

SCC CHAIR'S REPORT, for meeting of September 14, 2021

First of all, my apologies that I am not able to make this meeting or the October meeting, and my thanks to Joan for chairing on these occasions.

The summer has been relatively busy.

1. Use of Public Spaces for Filming and Events Working Group – this programme of work concluded with a meeting on 21 July. Through a series of workshop meetings, community groups and event producers had agreed a number of principles around themes of:

- the application and approval process for events;
- the nature of circumstances that event producers would be required to meet in relation to any one site;
- engagement and communication with local communities, and
- the economic, environmental and social sustainability of events.

This final meeting was to my mind somewhat hijacked by Festivals Edinburgh bringing forward a number of last minute amendments to the principles that had been agreed by the working groups.

A report on the outcomes of this work will go to the Culture and Communities Committee which meets on 14 September. Recommendations will then be made that will be subject to further consultation.

2. EACC Steering Group – has been very active over the summer, under the excellent, proactive chairing of Steve Kerr of Corstorphine CC. Most significantly, the EACC Steering Group met with senior officers of the City Council on 10 August to put some key asks:

- a new written concordat with the Edinburgh Partnership, the over-arching community planning body for the city;
- a review of the Neighbourhood Networks and other structures of engaging communities in the community planning process which currently are working patchily across the city to say the best, and
- secure independent, funded administrative support for the EACC.

A further meeting is due ahead of the next meeting of the Edinburgh Partnership Board which is on 21 September.

- 3. Jade Mooney** – on 10 June, I had a constructive meeting with Jade Mooney, our community planning representative on the City Council. She has stepped into Andrew Gallagher's shoes following his departure.
- 4. Underbelly Big Top, Meadows** – I submitted our agreed objection to this temporary structure for the Festival. The City Council granted permission, despite some, I believe, 340 objections. The Council will have to answer for its record on this matter. However, as far as I could tell, the structure on the Meadows never materialised, but instead

appeared on George Square, so perhaps Underbelly, if not the Council, took account of the objections.

5. **Assembly Festival planning application, George Square** – we determined not to object to this planning application for a temporary structure in George Square. However, very constructive contact was made with the managers of this site. I reported concerns that were identified by Nick about the food and drink concessions on site and the extent to which these were supporting or damaging local interest. We had a very interesting and respectful exchange of views on these topics and I now feel we are well placed to engage with these locally-based event producers in the future should there be a need.
6. **Hill Square Festival Venue** – noise from this venue was extremely distressing for the residents of Hill Square. I had a lot of communication back and forth with one resident in particular and the College of Surgeons who are responsible for this venue. Unfortunately consultation around management of this venue could have been better and the situation was irretrievable during this year's Festival run. However, it raises unfathomable issues for me as to why temporary festival venues in the Meadows and George Square felt they needed planning permission while the event producers in Hill Square felt they did not and were not subject to planning enforcement despite being reported. None of this makes any sense to me and I really feel this needs resolving before another Festival.
7. **Dough late licence application** – I submitted an objection to this application. We were invited to attend a Committee hearing on 23 August. I am not aware that a decision has been published on this matter as yet.
8. **Newington Stationers** – two planning applications were submitted for change of use to a café/restaurant to which we objected on grounds of over-provision. The Listed Building Consent was granted although I am not aware that a decision has as yet been made on the change of use although it would appear nonsensical for listed building consent to be granted and change of use for essentially the same application to be denied.
9. **Low Emission Zone consultation session** – I attended a very interesting session on the Low Emission Zone consultation on 12 August. To me, it all sounds pretty positive. Nick had raised an interesting point about the overall damage to the environment of local residents being encouraged to trade in their ostensibly perfectly good 'old' cars for new cars. The Council staff who were running the session accepted the point but emphasised this initiative was about improving overall air quality across the city of Edinburgh, not the wider impacts that might be brought about by swapping old cars for new. I understand there may be issues with this scheme and it is on the agenda for discussion on 14 September, so I'll not presume the outcomes of those discussions.
10. **Meadows Funfair** – we submitted balanced comments in response to this application. On the whole, we would rather there weren't events of this nature happening on the Meadows but if they were to happen, we had concerns, about environmentally-unfriendly generators being used, about litter management and about illegal flyposting.

The event was granted permission. Philip identified illegal flyposting associated with the event. I wrote complaining about this practice, copying in Edinburgh Parks Department, ward councillors, etc. No response has been received to date.

11. **Scottish Widows Building** – is a concern. Scottish Widows have now vacated. The ponds at the front of the building have been drained which has been raised as a planning enforcement matter. Steve Burgess is looking into who the owners of the building are so that we can write and establish what their thoughts and intentions are. Joe Goldblatt, local resident, has proposed that there should be a public meeting to discuss the local communities' views of the future of this site. This proposal is on the agenda of the 14 September Community Council.
12. **Innocent Railway Tunnel mural** – having met with a local resident who is very keen to resurrect this initiative, as a means of preventing vandalism damage to cars in East Parkside, I am re-engaging with City Council officers on this subject to explore how we progress the proposal. The officer who was previously pursuing this quite enthusiastically has since moved on secondment to another role. The suggestion is that the first step should be a consultation with local residents.
13. **Treasurer** – following Svetlana's resignation due to her moving out of the Southside area, and no other Community Councillor being able to take on the role, I enquired of the City Council whether we would be permitted to pay an individual to fulfil this function for the Community Council. I am in discussion with an individual on this basis and will hopefully will be able to report an outcome soon.

Tim

September, 2021