

DAVIDSON'S MAINS & SILVERKNOWES ASSOCIATION

Management Committee Meeting 13 February at 6.45 pm in Davidson's Mains Parish Church North Hall

1. **Apologies:** Councillors Kevin Lang and Norman Work.
2. **Present:** Rod Alexander, Chair, Charlotte Cowe, Secretary, Coll Gardner, Tim Mitchell, Seonaidh Edgar, Laura Thomson, Carolyn Williams, Gordon McGregor, Ellen Searle, Brian Flanagan.

In attendance: Councillors Graham Hutchison and Louise Young; PC Aidan Douds for Police Report.

3.1 Minutes. The January minutes were approved.

3.2 On-going and Recurring Issues Logs – to note

Ongoing Issues Log: Rod confirmed that as had been agreed at the January meeting, the description of the proposed action against each item on the log had been updated to reflect the current circumstances. It was noted that a replacement grit bin at Smarts had been provided in November and would be removed from the list, and it was agreed to survey the HGV problem on Main Street during the early part of 2018 due to an apparent increase in the number of infringements of the weight restriction.

Recurring Issues Log; Tim tabled the revised log. It included updates on the situation regarding the proposed survey of residents in The Green to obtain opinions about a possible resident's permit zone and more intended actions on the litter problems from RHS pupils. It also provided clarification on the regulations relating to the role of litter wardens. The problems around glass/bottle re-cycling with the blue boxes which had been discussed at the January meeting had been added to the log.

3.3 Matters arising (excluding items scheduled for later discussion)

3a. Paper Re-Cycling Bins at Tesco

Louise reported that at long last the failure by the Council contractor to comply with the service level agreement under the contract to empty the waste paper bins is being dealt with but no more information could be given at present as the matter is commercially sensitive.

3b. Street Lights on Ferry Road

Graham informed the committee that a letter had been sent to all residents in the block in Silverknowes Neuk who were responsible for the overgrown conifer trees to ask them to contribute to the cost of cutting them back. He understood that there had not been any replies and so it had been decided to move to issuing statutory orders, although this would take some time to come to a conclusion.

3c. Vivian Terrace Street Play Event

It was noted that this matter is on hold pending completion of the review by the Council into the 2017 events and the production of revised regulations and advice for any events to be planned for 2018. The committee would consider the Council response in due course.

3d. Grit bin at path from Main Street to Silverknowes Rd East

Louise advised that it had been agreed that a grit bin would be placed at the top of the steps in response to the request from the Association. The committee welcomed this and noted that all three new grit bins in the area had now been agreed.

3e. Pedestrian Crossing Queensferry Road/Quality Street

Norman had pursued this issue and had received a very full report from the Council regarding the time allocated for the pedestrian crossing phase within the traffic light cycle at the junction. The report made it clear that concerns about a reduction in the crossing time were unfounded and that it had actually been increased by 3 seconds to a total of 22 seconds, which was fully consistent with design and safety standards.

3f. Bus tracker out of operation outside Norhet

Norman had investigated this matter and had learned that the tracker had a technical fault and that the faulty element had been returned to the supplier for repair.

3g. Gritting Policy on Cycle Paths

Rod reported that he had received a response to his query about the gritting policy on cycle paths but it had failed to address the particular issue of sections of otherwise gritted cycle tracks which diverted on to local roads which were not on the Council priority gritting programme. This situation appeared to be anomalous and a further response had been requested. It had specific relevance to Silverknowes Drive and Terrace about which the Association had received complaints relating to the slippery road surface.

3h. Lauriston Castle Review

It was noted that a report was still awaited into the outcome of the public consultation on the use of the grounds of the castle. The committee would give full consideration to the conclusions and any recommendations from the report in due course.

4. Correspondence

Charlotte confirmed that all relevant correspondence had previously been circulated and/or would be discussed as appropriate under the agenda.

5 Reports

5a Police Report

PC Aidan Douds was welcomed to the meeting to provide the monthly verbal police report for January. The broad summary was that the general level of crime in the area is continuing at a very low level and is consistent with the current pattern over Almond and the west of the city. Aidan took account of a complaint from Brian (on behalf of residents at the north end of Vivian Terrace) of the incidence of a regular pattern of vandalism every Friday evening with youths throwing fruit at windows. Tim raised the issue of cold calling in the Cramond Road South/ Barnton Avenue Area by representatives from a religious organisation based at a Church in Granton which had caused some concern and controversy among residents. Aidan confirmed that the police were aware of the issue and those from the Church had been advised to change their procedures to respect the wishes of residents. The question of written reports was again discussed and it appeared the matter was still caught up in police approval procedures.

5b. Treasurer's Report

Gordon reported that the balance in the account was £7927.27 of which £4233.01 was the accumulated income for the Christmas Lights Fund.

6. Planning issues

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

It was noted that the application was still waiting to be considered by the Planning Development sub-Committee. In addition to objections from some residents who were opposed to the new development, Louise advised that there had been others who had complained that building work had started on the site without the necessary planning approval. The explanation from the Council to these residents had been that the work being undertaken was for initial preparatory work which was out with the scope of the planning application.

