

# ***FIRRHILLCOMMUNITY COUNCIL***

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: 26 MAY 2009**

Note of meeting held at the Colinton Mains Parish Church.

In Attendance: H Levy (Chair), P Wright; A Hunter; G Hunter; L Lynn; P Podd; J Napier; G Lightheart; J Carrie; B Kiros; B Clanlow; M Jarvis; E Aitken (Cllr); J Rust (Cllr); E Barry (Cllr); S Mackay (Carrilion);

Apologies: B Brand; Insp. S Wilson; S Aitken; N Tinlin; C Dunlop

### **1. Minutes of Previous Annual General Meeting held on the 27th May 2008**

The Minutes were read out by the Chair and copies provided for those attending.

Approved by G Hunter and seconded by L Lynn. There were no amendments or matters arising.

### **2. Annual Report:**

A copy of the Annual report is attached as Appendix 1. The Chair spoke on the report and made special mention of the following items.

**Communications - The Peak** – funding had been obtained for a further five editions this year but for the community newsletter to survive it had to become self-financing. With this in mind the Chair was looking for volunteers to assist in its production and distribution and in particular seeking an editor.

**Upgrading of Colinton Mains Park and Pavilion** – Applecross have gone into receivership creating uncertainty about the funding for the new pavilion. This may result in some of the options becoming unaffordable. Item to be placed on the agenda for next meeting for a fuller discussion.

**Regeneration of the High Flats Site** – funding problems have also arisen for part of the plans for this development. Item to be placed on the agenda for next meeting for a fuller discussion.

**Braidburn Flood Prevention Work** – the work is underway and it is now time to look at landscaping of the finished job to ensure it blends into and enhances the area. This will be covered in one of the presentations

### **3. Treasurer's Report: Accounts for 2008-09**

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Balance as at 01-04-08	2449.14	Stationary	5.85
(per bank statement)		Photocopying	117.44
CEC Grant		Stamps	13.32
		Lets	80.00
Interest	33.10	Bank Charges	10.00
			<b><u>£226.61</u></b>
		Cash in Bank at 17-03-09	2268.04
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£2482.24</u></b>		<b><u>£2494.65</u></b>

Difference of £12.41 is due to unrecorded interest, awaiting Bank statements

#### **4. Election of Office Bearers**

Councillor Barry took over the chair to conduct this part of the proceedings and invited nominations to be proposed and seconded for the various office bearer positions on the Community Council.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Proposed by</u>	<u>Seconded by</u>
Chairperson	Heather Levy	George Lighthouse	Jim Napier
Vice Chairperson	Alistair Hunter	Peggy Wright	Heather Levy
Secretary	Peggy Wright	Heather Levy	Grace Hunter
Treasurer	Pauline Podd	Heather Levy	Peggy Wright
Minute Secretary	Jim Napier	Peggy Wright	Heather Levy

The above nominations were agreed.

#### **5. Correspondence: Secretary**

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

1. City Development: Open Space Strategy Audit Consultation - book/maps covering city; questionnaires re Your Local Greenspace (by 10 July). [To be put on Agenda for June meeting.]
2. Cockburn Assoc. Edinburgh Civic Trust - Minutes of March meeting + Notice of meeting on 16 June, 4.30 pm, City Chambers [to JN].
3. Notice & Agenda for City Council & Community Councils Joint Meeting: 1 June, 7 pm, City Chambers - re Engaging with Communities [only HL can attend].
4. Pentlands N'hood P'ship: Agenda & Notice of Meeting, V. June, 7 pm, Pentland Community Centre.
5. Minutes from Paul Hight of meeting held at Pentland Primary School on 1 May re community use of school playing field. Summary: considered to be adequate play space in the area; disadvantages - safety/security/cost - outweigh the advantages of re-opening; may be reviewed if circumstances change.
6. Alastair Darling MP: invitation to "Meeting the World Development Challenge" by Rt Hon Douglas Alexander, at St George's W Church, 19 June, 6.30-8.30 pm.
7. Mike Avery, South West Neighbourhood Manager - email re devolved roads and footways budget in Pentlands N'hood P'ship. Two projects for consideration in our community: £15,000 for Colinton Mains Park lighting; £20,000 for access and path improvements along Braid Burn between Oxfords Ave and Firrhill Dr.
8. Edinburgh Community Council News May '09 .
9. Community Council Scheme Review 30/04/09.

#### **6. Date and Venue of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Firrhill Community Council will be held in the Colinton Mains Community Centre on Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2009 at 7pm.

