

Craighleith/Blackhall Community Council

Minutes of Meeting Monday 25 April 2022 Held at Blackhall St Columba's Church

Present - Stuart Pinkerton (Chair), Alan Denham (Secretary), Martin Riddell (Treasurer), Susie Ross, Duncan Osler, Darlene Jeffrey, Michael Cockburn; Inverleith Ward Councillors Hal Osler, Max Mitchell; Inverleith Ward local council election candidates - Jule Bandel (Scottish Greens), Stuart Herring (Scottish Conservatives), Mhairi Munro-Brian (Scottish Labour), Vicky Nicolson (SNP), Malcolm Wood (Scottish Liberal Democrats); 30+ members of the local community

Apologies - Jim McLennan, Deidre Brock MP, Tam Laird - Scottish Libertarian Party candidate

Minutes of 21 March 2022 meeting - approved.

Police Report - PC Colin Cursiter was not able to attend the meeting, but provided a written report which is included in annex 1.

Ravelston Park Community Asset Transfer consultation - the discussion at the meeting was to be used to inform the Community Council's consultation response on order to meet the City Council's deadline of 29 April. The consultation was being repeated because the original consultation had failed to meet the legal requirement for 20 working days for consultation.

It was apparent from the discussion that there was widespread acknowledgment of the need for a replacement nursery in Blackhall. This extended to both those who supported the Community Asset Transfer and those who are opposed to it. There was considerable disappointment that Edinburgh Council had made the decision some years ago not to provide a nursery in the Blackhall catchment area, Blackhall being the only community in the city not provided with a Council funded pre-school nursery.

As a consequence the use of the former Ravelston Park pavilion has provided a substitute and the land transfer will enable redevelopment of a new nursery plus a small community space to be opened on the pavilion site.

The Blackhall Community Trust representative stated that the Park location is the only viable site available for the nursery and hence the importance of the Community Asset Transfer to enable the new nursery to proceed with additional nursery spaces. This will enable the nursery to meet the Scottish Government's and Edinburgh Council's objectives of extending nursery provision. The Trust representative said that the development would only use 4% of the park area and part of the development would be available for community use.

A number of residents commented that they did not have knowledge of the Trust or had sought information from the Trust but received no response.

A number of residents opposed the Community Asset Transfer but acknowledged the importance of the nursery and the need for improvements in the nursery building fabric. A view expressed at the meeting by several residents was that alternative sites had not been explored sufficiently. It was not accepted that Ravelston Park is the best location for the

replacement nursery. Ravelston Quarry was referred to as a possible alternative site, but Councillor Hal Osler said that it would be prohibitively expensive to make it usable because it is contaminated.

By focussing only on the Ravelston Park pavilion it would lead to a significant weakening of the Park's current protection as open space. The Park was gifted to the local community in 1921 to be held in common good for future generations. It was also pointed out by the Friends of the Park that additional protection is provided by the Fields in Trust designation and the release of the land through the Community Asset Transfer would require equivalent amount of public land to be substituted.

With protection already lasting 100 years, the question asked at the meeting was why does our generation know best. The principle of maintaining the whole of the park as protected open space is equally important for future Blackhall generations over the next 100 years as in the previous 100 years.

Other concerns were also raised by some members of the community. The modest increase in size from 30 spaces to 40 spaces will not meet all future requirements for nursery spaces in the Blackhall area. Additionally funding issues ahead of Community Asset Transfer were of concern. It was not clear that adequate consideration has been given to the availability of funds, leading to concerns that the Blackhall Community Trust may not have a workable plan. There was also uncertainty about long term funding for the nursery being in place. Even if there was funding, it is not clear that the skill sets to project manage the building construction contract are available, possibly resulting in extended building works taking place in the park or may not even be completed.

Ravelston Park has for a long time been important for youngsters' football games and this should not be compromised by both construction works and new building. Other residents raised the use of part of the building for community use and related parking issues, particularly in the evening, and inconvenience to nearby residents.

In conclusion, there was strong recognition of the need for improved nursery provision. For some in the community this was of paramount importance and outweighed any concerns about the loss of open space. The discussion at the meeting demonstrated however that there was not a consensus on this point. The meeting was strongly divided on the use of Ravelston Park for development which is not related its primary use as a park. The need to maintain the good intentions of our predecessors 100 years ago is important and it is not for the current generation to undermine their good intentions by weakening the common good status of Ravelston Park and possibly setting a precedent for, say, expansion of the nursery in the future.

Craigleith Hill Area Speeding - resulting in part from Craigleith Road closure, Susie Ross expressed concerns about the speed of traffic in the 20 mph area with speeds in excess of 40 mph in some cases occurring. Traffic calming measures are inadequate and there was need for serious intervention. Police Scotland had been informed and will look at it as part of the routine speed assessment measures.

The Councillors said that they were seeking to reopen Craigleith Road earlier, possibly in June.

A resident also commented on the continued speeding problem on Craigmook Road.

