**Grange/Prestonfield Community Council**

**Minutes of 21 April 2021**

**Meeting held via Zoom**

**Elected Office Bearers -**

Chair - Ian Chisholm. (IC)

Secretary - Raphael Bleakley (RB)

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

**Present:**

Cllr Steve Burgess, Tony Harris (TH) Sue Tritton (ST), Alan Gilmour (AlG), Scott Paterson (SP), Sally Griffiths (SG), Peter Jones (PJ), Maureen Edwards (ME), Bill Reid (BR), Ken Robertson (KR) (joined 19:45)

**Apologies:**

Andreas Grothey (Treasurer), Isabel Clark (Minute Secretary), Stanley Bird, Julian Newman,

**In attendance:** Stefanie Murr.

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

**3.** **Minutes of 17 March 2021**- Circulated minutes were agreed.

Action items

* Peffermill litter bins and grange cemetery bins - (AlG) advised that bins are still missing
* Bin emptying people will not enter Cemeteries to empty bins - in relation to Grange Cemetery.
* Blocked drains - is Council acting on reports? Can Steve help with blocked drains - Cllr Burgess. Map of blocked drains, shows who reported. Cllr Burgess requested drains to be unblocked (Southside), a backlog because the crews on gully clearing diverted elsewhere. Anything outwith rota is taking time. Agreed to keep as an item **Action**
* Police report - received.
* Spaces for People - achieved a majority report from AlG & KR.
* Grants issue - response received by the Council
* Licensing of former Thai restaurant on corner of Dalkeith Road and West Mayfield - licensing status? **Action** - chase Cllr Rose

**(SP) approved minutes, (BR) seconder.**

4. Notice of Matters Arising not covered by agenda

1. **Reports (External)**
   1. Councillors Report – Cllr Steve Burgess

* Recent Meadows issues - Affects people in GPCC area. Response by Police & the Council as to what would be done. A Council action plan on a range of aspects has been produced. Cllr Burgess has been contacted about lack of toilets. Putting in a proposal for an urgent temporary provision for toilets on the central Meadows. Proposal has the backing of all Councillors in Southside and Newington Wards. Hoping that it will be agreed by Committee this week. Should see temporary toilet facilities on the Meadows shortly.
* Net Zero target - Policy & Sustainability Committee - considered a report on Council’s Climate Change reduction plan for a net zero carbon emission plan by 2030. The Council is working on an action plan which shows where Council’s carbon comes from - heating buildings such as schools. Show how emissions can be reduced. A lot of emissions that it’s not presently clear how they can be reduced. Council is trying to show leadership in this area. Trying to work in partnership with businesses and other agencies to work on a city-wide strategy with the aim to publish before COP-26 in Glasgow.
* Grange Cemetery - correspondence with a residents. Concerns about dogs off leads and intimidating people in the cemetery. Council officers trial dog control signs, Council looking at making this more obligatory.
* Prestonfield Neighbourhood Centre - day centre for older people with dementia. Still going, but struggling to survive as they have had little income. Looking at providing a more commercial offering. Looking to become an SDS centre. Cameron House Community Centre is getting into gear again and workers met at the end of March.

Questions to Cllr Burgess

* Meadows - (ST) - had circulated a report. Was sorry that no local councillors could attend. Councillor Day did attend and local people had a say. Public toilet provision all over the city is poor and has been going on for years. (IC) Raised that this issue has been exacerbated by closure of hospitality. (PJ) had circulated a paper to GPCC in 2020 and pointed out that public toilets were inaccessible to people with a disability and solution was to close them rather than make accessible. Is this being reconsidered? Cllr Burgess, agreed that this is an issue as facilities need to be accessible for all. Closure is due to financial pressure and the need to make savings. Report tomorrow is on future provision city wide. There is a move to open more toilets and put in temporary provision in parks such as Meadows, Inverleith and Leith Links. When hospitality opens, will help the situation. Daniel Johnson’s meeting - called meeting without consulting local politicians. Council officers told not to attend a meeting during an election period. Councillors met to discuss the issue, and were encouraged by Council Officers report along with the Police report. There were lots of people on the Meadows, only a small group of young people who went to the Meadows seeking trouble.
* Grange Cemetery - (ST) met Council officials, noted that it is one particular dog that causes problems - (ERJ) commented that Newington Cemetery - did have a problem with dogs, but was two particular dogs, but owner moved away. Doesn’t think owners would be happy with rules for dogs off leads. (IC) endorsed this view.
* Net Zero targets - (PJ) asked if there had been discussion about how resources within the Council will be found to make the changes needed to meet net zero targets. (BR) brought up challenge of converting boilers for home. Cllr Burgess commented that savings could be made from improving energy efficiency and can be used to pay off the cost of the infrastructure. Must be able to make a business case - Cllr Burgess has been pressing Council officers to do this. Council is bringing in financial expertise to see how to finance this. The UK Government say that by 2035 won’t be licensing gas boilers, however electricity supply is not sufficient with converting over to electric boilers and cars. (ST) sustainability issues on affordable housing - difficult to get sustainability into housing. Is there are a requirement for all affordable housing to be zero carbon. Cllr Burgess - new council housing and schools will be built to Passivhaus standard (a net zero standard). The biggest challenge is private housing and how to improve energy efficiency of those. Rental standards are different to private housing standards.

