



West End Community Council

Minute of Meeting

7:30pm on the 2nd of April 2026 at Ashfield Melville Street Edinburgh and participation via the ZOOM video platform

PRESENT IN PERSON

Community Councillors David Hewitson (in the chair), Secretary Paul Hancock, and Community Councillors, Dugie MacGregor, Hazel Black, & John Young along with City Councillor Joanna Mowat and local residents, Kate Whitehead, Barbara Ross, Gayle Watson, Fiona Searle, Dave MacIntyre.

ATTENDING VIA ZOOM

Community Councillors attending by way of Zoom were Licensing Convener James Benbow, , Isabel Thom, with City Councillor Claire Miller together with a number of local residents including, Linda Cunningham, Adrian Davies, Finola Quinn, Ian Halley, Peter Dunlop, Penny Barr (p/t)

Discussion	Action
<p>1. Apologies Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Community Councillors Ian Robertson, Richard Spalding, Graeme Lyall, Martin Young and City Councillors Margaret Graham, Finlay McFarlane, Hal Osler, MP's Christine Jardine and Tracy Gilbert, MSP Angus Robertson, local Residents Anne Tod and Stuart Adams</p>	
<p>2. Minutes from previous meeting The Minute of the Meeting held on 5th February 2026 was approved</p>	
<p>3. Meeting Summary: Generated by Read AI and corrected by PH Summary:</p> <p>The meeting opened with brief technical delays before adopting the agenda and circulated AI-generated minutes, then moved to a proposal from Penny Barr to create a permanent digital communications hub and periodic newsletter for the West End Community Council. Penny outlined a two-part structure: a time-sensitive news hub with drill-down pages and a separate evergreen archive/search area, and she warned against duplicating the existing Facebook page; the group also expressed concerns about hosting commercial content because of potential ICO/data-controller obligations. Penny agreed to review the existing WordPress site and obtain access via Fraser to produce an information architecture, wireframes, basic brand rules, and a short project plan, and Paul committed to send existing brand guidelines to her.</p> <p>The meeting then covered legal and planning matters. Attendees asked Margaret Graham to confirm whether instructions have been issued to King's Counsel and agreed to pursue clarification on whether the Community Council is a statutory consultee for planning applications. The West End place-plan team recast its draft to follow community-first engagement, scheduled a public drop-in event for Sunday 28 April in Walpole Hall, planned publicity and refreshments, and assigned a volunteer to check Hall cup and crockery availability. Transport and licensing items were reviewed in sequence: members flagged outstanding traffic rollouts and modelling gaps, agreed to pursue enforcement data and Haymarket Junction calculations, resolved to file a formal statutory-consultee objection on a safety risk, and noted a backlog of short-term</p>	



let applications and related local licensing concerns. The meeting closed with other civic updates and plans to schedule the next meeting around the May 7 election period.

Chapters & Topics:

Meeting opening and tech check

The meeting opened with greetings, roll call and apologies, and the chair noted a seven-and-a-half minute delay caused by internet problems and that the meeting was being recorded. Participants confirmed audio connectivity before proceeding.

* The meeting began with a delay due to internet and technical problems.

Introduction of Penny and purpose of communications work

David introduced Penny as the volunteer to pull together a community communications vehicle and referenced circulated minutes and an AI summary previously distributed. Penny was asked to speak in the first half hour and began outlining her background and intent for a newsletter and hub.

Rationale for a newsletter and hub; role of Facebook

Penny argued for a permanent news hub complemented by a periodic newsletter to reach residents not on Facebook and to preserve searchable content. She acknowledged Facebook's strengths for timely, user-generated posts and recommended not duplicating its role.

* Penny Barr volunteered to lead development of a community digital communications vehicle.

* The proposed approach is a news hub with drill-down pages for time-sensitive articles and a separate evergreen archive.

* The existing Facebook page should be retained for immediate, user-generated posts and not duplicated.

