

# Firrhill Community Council

*'Nec Aspera Terrent'*

(Undaunted by Adversity)

Minute of Ordinary Meeting of the Council on 22 October 2012  
Held in Oxgangs Care Offices, Firrhill Neuk.

## Members:

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

## Ex-Officio Members:

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

## Visitors:

S Duffy  
F Gosney

## Apologies:

S Boyack (MSP), R Lewis (Cllr)

## Non- attendance:

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

Agenda Item	Narrative	Action & Owner
Approval of Previous Minute	Draft minutes of meeting held on 24 September 2012 were reviewed. AH referred to the report on the Bridle Path (AOCB) and advised he had not seen the deeds but only informed of the information by the neighbour. With this correction, the draft minutes were moved for approval by A Hunter and seconded by L Linn. Approved.	J N to publish
Matters Arising	<p><b>Refuse Collections:</b> Update on item 1 of Cllr Aitken's report at the previous meeting regarding problems with the introduction of the new service. The Secretary received an email from the Waste Services Manager on this matter along with a summary of the current situation (attached as App 1), the progress being made and outstanding issues still being worked through.</p> <p>Constituents advised to get in touch by calling Waste Management Service on 0131 529 3030 or email <a href="mailto:waste@edinburgh.gov.uk">waste@edinburgh.gov.uk</a> if they have any problems. The Service would be grateful if, when contacting them, residents can provide as much detail as possible about their bin collection (e.g. their full address, what type of bin, any specific requirements such as if they have assistance with collections, or it is kept in a bin store). This would be helpful in resolving these problems as quickly as possible.</p> <p><b>Bridle Path Update:</b> see previous minute under AOCB. Cllr Aitken</p>	

	<p>reported that their meeting with Mike Avery to discuss the maintenance of open spaces such as the land along the burn had still to take place.</p> <p><b>Walled Garden Update:</b> see previous minute under AOCB. Cllr Aitken reported no action on this matter due to the absence of C Dunlop, Parks and Greenspaces Manager. This relates to reimbursement by the City Council to this gentleman for monies spent on developing the garden.</p> <p><b>HMO Application Update:</b> Cllr Rust reported he and J Napier had a meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> with the applicant at his request. Mr Marinello indicated it was his intention to withdraw the original planning application due to the building standards required to carry out his conversion proposal for the function hall to bed-sit accommodation. Currently reviewing his options. He referred to a supermarket chain being interested in purchasing the ground but aware of the implications this would have on the Broadway shopping centre next door. Agreed with us that the retention of the public house with its function hall should be an asset to the community but stated the hall was not being used and thus a financial drain. Agreed to keep us informed of his plans.</p> <p><b>Braid Burn Banking &amp; Infrastructure Inspection Update</b></p> <p>Relates to an ongoing discussion on the flood prevention works and the recent heavy rainfalls causing localised flooding along the Braid Burn. The Secretary wrote to the City Council indicating our concern about possible damage caused by the volume and speed of water flowing along the burn and asking what inspections of the waterway, its bridges and other structures were carried out following such a deluge and for a copy of the latest inspection report where carried out.</p> <p>In response the City Council gave an assurance on the ability of a bridge to withstand the hydraulic forces of flooding water is built into its design. Their <i>Bridges Team</i> carry out a general inspection of all bridges at least every 2 years with an inspection carried out if damage is reported.</p> <p>In regard to inspections the <i>Flood Prevention Team</i> inspect on a bi-annual basis, the banking and wall defences of all rivers. They also advised that the overhanging trees/ bushes and debris along our section of the burn will be cut back/removed over the next few weeks and in fact this appears to have taken place.</p> <p>An inspection of the Braid Burn throughout its length and its tributaries was carried out in April/May 2012 and a copy of the inspection report was provided, no major issues being reported.</p>	
<p>Community Police Report</p> <p><b>D Crawford</b></p>	<p><b>Crimes of Note during the October Period:</b></p> <p>On the 1<sup>st</sup>, whilst being dealt with for another matter in Oxfangs Street, a local teenager was found in possession of cannabis and was charged as a result.</p> <p>During the 4th, a male in the Oxfangs Crescent area lost his self control with other neighbours and began a period of behaviour whereby threats were made. He was also seen to be in possession of a weapon. The male was traced, arrested and charged and is no longer able to reside in the area.</p>	

