

FIRRHILL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING: 22 JULY 2008

Minutes of meeting held at the Oxgangs Neighbourhood Centre.

Present: H Levy (Chair/Treasurer); A Hunter (Vice Chair); P Wright (Sec); J Napier (Mins Sec); G Hunter; G Lighthead; B Brand; M Jarvis

In Attendance: E Leslie; A McNair; J Kerr; W Gray; P Podd. Cllr E Aitken.
Cllrs J Rust and E Barry (part attendance due to other engagements).

Apologies: L Linn; A Newton; Community Sergeant C Kowalski; PC David Crawford (Oxgangs Police);

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting: held on the 17th June 2008

Minute accepted as a true record, moved by G Lighthead and seconded by A Hunter

2. MATTERS ARISING:

(a) Item 5 – Presentation: Proposed Development – 1 Oxgangs Avenue – Chair reported that Wendy Farmer (Dunedin-Canmore) had advised her that the architect had still to complete the plans which may affect the intention to hold an open day on the 30th July at the church in order that members of the community could view the proposals.

The Chair also raised a matter that she considered had been overlooked at the presentation and that was the preservation of established trees and other plants. It was noted that no preservation order applied and after discussion it was agreed that W Gray would take an inventory of the plantation for the Chair in order that she can raise the matter with Dunedin-Canmore with the objective of preserving on site or re-establishment elsewhere.

(b) Item 10 – Hunters Tryst Primary School (asbestos removal work) – GL queried conflicting reports received through the media following the recent fire at this disused building. Cllr Aitken reported that the asbestos had been removed by workmen prior to the incidence of fire. The amount of asbestos had been limited and confined to the roof area, thus had been removed in a matter of a few days. She also reported that the process for arranging for the demolition of the building had been started and that the building had been made secure after the fire to maintain safety.

3. Community Police Report: written report read out by the Chair

PC Crawford's written report provided the following information.

CCTV

There is still no sign of the final phase as far as the installation of CCTV at Oxgangs Bank/Broadway. It is also becoming my personal opinion that the argument for having some additional CCTV in some other locations in Firrhill/Oxgangs is valid. My reasons will be evident why in the comments that follow below but will be an issue that I would wish to raise in person on another occasion.

PARKING

Recently we have received complaints regarding parking on the footway in Firrhill Drive. Although this has been a periodic complaint and action has been taken in the past, some owners have been continuing to park their vehicles fully on the pavement. As a result, 6 owners had to empty their pockets last week when their vehicles were uplifted at the grand individual total cost of £170 before the vehicles were returned to them.

Laminated A4 sized posters have been placed in all stairs in the affected area explaining the situation and outlining the offence and why vehicles WILL be removed. Arrangements have also been made for City of Edinburgh Council to erect brand new signs on specified lamp-posts as a further warning. All officers at Oxfords have been instructed to give the street attention when possible and have potential offending vehicles uplifted by the approved contractor.

It should be noted that removal of vehicles could be considered for any street so affected in the area, however, by a large margin, Firrhill Drive has in recent years presented the most consistent problem.

CRIME

Since the last meeting the following crimes have been dealt with. Thirteen incidents of vandalism to property with 6 solved and 3 incidents of break-ins to houses with all solved.

A male was caught in the act of breaking into a vehicle and this led to a total of 9 charges for similar offences for which he received a 6 month custodial sentence. The male is local and had been on a bit of a crime spree. The property of interest was Satellite Navigation Systems which people leave attached to their windscreens. Since his incarceration there has been almost no vehicle crime to speak of.

FIRERAISING

In the past few weeks there have been a number of incidents where fires have been started deliberately. This is mainly in the area of Oxfords Crescent and Firrhill Drive and Park. I have no doubt the culprits will be local. The incidents of note are as follows;

A few weeks ago a JCB digger was set alight within the Lovell's Building Site in Firrhill Drive at about 3.30 am in the morning. No-one was seen.

On the 16th, the old Butcher's shop at 23 Oxfords Crescent was set alight after the culprits gained access to the rear by the garages. Again no-one was seen.

In the early hours of the 17th at around 4.45am an unknown person set alight to wheelie bins outside an address in Firrhill Drive. The fire could only be extinguished by the Fire Service. The owner's vehicle sustained slight damage as it was parked nearby.

