

Woodlands and Park Community Council

Minutes of Meeting

Wednesday 8 December 2021, via Zoom, 7.30pm

Present: Ruth Gillett (chair), Tom Johnstone (secretary), Diane Mitchell, Gerry Doyle, Clare Crawford (minutes), Stewart Leighton

In attendance: Councillor Hanzala Malik, Councillor Martha Wardrop, Councillor Ken Andrew

1 Apologies: Derek Manson-Smith, Kay Scott, Dorothy Le Grove

2 Police Report

Tom Johnstone said that there is a reference to an instance of a speed gun being used on 'boy racers' in Park Circus when one of the drivers was warned. Amongst the correspondence was a complaint from a resident of Park Quadrant getting fed up with the noise of boy racers in Woodlands Road. Councillor Andrew said he had raised this matter on a number of occasions so was disappointed that a driver was just warned. He will pursue the matter with Inspector MacPherson. Stewart Leighton said that a few months back he had reported speeding in Woodlands Road between Park Road and the roundabout. Councillor Andrew had contacted Roads, and it was agreed that a speed and volume survey would be carried out, but Stewart has seen no sign of this although a 20-mile limitation notice has been painted on the westbound lane. Councillor Andrew said he would follow the matter up.

3 Minutes of 10 November Meeting

Tom Johnstone reported that under item 12, AOB 'Derek Manson-Smith Hamiltonhill traffic snarl-ups' should read 'Derek Manon-Smith reported that the new junction layout and lights at the junction of St Georges Road and Garscube Road have resulted in traffic snarl-ups'. Otherwise, the minutes of the meeting were proposed as a correct record by Tom Johnstone, seconded by Diane Mitchell.

4 Matters Arising

Stewart Leighton said there had been an article in *The Herald* of 7 December 2021 about plans by the Scottish Government to require councils to introduce a licensing regime for short-term let properties and that Edinburgh City Council was the only council to support the plans. He is concerned as he understands that a number of AirBnBs were operated in Woodlands during COP26 and that a preponderance of AirBnBs in an area, e.g. the Merchant City, can have an adverse impact. It is a matter that needs further investigation. Councillor Andrew said that AirBnBs in Glasgow are managed under Planning legislation and that Glasgow has not suffered the same loss of habitable properties to the tourist industry as Edinburgh has, although that could change as tourists begin to commute to Edinburgh. A few AirBnBs in Woodside were effectively closed down by using Planning and he has had no complaints recently. He will follow the matter up. Councillor Wardrop reported that there are some Airbnb Planning Enforcements in action. She will ask if there is going to be a more detailed policy, which she thinks will need to come through in the next City Plan. Tom Johnstone asked if she could find out if there are any actions, other than fixed penalties, that are being taken to prevent use as an AirBnB.

5 Councillors' Reports

Councillor Wardrop reported that Connecting Woodside is progressing Raeberry Street, but plans for Woodlands Road and West Princes Street have yet to be seen. She hopes to see proposals for St Georges Road in the new year and will ask for a presentation by council officers to the community council. Another tenement has been reported as being unsafe and needing structural repairs. In discussion of the matter with a Housing official, they agreed that a lot of the tenements in West Princes Street are in a poor state of repair. A huge investment is needed in Woodlands. Some factors are taking action, and the matter is being followed up by Housing officials. There are still cleansing issues. Diane Mitchell reported that the tyres in Ashley Street have gone.

Councillor Andrew reported that of the eight flats in the unsafe tenement in West Princes Street six are rented. None has an HMO licence, which he finds suspicious and has asked to be investigated. Building Control and the factor are now dealing with the repairs. There is a planning application in for a change at Peppi's Chicken at 124 Woodlands Road, which he hopes will mean an improvement. Prompted by Johnpaul McCabe, he had met with a council officer to look at issues in Park Road. Cars were parked in the turning head so the officer said he would have the markings changed. Councillor Andrew explained to the officer that when Eusebi's want to re-erect their outside seating areas there needs to be agreement with Roads that they are put in an appropriate place so there is separation between pedestrians, cyclists and customers of the delicatessen.

