



West End Community Council

Minute of Meeting

7:30pm on the 6th of November 2025 at Ashfield Melville Street Edinburgh and participation via the ZOOM video platform

PRESENT IN PERSON and via Zoom

Anne Tod, Stephen Townsley, Anne Marie Brittan, William Phillips, Martin Young, Martha Baur, Phillip Flockhart, Hillary Munro, David Hewitson, Colin Smith (CBRE), Hannah Munro (CBRE), Cllr Jo Mowat, Tom Lawrence, Roddy Donaldson, Douglas McGregor, Richards Spalding, Paul Hancock, Hannah Tweedy, Celia Joicy, Anthony Vettraino, Barry Cunning, Andrea Molten, Barbara Ross, Gayle Watson, Hazel Black, Finola Quinn, Isabel Thom, Peter Chalmers, Brian Veitch.

Discussion	Action
<p>1. Apologies Angus RobertsonMSP, Tracy Gilbert MP, Claire Miller, Finlay McFarlane, Hal Osler, Margaret Graham, Graeme Lyall, James Benbow, John Young, Gordon Wylie, Krystyna Szumelukowa</p>	
<p>2. Minutes from previous meeting The Minute of the Meeting held on 2nd October 2025 was approved</p>	
<p>3. Meeting Summary: Generated by Read AI - Uncorrected Summary:</p> <p>The meeting began with introductions from attendees, including local residents, community councillors, and planning professionals, highlighting the community's active role in local development. Paul Hancock addressed logistical issues, such as attendance tracking and technical difficulties with presentations. The focus then shifted to Sigis Capital, a hotel investment firm, and their Project Blossom, which aims to develop urban hotels in major European cities, featuring a unique blend of traditional hotel rooms and Japanese capsule-style accommodations.</p> <p>Concerns were raised regarding the planning application for Athol Crescent, particularly its classification as a commercial area despite its residential nature. Hancock emphasized the potential negative impact of servicing vehicles on the community and addressed worries about noise levels and local services due to the new hotel. He assured attendees that the hotel would be staffed around the clock for guest safety and that most guests would likely use public transport, acknowledging existing parking and traffic challenges.</p> <p>Hancock discussed the importance of community engagement in the planning process, noting the deadline for public comments and the need for detailed architectural plans to address design objections. He proposed using recordings for accurate meeting minutes and emphasized the necessity of an action list to track decisions. The conversation also covered ongoing issues, including the City Council's compliance with construction conditions and updates on local projects.</p>	



The discussion included the EV lamp post charging initiative and the discrepancies in policy between Edinburgh and East Lothian, with a call for a clear council policy to support public charging points. Hancock also addressed community concerns regarding proposed tram routes, advocating for alternatives that minimize disruption and the need for housing demolitions. The group agreed to draft a letter to express their objections and support for improved transportation options, while also reviewing financial updates and the progress of local initiatives, including the Hugo appeal and the place plan development.

Chapters & Topics:

Introduction of Attendees and Meeting Logistics

Paul Hancock opened the meeting and encouraged attendees to introduce themselves. Participants included local residents, community councillors, and planning consultants, such as Colin Smith and Hannah Brewer from CBRE. The introductions provided a diverse representation of the community, with individuals like Edvin Cius discussing their roles in local development.

* Introduction of attendees and their roles in the community council.

* Presentation of the hotel proposal by Sigis Capital and its implications for the local area.

Sigis Capital's Project Blossom Overview

Paul Hancock provided an overview of Sigis Capital, a specialist hotel investment firm founded in 2017, and their successful projects, including the transformation of the Indian buildings into Virgin Scotts Hall. He detailed Project Blossom, which seeks to develop urban hotels across Europe, with five active sites in major cities. Hancock emphasized the firm's strong ties to Edinburgh and their collaboration with various partners, including BlackRock Real Assets.

Project Blossom Overview

Paul Hancock introduced Project Blossom, focusing on the integration of upscale private bedrooms and Japanese capsule-style accommodations. The project is estimated to cost around 30 million pounds and will consist of 86 rooms, with 45 designated as traditional hotel rooms. Hancock emphasized the importance of safety and security for guests, particularly female visitors, and noted that the facility will not include event spaces to minimize external foot traffic.

Discussion on Athol Crescent Planning Application

Paul Hancock addressed inaccuracies in the planning application for Athol Crescent, asserting that the area is predominantly residential. He pointed out that the proposal does not adequately consider the servicing needs and the community's strong opposition, with 265 objections noted. Hancock also emphasized the importance of maintaining a good quality of sleep for residents, which could be compromised by the proposed development.

* Community concerns regarding noise, traffic, and the nature of the hotel development.

Community Concerns and Hotel Operations

Paul Hancock discussed the implications of a new hotel on the local community, highlighting concerns about noise and the potential strain on local health services. He assured attendees that the hotel would maintain a 24-hour staffing presence to manage guest activities. Hancock also pointed out that the majority of guests would



likely use public transport, which could alleviate parking issues, although he recognized the need for solid data to support this claim.

