

Grange Prestonfield Community Council
Minutes of 18 June 2020
Meeting held via Zoom website

Present

Chair - Ian Chisholm. (IC)

Elected Office Bearers -

Secretary- Raphael Bleakley (RB)

Joint Vice Chair - Ellen-Raissa Jackson (ERJ). Paul Rowllings (PR)

Treasurer - Andreas Grothey (AndG)

Present :

Stanley Bird (SJB), Sue Tritton (ST), Sally Griffiths (SG), Alan Gilmour (AIG), Scott Paterson (SP), Tony Harris (TH), Peter Jones (PJ), Ken Robertson (KR), Cris Ferguson (CF), ater

CLLR Cameron Rose, Isabel Clark (IAC)

Apologies :

Julian Newman (JN), Bill Reid (BR),

Absent - Police Scotland, Stuart Tooley (Edinburgh Uni), Maureen Edwards (ME)

In Attendance - Janet Sidaway (Former GPCC Chair), Ann Landels. (Liberton CC)

1. **Welcome.** - IC Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest** - None.

3. **Minutes of 20 May 2020** - Previously circulated Minutes were agreed after discussion of minor amendments.

Action Points -

- Police Scotland - Police Policy at present not able to join GPCC Zoom meeting nor provide a written report. If any GPCC members and/or public have any issues they can be raised with Police via email or phone.
- Bill Reid unable to attend GPCC Zoom meetings at present and (ST) advised she had contacted (BR) providing him with an update of useful contact numbers during the Covid crisis.
- Holyrood Park -(RB) dealt with. Discussion that restricted opening times.
- Public Transport - discussion that Government advice was to wear masks
- Newington Cemetery Bins removal - (TH) advised that he was arranging a meeting with Cemeteries Administration re Bins. Meantime a Lady at Newington Cemetery supplied a Bin for public use and regularly emptying same which was a great help.
- Planning Report - RB had sent it to Councillor Rose yesterday prior to meeting
- (IC) advised that not possible to hold the GPCC AGM due to the present unprecedented Covid circumstances as per CEC advice until later.

4. Notice of Matters - None

5. Reports (External) -

(a) Councillors Report

CLLR Cameron Rose advised -

Newington Cemetery Bins - not aware of issue and requested copy of email sent to CLLR Dickie to raise with the Bins and Cemetery Depts.

Holyrood Park Bins were overflowing due to reduced collections but now making collections and OK today.

Closures -

Holyrood Park - High Road was closed but now only closed 8.30 am - 6.30pm on Saturday and Sunday. Car Parks still closed. Lower road is open.

CEC emergency times - Nearly all Committees stopped including Full Council during cover crisis except for one Committee which is making all main decisions until next week. On 30 June 2020 the Full Council will resume for normal decision making. Other Committees (e.g. Planning, Development management, etc) will resume thereafter. CEC will not shut down for usual summer recess as closed for last 3 months. Some staff will possibly continue to work from home as this has been successful. Individual meetings, adhering to social distancing, may also resume sometimes.

Schools Report -

On Friday 12 June 2020) CEC issued Plans for schools to return on 11 August 2020 as per Scottish Government. Said CEC Plans were significantly criticised by Parents, First Minister and Cabinet Minister for Education. CLLR Rose and Councillors had a meeting with the Director of Education who was defensive regarding CEC Plans and arguing 3 key points against the criticism

1. Comparison with other local Authorities was unfair. CEC Plans were definite and not aspirational which some local Authorities had as their plans.
2. Money - not enough money to do any more.
3. Flexibility - CEC had to work within confines of Teachers contracts. No flexibility.

CEC Director of Education advised he would produce an Information Sheet of the most frequently asked Questions from Parents which may help.

Discussion that CEC School Plans are thorough but not imaginative, based on 2m social distancing guidance. CLLR Rose advised that at the Councillors meeting with the CEC Director of Education the Councillors all raised their numerous concerns and displeasure regarding the proposed CEC School plans and asked him to re-consider. The Scottish Government had said it would release more money to help Local Authorities with School arrangements.

(RB) advised that CEC had lost goodwill of parents due to poor communication. Preston Street Primary School communication with Parents was excellent unlike CEC communication. The CEC letter last week to Parents was not helpful and

resulted in a negative response from Parents prompting a letter being sent to CEC detailing their concerns with the proposed plans.

CLLR Rose replied that he considered CEC plans will change due to public pressure from observers and Parents. Very disappointed at the lack of imagination in the CEC Schools Plan. (PR) was glad CEC was re-considering their plans and asked if the individual schools could pick the model that best suits their school layout. CLLR Rose advised that likely all schools will follow one model. That there were 3 different categories namely Special schools, Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, and that all Schools would adhere to the one model. More clarity would be provided in a few weeks' time. Discussion that if one school could not accommodate the CEC model then this could pull all other schools down. CLLR Rose said this was a point well-made and (IC) commented that the Scottish Government took the same view.