They also discussed the angulation of the parking bays. Evidently, drivers are supposed to drive south to the turning head, turn and reverse into bays, but instead they drive straight into bays and have to reverse to get back out. There are vulnerable individuals living in Park Road so the likelihood of an accident is high. The officer said that it would be better if the bays were re-marked and angled the other way. They also looked at signage and road markings. Councillor Andrew had raised the point about speeding traffic on Woodlands Road and they almost witnessed an accident involving a truck and a car at the roundabout. Stewart Leighton suggested that parking in Park Road should be for residents only and said that the reserved area in front of the sheltered housing that should be kept free to service the building is regularly parked in. Councillor Andrew said he would ask that parking enforcement be enhanced and that a residents-only parking zone would be problematic, as shown in Hillhead. Stewart Leighton said that Woodlands is now a restricted parking zone rather than a controlled parking zone, which he regrets as it opens the door to uncontrolled casual commuter parking.

For technical reasons, Councillor Malik was unable to deliver a report.

6 Millennium Park

Nothing was reported.

7 Kelvingrove Park

Tom Johnstone reported that the following day at the full council meeting there were two motions about lighting in parks and he hoped somebody will make the point that it is problematic for wildlife and there is also evidence that lighting paths identifies targets. In discussion about the pros and cons of lighting, Councillor Andrew said he would be pushing for better safety but not by lighting the park and Councillor Wardrop said that there is much better lighting in Kelvin Way now and it is a much safer route now that it is car-free. Stewart Leighton said he had observed a car driving all the way along Kelvin Way. Councillor Wardrop said she would check that. There are planters at the end that are supposed to block access although they were moved for COP26 and she doesn't know if they have been put back.

8 Cleansing

Tom Johnstone said he had spoken that day to the Cleansing operatives who regularly do his close. They said the problem was entirely to do with catching up with the accumulation resulting from the period of industrial action. They were fairly confident things would be back to normal the following week.

9 Correspondence, including Planning and Licensing

Tom Johnstone reported that the applicant for planning permission for flat 1/2 144 Woodlands Road must be badly advised because it is an application for HMO use that is bound to fail. He should have been told that he doesn't actually need it. He has not yet looked at 124 Woodlands Road as it came in only that day. He will look to see if there are any grounds for objecting to it. There is an application in for both listed building consent and full planning permission at 15 Park Circus, an A-listed building, for conversion to two flat dwellings. His initial impression is that it is a very tasteful conversion indeed. None of the planning applications for HMOs has planning permission. One, in his own close, benefits from a 1987 decision to grant permission and will have HMO use forever. On 29 November he was notified that an application for residential development at 65-77 Otago Street has been refused. It had a record number of objections, 83,000, although most were not counted because it was an online petition and did not have the right information on each page. All the correspondence that turned up has been circulated already. He has not yet written to the minister about the standard of decision-making at Local Review Committees as he has been having difficulties getting some organisations to respond. It will have to be amended because the Local Review Committee is no longer limited to three members but the entire Planning Applications Committee is eligible to attend.

10 Finance

Gerry Doyle reported that after a bit of a palaver with Steven Dowling about the community council's accounts they have finally been passed as okay and safe to file. Tom Johnstone had sent him a PDF copy that he had been able to open. There are five Zoom payments due to be made to Tom.

11 Electric Charging-points

Nothing was reported.

12 AOCB

At Councillor Wardrop's suggestion, it was agreed to add air pollution to the agenda for the next meeting. Stewart Leighton said air quality surveys carried out in the late 1990s revealed very high levels of pollution that were concentrated on contours following the alignment of the west and north flanks of the M8. Levels of pollution have reduced but there are still likely to be quite substantial concentrations. Councillor Wardrop said

the motorway works could go on for some time so we need to be aware of the ongoing data. We need to be monitoring it.

Gerry Doyle said that a leaflet had been sent out that makes it quite clear that Charing Cross Housing Association will be taken over by the West of Scotland Housing Association. It was agreed that someone from the association be asked to speak to the community council. Diane Mitchell declared an interest but recommended that John Mulholland be invited.

13 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 12 January 2022 at 7.30pm via Zoom.