About the same time an attempt was made to set alight another set of wheelie bins in the same location. Fortunately the fire did not take hold.

The above is in addition to enquiries being made by colleagues at St.Leonard's who now cover the Greenbank area, where recently two sheds were set alight in rear gardens. On one occasion two "teenage males" were seen to run off back towards the Firrhill Drive area. The inference has been that whoever has been responsible has been using the grassed area between Firrhill Drive and the rear of Greenbank Road as their escape route.

So far we have no positive lines of enquiry and in an effort to generate some response a letter drop to a total of 90 houses has been carried out in the immediate area.

Most, if not all of these incidents were carried out in daylight in the early hours and no positive identifications have been made. It is for this reason that I believe CCTV is worth considering in this location. For those with longer memories, it was there before during the days of the High Rises and helped assist in numerous enquiries. In future I would be interested to hear the views of the Council Members in connection with the subject.

A short discussion took place at the meeting with various viewpoints expressed. The Chair requested that those persons attending the meeting discussed this subject within their own circles and reported back at the next meeting.

4. Councillors' Report: Cllrs Aitken and Rust

Fire-raising - Councillor Aitken reiterated concerns about the recent spate of fire-raising and referred to a fire in one of the shops at Oxgangs Crescent.

Grass-cutting - the poor quality of grass cutting on common land in the area that is carried out by the Council or its agents had also been brought to her attention. Where the grass is cut, there is no effort to remove the grass cutting. She intends to raise with the appropriate department and would like feedback if this problem continues.

Proposed Health Centre – an interim report has been produced on this proposed development on the site of the old Oxgangs Primary School. Councillor Aitken indicated she will be seeking a meeting with David Small, Social Care and Community Health Partnership, to discuss his report.

The Chair raised concerns that the Community Council had not been included in any consultations despite having requested inclusion. One of the issues that the community wished to discuss was the threat of amalgamation of the two doctors' surgeries resulting in the closure of the amenity at Oxgangs Path

Garden Aid – Councillor Rust advised that a number of elderly/disabled residents/tenants seeking help in maintaining their garden. The Chair indicated that a local voluntary group did provide this help but lacked volunteers.

“The Peak” – Councillor Rust advised that partial funding for future issues of this local newsletter had been obtained and he was meeting Dunedin-Canmore next week with the hope that they would cover the shortfall.

5. Treasurer's Report: H Levy

The Treasurer reported no change in the Community Council's finances but indicated that she had asked John Spence to act as auditor for the Council's finances, which he had agreed. This was accepted by the meeting.

6. Planning Report: J Napier

Report on the Weekly Planning Bulletins for Ward No.08. The period covered is from 22 April to 9 June 2008, during which only 3 applications and 3 decisions related to property within Firrhill Community Council's area are reported in the Bulletins:

- Planning application 01332 has been registered to erect a single storey extension to the rear of residential property at Caiystane Gardens.
- Planning application 01350 has been registered to form a bedroom with dormer window on front elevation of residential property at Oxgangs Farm Loan – application granted.
- Planning application 01451 has been registered to remove a conservatory and replace with a single storey extension at the rear of residential property at Oxgangs Bank.
- Planning application 01505 has been registered mount a bronze plaque on a historic building at Comiston Springs to the rear of Oxgangs Loan. Applicant informed permission is not required.
- Planning application 01612 has been registered to carry out a loft conversion in residential property at Colinton Mains Drive.
- Planning application 01873 has been registered for the erection of a single storey extension at the side of residential property at Oxgangs Road North.
- Planning application 01899 has been registered for the erection of a UPVC conservatory, porch and 1.8m high timber fence at residential property at Firrhill Drive.

- Planning application 01998 has been registered by Tesco Stores, Colinton Mains Drive, to install a lobby enclosure over the existing store entrance.
- Planning application 02016 has been registered to erect a detached garage adjacent to residential property at Oxgangs Road North.
- Planning application 00677 for a garden area-parking bay at residential property at Caiystane Gardens was granted.
- Planning application 01036 for an extension to residential property at Oxgangs Road North was granted.
- Planning application 01046 to erect a UPVC conservatory at the rear of residential property at Colinton Mains Road was granted.

