

Craigleith / Blackhall Community Council

Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 18 November 2024

At Blackhall St Columba's Church

Present – Community Council - Stuart Pinkerton (Chair), Alan Denham (Secretary), Grant Roger, Duncan Osler,, Michael Cockburn; Inverleith Ward Councillors Max Mitchell, Vicky Nicolson, Jule Bandel; PCs Colin Cursiter, Paul Gunderson.

In attendance - 13 members of the local community

Apologies – Darlene Jeffrey, Martin Riddell; Councillors Alan Beal, Hal Osler, Fiona Bennett;

Minutes of 21 October 2024 meeting - approved.

Police Report – PC Cursiter provided the update below :-

There were 179 calls to the Police this month (+1 from last year). There have been 2 break-ins to sheds - currently being investigated. No domestic break-ins reported. Police Scotland has also carried out speed checks in Craigcrook and Stockbridge areas in the last 2 weeks. There were 4 minor vehicle accidents this month, so they will look to carry speed checks forward into December.

During the Halloween/bonfire period there was relative calm in the northwest of the city. On 4 November a group of youths in Ravelston was stopped who had been sitting off fireworks. After suitable warnings they dispersed. A large policing operation was implemented across the city and although there were widely reported incidents in the city, overall the operation was deemed a success.

Youth calls in Craigleith are still ongoing. 2 suspects have been identified and are to be charged with a number of offences. A call was received regarding suspicious males in the Craigleith Hill area and following police enquiry, a number of items relating to drug offences were seized and a stolen car recovered.

During December there will be a few abstractions but they were hopeful it will not as resource intensive as previous years.

The subsequent discussion highlighted the issue (and misuse) of electric scooters, particularly their use on the bike path. The need for permanent CCTV at the Maidencraig Crossing was noted and temporary CCTV near Craigleith Tunnel.

The problem of HGV parking in Maidencraig Crescent while delivering to Baillie Signs was raised and PC Cursiter would discuss with Baillie Signs to consider whether there was scope for timed delivery windows.

Community Council matters :- Tram Extension - noted that the formal consultation on the tram extension through the community council area will now not take place until spring 2025 after the new community council is in place. The current details provided by the City Council had been circulated but did not refer specifically to the tram and focussed on bus lane extensions to Queensferry and other locations outside the city.

Craigleith Tunnel - the most recent suggestion is for a raised table in the tunnel. Councillor Fiona Bennett had provided a written update -

“Ahead of the meeting this evening I have an update regarding the bridge at Blinkbonny (Craigleith Tunnel). Council representatives have now met with an external supplier to review and discuss available options for pedestrian / vehicle detection & warning systems to consider what’s possibilities for this location, they're waiting for an update on costings. The team is also making progress on a proposed layout for the "physical civils work" and should have something ready for circulation later this week.”

Graffiti - it was noted that there was an increase in low level graffiti. The most recent example was one of the planters in the Dip being graffitied - reported and subsequently removed on 20 November. Councillor Mitchell said that there was a budget of £750k to deal with graffiti with priority being given to offensive material.

Craigcrook Road Inconsiderate Parking - following the issue being raised in September, a number of local Craigcrook Road residents had e-mailed the Secretary expressing their support for more effective control of parking, particularly close to the central reservations. Most were supportive of the possibility of double yellow lines being introduced.

The most recent information provided by Councillor Hal Osler ahead of the meeting said :-
“We have completed our inspection and surveys of the island and junction Jeffery Avenue at Craigcrook Road, I have also received comments from Waste, just waiting for accident stats from Road Safety.” Any changes would require a TRO and Councillor Max Mitchell suggested that one way would be to link the changes to any other changes which are part of improving the safety of access to Blackhall Primary School.

New Community Councillor - following Russell Murdoch being proposed by the Chair Stuart Pinkerton and seconded by Alan Denham, it was agreed that Russell should be appointed as a community councillor. As a resident of the Blinkbonny area his presence would address the absence of representation from that part of the community council.

Ward Councillor Reports - in their absence Councillors Hal Osler and Fiona Bennett had provided written reports which are attached in the annex.

Councillor Max Mitchell reported on :-

Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) TRO/21/30A west area - Queensferry Road - he reminded the community that they have until 16 December to comment or object to the changes to road layout including cycle lanes introduced on Queensferry Road in 2020 as part of the Covid response. (The Community Council has submitted a detailed objection attached to October minutes.)

Blackhall Dip Shops - the storage of crates out side a shop has been resolved satisfactorily.

Farmer’s Junction (Strachan Road/Hillhouse Road/Telford Road) - the changes are progressing which will make it safer for blind people and others with infirmities. He is awaiting a time frame. The changes will include a controlled crossing on Strachan Road.

