

Craigleith / Blackhall Community Council

Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 15 January 2024

Held at Blackhall St Columba's Church

Present - Community Council - Stuart Pinkerton (Chair), Alan Denham (Secretary), Grant Roger, Martin Riddell, Jim McLennan, Duncan Osler, Michael Cockburn; Inverleith Ward Councillors Hal Osler, Max Mitchell; Murrayfield Ward Councillor Alan Beal

In attendance - 30 members of the local community

Apologies - Darlene Jeffrey; Councillor Vicky Nicolson; and Angus Robertson MSP

Minutes of 18 December 2023 meeting - approved

Police Report - there was no police report this month

Community Council matters :-

Planning application : PAN Finance House, Orchard Brae

It was noted that the approved application for the partial reuse and partial redevelopment of the Finance House site as residential development is currently the subject of a pre application notice (PAN) for proposed changes as student accommodation. There will be a public exhibition in St Ninian's Church at Comely Bank in late February.

Concerns were expressed about both the appropriateness of the site for student accommodation and the possible use as short term lets outside term time. It was stated that student accommodation is in the same use class category as residential development and student accommodation would not be a change of use. Short term lets outside term time will be subject to separate approval. Student flats provided by developers means less student demand for main stream housing.

Planning application : Planning Permission in Principle for Proposed Nursery, Ravelston Park, Keith Crescent

Malcolm Fraser of Fraser/Livingstone Architects provided background information on the application. The funders of the nursery have requested that planning permission in principle is used to establish whether a building can in principle be approved on the site before funding is agreed. The application is not therefore a detailed application. If approved, the subsequent detailed application will address matters such as flooding, parking, bats, badger sets, and SUDS scheme.

There was discussion on the flooding issue. SEPA's current advice is dated 2023, but a local resident is sceptical of its accuracy with Ravelston Park flooding up to 10 times in a year. It was also noted that there is a small stream from Ravelston Woods into the Park. In terms of rain water run off, Mr Fraser said that attenuation tanks will be provided in front of the proposed building.

It was noted that this stage provides an opportunity to offer support for the building, but also the only opportunity to object to the proposed development, as once it is approved in principle, only details can be objected to, not the principle of the development.

Craigcrook Road (Keith Row) / Queensferry Road Junction

The possibility of traffic lights at the junction had been raised as well as restricting parking on Keith Row. Councillor Hal Osler thought that traffic lights could affect the flows on the arterial route. In terms of restricting parking, residents in the past have not been supportive.

Ward Councillors Reports

Craigeith Tunnel, Craigeith Drive - Councillor Alan Beal had met with the Council's Road Safety Team to look at the issues and problems. He also commented on the problem of speeding on Craigeith Crescent.

Orchard Drive Build Out - some drivers crossing from Craigeith Drive were experiencing difficulties reading the new layout in the dark, endangering pedestrians on the extended pavement. Councillor Osler said that the Council officials were still working out how to address the safety issues - lamp post or reflective bollards, Officials had said that a new lamppost was prohibitively expensive but this was questioned given the costs quoted for the SPEN changes.

Council Budget - to be decided in February but likely to be very challenging this year. In this context the extensive pot hole problems in the City was commented on.

Parking Issues - Councillor Max Mitchell said that the next meeting of the Transport and Environment Committee is likely to consider parking issues including Orchard Drive and the Blinkbonnys. Councillor Hal Osler has stressed to officials to look at Blackhall East (Queens Avenue area) as previous assessment was pre-covid.

Street Lighting - Queensferry Road fixed after 6 months and also Strachan Road lighting problem.

Tram Extension - the Transport and Environment Committee on 1 February will commence the consultation procedures for the extension of the tram between Granton and the City Centre.

AOCB

Food bins- the bins were fragile and break easily. One member of the community was on her 5th bin. The bins were mishandled by bin crews at times and there was also an issue of making them fox proof - could they be put on hedges? It was agreed to look into the matter.

SPEN - although to commence on 2024, there was no information on when the specific new cable works would impact on Blackhall.

Strachan Road Potholes - the recent weather had not been kind to the resurfaced road - now at least 60 potholes.

Suggested litter pick at Ravelston Park - Councillor Hal Osler will pass contact information to Friends (FORPWA) group.

Next meeting - Monday 19 February 2024

Alan Denham

Secretary

Craighleith/Blackhall Community Council

21 January 2024