

# Firrhill Community Council

*'Nec Aspera Terrent'*

(Undaunted by Adversity)

Minute of Ordinary Meeting of the Council on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2012  
Held in Oxbangs Care Offices, Firrhill Neuk.

## Members:

H Levy (Chair)  
A Hunter (Vice Chair)  
P Wright (Secretary)  
PI Podd (Treasurer)  
L Linn  
G Hunter  
J Napier (Minutes Sec)

## Ex-Officio Members:

E Aitken, Councillor, CEC  
R Lewis, Councillor, CEC  
J Rust, Councillor, CEC  
D Crawford, LBP, Oxbangs Police Stn

## Visitors:

N Tinlin, Fairmilehead CC  
S Duffy, Resident

## Apologies:

## Non- attendance:

The meeting started at 7 pm. H Levy in the Chair.

Agenda Item	Narrative	Action & Owner
Approval of Previous Minute	Draft minutes of meeting held on 23 <sup>rd</sup> July were reviewed. Members had noted that the document template had not been updated in regard to a change in ex-officio Member and the date of next meeting. With these two corrections, the draft minutes were moved for approval by G Hunter and seconded by L Linn. Approved.	J N to publish
Matters Arising	<p><b>Fun Day at the opening of the Sports Pavilion:</b></p> <p>The Chair wished to record her thanks to the management committee of AC Oxbangs for their organisation of what turned out to be a successful event. The weather for once had been excellent and a good crowd of local people attended to hear Doug Reilly, Chairperson AC Oxbangs and Richard Lewis, local city councillor and convenor of the City's Culture and Leisure Committee go through the opening ceremony. The event had paid for itself with a surplus left over to assist the football club in their running costs.</p> <p>City and community councillors did their bit by pitching in to help at the stalls. A disappointment was the lack of support from other council services in particular Edinburgh Leisure and Parks and Greenspace.</p>	

	<p>EA reminded the Committee that the main aim of the fun day had been to attract young people who attended to fill in the <i>Youth Engagement</i> questionnaires. Forty forms had been returned and these along with the forms returned at other events will hopefully give the Youth Engagement Group something to work on. This activity was well supported by Gordon MacDonald MSP and the Police who attended in force.</p> <p>The success of the day led to speculation that this should become an annual event possibly in co-ordination/partnership with AC Oxbangs end of season celebrations. Agreed that this should be investigated.</p> <p>There was a discussion on the use of the car park and the lack of lighting in this area. PW had noted that during football matches, cars park on the pedestrian walkway part of the car park and block the gate to the Bowling Club. The lighting in this area has still to be completed.</p> <p>The area of the park between the car park and the old toilet block and the football pitches have still to be properly landscaped. RL agreed to take this up with Parks and Greenspace Services .</p> <p><b>Consultation on Community Empowerment:</b></p> <p>A special meeting was held on the 16th to go through the consultation questionnaire and determine the Council's collective response. Agreed to response being made publically available on the website.</p> <p><b>Walled Garden at Police Station:</b></p> <p>AH had brought to the Community Council's attention the work being carried out by a resident in the old people's supported housing at the Police Station. A resident had offered to look after the communal raised garden sited in the central area of this small housing scheme. The City Council's Parks and Greenspaces Dept had agreed to clear the garden and add nutrients into the soil before handing it over to him but after waiting for several months for this work to take place, he decided to just go ahead and do it himself. The Community Council had visited the site after their meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> and commended the resident for his community spirit.</p> <p>The Community Council agreed to seek reimbursement from the City Council for the monies spent by this gentleman on developing the garden.</p> <p><b>Local Flood Report:</b></p> <p>This matter arises out of the Local Flood Report given at the last meeting where it was agreed that the Secretary write to David Bewsey, in his capacity as Chair of the PNP EIT Group, to find out answers to the following questions:</p> <p><i>Q1. Does Scottish Water keep a log re the opening of the sluice gates at the reservoir (Torphin?) which would feed into, and impact on, the Braid Burn? There is the feeling that these may have been opened at an inopportune time, thus adding to the huge volume of rainwater that the burn already had to cope with. Water was right up to the arches of the new, raised, bridges - and right over the top of the new wooden bridge at Colinton Mains Park. In fact, because of the speed this water was travelling at, we wonder whether the structure of the latter should be inspected for possible damage.</i></p>	<b>RL to action</b>
--	---	---------------------

