**Grange/Prestonfield Community Council**

**Minutes of 18 November 2020**

**Meeting held via Zoom**

**Elected office bearers: I**an Chisholm (IC)- Chair; Paul Rowllings (PR)- Vice Chair; Ellen Raissa-Jackson (ERJ) - Vice Chair; Raphael Bleakley (RB)- Secretary; Andreas Grothey (AG) - Treasurer.

**GPCC members present:** Peter Jones (PJ); Sue Tritton (ST); Cris Ferguson (CF); Stanley Bird (SB); Alan Gilmour (AG); Tony Harris (TH); Andreas Grothey (AnG); Cllr Cameron Rose; Ken Robertson (KR); Scott Paterson (SP); Maureen Edwards; Julian Newman

**Apologies:** Isabel Clark; Bill Reid; Sally Griffiths; Stuart Tooley (University of Edinburgh Representative)

1. **Welcome**
2. **Declarations of Interest -** No declarations of interest

**3. Minutes** - Councillor Rose contacted Ellen about complaint issue. IC confirmed that there had been no further follow-up from the police to request to join meetings via Zoom. Minutes approved.

**4. Notice of Matters** Arising not covered by agenda

1. **Reports (External)**
   1. Councillors Report - Cllr Perry

Tier Systems. SG have consulted with councils when taking decisions. Get more of a handle, about how this is playing out. East Lothian in Tier 2, West Lothian rates high. hopeful that if things remained the same, that there would be the opportunity to go into Tier 2. Infections started to rise in Edinburgh. In West Lothian lots of people travel into Edinburgh to work, SG don’t want to move Edinburgh into tier 2. Commented that businesses need certainty. Hospital admissions and status - ability to deal with an increase in infection. Issues in West Lothian with hospital capacity. Knock on effect to Edinburgh. Overall a difficult picture.

Schools - since school reopening there’s been little evidence of a transfer of infection happening in schools. Isolated incidents - not a lot of young people self isolating. No evidence of mass spreading of infection in schools. Council have put in as much protection around schools as possible. Infection rate under control - means more extra curricular activities in schools. If infection rates increase, things will be rolled back.

Council budget - This year’s budget will be difficult. £50million spent on the crisis, difficult budget for the next two years. National Government and SG will not be setting budgets until end of February 2021, have to balance budget in March. Normally consult, put out a general consultation, but this will be difficult this year.

Questions from Community Councillors:

IC commented on difficulty of travel between travelling regions - can’t travel between tiers. Very difficult for people between the tiers. ST mentioned that can’t cross the council boundary. IP commented that this has been poorly communicated, this was advisory and will become statutory, with the risk of a fine. Want to get infection rate as low as possible before Christmas to make it less stringent at Christmas. AG asked where the spread is coming from? IP coming from people mixing socially. Not visiting people in houses, not going to pubs, reduces social mixes. Compliance, in particular house visits etc. IC commented that following the law requires public consent.

KR: EACC convenes informal presentation about the budget. A bland questionnaire, difficult to get a grip on this difficult topic. Very hard to start making suggestions if don’t know what the start point is. How much are we in arrears, how much in debt, a sensitivity analysis? It’s difficult for anyone to step in to offer suggestions. In consequence, much of the response is likely to be not meaningful. Not offered much to go on. It’s a crisis for the budget. IP: Difficulty with precision is that CEC won’t know the funding position until very late on. Give a standard template to show the start point and how consider.

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

Commented on amount of time applications take to complete. Can cause issues for neighbours.

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

Following email consultation with the GPCC planning sub-group, the Grange Association and affected neighbours in Relugas Gardens, a GPCC objection to this application was submitted by the closing date of 13th November. We requested statutory consultee status for this application and the response to this request is worded similarly to our objection. The planning portal lists 26 objections.

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

These new applications for a separate bedroom building in the rear grounds of 14 Minto Street are stated by the applicant to replace those submitted earlier this year, although these are still noted on the CEC planning portal as awaiting assessment. Following a draft sent to all GPCC Members, the finalised version of a GPCC objection was submitted to CEC by 13th November, the closing date stated in the weekly lists. However, 20th November is in the planning portal as the last date for comments on 20/04317/FUL and so far there is a range of views with 13 objections and support from West Blacket Association. Difficulty because run into conflict with HES, raises interesting issues.