* Financial aspects of the hotel development and its impact on the local residential environment.

APRAE Discussion and Community Engagement

Paul Hancock initiated a brief discussion on the APRAE chat, focusing on the heritage statement and its significance. He noted that Dimitri is open to communicating with local residents and requested that a list of questions be passed to him. Hancock also reminded attendees about the deadline for community comments on planning, which is set for tomorrow.

Discussion on Accommodation Design and Infrastructure

Paul Hancock addressed concerns about the accommodation design, specifically pointing out that the so-called "Japanese pods" are merely bunk beds, as clarified in the application. He noted that Historic Scotland has requested more details regarding sanitary facilities and drainage, which are critical given the historical context of the buildings. Hancock also highlighted the challenges of accommodating modern drainage needs in older structures.

Planning Application Process and Community Involvement

Paul Hancock explained the steps involved in the planning application process, including the consideration of community objections and the role of planning officers. He highlighted that the community council has a two-week extension to submit further comments after the initial objection period ends. Hancock also mentioned that if significant changes are needed, there may be a re-advertisement of the application, allowing for additional public input.

* Discussion of the planning application process and community feedback mechanisms.

Discussion on Meeting Minutes and Action Items

Paul Hancock highlighted the challenges in producing meeting minutes and suggested that recordings could serve as a true record. He proposed creating an action list to ensure important decisions are tracked and followed up on. The discussion also covered the City Council's failure to enforce compliance regarding public toilet construction and updates on local projects, including the redesign of bin hubs.

EV Charging and Tram Consultation Discussion

Paul Hancock addressed the challenges surrounding EV lamp post charging in Edinburgh, noting the city's resistance compared to East Lothian's implementation. He emphasized the need for a clear council policy on public charging points. The discussion transitioned to the tram consultation, where Hancock and others expressed concerns about the proposed routes, particularly regarding their potential negative impact on the West End community.

* EV Lamp Post Charging Initiative

* Tram Consultation and Community Response

* Community Council's Position on Tram Routes

* Impact of Tram Routes on Community Well-being

Discussion on Tram Routes and Community Concerns

Paul Hancock discussed the potential benefits of integrating trams into the road network, highlighting the need for dedicated space to avoid conflicts with vehicles. He raised concerns about the Dean Bridge's structural limitations and the difficulties it



may pose during construction. Peter Chalmers suggested that their response should concentrate on these community-specific issues.

Planning Licensing and Financial Updates

Paul Hancock addressed the licensing report from James Benbow, indicating a lack of clarity but confirming that no objections were proposed. He highlighted Graeme's objections to three short-term lets and noted a significant increase in public comments on the matter. The treasurer's report indicated minimal financial activity, with funds primarily in the JustGiving account.

Planning Report Discussed

Licensing Report Discussed

Treasurer Report Discussed

Place Plan Discussed including reporting, what the place plan should and shouldn't include, basing decisions on data, boundaries, sub-group membership.

Councillors Reports were discussed

Engagement Report discussed

Heads of Garden report discussed in consideration of establishing Atholl and Coates

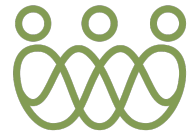
Crescent garden association

Action Items:

- * Paul Hancock will circulate the presentation slides after the meeting to ensure all attendees have access to the information shared. Done
- * Paul Hancock will provide an update to the transport statements based on actual usage data to address concerns about traffic generated by the hotel. Not received from CBRE
- * Paul Hancock will continue engaging with the community to address their concerns and provide further information as needed. CBRE comments attached
- * Paul Hancock will show the construction costs to the community members privately to clarify the financial aspects of the hotel development. CBRE comments attached
- * Paul Hancock will email the attendees with the list of questions that were discussed during the meeting. Done
- * Jo Mowat will speak to colleagues about the charges on lampposts to gather more information. Awaited
- * Hazel Black will write a letter to the council objecting to both tram routes while acknowledging the need to connect the Royal Infirmary. Done
- * Hazel will draft a letter regarding the tram consultation and circulate it to all community councillors for comment. Done
- * Margaret Graham - Licensing for STL information to enable comments. Still awaited
- * Paul Hancock to send transitional costs fro website to Dougie -Not done
- * Papers to be circulated earlier aiming to issue on a Monday before a meeting.

Key Questions:

- * How will the hotel address concerns about noise and traffic in the residential area?
- * What measures will be taken to ensure the hotel does not disrupt the residential community?
- * What is the nature of the hotel being proposed and how does it differ from traditional hotels?
- * What is the timeline for the planning application process and when will community feedback be considered?
- * Should the community council focus on the Dean Bridge option in their response?



<p>13. Future Meetings</p> <p>It was agreed to meet again on the First Thursday of each month, the next meeting being the 03-Dec-2025</p> <p>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.

DRAFT