	<p>During the afternoon of the 12th, a male answered the front door of his house in Colinton Mains Road and was assaulted by another local male known to him. The assailant was later traced, arrested and charged.</p> <p>On the 14<sup>th</sup>, whilst being returned to his home after being found intoxicated in the street, a local 24 year old male was found to have a Class B drug within his home (cannabis). He was subsequently charged with relevant offences.</p> <p>On the 15<sup>th</sup>, at some unknown time during the day, a child's blue coloured BMX bike was taken from the landing of a common stair in Oxfangs Street.</p> <p>On the 17th, police received a report that a vehicle was parked in the Oxfangs Bank area with a smashed rear windscreen. The vehicle was then found by the police and removed from the area due to its insecurity. The owner was made aware soon after. No persons or anything suspicious is known to have been seen or heard.</p> <p><b>Road Traffic Matters:</b></p> <p>No known police related issues so far despite the current road closure at the Lovell Building Site at the junction of Oxfangs Crescent and Firrhill Drive.</p> <p><b>Statistics:</b></p> <p>Beat PF56 – Fairmilehead and Swanston – 52</p> <p>Beat PF57 – Central Oxfangs – 116</p> <p>Beat PF58 – Colinton and Bonaly – 60</p> <p><b>Safer Neighbourhood Team:</b></p> <p>An awareness campaign will soon be launched to the public to highlight the availability of the <i>Immobilise Database</i>.</p> <p>Members of the public can register their valuables – particularly electronic and portable devices such as phones, laptops and other gadgets on the register. It is free to use, secure, is the only supported registration service recognised in the United Kingdom by police forces and mobile phone industry.</p> <p>It allows better investigation to take place of the theft of such property and of more interest to the public, the ability for stolen property to be reunited with the rightful owner. There are around 250 such cases each week where property is returned or further investigation made possible due to property being registered.</p> <p>Once logged onto Immobilise web site, the process is quick and easy to follow ; details are held securely and are only used once an item has been reported lost or stolen. Further information will follow and be available once the public awareness campaign begins shortly.</p> <p>PC Crawford gave his apologies for being unable to attend the next meeting of the Community Council</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>	
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<p>Ward Councillor's Reports  Cllr Rust</p>	<p><b>Refuse Collections</b> – covered under 'Matters Arising'.</p> <p><b>Good Companions</b> – covered under 'Matters Arising'.</p> <p><b>Pentland Community Centre:</b> refurbishment will take place next summer, dependent on funding. Various Trusts have been approached for funds and outcomes awaited. Cllr Rust has been seeking alternative venues for use by groups during the period the Centre requires to be closed. The function room above The Good Companions, the old Social Work building and Colinton Mains Community Centre have all been mentioned so far as potential alternatives.</p> <p><b>Janitorial Services</b> – a decision was taken in 2011 by the then LD/SNP Administration to reduce the budget by £850,000 and consequently reduce the number of janitorial posts by 40. "Campus arrangements" were to be introduced whereby one janitor would become responsible for more than one building. The Alternative Business Model (outsourcing) discussions stopped this process, but after ABM fell through it was re-started.</p> <p>Remaining staff are due to transfer from Children and Families department to Services for Communities department on 1st January 2013. The idea is to have an "integrated facilities model" whereby the service is more efficient!</p> <p>The Council sought to reduce the number of posts by voluntary routes and so far 14 janitors have accepted early release offers and 11 vacancies are not being filled. This means at present only 25 posts are going rather than the 40 budgeted for by the Council. There will therefore be budget pressures within the department for the remainder of the saving as the voluntary route has been exhausted.</p> <p>The deployment model means that 53 schools and community centres will be affected across the city (88 unaffected). Those unaffected are the likes of Colinton Mains Community Centre and Oxbgangs Neighbourhood Centre which make their own provision and all the PPP schools such as Bonaly.</p> <p>In practice it would mean at a High School, 2 janitors not 3. Currently in place at Boroughmuir and apparently works well. Overall the reduction should never be greater than one full-time equivalent at each building.</p> <p>So Services for Communities will be responsible for the service from January and we may well need a further briefing at that point regarding how the arrangements will work in practice. It will be operated under the neighbourhood model and we will need to keep an eye on any impact on community use where applicable. Opening and closing times and bad weather may all be pertinent issues. However, apparently there are some informal arrangements in place at present at some schools and centres, which though non-contractual, operate in a similar way,</p> <p>There have been two or three meetings with the trade unions and the janitors and no formal objections have been submitted. All affected Head Teachers and CLD staff will also have met with the review team by Friday.</p> <p><b>Social Work building</b> – this site is expected to be on the market late December.</p> <p><b>Flood Prevention</b> – City officials slow in getting back with responses to</p>	
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	<p>local concerns so Cllr Rust suggested a face-to-face meeting with them which the Chair agreed to. Cllr Rust to take forward arrangements for a meeting with Alvin Barber and Brian Torrance with the Community Council and the Chair suggested including Colinton Amenity Association who also had concerns re the reservoir levels. Individuals with specific concerns such as those on Oxgangs Road North could also be invited.</p> <p><b>Ground Maintenance</b> – meeting still to be arranged with Mike Avery</p> <p><b>Oxgangs Central Resident's Association Meeting</b> - community safety issues and Crimestoppers</p> <p><b>Fireworks Display</b> – Pentland Community Centre 5<sup>th</sup> Nov, 6pm start fireworks at 7.30pm. Ticketed entry to Community Centre for safety reasons</p>	
<p>Ward Councillor's Reports</p> <p><b>Cllr Aitken</b></p>	<p>1. On 10th September, the frequency of refuse collections changed to fortnightly. Unfortunately, I have been inundated with complaints about lack of collections for green and brown bins, communal bins and food waste. It shortly became clear that the problems were city-wide. Reasons given were new routes with which the operatives were unfamiliar, lorry breakdowns and backlog. My colleagues and I were told that these issues would be resolved at the end of the first week, but the problems persist. Residents are now extremely frustrated and we are seeking strong reassurances on the steps being taken to resolve the situation as soon as possible. There have been many problems with assisted collections which Jason and I have been resolving</p> <p>My group had a meeting on Thursday 27th Sept. with the Director, Head of Service and Waste Manager raising all the issues experienced by our constituents and we asked what actions were being implemented to find a resolution to this unacceptable situation. Contingency vehicles are clearing the backlog and additional information will be added to the route sheets..</p> <p>2. The AGM of Pentland Crime Prevention Panel will be on Wednesday 21st November, venue to be confirmed. PC Andy Jones has taken over as our Crime Prevention Officer and is currently attending training for his new role.</p> <p>3. I will be monitoring the parking round Pentland Primary School again following complaints. Also, I have reported problems with dog fouling near the school again.</p> <p>4. Jason, Richard and I attended the Oxgangs Central Residents' Association meeting where a number of issues were raised, including community safety concerns. These have been progressed.</p> <p>5. A number of funding applications have now been submitted by the Pentland Community Centre Refurbishment Group.</p> <p>6. Oxgangs Care AGM will be held on Thursday 15th November at 1.30pm in the offices in Firrhill Neuk.</p> <p>7. I joined the meeting of the Tenant Participation Group on 3rd October.</p> <p>8. I attended the Firrhill Walkabout on Thursday 4th October – a report has been submitted by Jim Napier.</p> <p>9. Our group received a briefing on the janitorial services review which</p>	

