**Minutes of Tollcross Community Council Meeting 27 March 2024**

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| 1. Welcome | **Present**  Members**:** Richard Allen, Roger Colkett, Iain Black, Rebecca Fairbairn, Paul Beswick, Andy Devenport  Councillors: Margaret Graham, Claire Miller  **Apologies:** Fiona Allen, Jo Mowatt, Tim Puntiss  Absent: Liz Summerfield, Cllr Findlay Macfarlane  No police representatives. |
| 1. Minutes of last meeting | Corrections and Matters Arising:   * Section 3: “haven’t generally been able to find volunteers” rather than no volunteers could be found. * Section 11: Cllr Graham will explore the process under which developers’ routine blocking of pavements for long periods becomes permissible. * Boundaries discussed and noted below.   The minutes of the last meeting were approved, proposed by Andy Davenport, seconded by Roger Colkett. |
| 1. Members | We currently have nine members (from a maximum of 12) and no representative members (where we are allowed six). Many CCs have made the point repeatedly to Edinburgh City Council that the process required for community organisations to become representative members of CCs is too onerous to enable them to join. The “scheme” (for changes to how CCs work) is likely to lead to more changes which may provide an opportunity to raise this again. |
| 1. Updates | **Police:** South West Community Newsletter received today provides useful contacts and updates on activity. It does not seem to cover any of the TXCC area. Representation anticipatedin June.  **Councillors:**   * **Issue 1.** Cllr Graham had a motion to congratulate community councillors next month. The Lord Provost has been requested to host a reception for community councillors in advance of elections to encourage people to stand. * **Issue 2.** Cllr Graham will explore when work to deliver the fountain designed by Chris Wigglesworth at the canal will begin. * **Issue 3.** Cllr Miller has been focused on health and social care. |
| 1. Tollcross Matters | **The website:** If members would like news stories to be added, send to PB. TXCC discussed the balance between deleting historical records to enable easier use of the website and the need for an easy to access archive.  **Twitter (X):** A lot of information comes through on this platform from other CCs and ECC.  **The Tollcross Clock:** The traffic island where the clock stood has been paved. The island is not on the route of any of the formal pedestrian crossings; given this, TXCC noted that the decision to pave this does not seem to make any sense. In addition it appears that TX junction furniture is beginning to change. This seems contradictory to the messaging that TX redevelopment means the clock cannot be reinstalled at this time.  **TX junction traffic flow and pedestrians:** TXCC discussed the issues for pedestrians at the junction. For the junction to work for pedestrians (who are supposed to be the primary users of the city’s roads) there needs to be a change to the sequencing and timings for traffic lights to allow pedestrians to cross the entire junction in one go. There does not appear to be a clear council plan for traffic at this dangerous junction.  **Community Council Boundaries:** PB has submitted TXCC views on this. The proposed changes relating to Lothian Road and Haymarket Station have been suggested by the West End CC with no clear rationale. TXCC views this as a proposal that unnecessarily splits communities and creates complexity for businesses operating on Lothian Road. **PB will forward his response on the boundaries to Cllr Graham; Cllr Graham will follow up.** |
| 1. Planning | **New student accommodation residence application on Dundee Street:** Not in TXCC boundaries and despite the area being overflowing with student accommodation TXCC does not think an objection will make any difference. We have objected to 16, and all have been approved. It was noted that ECC has the power to ensure gaps in the city are used for housing but do not seem to be using this despite the city’s housing crisis.  **New application for upward extension of a building on Semple St:** As the proposal sits within the footprint of the building and will not be visible from the ground, TXCC will not object.  **Short Term Lets (STL):** 7 more applications this month, now 193 in TX area and about 300 license applications (applications for home renting and home sharing make up the difference). Websters’ Land is now almost entirely STLs; TXCC had objected to an application at 406 Webster’s Land which was refused but a new application is now in. Applications are not being refused despite complaints from residents.  **Electric advertisements on bus stops:** TXCC noted an apparent conflict of interest in the decision to install 35 of these and noted the unnecessary use of electricity being contradictory to the city’s Net Zero ambitions. TXCC discussed how this could be sustainably powered, through solar or capturing energy from passing footfall.  **50 Gillespie Crescent is still being reviewed by the Reporter.** |
| 1. Licensing | **New licences discussed:** TXCC discussed the application for a karaoke facility in the lower ground floor of a local Japanese restaurant. TXCC agreed it was not worth objecting to this, given an existing licence exists.  **Licensing processes:**   * There are no standing orders for the licensing board. RC has raised this as a matter as it means that the public are unable to make noted interjections, including on any points of order. * On overprovision, RC will raise questions around how exceptions to the policy are framed re licensing in areas of over provision and whether these are ever turned down. * RC is engaging with the re-examination of the clause that prevents activity which can be heard (rather than being “an audible nuisance”) in the tenements above. |
| 1. AOB | **Meadows Festival:** Following Cllr Macfarlane’s work to explore discretion around when charging can be applied a lower fee of £2520 has been proposed. Cllr Graham confirmed she has also raised this with licensing; and a 50% discount has been offered. This is welcomed but the increase of £2519 from the previous charge is contrary to ECC statements on support for community events and is likely to prevent Meadows Festival taking place on it’s 50th anniversary (and the city of Edinburgh’s 900th anniversary). TXCC advised AD to write to Councillors, highlighting this.  Meeting closed at 20.35  **Next meeting at 19.00, Wednesday 24 April 2024**  **Discussion topics: any additions for agenda to be raised by 19 April** |