Content types, sponsorship considerations, and initial constraints

The group agreed on two main content types—time-sensitive articles and evergreen archives—and discussed potential local adverts or sponsorships as a future funding option while recommending a cautious, non-commercial launch. They noted the need to assess legal/data implications before pursuing commercial elements.

Data protection and mailing list distribution approach

The team discussed email distribution logistics and preferred to circulate newsletters via existing community group lists rather than adding individuals to council lists. Members warned that commercial activity would trigger ICO registration and the need for a data controller, which they wished to avoid due to administrative burden.

* Distribution will lean on community groups circulating the newsletter rather than building a large council mailing list.

* Introducing commercial content would likely require ICO registration and a designated data controller, which the group wants to avoid.

Website ownership, platform capabilities, and technical details

Paul confirmed the council now owns the website, recovered it from prior management issues, and that it is hosted on WordPress with a paid theme and provider support enabling social widgets, shop capabilities, and automatic updates. The platform was described as sufficient for the proposed news hub.

* The council now owns the website and it runs on WordPress with a paid theme and social connectivity.



Next steps and immediate tasks for Penny

Penny agreed to get access to the site (via Fraser) to inspect the CMS, draft an information architecture, produce simple wireframes, define light brand rules using existing guidelines, and prepare a short project plan with milestones for review. She then left the meeting and invited ideas to be sent through the chair.

- * Penny will examine the site, produce wireframes and an information architecture, and draft a simple project plan.
- * Paul committed to sending the existing brand guidelines to Penny.

King's Counsel clarification and action

Discussion centered on whether King's Counsel has been formally instructed and who holds responsibility for that instruction. Paul Hancock and others expressed uncertainty and assigned Councillor Margaret Graham to confirm whether King's Counsel were instructed and what the next steps are.

- * Margaret Graham was assigned to confirm whether King's Counsel has been instructed and what the next steps are.

Matters arising — TRO briefings and community markups

The group reported an invitation to a briefing focused on TRO rollouts and associated street changes, and noted Michael has not yet responded to a request for a separate meeting to review community council markups point by point. Participants emphasized the need for a joint session inclusive of Newtown & Broughton Community Council to resolve placement choices.

- * The TRO rollout briefing invitation is expected to cover TRO placement and program updates.
- * The group requested a meeting with Michael to review community council markups for TRO rollouts point by point.

West End local place plan update

The place-plan team described useful but late council feedback requiring them to recast their draft to prioritize community-first engagement. They agreed to involve the community, produce a newsletter, and use a workshop/drop-in format to test and refine ideas gathered to date.

- * The West End place-plan work will be recast to follow a community-first engagement model after council feedback.
- * Richard scheduled a meeting at the end of April to prepare for the public event.
- * A public drop-in event is planned for Sunday 28 April in Walpole Hall to solicit resident ideas using maps and pinned boards.

Public event logistics and publicity

Planning covered the public drop-in format, logistics for Walpole Hall including refreshments and cup availability, outreach methods such as posters and garden email lists, and suggestions to recruit attendees from related local events. A volunteer committed to check crockery/cup availability before the event.

- * A volunteer committed to check Walpole Hall cup/crockery availability before the event.
- * The team will pursue multiple publicity channels including posters and garden-email distribution to boost attendance.

Next scheduling and outstanding updates

The final segment recorded that Richard has set a preparatory meeting at the end of April and noted an outstanding update from the reporter on the Crescent Capsule Hotel item remained unresolved.



Statutory consultee status and guidance discussion

paul outlined conflicting interpretations about whether community councils are statutory consultees and read relevant sections of the City of Edinburgh Council scheme asserting a statutory right to be consulted. Claire advised escalating to the head of planning and suggested a joint approach between planning and governance to resolve the differing views.

* The Community Council's statutory consultee status is disputed between planning and governance departments and requires clarification.

Clarifying statutory weight and past interactions with planning

Paul recapped withdrawal of national guidance and reflected on past instances where the Community Council's views were given limited weight, asking if others recalled similar experiences and noting a lack of response in some consultations. Isabel reported no immediate recollection as former planning lead.