	<p>was agreed in the budget set in February 2010. The new arrangements will centre round neighbourhoods with each area having an Integrated Facilities Manager who will be the first point of contact. If schools and community centres are in close proximity, one janitor will be allocated for both facilities. More information will be available shortly on which establishments will be affected.</p> <p>10. I was present at a Veterans' Housing Briefing given by staff from MOD. This gave us an insight into steps which could be taken to help with housing needs.</p>	
<p>Flood Prevention Work Aftermath</p>	<p>The Secretary reported she had received a desperate phone call from a resident in Oxbgangs Road North to say her back garden is flooded yet again to the extent that even her dog can't go out in it. Complained that the ground under their floor is now continually wet and that this has all happened since the flood prevention work was carried out.</p> <p>They have been on to the Council many times, but get fobbed off, as nobody seems to be willing to take responsibility for the aftermath of these works.</p> <p>The Secretary passed this on to Cllr Rust for action on 12<sup>th</sup> Oct.</p> <p>After discussion it was agreed to request a meeting with the relevant people within the City of Edinburgh Council Services responsible for the flood prevention issues.</p>	<p><b>Cllr Rust to action</b></p>
<p>PNP South West Area Board Report</p> <p><b>J Napier</b></p> <p>9/10/2012</p>	<p>Election of Chairperson: this had been raised by SWNO officers as a necessary action to align procedures. Process challenged and a copy of the relevant rule was requested. Chair re-elected but a motion to revise the procedure has been submitted.</p> <p>Project 685: Oxbgangs Car Park Lighting: The Street Lighting Dept has drawn up a design for the installation and the contract is currently out to tender for procurement. Once they have appointed a preferred contractor they will notify the SWNO of the start date for the work, which should be quite soon. The budget figure is approx £29,000.</p> <p>See attached report (Appendix 2) for more detail of the meeting.</p>	
<p>PNP Funding Panel Report</p> <p><b>H Levy</b></p> <p>17/10/2012</p>	<p>1. Nominations for Chair –Judy Wightman was re-elected unopposed.</p> <p>2. Community Grants Fund applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Colinton amenity Association – agreed</li> <li>○ Oxbgangs Lochan Tenants &amp; Residents Association – agreed</li> <li>○ Ratho Environment Group – agreed</li> <li>○ Balerno Parish Church – no grant</li> <li>○ 51<sup>st</sup> Balerno Scout Group – partial</li> <li>○ Currie Youth &amp; Community Centre – no grant</li> <li>○ Riccarton Playgroup – agreed</li> </ul> <p>There followed a discussion about the grant limit which on the grant application is £5,000. In previous meetings it had been discussed and agreed that the limit should be lowered to £3,500. This was never brought</p>	