6b. Former RBS building/Moving the Notice Board

Rod provided the committee with an update on the situation with the DMSA Notice Board. The new owner of the building had insisted that we had to move the notice board from the site. It was not technically possible to move it from just inside the property line to just outside because of underground pipework and cables so the options were now to move it to the other side of the tree on the corner or to get agreement from Black and Lizars to move it on to their ground. Each of these options was being investigated. The Association had initially been given a time deadline of around the end of March to move the board but plans for internal structural changes to the building have still to be submitted for planning approval so realistically it could be anticipated we would have until at least the end of April to get it moved

7. Almond Neighbourhood Partnership

Graham and Louise provided an update on the situation regarding the future of the Neighbourhood Partnerships which had been an important item on the agenda of the first meeting of the new North West Locality Committee. As had been stated many times the Association regarded the Neighbourhood Partnership as having been an essential vehicle to represent the views and interests of the local community and had a strong interests in any changed arrangement which may be introduced under Council re-structuring . For the present there were assurances that Neighbourhood Partnerships would continue but that the matter remained under review.

There was much discussion about the NW Locality Meeting (which had been webcast) and the conclusion was that it had exemplified the present chaos and uncertainty around arrangements for community representation. Rod said it was a matter of fact and record that Community Councils and other Community Groups such as the DMSA considered that their views no longer carried the same currency as had previously been the case.

8. Local Action List

Rod confirmed that it had agreed with the North West Team that a meeting would be held to discuss outstanding and future projects after the 2018/19 budget had been set at the forthcoming Council meeting.

9. Christmas Lights 2018

The committee discussed the current situation regarding initial planning for Christmas Lights in 2018. It was important to note that the Council would decide on their budget on February 22nd after which it would be clear what their intent was going to be regarding Davidson's Mains (and elsewhere). After the Council position was known the Lights Group would be in a position to start formulating their own plans but for the present any comment was speculative. Ellen updated the committee on fundraising which would be necessary irrespective of the Council decision. Forthcoming events included a vintage tea party, with two sessions on the morning and afternoon of 3rd March (fully supported by the committee) and a fun run (so called chicken run) at the end of March, which will be generously sponsored by Boot Camp. The Lights Group also had a number of grant applications in mind which required the support of the Association and would be progressed over the coming months.

Rod explained to the committee that the Council had recently approved a project to upgrade all the street lighting in the city with new LED lighting heads and digitised controls. The project was cost effective with significant annual revenue savings but the timing of the project during 2018/19 financial year had created potential complications with upgrading lamppost columns in the village to take additional decorative fittings for Christmas 2018. This was under discussion with the Council at present. To keep all our options open Rod had provided the Council with a listing of all the additional columns the Lights Group may wish to have upgraded for decorative fittings to extend the number of decorated lights in the village. He had been assured that the listing had been passed to the Lighting Department for consideration.

The committee also discussed the formal relationship between the DMSA and the Lights Group which would require to be reviewed in line with previous decisions to consider setting up the Lights Group as a fully constituted organisation in its own right in 2018. The intention was to discuss this (and the 2018 plans) at a formal meeting with the group towards the end of March. The consensus of the committee was that the current arrangement had worked well, with an excellent synergy between the two groups, and that the engagement with a younger group had benefited the DMSA. However the views of the Lights Group were very important and would need to be taken into account before any final decision could be taken.

10. Amendment to Constitution

The committee considered an important amendment to the Constitution to include a clause which would come into force on any future dissolution of the Association. The background to the situation was that the Lights Group who were dependent on the Association status as a fully constituted parent organisation to support their applications for grant funding had been refused the opportunity to apply for one on the basis that the DMSA Constitution did not include a clause to specify what would happen to financial assets in the event of any future dissolution.

The committee recognised that the omission of a dissolution clause was a weakness in the Constitution and approved the following suggested draft in order to rectify the anomaly.

Dissolution

(a) The Association may be dissolved by a resolution passed by a simple two thirds majority of those present and eligible to vote at a Special General Meeting.

(b) If confirmed, after the payment of all bills, the Committee shall distribute any remaining assets to other voluntary group(s) or organisation(s) having similar aims to the Association, with preference being given if possible to local groups or organisations active in Davidson's Mains and Silverknowes.

It was recognised that the revision would need to be approved at the AGM, but it was hoped that the new clause would be acceptable for grant requests by the Lights Group to be made in the interim, pending such approval.

11. Facebook page for DMSA

Rod reported that after the last meeting he had spent some time receiving instruction on the development of a Facebook page for the Association and after a bit more work he would hope to meet up with Charlotte to discuss how it should be used and operated.

12. Parking at The Green

In response to an action agreed at the January meeting, Rod and Charlotte tabled a draft of a flyer for a resident's survey in The Green to determine opinions on the suggested introduction of a resident's permit scheme. The intention would be to deliver the flyer in advance of a door step visit and so the flyer would provide advice on how to contact the Association to decline a visit and/or to provide a response by other means. As a local resident Carolyn had kindly offered to help with the doorstep survey. The committee approved the draft document subject to it being updated as intended to provide more definitive information about the likely charges which would apply.

