

Craigleith / Blackhall Community Council

Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 15 April 2024

Held at Blackhall St Columba's Church

Present - Community Council - Stuart Pinkerton (Chair), Alan Denham (Secretary), Darlene Jeffrey, Martin Riddell; Inverleith Ward Councillors Hal Osler, Vicky Nicolson

In attendance - 10 members of the local community

Apologies - Grant Roger, Jim McLennan, Duncan Osler; Councillors Max Mitchell, Alan Beal; and Deidre Brock MP

Minutes of 18 March 2024 meeting - approved

Police Report - This month PC Cursiter had provided a written report :-

“There were 186 calls to Police over the month. This was a slight decrease from 205 for the same period last year.

There have been 2 reported thefts to garages and an attempted theft of a motorhome. All these incidents are currently under investigation. I am in discussions with my supervisors with a view to some plain clothed patrols during the late evenings, with the hope of disruption/detection opportunities.

There were 3 vehicle accidents of note this month and this is slightly higher than average. Again, speed checks to be carried out in the usual hotspots.

A serious fire was reported at Telford Drive. Thankfully there were no reported injuries and it was not suspicious.

In other news, PC Gunderson and I have been working with Trading Standards with raising awareness of how to deal with online scams, trusted traders etc. This was done in Craigleith, Stockbridge and Fettes.

I am also looking at starting a drop in surgery at Blackhall Library during the summer months. I will keep everyone updated on this.”

PC Cursiter has since acknowledged that with the closure of Blackhall Library due to RAAC, he is seeking an alternative meeting location. Once confirmed, the community will be informed.

Community Council matters :-

Potholes - the Chair expressed concern about the poor state of roads in Blackhall and Craigleith. Hillhouse Road/Queensferry Road and Strachan Road were specifically identified. Temporary repairs and short term treatments are inadequate and no longer providing an adequate repair. During discussion it was noted that stones and loose material from potholes was now being thrown onto the pavements; the sunken inside lanes on Queensferry Road means that large amounts of rain water collect and are cascaded across the footpath by passing vehicles including buses, making it unsuitable for pedestrians and great difficulty in reaching bus stops and other local services.

It was also noted that one side of Murrayfield Road (outside the community council area) is in serious disrepair.

Agreed - the Community Council to write to Ward Councillors.

SPEN (Scottish Power Electricity Network) - the installation of the ducting in Maidencraig Crescent had been carried out efficiently but had involved the removal of trees at the entrance to Roseburn footpath/cycleway. SPEN had agreed that replacement trees will be provided by the Council's Forestry Team.

Ward Councillors Reports

Councillor Hal Osler provided information on the following matters :-

Broken Manhole Covers

Two in particular - one success on Hillhouse Road by BT (it's coned off presently) and the other is a long standing one on the Quality Street end of Craigcrook Road first reported last September - finally Telewest had held up their hands and will be fixing!

Flooding Craigcrook Park

Councillor Osler said that there's been a job raised to replace this gully drain with a new, more efficient design, as it is not functioning well.

Trees overlooking Blackhall Primary

A resident has reported concerns about some neighbouring trees overhanging the playground at Blackhall Primary. These trees do not belong to CEC but are private. Overhanging branches have been trimmed but ultimately the trees are the responsibility of the owners of the property. The trees are regularly checked by the Council.

Lothian Buses Update

Following on from the Community Council's email and the response from Lothian Buses, Councillor Osler wrote to them regarding the possibility of diverting a bus down Craigleith Rd and up Orchard Brae to improve service in this area. Lothian Buses were not enthusiastic about the idea and also said no to another request for a connecting bus for Craigleith Retail Park area and Stockbridge - Ward Councillors will keep asking.

Road Safety

A number of residents have written with concerns regarding the pedestrian crossing at the bottom of Strachan Rd. Councillor Osler knows the Community Council has written to Dave Sinclair (Road Safety Team) and she was sure she and the other Inverleith Ward Councillors will continue to put pressure for improvements in this

area. There is perhaps a need for different approach. Although the Farmer's Junction had been accepted now as a major junction, the lack of action was disappointing.

Orchard Park (Big Whale)

On Saturday 20 April there's an event happening 11am -1pm in Orchard Park. Residents are being asked for views on how to make the park & wider community more adaptable to combat climate change. There's one in the afternoon in Easter Drylaw as well. These are part of the flood mitigation for the Craigleith Basin that has been brought forward due to funding being made available in the budget last year.

Blackhall Library

Councillor Osler has been chasing officers for a meeting to discuss what was happening with the Library and what the future holds. She knew there has been speculation about the Library remaining closed and she wanted to reiterate that the Council Leader (to a question she asked at Full Council) had assured her publicly that RAAC would not be used as a reason to close Blackhall Library. Added to that, the Convenor of Culture and Communities accepted an addendum to the Future Libraries consultation (happening at the moment) that stated the review would not be used as a means to close or reduce any hours in any library. This is reassuring but it is not going to be easy or quick to bring the Library back. It basically needs to be rebuilt and that will have to be factored in.

It was acknowledged that the challenge will be to secure funding for rebuilding but it could provide an opportunity to build something better.

Right to Grow

Late last year Councillor Osler had a motion passed agreeing that the City Council would look at its whole estate to see if areas could be released to allow for residents to grow food. She said that this is important as we have a cost of living crisis, a huge wait list for allotments & a desire to grow food but nowhere to do it. A report will be coming back to the Culture and Communities Committee after summer recess. Just adding to this in this year's budget monies were also put aside to support the Right to Grow as available land is only one of the barriers to growing food, support is another. Ideas for how this can be best used will also come back in the same report. This sadly doesn't apply to land that doesn't belong to the council but it at least starts us on the journey at looking at alternative and productive uses for small bits of land, some of which are redundant areas of hard standing.

During discussion land at South Groathill Road was noted as being underused.

CityPlan 2030

On 5 April the Examination of City Plan 2030 was published. In a nutshell there are no proposed changes to allocation of land within the CBCC area or in the West in general. So the Reporter accepted that what was provided in terms of development

for housing was suitable. There are a few changes proposed to some of the policies as the Plan was submitted before NPF4 so the Reporter has taken some policies out as they felt they were not needed. There is a few other bits still being worked on and we are awaiting feedback from officers on. It is expected to go to Planning Committee in June, then Full Council (if agreed), before going back to Scottish Ministers.

Councillor Vicky Nicolson : -

Commented on an open door event at Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre on 20 April 11am-3pm;

Craigeith Flooding - a number of pipelines from Western General Hospital had been identified as discharging into the water course. They have now been disconnected;

Former Royal Victoria Hospital Site - noted vandalism to both the stone wall facing Craigeith Road and the elevated cottage.

AOCB - there were no additional items

Next meeting - Monday 20 May 2024

Alan Denham

Secretary

Craigeith/Blackhall Community Council

17 April 2024