	to the partnership meeting for approval, which had led to confusion of what the grant limit is. It was agreed that in the interest of openness and transparency that this issue would have to be officially dealt with at the next meeting in January 2013. There is roughly £19,000 left to be allocated from the initial Grant Fund of £31,000.																			
Treasurer's Report  P Podd	<p>A statement of expenditure from the Hope Triangle project grant of £1775 was given with the following invoices being paid:</p> <table><tr><td>1. Art Therapist</td><td>430.00</td></tr><tr><td>2. Art Therapist</td><td>420.00</td></tr><tr><td>3. Hire of Room</td><td>200.00</td></tr><tr><td>4. Counsellor</td><td>40.23</td></tr><tr><td>5. Path Membrane</td><td>220.15</td></tr><tr><td>6. Plants</td><td>58.00</td></tr><tr><td>7. Transport</td><td>10.00</td></tr><tr><td>8. Book of Stamps</td><td>18.00</td></tr><tr><td><u>Total</u></td><td><u>£1,396.38</u></td></tr></table> <p>From the Community Council funds two memory sticks have been purchased at a cost of £16.98. One is for use by the Chair and the other will be held by J Napier and used for storing a backup of the material on the Community Council's website.</p> <p>The Secretary has received the sum of £120 for part payment of her broadband connection and £30 in payment for a repair to the Community Council's computer.</p> <p>Our bank balance stands at £4174.03 on 19<sup>th</sup> October. Some of the above cheques have still to be cashed.</p>	1. Art Therapist	430.00	2. Art Therapist	420.00	3. Hire of Room	200.00	4. Counsellor	40.23	5. Path Membrane	220.15	6. Plants	58.00	7. Transport	10.00	8. Book of Stamps	18.00	<u>Total</u>	<u>£1,396.38</u>	PP
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Planning Applications Report  J Napier	Other than the item already covered by Cllr Rust, there were no issues to report. See attached appendix 3 for details of applications and decisions as recorded in the weekly planning bulletins from 1 <sup>st</sup> to the 15 <sup>th</sup> October for the Firrhill Ward and notices of major developments for the City of Edinburgh.																			
Correspond/ P Wright	<p>See appendix 4 for list of correspondence received since last meeting.</p> <p>Item 3 under Correspondence Update – request for the names of the representative and substitute from the Firrhill CC to PNP sub-groups. The Chair advised that she now attended the health sub group in her new role of Community Health Worker and nominated P Podd. There being no other nominations PP was elected as the Community Council's rep for this sub group. The representatives to the PNP Sub-Groups are:</p> <table><tr><td>1. Health Community and Employment Group:</td><td>P Podd</td></tr><tr><td>2. Funding Panel:</td><td>H Levy</td></tr><tr><td>3. Environment and Transport Group:</td><td>P Wright</td></tr><tr><td>4. South West Area Board:</td><td>J Napier</td></tr><tr><td>5. Community Safety Group:</td><td>A Hunter</td></tr></table> <p>The Community Council did not agree named substitute representatives at this time.</p>	1. Health Community and Employment Group:	P Podd	2. Funding Panel:	H Levy	3. Environment and Transport Group:	P Wright	4. South West Area Board:	J Napier	5. Community Safety Group:	A Hunter									
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<b>AOCB</b>	<p><b>PW</b> – advised there were two skips in the Pavilion car park taking up three of the eight ‘legal’ spaces. The skips have been there for a few weeks with no obvious indication as to their purpose.</p> <p><b>HL</b> – noted it was the intention to hold another Health and Social Care Debate and proposed this be pencilled in for March 2013.</p> <p><b>FG</b> – noted there are a large number of one bedroom properties advertised on EdINDEX. Cllr Rust to seek statistics in terms of the number of one bedroom as opposed to two or three bedroom properties which are on EdINDEX.</p> <p><b>PW</b> – re correspondence item 28 - <i>Celebrating the work of Community Councils</i>, City Chambers, 28 November at 7 pm: H Levy, A Hunter, L Lynn will attend this event."</p>	<b>Cllr Rust to action</b>
<b>Date, Time &amp; Venue of Next Meeting</b>	<p>26<sup>th</sup> November at <b>2.30pm</b>. Members agreed to bring the time of meeting forward to enable it to be held during the daylight hours.</p> <p>The venue will be the Board Room in the Oxfangs Care Offices, 12 Firrhill 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 9pm



## Changes to Bin Collections: Update 10 October

### Green household bin collections

The vast majority of households have quickly adapted to the new fortnightly collection arrangements and the collections of these bins are running on schedule.

These changes are vital in helping us to reduce the amount we send to landfill and increasing recycling. So we are pleased that early indications show that we are heading in the right direction, with 3,399 tonnes less rubbish sent to landfill in September, compared to August. And if this trend continues then the budgeted landfill saving of £1.4m in 2012/13 will be realised.

The issues that arose initially have been focussed around the following:

- Our small refuse collection vehicle, which services harder to access locations such as some of the colonies, has experienced some delays. This route will continue to be monitored to see if it needs to be revised in order to ensure regular completion.
- Some problems with new crews locating bins on their routes but where this has occurred, we have updated our routes that same day with more accurate and detailed information.
- There have also been some missed assisted collections and wherever this has happened we will collect the bins as soon as possible. We are reminding crews to note the assisted collections listed on their routes and have extra staff checking these.

### Brown garden bin collections

There have been some delays with garden waste collections caused by seasonal high volumes of garden waste but the majority of garden waste bins are being collected on schedule.

### Food waste bin collections

In the west of the city we have added an additional route to respond to higher than anticipated levels of participation and to compensate for current delays.

The food waste collections in the east of the city have been delivered on schedule.

### Side loading bins (large on-street bins with foot pedal)

There were some delays to these collections of the new routes due in part to the crews being unfamiliar with the new routes and also because we had to adjust routes to allow for road works. However, in general, we are now collecting on schedule.

Crews are reporting higher than normal volumes of waste and a high incidence of excess waste presented around the bins. There is some evidence to suggest that residents and businesses are using these bins to dispose of waste even though they have their own collection arrangements.

### Chute fed bins, on street communal bins, developments and trade waste bins

These collections have experienced the most problems with delays and missed collections but with the help of additional contingencies are now running more frequently on their scheduled days.

These bins are often located in developments, within locked bin stores or away from the exact building address, which has posed challenges to the crews working these unfamiliar new routes in locating and accessing these bins. Where this is the case, we have added in more accurate information and ensured the right keys are available for the crews on these routes.

### Packaging Banks

There were initially some delays to collections but routes have been amended to increase capacity and these routes are operating on schedule.