	<p>In his response D Bewsey advised that three reservoirs feed into the Braid Burn and Scottish Water said they had not opened any sluice gates at that time</p> <p><i>Q2. Several residents in this community have registered with SEPA for flood alerts - and not one that we know of received a call. Those who attended our meeting would like to know what is the point in registering if SEPA is just going to ignore them?</i></p> <p>In response David Bewsey asked for the names/addresses of the members who had not received any flood warning so that he could forward them to SEPA. This has been done and the Secretary is still waiting on further information . Both L Linn and PI Podd confirmed that they'd had replies from SEPA; however, what is still not clear is whether alerts were actually sent out for the Braid Burn. Also, L Linn had been asked to confirm her details. Does this mean people have to re-register?</p> <p>It was agreed that information on SEPA Flood Alerts should be available on the Community Council Website</p>	Sec. will try to find answers <b>JN to action</b>
<b>Community Police Report</b>	<p>The Stations priorities are as stated in the June minutes</p> <p><b>Crimes of note throughout this reporting period</b></p> <p>On the 1<sup>st</sup> August, a child's silver BMX bike was stolen from the rear garden of a house in Oxbangs Terrace.</p> <p>On the evening of the 9<sup>th</sup>, a male threw rocks at the front windows of a property in Oxbangs Brae causing them to smash. The drunk male was found at the locus and arrested and charged.</p> <p>The owner of a scooter on trying to leave for work in the early hours of the 13<sup>th</sup> found it had been stolen overnight. The scooter was found burned out in Colinton Mains Park behind the Pavilion on 15/08/2012.</p> <p>On the 14<sup>th</sup>, a female in her 40's was found in possession of herbal cannabis in the central area and was charged with a possession offence.</p> <p>On the same date, 2 thefts were discovered to have taken place in Pentland Primary School. One theft involving school property appears to have happened during the course of the holidays, whereas the second theft involved money being taken from a staff member's handbag. Enquiries have been made and are continuing with the assistance of the school, but no-one has yet been detected.</p> <p>On the 15<sup>th</sup>, a visitor at Firrhill Medical Centre had an iPhone stolen when it had been left unattended in a room for a period of time. No-one was seen.</p> <p>Overnight on the 18<sup>th</sup>, a car parked in Oxbangs Street had its windscreen smashed by a large stone being thrown through it. Although a witness heard a loud bang at around 0400 hrs in the morning, no persons were seen.</p> <p>On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, a shed was found broken into in Colinton Mains Drive. A lawnmower and 2 strimmers had been stolen.</p> <p>In the early hours of the 27<sup>th</sup>, a vehicle was found damaged in Firrhill Drive with the rear windscreen having been smashed. On police attending, a further 2 vehicle in the same street were found to be damaged in an</p>	

	<p>identical fashion. There are no reports of anyone having seen or heard these incidents taking place.</p> <p><b>Statistical Report</b></p> <table> <tbody> <tr> <td>Beat PF56 – Fairmilehead and Buckstone - 75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Beat PF57 – Central Osgangs - 165</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Beat PF58 – Colinton and Bonaly - 93</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Safer Neighbourhood Team</b></p> <p>Operation Arable – This ‘A’ Division Initiative started a number of months ago in response to an increase in the number of reported <i>Street Robberies</i> taking place across the city. The aim was to offer a co-ordinated approach to the reporting of such crimes and the police response and investigation of them.</p> <p>This was mainly through the deployment of High Visibility Patrols in main areas and travel corridors in the city. Not unnaturally during the initial phases of the operation the detection of such crimes increased, notable persons were arrested and charged and the incidence of the crime type reduced.</p> <p>As of Friday 24th August 2012, Operation Arable has begun once again with the approach being focussed on local beat areas. The same tactic of patrols, licensed premises visits and journeys on public transport are being followed alongside traditional methods of policing involving relevant persons being stopped, checked out and if appropriate, searched for weapons.</p> <p>At the moment, there is no set date for the operation to end and it will continue well into the winter period when a further evaluation of the results will take place.</p> <p><b>Items raised by Members:</b></p> <p>AH asked if there had been any further developments regarding the spate of <b>graffiti</b> in the area. Had been raised previously and was to have been passed to the Community Police Officer based at Firrhill High School.</p> <p>No information on this item available other than it appears to be the signature of one individual.</p> <p>EA reminded the meeting that the <b>Oxgangs Community Safety Day</b> would be held at Oxgangs Police station on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September at 3 pm.</p> <p><i>To pass on information about crime anonymously, call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or fill out their secure, encrypted online <a href="#">Giving Information Form</a>.</i></p>	Beat PF56 – Fairmilehead and Buckstone - 75	Beat PF57 – Central Osgangs - 165	Beat PF58 – Colinton and Bonaly - 93	
Beat PF56 – Fairmilehead and Buckstone - 75					
Beat PF57 – Central Osgangs - 165					
Beat PF58 – Colinton and Bonaly - 93					
<b>Ward Councillor's Reports</b> <u>J Rust</u>	<p>Decking has been erected at ‘<b>The Good Companions</b>’. This was not part of the planning application and Michael Paton the case officer has asked Planning Enforcement to investigate whether permissions were required / obtained. I also submitted the Community Council submission re the HMO and have made written representation myself.</p> <p>I submitted written questions at last week's Full Council regarding <b>Community Newspapers</b>. The end of "Outlook" has been well publicised,</p>				

	<p>but there was a lack of information about what would replace it. The Council have now confirmed that a brief review by officers in the Communications Service, supported by Business Intelligence, under Tom Little, Head of Policy &amp; Public Affairs are looking at a range of ways to improve the way we provide information to, and hold dialogue with, stakeholders and the community. Outlook is part of this review which started in early June 2012 and will be reported to October Full Council. There is no specific funding for the review, which is being carried out by officers under current budgets and working hours.</p> <p>I attended the meeting regarding the proposed <b>Firrhill Health Centre</b> which took place last Thursday in Osgangs Neighbourhood Centre. This is elsewhere on your agenda.</p> <p>Residents from <b>Osgangs House and Drive</b> were in touch re showers which remain unusable four months after installation due to Scottish Power undertaking an electricity upgrade at the same time as the bathroom refurbishment programme. As a result of a motion I submitted to Council, which received the support of Edinburgh Tenants' Federation and Osgangs Central Residents' Association a firm timetable for the work to be undertaken was agreed and the Council are to have dialogue with the utilities to ensure better co-ordination in future.</p> <p>I arranged for emergency drainage work at <b>Osgangs Avenue</b> where a burst in a rear green was causing problems. This has now been resolved.</p> <p>The devolved roads and footways budget has been allocated following a meeting at which I was in attendance. The proposal put forward by myself and the Community Council regarding <b>a new junction layout at Osgangs Avenue at Osgangs Road North</b> was agreed as high priority (the cost of the new junction will be spread over 2 years - £27.5k this year and £27.5k next year) and Osgangs Road new refuge island (£12.5k) amounting to £40k.</p> <p>The <b>Neighbourhood Partnership</b> Business meeting is on tomorrow in City Chambers. The first scheduled funding panel meeting was cancelled due to a lack of applications, but it will next meet on 17<sup>th</sup> October. There is a 'Meet the Funders' event taking place at Gate 55 on Wednesday 26th September. I have also been assured that the next one of these will take place in Pentlands, probably Osgangs.</p> <p>Some residents have been in touch regarding <b>seagulls</b>. The situation is that the Council does not have a statutory responsibility to deal with seagulls as any nuisance is not considered to present a concern for public health. Consequently, the Council does not provide a service for the removal of gull's nests from properties and also does not have powers to require property owners and occupiers to remove nests. The Council is undertaking a pilot de-nesting project in the Merchiston area of the city, but there are no plans to extend this action until the pilot project has been completed and evaluated. However, the Council has published advice which is available on the web.</p> <p>I asked questions at Council regarding <b>grounds maintenance and grass-cutting</b>. There have been 570 recorded complaints in the south west area this year regarding this. The south west currently has 3,124,644m<sup>2</sup> of amenity areas, parks etc. As part of the <i>imProve it</i> Programme the Council</p>	
--	--	--