(AlG) raised that Prestonfield Bowling Club, has a dwindling membership and is looking like they will dissolve the Club. Considering handing over control of the lease to the Council in the next few months. Would prefer that the Council to take over and turn into allotments, as opposed to a private development. Is it likely that the Council could turn this to allotments? (ME) raised that over 2000 people waiting for allotments in Edinburgh. Cllr Burgess, an excellent idea that he would support, Action: Cllr Burgess will follow up.

* 1. Written Police report

A written report was considered from the Police.

(ERJ) asked about direct police complaints or complaints to Councillors? Cllr Burgess commented that he’s unsure how the police handle complaints from individuals.

Crime - housebreaking gone down.(TH) observed that the report is non specific in terms of our area. (IC) commented that large amount of crime is online, scams etc, but no information on that. Has an impact on this part of Edinburgh. (PJ) commented that rogue traders are buying up telephone numbers. Discussed circulating neighbourhood watch information to the Community Council. (SJB) has previously circulated this information and (IC) will follow up with him.

1. **Reports of Interest Groups**
   1. Planning –
      1. Paper from Tony Harris

(KR) had written a note a note on how the Director of Planning and environmental appeals do their work. (RB) to circulate. Issues about development and evaluating competing considerations in planning terms.

**19/02822/FUL – Rear of 1 Mentone Terrace EH9 2DG: Change of use from 5 garages to house**

This application is recommended for approval at the CEC Development Management (DM) Sub-Committee on 21st April. This is not just change of use but a new build higher than existing. Mentone terrace application has been approved.

**20/04089/FUL – 9 Relugas Road: Change of use of railway land to private garden and erect fence.**

This application is still noted as awaiting assessment, but is expected to be determined in the near future following further information from Network Rail about the site partly on their land.

2**0/04317/FUL & 20/04316/LBC – 14-15 Minto Street (Thrums Hotel) EH9 1RQ: extend hotel**

These applications were recommended for approval at the DM Sub-Committee on 21st April. Was approved at the meeting without discussion. One change is to remove the number of parking places, reduces it from 12 to five. Meets a point made that the parking place was too small. Will this put additional pressure on parking in surrounding area?

**21/01532/FUL – Block of 9 Flats, car parking etc at 67 Prestonfield Avenue EH16 5EX**

This is a currently vacant site between the Neighbourhood Centre and a small CEC garden near the junction with Priestfield Road. A public footpath runs between these two roads along the south side of the site. There is an existing consent 17/04942/FUL dated 1st October 2018 for a similar scheme. The differences in this new application are the reconfiguration of the block of flats to have a longer frontage onto Prestonfield Avenue and the vehicle access to be off Priestfield Road. The latter would avoid an awkward turn in front of the Prestonfield Avenue bus stop in the current scheme. There are two telecoms cabinets in the way at the back of the Priestfield Road footway obstructing the proposed vehicle access. (ERJ) commented that the CC did a lot of work around the time of the original application to make sure the vehicle access didn’t obstruct the bus stop and that this revisal is an improvement on the existing scheme.

