

FIRRHILL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING: 24 FEBRUARY 2009

Minutes of meeting held at the Oxfangs Neighbourhood Centre.

Present: H Levy (Chair/Treasurer); A Hunter (Vice Chair); P Wright (Secretary); G Hunter; L Linn; J Napier (Min Sec).

In Attendance: B Kircos; B Hanlon; Cllr Jason Rust; Cllr Eric Barry; Norman Tinlin, (Secretary, Fairmilehead Community Council); Inspector S Wilson (LBP)

Apologies: Cllr E Aitken;

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting: held on the 27th January 2009

Correction to attendance, recorded in error that G Lighthead attended last meeting. Chair reported George has been unwell for the past few weeks and proposed the Council record their best wishes for his speedy recovery. Correction to item under the 'Police Report' which should have read that residents noticed a 'car being broken into and not a 'house' as recorded. Correction to item under 'Ward Councillors Report' which should have stated that the lack of grit/salt bins at strategic locations had been reported to the City Council department by A Hunter but subsequently referred to the Ward Councillor due to a lack of action.

With the above amendments the minutes were accepted as a true record, moved by G Hunter and seconded by L Linn.

2. Matters Arising:

(a) Police Response Times: - The Chair was going to report back on this but with the attendance of a police representative, asked her to respond and explain the circumstances. Insp. S Wilson explained the call grading system used by the police when allocating resources to attend incidents. On her investigation into the handling of this call she advised that based on the information given by the caller the incident was classed as a grade 3 call which relates to calls for assistance that can if necessary be attended within 4 hours. This is based on the information that a crime has been committed but the perpetrator is no longer on the scene and the caller was not at risk. The police attended within the required time and did assist the occupier to secure the premises.

The incident highlights the need for the public to be more aware of the call grading system. There is an expectation that when an emergency 999 call is made that the required service will respond immediately. Unfortunately that is not the case for the police and ambulance services where, due to the large number of calls received, judgements have to be made on who should get priority. This is a matter that should be highlighted by the Force Communications Centre when taking details of calls from the public.

Members considered that where it is likely that calls will not be attended for a number of hours, thought should be given by the FCC to contacting the caller and keeping them informed, thus alleviating the feeling of isolation that a victim of crime may have.

Chair proposed that an invitation be made to the Force's Communication Centre at Bilston near Loanhead for a representative to attend a special meeting of the Community Council on 28th April, to talk about call handling procedures. This was agreed. Insp. S Wilson offered to arrange.

(b) Colinton Mains Park and Pavilion: - Cllr Rust gave a rundown of recent communications with the relevant Council officers and advised that whilst basically there has been no decision made regarding the initial proposals for a new build there are problems with funding which may result in refurbishment of the existing facilities as the only option. It was his view that in the latter event there would be a requirement to provide an additional two changing rooms to go with the number of pitches available for use. (see also under Meeting Reports - b) Firrhill Community Council Business Meeting 18 Feb 09, Item 4.)

3. Community Police Report: Inspector S Wilson

A report of crime statistics for the last month was given and it was noted that whilst the number of recorded crimes had went up, so to have the number of solved crimes. Members were cautioned about interpreting statistics and given the example of seemingly dramatic fluctuations occurring where it is an individual is on a crime spree and then gets caught. This may alter what was previously a notable increase in crime to an equally notable increase in the number of solved cases.

There have been a number of problems at the Children's Home in Oxgangs Avenue and a seasonal problem of calls about snowballs.

As a consequence of a new initiative trialled elsewhere, a police liaison officer has been assigned to Firrhill High School. The officer will be based at the school during school hours. This initiative is funded by the City of Edinburgh Council therefore it should not affect the level of resources that the police have within the community. The down side may be that an officer with less experience will replace this officer.

Chair thanked the Inspector for her report and noted that such was the concerns about crime in the community that this item had taken up a considerable period of the meeting. In closing the Chair also advised that David Crawford, the Community Police Officer, was off on long-term sick due to an injury and offered the Council's best wishes for his speedy recovery.

