

Craigleith / Blackhall Community Council

Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 21 October 2024

At Blackhall St Columba's Church

Present - Community Council - Stuart Pinkerton (Chair), Alan Denham (Secretary), Grant Roger, Duncan Osler, Martin Riddell, Michael Cockburn; Inverleith Ward Councillors Hal Osler, Max Mitchell.

In attendance - 10 members of the local community

Apologies - Councillor Alan Beal; Darlene Jeffrey, Jim McLennan ; PC Colin Cursiter

Minutes of 16 September 2024 meeting - approved, subject to one minor change.

Police Report - there was a written report this month from PC Cursiter:-

“There were 156 calls to Police this month (down 9 from same period last year)

A domestic housebreaking was reported last week which involved 2 cars being stolen. At time of writing, one has been recovered and efforts are ongoing to trace the second.

There were 2 reported break-ins to sheds which are under investigation.

In relation to vehicle crime/incidents, there was a minor vehicle accident at Queensferry Road. Roads Policing also had a pro-active seizure of an uninsured vehicle.

There have been a small number of calls regarding electric bikes/motorbikes etc. I am hopeful that trend continues.

Planning is at an advanced stage in relation to Halloween/bonfire night, with a number of joint visits with the Council taking place already this month.

We have also had a very positive joint visit with Social work to one of our recidivist youth offenders, and this has (so-far) led to a big reduction in calls.”

Following a house break-in in Blinkbonny Grove the subsequent discussion noted that there was group of 5 or 6 individuals in balaclavas doing ‘recces’ in the area including Craigleith View. An incident was also reported at the junction of Craigcrook Road and Hillpark Brae near the horse field where the grass was sprayed with a symbol to alert others in the gang to the property to be targeted. The advice to the community is to alert Police Scotland by phoning 101. The Chair also undertook to inform PC Cursiter.

Community Council matters :-

Consultation response to Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) TRO/ 21/30A west area - Queensferry Road

Agreed that the draft comments should be submitted to the City Council.

Service 13 - noted that the City Council has agreed to maintain the service through the city centre and a new operator - McGills - will provide the service from December. Edinburgh Coach Lines has agreed a short term extension until then.

City Council Consultation on Community Councils including Boundary

Adjustments - the results of the consultation showed only a minor change in the community council boundary, despite requests that the boundary should reflect the geographical area more effectively, particularly of Blackhall, where the boundaries are based on an administrative solution along Hillhouse Road / Telford Road and excludes much of Blackhall to the north. Likewise parts of Craigleith Crescent and the Blinkbonnys have closer connection with Blackhall than the Murrayfield Community Council area. Despite seeking changes 3 times, the request from Craigleith/Blackhall Community Council was ignored and no explanation has been given. Councillors Osler and Mitchell agreed to seek an explanation from officials.

The completion of the consultation would now allow the election of new community councils in February 2025, with elections in March 2025 if necessary. The last meeting of the current community council will be held on 17 March 2025.

City Plan 2030 - has now been approved by the City Council and continues to protect the open spaces at the 'horse fields' on Craigcrook Road and Hillhouse Road Woods. Councillor Osler said that the process for City Plan 2040 has now begun and it will be important to engage in the place making process to maintain the valued open space status of the sites.

Ward Councillor Reports - Councillor Hal Osler and Max Mitchell reported on :-

Hillpark Steps (Queensferry Road) Bus Stop - local residents have questioned whether Fife express buses should stop there or whether their stop should be relocated elsewhere eg Clermiston Road.

Blackhall Mosque pavement build out - the change has resulted in rain water not draining away effectively.

SPEN - following the cable works, a steel fence is to be provided at Maidencraig Crescent.

Baillie Signs, Maidencraig Crescent - a resident commented on the problem of large commercial vehicles parking on double yellow lines, making access for residents difficult. It was also noted that a large tent has appeared which was not being used for storage.

Flora Stevenson Primary School - a meeting was held to consider options for improving safety and access for children.

Orchard Park Swale - an onsite meeting was held to view progress on the measure costing £130k to slow down surface water and limit flooding.

Blackhall Mosque Parking Issues - as well as addressing the issues close to the Mosque outside the community council area, the solution will also increase the double yellow lines on Strachan Road, March Road and Columba Road in the community council area.

Councillor Fiona Bennett - was not able to attend but provided a written report - attached in the annex to these minutes.

AOCB - Craigleith Tunnel - it was noted that Murrayfield Community Council was to consider their position regarding either it should remain open or be closed to traffic. Proposals are expected to go to Transport and Environment Committee in November after which Murrayfield CC, Craigleith/Blackhall CC and residents will be consulted.

Gully Drains - the gully drains close to Blackhall Medical Centre on Hillhouse Road are problematic leading to flooding of the road and footpath and making access to both the Medical Centre and the green man crossing difficult. Councillors Osler and Mitchell agreed to follow up the matter.