**20/04983/TCO – Pruning of selected trees at former Royal Blind School site, 2b Craigmillar Park**

This application by CALA Homes (East) Ltd, the developer of the site for housing, was validated on 13th November, although details are not yet available of the pruning work. Listed Building and Conservation Area Consents have already been issued, covering demolition etc, with planning permission 18/10180/FUL outstanding and the site seemingly remains with Royal Blind.

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

Sue has been forwarded an email from CEC Property Management that dialogue has been resumed with the preferred site purchaser, CALA Homes, on the terms of sale following a shutdown due to corona virus. Further community consultation is expected in due course and the approval of CEC Finance and Resources Committee is required before any contract of sale is concluded.

KR sent round papers relating to CMP and last EACC discussion. Very valuable contribution to the debate. Strong links to planning. Suggest that LDP will be published and CMP published for final consultation. Put it on agenda for discussion in 2021. KR: notes don’t go near the detail given in these sessions. Will need to do a good deal of preparatory work. Session doesn’t act as a stage - they are very detailed topics. ST: It is where small groups have met before. Planning subgroup and transport subgroup meetings. Bring other associations into the discussion and look at next meeting.

Astley Ainsley. ST: Community engagement group spotted that AA has applied to demolish buildings. Have been demolished before received permission. Chopped down two trees, again without permission. Chairman of group written to NHS Lothian emphasising need to obey planning rules. Disappointing that the NHS is abusing rules.

* 1. Licensing - none
  2. Roads/Transport

AG: Spaces for people. Plans for South Bridge carriageway reduction - north bound closure, cycle segregation. Bus stops to go on North Bridge. Broughton CC objected to this.

Dalkeith Road wands have been made more secure

Trams - volume of people using the tram means that extension is not looking economically viable. IP: Commented that it’s difficult due to pandemic. If stop construction it costs money, restarting construction costs money. Is a judgement, do trams make sense? CEC agreed to go ahead and keep monitoring it Lots of questions about what normal looks like and when normal returns - good news with a vaccine which has accelerated.

ERJ: This week is action on pavement parking - lot of problems with pavement parking on Dalkeith Road, Minto street, Prestonfield Avenue when bus lanes aren’t in operation. Can we keep an eye out for this - to try and raise awareness. Second problem, junction of Duncan Street and South Gray Street blocked off - BT vans park and leave their engines running. AG to contact BT about this. JN commented that part of the problem is that police only regard moving traffic as criminal offences. Not in terms of parking offences. Decriminalisation of illegal parking is to blame.

AG commented that the Mayfield Road quality bike corridor cycle lanes are in a very bad state. There was a cycle lane, the cycle lane hasn’t been reinstated. IP to check.

ST commented on bus stops being closed, some are important - George iv bridge, the mound. Removal of bus stops can be a problem for certain groups. Are attempting to make the distances between stops longer.

* 1. Communications/Publicity

PR spoke about work done on website to make visibility on Google. Agreement from Waverley Park Feuers, to raise awareness of the Community Council. Good to have similar neighbourhood community groups. Halloween suggestion - sponsor a window decoration for Xmas. ERJ will speak to people in comms sub-group.

* 1. Environment -

ST asked if GPCC should consider what can be done about electric charging points. Issue of lack of public chargers in the area - currently only found on Edinburgh University sites. Will be planning implications. In terms of roadside, new planning applications, must have charge points. IP raised the cost of installing new charge points is high.

* 1. Newington Cemetery.

ERJ updated on plans to hold a working party - but called off due to high rates of infection so called off.Extra donations of plants received.

1. **Reports from Office Bearers**
2. **Reports of Outside Groups**
   1. Edinburgh Association of Community Councils (EACC) GPCC Representative
   2. Southside/Newington Neighbourhood Network (SNNN)
3. **Open Forum (including items from members of the public) –**

1. **Date of next meeting: January 20 2021**

**Action list:**

* KR to follow up at EACC about police updates at virtual meetings.
* Payment for cost of website hosting - AnG to follow up with PR
* AG to contact BT re: Duncan Street and South Gray Street blocked off by BT vans.