* National guidance that previously described community councils as statutory consultees has been withdrawn, complicating interpretation at local level. Jo Mowat undertook to confirm correct person within CEC to resolve this issue.

Reporter update and planning application volume

The group heard that the reporter's decision on the Atholl Crescent/Argyll Crescent hostel was delayed to allow comments from the applicant and the city, with World Heritage comments noted and multiple objections submitted. Paul observed an unusually low number of West End planning applications and attributed reduced development to market uncertainty.

* The reporter's decision on the Atholl Crescent hostel was delayed pending further submissions from the applicant and the city.

Local Traffic Improvement Program and coach plan concerns Hazel summarized Transport & Environment Committee items including the Crescent pedestrian crossing and the local traffic improvement scoring process, and committed to chasing missing information. The coach-parking/TVL proposals were criticized as lacking a comprehensive plan, with questions raised about enforcement, idling, driver facilities, and the absence of strategic detail.

* The Crescent pedestrian crossing and Local Traffic Improvement Program need follow-up because committee material was unclear or not yet visible to the group.

* The coach-parking/TVL proposals were presented without a clear overall plan or enforcement strategy, prompting requests for data and further detail.

Workshop outcomes, traffic diversion concerns, and crossing debate

Discussion reviewed a previous workshop on traffic measures where proposals for cut-offs were later rejected over fears of diverting traffic through Haymarket, prompting a request for the calculations used. The group debated proposed zebra crossings and cycleway impacts; participants concluded the suggested zebra at the bottom of Cones would likely exacerbate congestion and reduce visibility.

* The group requested detailed traffic calculations to be obtained by Hazel from Ruridgh Mc Geddes for the Haymarket Junction to understand diversion impacts before endorsing road closures or calming measures.

* Participants agreed a proposed zebra crossing at the bottom of Coates Gardens would likely worsen traffic and pedestrian visibility concerns.

Decision on bins and request for accountability

Members discussed the draft proposals and flagged a single query concerning bins and an unexpected decision reversal, questioning who made the call and citing the phrase "unacceptable impact" in an email as part of the disagreement. Paul proposed



seeking clarity and suggested using a freedom of information request if direct answers are not received within a week.

* The group will try to identify who authorised the junction decision and may file a freedom of information request if no timely explanation is given.

* Members judged the proposed junction change unsafe for cyclists and pedestrians and agreed this should be stated in their response as a statutory consultee.

Safety concerns and transport modelling at Haymarket Junction

Discussion turned to transport modelling, potential tram-related constraints, and whether traffic-calming measures remain viable; Claire reported she had emailed Rory asking for mitigation measures and was told modelling will be updated when the new model is ready. Members expressed that the proposal prioritises vehicular flow over pedestrian and cyclist safety and resolved to record safety concerns formally.

* Claire queried the transport modelling and requested identification of mitigation measures to allow the proposed change at Haymarket Junction.

Licensing report and short-term lets backlog

James Benbow presented licensing items, highlighting 27 short-term let applications this month with several temporary filings, first-time applications, renewals, and many incomplete submissions that the system currently allows. Paul explained a renewal surge tied to a previous licensing deadline that created a processing bulge and increased committee workload.

* Licensing reported an unusually large number of short-term let applications this month, including many incomplete renewals creating a processing bulge.

Local premises and community impact questions

Members examined specific premises applications, including an occasional license at 18 Haymarket Terrace and a convenience store on Queensferry Street next to a halfway house, prompting questions about potential neighbourhood disruption. James noted off-sales applications and argued that buyers could simply use other shops if one outlet is restricted.

* Councillors noted a convenience store application adjacent to a halfway house and discussed potential local impacts.

Enforcement, police updates, and engagement issues

The absence of police representatives was noted but members reported a recent enforcement blitz that resulted in seized bikes and multiple charges, which they considered a useful start. Engagement updates included following up on a resident complaint about a manhole repair and ongoing moderation of a large Facebook group.

* Police enforcement achieved seizures and charges in a bicycle/moped blitz, which members welcomed.

