

DAVIDSON'S MAINS & SILVERKNOWES ASSOCIATION
Management Committee Meeting 19 September at 6.45 pm in Davidson's Mains Primary School

1. **Apologies:** Gordon McGregor, Laura Thomson, Craig Duncan, Cllr. Kevin Lang, Cllr. Graham Hutchison.
2. **Present:** Rod Alexander (Chair), Charlotte Cowe (Secretary), Seonaidh Edgar, Carolyn Williams, Ellen Searle, Coll Gardner, Tim Mitchell, Brian Flanagan, Cllr. Louise Young, Cllr Norman Work, Sgt. Richard Homewood (for the Police Report)

3.1 Minutes.

The Minutes of the June meeting were approved.

3.2 On-going and Recurring Issues Logs – to note

Rod reported that there had not been any requirement to update the on going issues log following the June meeting. He anticipated that there may be a requirement to add additional items following today's meeting. Tim tabled the recurring issues log which incorporated changes agreed at the June meeting.

The contents of both logs were noted by the committee.

3.3 Matters arising (excluding items scheduled for later discussion)

3a. Re-Cycling Bins at Tesco

The committee expressed ongoing frustration and disappointment that a second waste paper bin had not yet been provided for the site and that a two weekly collection cycle was not yet in place, in contravention of firm promises made several months ago by the former Transport and Environment Convenor. Kevin was not present but it was noted that he had been independently following up on the problems on the site. Reminders had been sent to the Council and would be followed up and the matter would be discussed with the new manager at Tesco to get his/her support.

3b. Street Lights on Ferry Road

The committee expressed concern that action to cut down conifer trees at Silverknowes Neuk to gain access to the faulty street lights had still not been undertaken. The Locality Transport and Environment Manager had again been reminded of the safety concerns, especially with the darker evenings returning. He has acknowledged the problem and is looking at what can be done.

3c. Vivian Terrace Play Street Event

Rod explained that following the June meeting he had learned that the Council were undertaking a review of Street Play Events across the city and that the deadline for submissions was the 30th September. The intention now was to make a formal submission from the DMSA to the review regarding all the problems around the event at Vivian Terrace. The thrust of the complaint would be the complete failure by the Council to ensure compliance with their own guidelines which were intended to address the interests and concerns of all residents and the proper management of the event. It was agreed the submission would be circulated in advance for comment.

3d. Weeds on Pavements

It was noted that the Council's annual weed treatment operation had finally reached Davidson's Mains and Silverknowes in August, although there had been torrential rain only 24 hours after the spray treatment which was almost certain to reduce the effectiveness. Tim reported that some streets west of Cramond Road South had been missed. The committee noted and welcomed that more residents appeared to be clearing weeds from outside their properties but recognised a Council service was essential because there were many residents who were unwilling or unable to do so.

3e. Speeding traffic on Silverknowes Road

The committee further discussed reports of speeding traffic on Silverknowes Road, but noted that it was the stated intent of the Council to review the operation of the recently introduced 20 mph limits in 6 months time so decided that the matter would be included on the on going issues log for consideration after the review.

4. Correspondence

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

5. Reports

5a Police Report

Sergeant Richard Homewood was welcomed to the meeting to provide a verbal report for the months of July and August. The committee were disappointed to hear that housebreakings, mainly sheds and garages, were continuing at a relatively high level following an increase in the early summer. Vandalism was also occurring at a significant level, and motor cycle crime remained a serious problem, although it was centred on the north of the city. On the plus side Sgt .Homewood provided information that there had been a number of charges and arrests against individuals for the crime in the area, although he acknowledged that a probable factor for an increase in local crime levels had been displacement due to the high profile police activity in the north of the city. It was confirmed that the intention remained to provide written monthly reports in future.

5b. Treasurer's Report

In Gordon's absence Rod reported that the balance in the account was £5734.90.

6. Planning issues

It was noted that currently there are no active planning applications in our area

Louise advised that a formal application for the extension to Davidson's Mains Primary School was likely to be submitted shortly and also mentioned a pre application for developments at Cammo in which the committee may be interested, given our long standing concerns about the cumulative negative impact on our area of developments to the west and north.

