



West End Community Council

Minute of Meeting

7:30pm on the 5th of February 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, Martin Young, Martha Baur, Hazel Black, John Young along with City Councillor Joanna Mowat and local residents, Barbara Ross, Bill Phillips, Michael Atkinson, Krystyna Szumelukowa, Anne Sibbald, Peter Johnston.

ATTENDING VIA ZOOM

Community Councillors attending by way of Zoom were Licensing Convener James Benbow, Graeme Lyall, Isabel Thom together with a number of local residents including Paul Johnson, Peter Dunlop

Discussion	Action
<p>1. Apologies Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Community Councillors Treasurer Douglas McGregor Ian Robertson, Richard Spalding, and City Councillors Margaret Graham, Claire Miller, Hal Osler, MP's Christine Jardine and Tracy Gilbert, MSP Angus Robertson, local Residents Finola Quinn and Ian Halley</p>	
<p>2. Minutes from previous meeting The Minute of the Meeting held on 8th January 2026 was approved</p>	
<p>3. Meeting Summary: Generated by Read AI and corrected by PH Summary:</p> <p>The session began with David Hewitson welcoming attendees and confirming the recording of the meeting for accurate note-taking. He acknowledged absences from several members and facilitated a round of introductions, including a new participant, Paul Johnson. It was noted that the minutes from the previous meeting had been circulated, although he was unable to locate them during the session.</p> <p>The meeting addressed the City Council's non-compliance regarding public toilet construction and requested an update from Cllr Margaret Graham. There was an update on the bin hubs, mentioning that officer recommendations had been accepted and that community feedback would be sought before the publication of traffic regulation orders. The attendees emphasized the need for decisions on bin relocations in Coates Gardens to be based on well-reasoned comments rather than personal preferences, while also discussing ongoing issues with bin lorries and the necessity for clear instructions for street sweepers.</p> <p>Graeme Lyall initiated a discussion on planning, highlighting the successful prevention of short-term lets in specific areas. The attendees expressed dissatisfaction with the handling of the contentious Atholl Crescent development, particularly regarding transport issues affecting the residential neighbourhood. It was noted that the case would be reviewed by the Scottish Government reporter and that a comprehensive response would be prepared to support local residents. The group also discussed the</p>	



importance of protecting green spaces and the potential for renewable energy initiatives in future planning efforts.

Concerns were raised about the lack of mention of electric vehicle (EV) charging in recent plans and the need for improvements in public spaces, especially in Festival Square. There were discussions on various planning matters, including accessibility issues related to bus stop placements and the operational decisions of Lothian Buses. and also addressed the status of small project submissions and the uncertainty surrounding visitor levy funding, how to apply and what the criteria were.

The session included discussions on new license applications for convenience stores and short-term lets, with James Benbow highlighting the need for improved application processes and timely notifications. Finally, there were updates on illegal bike usage and the logistics of bike rentals, noting the high usage rates and concerns about potential misuse.

Chapters & Topics:

Attendance and Introductions

David Hewitson welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that it was being recorded for both AI notes and audio verification. He listed several individuals who had sent their apologies for absence and then facilitated a round of introductions among the attendees, which included community councillors and local residents.

- * Update on the construction of public toilets and council compliance.

Update on Bin Hubs and Waste Management Issues

The meeting raised concerns about the City Council's failure to enforce compliance with public toilet construction and Jo Mowat suggested contacting Cllr Margaret Graham for an update. He reported that the recommendations for bin hubs were accepted, and there would be a chance for community input before the traffic regulation orders are finalized. Hancock emphasized the importance of scrutinizing these orders to ensure community needs are met.

- * Budget discussions and upcoming council meetings.

- * Discussion on the bin hub locations and community feedback.

Bin Placement and Community Concerns

The meeting addressed the potential relocation of bins in Coates Gardens, noting that decisions should be informed by community feedback rather than individual preferences. There is a specific concern regarding bin lorries navigating the area incorrectly and stressed the need for clear guidelines for street sweepers to maintain cleanliness. The discussion also touched on the collaboration between residents and council employees.