4. Ward Councillors' Report: Cllrs Barry and Rust

Cllr Barry referred to the plan to locate flashing lights to create a 20mph zone covering the main entrance to Firrhill High School in Oxgangs Road North. Deciding on the exact location to position the lights due to the close proximity of the roundabout at Colinton Road is causing a problem. Considers the main risk is from vehicles travelling north from Colinton Mains Drive. Council officials to have a site meeting 2 – 4 March, he will advise Secretary of date and time.

The matter of school buses still using the route from the Chip Inn along Oxgangs Road North has been raised with the appropriate authority and the situation should now improve, however members reported that they are still using this route.

Additional grit/salt bins have been located at strategic locations for use by the community. If members became aware of bins needing replenished or bins required at other locations they should advise "Clarence" and failing that, himself.

The Janitor at Pentland Community Centre will be on long-term absence following an operation. In consultation with the Council department responsible it has been agreed that a full-time replacement will be temporarily employed. This is an improvement on the last occasion where only a part-time replacement was employed resulting in the Centre having to close.

Cllr Barry reported on the progress of discussions to action work to resolve inbuilt design problem with the drainage system that caused the occasional flooding in parts of Colinton Mains. He will keep an eye on this to ensure the matter is speedily progressed. (Ref: Sept08 Minute).

Reference was also made to the problem of water retention in the bowling green at Oxgangs Road North. Investigations had determined the cause and remedial action has been taken. It was found that the recent work in Colinton Mains Park was unrelated to the problem.

A report had been obtained on the fire safety of the new building at Oxgangs Crescent following the recent fire and he had put a copy had been put on the notice board at the Oxgangs Neighbourhood Centre for information. The report from the Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service basically indicated that the severity of the fire was due to the large amount of construction material stored within the partially completed building.

Cllr Rust referred to the proposal for a controlled crossing at Oxgangs Avenue. CEC officials have agreed to view and assess the site in the coming weeks.

Flood prevention clearance work currently being carried out prior to the nesting season. Trees and hedges are being removed to clear the way for the construction of a floodwall.

Query regarding the Electricity Board Sub Station that is located in Firrhill Drive opposite the Oxgangs Neighbourhood Centre. Conflicting statements

5. Treasurer's Report: H Levy

The Treasurer reported that there were no changes to the finances from previous meeting.

6. Meeting Reports

a) Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership Meeting 3 Feb 09

Chair reported on the Oxgangs Broadway/Bank project being carried out under the Urban Centre Programme. The UCP scheme aims to improve the environmental quality, economic prosperity and sustainability of local centres through the delivery of public-funded projects. The Pentlands area had been awarded a budget allocation of £100,000 for utilisation in 2009-11.

Two schemes had been identified as being in greatest need of integrated public realm improvements, the local shopping centre at Oxgangs Broadway and another at Main Street Balerno. With the initial phase of the Oxgangs project having been completed the Chair's expectation was that CEC officers would recommend completing phase 2 before moving on to the Balerno project. However no recommendation was made and it was left to the community representatives to argue their own case.

The decision was to select the Balerno project for the 2009-2011 funding allocation and supplement this by ring-fencing the sum of £50,000 from the Roads and Footpaths capital budget for 2009/10. The Oxgangs Broadway/Bank project will be completed if there are sufficient funds available from the underspend from a previous year's UCP budget.

Noted that Firrhill High School PTA was awarded £1,575 from the NP Community Grants Fund for equipment for a Healthy Lifestyle Fair.

Date of next meeting Tuesday 31 March 2009 – in Currie High School

b) Firrhill Community Council Business Meeting 18 Feb 09

Held in Morrison's on Wednesday, 18 February 09 at 10:30 am, and attended by Heather Levy; Alistair Hunter; Peggy Wright and Jim Napier. Meeting called at request of Chair to discuss business for the next meeting.

(i) Bookmarks

Discussion on producing a Firrhill Community Council bookmark as a method by which the Council can promote itself within the community. Two examples were provided: -

- one consists of information about a community council's purpose and role with contact details on the one side and a historical picture of the Pentland Hills on the other.
- the other consists of the same community council information on the one side and a useful list of local amenities telephone numbers on the other. Both sides having a small picture of a local view above the text

There was general support from all with the view that it should be professionally done rather than in-house. Agreed Heather goes ahead and investigates costs for producing approx 3000 and method of distribution. Various methods were discussed, including the Peak; post office and the schools, as possible ways of distributing within the community. Subject to the Council agreeing the proposal, the aim is for it to be ready for presentation at the May 09 AGM.

