

# Woodlands and Park Community Council

## Minutes of Meeting

Wednesday 8 May 2024, Fred Paton Centre, Carrington Street, 7.30pm

**Present:** Ruth Gillett (chair), Tom Johnstone (secretary), Stewart Leighton, Rosanne Davidson

**In attendance:** Brian Gannon (West of Scotland Housing Association), Councillor Seonad Hoy, Clare Crawford (minutes)

**1 Apologies:** Derek Manson-Smith, Colin Ewen, Mariama Bah, Gerry Doyle, Councillor Wardrop, Councillor Andrew, Ros Smith

### 2 Police Report

Tom Johnstone said that the police report for April had been sent by email, the first for quite a while. He gave some details of what the report contained.

### 3 Brian Gannon, West of Scotland Housing Association: Melrose Street and Proposal for Albany Centre

Brian Gannon, Chief Executive of the West of Scotland Housing Association (WSHA), gave an update on the property in Melrose Street that had been compulsorily purchased by Glasgow City Council (GCC) in 2022 and transferred to Charing Cross Housing Association (CCHA) before the transfer of engagements from CCHA to the WSHA after a tenant vote in August 2022. WSHA now owns it and has been waiting for GCC to make a decision about its future. A firm of consultants has carried out an options appraisal, from full refurbishment to demolition and new build. There is to be a meeting with GCC in May to discuss the report, the funding and the timing of the funding. In response to an email from Councillor Wardrop, a banner will be put on the front of the building to say 'acquired by West of Scotland Housing Association for development'. The property is in severe disrepair. It has been affected by water damage and a fire in 1999 since when it has been derelict. Structural engineers have said there is a loss of stability and that the building has deteriorated beyond reasonable repair. The cost of the refurbishment option for 10 flats is not feasible as it would use most of GCC's affordable housing budget on one building. The whole of Queens Crescent was B-listed in 1970, but many of the features in the listing are not present on this building and it has a very different structure. In discussion, Stewart Leighton said that features may have been removed between 1970 and 1999, and Tom Johnstone said that the Historic Environment Scotland listing should be consulted before assuming that features are missing and that he would look for it on the HES website. Brian said that the oldest maps show Queens Crescent as a continuous curve and Melrose Street as a straight section, but it is slightly set back and is a different height from the other buildings so there is a question about the listing. He cannot make the options appraisal available as it was produced for GCC but he will find out at what point it can be shared. The demolition and new build option would create 16 flats at a cost of just over half of the refurbishment option per unit, which is still a significant amount of money with no option for facade retention. Previous discussions had led him to think that work on the building might start towards the end of the next financial year but that can change as funding options change. In reply to a question from Councillor Hoy, Brian said the flats would be for mid-market rent, which is roughly halfway between social rent and private sector rent, is designed for people with an income between certain thresholds and is funded by the Scottish Government and GCC. Less grant is required because rents are higher. Mid-market rent is set based on the local housing allowance, which is set for the whole city and does not take into account local markets, for example, the difference between rents in the east end and the west end.

Brian said when he had learned that the Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector (GCVS) was looking to move on from the Albany he had contacted them to say that WSHA would be interested in acquiring it for social housing. WSHA got funding from GCC for a feasibility study on conversion to flats and for community use and took on the architects who GCVS had already appointed to draw up plans so that the building could be sold with planning permission for residential use. WSHA asked the architects to take it a stage further and draw up plans for flats converted to Glasgow's standards for social housing, which the private sector does not have to meet. The architects have come up with a proposal where the Albany is converted into nine or ten flats plus a large community hall that can accommodate up to 80 people, for use by the Woodlands Community Development Trust (WCDDT), WSHA's Garnethill and Woodlands Residents' Association and other local groups. WSHA are just waiting for some final information about a heating energy strategy for the building. GCC technical staff have looked at the plans and have no major issues. Brian has had lots of conversations with Ian Bruce, the chief executive of GCVS, and had hoped to negotiate with GCVS to acquire it, but GCVS have since put it on the open market and have apparently had significant interest, probably from developers. In reply to a question from Stewart, Brian said Ian Bruce has indicated that GCVS's preference is that the Albany remains 'a

social good'. Brian thinks that the marketing is because Ian Bruce has to demonstrate to his board that, as a charity, GCVS is meeting its obligation to achieve market price and has properly marketed the property. WSHA is also a charity and is under the same obligation, and WSHA can pay market value. He sees the plan as an opportunity to bring more social housing into the area and to have a community hall in the area of the building that used to house a café and has a kitchen. There will be a clear separation between the residential access and the community access and proper noise insulation. WSHA is making the case to GCC to fund the residential conversion but conversion of the hall would probably need separate fundraising. It might be an application for capital and revenue, capital funding to convert the hall and revenue funding to employ a community worker to manage the hall and its activities. WSHA has a lot of experience in managing community facilities. In discussion, Stewart said that the bit of Ashley Street that forms an apron in front of the GCVS building could be closed off and integrated with the Millennium Park, which would enhance not just the housing but the amenity. A roundel at the corner at one side would allow vehicles to turn and go back down. There was discussion about parking and patterns of parking. It was agreed that Stewart would draft a letter to the chairperson of GCVS arguing the case for the public benefits of WSHA's plan to the east end of Woodlands and mentioning the apron proposal and Tom would process it.

