

Craigleith / Blackhall Community Council

Minutes of Meeting held on Monday 19 February 2024

Held at Blackhall St Columba's Church

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

In attendance - 15 members of the local community

Apologies - Jim McLennan; and Angus Robertson MSP

Minutes of 15 January 2024 meeting - approved subject to a minor change

Police Report - there was a short written police report this month due to illness of P C Cursiter:-

there were 147 calls, 32 less than similar time period last year. There has been a marked reduction in youth calls.

Two housebreakings have been reported and they are being investigated by the CIU department. An incident was reported involving an attempted theft of a numberplate, so these events may be linked. Police Scotland will be looking to do more foot patrols now that festive duties have been completed.

In discussion it was noted that the report did not include other issues :-

- 1) there was not any inclusion of the theft of the two expensive bikes on the cycle path near House O' Hill Road/Wester Drylaw Drive. It had raised some concern in the community.
- 2) there was an incident of joy riding in Blinkbonny which resulted in a car being crashed and occupants leaving the scene.
- 3) balaclava wearing youths on pedal bikes around the Craigleith/Blinkbonny area with youths fleeing towards an unoccupied house in Craigleith Drive, potentially linked to item 2, again raising concerns in the local area.
- 4) the mobile CCTV unit hasn't been on the cycle path for a while - was there a possibility of its return following these recent issues?
- 5) there has been a car abandoned on Maiden Craig Crescent for at least 6 months. OE57FNZ Alfa Romeo. Its tax has expired - was there anything the police can do about it?

The Chair agreed to e-mail Police Scotland about these concerns in 1-5 above.

Community Council matters :-

Review of Scheme for Community Councils and their Boundaries

It was noted that Edinburgh Council was consulting on the review between 19 February and 8 April. In some parts of the city, changes to community council boundaries are proposed in the consultation paper, in part reflecting new housing. No change to the Craigleith/Blackhall Community Council boundary is proposed. In

discussion it was noted that the current boundary following the centre line of Queensferry Road (Hillhouse Road) and Telford Road was administratively convenient, but it did not fully reflect fully the geographical community of Blackhall. Parts of the area north of Queensferry Road and Telford Road were arguably part of Blackhall including the House O'Hills and Drylaw Crescent area. Likewise parts of the Craigleith Crescent area near Blackhall Dip were geographically closer to Blackhall than Murrayfield. It was agreed that the Secretary would prepare a short paper setting out options ahead of the next meeting.

Parking Problems at Blackhall Mosque

Local residents living in House O' Hill Road and Drylaw Crescent who had formed a local committee had been in touch with the community council about parking problems resulting from Friday prayers at Blackhall Mosque. Although part of Blackhall it is not directly within the community council area. It was recognised however that the Strachan Road/March Road/Columba Road could also be affected.

Councillor Vicky Nicolson said that the Mosque has been proactive in attempting to deal with the parking problem - there are now 2 Friday gatherings; number plates of badly parked cars are read out and drivers have to relocate such cars. She has also been trying to facilitate a meeting between the Mosque and local residents. Additionally council officials have been monitoring the parking issues. Councillor Hal Osler said that she was awaiting a report from the Council's chief roads official on the problem.

Incorrect parking should be reported. Likewise where licensed hire vehicles are parked across residential drives, the vehicle and number should be reported to the Council's licensing department.

The Chair said that the community council were happy to meet with local residents if they were also willing to engage and co-operate with Council officials, the Mosque and the community council.

Lothian Buses Services in the Queensferry Road corridor

It was noted that service changes are to be introduced on 24 March, but other than the introduction of a limited X47 service along Queensferry Road at peak hours, no major changes are proposed. Discussion highlighted a number of problems :-

there was no increase in the choice of routes, given the loss of services 41 and 42 in the last 18 months;

Ward Councillors had not had advanced notice of the changes, despite the commitment given by Lothian Buses after the last service changes. A local resident thought that Edinburgh Council should have greater control over bus services; with service 43 the only bus serving the city centre retail core and Princes Street east end, it has resulted in heavy loads at bus stops, slow boarding and often full buses at Queensferry Street;

frequent delays means that effectively there is a 20 minute service with 2 buses arriving together, effectively 3 buses per hour in the Queensferry Road corridor.

Agreed that the Secretary would e-mail Lothian Buses about these concerns.

Local Place Plans

While planning legislation now provides for the preparation of local place plans in Scotland, Councillor Hal Osler said that the best scope for such plans were in areas where there was a blank canvas and potential for larger scale developments. Although place plans could be considered in Craighleith/Blackhall, the opportunities for new housing is limited to a small number of brown field sites. Sites behind the school, opposite Ravelston Golf Course and South Groathill Avenue were suggested. There is already a place plan for the brownfield Royal Victoria Hospital site. A place plan would not have the status of the local development plan. Concluded it was not a high priority at this time.

Consultation on the Library Service

The discussion concluded that the priority was the reopening of Blackhall Library. Councillor Hal Osler said that it will come back but it will not be quick due to the RAAC concrete problems and the priority being given to RAAC in school buildings. Addressing RAAC in the library could cost between £3.5 and £6m. Given the unfunded costs going forward, the current works at Ratho Library, once completed, will determine the best way forward at Blackhall Library eg treating the existing building or rebuilding.

Nursery in Ravelston Park Planning Application

Noted that the current planning application had been adjusted and the period for comments extended by the Council.

Hillhouse Road Woods Signage

The Secretary reported that following agreement at an earlier meeting to take forward enforcement action through Edinburgh Council, the signs had been removed promptly once the Council had contacted the auctioneers.

Tram Extension along Roseburn Path

The Chair said that once the consultation is active, the matter will be considered at a future community council meeting to ascertain community views. It was noted that the Business case will cost £44m to prepare and the entire tram extension £2bn to build.

Ward Councillors Reports

Councillor Vicky Nicolson reported on

- Western General Hospital site - overhanging trees had been cut back following concerns from adjacent residents in Davidson Road and Grigor Drive
- she had been involved in a pre-application notice for student housing
- residents in Groathill Road South are seeking a 'no right turn' on Telford Road to reduce rat running and ease the pressure on the tunnel where there is not a separate footpath.

Councillor Hal Osler reported on

- problems with communal bins particularly around Blackhall Dip - problems in terms of regular emptying
- a tree is down in Ravelston Woods

Councillor Alan Beal reported on

- the SPEN cable - new electricity cable linking Gorgie Road with Telford Road substations- is coming over the hill from Murrayfield. Works started in Maidencraig Crescent on 19 February and will last 4 weeks
- Craigleith Drive Tunnel - local residents voiced their concern about the poor 20mph signage on Craigleith Drive; also the road and tunnel being used by school buses

Councillor Max Mitchell reported on complaints about communal bins in Orchard Brae

AOCB

Horses - as horses are herbivores their excrement does not have to be picked up
Yellow box markings opposite Craigleith Crescent on Queensferry Road - the yellow markings are so well worn, many drivers are now ignoring the yellow box. Councillors agreed to follow up the matter.

Strachan Road closure - noted that there had been no advance warning of the road closure to carry out works on the proposed 5G mast.

Maidencraig Crescent Steps - Martin Riddell said that another resident had experienced a bad fall on the Steps

Next meeting - Monday 18 March 2024

Alan Denham

Secretary

Craigleith/Blackhall Community Council

27 February 2024