	<p>are carrying out a zero based resourcing exercise for open space maintenance. This involves assessing all the landscape types in the Council's green space estate using the digital asset map, determining the maintenance schedules required to deliver the Landscape Quality Standards and quantifying the resources (staff and equipment) needed in each Neighbourhood. This exercise should be completed by October 2012 and may lead to a re-distribution of ground maintenance resources across the six neighbourhoods.</p>	
<b>Ward Councillor's Reports</b> <u>E Aitken</u>	<p>Complaints about the lack of ground maintenance in open space areas, grass not being cut until it is overgrown and when this is cut the cuttings are not picked up thus defeating the object of trying to improve the appearance of the area.</p> <p>Complaints about the mess caused by Seagulls / Pigeons. Transpires this is not a matter the City Council will deal with other than to offer advice on how to deal with them. Contact pest.control@edinburgh.gov.uk for advice if experiencing problems with either of these pests.</p> <p>Complaints about recycling bins not being emptied have been passed on to the CEC Cleansing Services</p> <p>Attended a meeting of the Lochan Residents' Association where a presentation on the Hope Triangle was well received</p> <p>Repairs to historic Comiston Well House (Cistern) on Cockmylane in Fairmilehead and Firhill Wards are in the process of being carried out.</p> <p>Parks and Greenspace Services asked to deal with the ever increasing spread of hogweed along the Braid Burn. Response was that it can only be tackled on a certain day of the year but unfortunately it rained that day.</p> <p>Community Safety Panel – to be renamed</p> <p>Cockmylane – inspection by Environmental Health</p> <p>Pentland Community Centre : Renovations – next meeting of the action group will be the 19<sup>th</sup> September</p> <p>A reminder that the <b>Tea in the Park Fun Day</b> is on in the Braidburn Valley Park this Saturday, 1st Sept 2012 from 14:00 till 16:30.</p> <p>Also that the <b>Art in the Park</b> event held in Spylaw Park, Colinton Village is on the following day that is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept from 11:00 till 17:00</p>	
<b>Ward Councillor's Reports</b> <u>R Lewis</u>	<p>Oxgangs Library – the internet problems affecting the library's computers has been resolved</p> <p>There are plans to designate Stevenson's birthday, 13 November, as Robert Louis Stevenson Day with a recommendation that this day is established in the city's calendar as an annual event celebrating the life, work and legacy of Robert Louis Stevenson. Such an event may include walking tours with Cockmylane being part of Stevenson's historic trail.</p> <p>There has been recent consideration of improving this pathway but dispute over funding responsibility between Housing and Parks and Greenspaces. Does this mean Culture and Leisure are now in the picture for funding.</p> <p>Paralympics Games – funding for volunteers to go to London</p> <p>Access to facilities at Firhill High School – seeking a review of the</p>	

	<p>arrangements.</p> <p>Fun day – letter of apology from Edinburgh Leisure for non-attendance</p> <p>George Street Assembly rooms restoration – need to promote this city asset</p> <p>HL raised questions about responsibility for the maintenance of Colinton Mains Park. Park bins not being emptied, dog walkers not picking up dog waste and the council's workmen cutting the grass without picking up the rubbish first, the result of which can leave sharp metal cans embedded in the ground.</p>	
<b>Firrhill Health Centre</b>	<p>The Chair gave a resume of the meeting that took place in the Oxbangs Neighbourhood Centre on 23 August. This had been an invitation from the designers, Gareth Hoskins Architects, to an Initial Design Workshop for the planned Firrhill Health &amp; Social Care Centre. It was not a public meeting but for the purpose of giving key people an opportunity to discuss the initial designs. There will be a public consultation probably next year. Representatives from the NHS, CHP, local medical practices and local City Councillors also attended.</p> <p>The proposed site in Colinton Mains Drive, opposite the Tesco Superstore, was first identified in 2009 for a joint venture between the NHS and the CEC for a Medical and Social Care Centre with the Craiglockhart Medical Practice seeking to consolidate their services on one site. Since the initial discussions the CEC Social Work have withdrawn their involvement and it is now a NHS Lothian project.</p> <p>Colin Briggs and Helen Kelly, for the Architects, gave a presentation on the work they had done to assess what would be the most suitable structure given the list of services that it was intended to be housed within it, the restrictions of the site and the desire to have a building that would fit into the location and not be out of place.</p> <p>The recommended design provided a part two, part three, storey building to house the two medical practices on the ground floor. They would be separated by a central entrance foyer in the form of an atrium. Positive discussions have been held with Firrhill Medical Practice regarding this proposal. If accepted the existing medical practice building would be used to house the Older Peoples' Services.</p> <p>It is proposed that a lay-by/drop off point will be provided in front of the building on Colinton Mains Drive. It is unlikely that any parking will be provided other than for essential car users and disabled badge holders.</p> <p>The proposed services that will be run from this building will be the two medical practices (Firrhill and Craiglockhart); community nursing; midwifery; podiatry; paediatrics; speech and language therapy; older people's mental health; physiotherapy and touch-down facilities for ensuring proper transfer of care.</p> <p>Provisional timetable as this is part of a funding package involving two other new builds will be the appointment of HubSE by October 2012 to seek appropriate funding (60% private – 40% public). Completion of the outline business case by early 2013. This will progress to the final business case and if all builds approved, may move to commence site work by the</p>	