Brian said he had met Tom and others on the site of the Kelvinbridge mural and, as there was talk about funding for a feasibility study, he had said that WSHA, as part of the transfer agreement with CCHA, had given a commitment to a kickstart fund for environmental projects in Woodlands and Garnethill. Any expenditure from that fund has to be approved by the Woodlands and Garnethill Residents' Association. They have discussed it and have said that in principle they support it but are looking for more information about what the money is required for. Tom said he had received an email from Yardworks about the components of the £5,000 study, which he would forward to Brian, and Brian said it would be discussed at the next meeting of the Woodlands and Garnethill Residents' Association, the following Thursday. In reply to a question from Stewart, Clare Crawford said she had not yet raised the matter of the potential garden at the site with the WCDT board because the proposal is still amorphous. Tom said that Councillor Andrew had enquired about ownership of the site and it appears to be owned by the council. Councillor Hoy said she had not seen that response. Tom said that there is a list of elected community councillors. Ex-officio members are not on that list so if one councillor sends something to that list other ex-officio members won't automatically get a copy.

#### **4 Minutes of 10 April Meeting**

Tom Johnstone said there were some very minor typographical errors. The minutes were proposed as a correct record by Tom Johnstone, seconded by Ruth Gillett.

#### **5 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

#### **6 Kelvinbridge Mural**

Tom Johnstone said that in trying to identify the elements that are involved in the quoted fee of £5,000 plus VAT an email had come in from SWG3 on 11 April to say 'Documentation of the site; community consultation to gather perceptions with residents, businesses and visitors; site assessment for remedial works, access and costs; mock-ups of potential artwork and artists; write-up of findings, recommendations and costs.' There is no breakdown of how much would be under each of those headings but he does not know if there would normally be for a feasibility study of this type. Ruth Gillett said as far as the Woodlands Community Development Trust is concerned the community council is not looking for any actual commitment at this stage, just if they might be interested in principle. Clare Crawford said she was sure they would be. In further discussion Ruth said that some people in the Park Road area are not keen on anything that might be noisy, Rosanne Davidson said that there had been a children's play park there when she was growing up and the gym has not been used much and has been vandalised, and Councillor Hoy wondered if Councillor Andrew had discovered what the situation is with vehicles that sometimes go there. Stewart Leighton said there have been activity works going on in the past and the area contains a form of hard standing. Tom said there has also been an offer of help from Jonathan Pickering in an email on 29 April talking about various online resources which can be of use which Tom takes him wanting to help us identify these resources. He has copied in a Michael Ward in Planning. Jonathan is also able to help us if we have any interest in growing anything on the site.

#### **7 Trinity College Tower**

Nothing was reported.

#### **8 Councillors' Reports**

Councillor Hoy reported that she and Councillor Wardrop had gone on a walkabout along Woodlands Road a few weeks previously. She had photographed a lot of graffiti and sent the pictures to NRS with a request for it to

be cleaned up. She has not had a response but is hopeful that they will do some of that. Councillor Wardrop has reported various lighting faults and issues with bins on the streets. She also managed to get some lighting fixed at the junction of Woodlands Road and Baliol Street. They were also involved with a student project on Kelvin Way the previous Sunday when two students from Glasgow School of Art got permission to put down carpeting across Kelvin Way as part of a project to show how people engage with Kelvin Way since it has been pedestrianised. They were using that to inform their degree show, which is coming up in the next few weeks. They said it went really well and they had received lots of responses from people and someone had used a drone to record it for them. Tom Johnstone said that Councillor Hoy had sent him an email on 22 April with a link to the survey, which is included in the list of correspondence.