**Redevelopment for housing of St Crispin’s School site, 19 Watertoun Road EH9 3HZ**

A report finalising the details of disposal to CALA of the St Crispin’s school site was approved at the CEC Finance and Resources Committee on 4 March.   Online consultation has been circulated. The maximum number of units onsite is 64. Proposal is for 49 units. Removes the liability for a major development. Unclear what the mix will be. Encouraging that CALA are engaging with Savile Area Residents Association. Suggestion to add the St Crispins consultation onto the website. Proposal includes 25% affordable housing.

**19/05923/FUL- Major Development in GPCC Area (also partly in Craigmillar & Gilmerton/Inch CCs) DPEA Appeal PPA-230-2329 re 19/05923/FUL - Edinburgh University Peffermill Sports Village**

This Appeal against the CEC refusal of 19/05923/FUL has resumed after being on hold, the DPEA Reporter having decided to conduct an unaccompanied site visit on an unknown date, in accordance DPEA Covid-19 restrictions.

**CEC Planning Service – Non-Material Variations (NMV)**

On 6th April we were notified by CEC of a new NMV Service, with definitions and charging structure. Commented that this is a useful clarification is that NMV is not a new consent, so the original consent date still applies. Typical of owners such as Cameron Tolls, to avoid obligations.

**Astley Ainslie Hospital Site**

NHS Lothian want to keep using Hospital Site, so any considerations in past in their programme are set back. (ST) question on the status of the current group - need other areas to put reps on the group. (ERJ) noted that she has a contact who works for the NHS who is responsible for the site, could be a quick way to find out any updates.

**Newington Library (ERJ)**

Concerns of current use of Covid testing centre. Asked by quite a few people about what’s going on as it was very quick to be repurposed . Wrote to Steve Burgess who suggested that CC write to the Communities and Culture Convener. Lots of people with reduced mobility use Newington Library, difficult to access Central library, click and collect, unclear why this library was chosen. Asking if the decision is to reduce provision, run down the library or close the library?

Cllr Burgess stated that council officers agreed that this was badly handled. Lucy Richardson from the Grange Association contacted Cllr Burgess on 19th March. Was a committee decision to approve it but ward councillors weren’t notified of this. Contacted Sarah Burns SE Locality Manager. Got back to Cllr Burgess that the main concern is that it happened without consultation. The covid testing centre is for a six month temporary use and will be returned to a library. Cllr Burgess thinks it would be useful to get that in writing from Communities and Culture Convener. Cllr Burgess subsequently received the briefing Councillors should have been given. Direction from UK Government of the need for local testing centres. Other libraries won’t be open until August. Use of Newington Library as a test centre will not impact on its capability to act as a library given current covid Restrictions. Action: Community Council to contact Communities and Culture and Convener. (IC) suggested strengthening the draft to highlight that Councillors weren’t informed of this decision in change of use.

* 1. Licensing - No licensing issues.
  2. Roads/Transport – Alan Gilmour

Instances of youths throwing stones at buses, for instance Portobello High Street. Bus services are increasing as of Sunday 26 April.

* + 1. Parking - CPZ Consultation

Council have sent out leaflets consulting on proposed Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) across the city. The reason in the literature is due to an increase in requests from communities asking the Council to take action to tackle issues caused by non-residential parking. (ME) raised that Dalkeith Road, has restrictions, can’t park on Dalkeith Road, what happens to people with cars who live on Dalkeith Road? (SG) mentioned that on Maclaren Road - had a priority parking area for 5 years, works well. The permit is cheap. Visitors can park on other side of the road, would object to parking meters. Is it all or nothing? If some streets have a problem and others don’t, how does this work. (TH) supports (SG) view.

GPCC managed to get a trial of a Priority Parking Area (PPA). Has been very successful where other areas have taken this up. View that Edinburgh transport people - should resist the change to CPZ which leads to more street clutter etc. Need to encourage everyone who has got the leaflet to object, otherwise. Is a separate consultation that’s come out of the blue. Need to encourage individuals to respond - suggestion to do this through local Associations. (ST) huge spaces to the north of of B1 in the Grange, should encourage these to become PPA. These only need to be monitored for one and a half hours a day as opposed to CPZ which needs 12 hours monitoring and adjacent street clutter and extra costs. (SG) would like to know from the Council whether the background intro is accurate. (Could be individuals who are quite vociferous who object to people who are not in the street are parking there. Discussion about pressure on this area? Action: ask the council for evidence given that traffic has been down.