(SG) asked about Pupils access to technology and what CEC were doing to identify the pupils that require the technology. CLLR Rose advised that CEC current plan was to make 1,100 iPads available to pupils but require to get this up and running.

Discussion that One to One teaching raised a complexity of issues and safety.

(ERJ) asked about social distancing - concerned that CEC school plan is setting the children to fail. Very difficult for children to keep 2m social distancing and would that lead to schools being closed. How are the CEC Education and/or schools going to inform Parents of any advice changes?

CLLR Rose advised that CEC school plan was 33% teaching in school with 2 m social distancing which was unrealistic because children will find this difficult to put in practice. Parents are concerned about the distancing. The Scientific evidence is that children are least vulnerable. The CEC school plans take no account for relaxation of the social distance (eg 1m).

CEC Director Education re-considering the school plans between now and August with benefit of input by Parents, Councillors, Scottish Government, etc

(KR) enquired if CEC had engaged with Teachers Unions but CLLR Rose did not know. There was no indication in the CEC school plans for variation of the Rules for teachers, no attempt for Volunteer teachers, flexibility of hours, etc. If the UK and/or Scottish Government rule on 2m guidance changes then this will change the CEC school plan.

(CF) commented that until the R number is significantly down the 2m rule will stay as increased risk of transmission of Covid - children could get covid virus and pass to elderly. CLLR Rose replied that the Government has to take into account that some people view the Social Distancing 2m rule to protect children, and everyone, which requires balancing a lot of risks.

(IC) commented that this was a political decision. The CEC Plan assumes 2m with no changes while other Local Authorities assume 1 m and changes.

Cameron House Nursery (CHN) - (RB) advised he had circulated a note regarding CHN. He had bumped into the Head Teacher who informed him there were no plans to re-open CHN. What are CEC future plans for CHN

CLLR Rose advised he had heard Cameron House Nursery is potentially closing and referred to a CEC email advising –

CHN continuing to provide nursery care has been under review in recent weeks. It is a small Nursery and only 2 children due to return. They can be offered placements in a new refurbished nursery nearby. The Head Teacher is retiring Possible decision to close CHN and nursery children go to Prestonfield. CHN building requires refurbishment which would cost £400,000. CEC beginning procedures to close CHN. CLLR Rose said he would circulate this.

(RB) said there had been definite plans for CHN to be refurbished. Staff happy and Scottish Government said increase Nursery provision - why CEC change to closure?

CLLR Rose advised that Prestonfield Nursery was available and has spaces. Head teacher retiring and change in direction but has to be Public consultation. Discussion that Parents wanted their children to go to CHN but not allowed by CEC in order to reduce numbers actually attending CHN,

CLLR Rose advised that all Councillors (CLLR Dickie, Perry Burgess) are committed to have someone attend GPCC meeting each month..

5. Reports of Interest Groups -

a. Planning

(TH) had circulated his Planning Note to GPCC members prior to the meeting.

Royal Blind School (RBS) Craigmillar Park.S75 not signed yet and timescale extended. Royal Blind school still own the property and access has been closed due to vandalism and security issues.

10 Craigmillar Park - planning application for safety fences on flat roof of Nursery. Local residents provided helpful information regarding this application. A number of objections already lodged. GPCC considering objection

23 Minto Street - New application submitted with a few changes after last year's application was refused by CEC. GPCC objection lodged

16 Minto Street - concrete Bin Store. Obtained planning consent for different style/build of bin store. Blasket Assoc in discussions. GPCC keeping a watch on how this progresses.

5G Mast - Mayfield Road at end of Mentone Terrace. Erection of 20' Mast. GPCC replied and await Planning application.

Peffermill Sports Village - Main application still to be determined. However disappointing that another application has been granted for future phase of Sports Village prior to the main application being decided.

9 Relugas Road - Long history with this planning application - (TH) had discussions with local objections and GPCC considering objection.

148 Bed Student Accommodation - Mayfield Road. (CF) raised concerns about this planning development in view of Covid issues and if there would be a review of the plan. Discussed that this planning application is proposed by a private company (not university). Ann Landels on behalf of Liberton Community Council advised keeping a careful watch on this development as in their area although working together with GPCC.

Online Civic Forum - (ST) Advised that OPEN DOORS DAY usually at end of September 2020 was cancelled. However, possible could be outside activities eg guided groups (up to 10 people) round Newington Cemetery, a walk round streets of interest.

b) Licensing - None.

c). Roads/Transport

(AG) advised that the Covid 19 Crisis had brought about a transformation by CEC in the City Centre -

Temporary new cycle lane between Cameron Toll and New RIE.

Signs are confusing for cyclists. Cyclists are moving over to vehicle lane as not clear that there is a designated cycle lane now. Buses now in same lane as all vehicles. Bollards on the roads. Ambulances have to use the vehicle lane and cars cannot move into the side as the Bollards stop them. (AG) to email CLLR rose with cycle issues at this location.

