

Tollcross Community Council

Minutes of Meeting on Wednesday 30 September 2015 at 7pm
Tollcross Community Education Centre, 117 Fountainbridge

1. Welcome and Apologies:

Present: Paul Beswick (Chair), Andrew Brough (Secretary), Tim Puntis (Treasurer), Richard Allen, Iain Black, Roger Colkett, Andrew Devenport, Heather Goodare, Michael Lister, Chris McGregor, Liz Summerfield, Ann Wigglesworth. **Police:** PC Sacha Ponniah, St Leonards; PC Simon Wotton, Oxfangs, PC Leo Baker and PC David Scott, City Centre

CEC Councillors: Andrew Burns, Melanie Main **MSP:** Marco Biagi, MSP **Members of the public:** David Liddle, Andreas Wilhelm

Apologies: Nick Munro, Chris Wigglesworth. Sarah Boyack, MSP. Cllrs Corbett, Howatt, Key, McInnes, Rankin.

Paul Beswick welcomed everyone to the meeting and intimated that item 3 on the Agenda – Police matters – would be moved to the top of the Agenda and that item 4 – Marco Biagi’s presentation – would follow the Police matters.

3. Police matters:

PC Simon Wotton and PC Sacha Ponniah presented their reports, with PC Leo Baker and PC David Scott being in attendance.

PC Ponniah reported that in the Tollcross area served by St Leonard’s there were 9 recorded crimes during the period 26 August to 20 September: 6 shoplifting offences, 1 licensing infringement and 2 house break-ins. He also reported that the legal-highs related Operation Austenberg was still in operation, and that one suspect had recently been apprehended in a stairwell in Home Street.

It was pointed out that crime figures relating to house break-ins in the Central area over a five-year period had increased by 50%, but that the detection rate was over 70% and that this was encouraging. PC Wotton reported that there had been 3 arrests for house break-ins in the period, one serious assault in the Fountainpark area and one hate crime, with a 100% detection rate.

Heather Goodare again mentioned the problem of cyclists riding down the one-way Glengyle Terrace and into Barclay Terrace. One officer from City Centre replied that the best means of promoting safer cycling was by means of education, and that there have been in the past at this particular time of year safer cycling campaigns run in conjunction with the universities. PC Ponniah said that he would look into this.

ACTION: PC Ponniah

The question of safer cycling widened to include problems encountered at Grove St, Fountainbridge and particularly along the Canal. There followed a detailed discussion about the canal path and commuter-cyclists, the possibility of widening the canal path by means of more regular grass-cutting to prevent narrowing of the path, and the question of right of way and whether pedestrians should have priority over cyclists. PC Ponniah said that he would give attention to these matters

ACTION: PC Ponniah

On the related matter of cycle routes and road safety, Tim Puntis mentioned the problems that will result on Lower Gilmore Place once the new school opens, as this will become part of the National Cycle Route, and wondered if it was not time for LGP to have an upgrade, in every respect.

Cllr Melanie Main pointed to the £50 000 that was being made available for road works and wondered if some of this money could be used to improve Lower Gilmore Place. Cllr Burns said that the South West Neighbourhood Partnership had no plans to do so at the moment.

Richard Allen had been asked to raise a point from residents on the canal – ie boat-owners – about police feedback on previous issues that had not been addressed, and asked the police to take these matters back to the office.

Roger Colkett asked for a map of the Tollcross Community Council areas which the various Police Officers serve to be made available, (ie West and Pentlands, Central, and St Leonards).

Michael Lister had previously supplied PC Wotton with a map of the TXCC area, and PC Wotton said that he would report back at the October meeting with police areas delineated.

ACTION: PC Wotton

There followed the perennial complaint about cyclists on pavements.

4. Speaker – Marco Biagi: Affordable housing and alternatives to Council Tax:

Marco Biagi spoke to three matters: housing – student housing and affordable housing; Council Tax reform; and boundary commission proposals.

He acknowledged the long-standing debate about purpose-built student accommodation and the problems associated with the absence of supplementary guidance for the local development plan and explained how the Scottish Government and CEC are working together to address the political and technical issues surrounding these questions. On the question of Council Tax reform, he explained the three possible options: property tax, local income tax, land value tax and pointed out the weaknesses of land value tax. He also spoke to the matter of boundary changes and how these might help Tollcross which currently straddles a number of CEC wards.

There followed some detailed questions and points from the floor about community mix and the problems associated with a transient population; how CEC census data zones were not fit for purpose; how the CEC view relating to planning was new development at any cost; how even the Reporter in a recent planning appeal had found that CEC guidance relating to planning applications and decisions was contradictory; and how existing student housing would be affected by the projected change in the nature of education in the next ten or fifteen years, with an increase in distance-learning and on-line courses.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 30th August 2015 – acceptance & Matters arising:

Correction

Item 6: Councillors' Reports

Cllr Corbett asked for it to be added that he had submitted a report to the August meeting.

Matters arising

Item 6: Councillors' Reports

Andrew Brough asked about the nuisance caused by bicycles used as advertising boards in the streets.

ACTION: Cllr Melanie Main.

Item 11: Ann Wigglesworth enquired about the possibility of appointing honorary members to the Council. The possibilities of honorary membership and co-option were both briefly discussed.

5. Local Matters:

a. Tollcross Xmas Lights Event 2015:

Further to its meeting of 10 September and its subsequent report, the sub-group recommended to the full Council that the 2015 Lights Event does not go ahead. This recommendation was accepted, and Chris McGregor asked that we record this decision with our regret.

