

Craigleith / Blackhall Community Council

Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 17 June 2024

Held at Blackhall St Columba's Church

Present - Community Council - Stuart Pinkerton (Chair), Alan Denham (Secretary), Darlene Jeffrey; Inverleith Ward Councillors Hal Osler, Max Mitchell.

In attendance - 9 members of the local community

Apologies - Martin Riddell, Jim McLennan, Grant Roger, Duncan Osler, Michael Cockburn; Councillors Vicky Nicolson, Jule Bandel, Alan Beal; and Deidre Brock

Minutes of 20 May 2024 meeting - approved

Police Report - there was no full report this month. Information from Police Scotland stated that the number of incidents in the Craigleith/Blackhall beat had dropped compared to the same period in 2023.

Community Council matters :-

Blackhall Primary School - Overhanging Trees — an Edinburgh resident with grandchildren at Blackhall Primary School expressed concerns about the height and close proximity of trees to both the boundary of the school and adjacent temporary class rooms. The trees were privately owned, not on Council owned land. With the aid of photographs he said his concern was that although the trees had been assessed as being in good health, experience suggests that even in high winds healthy trees can sometimes be blown over. Such an event at the school could have potentially serious consequences.

The initial response from the Council had been disappointing and likewise the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) response.

Councillor Hal Osler said that the more recent responses had been more helpful. The school was working with HSE, the private owner had employed a tree specialist to inspect the trees and some overhanging branches had been removed, the headteacher had met the owner 4 times and the trees had been inspected by Council officials twice. She said that the welfare of the children was of importance to the headteacher and it would not be put at risk.

In conclusion the Chair said that the Community Council was sympathetic to the concerns raised but the community council could not do more than what had taken place already. There could be however be scope for raising it through the parents/ teachers council. Councillor Hal Osler said that she would make contact with the headteacher and also forestry staff in the City Council to seek a regular assessment of the trees concerned.

Flooding in Ravelston Park - a local resident had expressed concerns about the flooding in the Park following the recent heavy rainfall. It was the worst in 40 years of living near the Park. The coincidence of the heavy rain ahead of Blackhall

Sports Day had required a major effort to pump the water out of the Park ahead of the event.

The discussion noted that with global warming leading to increased rainfall, parks are likely to have a role as part flood prevention in the wider surface water network by limiting flooding of nearby houses and delaying water release to major water courses such as the Water of Leith. Flooding in parks will therefore have a key role in flood management.

The Craigleith catchment area was being looked at in the context of North West Edinburgh. Flooding of houses adjacent to Orchard Park will be tackled through the construction of a swale.

Councillor Hal Osler said that if all residents had a water butt, it would make a major contribution by limiting water going into street drain system.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service - noted that SFRS was holding an open day on 18 June at McDonald Road Fire Station.

City Plan 2040 - noted that the City Council had now started the process of working towards the next local development plan. The Community Council will consider the matter more fully at later meeting. City Plan 2030 was expected to be approved by Committee in the near future.

Glass Blue Boxes - because of recent staffing problems in the Council, non essential uplifts had been delayed including glass collections. Normal collections had now been reinstated.

Yellow Box at Craigleith Crescent/Queensferry Road Junction - Councillor Hal Osler agreed to contact Councillor Alan Beal about the matter.

Ward Councillors Reports

Councillors Hal Osler and Max Mitchell reported on the following :-

Blackhall Library - the cost of replacing the roof because of the RAAC concrete problem was likely to be so high it could be more economic to redevelop the building. The retention of a library is of importance but redevelopment would raise the question whether the present site with limited access off Queensferry Road is the best location. Consideration could be given to an alternative site for a replacement library at Davidson's Mains Primary School, Corbiehill Road in Almond Ward.

Hillhouse Road - the recent utilities works outside the vets had taken place without authorisation and had not been reinstated promptly. After being reported to road officials, the footpath had now been reinstated and the obstructions removed.

Craigleith Hill - the recent emergency utility works on Crewe Road South and forthcoming road closures for planned utility works at the same location at Crewe Road South is making access to Craigleith Hill difficult.

Local Traffic Improvement - Maidencraig Steps will be looked at as either part of this scheme or as an active travel scheme. In the meantime officials have said that no interim measures are possible.

Transport and Environment Committee meeting 20 June - road safety projects valued at £11m have been identified but the budget available is only £1m. In the subsequent discussion, a resident expressed concern that road safety improvements at Craigleith Tunnel had fallen off the list. The Council appeared to be seeking a gold standard approach rather than something simpler like speed bumps. Agreed to consider more fully at the August meeting of the community council.

ETRO Queensferry Road - the City Council had relaunched the consultation to make the Spaces for People measures introduced as part of the covid measures permanent. A consultation lasting until December provides the local community an opportunity to register their concerns, object and seek changes. It was agreed that the Community Council will consider more fully at a meeting after the summer break.

Orchard Brae - the trees on the west side need to be cut back

Schools - a discussion noted that every senior school in Edinburgh was at capacity with no additional teachers likely. Edinburgh has one of the lowest rates of investment per child. Independent schools in Edinburgh educate about 25% of senior pupils but the possibility of VAT on school fees could lead to the numbers reducing, with a consequential impact on Council secondary schools.

Next meeting - Monday 19 August 2024

Alan Denham

Secretary

Craigleith/Blackhall Community Council

19 June 2024