**Minutes of Tollcross Community Council Meeting 25 September 2023**

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| 1. Welcome | **Present**  Members**:** Richard Allen, Roger Colkett, Iain Black, Andy Devenport, Rebecca Fairbairn, Paul Beswick, Tim Puntiss, Fiona Allen (online).  Councillors: Margaret Graham  Student representation: Sonny Scott and Laura Taylor (Edinburgh Student’s Housing Co-op) and Sandy Woodhouse.  Two representatives of the Gillespie Crescent Community and three other members of the community.  **Apologies:** Liz Summerfield, Stuart Tooley, Cllr Jo Mowatt, Cllr Findlay Macfarlane  No police representatives. |
| 1. Minutes of last meeting | Correction: Point 6, other updates were sent by email.  The minutes of the last meeting were approved, proposed by Roger Colkett, seconded by Iain Black. |
| 1. Members | The Chair agreed to explore on-going non-attendance. |
| 1. Updates | **Police:**   * **Tollcross Police Report.** Received. TXCC would like to have data on the danger of Tollcross Junction as it is frequently cited as one of the city’s most dangerous. It was noted that outages of traffic lights at the junction is a significant danger for pedestrians, even when traffic continues to flow.   **ACTION:** **Chair to write to request details of accidents and ask for an update on the health of the lights at the junction.**  **Councillors:**   * **Issue 1.** Student developments in the area, specifically the Atik Nightclub and Gillespie Crescent. * **Issue 2.** Graffiti – specifically tagging – is becoming an increasing issue in the area. TXCC members recognise the value of artistic graffiti but agree with the general issue, and noted the damage graffiti does to stone, as well as social issues around gang “ownership” this represents. Cllr Graham will be raising this. * **Issue 3.** Short Term Lets notices. TXCC raised the point – again – that notices are not being displayed in a manner that is “conveniently read by the public”, which means TXCC and the public are not able to report on whether or not notices are valid. Cllr Graham agreed to follow up on this. |
| 1. Tollcross Matters | **The website:** The links and text on the website are out of date, PB requested suggestions of new links worth including. He has also asked for an update on licensing and STLs, for that section of the website.  **ACTION: All to come to November meeting with ideas of useful weblinks for local organisations and points of interest.**  TXCC agreed the messaging function in the website does not serve its purpose. TXCC noted the value a wider array of social media for sharing local issues.  **ACTION: PB agreed to explore adding a simple question/ answer function to distinguish human contacts from spam.**  **The Clock:** No updates. The clock remains in storage awaiting the funds for repair. TXCC reiterated the request for the clock to be temporarily re-located on the junction.  **Membership:** TXCC requires at least two more members and two co-opted members to function effectively. Ideally these would broaden our demographic coverage:   * Age: to attract younger members we need to make the role of community councils more visible, and the area TXCC covers clear (ideally this would outline the location of all community councils to help boost engagement with others). A city-wide approach via universities was suggested. This could also encourage students to register on the electoral roll.   **ACTION: Chair to raise with EACC on 26 September.**   * Minority racial and ethnic groups. * TXCC discussed ways of raising visibility, including:   + Making the noticeboard more visible   + Doing more on the website and social media   + Using catchy posters/ fliers such as “Your Community Needs You!”, “by the community for the community”, “Make TX Great Again”.   + Highlighting local issues, such as the planning process issues, to bring interested residents and residents’ associations to meetings   + Using the media to make local issues, particularly planning, more visible   + Leaving posters. Fliers in The Shrub Shop (Bread St), local nurseries and cafes and student unions.   **ACTION: Secretary will explore these approaches over the winter break.** |
| 1. Planning | **Short Term Let (STL)** is increasingly an issue in Edinburgh where there is a housing crisis. Applications for STLs are rising at an exponential rate. There are 37 within the TXCC area currently, 50 applications are received each week in Old Town. Companies are set up specifically to make it easier for STLs to work through the process, avoiding objections. No licenses have been refused; STLs are replacing homes. Shops under tenements are now being turned into small flats which are not in keeping with the architecture of the area.  **Student accommodation developments.** Objecting to applications takes a great deal of effort, but the issue of overconcentration of students in the area taking opportunities away from providing homes is real. Developers seems to be able to define their locale to circumvent this, and often omit new student residence builds in their applications. The Council Planning Department is too stretched to investigate this. Further, these new developments are not addressing the lack of accommodation for students; there are empty rooms in existing developments as students cannot afford the space.  TXCC has so far rejected to 11 plans, with 10 being approved and one currently with the Reporter.  **Atik student accommodation** application is in. The plan will not address the lack of student housing as it is largely for studio flats, so is not a good use of space. Further, the guidance on student housing makes clear single rooms are not good for student mental health. It was agreed TXCC would object.  **ACTION: LT and SS to provide additional material to PB.**  **Gillespie Crescent application is expected imminently.** TXCC agreed to ask to become a consultee and replay the points made in objection to Atik. TXCC will work in concert with the Gillespie Crescent Residents Committee.  **Signage on shop and restaurant frontages.** The requirement for planning permission will be explored as two establishments have recently erected signs with lighting that is not in keeping with the area. |
| 1. Licensing | No applications.  **ACTION: Councillor Graham agreed to check the requirement of STL licensing applications to be referred to community councils.** |
| 1. AOB | Meadow’s Festival: city wide charge for the use of parks is rising to £4800 (inc 50% discount for community groups) will result in community events no longer being viable. **Action Chair to raise with EACC.** Prevent the policy changing without CCs being able to discuss the policy and its impact on the city on the brink of the 900th anniversary of the city’s charter.  Meeting closed at 20.25  **Next meeting at 19.00, Wednesday 29 November 2023**  **Discussion topic: The Canal (external speaker invited)** |