AW asked about the role and remit of sub-groups, and it was suggested that she might wish to place this matter as an item for discussion at a future meeting.

b. Public online Survey & year ahead focus:

Andrew Brough reported that of the 13 replies he had received, the three main items of interest to the public were refuse bins, improvements at the Meadows, ie more seating and more areas for barbeques, and outdoor gym equipment.

On the question of the Meadows, Heather Goodare announced that FOMBL had just recently been awarded Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation status and had produced a new promotional leaflet. She also mentioned the memorial bench to General Pacek.

In terms of priorities for the coming year, Andrew Brough suggested that Lower Gilmore Place, Lochrin Place and Chuckie Pend should be considered as areas for concern.

c. Community Council Development Programme:

Andrew Brough referred members to details of these in the Events section at the end of associated papers for the 30th September meeting.

d. Community Councils – Locally working together:

Liz Summerfield reported that approaches to Old Town and Merchiston had been positive; West End was lukewarm in its response, and that she had been unable to get a response from Marchmont and Sciennes. As Southside had newly been resurrected, it was proving initially difficult to make contact with them. Liz added that she would require more feedback from other community councils before she would be able to see if the proposal to work locally together would be viable, as different areas within the city had different concerns and priorities. Paul Beswick added out that it was important to improve communication with and between community councils.

ACTION: Liz Summerfield to continue to pursue this matter.

On a related subject, Andrew Brough added that he regretted the present lack of focus on the part of the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils, but with proposed

reorganisation of the EACC there would be the opportunity for community councils to work more closely together on issues of common concern. Because Roger Colkett also sits on the EACC, it was suggested that he and Andrew Brough liaise on ways to help improve the way that the EACC currently functions.

ACTION: Andrew Brough and Roger Colkett.

e. Communications sub-group – Banners and Designs:

Tim Puntis referred to the report of the sub-group meeting of 15 September and said that he would bring the final designs to the full council. On the question of sub-groups, he added that while sub-groups did need to bring matters back to the full council, they also had to have a level of autonomy in order to function.

f. Treasurer signatures for cheques:

The Treasurer explained that it was proper for there to be a pool of 4 or 5 signatories and suggested that Roger Colkett be added as a signatory.

There was no dissent to this suggestion, and it was agreed that Roger Colkett be added as a signatory.

ACTION: Tim Puntis

6. Councillors' Comments & Questions:

Cllr Burns reported that the completion date for the new Boroughmuir School was scheduled for September 2016, but added that it may be October 2016. He also reported that Linear Park had opened. He said that planning applications for housing on the south side of Fountainbridge and student flats on the north side had been submitted; and that the city-wide consultation on the council's budget would open in October for three months.

Cllr Main mentioned that £50 000 for road works/improvements in the Tollcross area had not yet been allocated.

Cllr Main also mentioned that there were no specific parking spaces for disabled people outside the King's Theatre and that there were plans to create such spaces. There were no objections to this from TXCC.

Andrew Brough replied that an email had been sent with suggestions regarding roads in the local area, but that we would also support the plan for a disabled place outside King's Theatre.

On the question of Underbelly's use of the Meadows during the Fringe, Cllr Main reported that this was under review and that a consultation request had been circulated. While there had been problems with the length of the events and safety issues relating to vehicles, the general feeling about the events was positive and that there was an option to grant permission for the site to be used next year.

Heather Goodare said that she had been sceptical about the reinstatement of the grass and had been pleased with the results, but reported that the fun-fair had been too noisy.

Ann Wigglesworth added that the grass was still thin and that there was no rope or ring around the reinstatement area.

ACTION: Heather Goodare to approach Mike Shields to ask about introducing a ring of rope or hazard tapes.

Andy Devenport asked about the cleaning of refuse bins and about the Edinburgh Solar Coop, and was directed to their website. www.edinburghsolar.coop

7. Planning:

Paul Beswick had previously circulated planning applications.

a. Lister Square – the change of use from Class 3 (restaurant) to public house. It was decided on the grounds of consistency to object to this application.

ACTION: Paul Beswick

b. Use of visitor moorings as residential craft moorings –

Andy Devenport explained the background to this matter and the problems this extension of use would create. It was suggested that he and Richard Allen liaise with Paul Beswick on this matter.

ACTION: Paul Beswick, in consultation with Andy Devenport and Richard Allen.

c. Planning Democracy postcards –

Paul Beswick distributed postcards for members to send to MSPs about equal rights of appeal in the Scottish planning system, and urged all members to complete a card and send to their MSP.

ACTION: All members.

8. Licensing:

Roger Colkett reported that as a result of objections made to two applications, the deliberations of the Licensing Board in respect of these applications were being continued.

On the question of an outdoor drinking area at Caffè Milano on Lothian Road, following a brief discussion, there was no objection.

a. Nomination of a second for Licensing Matters:

Roger Colkett talked of the desirability of there being a second or deputy for licensing matters.

9. Reports in addition to those written:

Paul Beswick stressed the importance of these reports as a record of our activities while representing TXCC on other bodies, and the need to produce reports timeously for inclusion in the papers distributed in advance of each monthly meeting.

10. AOCB:

Heather Goodare again reminded the meeting that FOMBL had recently been awarded Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation status and distributed the new information leaflets.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 28 October 2015 at 7pm, Tollcross Community Centre