### **Red and blue box collections**

These collections are carried out by Palm Recycling and have not changed frequency or day and routes have not been amended.

### **Bin deliveries**

We have good stocks of food waste bins and aim to complete all outstanding deliveries this week. Residents can now use plastic bags to line their food waste caddies. Additionally we are trialling the sale of compostable liners at the Drumbrae Hub and Blackhall library for £1 a roll. If this proves successful it will be rolled out to other libraries and neighbourhood offices.

Red and blue box orders are being delivered by our contractor, Palm Recycling, from this week at a rate of 300-500 per day. Although they had anticipated a rise in orders, the response from the public has been so positive – 6,200 requests to date – that demand had outstripped their supplies so unfortunately there has been a delay in deliveries.

## Note on the South West Area Board Meeting held 9 October 2012

### Nominations for the Position of Chair

This matter caused a bit of a stooshie at the last meeting and was deferred to allow the Partnership officers to provide clarification of the rules. What they provided was general information<sup>1</sup>, which did not resolve the matter, being more of a policy statement than rules. It does appear the Chair of the Board is traditionally an RTO Tenant and Maud Wylie<sup>2</sup> was re-elected as Chair.

Alex Paton, representing the Redhall Tenant and Resident Group proposed that the position of Chair should be for a period of not more than three years at which time the Chair must vacate the position and a new Chair appointed. Personally I am not opposed to this idea as enables the opportunity for everyone who attends these meetings to gain the experience.

What is a more pressing issue is the need for a reappraisal of the role this sub-group plays within the Partnership. It is clear a number of RTO representatives are not happy about the expanded remit of the previous Housing Area Board and the lack of rules does not assist. It is unfortunate this comes across as a prejudice against community councils and to a lesser extent, local councillors. If the people round the table cannot be accepted on an equal basis to discuss and plan developments within their remit then to my mind it is not a partnership.

Equally, it is not unreasonable for tenants in any housing organisation to want to have a say in how that organisation delivers its services. If the City Council's tenants want to have a forum or focus group that relates only to their tenancy, then perhaps there is a need for that to be separate from the Partnership and its sub-groups. This would not prevent them from making representations to any of the Partnership forums, where appropriate.

*Does the Community Council wish to discuss this and make recommendations?*

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

It was previously proposed to change the meeting day from a Tuesday to a Thursday. A decision has been achieved with SWAB meetings continuing to be held on a Tuesday.

### Minute of Previous Meeting (7 Aug 2012) and Action List

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

### Matters Arising

With regards to the proposed project 639 (**Cockmylane**), the issue of ownership of the land is still questionable but there is an general acceptance if the footpath is to be upgraded then it should be jointly funded from the Housing and Parks respective budgets. I drew their attention to Culture and Leisure's recent decision to establish a Robert Louis Stevenson day in the city calendar as an annual event celebrating the life, work and legacy of the Scottish novelist, essayist, poet and travel writer. Plans include walking tours and this pathway is part of the Stevenson Historic Walk.

The question of whether the **Spring Clean Initiatives** carried out in 2011 would be repeated in 2012 has still to be determined. Members will recall that recycling bins were located in the car park between Oxfangs Avenue and Oxfangs House for a short period of time along with a campaign to get people to recycle their rubbish.

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<sup>1</sup> see end of report

<sup>2</sup> Hailesland Neighbourhood Council

## Property Conservation – Public Consultation

This was to be a presentation from Libby Strong, Service Re-Design Manager, Services for Communities, on the public consultation carried out into *Property Conservation*. Unfortunately she was unable to attend but did provide the following information:

*“On 31 October the consultation will draw to a close. Consultation has been extensive and has included homeowners, private landlords, ETF/EPTAG, building trade companies, housing organisations, emergency services, architects, solicitors, chartered surveyors, Neighbourhood Partnerships, Community Councils and other local forums, other Council wide services. In addition to the web survey [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/propertyconsultation](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/propertyconsultation) an independent research company is hosting 6 city wide resident focus group sessions. 10% of existing service customers have been contacted in writing to invite them to participate.*

*Presentations and meetings have been progressed with a number of organisations and services and this will continue until the end of October.*

*Comms strategy has included media coverage, adverts, posters, leaflets, media blogs and other social media. This has been re-energised to highlight the midpoint stage of the consultation process and the time left to participate.*

*Consultation groups have also emailed or written to their members to raise their awareness on how to feed in views, concerns, suggestions -to support the process.*

*Analysis of information gathered will be carried out by Knowledge Partnership (independent research company) and the Research and Information Team, Corporate Governance. In view of the recent changes to governance the outcome of the consultation process will be reported to the Property Sub Committee in October/November.*

*Early indication supports a need for accessible advice and information for homeowners and the retention of an Emergency Statutory Notice/out of hours service to cope with emergency situations that pose a risk to public safety or health. A new service pilot will be set up by Spring 2013. Overall we are receiving a wealth of interest in the service re-design through all the above methods and the feedback is wide ranging.”*

Members will be aware of the media and police investigation into malpractice within the City's Property Conservation Service, which used statutory powers to carry out common repairs. As a result this department has almost shut-down, running an emergency service only and the Authority are looking at options for a new service to support homeowners to repair and maintain private buildings in shared ownership. It is due to be launched in spring 2013 and as stated above has been out for consultation with the closing date Wednesday, 31 October 2012.