7. Almond Neighbourhood Partnership

Rod provided feedback on the recent Neighbourhood Partnership Meeting. The meeting had been almost wholly devoted to discussion on the draft North West Locality Plan with each of the Community representatives making strong complaints about the absence of prior circulation of the latest document and the complete absence of any proper engagement with the Partnership. The very demanding timetable for the Council to approve the Locality Plans meant that it was impossible for community organisations to consider the Plans and then provide any constructive feed back. Rod also advised that political working groups had been set up to review the operation of the Planned Locality Boards and the future of community engagement and representation at a working level below Board Structure. The Association were perhaps fortunate that one of our local Councillors, Louise, was a member of a member of the North West working Group and Rod was assured that Louise fully understood the position of the DMSA whose representation appeared to be uncertain, given our voluntary and unelected status. Louise said that she was certain that whatever structure was eventually agreed she was in no doubt that there was a need for a format that encouraged and supported meaningful engagement at a local community level.

8. Local Action List

The committee shared Rod's concern that the Locality Roads Team no longer appeared to have the resources to undertake the work on our priority Action list against previously agreed timescales and target dates for completion. Rod and Tim had spent time with officials to discuss the items and the timescale of when projects would be undertaken. The Locality Manager had requested that we prioritise the list, but nearly all the items were already safety related and so the scope was limited. It would be done on a best endeavours basis although nothing would be removed from the list. There is particular concern about delays to survey work prior to consideration of requests for parking restrictions at Corbiehill Road/Avenue, Corbiehill Road/Main Street at the Corbie Café and on Corbiehill Crescent.

9. Road and Footpath Maintenance

Rod advised that unlike previously when there had been regular discussions about the forward maintenance programmes with the Roads Team, at present these were not possible due to work load pressures on the team. He confirmed there was no planned footway resurfacing work in our area in this year's capital budget. The roads programme had included the major projects for upgrading the Silverknowes roundabout and the upgrading project for the cycle route through Davidson's Mains Park and tar and chipping had been added to the programme for Cramond Road South, Corbiehill Road, Vivian Terrace and a section of East Barnton Avenue ,the first two of which had already been completed.

10. Christmas Lights 2017 Event

Rod updated the committee on the situation with plans for the 2017 festive season following the actions over the summer. He took the three strands of the agreed plans in turn.

1. In February the Council had promised to decorate an individual tree in Davidson's Mains provided it was one at a suitable location on public ground. The committee had subsequently agreed that the Oak Tree at the junction of Main Street and Cramond Road South met the criteria and the location was ideal for a possible switch –on ceremony. There had not been any subsequent communication from the Council so Charlotte had written to the Director of Place to confirm the agreement. A reply was awaited.
2. Lighting Motifs on Main Street –An important development over the summer had been an award of £2500 from the Community Grants Fund to cover 50% of the cost of 10 new light fittings for Main Street. This meant that the total cost for the DMSA to fund for this year would be about £4000 (£2500 for 50% of the costs of the new motifs plus £1500 for other costs) . Rod was in discussions with a contractor regarding pricing options which would need to be agreed by the committee and there would clearly need to be a big fund raising effort to recover at least most of the cost. Rod agreed to circulate the contract details to the committee in due course.
3. Lights Switch On Event. Rod confirmed he was liaising with all the interested parties including the local schools and youth groups to set up an Action Group to organise a switch on event and undertake fund raising. He said he had been encouraged by initial discussions and anticipated that the first group meeting would take place the following week.

11. Problem of Heavy Goods Vehicles

The committee discussed the outcome of the survey by members of the committee into contravention of the 10 m length restriction for vehicles using Lauriston Farm Road because of the limited turning radius at the junction with Cramond Road South. By any standard of measure it had been a success with no fewer than 11 separate transgressions during the day. One of the 11 had been referred directly to the Police because it had not been possible to identify the company from the parent company while the police could do so using their national vehicle registration database. Each of the other ten had been contacted and it was encouraging that positive responses had been received from eight of them, with undertakings to ensure their drivers were given instructions to use the correct route via Telford Road. Two had not responded to emails, or reminders, and had been sent letters by recorded delivery ,and responses were awaited. There were lessons to be learned from the survey, not least that the drivers “bush telegraph” appeared to have been operating and rate of infringement reduced during the day to the extent that they had stopped by 4 pm. In future it would be better to restrict surveys to different times on different days. The committee agreed to undertake a follow up survey at some point in the future and to plan for a similar type of survey regarding the 7.5 tonne weight restriction on Main Street.