People Story Museum - a member of the community expressed concern about the closure of the museum. Councillor Osler said that it was short term measure because of staff shortages through illness and will reopen in December. In the longer term the building will require substantial refurbishment.

Next meeting - Monday 18 November 2024

Alan Denham

Secretary

Craigleith/Blackhall Community Council

28 October 2024

Annex

Councillor's report from Councillor Fiona Bennett

Weedkiller, weeds in gutters and roadsides

Response from CEC:

During 2023, The Council made the decision to further reduce the use of Glyphosate based chemicals for the control of weeds across its full estate. From 2024 Neighbourhood Environmental Services will cease the use of any glyphosate-based chemicals in its maintenance of the majority of CEC maintained grounds. The only exemption on this will be the control of invasive weeds i.e. Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed. Where we have previously used chemical treatments along path edges and fence lines, this will now stop. There will be no treatment of weeds by chemical across the whole estate including schools, housing areas. Neighbourhood Environmental Services had already stopped any use of chemicals within its parks and playgrounds. All maintenance in these areas will now be completed by mechanical sweeping or hand weeding and edging.

It is the council's intention to introduce a phased reduction of the use of glyphosate-based chemical, with a potential full ban by 2026 for the control of weeds on our roads, carriageways, pavements, and hardstanding areas. As part of the phased reduction for the control of weeds on our roads etc CEC will continue to investigate alternative methods of weed control as well as increase mechanical and hand removal of detritus and weeds. A new routing programme for mechanical sweeping of all streets will be introduced during 2024 and part of the benefit of such a programme is the reduction in the amount of soil and detritus which can act as a perfect seed bed for street weeds.

During 2024, some hot spot areas will be treated with a limited one spray, using controlled droplet application methods. If required, this will be followed up with hand removal and scrapping. These will be areas of high car parking, controlled parking areas, cobbles areas etc where it is harder to access with mechanical sweeping equipment, for example - areas of the City Centre and the New Town / Stockbridge. We will continue to look at alternatives for such areas during 2024/25.

We will be continuing to work with individuals or groups where there is a strong wish for chemicals not to be used. If an individual can make the commitment to weed the area in front of their own property it will mean no chemical application will be required as our staff should only spray active weed growth.

If given enough notice and provided a request can demonstrate sufficient community demand and commitment to "selfweed" by a street and/or area, then we can work with them to ensure no glyphosate applications will be made in that location.

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact waste@edinburgh.gov.uk

All requests received will be inspected by the duty supervisors or street inspectors to assess and carry out a health and safety check. If the weeds are deemed to be a trip hazard or causing damage to the street surface we would remove the growth at the time, if not they will be left until the crew is next at the location when a further assessment will be made.

Leak:

We have been notified that maintenance of the path in question lies with Roads Services and are waiting for the head of the department to get back to us. We are trying to establish responsibility for residents' damaged property. Both Scottish Water and the Council have not found evidence that they are responsible for the leaking water. We are not entirely hopeful that we are going to get the resolution that residents are seeking. It may be that responsibility is deemed to lie with residents however, we will continue to advocate for residents.

Noise from Hotel:

Manager is now not responded to correspondence regarding this. Our last update was that the new extractor fan was to be installed and we are seeking confirmation that this has happened. The last attempt to engage with the manager was today.

Bridge at Blinkbonny:

Dave Sinclair has confirmed that he has asked that all project sponsors and local stakeholders are contacted ASAP, he appreciates that it has been some time since the committee and deputation. He has asked that Cllrs, the two local Community Councils, Jo Crowson and Suresh Gajjar are all contacted directly. We assume that contact has not yet been made as Councillors have not had any update. We've asked for another update and Mr Sinclair has chased this today.

Trees and High Hedge Act:

Clarity on the definition of a high hedge seems to differ between councils. The Scottish Government states:

**"For a hedge to count as a high hedge it must:
be a row of two or more trees or shrubs
be over 2 metres high
block light"**

Applying for a high hedge notice - mygov.scot

However, in other sections of the Act there are conflicting statements, resulting in inconsistent interpretations. Councillors are aware of cases in other councils where a row of trees has been considered a hedge. So far the City of Edinburgh Council has been very clear that this specific row of trees will not be considered a High Hedge. We have asked how residents can escalate this.

Number 13 bus:

We're aware of a number of issues recently with the reliability of the number 13 bus, run by Edinburgh Coachlines on behalf of the council, and have been advised that the contract will be taken over by McGills from December. We understand that this change will cause some anxiety so we're following up to get some additional details regarding the new contractual arrangements.

Fly tipping:

There have been a couple of incidents of fly tipping along the Roseburn/Telford path which we have raised with the cleansing team.

Cllr Fiona Bennett | Liberal Democrat | Corstorphine/Murrayfield Ward |
Working on behalf of Corstorphine, Murrayfield, Ravelston, Saughtonhall,
Roseburn, Carrick Knowe, Broomhall and Wester Broom

Address: City Chambers, 253 High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1YJ