Another suggestion was to produce a Firrhill Community Council cotton bag with the Council's logo stencilled on it. Agreed to postpone this for future discussion.

(ii) Annual General Meeting

General agreement that the AGM should be held in May as normal. Secretary to check availability of the Colinton Mains Church Hall as the venue. The Oxfangs Neighbourhood Centre has been provisionally booked for the May meeting but the church is a more central location for the AGM.

As previously proposed, the topical theme for the meeting is to be environmental issues such as garden recycling.

(iii) Flood Prevention

Alistair produced correspondence from the City of Edinburgh Council and Carrilion regarding the next stage of the flood prevention project to be carried out in Colinton Mains. Clearance work has started along the banks of the burn with trees being cut down. This work will also include the removal of boundary hedges to enable the retaining wall foundations to be dug in.

The Community Council had planned for this subject to be the main topic for their meeting on the 24th March 09 with invited speakers. Proposed that the Secretary write to the authors of the letters and ask them to attend.

- a) Stuart Mackay, Carrilion Stakeholder Manager
- b) Brian Torrance, Project Manager Flood Schemes, CEC

Venue to be arranged, with the preference being Colinton Mains Church instead of Oxfangs Primary School.

(iv) Colinton Mains Park

Meeting agreed that we are receiving mixed information regarding the next phase of this regeneration project. Heather has heard that the CEC have agreed to two new pavilions being built but does not know if the proposed new build pavilion in Colinton Mains Park is one of them.

Propose that the Council seek a meeting with the new Neighbourhood Partnership Manager, Mike Avery, to bring him up to speed on the park and seek his assistance in getting an update on the whole project – specifically the park, pavilion and the lighting.

The current story regarding the Applecross / Meggetland deal is that the money is there but Applecross are not prepared to release it to the CEC until they are certain it is being spent as originally intended. It appears the Company's stance is that the money was agreed for the sole purpose of improving the changing facilities at Colinton Mains Park, if not spent for that purpose then they are not obliged to hand over any monies.

The meeting noted the discussions and generally agreed to the recommendations from the executive.

7. Planning Report:

Report on the Weekly Planning Bulletins for Ward No.08. The period covered is from 26 January 2009 to 16 February 2009, during which only 1 application and 1 decision related to property within Firrhill Community Council's area have been reported in the Bulletins:

- Planning application 0000241 registered to carry out an attic conversion at a property in Colinton Mains Road.
- Planning application 0004281 registered to erect a front porch at a property in Caiystane Gardens has been granted.

8. Correspondence

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

- a) City Development Planning and Strategy: follow-up letter re Engagement with Community Councils – Action Plan and Report to Planning Committee (item 4 in our January meeting correspondence and questionnaire on Community Council's engagement with Planning
- b) NHS Lothian re RHSC Reprovision Project: plan to move to Little France (estimated service start December 2012.
- c) Eileen Hewitt: a) replacement sections for Council Diary; b) CC Office Bearers (Feb09); c) Edinburgh CC News, Feb09 [distributed at meeting]
- d) Eileen Hewitt (email) re CC Funding Fair: Tuesday 23 March, 7 pm, Waverly Court
- e) Diana Potter (email) re Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership sub-groups: H Levy now in Health, Community and Employment group. [still no confirmation re P Wright (Transport & Environment) and A Hunter (Community Safety).]
- f) Cockburn Association Notice and Agenda for next meeting of Edinburgh Civic Forum: Tues 17 March, 4.30 pm, City Chambers.
- g) Letter and Nomination Form from Lord Provost re Edinburgh Award (by 18 March). The Community Council agreed to nominate Chris Hoy, the Olympic cyclist for this award. Secretary to complete and return form.

9. A.O.C.B.

- a) Query on who was responsible for dealing with incidents of dogs fouling. Advised to contact the Environmental Wardens
- b) Query on action being taken against drivers who park their motor vehicles on the corner of road junctions

10. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Firrhill Community Council will be held on Tuesday 24th March 2009 at 7:00 pm. Subject to confirmation the proposed venue is St Marks School.