

West End Community Council Minute

7:30pm on the 12th of January 2021 on the ZOOM video platform

Present: Dr Gordon M Wyllie (Chair), Ian Robertson (Vice Chair) David Duncan (Secretary), Alex Milne (Treasurer) Isabel Thom (Planning), Martha Baur, Gordon Renton, Paul Hancock City Cllr's Karen Doran, Hal Osler and Joanna Mowat and local residents David Hewitson and Linda Cunningham.

Discussion	Action
<p>1. Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received on behalf of Community Councillor Dr Leonora McAndrew.</p>	
<p>2. Minute of meeting held on the 1st of December 2020</p> <p>The Minute of the last meeting was approved; with no matters arising that were not on the Agenda.</p>	
<p>3. Police Report</p> <p>Paul Hancock of the West End Facebook Group had received and summarised the most recent report made to the Group by Campbell the Community Sergeant. (This stimulated some discussion regarding the extent to which the remaining erstwhile Police Boxes were or ought to receive the protection of Listing, with Mr Hancock expressing the belief that while most of them had been sold off, none of them should be painted in municipal livery colours.</p>	
<p>4. Councillor's Report</p> <p>Cllr Joanna Mowat advised that with the general interruption of business during the holiday period not a lot of consequence appeared to have happened at the City Council, and she had still not received an answer to her enquiries regarding any transmission of the legal stipulations enjoining the provision by the developers of public toilets at the Morrison Street development site.</p> <p>The Councillors are looking forward to considering the City Budget on 18 Feb and Cllr Mowat advised that some more money was being made available by the central government.</p> <p>Consideration is being given to a new Business Plan re bridging the funding services in the light of the Best Value report</p> <p>Paul Hancock explained the Public Health issues arising in the coronavirus pandemic from the lack of public toilets and the closure of licensed and other premises where facilities might have been available, stating that infectious matter in excreta could remain active for several weeks. David Hewitson (who referred later to an increase in the number of fines for urinating in public) said that examples from elsewhere showed that such provision could be made self-funding if one could first find initial capital funding. Cllr Mowat, who had</p>	



previously raised this matter with the City Council, had been advised that relevant considerations included connection to sewerage and the allocation of staff resources in a time of shortage. Noting that alternative provision had now been made at the Waverley Station, where "contactless" payment had been introduced, the Councillor said that she would take this matter back to the Council. Isabel Thom wondered if any of Scottish Govt funding could be used in that regard.

Mr Hancock then referred to the "slippery pavements" issue previously raised by Mrs Thom. In the course of the discussion which followed, it became clear that other pavements than those in Douglas Crescent and some of the immediately surrounding streets were affected. Cllr Mowat had discussed this with City officials, saying that it would be cheaper and more immediately effective for the Council to fix the problem by roughening the affected stone surfaces than to seek a remedy from the contractors and/or suppliers of the stone. Mr Hancock went on to say that he had been in touch with the suppliers of the stone, and also with relevant city officials, who had undertaken to revert to him. Nothing appeared to have resulted except an indication from the suppliers that they could offer no advice except that (at least, when new) the stones comply with requirements. Stating that these surfaces are dangerous and not "fit for purpose", Mr Hancock called for immediate action such as gritting. Cllr Mowat referred to previous attempts to remedy the situation such as power-washing and asked Mr Hancock to e-mail her and Cllr Doran

As a coda to the above, Mr Hewitson felt that the roadside edges of such pavements are the most significantly at risk from algae, and contrasted the situation regarding stone surfaces with the situation regarding concrete, which Cllr Mowat agreed was inherently warmer than stone.

A discussion now took place regarding street lighting. After Mr Hancock had referred to the introduction of LED illumination into Eglinton and Glencairn Crescents, Cllr Karen Doran referred to the computerisation of the LED lighting system and its ability automatically to record failures and interruptions. Mr Hancock contrasted this with the situation in Haymarket/Clifton Terrace, where he said twelve street lamps were out of action, and the difficulties he had encountered in using the City Council website to report this. In this connection he referred specifically to the "Over Five" reporting mechanism. He agreed to provide details to Cllrs Doran and Mowat.

Cllr Hal Osler referred to repair work being done to bridges in the Dean Village, in Sunbury Place, and to the riverside pathway alongside the Water of Leith below Donaldson's Hospital. In connection with the Dean Village, the Chairman referred to the blocking some time ago of the ford across the stream alongside the bridge.

5. Correspondence

There was no WECC correspondence.