HL reported that Stage 3 of the Oxgangs Re-Development is set to go to the Planning Committee in August. Plans for this part of the redevelopment to include an area for a workshop centre that will enable Oxgangs Care to assist vulnerable families and children. Plans also include an area for the provision of a general store retail outlet.

7. Meeting Reports – P Wright

a) Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership Meeting, 18th June 2008

See attached sheet. It should be noted that due to the date of this meeting, the report was included as part of the minutes of the previous meeting for information purposes.

b) South Edinburgh Public Partnership Forum (SEPPF)

The Chair reported that she had been advised that the above forum was reforming and asked if she or someone from the Council would be interested in joining and taking on an active role within it. (See attached flyer)

The SEPPF provides the main forum for the Edinburgh Community Health Partnership and the people of South Edinburgh to communicate effectively with each other on a range of health issues.

The Co-ordinating Group will have a maximum of 12 members who can represent the range of interests and personal circumstances in the communities of South Edinburgh. The Group's role is to co-ordinate the programme of activities for the SEPPF.

The role is unpaid, but expenses can be claimed to cover travel expenses, respite care costs, carer costs and child-care costs. A minimum commitment of 1 year is required. Co-ordinating Group members are expected to attend a minimum of 1 meeting per month (either of the SEPPF or of the Co-ordinating Group). Members must live in South Edinburgh.

Having had a previous involvement in the Forum, the Chair was interested in representing the Council at its meetings. There being no other proposers, this was agreed.

8. Correspondence

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

- a) Queensferry and District Community Council: Annual Report 2008.
- b) "SEPA View" – magazine of the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency.
- c) Edinburgh Tenants Federation; Annual Report 2007-08 + "Tenants' Voice" magazine.

9. A.O.C.B.

The Secretary asked if there had been any progress regarding the land between the new Oxfangs Primary School and the Braid Burn footpath as there was continuing concern at the ongoing lack of communal space for children and young people in the area. Councillor Aitken reported that there was a problem with the drainage on this land but that work was going ahead to repair the site which had been used by contractors carrying out the flood prevention work on the Braid Burn bridge.

Councillor Barry reported that he had recently attended a meeting with a local voluntary group called 'Work Track' whose aim was to assist people, who have been out of work for a long time or are disadvantaged, get into employment. A lack of funding is causing the organisation to lay off staff and there was a risk of this voluntary group closing down.

The money is held by the City Partnership who keep telling them that the money will be paid in 3 months time but it never is. In January, it was wait till April, in April it was wait till 1st July and there is still no money. The Group's Directors have had to issue the first six redundancies and more of the staff will get 30 days notice on the 15th August if there is still no money.

10. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Firrhill Community Council will be held in the Oxfangs Neighbourhood Centre from 7:00 pm on Tuesday, 19th August 2008.

It should be noted that this meeting has been brought forward one week to avoid clashing with the Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership meeting due to be held on the 26th.

A special meeting of Elected Members will be held here on Friday 1st August 2008 to discuss and complete the Community Council questionnaire circulated by CEC.

FIRRHILL COMMUNITY COUNCIL: MEETING REPORT - P WRIGHT

PENTLANDS NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP met on 18 June in Clovenstone Community Centre, Chaired by Councillor Jason Rust and attended by City Councillors, nominated Community Council reps, Inspector Lyall from L & B Police, other agencies, and residents in the Partnership area.

1. Partnership Community Plan Development – a report by Christine Doherty, Partnership & Information Manager, compiled mainly with info from Community Council questionnaires. Priority areas for action were also identified from local Community Profiles, Edinburgh Household Survey, and local Community Plans, e.g., Oxfangs Community Plan + W Edinburgh Partnership Community Plan, which narrowed issues down to specific geographical areas. The Partners, including health, police and City Council departments, are developing a range of community plans and city strategies to tackle key areas of work, and key issues identified by the community can be linked directly to key priorities recognised by partner agencies. Also, the local housing area board is considering its integration into the Neighbourhood Partnership and a steering group has been formed to consider, e.g., the group's core activity, a mechanism by which to prioritise project activity across the community, and communication with the NP.