	<p>Autumn of 2014.</p> <p>The community council representatives expressed concerns about the adequacy of the site in terms of service delivery space and the lack of parking in view of the centralisation of medical practices.</p>	
<b>PNP Reports</b>	<p>Reports on the following partnership meetings are attached as appendices:</p> <p><b>Environment, Infrastructure and Transport: 30 July 2012 – App1</b></p> <p><b>Neighbourhood Environmental Projects (NEP): 30 July 2012 – App2</b></p> <p><b>South West Area Board: 7 August 2012 – App3</b></p>	<p>PW</p> <p>PW</p> <p>JN</p>
<b>Treasurer's Report</b>	<p>There have been no transactions this month but there are three payments outstanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the invoice for the latest newsletter has still to be received.</li> <li>• reimbursement of transport cost to the Chair.</li> <li>• reimbursement of AGM catering costs to the Chair.</li> </ul> <p>The current bank balance stands at £2813.22p</p>	PP
<b>Planning Applications Report</b>	<p>See appendix 4 for details of applications and decisions for the Firhill Ward as recorded in the weekly planning bulletins for the period from 23 July to 20 August.</p> <p><b>Good Companions: HMO Application</b> - Issues related to this matter are also covered in Cllr Rust's report.</p> <p>Advised the Good Companions had submitted an application to register as a 'house of multiple occupancy' (HMO) and asked if we wished to make comment. On the information presented it is presumed the application is in retrospect and only for the area that is the manager's flat. The existing provision does not appear to provide communal space. As the Community Council have already supported the views of the Environmental Health in relation to this not being a suitable setting for such occupancy, the meeting is asked to endorse the following response sent, a copy of which is included in Appendix 4. This was agreed.</p>	JN
<b>Correspond/</b>	See appendix 5 for list of correspondence received since last meeting.	
<b>AOCB</b>	None recorded	
<b>Date, Time &amp; Venue of Next Meeting</b>	<p>24<sup>th</sup> September 2012 at 7.00pm.</p> <p>The venue will be the Board Room in the Oxbangs Care Offices, 12 Firhill Neuk. The Board Room is not able to accommodate many visitors thus the Council are asking those who wish to attend to advise the Secretary beforehand.</p>	

The meeting ended at 9.30pm

# ENVIRONMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT GROUP MEETING

Held in South West Neighbourhood Office, 30 July 2012

This Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership EIT sub-group meeting was attended by Council officials, Community Council reps, and chaired by D Bewsey, Colinton Amenity Assoc.

### Green Belt

Alison Kirkwood, Principal Planner, CEC, was introduced to make a presentation on 'Green Belt Policy - What does it mean for the Pentlands Area?'

Alison explained that six Planning Authorities covering Fife, Edinburgh, East/West/Mid Lothian, down to Borders, come together for Strategic Green Belt Planning, as green belts will often cover large areas and cross boundaries. Policy guidance is from the Scottish Gov., to protect open spaces and landscaped areas - but, to help shape growth of the city, because of demand for more housing, a balance must be found; so it does not say that green belt must never be built on. However, housing development is not accepted unless agreed 'in a planned form' in the Local Plan, ie, no ad hoc development is allowed, even though the Scot. Gov. is keen to support the building industry.

Agricultural land must also be taken into account as important, although some farmers themselves want to sell off land for housing if their farms/crops are no longer economically viable. The vast majority of housing developments in the pipeline are for 'brownfield' sites, ie, sites which have previously been built on. They are unlikely to provide all land necessary for new-build, but always have priority over the green belt. Edinburgh has land 'banked' for 45,000 houses up to 2020 (a further 3,000 to be identified from '20-'24) - but 20,000 currently being built are on hold because of the economic climate. Builders now need smaller sites to eke out funding: build some houses to sell, then use that money to build next phase. Main Issues Report: suggested Edinburgh sites link - consultation takes place at various stages over a few years. In West Edinburgh, the showground and airport environs have already been taken out of the Green Belt. Scottish Gov. has a Strategic Development Plan for the four main cities, to plan for cross-boundary developments, and its Reporters are now examining new developments identified - 1,000 in W. Edinburgh, eg, around Gogar, and 2,000 in E. Edinburgh, generally where there is good transport infrastructure of rail/tram connections. Our City Council virtually has to accept the Reporters' recommendations. There is no planned strategic area of growth in Pentlands, which is less well suited to major land sites because of geography and poor infrastructure - although up to 50 houses could be built on a site, as no extra infrastructure (transport etc) would be needed. Social housing requirement is still 25% of every 12 houses built, but developers may contribute to this in another area if they can prove it is not viable on a particular site. Edinburgh's housing plans now have to be reviewed every five years: as demographics change, more one-bed flats, or more family homes, may be needed at any particular time. Legislation also covers re-claiming empty houses/flats. The Draft Local Plan will be submitted by the City Council on 10 August '12. However, if the Scottish Gov. Reporters have issues with it, further consultations will be needed before this is published.

