

Craigleith/Blackhall Community Council

Minutes of Meeting Monday 21 September 2020 - Held online via Zoom

Present - Stuart Pinkerton (Chair), Alan Denham (Secretary), Martin Riddell (Treasurer), Duncan Osler, Grant Roger, Jim McLennan, Darlene Jeffrey, Susie Ross; Inverleith Ward Councillors - Hal Osler, Gavin Barrie, Max Mitchell, Iain Whyte; and 3 members of the public including Friends of Orchard Park.

Apologies - Michael Cockburn

Minutes of 17 August meeting - approved.

Police Report - PC Roslin Milne had provided a written report. The main aspects covered were :-

As a result of Covid-19 regulations, officers are being encouraged to carry out their business remotely where possible. PC Colin Cursiter will be joining the community team.

Traffic/roads: Officers have carried out a number of speed checks across the Inverleith side of Ferry Road, with a number of tickets issued and incidents reported to the court. Bike marking – at a recent event, 90 bikes were added to the bike register. The plain cloths team continues to tackle motorbike crime and pedal bike theft in the area.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB): School link officers are working with local schools to discourage anti-social behaviour. Officers continue to patrol ASB hotspots, and encourage local residents to report any incidents. Patrols also continue around Craigleith Retail Park.

Spaces for People - a local resident had expressed concern about the speed of traffic on Strachan Road and also Craigcrook Road, the majority of it exceeding the 20 mph limit. For pedestrians it made maintaining both social distancing difficult and crossing the road in the absence of central islands difficult. The Councillors confirmed that the Council's policy is not to provide speed bumps and other physical measures to control traffic speed. Additionally it was noted that speeding is not covered by the Spaces for People regulations. Likewise the need to cutback hedges to increase pavement width.

A wider discussion said that the progress of individual schemes as part of Spaces for People had been erratic eg proposals for Comely Bank Roundabout had been issued in June with a tight consultation deadline of 5 days, but the changes will be not implemented until October. The overall approach on Spaces for People had been haphazard with no joined up approach and with the opportunity for assessment of individual schemes by Councillors not available after such scrutiny was voted down by the administration. The unsatisfactory experience in Stockbridge was noted and likewise at Silverknowes Road North.

The schemes are progressed through a temporary road traffic order which lasts for 18 months. The schemes will also now be subject to review by the Council every 2 months. There was no information available from the Council how the 60 responses to the public consultation on Spaces for People from Blackhall and Craigleith residents will be progressed.

Further proposals will be considered by the reinstated Traffic and Environment Committee including bus priority measures.

To address social distancing concerns, it was suggested that residents should be encouraged to self police to reduce speed and cut back hedges.

Anti Social Behaviour - the congregating of young people in Ravelston Woods, often drinking to excess, had resulted in the last week in two separate incidents of theft at knife point and an assault of a resident in Maidencraig Crescent who required hospital treatment. Police Scotland, including CID, were investigating both offences. Additionally there had been damage to cars in Maidencraig Crescent. Local residents were to meet with Police Scotland later in the week to consider possible measures to address the current problems. Such measures included the reinstatement of the CEC temporary CCTV camera at the cycle path at Craigmyleth, additional CCTV cameras, deployment of plain clothes officers when possible, additional patrols on the Roseburn cycle and footpath and also up to Ravelston Woods, and the gates to Ravelston Woods could be locked from a safety and security perspective if these events continue.

During discussion it was noted that Councillor Hal Osler had written to school heads regarding more than six youths congregating could be contravening Covid-19 regulations. Given that Ravelston Woods was well appreciated by local residents, there was a need to ensure that it did not become a no go area. Some residents in Maidencraig Crescent were very concerned at the disturbances and damage to vehicles as a result of the anti social behaviour. It was however important that incidents did not escalate. The pros and cons of publicity were also considered.

Noise and Pollution during construction works - Susie Ross said that with the large number of house extensions under construction in Craigmylethhill area and also the larger scale construction works at the Western General Hospital, there were significant air pollution and noise pollution problems in the area. The clear impression was that some contractors were not complying fully with the regulations.

During discussion it was acknowledged that in some cases, the problems were short term and when investigated were not always apparent; that the Council's noise pollution team was now small and working under pressure; that the legislation allows for construction works to be undertaken Monday-Saturday 7am-7pm, but such works should not take place on Sundays.

It was acknowledged that on small scale house extensions the powers were limited. On works at the Western General, Councillor Osler agreed to e-mail the hospital.

Orchard Brae House - pre-application notice for residential development in car park and other parts of the site - agreed that the developer should be invited to an online meeting to discuss the proposals, preferably the 16 November meeting.

Blackhall Library - a local resident had sought information on when the Library would reopen. A forthcoming meeting of the Council's Culture Committee is expected to approve the reopening of 7 libraries - but not Blackhall Library. Local Ward Councillors had been trying hard to get Blackhall Library up and running but had been informed that the Library required works before it can reopen. They have not received information on what works are required.

Friends of Orchard Park - Teresa O'Dwyer provided background on the recently formed Friends of Orchard Park group. Their aim is to provide a green haven and improve biodiversity, and to tidy the green space - the improvements of 10 years ago were not being maintained adequately by the Council. Although they were currently a small group, they had big ambitions. They were also at present constrained by limited finance. The first priority was Orchard Park South with emphasis on fruit trees and the group had leafleted nearby residents. The group was also keen to attract additional volunteers. In terms of finance, the Community Council said it was prepared to consider a funding request.

Telford Road - tree blocking part of the pavement - agreed that the Secretary would contact Ruthe Davies, Forestry Officer.

Comely Bank Roundabout advertising - Jim McLennan was surprised at the proposal to advertise on behalf of the Council at the roundabout. Councillor Whyte said that the notices reflected a Committee decision taken 2 years ago.

City Councillors Reports - additional to the items already discussed in the meeting, the Councillors there were still concerns about the flooding issues that took place in parts of Blackhall and Craigmyle in August. Blocked gully drains continue to be an issue eg Queensferry Road and additionally Scottish Water had not been helpful regarding the flooding problems. The local Ward Councillors were all doing their best for the local community on a range of issues.

Next meeting - at 7.30 pm on Monday 19 October 2020 to be held online via Zoom. The delayed Annual General Meeting will also be held on the same date, alongside the regular monthly meeting.

Alan Denham
Secretary
25 September 2020