

DAVIDSON'S MAINS & SILVERKNOWES ASSOCIATION
Management Committee Meeting 10 October at 6.45 pm in Davidson's Mains Primary School

- 1. Apologies:** Cllrs. Kevin Lang, Louise Young; Sgt. Richard Homewood (for police report).
 - 2. Present:** Rod Alexander (Chair), Charlotte Cowe (Secretary), Brian Flanagan, Seonaidh Edgar, Gordon McGregor, Ellen Searle, Coll Gardner, Tim Mitchell, Laura Thomson.
- In attendance:** Cllr. Graham Hutchison.
- 3.1 Minutes:** The Minutes of the September Meeting were approved subject to a couple of amendments to the draft following discussion.
 - 3.2 Ongoing and Recurring Issues Logs – to note**
Rod tabled the Ongoing issues log to which two items had been added following decisions at the September meeting ; speeding traffic on Silverknowes Road, and ground maintenance policy relating to Davidson's Mains Park and Silverknowes Foreshore. Tim confirmed that there were no additions to the Recurring issues log from the previous month. The content of both logs was noted.
 - 3.3 Matters arising** (excluding items scheduled for later discussion)
 - 3a. Recycling Bins at Tesco**
The committee were concerned to note that there had still not been any progress on the provision of a second waste paper bin on the site nor had fortnightly uplifts been introduced despite previous promises by the Council. The committee were aware that Kevin had been pursuing complaints about the site but the situation was becoming increasingly unacceptable and it was decided to make a further complaint to the Transport and Environment Convenor and also to discuss the matter with Kevin so that all our complaints were co-ordinated.
 - 3b. Street Lights on Ferry Road at Silverknowes Neuk .**
It was noted there had not been any further communication from the Locality Transport and Environment Manager regarding the problem of inoperable street lights at Ferry Road at Silverknowes Neuk to which access for repair could not be attained because of overgrown conifer trees in private property. He had been reminded of the significant safety issues arising from reducing daylight hours and it was decided that Charlotte would write again to request some action.
 - 3c. Vivian Terrace Play Event**
Rod provided an update regarding the Review by the Council into the Street Play Schemes held across the city over the summer. The DMSA had now made a formal submission regarding the Vivian Terrace event, as approved at the September meeting. Having made that submission we were then contacted by residents of Silverknowes Gardens who made very similar complaints about the role of the Council and we had then been obliged to make a further submission relating to Silverknowes Gardens. Rod said that he understood that the Council were aiming to complete their review in time for a full report to the full Council meeting in February 2018 and the plan would be for the committee to review the situation in the light of that report.
As a recent development, Ellen had received a representation from the organiser of the event in Vivian Terrace who considered that he/she had been unfairly represented by the Association in that efforts had been made to communicate with all the residents in Vivian Terrace in advance of the event. Rod acknowledged that our reference to absolutely no engagement having taken place was clearly not correct in the light of this new information and he would make that clear to the Council. It was important for us to make a correct representation of the facts, although the whole thrust of our criticism was against the Council and not against the organisers of these events.
 - 3d. Bus Engines Idling Outside the Primary School.**
Norman had undertaken to pursue the replacement of missing signage outside the primary school warning against the practice of bus drivers being parked with the bus engines idling. In view of Norman's non attendance at the meeting the matter was carried over for him to provide an update on progress.

4. Correspondence

Charlotte confirmed that all material correspondence had been previously circulated or would be referred to under the relevant agenda item.

5. Reports

5a Police Report

Charlotte advised that Sgt. Richard Homewood had sent apologies for the non-attendance of the police due to operational requirements. He had stated he would provide a written report to be read out to the committee but this had not been received. Charlotte undertook to follow the matter up to see if the report could still be provided, and if one was received she would pass the information on in a format which was suitable to the Police.

5b. Treasurer's Report

Gordon reported the balance of the account to be £5740.60. There were no immediate financial matters to discuss.

6. Planning issues

6a. New Building at Davidson's Mains Primary School

The committee discussed the planning application for a development to increase the capacity and improve the facilities at the local primary school and were fully supportive of the proposals. It was understood the plans had been developed in full consultation with professionals and parents from the school. The Association had received a request from the Parent Council to write to the Council in support of the proposals and would be very pleased to do so.