Work streams – main areas to develop as key priorities for local community in first year: Environment and Strategic Planning; Community Safety; Community Facilities & Services; Health; Transport; Education and Employment. The Draft Plan format proposed has four headings for each work stream: Community Priorities; What We Will Do Next; Lead Partners; Targets. The partner agencies will agree their own input into the plans and the tools required to measure progress. Once an outline draft is agreed, there will be more consultation across the NP area with the local communities/interest groups so that all can have opportunity to comment, leading up to the final draft.

2. Walkabout Programme – included Oxfangs, the SfC Housing Officer and Cllr Barry attending. [It was noted that Cllr Elaine Aitken might have attended but walkabout dates were not available in advance as she requested.] Various issues were recorded, e.g., Roads, Task Force, BBS, Clarence (lack of response when called), Contractors, and Property Management. Meetings of stakeholders are taking place to try to address these issues. Council officers may be named so that direct contact can be made. Also, walkabouts may be more effective in future with further development and staff training.

3. Post Office Closures – Post Office Ltd will start public consultation on 19.08.08. At least 15 POs in Edinburgh are ear-marked for closure - if one is reprieved, another must take its place - but these will not include the four managed directly by PO Ltd (Frederick Str, St James Centre, Wester Hailes and Morningside). Royal Mail Group must consider financial sustainability and number of customer transactions, urban population living within one mile, and areas of deprivation, among other criteria when making closure decisions. Consultation will last for six weeks (to 23.09.08) and posters/leaflets + address for customers to submit comments will be displayed in POs identified for closure. Royal Mail Group will make closure or reprieve decisions by 7.10.08; changes will be implemented from 10.11.08.

4. New Street Names – The City Council Planning Committee has compiled a report with the purpose of referring the Street Naming Charter to the Neighbourhood Partnerships. Proposals include the building up of a bank of potential street names for each NP area, using established conventions as set out in the Council's Street Naming Charter and interim arrangements for consulting with local ward members. A ready 'bank', using existing criteria + local knowledge, could allow new housing developments to be named more quickly, therefore allowing quicker access to utility connections, etc.

5. NP Community Grants Fund – locally, among the latest round of grants approved, Oxfangs Neighbourhood Centre Association has been awarded £4,970 for coach hire for six summer trips, a large screen, projector, DVD player, speakers, amplifier, and tutors for taster activities at Open Days for the area. Oxfangs Drama Group, for young people aged 12-18 to take part in dramatic activities and learn theatre skills, is awarded £3,676 for expenses connected with performing a play in the Festival Fringe in August, ie youth support workers, food, drink and attendance at three other Fringe shows. Both awards are made under the Social Inclusion theme.

Future Meeting Dates: 26 August, 7 October, 9 December 2008; 3 February, 31 March, 2 June 2009. (These dates are provisional, and venues will be announced later.)

South Edinburgh Public Partnership Forum (SEPPF)

Do you live in South Edinburgh?

Are you interested in health issues?

Do you have good contacts with at least one section of the
population of South Edinburgh?

Do you like helping to organise meetings?

If the answer to these questions is “yes”, please read on.

The SEPPF is the main way for the people of South Edinburgh to give their views about their health services to the Edinburgh Community Health Partnership (CHP). The CHP covers services like GPs, Health Visitors, Pharmacists, Dentists, Physiotherapy and Mental Health services.

The Co-ordinating Group’s job is to organise meetings and other ways for people in South Edinburgh to have their say about the CHP’s services. To make sure everyone’s voice is heard we want to have people with strong links with different communities on the Co-ordinating Group. This includes: people from black and minority ethnic communities; people from the LGBT communities; older people; disabled people; people concerned with the health of young families; young people; and people from different parts of South Edinburgh. And there are many more groups we could add to this list!

Being a member of the Co-ordinating Group is an unpaid role, but you would reclaim any travel expenses, respite care costs, carer costs and child-care costs.

Members of the Co-ordinating Group would come to a meeting each month (this might be either a SEPPF meeting or a Co-ordinating Group meeting). They might also need to talk to some people in their communities outside these meetings.

For more information or to tell us you are interested in being part of the Group, please contact Sally Dick or Chris Vickerman by 28 July.

Sally 0131 667 2497; or 07917 324615; or sally.palm@blueyonder.co.uk

Chris 0131 228 8590; or 07917 283760; or cvickerman@blueyonder.co.uk