(ME) said that Prestonfield Tenants Association were previously offered permits and said they didn’t want them. PPA point is to deter commuter parking - one attendant can monitor a number of areas. They have been shown to be successful. (ST) Consultation lasts to end of May - KR and AlG to go to May meeting to be sent in

* 1. Communications/Publicity – Paul Rowllings
     1. Community engagement

Got a few new registrations. Will take up CPZ consultation. Spaces for People email exchanges raised by (KR) and (ERJ), observation about confidence that we represent the residents in the CC area. A talking point. We don’t have a mechanism to directly engage with the residents to seek opinion. Traditionally has been people speaking to neighbours etc. Don’t need a large email distribution list. Occasionally is useful to get a wider body of opinion. Are smaller groups like Grange Association, Waverly Park etc to get email lists etc. (SG) suggested asking groups to respond via Survey Monkey etc. (IC) How representative, disagreement means that the CC has a wide range of views on the CC. Should aim on some things to increase views. (SG) SfP consultation, will be continuing debate - will continue to come. (PR) have some ideas about how we engage so that we’re ready for when the next issue comes. Have a newsletter that's distributed every couple of years, but that’s not very responsive. Ways of mechanisms to try and get in touch with residents

(KR). Posited two questions about how to engage with residents:

1. How get the message out? Display boxes host minutes of meetings. Distribute the minutes in post-office windows?

2. What happens when we get responses back? How handle that? Doing nothing isn’t the answer.

(AlG) mentioned the Next-door website (<http://nextdoor.co.uk>) which could be linked to the GPCC Facebook page. (SP) offered to look into this and to be given access to GPCC Facebook page. Proposals for discussion at a further meeting.

* 1. Environment

(ST), pushing for more on-street charging points, nothing been done on that. A continuing issue.

* 1. Newington Cemetery

(ERJ) said that she has met a young person who proposes a mini free library in the Cemetery as part of her Duke of Edinburgh’s award. . Edinburgh Tool library build, doing this as part of her Duke of Edinburgh award. Looking for support from Community Council. Others have been very popular.

1. **Reports from Office Bearers**
   1. Treasurer - no report - request for volunteers to become Treasurer.
   2. Secretary - no further information to report. Were asked to provide

**5. Reports of outside groups**

**a. Edinburgh Association of Community Councils (EACC)**

(KR) Response on behalf of GPCC on public spaces management - how city is used in public space for events etc. Enquiry has led to a short-term working group, will convene over three months, first meeting tonight - nothing to report. 60 interested parties, hope to map out the basis for a development plan.

EACC - (KR) mentioned that there’s a session on 22nd April, tackling the map of how Edinburgh gets to net zero by 2030.

b. Southside/Newington Neighbourhood Network (SNNN)

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| **3** | Licensing of former Thai restaurant on corner of Dalkeith Road and West Mayfield - licensing status? **Action - chase Cllr Rose** | **Action - RB to follow up with Cllr Rose** |
| 2(b) | Circulating neighbourhood watch information to the Community Council. (SJB) has previously circulated this information and (IC) will follow up with him. | IC to follow up with SJB to circulate Blackets Association neighbourhood watch information. |
| 3 (a) | KR note on how the Director of Planning and environmental appeals do their work. | RB to circulate note |
| 3 (a) | St Crispins CALA development - Consultation to be added to GPCC website | PR to add to GPCC newspage |
| 3 (a) | Newington Library | Letter to Communities convener to be strengthened and sent by IC |
| 3 (c) i | Parking consultations | AlG and KR to draft feedback for May meeting |

(ST) Info on community grants fund - however no sign of the SNNN meeting again.

6. Open Forum (including items from members of the public)

* + (SM) introduction of parking scheme - concern is that the measurements are extreme, not user friendly for people looking for evidence in the proposal paper. The reference to appendix 3 - no appendix. Wonder what the aims are of the changes?
  + (BR) Closure of eye pavilion going to Livingston - wanted to raise concern.
  + (BR) raised that there are lots of cones at the top of Prestonfield Avenue following resurfacing. Could they be relocated elsewhere? Cllr Burgess to follow-up.

**10. Date of next meeting:**  19 May 2021. (RB) and (IC) to discuss whether AGM should be May or June 2021.