Concern has to be raised at the reasons why the City Council are redesigning the service and the options available. To walk away from an essential service because of a failure on the part of some of the management and workforce to provide a proper service is a cop out on the part of the Council

The political decision to sell of Council housing stock escalated the number of private buildings in shared ownership, potentially creating an increase in the number of disputes regarding common repairs and a consequential increase in the workload of this department. There is no excuse for fraud or other dubious practices that seem to have taken place but if there was no increase in staff it is perhaps not surprising that shortcuts were taken. Irrespective it is up to the Council to sort out the Service not simply transfer it to the private sector where profit will be the guiding principle and not integrity.

If the City Council's concern is really to put in place a new service which supports the city's homeowners with repairs issues then it must be retained within the public sector, with a more robust audit/appeal system to alleviate the possibility of such problems re-occurring..

The City Council's options are:

### **Property Factoring**

*Property factors are appointed by the homeowners to manage and repair common areas of shared property.*

*The Council could either provide this service or arrange for a private company to provide the service. Property factors are governed by the Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2011 and must follow a code of conduct. A factoring service requires all owners in a building to sign-up.*

### **Sample inspections**

*The Council would carry out a proactive programme of inspections of Listed Buildings on the risk register to identify essential repairs and notify owners of these. This option would help to ensure public safety and safeguard the city's architectural heritage.*

### **Tenement Management Scheme**

*The 2004 Tenement (Scotland) Act allows homeowners to manage common repairs where management of common areas is not clear in their title deeds. Advice and assistance would be available to guide homeowners wishing to use this scheme. The Council already uses the scheme for maintenance work in areas of where there is a mix of Council and privately-owned properties.*

### **Project management**

*The Council would provide homeowners with project management support for common repairs including preparing tenders, completing the work and recovering costs.*

The City Council also intends to keep a 24/7 emergency service, which plays an important role in maintaining public safety and responding to emergency situations, and carry out a full review of the advice available from the Council. They maintain that whichever of the above options are chosen, they will ensure the service is supported by strict guidelines on financial management and customer care.

### **Area Walkabout**

On the 4<sup>th</sup> October I attended a walkabout with Cllr Aitken, B Brand and three Council officers in the Firrhill Drive, Colinton Mains Park and Oxfords drive area. A report of the issues raised will be attached to this note.

*Jim Napier*

18 October 2012

## The South West Area Board General Information

### Background:

The SWAB is the former Housing Area Board, which has expanded its remit to reflect the wider role of SfC. The Chair of the Board is traditionally an RTO tenant. While the Vice Chair role is open to any member including individuals (Excluding Officers & Elected Members)

### Remit & priorities:

The Area Board core business includes Environmental Projects, Landlord Performance/ Housing Activity and Communication. A standing rotating agenda divides each meeting into Neighbourhood Environment Projects (NEP's) and landlord issues and performance. The local community plan actions for the Board in the next three years are:

- *Involve local communities through consultation in the development of future homes build through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Homes initiative.*
- *Work with local colleges and universities to better integrate students living in the community, raising awareness of local community concerns about homes of multiple occupation*
- *Work with partner agencies to improve quality of life for residents through tackling antisocial behaviour and noise levels in tenements with mixed occupation.*
- *Develop joint projects to improve open spaces surrounding housing build areas improving the environment and developing green spaces for community use.*

### Role of the Board Chair

The term "Area Board" is used to refer to the core membership of representatives from RTO groups, community councils and elected members that forms the South West Area Board, excluding substitutes and other parties present (i.e. SW staff members or other agency officials in attendance at any one time).

The role of the Chair is to provide effective leadership and ensure the Board members discuss, agree or recommend future direction on core Area Board business. The Chair of the Area Board is responsible for:

- *Finalising the agenda with the Partnership Development Officers;*
- *Ensuring meetings start on time and proceed according to the agenda and relevant meeting regulations;*
- *Ensuring that all decisions and actions are clear and understood by the Board members;*
- *Ensuring that members know and adhere to the Code of Conduct;*

*Note: The final section of this General Information paper, headed "Role of Board Members", has been omitted to avoid going on to another page as it was not relevant to the issue under discussion*

## Weekly Planning Bulletin Report for October Meeting

### 01 October 2012

No applications for Ward 08 – Firrhill CC

#### **Proposal of Application Notices for the City of Edinburgh:**

Ward No.07 – Sighthill Gorgie: Proposal of Application 12/03371/PAN for a proposed residential development at Oaklands Special School, 40 Broomhouse Crescent, Edinburgh, EH11 3UB.

**Decision** on application (12/02805/FUL) to erect an extension to side/front of house, porch and conservatory to rear, convert existing attic space at 116 Oxfords Road, Edinburgh, EH10 7AZ has been granted.

### 08 October 2012

No applications or decisions for Ward 08 – Firrhill CC

No Proposal of Application Notices for the City of Edinburgh

### 15 October 2012

No applications or decisions for Ward 08 – Firrhill CC.

#### **Proposal of Application Notices for the City of Edinburgh:**

Ward 07 – Sighthill/Gorgie : 12/03371/PAN for a proposed residential development at Oaklands Special School, 40 Broomhouse Crescent, Edinburgh, EH11 3UB

Ward 11 – City Centre : the following World Heritage and Old Town Conservation Area sites: -

12/03619/PAN : Section 42 application to vary condition 1 of Planning Permission 07/00101/FUL to extend time period for commencement of development (PA2) at land adjacent to New Street (Former Bus Depot) Edinburgh.