Automatic green man - Do not require to press the buttons as all switched on to reduce risk to public. Reduced waiting time for green man. Some Guard rails and Bus stops to be/have been removed to reduce risk of contact.

24 hour Bus Lane - Minto Street, Craigmillar Park, Liberton Road, CEC proposal to change some bus lanes to 24 hours in Southside and also elsewhere in City.

Foot Paths - social distancing 2 metres - difficult on some pavements/paths as not wide enough.

Just Eat Cycles - significant increase in use of cycles during cover crisis.

E-Scooters - Banned, except on private land. Glasgow Council is going to trial e-Scooters and hope to be first Council to allow on roads. 67% opposed to e-Scooters on pavements but believed not safe enough to go on Roads.

Trams enquiry completed after 6 years and no nearer identifying who responsible.
Tram work due to start on Monday 22 June in Leith Walk. Bus routes will be diverted via London Road and Easter Road.

Covid 19 crisis and lockdown - 35% less traffic volume.

New Bus time table issued 17 June due to increase passenger numbers.

Monday 22 June 2020 - Traffic Wardens back on duty and parking restrictions back in force.

Lots of Road Closures generally across Edinburgh in the short/long term. Measures planned by CEC City Centre Transformation Plan have been brought forward as result of Covid crisis due to increase in walking + cycling. Longer term planned road closures in neighbourhoods to reduce through traffic. Some of the proposed changes include –

- Victoria St and Cockburn St - planned closure and reduced parking.
- Mount Vernon, Kingston Avenue - planned road closure.
- Minto St./Bridges corridor - temporary footway widening
- George IV Bridge - temporary footway widening + cycle lane

(d). Communications/Publicity.

(PR) advised that he and (SJB) were regularly updating Facebook. There had been 3-4 new subscriptions since the last meeting.

New GPCC Website - 20 visitors each week

GPCC Facebook - 5 visitors each week.

Modest numbers and not staying long on Website/Facebook. Going to re-visit GPCC website layout to help inform, engage and communicate with residents in area. (IC) advised that the GPCC website contained all the required information (eg Minutes, meetings, etc) for the public to access.

e) Environment

(ST) advised nothing to add.

f) Newington Cemetery

(ERJ) advised that removal of the Bins was still an issue and seeking more help from CEC. No grass cutting had brought lots of wildlife to the cemetery.

Massive increase in number of people walking in Newington Cemetery which was good and hope that some may provide assistance in the future.

CLLR Rose asked (ERJ) to email him about the Bins issue as not aware of it.

(CF) asked what was a Scavenger Hunt - (ERJ) advised it was a hunt for the children which was on the phone to find specific objects (e.g. types of leaves, cones, etc)

(TH) advised he found information regarding Scientific Bereavement which included Cemeteries potentially receiving a Donation of 1,000 Euros to Newington Cemetery and would forward it to (ERJ). Source of the funds comes from recycled metals.

6. Reports from Office Bearers

IC Chair - Nothing to report

RB Secretary - Nothing to report.

AndG Treasurer - Report circulated.

GPCC Balance £2,384.87 less expenses (pending Zoom meetings and websites)) leaves balance of £2,164.91 of which Newington Cemetery has £1,263.05 leaving GPCC balance at £901.86.

(CF) raised the question of any Civic award for local people who were helping pensioners during lockdown. After discussion that previously a few people may have been nominated and to email CLLR Rose for up to date position.

7.Reports of Outside Groups

- a. EACC (Edinburgh Association of Community Councils) GPCC Representative

(KR) advised a meeting arranged for tomorrow (Thurs 19 June 2020). The Agenda dominated by Recovery Role, not sure if anyone from CEC attending. Would report back later.

- b) SNNN (Southside/Newington Neighbourhood Network)

ST advised- nothing to add but was going to obtain an update.

9 Open Forum -

Public Toilets - (PJ) raised concerns regarding the lack of Public Toilets when people were being encouraged to take daily exercise. Discussion that this was a National issue and (ST) said could be an Environmental concern. (PJ) to prepare a Note and submit to GPCC to help argument for more public toilets at the Public Consultation by CEC when deciding how to spend the Budget.

IC Chair thanked everybody and to keep safe.

10. Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 15 July 2020 at 7 pm. Via ZOOM

4	Newington Cemetery Bins	RB to send CLLR Rose a copy email sent to Cllr Dickie	Before 15 July 2020
4	Cameron House Nursery Closure	CLLR Rose to send CEC email to GPCC	Before 15 July 2020
5(c)	Cycle route from Savacentre to New ERI	Ag to email CLLR Rose with List of issues	Before 15 July 2020
5(f)	Newington Cemetery Bins	ERJ to email CLLR Rose with email of issues	Before 15 July 2020

5(f)	Funds -possible 1,000 Euros to Newington Cemetery	TH to send email to ERJ	Before 15 July 2020
6	Civic Awards nominations	CF to email CLLR Rose enquiring about this	Before 15 July 2020
9	Public Toilets when going to be opened	PJ to prepare note and submit to GPCC	Before 15July 2020