### Other Agenda Items

**Flood Defences:** Digital photos taken by H Levy of recent flooding in Oxbangs had been e-mailed to the Council's Alvin Barbour, whose remit is flood defences, and he is studying those, but says that this is less than a 1-in-10-years event (ie, we are likely to get a lot more of it!).

Three reservoirs in the Pentlands (+ all the rainwater in between) feed into the Braid Burn – but the Council can't ask Scottish Water to alter the levels of these as they had said that the flood defences were built for a 1-in-200 years event! On the basis of what has just happened, with the Braid Burn up to the arches of the bridges through Colinton Mains & Oxbangs, will these flood defences cope with any worse?

Photos taken by A Hunter of the playing fields beside Osgangs Primary covered in water were also handed round, and it was agreed that this flood plain was doing its job, as he had noted that the waters receded in a fairly short time. Stuart Farquhar, an officer with the SW Roads Team, stated that flooding problems (even just with normal rainfall) on the path adjacent to this field, close to the new bridge built on Osgangs Rd North - which Firrhill Community Council has been trying to get sorted out since the path was re-surfaced there - are caused by a design fault: that part of the path is sub-standard, as it has been made too low.

He is looking for money from Alvin Barber so that his team can rectify this. Re the confusion about sandbags - whether empty bags and a supply of sand are given to residents to fill themselves - when I asked Stuart Farquhar, he confirmed that pre-filled sandbags are delivered to householders who need them, if they contact the Council

**Waste Collections:** To encourage residents to do more recycling, from the beginning of September the rubbish collection will be fortnightly, with green bins and brown bins being collected on the same day on alternate weeks - except from November to March, when brown bins are collected only once a month. Grey kitchen waste bins will still be collected every week, and red/blue recycling boxes will be emptied as now. Info sheets with dates should be delivered to all residents before the changeover, but the Council can also be contacted on 0131 529 3030, or e-mail [waste@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:waste@edinburgh.gov.uk) or visit [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/recycling).

**Transport:** The Healthy Living Centre at Wester Hailes is presently being built, and it is likely that people from all communities within Ward 8 will need to access this at some point. However, the No 18 bus does not go down that way, and so far there has been no contact with Lothian Buses and First Bus. Norman Tinlin, representing the EIT Group, will write a letter to the heads of both companies to initiate a meeting, in the hope that dialogue can be started on the possibility of a slight change of route for the No 18 to take in this Health Centre.

**Planning:** Presently, Neighbourhood Partnerships are not allowed to have any say in Planning issues, mainly because City Councillors are involved in NPs. This EIT sub-group, which has no Councillors attending, feels that we should have a say in proposed large developments where the environment, infrastructure and transport are affected. This will be investigated.

**Gardens Team:** Stuart Farquhar reported that the number of Council staff available to look after gardens/green spaces/verges has been cut drastically, although qualified street cleaners can sometimes help out. Regarding weed-killer: the Council is now only allowed to use a chemical which is much weaker than was previously used, and that, plus almost constant rain this season, has made getting rid of weeds quite ineffective

**CIMS Scores:** Charts showing the latest Cleanliness Indices were handed out, the highest being Ward 1 with 82, the lowest being Ward 7 with 67, and our own Ward 8 being 76.

## MEETING FOR WARD 8 NEIGHBOURHOOD ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS (NEPs)

Held at SW Neighbourhood Offices, 30th July 2012

This meeting was attended by Cllrs Elaine Aitken and Jason Rust; Ward 8 Community Council reps; and Lloyd Richardson, Professional Officer. It was Chaired by Dr Andrew Edwards, SW Area Roads Manager.

After discussion of each of the ten projects put forward for consideration, decisions were made as follows re this year's budget of £65,000:

Six projects were prioritised for delivery: 2 x Priority A; 2 x Priority B; 2 x Priority C.

Priority A:     1) Oxbangs Avenue - new junction layout to form two traffic lanes at exit on to Oxbangs Road North. This is an expensive project because of required safety audit, traffic management, and removal & re-siting of street light & junction warning light, and so the cost will be spread over two years: £27.5k this year and £27.5k next year.

                  2) Oxbangs Road - new refuge island, £12.5k. \*

Priority B:     1) Oxbangs Road - resurface footway, £4k. \*

                  2) Swanston Park - establishing a woodland path, £5k.

\* The two Oxbangs Rd projects are above the Hunters Tryst roundabout.

Priority C:     1) Bridge Road, Colinton — resurface footway, new dev'ment to Colinton Inn, £10k.

                  2) Oxbangs Grove – resurface footway, £4k.

As the above figures are 'guesstimates' at present, the SW Roads Team will now get fixed quotes, timescales, and safety audit for new junction.

Four projects were put on hold:

1. Woodhall Road, Colinton - guardrails: proper assessment to be carried out.
2. Oxbangs Place - resurface carriageway at No 11: budget constraints; higher priority projects. (But I reported a bad pothole between No's 8/9; this should be repaired from a different budget.)
3. Cockmylane, bottom part, down to Oxbangs Avenue - resurface: this footway is not adopted by Road Services, but there could be possible collaboration with Housing Section.
4. Bridge Road, Colinton, between Post Office & Spylaw Street - resurface: put on hold until work there is completed by Scotland Gas Networks.

N.B. Appropriate projects can be added at any time to the 3 year programme.

Peggy Wright, Firrhill Community Council Rep.

