



## Southside Community Council

### Minutes of the meeting on Tuesday 10th May 2022, 7:00pm (by Zoom)

#### **Present:**

**CC Members:** Joan Carter (JC) (Acting Chair), Alex Alderton (Minutes), Stephen Rodger Benson (SRB), Bob Hodgart (BH), Liz Logie (LL), Philip McDowell (PM), Jack McPake (JM), Betty Offerman (EO), Philip Pinsky (PP).

**Councillor:** Steve Burgess (SB).

**Members of the public:** Nahid Aslam (NA), Sam Hughes (SH), Alison Neathey (AN).

#### **1. Welcome and apologies:**

JC welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies from Daniel Fisher, Tim Pogson, Simita Kumar, Pauline Flannery.

#### **2. Issues brought by members of the public:**

**2.1** Southside Community Centre has been approached by the Causey Development Trust, who are willing to help sort out the front garden of the Centre. NA requested that the SCC publicises their callout for volunteers once the date has been confirmed. **Action: NA to send PM information once the date is confirmed.**

#### **3. Alistair Cranston, Manager, Unite Student Accommodation - Problems at Salisbury Court**

Alistair Cranston was not present.

#### **4. Minutes and Matters Arising:**

The minutes of the April 2022 meeting were agreed with an amendment to Item 3.2 - BH submitted two papers and will forward information about these for the minutes.

**4.1 Item 2 - Mosque history project:** PM has put a poster up and shared info on the website as well drawing their attention to local history Facebook groups.

**4.2 Item 4.1 - East Meadows area improvements:** No progress.

**4.3 Item 4.2 - National Planning Framework 4:** BH sent round what he submitted.

**4.3 Item 6.1 - Scottish Widows:** The SCC had previously emphasised the importance of signage to tell the public about what work is being done but this has not been acted on, which is disappointing.

**4.4 Item 7.1 - East Newington Place:** TP has emailed Places for People regarding starting discussions around affordable housing suggestions for East Newington Place.

**4.5 Item 7.6 - South Clerk St:** PM put in an objection based on the previous application having already been approved. The new applications have now been withdrawn.

**4.6 Item 7.2 / 7.3 - Davie St/Nicholson St:** The SCC thanked SRB for submitting on its behalf comments on the Davie St planning application, and objections to all three of the applications for the BT HUBs.

**4.7 Item 8 - Hustings:** The event was a success and JC thanked the members of the SCC for their efforts towards this. There were plenty of attendees and questions.

**4.8 Item 10.2 - Low Road Reopening/Radical Road Closure:** EO circulated information about the Low Road and is in discussion. Historic Environment Scotland has published a report on the future of the Radical Road. AN expressed alarm that it has not been opened yet and at the possible new plans of a shelter or walkway. The HES report systematically assessed the risks and options and concluded that something did need to be done. There was a feeling that the suggested plans were unlikely to take place and an idea that the SCC could respond to the report suggesting that the risk is not so great. There was a suggestion to invite those involved to a meeting. EO made the point that for the Low Road they are seemingly oblivious to risk, but with the Radical Road they are very sensitive to risk, so the SCC could question how they came to these conclusions. JC recommended everyone reads the HES report as it explains their train of thought. They are concerned about being liable if someone gets hurt, however there are additional dangers if it remains closed, such as graffiti.

**Action: EO/JC to draft a letter on behalf of the SCC.**

## **5. Councillor's Report:**

The Councillors intend to put together a rota so that one of them will be present at each meeting.

The SCC congratulated Cllr Steve Burgess and the other councillors on their success in the recent elections and expressed gratitude to Cameron Rose for his many years of service. **Action: JC to send a message of thanks to Cameron Rose.**

There is not much business in the Council at the moment. The Councillors entered the Chambers on Monday and new Councillors are being trained.

In terms of election results, no party had a majority. SNP and Labour combined would have a majority, but the Labour leader will not support a coalition in Scotland. The Edinburgh Labour Group has written to their executive asking for special circumstances to work with other parties. If this is not agreed, other parties will work together, and there are several possible combinations though this situation is complicated because of conflicting priorities. One party might propose running the Council as a minority but they would still need support from other parties.

Lots of Council functions are not party-political, e.g. planning applications, and it is important that a conclusion is reached soon so that these functions can continue to run smoothly. Constituency casework will continue in the meantime.

## **6. Reports from Committees and meetings attended:**

**6.1** BH attended an Edinburgh Heritage meeting about Scotland's UNESCO Trail.

## **7. Planning and Licensing Applications:**

**7.1 Distillery:** There is a proposal as part of the Distillery's planning application for a fence along the neighbouring bike path, which is curved. The fence would obstruct the view of cyclists/pedestrians. It will be 1.2m high but this is still higher than some wheelchair users and children; they say there are gaps to look through but if you look along a fence you can't see through. PP has suggested they move it back 1 metre from the path. In the recent meeting with them it was discussed but no action has been taken. PP suggested the SCC writes a letter. SB confirmed it is OK to suggest a change to their application before they submit it. It was pointed out that the grass where the fence will be might not actually be part of their property as it is managed by the Council. PP has also contacted Spokes and other cycling organisations to see if they will add their voices to the discussion.

