



West End **Community** Council

MINUTE
of the
Meeting
of the
WEST END COMMUNITY COUNCIL
held at 19.30 on Tuesday 4 March 2025

SEDERUNT

PRESENT IN PERSON were Gordon M Wyllie (in the Chair), Vice-Chairman Ian Robertson, Engagement Officer Paul Hancock, Martha Baur and Gordon Renton, Community Councillors, and City Councillor Finlay McFarlane along with local residents Stuart Adams, Hamish and Lizzie Alexander, C J Arnott, Colette Grant, Ian Halley, Finola Quin, William Phillips., Barbara Ross, Richard Spalding Gayle Watson, and John Young.

ALSO PRESENT were Police Constables Eilidh Bain and Andrea McKenzie.

ATTENDING VIA THE ZOOM VIDEO PLATFORM were Treasurer David Hewitson, Planning Convener Isabel Thom , Licensing Convener James Benbow and City Councillor Margaret Graham along with local resident, Peter Chalmers, "Cynthia", Cate Howell , and 3 members of the public.

WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

After welcoming everyone to the meeting Gordon Wyllie opened proceedings.

APOLOGIES were presented from or on behalf of Roads Convener Hazel Black, Community Councillor Leonora J H McAndrew , Planning-Convener-designate Graeme Lyall, City Councillor Jo Mowat, Christine Jardine MP, Angus Robertson MSP, and local resident Anne Tod

Minutes of the meeting held on 4th February were summarised by the chair and approved by the meeting.

Matters Arising

Community Council Elections

Mr Hancock reported the unofficial result. We had more than enough nominations to ensure the continuance of WECC. Sadly, others, including Old Town had fallen short. Mr Hancock paid tribute to all the folk who had assisted in the distribution of leaflets around the area, which covered the search for nominations and took the opportunity to advise local people of the meeting dates for WECC in 2025. As at the time of the meeting we had had 13 nominations but one had been withdrawn. Mr Wyllie said that having been involved with WECC as chair for 20 years or so he had decided to stand down. He thanked those present for supporting the

community council whilst he was in his leadership role. Cllr Margaret Graham reported that 8 community councils had fallen short but they would be given extra time to seek nominations and, by contrast, Cramond, Barnton and Cammo CC and Trinity CC would be holding elections as they had more than 12 nominations.

Police Report

PC Lee Fergusson had sent out a report for Oct to December period and the next report was due out in early April. There is a team of three covering the West End. Now staffing had stabilised it was hoped to start projects on significant problem matters. Haymarket Yards had had issues with young people and the building site. Mr Hancock noted that since the building works local to Rosebery Crescent the level of problems had significantly reduced and the drug dealing appeared to have ceased. Cycling on pavements is a problem but trying to confront cyclists when you are only in small numbers is difficult. MR Wyllie pointed to Haymarket Terrace as a particular problem with cyclists not only using the pavement but also the main carriageway despite there being a cycleway. Mr Hancock suggested that the peak time for cyclists on pavements was rush hour in Rosebery Crescent where the road is completely disrupted by Scottish Water's sewer works. Later in the month there might be staffing available to tackle this issue. Also, police were meeting with Places for People to see if they could work jointly on the issue of ebikes. The lack of licence plates means ebikes are difficult to identify. Karen Mackenzie (Traffic liaison officer at West End) had done an education package for Deliveroo staff which was well received.

Security Bike marking at Haymarket will be returning in the Summer. Haymarket station was an excellent location for this.

Torphichen Street police station was a sad miss. There is only one member of staff for the front desk, and he is often withdrawn to work in other areas like Street Cameras. Haymarket Hub will be returning to normal hotel work. They were given an extension to allow a possible continuation for a further three months then it will close for refurbishment and reopen as a Holiday Inn Express. Mr Hancock asked of Cllr McFarlane might enquire exactly what was planned for the Hub and also the new Hotel opposite Donaldsons, which may have been granted an HMO licence. (the Lodge Hotel or Duthie Lodge)

Local point of contact is now PC Andrea McKenzie

Treasurers report

Publicity for the Community Council nominations came to £192. The council would have charged three times as much (which would have been our entire income for the year from the Council) 3,300 leaflets were circulated. Paul was thanked for spearheading the publicity

£1216.18 is left in the kitty.

Further Matters arising

Neighbourhood Watch – Paul has a volunteer lined up to put up the lamppost signs.

Toilets – There is a proposal passed at committee to open all council buildings to the public for the use of their toilets, including buildings managed by an arms length company so that would include EICC in our area.

Slippy Pavements - A trial section of paving in Douglas Crescent has been “flamed” (PS this has made a significant difference to the “stickiness” of the surface.)

Street Signage - No access to HGVs is now signed for the Rosebery Crescent Lane. Waste collection vehicles are exempt from this restriction.

Cat, and other Sculptures

Hugo’s statue does not need planning permission, so the collection of funds and work on the statue itself can proceed. Allan Herriot, who did the sculptures of Wojtek the bear in Princes’ Street Gardens and Robert the Bruce on the Castle Esplanade has been appointed to create it.