### Note on the South West Area Board Meeting held 7 August 2012

#### Nominations for the Position of Chair

This matter was raised by Debbie Herbertson, SW Service Manager for Housing and Regeneration and ended up a bit of a farce. What seemed a relatively straightforward matter became a complex issue with the end result that the current Chair remains in office until clarification of the rules are obtained. Conflict has arisen over who is entitled to be nominated and who is entitled to a vote with the representatives of the Housing Tenants' Associations maintaining the position of chair was restricted to the tenants' reps with the eligibility to vote extending to community reps but not City of Edinburgh Councillors or Officers. The lack of a documented constitution for this group exacerbates the problem. I am not sympathetic to the Tenants position as it does not reflect a partnership status.

#### Area Board Meeting Dates for Session 2012/13

This was to include a proposal from Graham Budd to change the meeting day from a Tuesday to a Thursday to assist the SWNO Officers in drawing up the Neighbourhood Partnership calendar. I covered this in my report to our June meeting and the summary position remains unchanged.

#### Minute of Previous Meeting (12 June 2012) and Action List

This is covered in my report to our June meeting but a copy of the draft minute is available for perusal.

#### Matters Arising

With regards to the proposed project 639, Alex Paton, representing the Redhall Tenant and Resident Group asked what the figures were for the Devolved Roads and Footways budget for the South West Neighbourhood for this financial year and if these funds if not allocated this financial year be rolled over to the next year?

Subsequently advised by email: Budget figures for South West is £210k and Pentlands £140k. Funds can be rolled over but there is a full programme for expenditure for this year.

#### Income Management – Rent Arrears and Changes to Eviction Legislation

This was an interesting if depressing presentation by Tracey Kelly, Rents Senior Officer, SSU.

#### Landlord Performance

Update on the performance of the SW Team for June:

Well housed – repairs completed within target – reported there has been a slight dip from 96% in April and May to 94% in June. The performance indicator is 98% but the citywide average is 94%. Also in this category the Team were on target with an 8 day average turnaround for repairs to an empty home. Citywide average was 9 days

Well housed – average time to let an empty home – the Team were on target taking an average of 22 days to let a property (with 34 lets) against a city wide target of 22 days. The citywide average for June was 20 days.

Well housed – cash value of current rent arrears – at the end of June the rent arrears stood at £594,799. Compared to the same time last year there has been an increase of £83,158 (14%). There has been an increase of 142 tenants in arrears. Cash intake went up by 2% - £36,566 but housing benefit went down by 1%. The reduction in housing benefit has made a big impact in the arrears figures with issues with backlogs for progressing claims.

There is a fortnightly rent surgery held in Oxbgangs Library on Thursdays between 2 – 4 pm.

Well housed – housing advice cases which do not go on to present as homeless – the figure for June is 64% the target is 55%. The number of people who presented themselves as homeless was 46 and there were 120 interviews for housing options.

Currently the Team are undergoing an inspection by the Scottish Housing Regulator's Scrutiny of Homelessness Services. This is in regard to the continued high use of B & B accommodation and the 2012 abolition of non-priority cases.

The Property Team conducted 10 walkabouts and carried out 309 inspections over the month.

### **The Estates Walkabout Review:**

The update included an appraisal of events since the September 2011 report outlining the aims of local Estate walkabouts, the main issues identified on each walkabout, past success and what did not work so well. This was discussed by a focus group in October 2011 and the following suggestion for improvements made.

Proposed each walkabout should be individual to each walkabout area and that feedback needs to be improved to ensure all issues raised at walkabout are fed back to future walkabout, even if this is to explain why an item has not progressed. A review was also undertaken of the contact list by the relevant lead officer to ensure that the invitations were being sent out to the correct contacts.

A meeting set up in each area by the lead officer looked at future priorities, the potential for future requests for NEP Projects and ensured the day/time and frequency of walkabouts are suitable to all. The main issues identified from previous year's walkabouts informed the decision on who would take the lead in future walkabouts (e.g. if the walkabout issues were mainly repair/housing type issues then a Housing Officer from the Property Team would take the lead).

It is intended that the whole area covered by a walkabout will be covered within the year and the lead officer will be responsible for setting out the areas to be visited on each walkabout, this will include any hot spot areas. Walkabouts cancelled due to weather conditions to be rearranged within at least 2 weeks of the original date.

The lead officer to capture all issues raised on the walkabout and input the information into a common database all staff can access. Staff from each service area within SW Neighbourhood will update an outcome in relation to any issue assigned to them from a walkabout. The lead officer will be responsible for ensuring all issues raised have a response to feedback to the next walkabout.

It was noted on a few occasions walkabouts were only attended by staff with no community involvement. SWN Officers are looking at alternatives for these walkabouts and considering the use of social media as a way of engaging with these communities

Consideration has been given to advertising the walkabouts in local communities, newsletters and websites. This has been decided against as numbers attending walkabouts could become out of hand. Still looking for feedback on this matter.

Jim Napier

27 August 2012

## Weekly Planning Bulletin Report for August Meeting

23 July 2012

No applications or decisions for Ward 08 – Firrhill CC

Proposal of Application Notices for the City of Edinburgh:

Ward No.11 – City Centre: World Heritage Site, Listed Category: A, New Town Conservation Area – Proposal of Application 12/02263/PAN for alterations and change of use of 1-5 Baxter's Place to a licensed hotel at 1 - 5 Baxter's Place, Edinburgh, EH1 3BD.

Ward No.14 – Craigentinny/Duddingston: Proposal of Application 12/02276/PAN for a residential development of colony housing and flats including roads, landscaping and pedestrian connections at land 137 metres south of 52 Albion Road, Edinburgh.