7. Almond Neighbourhood Partnership

The committee again discussed the review which was being undertaken into the future role of Locality Boards and the future continuation of the Neighbourhood Partnerships, for which the outlook at present was uncertain. Graham explained that there had been some quite fundamental differences of opinion between the political groups in each of the Localities about the future structures which had resulted in a need to re-state the main principles and priorities. Rod once again stated that the whole future of how the DMSA engaged with the North West Team and the local Councillors was dependent on the outcome of the review.

8. Local Action List

The committee further discussed problems with the extensive delays to projects on the Action List and Rod confirmed that the review of our priorities, as requested by the Locality Transport and Environment Manager, would be completed shortly. On a positive note, the committee welcomed the fact that white lining at the junction of East Barnton Avenue with Barnton Avenue, and road markings on Corbiehill Road in the vicinity of the primary school, had each been completed following complaints by residents about safety.

9. Road and Footpath Maintenance

The committee accepted that for the present this item should be transferred to the ongoing issues log, with the intention that the future programme should be reviewed again in the lead up to next year's Council budget process.

10. Remembrance Day

Charlotte confirmed that everything was in hand for the Armistice Day Service on 12th November which this year would be officiated by the Very Rev. Russell Barr. Strong support from the local Youth Groups again looks assured and it would be the intention to publicise the event shortly.

11. Newsletter

It was agreed that the Autumn Newsletter would be scheduled for printing around the 13th November, with deliveries being over the week-end of the 18th /19th. This timetable would be ideal for promoting the Christmas Lights Event with it being highly probable that the Newsletter would contain a separate flyer from the Christmas Lights Group.

12. Christmas Lights 2017 Event

Rod advised on progress in relation to the event.

12.1 Decorated Tree at RBS corner. The Council have now confirmed in writing that they will dress the Oak Tree outside the former RBS premises at the corner of Main Street and Cramond Road South. Rod said that he had been advised that the work had been scheduled for 20th October.

12.2 Mounting of Motifs on Lampposts on Main Street. The committee had been kept fully advised

on the situation regarding the options for alternative contracts for the provision of motifs for this year, a situation which had been thrown into confusion and uncertainty by an absurdly late decision by the Council to re-instate budget cuts and provide motifs themselves for this year, only 48 hours in advance of the DMSA having to meet a contract deadline. The decision, with the commitment for only one year had far reaching implications for future planning and funding of the Lights and strong complaints had been made to the Council. For this year the Council would be providing 13 motifs, the same number as in 2015, to be mounted and de-mounted by a Council Contractor, who would also provide support for the Switch –On event .

12.3 Switch-on Event. Rod, Charlotte and Ellen provided feedback on planning for a Switch-On Event which had been fixed for Friday 1st December to suit the Davidson's Mains Primary School Choir. A very productive meeting had been held with representatives from the local youth organisations, the schools, the local nursery and some residents who had all previously expressed an interest in supporting Lights in the village and a Switch On Event. There was strong enthusiasm for a Switch–on event this year and to organise a properly constituted Christmas Lights Committee for future years, including assuming all the responsibilities for fund raising to purchase new lights. Rod said that for this year the DMSA would undertake all the responsibilities for dealing with the Council, the Police, the Contractors and any other necessary formalities. The DMSA would act in an advisory capacity to help, but had no wish to interfere in the planning for the event which would be the responsibility of the Christmas Lights Group. This position had been welcomed by the group. Ellen had been keen to get involved with the group as a resident and parent and she had previously circulated the committee with a summary of all the ideas being considered for the switch-on event. The group were to have a follow up meeting in a few days time after which firmer plans would be drawn up and more detailed information would be available. The committee fully supported these developments, including whatever financial support was needed for this year.

13. Facebook page for DMSA

The committee discussed the importance of progressing with the Facebook page, not least with the purpose of linking it up to a fundraising facility for the Christmas Lights Fund. The current position was that Laura had set it up on restricted access and it was agreed she would make it live and then transfer the management of the page to Ellen who had agreed to take it over. It was agreed to wait to see how it developed before taking steps to link it to other facilities. The committee welcomed the fact we had been offered advice by a contact at the RHS and by Graham when it was needed.

