

DAVIDSON'S MAINS & SILVERKNOWES ASSOCIATION

Management Committee Meeting 13 June at 6.45 pm in Davidson's Mains Primary School

1. Apologies: Judith Lowther, Gordon McGregor, Ellen Searle, Karen Dallas

Charlotte reported that Judith had tendered her resignation as she was moving out of the area. On behalf of the committee Rod expressed thanks to Judith for her contribution to the work of the Association and wished her every good fortune for the future.

2. Present: Rod Alexander, Charlotte Cowe, Laura Thomson, Brian Flanagan, Carolyn Williams, Tim Mitchell, Seonaidh Edgar, Coll Gardner, Craig Duncan.

Rod was pleased to welcome Craig as a new member of the committee.

In attendance: Cllrs. Graham Hutchison, Kevin Lang and Louise Young; Sergeant Richard Holmwood for the Police Report. It was the first meeting for each of the Councillors and Rod congratulated them on each being elected for the first time to represent Almond Ward.

3.1 .Minutes: The minutes of the May meeting were approved.

3.2 .On-going and Recurring Issues Logs – to note

Rod tabled the On-going issues log which had no changes from the previous meeting. One item on the log, HGV's on Main Street was on the Agenda for discussion at the meeting but had been retained on the log because the matter was ongoing and would require future discussion.

Tim tabled the Recurring issues log which had been updated to record two items. Firstly, safety concerns on the shared footpath for cyclists and pedestrians on Barnton Avenue at the junction with Cramond Road South, and secondly to provide an update on safety concerns for cyclists and pedestrians on the path between Cramond Road South and Silverknowes Terrace where access protection markings had been painted at the Silverknowes Terrace end of the path but suggested segregation had been declined by the Council.

3.3 .Matters arising (excluding items scheduled for later discussion)

3a. Re-Cycling Bins at Tesco

The committee expressed concern that the promise of a second waste paper bin for the site and an assurance of fortnightly collections had not materialised and it was agreed to write to the Council to ask when the situation would be rectified.

3b. Street Lights on Ferry Road

It was noted that the problem of the large conifers in private property at Silverknowes Neuk which were preventing access to street lighting columns on Ferry Road remained unresolved. The committee acknowledged that the situation had become less serious with the longer daylight hours but were worried that the situation was dragging on and might not be resolved before the start of winter when darkness and road safety would again be a serious issue. In view of these concerns it was agreed to write to the Locality Environment and Transport Manager to seek assurances that appropriate priority was being given to having the street lights repaired before the autumn.

3c. Overgrown Hedge at Main Street

Following discussion it was agreed that the hawthorn hedge at the east end of Main Street did not present an obstruction to the footpath at present but its growth would be monitored over the summer.

4. Correspondence

Charlotte confirmed that all correspondence received had been circulated or would be referred to under agenda items.

5. Reports

5a. Police Report

Sergeant Richard Homewood, Local Area Sergeant, was welcomed to the committee to give the verbal report for May. Sergeant Homewood advised that there had been a significant increase in housebreakings in the area during the month, and it had been a particular problem in the Barnton Avenue / East Barnton Avenue area. He had a concern that some of the incidents had been helped by property not being properly secured and stressed the need for vigilance with regard to keeping doors locked and windows secure. The committee agreed to help by publishing a police notice on the notice board and website with a security message from the police. Sergeant Holmwood confirmed that some arrests had been made and that positive lines of enquiry for some of the incidents were being pursued but it was important for residents to advise the police of anything that they thought was suspicious. In response to questions Sergeant Holmwood confirmed that the police are supportive in principle of CCTV on domestic premises and that it is perfectly legal to record images of anti-social behaviour or anything relevant to reporting possible criminal activity in a public place.

5b. Treasurer's Report

In Gordon's absence Rod reported that the balance in the account was £5833, with the increase reflecting membership subscriptions received over the past month. Payments were still being received although bills for the hire of the hall for the AGM and for printing of the May Newsletter had still to be paid.

5c. Community Safety Forum

Tim again advised that the Forum remains in abeyance pending a review of restructuring within the council. He gave an update on the work of the separate Almond Community Safety Panel and its role in co-ordinating Neighbourhood Watch activities and links with the Police. In the absence of the Forum the Panel was providing a useful vehicle for discussion with the Police about local priorities and concerns about crime and anti social behaviour.

5d. Health & Community Care Sub Group

As with other sub groups, it was noted the sub group remained in abeyance pending completion of an on-going review into the role of the Neighbourhood Partnerships and the sub committees.

6. Planning issues

6a. 40 Barnton Avenue

It was noted that the applications to demolish the property and to build a new development on the site had now each had been formally withdrawn.