- * Community engagement and local issues, including bin management and public safety.

Planning and Development Updates

Graeme Lyall provided insights into planning matters, mentioning the prevention of short-term lets in Haymarket Terrace and Lyndoch Place Lane. Paul Hancock elaborated on the Atholl Crescent development, criticizing the council's response to transport concerns and the potential for a large hotel in a residential area. He noted that the Scottish Government reporter will now handle the case, with a detailed response being prepared in support of local residents.

- * Planning and development concerns in the West End area.



Discussion on Urban Development and Accessibility Improvements

Paul Hancock addressed the absence of EV charging references in planning documents and advocated for enhancements in public spaces, specifically mentioning Festival Square. He expressed opposition to the proposed seven-storey building in the area and discussed the complexities surrounding planning permissions. Hancock also emphasized the need for better accessibility and infrastructure improvements in the West End.

Discussion on Planning Matters

Paul Hancock facilitated a discussion on planning matters, encouraging participants to raise any additional issues. Peter Dunlop tried to interject but faced technical difficulties with his microphone.

Discussion on Bus Stop Accessibility and Council Policies

Paul Hancock raised issues about the increased distance between bus stops, specifically noting that the spacing at West Maitland Street has expanded from 160 meters to over 600 meters. He questioned the council's advocacy efforts for residents and the lack of discussions between Lothian Buses and the council regarding the closure of certain stops, emphasizing the need for better communication and planning.

Project Funding and Community Concerns

Paul Hancock raised issues regarding the submission of small projects and the visitor levy funding, noting that there has been no acknowledgment from the council offices. He emphasized the need for clarity on how projects will be prioritized and whether there will be an application process for community involvement in funding decisions.

* Visitor levy fund allocation and community project proposals.

Discussion on Licensing Applications

James Benbow discussed a new convenience store license application at Haymarket station, questioning the necessity of an alcohol license given the number of existing stores. Paul Hancock highlighted the potential for including licensing restrictions in a place plan, although he acknowledged past difficulties in enforcing such policies. The conversation also touched on a short-term let license application for Chester Street, with Paul expressing concerns about potential disruptions from six-person short-term lets.

* Licensing applications for new convenience stores and restaurants.

* Discussion of short-term let licensing renewals and community objections.

Community Safety and Licensing Updates

Cllr Jo Mowat addressed concerns about illegal bikes being used by delivery drivers and noted that Inspector Quinn is prioritizing this issue. He shared updates on the budget discussions and highlighted ongoing frustrations with short-term let licensing and planning applications. Hancock emphasized that while there are objections to short-term lets, they often do not relate to antisocial behavior.

* Enforcement actions regarding illegal bikes and delivery drivers.

* Updates on the new licensing database and taxi center.

Discussion on Local Transportation and Community Engagement

Cllr Jo Mowat addressed the bike rental system, highlighting the importance of designated pickup and drop-off locations to avoid continued charges. He mentioned the effective geofencing that prevents bikes from being taken out of designated areas and shared statistics showing significant usage. Hancock also touched on community



<p>engagement efforts, including a forthcoming questionnaire to gather local input for a place plan.</p> <p>Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Margaret Graham will be asked to provide an update on the King's Council opinion regarding the construction of public toilets.* Paul Hancock will ensure that the updated maps regarding bin hubs are published on the council website are publicised.* Paul Hancock will prepare a community council response in support of the Atholl Crescent residents regarding the hostel development.* David Hewitson will draft a letter to the council regarding the bus stop spacing and the need for better service for residents.* James Benbow will submit a late objection to the new convenience store license application due to the community council's discussion.* Cllr Jo Mowat will email Inspector Quinn to follow up on the enforcement actions regarding illegal bikes being used by delivery drivers.* Cllr Jo Mowat will provide an update on the progress of the new licensing database in the next meeting.* Cllr Jo Mowat will raise the issue of the break-in at 20 Grosvenor Crescent with the new inspector.	
<p>13. Future Meetings</p> <p>It was agreed to meet again on the First Thursday of each month</p> <p>Thu, 02-Apr-26 Thu, 07-May-26 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.