30 July 2012

No applications or decisions for Ward 08 – Firrhill CC

Proposal of Application Notices for the City of Edinburgh:

Ward No.05 – Inverleith:– Proposal of Application 12/02585/PAN for the demolition of existing office building and erection of mixed use development comprising hotel (Class 7), health and fitness facilities (Class 11), food and drink facilities (Class 3), conference facilities (Class 10) and associated car parking at 140 Crewe Road South, Edinburgh, EH4 2NY.

Ward No.17 – Portobello/Craigmillar: Proposal of Application 12/02468/PAN covering existing factory unit with single storey offices. Applicant is seeking to move various departments of City of Edinburgh Council into building. This will mainly involve the passenger operations team for predominantly mini bus parking in existing exterior car park and new parking inside warehouse. The gates are to be widened slightly and some additional lighting in exterior car park. The Warehouse is to be divided to create metal/woodworking workshop at 2 Peffer Place, Edinburgh, EH16 4BB.

06 August 2012

Application 12/02216/FUL to remove a window and wall at the rear of the house and form patio door. To also form driveway and lay monoblock paving for car parking at 8 Colinton Mains Green, Edinburgh, EH13 9AG.

Proposal of Application Notices for the City of Edinburgh:

Ward 05 – Inverleith: 12/02585/PAN for the demolition of existing office building and erection of mixed use development comprising hotel (Class 7), health and fitness facilities (Class 11), food and drink facilities (Class 3), conference facilities (Class 10) and associated car parking at 140 Crewe Road South, Edinburgh, EH4 2NY.

Ward 14 – Craigentinny/Duddingston: 12/02665/PAN: This is a Section 42 planning application to not comply with conditions pertaining to opening and servicing hours of planning permission reference A/00087/92. Current servicing hours are; 7.30 am - 8.00 pm Monday to Saturday and 9.30 am - 5.00 pm Sunday. Current opening hours are, 8.00 am - 8.00 pm Monday to Saturday, 10.00 am - 5.00 pm Sundays at 2, 4 Piersfield Terrace, Edinburgh, EH8 7BQ.

No decisions for Ward 08 – Firrhill CC

13 August 2012

No application or decisions for Ward 08 - Firrhill.

No Proposal of Application Notices for the City of Edinburgh.

20 August 2012

Application 12/02805/FUL for an extension to side/front of house, porch and conservatory to rear, convert existing attic space at 116 Oxbangs Road, Edinburgh, EH10 7AZ

Proposal of Application Notices for the City of Edinburgh

Ward 11 – City Centre: 12/02797/PAN: This is for an amendment to detailed planning permission (10/02373/FUL) to include design changes to proposed hotel development (Block D) of the approved masterplan at 189 Morrison Street, Edinburgh, EH3 8DN.

Ward 14 – Craigentinny/Duddingston: 12/02665/PAN: This is for a Section 42 planning application to not comply with conditions pertaining to opening and servicing hours of planning permission reference A/00087/92. Current servicing hours are; 7.30 am - 8.00 pm Monday to Saturday and 9.30 am - 5.00 pm Sunday. Current opening hours are, 8.00 am - 8.00 pm Monday to Saturday, 10.00 am - 5.00 pm Sundays at Morrisons, 2, 4 Piersfield Terrace, Edinburgh, EH8 7BQ.

Ward 16 – Liberton/Gilmerton: 12/02804/PAN: This is for a Section 42 planning application to not comply with conditions relating to servicing hours and opening hours of planning permission A/02206/98. Current operating / opening hours are restricted by condition (G01) to 0700 - 2200 daily. Current loading / unloading hours are restricted by condition (G49) to 0700 - 2200 daily. Service / delivery vehicles shall not arrive outwith loading / unloading hours (condition EE5) at Morrisons, 432 Gilmerton Road, Edinburgh, EH17 7JQ.

**Submitted comments re Good Companions HMO Application**

Many thanks for making us aware of this application and seeking our comments, please note that there is insufficient time to take this to the next meeting of the community council but I am sure they will endorse this response in due course.

As you are aware we have registered our concerns at the suitability of this location for use as a house of multiple occupation when a planning application was submitted in March of this year to convert the whole of the upper floor to this use. This application is still pending consideration.

It is also understood that the manager's flat is already being used as an HMO and thus presume this is in retrospect. It would be interesting to know if there are currently seven residents living there or if this is an intended reduction which will be reflected in a revised planning application. We made the point in our previous submission that there was a distinct lack of communal space shown in that application.

I am sure the community council continue to share the concerns expressed by Environmental Health in their assessment of the planning application that residential properties in close proximity to public houses can provide a poor level of residential amenity for residents. This basically supported our own stance that the Oxbangs area is a residential suburb of the City with very little in the way of attractions for young people other than the local pubs and this is the only one that could be put in the category of Public House. To have a situation of a large group of single people living in such conditions is liable to be detrimental to them and ultimately to the community.

The fact that people are living there at present in accommodation that can only consist of small bed-sits with no communal space perhaps gives an indication of the attitude of the applicant in viewing this solely as a financial venture with no consideration of social requirements.

I am sure the community council will reaffirm its view to this being an unsuitable place for an HMO and would hope this is supported by the City Council.

## Firrhill Community Council Correspondence

24 July – 24 August, 2012

**By e-mail:** all relevant messages forwarded to members with this facility; some transferred to website where appropriate.

