

Minutes of the Meeting on Monday September 11th 2023, 7:00pm at Nelson Hall

1. Welcome and apologies for absence, declarations of interest

CC Members: Daniel Fisher (DF) (Chair), Joan Carter (JC) (Vice Chair), Philip Pinsky (Treasurer), Liz Logie (LL).

Minutes: Zahra Massoud (ZM).

Councillor: Tim Pogson (TP).

Members of the Public: Anna Pinsky (AP), Jim Clark (JimC), Malcom Montgomery (MM).

Apologies from Nicholas Oddy (NO) and Stephen Roger Benson (SRB), Betty Offerman (BO), Will Tillotson (WT) and Harriet Lyall (HL).

DF welcomed everyone to the meeting. DF addressed the passing of Bob Hodgart. A discussion was had on the obituary on SCC website, funeral details. JC suggests contacting the family, sending flowers on behalf of SCC.

2. Ascertain issues brought by members of the public: determine when and how to deal with them

2.1 JimC raised the issue of the café in Hope Park Crescent; the owner has been frequently leaving excessive rubbish in the back green behind the café. 4 waste bins currently present in back green, but these are frequently overflowed and waste left on the floor where animals can access it. Planning permission designates an area for trade waste as well as a maximum area for customers (remaining space designated for local artists), but café appears to be operating in excess of these requirements. SCC confirms this is not allowed. Problem was worsened during festival. JimC has discussed problem with café owner, who has agreed to fix the issue, but no progress made. JimC and neighbours have photographic evidence of the issue. JimC has raised the issue with Councillor Pauline Flannery, but not yet escalated to Trade Waste.

Action – TP suggests contacting trade waste with photo evidence to arrange a visit and address solutions. TP forwarding photo evidence to Pauline Flannery to follow up. TP will be in touch with JimC for further action.

2.2 AP raises question of planning application for “hostel” at Hardwell Close (lane off St Leonard’s St) (space used to be Victim Scotland). Application information sent to residents contained no further details on hostel type or building use, so AP has objected on grounds of lack of information. Application appears to be for a ~10 single-occupancy room building with a reception area. Concerns that this is not a good location for a hostel – lane is small, badly lit, lack of waste management solutions, guests or hostel may be noisy and disturb residents in close proximity. Application does not specify the type of hostel, or whether these are short- or longer-term lets. AP and JC concerned that “hostel” may be used as long-term lets or student accommodation, while circumventing proper requirements. Time window for application responses from public has already passed.

Action – TP to look into the application further, let SCC know further info in good time to allow for object as a council if necessary

Action – PP to question planning office on whether rejection as a community council is possible

3. Minutes of the meeting held on June 12th 2023 and matters arising

DF raises issue of previous meeting’s minutes; these are disorganised and not useful to members or the public in their current form. DF has begun re-formatting and editing, but may take time. Formatted document to be sent to SCC to fill in details. Minute taker has requested invoice; they have been asked to amend minutes before this is paid to them. Initial requested invoice was for wrong amount; correct invoice has now been requested.

Action – DF to send edited minutes to SCC with action points for members to check

Action – SCC to amend minutes with any details remembered from previous meeting

Action – DF to forward correct amount invoice to PP once issues are resolved.

4. Councillor's Report

TP reporting on behalf of Councillors.

First council meeting was held 10 days ago after summer recess. Big issues raised:

- Voting rights for faith groups on the education committee. Debate was held, involving many stakeholders from different religious groups. In particular, the Catholic community felt strongly about voting rights for Catholic schools. Decision made to maintain existing rules on voting rights
- Workforce issues. TP's focus is on Health and Social Care – main challenges are healthcare waiting lists, patient discharge times. Workforce issues are the primary cause; 10-20% vacancies seen across the workforce. This is a major focus of the council; actions to push recruitment and retain current staff by highlighting better Terms and Conditions compared to private sector
- Support at after school care (e.g. SCHOOSH) for young people with specific needs. Council have been approached regarding discrepancies in care over the summer period, where contracted staff are used instead of normal term-time staff hired by council.

Other local issues:

- Parents at Preston Street Primary School are facing transport issues with the new low emission zone and other transport planning. Meeting has been set up between parent Transport and Environment Committee, and the ward council and council officer tomorrow evening (12.9.23).

Meeting has taken a long time to set up, and will happen online. Chance presented for parents to raise their issues and officers to respond. JC has requested an invitation from TP, but this will be subject to parent committee.

- TP has been contacted by organisers of the Meadows Festival (Liz Hyatt) regarding licensing fees for use of the Meadows. Organisers currently paying thousands of pounds for required licences; has led to a relocation of the festival from the centre of the Meadows to the east side. They request recognition of community vs corporate events in licensing and prices reflective of this.

5. Reports from office bearers

5.1 Secretary – Not present.

5.2 Chair – Nothing to report.

5.3 Treasurer – PP confirmed SCC's accounts have now been audited. Community council funding for 2024 secured.

5.4 Webmaster – Unfilled position.

5.5 Public Engagement Officer – Unfilled position

6. Reports from Committees and meetings attended

6.1 DF attended Fairmilehead CC meeting last week. Boundary reviews were discussed. Issues raised at SCC in previous meetings regarding traffic running red lights have also been raised at Fairmilehead. Councillor Scott Arthur has taken this up with the Edinburgh Chief Constable. SCC consensus that lack of police enforcement of traffic regulations is the issue. Discussion had over use of CCTV to enforce traffic regulations.

Action – DF to follow up with Councillor Scott Arthur to see what further action can be taken

7. Planning and Licensing applications

Some others already discussed (2.2).