12. Silverknowes Roundabout

Rod and Charlotte reported on the situation regarding the proposals for the modifications and improvements to the roundabout where the absence of proper notice for the works and a confusing letter from the Council to residents in the area had created a high level of uncertainty over about what was happening. The DMSA had received a high level of complaints about the proposals. Only one was related to an aspect of the design, with all the rest being about the temporary traffic restrictions to be put in place, with the majority of those being due to the uncertainty and confusion. It was now known that the biggest mistake by the Council had been a failure to consult with cycling bodies on the proposals and that the proposed works had been put on hold until a number of complaints by them had been addressed, including aspects of the design in relation to the cycle reservations.

13. Rat Running in Silverknowes

Tim reported on discussions he had been holding with a resident of Silverknowes Drive, from the section between Silverknowes Avenue and Lauriston Farm Road, who is very concerned about rat running at the peak traffic period in the evening when some drivers choose to use Silverknowes Drive, Silverknowes Avenue and Silverknowes Terrace as a route to avoid the queueing on Lauriston Farm Road. The resident is concerned that this results in queueing and congestion on these secondary residential streets which were not designed for volumes of through traffic, with the associated concerns about pollution and safety. The resident wanted support to undertake a door to door survey of residents of all properties on the route affected by the rat running and queueing to establish the level of support for closing off Silverknowes Terrace at the junction with Lauriston Farm Road. The committee had no objection to the resident undertaking such a survey, subject to the proviso that it was described as a local resident's survey and that before such a proposal could

ever be implemented there would have to be a wider survey to establish the views of all the residents on the west part of Silverknowes who would be affected.

14. Litter problem in the area

Tim had previously circulated the minutes of a meeting which he had organised on behalf of residents from East Barnton Avenue and the immediate area regarding the persistent litter problem which for the most part is caused by RHS pupils using the local take –away shops at lunch time. The meeting at the RHS had been attended by the head teacher, community police officers ,pupil representatives, the council wardens and some residents. Tim summarised the main problems, which had been generally recognised, and possible actions which were being considered. He was thanked by the committee for leading this initiative.

15. Open Space Maintenance Policy

The committee again discussed the Council's maintenance policy with regard to grass cutting at Davidson's Mains Park and Silverknowes Foreshore. It was recognised that there had been some level of response to earlier requests to increase the area of grass being regularly cut, particularly at Silverknowes, but more limited at Davidson's Mains Park , and that the matter should be reviewed again next Spring. It was agreed to transfer the issue on to the On going issues log in the meantime.

16. Bus engines idling

The committee discussed the problem of school hire buses parked outside the school with their engines running. While some drivers had responded to requests to switch their engines off, not all had done so with good grace, and the response from the management of some of the companies involved had been unsatisfactory. It was the recollection of some present that previously there had been signs outside the school to prohibit the practise and Cllr Work agreed to pursue the matter with the Council to get the signs re-instated.

17. Membership

Charlotte provided an update on membership numbers following invitations to renew membership subscriptions. The total stood at 234, with 220 being renewals and 14 for the first time. The number of members recorded on the data base at the start of the exercise in May had been 253, so these numbers represented a net reduction of 19. It was known that 11 members on the database had either moved away or were deceased so the non–renewal number was only 22. This was considered to be an excellent response although it was hoped that following the autumn Newsletter the total number would increase a bit towards last years total.

18. Withdrawal of 32 and 42 bus services

Rod reported that he was still waiting for the date of a meeting which the MSP was setting up with the Chief Executive of Lothian buses for Cramond and Barnton CC and the DMSA to discuss concerns about bus service changes and withdrawals related to the introduction of service 200 to the airport. A reminder had been sent to the MSP about the delay.

19. Facebook page for DMSA

The importance of promoting the Facebook page was discussed after an initial trial and it was agreed Laura would be asked to make it live. Ellen agreed to work with Laura on managing the page. It was also agreed to investigate the possibility of linking it up in due course to the bank account to allow donations through crowd funding but that it was a priority to be sure the page was operating properly first before a direct connection was made .

20. AOCB.

21. Date of Next Meeting 10 October 2017 6.45 pm in Davidson's Mains Primary School