7. Almond Neighbourhood Partnership

The committee discussed the current situation regarding the Almond Partnership. It had not met for about three months and no date for a future meeting had been set. The future of the partnerships had been under review for several months and it was clear no decisions on the future were likely until after decisions had first been taken on the revised council structure based around the four locality model. Kevin explained the background from a Council perspective and indicated that he understood that a further meeting of the Neighbourhood Partnership Boards was being planned to provide feed back on the future structure and role of the Locality Committees. Rod stated that whatever the situation the lack of information had created a void which was generating all sorts of rumour about the future and at the very least it would be helpful to have some kind of statement from the Locality Manager on the current status of the process. The Councillors were each asked to play their parts in keeping the committee advised. On another matter, Rod advised the committee there had still not been any feed back on the meeting in April to discuss the outcome of the consultation on the Locality Improvement Plan and he would raise this matter with the Locality Manager.

8. Local Action List

The committee considered an updated and revised Action List which had previously been circulated by Rod for comment. It was noted that one item, renewal of faded road markings at the junction of Barnton Avenue and East Barnton Avenue had been added to the list to avoid any ambiguity. The white lining was to be done after road re-surfacing which was subject to a separate roads and footpaths repair list yet to be finalised but it was accepted it was better to keep the problem of the road markings separately identified. Rod made it clear that a separate list of road and footpath repairs would be produced once the forward programme for 2018 onwards had been approved by the Council. It was currently delayed by the Council Elections and the delay in forming an administration. It was agreed the Action List would be forwarded to the Locality Transport and Environment Manager for comment and would then be displayed on the notice board for information, in line with commitments made in the newsletter and at the AGM.

9. Road and Footpath Maintenance

Rod suggested it would be best to defer publicising the 2017/18 programme for road and footpath repairs until information was available for the two subsequent years. It was possible some projects which were not on the programme for the current financial year and which the committee expected should be given priority may be on the list for the next two years and it would make sense to consider the full picture before making comment to the Council. This was particularly the case regarding footpath maintenance with no local footpaths scheduled for re-surfacing in 2017/18. The committee supported this position.

10. Christmas Lights 2017 Event

The committee discussed at some length the fall out from cancellation of the 2016 Christmas Lights programme and the implications for planning an event for 2017. Despite a number of uncertainties and potential difficulties the committee were fully resolved to do their best to support an event in 2017. It was clear that while the Council might be prepared to support and finance a single decorative tree at a location in the village (either a decorated tree or a stand alone Christmas tree) if decorative lights were to be provided on Main Street there was no doubt the cost would have to be covered locally without Council support. The reaction from local residents to the cancellation of the 2016 event and the response to requests for support following the newsletter had indicated there was likely to be sufficient support for a campaign to have lights for 2017 and a switch –on event, which would be dependent on some form of lights being provided. The committee then considered the position with each of these elements.

(a). Decorative tree. The Council had suggested in writing to the Association that they may be prepared to fund a decorative tree in the village on public ground for the festive period in 2017. The committee had doubts about the restriction to council land as being one of the necessary criteria, given the problem of finding an appropriate location, but hoped that if necessary as an alternative a decorated Christmas tree would be an option at a suitable location in the village. Clarification was needed on assurances about funding and exactly what the Council would pay for as well as further discussion on a location should the funding be available. The funding issue would be pursued immediately with the Council to seek clarification.

(b). Lights on Main Street. Craig explained to the committee that he was particularly keen to get involved in ensuring there were decorative lights on Main Street for 2017 and was willing to take responsibility for fundraising to purchase new light fittings and cover the resources to mount and de-mount them for the festive period. He advised that a local electrical contractor was willing to give support and that he himself was prepared to make a donation to the fund from his own business. He hoped other businesses who had an interest in seeing the village have festive lights would also be prepared to contribute. It was agreed that matters such as approval and clearance for access to the Council Lighting infrastructure, public liability and personal injury insurance as well as costs would have to be clarified and these matters would be pursued.

(c). Switch –On Event. Following the cancellation of the 2016 event representatives from both Davidson's Mains Primary School and the RHS choirs had expressed disappointment and had indicated a desire to get involved if it a switch –on event could be reinstated in future years . This had been followed by responses to our newsletter, one from a representative of the Guides and Beavers who wanted to get involved and some from local residents who wanted to help. It was agreed the committee would take steps to set up a meeting between interested parties with a view to forming a local working group.

11. AGM Review

The general consensus of the committee was that the AGM and Public meeting had been a success but that the Q&A session had been more subdued than in recent years. There were a number of factors for this related to two main items taking up much of the time with input from the police and the Locality Manager but it was accepted that in principle those present had insufficient time to raise other local issues. It was agreed that steps would be considered to reduce the time taken for the completion of the formal part of next years AGM and also whether the time available on the evening should be increased. It was also recognised that there was a case for including a presentation on a local interest topic to contrast and compliment discussion on the usual topics of local complaint.

12. Membership

Rod and Charlotte provided an update on membership numbers following the AGM. The start point for the renewal exercise had been 255 names on the database and the aim would be to try to maintain numbers at around 250. With applications still being received it looked like the initial response to invitations to renew had been in line with expectations from previous years and it was agreed reminder letters would be sent at the beginning of July.

