to attend for this purpose. This was agreed.

10. 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, 22 April 2008 at 7pm.