

SCC and Meadows and Bruntsfield Links Advisory Group (MABLAG)

This is just to explain our situation with MABLAG. MABLAG is formally constituted to have representatives from the 4 CCs adjacent to the Meadows (Southside, Marchmont/ Sciennes, Tollcross and Merchiston), plus reps from Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links and Edinburgh University Student Association. It also has 3/4 members who are from appropriate departments of City of Edinburgh Council or sections thereof (Parks, Environment etc), one of whom has responsibility for doing minutes and putting these on the MABLAG web site. When the previous SCC was dissolved in 2011, MABLAG agreed to the Southside Association having a representative on it in place of SCC and this place was taken by Linda Hendry. As a member of SA, I deputised for Linda on at least one occasion in 2013.

I did attend the MABLAG meeting on Monday 16th Nov. However, when I volunteered to attend this particular MABLAG meeting right at the end of the SCC meeting on 9th Nov., I was forgetting the formal situation that 'Southside' was already represented by an SA member, normally Linda H. As I recall, I said something to the effect that if no one else was able to go or wanted to go, I might be able to go and that I had deputised for Linda as the SA rep. before. I wasn't really volunteering to be SCC rep. and, since the meeting was essentially in the process of winding up so we could get out of the room by 9.00 pm, I don't think SCC actually agreed to me being the MABLAG rep.

As it happened, Linda could not attend the meeting on 16th Nov, so Chris Wigglesworth of Tollcross CC who is Chair and David Doig from CEC's Environment Dept helpfully suggested that I should be accepted as Linda's substitute as SA rep and would therefore be allowed to participate fully in the meeting. Two weeks ago Linda confirmed that she no longer lives in Edinburgh and therefore no longer wants to be SA rep. She thinks SCC should now appoint a rep. I've discussed this with Colin Christison, Chair of SA, and he's happy with that. I hope we can therefore appoint someone at our meeting on 14th Dec.

From my limited experience, I think MABLAG is an interesting committee to serve on. It meets 4 times a year, though occasionally there are special meetings outside that schedule. CC reps and others with the interests of local users in mind get real opportunities to raise issues about the condition of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links and their facilities with relevant officials from CEC. My feeling from the meeting on 16th Nov. was that it had a constructive and lively atmosphere and that both sides seemed to feel that progress had been made over the previous two years in addressing some of the recurrent problems in the Meadows, such as drainage and damage to the grass and soil from repeated use of similar areas every summer during the Festival, particularly by the 'Lady Boys of Bangkok' (they used a gap site

in Fountainbridge in 2015). However, there are clearly many problems still to be tackled effectively.

If someone else would like to be SCC rep on MABLAG, I'd certainly be prepared to be their deputy, unless, of course, we have other candidates for both rep. and deputy. I'm certainly not pushing to be rep – right now I have to try to reduce demands on my time. However, if no one else on SCC wishes to be rep., I might be prepared to take it on for a limited period, say, until next summer, if someone else will be deputy.

Though I wasn't strictly attending the meeting for SCC, I'm sorry I couldn't manage to give you a report on the meeting itself on 16th Nov. by the deadline line you set, but I felt I needed to clarify the situation involving SA and SCC first. I will let you have a report for our meeting in January.

Bob Hodgart 13/12/15