13. Newsletter Review

The committee reviewed the recent newsletter and it was noted that the general feed back appeared to have been positive. The consensus was that the decision to incur the cost of using a separate insert for membership information to provide additional space for news items had been fully justified and would be considered for next year.

14. Litter problem in the area

The committee discussed this problem against the back ground of an increase in the numbers of complaints from local residents and it was agreed to pursue a number of actions after school pupils had returned following the summer holidays. It was acknowledged that the Headteacher of the RHS appeared to be cognisant of the problem and that Tesco were acting responsibly in keeping their grounds clean and tidy but it was agreed that after the summer the school, local fast food outlets, and the Council wardens would each be contacted to try seek actions to improve the situation .It was noted that Tim was already in communication with the Head Teacher from the RHS and the outcome would feed into the actions after the summer.

15. Open Space Maintenance Policy

15 a. Davidson's Mains Park

The committee expressed concern that the area of grass to be closely trimmed had not yet been extended in line with a recent agreement with the Council. It was agreed contact would be made with the officer concerned to check the current intentions and to press the case for the change to be implemented as soon as possible.

15b. Silverknowes Foreshore

Charlotte reported that a meeting had been arranged at the Beach Walk Café with a research group who were consulting on developing a long term vision for promoting the Edinburgh Shoreline from Queensferry to Eastfield and who wanted to hear the ideas of local community groups. It would be an opportunity for the committee to promote our vision about enhancing the Silverknowes shoreline for recreation and leisure use. The opportunity would be taken at the meeting to check the implementation of extended grass cutting which had been agreed to meet the needs of those using the area around the café.

16. Problem of Heavy Goods Vehicles

The committee further discussed the problem of infringements by commercial vehicles of the 10 metre length restriction at the junction of Lauriston Farm Road/Cramond Road South and the 7.5 ton weight limit on Main Street. There had been a number of recent examples of each which suggested the restrictions were being contravened on a regular basis and it was agreed it would help the campaign to have better enforcement if the committee had statistics for a full working day. A number of members of the committee indicated their willingness to participate in surveys at each location and it was decided these would be set up for August after the trade's holidays. There were a number of suggested actions, including a review of the 10 metre length limit at the junction to seek to have it reduced but it was recognised that any such review should await the outcome of the awaited report by Road Traffic Consultants into road traffic on Lauriston Farm Road.

17. Vivian Terrace Street Play Event

The committee discussed the recent Street Play event which had taken place at only a few days notice for residents and with no prior consultation, in contradiction with the Council's published guidelines for planning these events. The committee re-iterated their position that agreement around these events was a matter for local residents but considered that it is essential that residents affected by any scheme should be properly consulted. The Association had received a number of complaints and it was agreed to write to the Council to complain about the failure to operate to the guidelines.

18. Withdrawal of 32 and 42 bus services

It was noted that the committee had still not received a substantive reply to the complaint to Lothian Buses about the withdrawal of the 32 and 42 bus services from Davidson's Mains and a reminder would be sent. Rod reported that separately he had attended a meeting with Barnton and Cramond CC and Alex Cole Hamilton MSP to discuss the complaints. The 32 and 42 changes were linked to the introduction of the 200 Airport bus and Alex Cole Hamilton had accepted that he had not anticipated the linkage and viewed the linked changes as an unintended and unfortunate consequence. It was clear that the fact the 200 was partly subsidised by Edinburgh Airport had resulted in the withdrawal of the non subsidised 32 which competed for passengers on part of the route. The MSP had undertaken to organise a meeting with the Chief Executive of Lothian Buses to discuss the problems for local residents at which the DMSA and Barnton and Cramond CC would be represented.

19. Facebook page for DMSA

The committee discussed the current situation and it was agreed to give priority to get it up and running by September.

20. AOCB.

a. The committee discussed the problem of the responsibility of weeds on pavements at the curtilage of properties, a matter which was the subject of increasing numbers of complaints. It was noted that the current policy regarding the treatment of weeds in the public realm was the subject of recent enquiries to the Council and the matter was carried forward.

b. The committee discussed the problem of vehicles speeding on Silverknowes Road, a recurring theme over recent times. As with current concerns with speeding at other locations in the local area it was decided to wait until the roll out of 20 mph speed limits had been introduced (scheduled for our area by August) and the effectiveness could be assessed before taking this further.

c. Rod reported that concerns raised by residents in response to BT Openreach re-marking the original site for the proposed broadband box at The Green had been resolved. He had received assurances from BT that the box would be installed on the revised site as agreed with the DMSA and in line with the wishes of the residents. It appeared that there had been an administrative misunderstanding between BT and their contractor over the markings.

**21. Date of Next Meeting 19 September 2017 6.45 pm in Davidson's Mains Primary School
(to be confirmed).**