## **9 Kelvingrove Park**

Ruth Gillett said that she and Tom Johnstone had attended a meeting about the bandstand concerts and the Mela. Tom said it was an interesting meeting because it was divided up into discussion groups on different topics and worked quite well. He felt he got more information than he would normally and it was also much better for people with hearing problems. Ruth reported that all the rhododendrons have been removed from the area above the herbaceous border. There are now very few flowers left in the park, only the bit beside the skateboard park. There was discussion about whether the removal of all bushes from around the paths was for the safety of women following a rape in the park or whether it was a cost-saving measure, Ruth said she has been told that the azaleas have been removed from the azalea walk. In response to a comment from Stewart Leighton about wild flower areas, Ruth said that they keep talking about doing that but don't do it and that it had been decided a good few years ago that Kelvingrove was not going to be a flower park. The flower beds at the top were removed at the same time as loads of trees. There is no money to plant the herbaceous walk, which is why the community council backed the students who planted the fruit trees because it is at least something and the fruit trees went into the grassed-over areas so that there are still areas that can be planted with wild flowers. All the wild rose bushes that were in the area around the pond were removed. In reply to a comment from Rosanne Davidson, Ruth said that when the fountain was last restored it was thought that the pipes problem had been solved, but within a couple of years the pipes problem seemed to be back because the fountain cannot be run. When the basin was left dry the fountain was vandalised and the stone birds were removed. When the basin was filled there was trouble because the water was not refreshed and became stagnant. Water in the basin deters climbers. In reply to a question from Councillor Hoy, Ruth said that there should be as little maintenance as possible because maintenance means chopping trees down. It would be good to plant wild flowers all over the place. There are bulbs in the springtime. Tom Johnstone said there are wild flowers on the other side of Kelvin Way towards the university and an example of how wild flowers should be sown is demonstrated by the big slope beside the artificial pond in Ruchhill Park. In reply to a comment from Councillor Hoy, Ruth said that encouraging biodiversity is mentioned every now and then, when they want to remove the rhododendrons for instance, but there is little of it. She thinks many people who complain that the park is not maintained mean that what they want is a manicured look. They don't seem to realise that it is great that the council is not cutting everything back all the time. Stewart Leighton suggested a low-maintenance landscape management plan with representatives from all the community councils around the park. Ruth said our experience over thirty years is that they come up with these plans and then use them to come up with plans to fit them around their things. Ruth said that would not help because those who see maintenance as manicure would want rid of all the wild areas. She agreed with Stewart that there is a lack of consensus. It is better to let it be and try to intervene if something drastic is being done. Councillor Hoy said she would look at the strategy and see if there is any way to exploit what is written in it.

## **10 Dropped Kerbs**

Tom Johnson said he thinks not all the dropped kerbs had been done.

## **11 Park Circus Lane**

Tom Johnstone reported that there had been an email the previous day from George Hazle to say that the wife of an architect who lives in the Park area has been chasing up the matter and has been advised that the lane should be cleared this week and final resurfacing work will commence the following week.

## **12 Citizens' Panels**

Councillor Hoy reported trials were carried out in Pollock, Calton and a pilot is being carried out in Govan. A report on the first two has been written and should be available for sharing as it has been to the Hillhead Area Partnership.

## **13 Cleansing**

Nothing was reported.

#### **14 Planning, Correspondence and Licensing**

**Planning:** Tom Johnstone reported that there were three planning applications about which he had nothing to say.

**Licensing:** Tom said that the HMO does not have planning permission. The first of the two secondary letting applications, Flat 0/1 36 South Woodside Road, has no planning permission. It is a main-door flat and is completely separate from the close, which is why the application has been accepted. There is nothing remarkable about the second secondary letting application as it is a separate part of the property. There is nothing special about the Street Trader licence.

**Correspondence:** Tom said that everyone will have seen that Steven Downing and Lawrence O'Neill are leaving the council. Councillor Hoy said that the department has been restructured to get rid of that role. It is part of the paper that she hopes to be able to share. Tom said they were already part of the Chief Executive's department. Councillor Hoy said it is the new Communities Division and the way of working has been changed. Tom said the communication from Councillor Andrew on 11 April about the granite staircase is about the apparently unlicensed street trader but it turns out that the licensing position was quite regular. On 17 April he had sent in objections without having the opportunity to consult with other community councillors to the conversion of the gate lodge in the Botanic Gardens for commercial use as office space to rent. He was contacted at 10pm by Anne Laird of Friends of Glasgow West who informed him that the cut-off point was midnight so he only just got an objection in. There will be a listed building consent application made for the same property. On 22 April Councillor Hoy had sent him the email with the link to the survey about Kelvin Way. If you want to participate in the survey being carried out by the Chief Executive's department about community council support the email that he received on 25 April provides a link. The survey closes at 10pm on 12 May. Ruth Gillett mentioned the survey about buses, which should be completed quite soon. Councillor Hoy said it would close on Monday 13 May. Tom said that on 29 April the administrator at Woodlands Community sent an email explaining a further delay over the noticeboard because of a manufacturing problem.

#### **15 Finance**

Tom Johnstone reported that he has paid £80 of his own money for the March and April hires of the Fred Paton Centre. The invoice was sent directly to Gerry Doyle. He will ask Gerry when he is better to issue him a cheque.

#### **16 Electric Charging Points**

Councillor Hoy reported that a paper has been sent to the City Administration Committee that Councillor Wardrop has sent her earlier that day, which she will share about electric vehicle charging infrastructure collaboration. Neighbouring local authorities are looking at collaborating to procure EV charging across the area. There is also a report in it about air quality. She knows that the community council wanted specific information around St Georges Road and the viaduct, which they haven't yet received, but this is a general one around the Air Quality Action Plan for the city, which will probably be of interest.

#### **17 Air Pollution**

This was covered under item 16, Electric Charging Points.

#### **18 AOCB**

There was no other competent business.

#### **19 Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 12 June 2024 at 7.30pm in the Fred Paton Centre, Carrington Street.