DF raises Yippee Productions (own Just the Tonic) have applied for public entertainment license for GCC for 1 year. License times are till 1am, but most events booked until 11:30pm. GCC currently host events until 6am with no issue; DF happy that new license will unlikely cause issue.

8. Christmas Lights Switch on

SRB has put in application for Christmas Lights. May include request for road closure during ceremony – DF says past precedent for this, but it hasn't happened in recent years. BO has asked for Starbucks to do free tea/coffee for the event, in line with their policy.

No budget left over from last year. No money yet requested for this year.

Also Edinburgh University small grants fund could be applied to as a backup source of funding.

DF unlikely to be available on the day of the event.

Action – JC, PP to look into Christmas tasks

Action – Barbara (GCC fundraising assistant) to Draft application for grant money

Action – Book community centre JC, PP

Action – DF to look into university volunteering staff to help with event

Food – last year Papa Johns donated 14 pizzas (half meat half cheese, one vegan). Dominos didn't reply. Tesco donated food, may have spare Krispy Kreme donuts. Not sure if pakora supplier is still cooking at community centre, but worth doing again if still there.

Action – JC to contact Papa Johns and ask for donations. 16 pizzas

9. Getting more active members

Discussion held of methods; recruitment/public engagement event proposed. Past method of a stall outside Tesco to encourage people to share their issues and get involved was proposed by TP. Consensus to arrange event for weekend of either October 14th or 28th.

Action – JC to send email asking about October weekend event. All members to comment on date.

Sign-up sheet and leaflets at Christmas Lights event proposed.

Keen to recruit more members from Preston Street Primary School, students, Edinburgh University staff.

SCC members will aim to approach anyone they know who may be interested.

Action – DF to gauge interest at volunteer recruitment event on Wednesday 13.9.23

10. Keeping the website updated

DF has put in an application for a job at GCC for “Community Admin Support” for 6 months. Should be able to do admin for SCC and other groups, including updating website. Few reviews per year of applications for Community Grants Fund.

General consensus that SCC happy to pay for someone to update the website; PP confirmed money available for this in the budget.

DF has a contact who made the GCC website who may be interested.

Website requires a domain transfer. DF has created a login and requested this, waiting to hear back. Later goal to transfer to WordPress or similar new and easier format.

Contact form on the website also not currently being monitored; this needs addressing along with website.

Goal to make website easier for all SCC to update rather than one nominated person. However, would be easier if the website creator/maintainer does attend meetings.

11. Effect of Festival on the Southside

Mixed views on the extent of festival effects; DF and TP feel not as busy as previous years, LL and JC feel effects were worse.

Strong feeling that Fringe organisers, venues, councils etc. are not meeting their goals made during COVID of reducing the environmental impact of the festival and spreading its impact across a larger geographical area. TP gives example of Jazz and Blues festival, who have successfully done this.

Consensus that Festival action should be taken by raising specific concerns with individual venues, as there seems to be no overarching policy by the Fringe Festival for the venues regarding these issues.

Action – TP to check council commitment to new Fringe policies being enforced

Action – TP to ask Fringe society whether they have policy/responsibilities

Specific issues include:

- Health and environmental impact of diesel generator in front of House of Oz. Similar issues dealt with successfully in other venues, e.g. Venue company paid for GCC to have upgrades to power to ensure sufficient supply for their shows
- Fringe festival considering stopping printing programs for environmental reasons
- PP raises issues of advertising boards and fence lining sections of meadows, where food vans parked – these block views from cycle paths, affecting safety. These are managed by Out Of Hand, who have a good reputation for engaging

with resident concerns. TP suggests now is the best time to engage, immediately following the festival

- TP raises issue of food stalls in the Meadows. Was big issue last year, seems better this year. No obvious issues currently, but this comes through licensing so can be changed.

Action – PP to write Out Of Hand about signage blocking safe views for cyclists

Action – DF to approach festival organisers at meeting on Thursday if possible to see if they are receptive to issues, whether they'll attend CC meeting

12. Short Term Lets

TP says lots of pressure from industry to delay government legislature; Council position hasn't changed. Scot Govt says legislation may be delayed again. Number of MSPs have asked for delay of implementation date – should be debated this week in parliament. TP has met with short term let landlords, who claim they make more money for short term over long term lets.

New legislation would make planning permission required for short term lets, based on reasonability. These would also be subject to separate licensing.

LL raises issue of illegal short-term lets, from their personal experience of tenement residents renting their flats, causing nuisance to neighbours and breaking terms of contracts.

JC discusses Terry Levinthal letter, which addresses these issues.

Action – JC to forward this letter to SCC

13. Public Question Time

None

14. Any Other Business

14.1 Make new name badges for future meetings, proposed by DF.

Action - DF to arrange new badges

14.2 SCC notice board – DF doesn't have key for notice board. Confusion on installation of the notice board over possession of keys. Mike Shields (park manager) has been replaced by David Kyles.

Action – TP to talk to David Kyles about getting a new key for DF to keep in GCC key safe

14.3 Nicholson Square update from JC and LL. Note from Pauline Flannery to say she'd been in contact with Andy from Friends of Nicholson Square (FONS).

TP says he, Pauline and Police met with chairs of FONS. Over COVID period, park has fallen into disrepair and there are security issues over current use of the park, but FONS are keen to improve. Meeting was overall positive. Action from around a month ago was to work together with FON to create action plan of small tasks.

Action – TP to follow up with FONS for next steps for progression

Action – LL to get involved with FONS tasks e.g. litter picking

JC reports pigeon signs have again been removed – someone purposely removing? Local residents and users of the area have been seen actively giving food to pigeons, which make the park unusable. Environmental Health have been asked, but they won't intervene unless health hazard. Those feeding pigeons will continue to do so despite signs – can these individuals be directly approached?

17. Date for Next Meeting: October 9th 2023