14. Vehicle Length Limit Infringements on Lauriston Farm Road

Charlotte provided the committee with an update on progress following the successful monitoring exercise which had been undertaken by the committee on 21 August to identify transgressions of the vehicle length limit on Lauriston Farm Road. Of the 11 instances identified at the time, there had been positive responses from eight of the companies, with undertakings by the managements to make sure their drivers were advised of the restriction and also that they would be instructed to use the recommended route via Telford Road. Two companies had now been referred to the police, one because the company would need to be identified from vehicle registration records and another because the company had not responded to any communications from the Association, including a recorded delivery letter. One company had advised that the length of its vehicle had been just with the limit and it was agreed Charlotte would write to them to ask if they would consider using the recommended route for industrial vehicles via Telford Road.

The committee resolved to undertake a follow up survey in due course and also repeated a commitment to undertake a similar survey regarding the weight restriction on Main Street.

15. Silverknowes Roundabout

The Committee discussed the recently notified changes to the design of the roundabout in response to complaints from Spokes and the cycling lobby. The changes involved the removal of the cycle lane on the roundabout and diversion of the cycle route to the north of the bus stop on Silverknowes Parkway to avoid potential conflict with bus movements at the stop. A further change was the extension of the kerb line at the entrance to Lauriston Farm Road to improve the line of sight for drivers having visibility of pedestrians about to cross the road, with the consequential replacement of the previous central island reservation with a zebra crossing. It was noted that the roundabout was to close for two weeks from October 23rd and the committee anticipated a significant amount of local congestion would occur. It was noted that the 29 bus would be using Silverknowes Hill for turning. It was also noted that in contrast with the timing of the start of the works a few weeks ago this time all local residents had received advance warning of the proposed actions.

16. Rat Running in Silverknowes

Tim reported that following a reconsideration of the options the resident's survey would be based on a proposal for a one way system of operation for Silverknowes Terrace between Lauriston Farm Road and Silverknowes Avenue, with access from the Lauriston Farm Road end. The committee supported this change. It was again noted that this is a limited survey being undertaken in a localised area and that future actions will be reviewed after the results are known.

17. Local Litter Problem

Tim had provided a full report on his initiative at the September meeting and advised that as yet there was no particular follow up action to report. It was therefore agreed that the matter would be transferred to the recurring issues log for the present to be reviewed when circumstances merited further consideration. The committee recognised that there had been some recent improvement in the situation which could reasonably be attributed to the recent strong drive on litter by the RHS.

18. Withdrawal of 32 and 42 bus services

Rod advised that he was still waiting for the date of a meeting which Alex Cole Hamilton MSP was setting up with the Chief Executive of Lothian buses on behalf of the DMSA and Cramond and Barnton CC to discuss the problems arising from bus service changes associated with the introduction of the 200 service to the airport, on a route which was of limited benefit to our local area.

19. AOCB.

19a. It was noted that a complaint had been made about litter in the grounds of the primary school. Since it appeared that the school were taking full responsibility for clearing it up it was agreed that we would initially just check with the Parent Council for their views on the matter.

19b. Graham advised that in response to a complaint about the risk to pedestrians from speeding cyclists crossing the footpath at the exit from the cycle path on to Silverknowes Road East (at the junction with Silverknowes Road /Drive) consideration was being given to installing rumble strips on the approach to the crossing. It was recognised it was a difficult location for alternative speed reduction measures, although the effectiveness of the suggested solution was questioned by the committee.

19c. In response to a query as to whether the flight path on the approach to the airport had been altered to bring it closer to Silverknowes, Graham assured the committee that he had been fully involved in the discussions with the airport and he could give an assurance that there had not been any change. Rod confirmed that this was exactly the message he had provided to the small number of local residents who had contacted the Association about the situation.

19d. The committee discussed the present difficulties in communicating with the Council due to problems with the Web Site. Rod described his recent experience with two important emails on separate issues which had disappeared into a "black hole " and had only been retrieved by the Council's IT Experts after about a week . In the interim he had been obliged to resort to posting paper copies of the emails to ensure there was some action on very important issues regarding the Christmas Lights. It would appear from discussions that some legitimate emails are being treated as "junk" while others just disappear, meaning there is very low confidence in the system. The problem is compounded by difficulties with the telephone system, with more than a suspicion that the Council are deliberately operating procedures which put barriers in the way of telephone contact.

19e. The committee discussed a persistent local rumour that McTaggart and Mickel had purchased the Tesco site for a residential development which would include a smaller Tesco retail outlet. The committee do not normally give credence to rumours but given the background to the situation and the potentially serious impact on the local community, Rod agreed to try to find out if there was any substance to the reports.

20. Date of Next Meeting 14 November 2017 6.45 pm in Davidson's Mains Primary School