<p>8. Website</p> <p>Mr Hancock advised that since the last meeting he had been in touch with Campbell Mills and reported that the website is indeed owned and paid for by the Community Council. Along with the WECC noticeboard, it is a main means of communicating with the local residents.</p> <p>Unfortunately the software of the site is not only old, difficult to maintain, and requires professional management., but it presents a different appearance on a computer screen from a mobile phone.. It does not facilitate the use of blogs, nor archiving nor consultation-monitoring by the Community Council</p> <p>Sticking with it would cost £100 a year with help from Campbell Mills as required - at the current time he has been providing this on-going maintenance for free, and if he were engaged on a retainer to keep it going with some volunteer help it would cost £300.</p> <p>Mr Hancock advised changing to a different system called Wordpress with the help of three volunteers from the Facebook Group.</p> <p>Although Wordpress would cost a little more, it would be a lot easier to operate and be more flexible, as well enabling monitoring, archiving and storage of material like Minutes and Accounts, and the use of WECC e-addresses. Migrating the system with the help of Mr Mills and the volunteers would cost £400.</p> <p>Mr Hancock will prepare a paper and create a dummy website for discussion at the next meeting..</p>	
<p>9. Planning Report</p> <p>Before speaking to her report, Mrs Thom referred to the appeal marked by the intending developers of the former Royal High School building on the Carlton Hill against the decision to refuse permission to turn it into an hotel.</p> <p>Another controversial proposal is the erection of a new Filmhouse building by Richard Murphy in the square ex adverso the Sheraton Hotel. Apart from being out of scale , encroaching upon the public realm and depriving the public of open space, and ignoring the classical and vernacular characteristics of the surrounding area, one of the objectional design features is a potentially-noisy open-air auditorium on the roof, which would likely draw forth an application for enclosure, thus adding yet another storey to the building. Other disadvantages would include a loss of public space. Comments to the Planning Department should be made by 20 May. It was agreed that the Community Council should strongly object.</p> <p>Other specific comments included the Debenhams site on Princes Street, and the likelihood of permission being granted for the proposed changes to Meldrum House, short-term lets in Dewar Place going to appeal , and the withdrawal on</p>	



<p>an application for change of use of 10 Melville Crescent from an office to residential accommodation.</p> <p>Other matters referred to included the CCWEL cycle network a Douglas Crescent study on traffic patterns in the West End, the cancellation of the 5 Community Councils discussion meetings on the Quaich project, the Cockburn Association conference on 30 January (Whose Festival Is It Anyway?) and meetings of the Civic Forum.</p> <p>Mrs Thom also referred to the City Council's public consultation on the Management of Public Spaces anent the guidelines to be adopted regarding green open spaces, and principles to adopted . Cllr Hal Osler very kindly agreed to circulate a hyperlink to facilitate this.</p> <p>Points to consider include the use and appearance of Princes St and the "Waverley Valley Strategy" , the future role of the valley, what the uses of Princes Street should be (shops, house etc), what issues affect the public realm, whether there should be some unity of design, how the area should connect with other parts of the city (such as the Mound, George Street, and the Waverley Station) and a number of miscellaneous issues such as a carbon-neutral strategy</p> <p>LICENSING matters included premises at 6 Queensferry St and the progress being made with short terms lets legislation.</p>	
<p>10. Financial Report</p> <p>The Treasurer reported that the current bank balance stands at £1779.47 , from which an outstanding £15 disbursement requires to be deducted. In response to a question, he explained that the WECC's sole source of income is a City Council grant, currently approximately £800 a year.</p>	
<p>11. Annual accounts and preparations for AGM on the 2nd of February 2021</p> <p>The above matters had pushed aside any discussion of this item except insofar as a mere mention that those appointment-holders willing to continue in their existing roles might please confirm this.</p>	
<p>12. Date of next meeting</p> <p>2nd February, 2nd March, 6th April, 4th May, 1st June, 6th July, 2nd September, 5th October, 9th November</p>	
<p>13. Any other competent business</p> <p>A number of other items entered the discussions at the point. Apropos of nothing in particular, these included # the reference and containment in the City of Edinburgh website of provisions anent complaints procedures re CC members (and how to be dealt with them) as laid down in the City Council's regime for Community Councils - Cllr Mowat</p>	



<p>briefly explained the circumstances under which these regulations had come about, # the CCWEL specification for paving slabs, and a # discussion regarding the Facebook Group's interest in local noticeboards, including those of neighbouring community councils.</p>	
<p>There being no further business. Dr Wyllie closed the meeting.</p>	

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