There is also an issue around the waiting area part of the application; this is for lorries waiting for the gates to be opened. They will protrude and block pavement/cycle path access. There was a feeling that in reality the gate would often be open. AN felt that the gate/fence would look very unfriendly; SB confirmed this can't be challenged formally unless it isn't in keeping with the area, but it could be raised in the SCC's letter as it is not a formal objection.

**Action: PP to draft a letter to the Distillery and circulate; JC to send once agreed.**

**7.2 Arthur Lodge Tree Felling:** This has been passed on to the Community Council where it is located (Grange and Prestonfield). PM has also informed a local tree group, but it is unlikely they will act on it. Sue Tritton from Grange and Prestonfield has confirmed that this type of notice is just for information and you can't object to it, though the trees are subject to a preservation order so they would have needed permission.

**7.3 West Crosscauseway:** There has been a retrospective application for change to a short term let at West Crosscauseway. Lots of these types of applications are being made at the moment. JC will attend a Civic Forum meeting on Thursday about this; anyone who is interested can obtain details from JC.

## **8. Future of the SCC**

**8.1 Future Meetings:** JC visited Nelson Hall today; they are low on staff so JC suggested the SCC could be keyholders. It should be possible to return there in September; in June a room can be booked at the Charteris Centre. There was a proposal to switch to Mondays - all in agreement. PM pointed out that an arrangement would need to be made to collect any post from Nelson Hall.

**Action: JC to arrange post collection.**

**8.2 Treasurer:** A Community Council can't have paid office-bearers, but it can have a paid 'bookkeeper' who is not on the Community Council. TP had asked Southside Community Centre if they had anyone or ideas of how to recruit; they had sought one via an advert in a Chartered Accountant publication but there were no responses, so didn't think this was useful to us. PP volunteered to take on the role in a voluntary capacity. PP was nominated by JC, seconded by EO - all in agreement.

**8.3 Chair:** A replacement Chair is required for JC. JC is away in June and then it can be sorted over the summer. AN asked why the Chair does so much administrative work; the response was that most information goes to the Chair as well as the Secretary. JC is happy to chair the meetings and to take on one or two defined tasks, but not to continue being responsible for sorting many issues that arise in-between. SRB would have been happy to volunteer but has other commitments. JC expressed thanks to PM for taking on a lot of the work too.

## **9. Edinburgh's Short Term Lets Licensing Scheme**

The Scheme is currently in a public consultation phase from 15th April to 10th June. SB was in agreement that it would be good for the SCC to respond. There is a fear that the Council's actions will not be stringent enough.

## **10. Public Question Time**

**10.1 Dumbiedykes Green Spaces Proposals (see [this report](#)):** There is construction work going on in Dumbiedykes and the surrounding grass is a mess. SH would like to sow wildflower seeds on the unearthed soil. Dumbiedykes is not in the Southside/Newington Ward but is still in the SCC's area. It was suggested to contact the Dumbiedykes Residents' Association but this has folded. The grass is on Council land so they would need to be consulted; they have been sowing wildflowers in other green spaces so it is likely they would be in favour, though it can be controversial as some people view wildflowers as messy. SB advised approaching Mike Shields, Parks Officer, at the Council. JC advised that some knowledge is required for sowing wildflowers. Friends of the Meadows has been doing this for some time. **Action: JC to pass on SH's report to them.** SB also suggested contacting David McCaig, a resident of Dumbiedykes who does a lot of work on the land locally.

## **11. Any Other Business**

**11.1 Edinburgh World Heritage:** EWH would like to consult with Community Councils on the World Heritage Site Management Plan. They have suggested a special meeting. DF suggested 8th June 6-7pm - either at the Charteris Centre or on Zoom. Southside has a lot of historical context in the city and there were suggestions to invite other groups: Southside Community Centre, Southside Heritage Group, Southside Association, and local faith groups. **Action: JC to arrange the meeting.**

**11.2 Birds in Nicholson Park:** LL was concerned about the unhelpful response from the Council to a resident's complaint regarding public health concerns and nuisance arising from gulls and pigeons being fed in Nicholson Park. LL would like to see a sign put up to dissuade people from feeding them, and to know what actions the Council had taken in the past. SB remembered an attempt some time ago to speak with people but it was not successful. There is a Friends of Nicholson Square group which could be contacted. PM had passed the complaint on to the Environmental Wardens when the issue was first brought to the SCC's attention. BH suggested falcons can be used to scare pigeons away. People really enjoy feeding the birds so it would require an official response and enforcement. **Action: SB to investigate with the Council.**

**11.3 Planning Enforcement:** PM is concerned that arrangements are not being enforced effectively, such as signage and unauthorised structures being removed. SB is not aware of any changes to planning enforcement and suggests the SCC writes to the planning enforcement department to raise these issues and also to SB so that he can ask on the SCC's behalf. **Action: PM to write a letter.**

**12. Next meeting:** Monday 13th June 2022 at the Charteris Centre