#### **7. Presentations**

The following presentations

**a) *Master Composter Project***

A very informative presentation by Rose Hill on the advantages of home composting and how to go about doing this yourself.

**b) *Transition Edinburgh Deep South***

Presentation by Johanna Carrie on this local group concerned about problems of climate change and looking at how we can prepare for the future in positive ways. Unfortunately time prevented this presentation being heard in full. A copy of the hand-out is attached as Appendix 2.

**c) *Proposed Landscaping for Braid Burn and Colinton Mains Park***

Plans/designs provided by Stuart Mackay of proposed landscaping for the area of the park affected by the flood prevention work and along the burn itself were provide for viewing and comment.

# **Firrhill Community Council**

## **Annual Report 2009**

### **Council Membership**

Since our last AGM, 10 open meetings of the Firrhill Community Council have taken place and it is perhaps a sign of growing interest that these meetings are developing that the attendance of members has been very regular and there has been an increase in the number of visitors attending, however more participation is required. The primary purpose of community councils is to ascertain and express the views of the community that they represent and in order to do this effectively it is essential the community also engage with the council. The Firrhill Community Council would sincerely welcome new participants in its activities, either as prospective members or simply as members of the community attending its meetings. Either way we would like to meet you.

The work carried out by our three local government councillors Elaine Aitken, Eric Barry and Jason Rust continues to be appreciated. The new larger ward has meant a substantial amount of extra work for them but they have still managed to regularly attend meetings and take up matters on our behalf.

### **Crime**

Equally over the year we have had good support from the Lothian and Borders Police, who have attended most of our meetings giving reports on crimes and advice on crime prevention. Where concerns have been raised their representatives have been forthright in their responses and actions.

In reviewing the reports over the year it is concerning that the community continues to suffer from acts of vandalism, arson and break-ins to property that are the misdeeds of a few, however, it is perhaps heartening that in comparison with other areas of the city, Firrhill continues to be a relatively safe place to live.

### **Communications**

#### **The Peak**

The continuation of this local publication is under threat due to a lack of funding. The original funding of the Peak came from the Local Development Committee and Dunedin Canmore Housing Association as a vehicle for informing the community of the re-generation plans. With those plans well under way the funding is being withdrawn but the Peak has been a valuable medium for communicating local news. The Community Council are striving to find the means to maintain it.

#### **Web Site**

A major success for the Community Council is the creation of its website. Through this facility it is hoped we will be able to improve our communications within the Community, by promoting news of events and activities and equally important facilitating feedback from those who reside in our community and wish to express their views. The website address is [http://www.firrhillcommunitycouncil.btik.com/p\\_Home.ikml](http://www.firrhillcommunitycouncil.btik.com/p_Home.ikml)

## **Neighbourhood Partnership**

The statutory requirement for local authorities to engage with other public bodies and voluntary groups within their communities has led to the replacement of Local Development Committees by new local 'Neighbourhood Partnerships' groups. The Firrhill Community Council area sits within the new Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership which is organised by the SW Edinburgh Neighbourhood Team.

The purpose of Neighbourhood Partnerships is to improve and structure the delivery of services to suit the local community. Its meetings are held monthly and its role is advisory. The earlier work this year has been finalising the constitution and setting up business arrangement for the new structure.

With the pressure on local government bodies to be seen to engage with each other and voluntary groups within the community, it can be anticipated that the number of meetings attended by the Community Council's representatives will increase. It is to be hoped that the outcome from such discussions will see positive benefits for the community in the plans and developments that are proposed and in meaningful consultation where issues are raised.

## **Ongoing Developments**

### **Braidburn Flood Prevention Work**

This year has seen the completion of the advanced works at Oxfords Road North and the start of the main works which is to build the flood wall from Redford Road down to Braidburn Valley Park. The Community Council have maintained contact with the contractors in order to ensure the community is kept informed and aware of the progress

### **Regeneration of the High Flat Site**

In viewing the previous annual report covering this item the situation appears unchanged with phase one completed, phase two near completion and the prospect of phase three starting very soon. Despite the set-back of a fire that caused the destruction of an almost completed building, the work on this second phase is progressing well with some of the new houses completed and occupied. Vehicle access to Firrhill Drive from Oxfords Avenue has also been fully restored. It has been a long exercise and some recognition must go to the patience of the residents of Firrhill Drive, who continue to be disrupted by the building works.

When completed the three multi-storey tower blocks will have been replaced by two and four storey housing that will provide 238 new residential units.