Following the survey, the committee resolved to only pursue this matter if there was clear evidence of support from residents, and if that was the case the Council would then be approached to trigger the process for introducing a resident's parking scheme.

13. Jurassic Park Event at Lauriston Castle

The committee discussed the event which was planned to take place from 30 March to 15 April, with additional days before and after for set up and removal of exhibits. There was a serious concern at the lack of appropriate notice and the very late consultation with local residents. The committee had raised a number of concerns with the Council including site security, traffic and parking arrangements, restrictions on access to the site for regular users, and potential problems of access to the castle for other planned activities. In response the Council had given assurances that all of these issues would be addressed. The general position of the committee was that there was likely to be a lot of support for the event and that it was to be welcomed but only subject to the interests of local residents and other users of the site being given proper consideration.

14. Community Payback Orders

Tim had spoken to a Community Payback Work Officer about the possibility of using Community Payback Orders to clear accumulated litter on Cramond Road South/North. He had been informed that these orders are not permitted on Council Property as the council would not permit the use of these orders for a task which would normally be undertaken by a paid employee. This was supported by Louise. Graham agreed to contact officials to clarify the council position on the use of community payback orders on Council land. Tim had also been informed that a council team would be organised to clear the litter in the hedgerows adjacent to the fields behind Lauriston Castle grounds on Cramond Road South.

15. Tar and Chip Re-surfacing

The committee again discussed the implications of the failure of a number of tar and chip road resurfacing projects. Louise advised that a full report on the problem was to be submitted to the Transport and Environment Committee. It would shed light on the causes of the problem and specify a timetable for the surfaces to be retreated. The contractor involved had already agreed to carry out the remedial works at his cost.

16. Rat Running in Silverknowes

The committee accepted Tim's suggestion that this issue should be placed on the recurring issues log for future consideration should the need arise. He had not had any recent contact from the local resident who had previously expressed an interest in undertaking a survey of resident's opinions on the problem.

17. Withdrawal of 32 and 42 bus services

The committee considered the notes of the meeting with LRT and Council Officials to discuss the unsatisfactory consequences around the introduction of the Skylink 200 service to Edinburgh Airport and the associated withdrawal of the 32 and 42 services from Davidson's Mains. It was agreed that the DMSA had made their point but to pursue the matter any further would be counter productive and be unlikely to result in any changes. Rod advised that he had received an assurance that the 2009 traffic report which had identified possible methods for improving congestion on the Queensferry Road would be sent to him within the next couple of weeks.

18. AOCB.

18a. Louise advised that Kevin had requested that the road surface at the junction of Silverknowes Road East/Ferry Road be resurfaced due to further deterioration and the appearance of large potholes.

18b. The committee agreed that in response to increasing traffic and congestion on Cramond Road South at the junction with Lauriston Farm Road , a request should be made to the Locality Transport and Environment Manager for the introduction of a yellow box junction at that location.

18c. Louise informed the committee about impending roadworks at the Barnton Junction for resurfacing work commencing on 12 March. The principal works would be on the north side of Queensferry Road between the Barnton Junction and Drumbrae Road Junction. The works would be carried out overnight between 7pm and 7am each day and diversions and traffic controls would be in operation.

18d. It was reported that the grit bin on Silverknowes Terrace was empty and the Council would be notified.

18e. The issue of damage to food bins due to rough handling after emptying by the Council contractors was raised again. The committee recognised it was a widespread issue which could only be resolved by revision to the current contract and the situation was noted for the present.

18f. Tim gave notification of another training session for community council members on Tuesday 27th covering planning enforcement, social media and tree protection in the city. This would be open to the DMSA committee if anyone was in a position to attend.

18g. The committee had a brief discussion about the implications for the Association of the new Data Protection Act which would come into force in May 2018. The consensus was that we were already broadly compliant with the main directives of the new legislation but it was agreed we had to be seen to be pro-active in ensuring compliance. It was agreed Rod and Charlotte would table a draft statement of our policy on data protection for consideration at the March meeting to cover the particular circumstances of our data usage. It was intended to incorporate the approved policy into our Constitution and to make it clear in a suitable format to members who would be renewing annual membership or joining from May onwards.

18h. The committee discussed the popularity and success of the Board Walk Beach Club at Silverknowes promenade in the context of the number of visitors and the absence of any direct bus service. The owner of the business had previously asked for support to have a bus service re-instated and the committee agreed to make representations to LRT to request a service for the summer timetable.

18i. Following discussion the date for the AGM was fixed for Wednesday 23 May. This date was suitable for members of the Lights Group who wished to make a presentation at the AGM on improving engagement with the community and to use the meeting to generate ideas for doing so. The committee were fully supportive of the objectives of the proposed presentation, and in view of the fact it was likely to attract a number of younger people in addition to the normal size of attendance, it was decided to try to book the larger hall at the Parish Church for the meeting.

19. Date of Next Meeting 13 March 2018 6.45 pm in Davidson's Mains Primary School