Councillor Reports - Councillor Hal Osler said that Queens Road Steps had been repaired temporarily but permanent repairs were still required.

Groathill Avenue road closure - a resident said that the closure had resulted in confusion with traffic lights still functioning on Groathill Avenue. The alternative route via Groathill Road South was not suitable as there were parked cars and a low, narrow bridge. Councillor Max Mitchell was following up the matter.

Local Election Inverleith Ward Candidates

As well as introducing themselves, the candidates gave a brief summary of their priorities -

Jule Bandel, Scottish Green - as well as housing issues including rented housing, she was concerned about broken pavements would discourage walking; bus services were not providing adequate connections limiting the use of public transport.

Max Mitchell, Scottish Conservative - he has been a councillor for 5 years, had listened and his priority was to support the improvement of the Inverleith area. His focus was delivering basic services rather than headline grabbing projects.

Stuart Herring, Scottish Conservative - his policy priorities were infrastructure, improving roads and pavements. This includes the removal of Spaces for People bollards. Localised flooding issues should also be a priority.

Vicky Nicolson, SNP - as a resident of Drylaw she was passionate about making the local area better and will work hard for the local community.

Hal Osler, Scottish Liberal Democrats - has been a councillor for last 5 years and enjoys working with community representatives who are passionate about their community. Priorities are accessibility around the Ward, localised flooding problems and pavements.

Malcolm Wood, Scottish Liberal Democrats - he is a local Blackhall resident as well as a scout leader at Blackhall St Columba's Church. His priorities are the need for an equal society and climate change.

Mhairi Munro-Brian, Scottish Labour - she was a Union representative and acknowledged that there had been no Labour voice in the Ward for the last 5 years and was keen to rectify this omission.

AOCB

Proposed 20 metre telecoms mast near 2 Strachan Road - a local resident asked about progress on the application. There was nothing to report at the time of the meeting (Note - subsequently informed that the Council had approved the application).

Ravelston Park flooding - reported some time ago but it still remains a problem.

Next meeting - to be held at Blackhall St Columba's Church small hall at 7.30 pm on Monday 16 May 2022.

Alan Denham
Secretary
5 May 2022

Annex 1 - Police Report



OFFICER COMMENTS:

Been on details such as Russian consulate, high risk missing person, football and anti youth disorder patrols.

Op Pax has identified young people who are involved in anti-social behavior and we are working with schools/parents/council on their offending.

Operation PAX was created to disrupt this type of activity, provide reassurance to the community and engage with them to gather information, and report suspicious or criminal behaviour. This would allow us as the police to take positive action in respect of identified nominals, & work with our partner agencies to take diversionary, enforcement or disruptive action in order to address this issue. We conducted joint visits to parents of the young people, working with partners to address their behaviour. Officers involved generated intel of the threat assessment, for further disruption action Together with Partners.

The aim is to identify various opportunities for diversionary tactics, to make referrals to partners, in order to work together to reduce the opportunity for young people recruited into serious and organised crime or criminal exploitation due to situational vulnerabilities.

Operation PAX provided, dedicated, increased & focused patrols to exploit available opportunities to highlight proactive enforcement activity and engagement in the North West. The policing style for this operation is to keep people safe and police by consent. However, in order to disrupt these groups, a Zero Tolerance approach is used where appropriate and proportionate. Action in key hotspots known to attract youths, and ASB have been policed by nominated officers from CPT, the Local Initiative team and Response throughout this year, and their presence has definitely reduced the call numbers up until February, by 31% and have curbed the behaviour of these youths, and the frequency of ASB events. Through disruption tactics, enforcement and diversion, this operation has shown that positive action leads to a safer community, and residents can see the efforts being made to decrease this type of behaviour.

We have a team who react to incidents and do CCTV trawls and charge youths involved later. 2 males charged recently for throwing dog poo on the cycle path after officers identified them from CCTV.

- Recently Drylaw Community officers have embarked on their individual programme of events in Schools, Buses, Colleges, Hospitals, as part of hate crime week. Officers have engaged with the public to create an understanding of hate Crime, & the 5 strands involved, Hate, Religion, Disability, Sexual Orientation & Transgender Identity. Talks carried out in 3 primary schools, Forthview, St David's & Pirniehall, on hate crime. PC's Maguire, Hickie & Smith state that the talks were well received, & actions created from the children, on hearing this information. Thus highlighting the necessity to have children at such a young age, being aware of how their actions and the actions of others can affect the lives and wellbeing of those being abused. The message, that all hate crime, in all forms is not acceptable, and will not be tolerated under any circumstances by Police Scotland. This week of action may be over, but all of the officers here in the North West are committed in preventing crimes of this nature

CONTACT US;

Email (for all ward areas): EdinburghCPTNorthWest@scotland.pnn.police.uk

Email address is not monitored 24/7 or for reporting crime or ongoing incidents. These should be reported by calling 101 (non-emergency) or 999 (emergency).

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