- 1 Sarah Boyack MSP: e-news for July
- 2 David Bewsey, Chair, EIT Group: replies to Sec's questions re local flooding (in EIT Report)
- 3 f by Cllr Aitken: re the Edinburgh Reporter running a live webchat with L & B Police, 31/07; Chief Inspector Thomas would explain about Operation Cypher.
- 4 Craig Dunlop: reply to question re derelict garden at houses in police precinct – it had gone 'off his radar' but will see to this on return from holiday.
- 5 Karen McDonald, SW Office, confirming receipt of Sec's update on Firrhill CC sub-group reps.
- 6 f by Eileen Hewitt: funding for WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Initiative) to distribute for projects in Edinburgh & Midlothian will cease after 2012.
- 7 Scott Neill, in reply to e-mail re Vice-Chair's concerns re who should be approached about possible problem with steam from Braid Burn School going through vents: message passed on to R Beattie, Scientific Services (part of Environment Health).
- 8 Karen McDonald: latest Pentlands NP Digest.
- 9 Heather Levy re Oxgangs Community Fun Day, to be run by AC Oxgangs & Firrhill CC + Opening of new pavilion by Cllr Lewis, Sat. 4 August.
- 10 Dr Andy Edwards: priority NEPs discussed/decided at 30 July meeting (listed in Firrhill CC rep's NEPs Report).
- 11 Cllr Rust: HMO Application for Good Companions (deadline for comment 15 August).
- 12 f. by S Neill: 1st Sustainable Community Energy Network Newsletter. Details of group can be found at Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation.
- 13 Gordon MacDonald MSP: August Newsletter.
- 14 Gordon MacDonald MSP: press release re upgrading of underpass to the new Healthy Living Centre at Wester Hailes.
- 15 f. by E Hewitt: details of bin collection changes; info to be delivered to all households.
- 16 Lloyd Richardson, SW N'hood Environment, in answer to Sec's query re blue paint round badly deteriorated manhole cover at crossing in Colinton Mains Drive: blue paint denotes responsibility of Scottish Water, who will repair this on 6 August (but he ordered temp. Council repair to make safe). [This damage was reported by J Napier, Firrhill CC Min. Sec., and P Wright, Sec.]
- 17 f. by D Bewsey: suggested sites for housing on 'green belt' from Main Issues Report.  
Link:

[http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/7168/map\\_of\\_other\\_greenfield\\_housing\\_sites\\_suggested\\_by\\_developers](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/7168/map_of_other_greenfield_housing_sites_suggested_by_developers)

- 18 Jim Napier: letter to Planning Dept. re proposed refuge island at Redford Rd, W of Oxbangs Rd.
- 19 f. by E Hewitt re Zero Waste Scotland's flytipping grant scheme to get rid of flytipped material. Details at <http://www.dumbdumpers.org/flytipping/> (closing date for applications 31 August).
- 20 H Levy re Initial Design Workshop with architects re Firrhill Health & Social Care Centre: for key stakeholders (public consultation probably next year).
- 21 Jim Napier re Good Companions HMO Application, including statement from Environmental Health re this application.
- 22 Jim Napier: letter re legal aspects of Firrhill CC's Flood Prevention Works Report: sent by Sec. to Alvin Barber, Senior Professional Officer, and Brian Torrance, Project Manager Maintenance, at Council's City Development Dept.
- 23 f. by H Levy: Pentland N'hood P'ship Prep Group Report (meeting in Pentland Centre, 25/07).
- 24 H Levy: Power Point Presentation on Hope Triangle to Lochan Residents Assoc.
- 25 Gordon MacDonald MSP re People's Postcode Lottery Dream Fund: charities/organisations can apply for up to £100k. <http://www.postcodetrust.org.uk/> for details.
- 26 Jim Napier: Firrhill CC's response to Good Companions HMO Application for Sec. to forward to our local Councillors Jason Rust, Elaine Aitken and Richard Lewis.
- 27 Replies to above: from Cllr Rust that he will take this forward, and Cllr Aitken that she sits on committee dealing with applications and can comment there.
- 28 Gordon MacDonald MSP: press release re his visit to Scottish SPCA's upgraded re-homing centre at Balerno. To view pets needing re-homed: [www.scottishspca.org](http://www.scottishspca.org) or phone 0800 520 0691.
- 29 Norman Tinlin, Sec. of EACC (Edinburgh Assoc. of Community Councils) with dates of meetings arranged until April 2013.
- 30 Councillor Andrew Burns: Council Leader's Report for August.
- 31 H Levy re Hope Triangle Launch, Monday 10 Sept, 2-4 pm or 6-8 pm: write your message of hope and help create a corridor of scented plants.
- 32 Oxbangs Neighbourhood Centre needs volunteers to help in the kitchen for a couple of hours, or whatever you can manage; one-day course on health & hygiene (for certificate) provided. Contact John Spence on 441 7558.
- 33 f. by Cllr Rust: letter re plans to review the Community Council Scheme, which local authorities had to prepare according to 1973 Local Gov. (Scotland) Act. This Scheme provides a framework governing the creation and operation of CCs. Stage 1 of review process: Community Councils will be sent a questionnaire. [This letter also e-mailed by Natalie Hoy, Local Community Planning Mgr, Services for Communities.]

## **By Post**

- 1 Eileen Hewitt, Liaison Officer for Community Councils at City of Edinburgh Council:  
'Briefing on Managed Weekly Collections' on changes to our waste & recycling collections.
- 2 NHS Lothian's Summer 2012 issue of Health Link newspaper (for distribution to FCC members)

## Correspondence for 27 August

1. f. Cllr Rust (from Services for Communities - Planning and Building Standards) – new planning guidance being produced for (a) businesses; (b) householders; (c) listed buildings and conservation areas. [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/planning\\_consultations](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/planning_consultations).
2. Johanne Carrie: the Edinburgh Filmhouse are running the film '*The Transition 2*' on Sept 20<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.
3. Bill Hannah: VOCAL briefing paper on consultation into integration of adult health and social care.

If anyone would like more detail of any of the above, please contact me.

Peggy Wright

Tel: 0131 477 4400

e: [peggy.wright@live.co.uk](mailto:peggy.wright@live.co.uk)