12/03620/PAN : Section 42 application to vary condition 1 of Planning Permission 07/01287/FUL to extend time period for commencement of development (PA3) at land adjacent to New Street, 221, 223 Canongate, Edinburgh.

12/03621/PAN : Section 42 application to vary condition 1 of Planning Permission 07/04400/FUL to extend time period for commencement of development (PA4A) at land adjacent to New Street, 221, 223 Canongate, Edinburgh.

12/03622/PAN : Section 42 application to vary condition 1 of Planning Permission 07/01237/FUL to extend time period for commencement of development (PA5) at land adjacent to New Street, 2, 4, 5 New Street, 223, 227, 229, 231 Canongate, Edinburgh.

12/03623/PAN : Section 42 application to vary condition 1 of Planning Permission 07/01288/FUL to extend time period for commencement of development (PA6) at CEC Depot, East Market Street, Cranston Street, Edinburgh.

12/03624/PAN : Redevelopment/demolition/erection of buildings for mixed use development including potential residential; office; hotel; class 1,2,3 commercial; leisure; and/or community uses and other associated uses and works at land adjacent to New Street, 2, 4, 5 New Street, 221, 223, 227, 231 Canongate, land at East Market Street, 5A-24A Cranston Street, 1-15 East Market Street, Edinburgh.

12/03625/PAN : Section 42 application to vary condition 1 of Planning Permission 07/01241/FUL to extend time period for commencement of development (PA7) at land at East Market Street, 1-15 East Market Street, 5A-24 Cranston Street, Edinburgh.

12/03627/PAN Section 42 application to vary certain pre-commencement conditions attached to planning permission 07/00101/FUL to allow phased implementation of consent - Condition 3 (Archaeology) and Condition 5 (Boundary Treatment and Footway Details) at land adjacent to New Street (Former Bus Depot), Edinburgh.

12/03629/PAN Section 42 application to vary certain pre-commencement conditions attached to Planning Permission 07/01287/FUL to allow phased implementation of consent - Condition 2 (Archaeology); Condition 4 (Sustainability Management System); Condition 6 (Construction Details); Condition 7 (Sustainability Management System); and Condition 21 (Boundary Treatments) at land adjacent to New Street, 221, 223 Canongate, Edinburgh.

12/03631/PAN : Section 42 application to vary certain pre-commencement conditions attached to Planning Permission 07/04400/FUL to allow phased implementation of consent - Condition 2 (Archaeology); Condition 4 (Sustainability Management System); and Condition 17 (Boundary Treatments) at land adjacent to New Street, 221, 223 Canongate, Edinburgh.

## 22 October 2012

No applications or decisions for Ward 08 – Firrhill CC.

### **Proposal of Application Notices for the City of Edinburgh:**

Ward 07 – Sighthill/Gorgie: 12/03473/PAN - Non-compliance with conditions on hours of deliveries and collections at 10-12 Inglis Green Road, Edinburgh, EH14 2ER.

Ward 17 – Portobello/Craigmillar: 12/03691/PAN for a proposed residential development at 171, 173 Duddingston Park South, Edinburgh, EH15 3EG.

**Decision:** On application 12/02847/PNT which relates to an upgrading of the telecommunications apparatus at 2 Oxfangs Bank, Edinburgh, EH13 9JT. This is a permitted development.