Councillor Jule Bandel commented on the issues including repair issues at **Maidencraig Court**. Councillor Nicolson said that the issue was further complicated by the Councillor being the factor and maintains the boilers, but not all properties were Council owned. Additionally Councillor Nicolson commented on enforcement action following a garage disposing of oil down the drains. Also noted a noisy manhole cover on Telford Road.

In discussion a member of the community commented on the **blocked gully drains**, including those outside Blackhall St Columba's Church. Councillor Max Mitchell said that the Council's policy was to clean them every 2 years unless they were in flood prone area when they are cleaned every 6 months. He subsequently sent an update from Council officials - "Thank you for your enquiry, on speaking with the works team they advise the route covering this section of Hillhouse and Queensferry Roads is undertaken by our Nightshift. They are currently working through the City centre routes and will be moving onto this one in about two to three weeks but this may be extended if they are needed for gritting duties. The two Gullies at the junction of Strachan Road near Blackhall Medical Centre will be visited at the same time."

Next meeting - Monday 16 December 2024

Alan Denham

Secretary

Craigleith/Blackhall Community Council

22 November 2024

Annex - Councillors' Written Reports

Councillor Hal Osler's report :-

Blackhall Library - Meetings have been held with representatives of the Friends of Blackhall Library and D'Mains Primary School Parent Council. In general there is support for the temporary provision being sited at D'Mains but the following has been noted ...

The Parent Council raised issues which will require to be considered related to access, site security and safety and wider traffic safety before we move to the next stage and submit a planning application. This reflects some of the concerns which have been raised by the wider school community.

As it stands the plan is to have a library installed by mid October 2025. This may sound like it is a long way off but there are still a number of hurdles to overcome to do with finance and planning.

Orchard Park North - A young resident has been in touch asking for a spring to be attached to the gate that faces onto Orchard Road South. Someone left the gate open and her dog ran out into the road and was hit by a car. I have forwarded the request to officers but would ask if individuals could be mindful when entering/exiting the park to make sure that the gate is closed – probably relevant to all the parks.

Strachan Road - Had an extremely good meeting with officers and Sight Scotland to discuss the thoughts about what is being proposed for Strachan Road. What is coming forward is a staggered crossing which allows for those heading towards the medical centre to cross slightly further back from the junction which would be safer. I and Sight Scotland have requested that guard rails be added to the design (not there presently) to encourage all to cross safely. We have also been informed that when the green man is triggered for that section all the rest of the traffic will be stationary which will help in terms of facilitating a safe crossing.

I have followed up with officers asking about next steps and timing as there will be some legal requirements for changes to markings but that might not preclude other aspects from being implemented prior to. In addition I have included within the thread Dave Sinclair who is leading on the Mosque parking issues, so that any requirements for a TRO can be done at the same time.

Councillor Fiona Bennett's report :-

Leak: A meeting with Road Services and the Flood Management Team was initially scheduled for November 14th but has been rescheduled to November 28th at 10 a.m. This meeting will include residents, Council representatives, and Councillor Bennett. We are deeply disappointed by the delays in arranging this meeting and by its abrupt cancellation on short notice by Council representatives. Several residents had rearranged their commitments to attend, which adds to the frustration.

Noise from Hotel: The hotel has issued an apology for its lack of response. The Project Manager and Senior Team at Atlas Hotels have been collaborating to improve communication. According to the Environmental Health Officer, the hotel is operating within reasonable noise levels and is not required to make adjustments or replace the extraction fan. However, prioritising positive community relationships, Atlas Hotels has committed to replacing the kitchen extraction fan as a goodwill gesture.

The installation has faced delays due to unforeseen complexities, but the Project Management team is meeting with contractors in the coming weeks to expedite the process. Meanwhile, a timer has been installed to regulate the extraction fan, ensuring it operates only between 5 pm and 10pm. Residents have provided detailed logs of noise disturbances, which Councillors have shared with the hotel. The hotel manager has been asked to meet residents and Councillors on-site to discuss further.

Trees and High Hedge Act: The Council has clarified that the group of trees in question does not qualify as a high hedge under current regulations. Councillors are exploring whether any further action can be taken.

Bridge at Blinkbonny: A Senior Transport Team Leader has confirmed that work is underway to address concerns with the Blinkbonny bridge. The team has reviewed the deputation to the Transport and Environment Committee from August and is considering installing an elongated raised table with ramped approaches through the tunnel. This will create a level surface for pedestrians and act as a visual deterrent for vehicles.

The proposal also includes upgraded warning signs and improved road markings to better manage driver behaviour near the tunnel. Further discussions are planned to finalise options.

The team is aware of the upcoming community meeting and intends to provide an update. Councillors have requested details to share with residents.

White Lines/Parking: At the last Blinkbonny Neighbourhood Watch meeting, residents expressed concerns about vehicles parking too close to driveways on Blinkbonny Road and Grove, where faded white lines make the boundaries less visible. Councillors have contacted the Council to inquire about the process for reinstating these markings.