### **Upgrading of Colinton Mains Park**

Another long drawn out exercise, the first phase of this regeneration project, which started in the spring of 2006, is all but completed. Problems with the drainage installation have delayed the use of the pitches but reports from the CEC Parks Department indicate they will be available for the coming season. The next phase of the work is to upgrade the changing rooms and with the funding for this part of the project now in place a recent stakeholders meeting was held for the purpose of determining its requirements.

Completion of the work on the Park will be upset by the flood prevention works with a substantial area of ground along the side of the Braidburn being taken over by the contractors as a work site. This will also cause the loss of the playing field belonging to St Marks Primary School

## **Schools: Footpaths and Playfields**

Arising out of the closure of the old Hunters Tryst School, now demolished and the rebuilding of the old Comiston Primary School, now the new Pentlands Primary School, between Oxgangs Green and Oxgangs Bank is still an issue. The loss of this pathway, coupled with the loss of the path that ran through the grounds of the now demolished Hunters Tryst Primary School has caused difficulty for residents and in particular, the elderly to access the range of community facilities available in the area of Oxgangs Bank and Brae. The Community Council in partnership with other groups have campaigned for a path to be replaced and the matter is ongoing.

At the same location, consultation has taken place to enable the schoolchildren the right to play in the school playing field during the periods when the school is closed. There are concerns regarding the management of this area to ensure it is maintained in a safe condition for school activities. Discussions are ongoing The loss of the footpath that ran alongside the

## **New Developments**

### **Proposed Health Centre**

The Chair raised concerns that the Community Council had not been included in any consultations on this development despite having requested inclusion. In a joint venture the CEC Social Work and the NHS are proposing to build a health centre on the site of the old Oxgangs Primary School. The Community Council organised a presentation of the plans which was held in the Oxgangs Neighbourhood Centre and support the intention but have strong reservations regarding the threat of amalgamation of the two local surgeries resulting in the closure of the medical facility at Oxgangs Path.

### **Housing Development – 1 Oxgangs Avenue**

This site occupied by St Hilda's Church has been acquired by The Dunedin Canmore Housing Association for the purpose of developing it for housing. The initial proposal is to build 22 x 1 and 2 bedroom flats for the elderly with 2 of the flats specially designed for wheelchair use. The profile of the building itself is to be a mixture of 2-4-2 storeys to blend in with the height of surrounding properties. Concerns were raised about the site being on the corner of a busy road junction and the parking problems in the area.

### **Church Development**

Next door to the housing development, the All Nations Church at 1c Oxgangs Avenue has presented its proposals for the redevelopment of the existing building. The aspiration is to provide a community building which is accessible to all, whether it is for the purpose of worship or to have a cup of coffee in their community cafe.

## COMMUNITIES IN TRANSITION

TRANSITION initiatives result from groups of people coming together with a shared concern. **How can we make the transition from the way we live now to the way we will need to live in a future when our fossil fuel economy is no longer viable?**

Our aims are to...

- **Reduce energy use**, so moving towards a low-carbon lifestyle and helping to combat **climate change**.
- Imagine and plan for local resilience and **sustainability** in the long term.
- At the same time build on community strengths and **enjoy** supporting each other.

**Transition Edinburgh Deep South** covers Fairmilehead, Oxgangs, Colinton Mains, Firrhill and Colinton.

Current action plans:

**Energy audit** - asking householders to complete a Home Energy Survey form; this is supported by the Scottish Government and the Energy Saving Trust. Householders will receive a personalised report (from the Energy saving Trust) including information on grants for improving insulation. Planning is still in progress but this may happen towards the end of June. Some volunteers may come door to door, but look out for 'drop in sessions', possibly in libraries.

If energy is your concern look for David MacKay's book - Sustainable energy with out hot air

- available online. This gives the 'sums' that show the UK could go carbon free and still keep warm and keep the lights on, but he does not say it will be easy.

**Eating local** this project will really start on June 23, when people who have been trying to use more local produce will discuss the experience. The point of this is to encourage our locality to be more self sufficient, to support local producers and to reduce the carbon emissions of transporting food. The Fife Diet project is an extreme example of eating local. There is information about it online.

**Planting a berry hedge** - this is another aspect of local food. We hope to be able to plant fruit bushes along the eastern edge of Colinton Mains Park. This should happen in the autumn. Before then there will be consultation with local residents. We intend to involve schools. This fruit will be a community resource.

**Our meetings** are open to all. We use the Pentland Community Centre on Oxgangs Brae. Meetings run from 7.30 to 9.30. We show films, have speakers and discussions.

Contact person is Johanna Carrie 445 2575 or [johanna.carrie@btinternet.com](mailto:johanna.carrie@btinternet.com)