

Craigleith/Blackhall Community Council

Minutes of Meeting Monday 20 January 2020

Held in Blackhall St Columba's Church Small Hall

Present : Stuart Pinkerton (Chair), Alan Denham (Secretary), James McLennan, Duncan Osler (part), Grant Roger, Michael Cockburn, Darlene Jeffrey; Inverleith Ward Councillors - Gavin Barrie, Hal Osler, Max Mitchell, Iain Whyte; PC Lindsay Johnston; 4 members of the public. Also attending on behalf of Queensberry Properties - Steven Simpson, Ewan Anderson and Alex Orr

Apologies : Martin Riddell, Deidre Brock MP, Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP.

Police Scotland

PC Lindsay Johnston reported that 22 cases had been solved; number of housebreaks in particular were down, part of a city wide trend. There continued to be regular foot and car patrols, including Ravelston Woods and Roseburn Cycle Path.

During discussion there was brief mention of 20mph speed limit. A report is to go to the next meeting of the Transport and Environment Committee in February.

Lloyds Building (Finance House), Orchard Brae

On behalf of Queensberry Properties, Steven Simpson and Ewan Anderson outlined the proposals for the redevelopment and reuse of Finance House. Queensberry Properties which has been operational since 2007 is a joint venture between Cruden and Buccleugh Properties. Their objective is to develop upmarket housing.

Finance House comprises 2 buildings, one built in 1960s facing Orchard Brae and a second built in 1970s. The latter building will be demolished and the site redeveloped, allowing the recreation of a missing terrace. The 1960s building will be reused and reclad, and a green frontage provided on to Orchard Brae . The quality of the landscape on the site will be important and will be improved.

Conversion and redevelopment will result in 170 flats of which 8% will be 3-bed, the remainder 1 and 2-bed. As the site is well connected in terms of bus services, the number of parking spaces will be reduced to 54 (currently 166), consistent with the emerging planning policy in the City Plan 2030 and the City Mobility Plan.

There will be public exhibitions at Orchard Brae House in February and March.

Meeting of 16 December 2019 - minutes approved.

Matters arising :-

Police Scotland consultation - Secretary completed and submitted a consultation response.

Service 13 - e-mail submitted to Edinburgh Council on future of service 13 but a response still awaited.

Chair Report and Other Community Council Matters

The City Council is consulting on the issues for the City Plan 2030 (review of local development plan) and the City Mobility Plan during February and March. Following discussion it was agreed that both should be considered at the February Community Council meeting. Both were also to be considered at the meeting of the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils on 23 January which the Secretary will attend.

City Councillors Reports

Councillor Hal Osler said that there was to be a visit to East and West Princes Street Gardens ahead of a meeting of the Culture Committee.

Councillor Gavin Barrie reported that a meeting with Blackhall Primary School parents had sought a streets protection plan and the closure of Craigmack Road during school opening and closing times - he said that given the mixture of traffic on Craigmack Road and the need for attendance by Police Scotland to oversee the closure, it was not likely to be practical.

Tourism - the revised strategy was discussed - from 2020 the priority is to manage the number of tourists and this was welcomed. However in the absence of an action plan and the role falling to the Edinburgh tourist action group reflecting the tourist industry, it appears to be policy with limited scope for successful implementation. City Council's priority is to introduce stronger controls on short term holiday lets such as AirBnB as well as the visitor tax.

AOCB

Community Garden - a local Blackhall resident had contacted the Community Council on the feasibility of a community garden.

The view at the meeting was that it was an interesting idea - it was certainly not an idea that had been considered before - although given the residential character of the Blackhall area with the majority of dwellings having gardens, it was not clear the type of community garden being considered - was it be a formal garden or allotments.

The 'horse field' on Craigmack Road had been suggested as a possible site but nobody at the meeting had any knowledge of the current ownership. There was also a discussion on alternative sites, including Ravelston Park, one of the Orchard Parks and the former quarry behind Blackhall Primary School, but the view was that there was not an easy alternative site currently available in Blackhall.

Nursery Provision - the forthcoming Government changes increasing the level of provision for 3 and 4 year olds and the under provision in Blackhall (and elsewhere in the city) was discussed.

Royal Victoria Hospital - no specific proposals at this stage.

Next meeting : Monday 17 February 2020 at 7.30pm Blackhall St Columba's Church

Alan Denham, Secretary
25 January 2020