Treasurer, Hugo sculpture payment, and minor civic reports

The treasurer reported modest funds and agreed to an initial £50 payment to the Hugo sculptor, with a larger £1,500 payment expected when invoiced, and discussed invoice recipient details. Members also discussed reporting a damaged pillar on Dean Bridge to the council for structural attention.

* The council will pay an initial £50 toward the Hugo sculpture and arrange a larger payment when invoiced from the monies raised by public subscription.

* Engagement work continues with a resident manhole complaint referred to Lewis Ennis for action.

Scheduling, elections, and meeting close



The group set the next meeting for May 7 and debated attendance given the election schedule, shared brief anecdotes about election counts, and closed with an agreed follow-up by email from Peter and general thanks to attendees.

Action Items:

- * Penny Barr will review the website CMS and report on its capabilities.
- * Penny Barr will speak to Fraser to get a password and site access.
- * Penny Barr will draft a simple information architecture and a couple of wireframes for the news hub and drill-down pages.
- * Paul Hancock will send the existing brand guidelines to Penny Barr.
- * Penny Barr will create a very simple content strategy and a short project plan with rough milestones for review.
- * Margaret Graham will confirm whether King's Counsel has been instructed and what the next steps are.
- * Paul Hancock (or the group) will request or follow up with Michael to arrange a meeting to go through the Community Council markups point by point.
- * Richard will prepare for the public place-plan event by holding a planning meeting at the end of April.
- * A meeting participant will check Walpole Hall cup and crockery availability before the drop-in event.
- * Jo Mowat will write to the government to seek clarity on the statutory consultee status and withdrawn national guidance
- * Hazel will chase up the Local Traffic Improvement Program / Crescent pedestrian crossing update and report back
- * Hal Osler will follow up on how the Community Council can engage with the coach plan and ensure West End concerns are considered
- * Jo Mowat will forward a two-line summary (the two-liner) about the Belford hostel pedestrian crossing to the group after Hazel provides it
- * Hazel will request the council's traffic calculations for the Haymarket Junction and circulate them to the group
- * Hazel will submit a freedom of information request if he does not receive an answer about who made the junction decision within a week
- * Claire Miller will follow up with Rory to confirm what mitigation measures will be identified and to monitor the promised remodelling of the transport model
- * Dougie will pay an initial £50 to the Hugo sculptor when an invoice is raised
- * Dougie will arrange a set of accounts and send them to the auditor to support stipend/payment processing
- * Jo Mowat will contact the relevant councillor and forward photos to report the knocked-over pillar on Dean Bridge for structural assessment
- * Paul will follow up with Lewis to get an update on the reported manhole repair on Haymarket Terrace
- * Peter Dunlop will send an email to the group with his correspondence or follow-up items

Key Questions:

- * Do we employ or instruct King's Counsel, and who holds that responsibility?
- * Is the upcoming meeting to review the place-plan and outreach an internal meeting?
- * Has anybody got data on how many coaches are actually using the area?
- * Are any of our councillors on the Transport & Environment Committee?



<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Will the group discuss how a proposed zebra crossing at the bottom of Coates would operate and its likely effects?* Who made the decision to abandon the previously discussed traffic-calming measures and what basis was used for that decision?* What other measures would be implemented to reduce journeys through Haymarket Junction so the proposed change would not cause congestion?* Is the Queensferry Street convenience store application near a halfway house, and could that proximity cause local disruption?	
<p>13. Future Meetings</p> <p>It was agreed to meet again on the First Thursday of each month</p> <p>Thu, 04-Jun-26 Walk about Thu, 02-Jul-26 Thu, 06-Aug-26 Thu, 03 Sep-26 Thu, 01-Oct-26 Thu, 05 Nov-26 Thu, 03-Dec-2</p> <p>with the meeting of 4th June to involve a perambulation of the local area. All meetings would now continue be held at Ashfield although participation would also be possible via Zoom.</p>	

There being no further business David Hewitson closed the meeting.