Dr Elsie Inglis (who lived in the West End was a suffragette and early female doctor) statue has been agreed to go up on the High Street.

Saraj Lall who was an inspirational teacher will have a statue erected in St Patrick’s Square.

There remains a possibility of the relocation of Body and Soul from Hunter Square to Coates Gardens opposite the William Gladstone statue. A potential donor has asked about leaving money in her will for a piece of public art for the West End. Also, when Baillie Gifford move into Haymarket Square Jo has agreed to put the Community Council in touch with the correct person to see if they would contribute something.

Isabel raised the issue of an Art trail in the West End which had been floated several years ago. The possibility of siting a piece of art on the junction of Douglas Crescent and Palmerston Place had been raised. The Modern Art Galleries had offered suitable items if they could be insured. The Cathedral was also interested in being part of any Art Trail because of the Phoebe Anna Traquair murals in the Song School.

Cllr McFarlane described the work that was going on behind the scenes to ensure that the city’s collection of public art was catalogued and managed properly. The Hugo statue could prove to be a big draw attracting footfall to the Wiliam Street shops.

Mr Wyllie suggested that management of the public gardens may also benefit from better forethought.

Roads Report

Traffic in Coates Gardens has increased by 31% although noise levels are not as bad as elsewhere in the city. Noise levels would not be acceptable on a building site so it seems crazy that it is acceptable for setted streets. The junction at the foot of Coates Gardens would not have been designed that way had they realised the amount of traffic using the junction. It was hoped that this may lead to a review. Hazel Black had submitted a suggestion for small scale traffic changes. There is no evidence of video monitoring of the junction as we were promised. Cllr McFarlane offered to arrange for questions to be asked at the transport committee on Thursday.

Rosebery Crescent will become a single entry point again for access to the south end of Rosebery. Paul has asked that the bin collections route be changed as the bins will move as the Scottish Water works moves up the street.

Licensing Report

James had updated Paul prior to the meeting. Both James and Graeme had submitted detailed objections to the application for a slot machine venue in Morrison Street.

Also an application has been submitted for a Tesco Metro in the unit 1 of Haymarket Square. James has written in support of this.

It would be good to have a one shop/one stop licensing arrangements instead of them being separate. An electronic notification to Community Councils for licensing applications, akin to the planning arrangements, would be helpful. Cllr Graham agreed to look at this.

Planning Report

Graeme had sent apologies but there had been nothing significant on the planning for this month other than the Hugo statue that we dealt with earlier.

Isobel attended the Cockburn Society Civic Forum this evening. Matters that were discussed were the new Edinburgh Design Guidance which is out for consultation. Sustainability and general updating was included. Student Accommodation Guidance, focussing on quality and adaptability, comments by 23rd May and Listed Building design Guidance.

Rosebery House demolition has been carefully done because of the proximity of the tram lines. Overnight working for the next two weeks seems to be managed well leaving the façade in place which acts as a sound barrier. We have requested that lorries taking the debris are not routed via Palmerston Place but planning have declined to enforce that.

Engagement Officers Report

Website and email management is in hand. We are changing provider and we are already seeing improvements.

Media interest in Hugo Statue.

Waverley Valley Consultation response, jointly with New Town Broughton, saying it was not a proper strategy. Princes' Street monoculture has not been addressed. It is to be hoped that we will continue to be involved as this develops, although cynicism was expressed in this regard!

Communal Bin Review phase 6, Paul was hoping that this might be discussed this evening. Gull proof sacks in streets with no railings and similar. Please look at the document as circulated by Paul. Typical Bin Hub would take 6 bins and two car spaces. Gull proof sacks for both household waste and, separately, for recycling. We had requested that household waste be dealt with using the paladin bins and the gull proof sacks for the recycling only but this had been ignored. Railings maintenance is a householder's responsibility and is not cheap. They will have new "weighted" gull proof sacks that do not need to hook over railings. Paul encouraged all present to take part in the consultation as it was very important.

Siting the bin on the Gardens side of streets was initially not possible but now is. Please complete the survey to make your views known.

Hazel suggested that traffic management may be helped if the end on bin hubs were used to put pinch points into streets like Magdala or Douglas Crescent to slow the traffic down.

Paul raised the question of having Palladin bins for household Waste with Gull Proof sacks for recycling this was not ruled out by council officers but would increase the complexity of management.

Councillors Reports

Cllr McFarlane flagged up the consultation on council managed parks. Issues like dogs on leads and busking were covered.

Unauthorised shop displays, apart from newspapers and grocers, were going to be enforced more rigorously. West End has more issues with commercial waste bins. Finlay asked that people email him with any concerns about this, as heavy fines could be imposed if such bins are wrongly sited.

Cllr Graham. Only one fine had been imposed for littering in the last 12 months. She will seek more information and report back.

EV charging is being managed on a multi authority basis and a plan is about to go out to tender with Mid, East and West Lothians. Street lights being used for charging is also under consideration. Most West End street lighting is on the kerbside of the pavements (85%) so would be suitable.

Next Meeting 1st April.

Paul proposed a vote of thanks to Gordon Wyllie for his years of service to the West End Community Council. The meeting responded with a universal round of applause.