Firrhill Community Council Correspondence: 25 September – 18 October, 2012

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

- 1 Oxfangs Library new w/e opening hours: Sat 10am-5pm; Sun 1pm-5pm. For all opening hours, visit your local library; visit [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/libraries) or Tel: 0131-200 2000
- 2 Cllr Elaine Aitken: reply to Sec's e-mail re unlocked gate and lack of maintenance at Braid Burn bridle path (she and Cllr Jason Rust will action).
- 3 Sarah Boyack MSP: e-newsletter for September.
- 4 f by H Levy: free Stress Control Course in 2013 (6 wks) at Meggetland. Details: 0131-537 6918 or e-mail [Ronnie.Menzies@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:Ronnie.Menzies@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk)
- 5 Council Licensing Board, for 29 Oct meeting: Variation of Premises Licence Applications and New Premises Applications.
- 6 f by E Hewitt: free Public Seminar, Planning Issues Event (Edinburgh Active Citizenship Group) 24 Oct, 7-9 pm, City Chambers: 'Who is Edinburgh for?'; 'How can Communities have more influence on decisions made?'.
- 7 Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust: 'Fungi Foray', 10 Nov, in Edinburgh. Details at 0131-445 4025, or e-mail [ruth@elgt.org.uk](mailto:ruth@elgt.org.uk)
- 8 Gordon MacDonald MSP: press release re Breast Cancer Campaign's 10<sup>th</sup> yr. Friday 26 October is 'Wear it Pink' Day; £2 donation requested from everyone who does this.
- 9 Message through Firrhill CC's website from Live UnLtd Development Manager, Scotland, re awards & support to 11-21 yr-olds to start social projects/enterprises to improve their area [e-mail forwarded to H Levy, and Cllr Elaine Aitken, overseeing youth engagement in this community].
- 10 Graham Budd, SW Office, re possible practical session for CCs on use of social media to engage with local residents [Firrhill CC is already on Facebook & Twitter].
- 11 Gordon MacDonald MSP: People's Postcode Lottery Newsletter, Autumn '12.
- 12 f by E Hewitt from Cllr Lesley Hinds: update on trams project's progress.
- 13 E Hewitt: Community Council short-life working group's final report and recommendations. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/local-government/CommunityCouncils/CCShortLifeWorkingGroup>
- 14 Cllr Jason Rust, and Gordon MacDonald MSP, re high hedges: Bill introduced to Scottish Pmnt so that disputes can be sorted out more readily, with more assistance from Scot. Gov. Constituents can make their views known: tel. Gordon on 0131-466 5810.
- 15 Bill Hannah: final draft version of Oxfangs Community Map.
- 16 Gordon MacDonald MSP is on board for tax justice, and to fight aggressive tax avoidance, with Christian Aid & Church Action on Poverty. Tick for Justice @ [www.christianaid.org.uk/tax-bus](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/tax-bus)
- 17 Scottish Water's Winter Code: simple steps to be prepared – heating, insulating, protecting pipes; advertising this on TV, posters, leaflets [also on Firrhill CC's website]
- 18 Gorgie Dalry CC Sec. complaining about the many marketing e-mails being received by her CC, leading to responses from many other CC Secretaries with the same complaint. [Eileen Hewitt has contacted the Council's Information Security Manager for advice on dealing with this problem.]
- 19 E Hewitt re new Petitions Committee: individuals, community groups and local businesses are being given a voice to influence Council decisions in the city; allows people to raise issues of public concern and gives Councillors the opportunity to consider a need for change. They can not consider matters currently at a Council Committee, or in a work programme – or a Council Committee

decision made in previous six months. Online petitions: [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/petitions](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/petitions) or enquiries: [petitions@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:petitions@edinburgh.gov.uk) Forms can be collected at local libraries and Council offices.

**20** Capita's Welfare Reform Scotland Conference, 29 Oct, George Hotel. Info from Catherine Kennedy on 0207-202 0557 or e-mail [conference.events@capita.co.uk](mailto:conference.events@capita.co.uk)

**21** Cllr Jason Rust re setting up meeting with FCC reps and local HMO applicant.

**22** Scott Neill: sources of funding for young people's projects (up to end Oct). Access free on-line database of funding sources, using a library number to log in:  
<http://www.open4community.info/edinburgh/Default.aspx>

**23** Council Waste Services Manager: apology for any problems experienced by residents during changes to bin collections. Any comments on issues (with full details): Tel 0131-529 3030, or e-mail [waste@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:waste@edinburgh.gov.uk) [You can also use these contacts for new bins/recycling boxes.]

**24** Capital's 'Public Service Reform Scotland' Conference, 31 Oct, George Hotel. For more info 'phone Richard Goddard on 0207-960 7719.

**25** Edinburgh Leisure News (a) Launch of High Flyers: new programme of disability sport for under 18s (funded by City Council), Sat 27 Oct, 10am-1pm, Meadowbank Sports Centre. For programme details: Heather Williams, 0131-458 2150. (b) Sports & Physical Activity Development Plan to get more people more active in next three years: Lisa Hunter or James Brandon, 0131-458 2162.

**26** Oxfangs Library: BBC Radio Scotland recording Brian Taylor's Big Debate, 7 Dec, noon-1pm.

**27** Eileen Hewitt: Scottish Gov has begun work on 3<sup>rd</sup> National Planning Framework (NPF3) and a review of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). Details can be found at [www.scotland.gov.uk/npf3](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/npf3) and [www.scotland.gov.uk/planning/spp](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/planning/spp)

**28** E Hewitt: Community Councils Newsletter for Oct. + details of Council event in City Chambers: 'Celebrating the work of Community Councils', 28 Nov, 6.30 for 7pm.

**29** Craigleith/Blackhall CC Sec. re people outwith their CC area wanting to attend their meetings; asking other CC Secretaries if they have had this experience, and whether there is any ruling on it.

**30** Cllr Richard Lewis's apologies: unable to attend our meeting on Mon 22 Oct.

**31** Oxfangs Library: talk/presentation by David Peat, photographer, 28 Oct at 2.30pm.

#### By Post

**1** 'Working Capital', Sept 2012

**2** Letter from Project Officer (Maintenance), Services for Communities, in answer to Sec's e-mail query re Braid Burn: the Flood Inspection Team inspects banking & wall defences bi-annually, and Bridges Team all bridges at least every two years (extra inspection if damage reported). A copy of the most recent inspection (April/May 2012) is enclosed: small amount of erosion found on banking at Colinton Mains Park stretch. Also, trees and bushes overhanging burn at Colinton Mains/Firrhill/Oxfangs to be cut back.

#### Update: 19 – 22 Oct

1. HMO for 12 Firrhill Crescent (Colinton Mains House): 7 tenants / 7 bedrooms

2. EACC Secretary: Question Time, Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November, 10am to 1pm, European Room, City Chambers.

3. Scott Neill: request for CC rep and substitute rep for each PNP sub group.

4. Scott Neill: papers for EIT group meeting, Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2.30pm.