

Colinton Community Council

here to represent you

Minutes of the meeting of 14th April 2015

Venue: Colinton Bowling Club

Present

Dr David Houston (Chair), Tom McDonald (Vice-Chair), David Bewsey (Secretary), Gordon Neill (Treasurer), Nigel Rudd, Mike Scott, Bill Alexander, Alastair Murray, Colin Proctor, Catherine Lang, Lorraine O'Shea (CVE), Iain Gotts (CAA).

Cllr. Jason Rust, Cllrs. Aitken, & 26 members of the public

Apologies

Cllr Lewis, Cllr. Ricky Henderson for Alistair Darling MP, & Gordon MacDonald MSP, Fiona & Ruth Johnstone & Mr & Mrs Ferro

Welcome by the Chair

The Chair, Dr David Houston, welcomed the audience and thanked Colinton Bowling Club for allowing us to use their premises and went on to describe the Community Council primary remit and what it does. He also made it known that the minutes and agendas are available on the website and that the Community Council can provide news of meetings etc. available if residents sign up to our email distribution list. He went on to describe the sub-group members.

Planning: Tom McDonald, Iain Gotts & Lorraine O'Shea

Environment & Trees: Nigel Rudd & David Bewsey

Roads & Transport: Bill Alexander & David Houston

Health & Wellbeing: Catherine Lang & Colin Proctor

Community Safety: Alastair Murray & Gordon Neill

Communications: Mike Scott, Lorraine O'Shea, Alastair Murray & David Bewsey

Minutes of the meeting

The minutes of 10th March were approved.

Proposed by Gordon Neill, Seconded by Bill Alexander

Matters arising:

Nigel Rudd commented that he had emailed the Forestry Department with regards to the Flowering Cherry trees that had been removed from outside Redford Barracks on safety grounds. He is awaiting a response from Forestry Services and Parks & Greenspace.

Action: to be followed up

Planning

Application 14/05261/FUL – 6 - 8 Bridge Road, Colinton

The Chair asked the Secretary to give details of the online survey, which so far had received 130 responses. The responses were 82% opposed 9% neutral and 9% in favour. The Secretary described most of the comments as not being related to the actual planning matters but more to their views on the effect of the Co-op on the village economy and that there were quite a lot of mixed views. The full list of comments had not yet been fully evaluated.

The Vice Chair read out a statement about his proposed course of action on this matter. In introducing the proposal he said that Colinton Community Council needed to finalise its formal comment to CEC Planning and went onto to suggest actions and proposed representations for which he would seek formal ratification later in his presentation.

He went on to say: as a statutory consultee in the planning process, the new Community Council's responsibility is to establish and inform the City Council of the views of the Colinton community. It is unfortunate that the Community Council has to address as sensitive a local issue as this so early in its existence, as the absence of financial resources or settled procedures to date has proved a considerable obstacle to its information gathering.

Individuals and other interested parties such as CAA have a right to make their own representations to the Planning Authority and over two hundred already have done so. A similar number have made their views known to the Community Council at the public meeting on 10th March or via its website questionnaire.

The Planning Process: Because of the level of objection, this application will not be decided by Council officials under delegated powers but at a Planning committee. Colinton Community Council has asked to make a statement at the Council's Development Management Committee, but that is at the discretion of elected members.

Discussion with officials has established that the April committee agendas are already full and because of the General Election, this case is likely to go to committee on or after 20th May. The Planning officials' report and recommendations, and public representations will be published about a week before that.

Planning decisions: These are made against the background of established policies and when an application is refused the planning authority must give cogent planning reasons for its decision.

From a planning point of view, commercial character and form of tenure are largely irrelevant and will not be considered a change of use. That may displease some, but local views on the subject are already well represented in the existing representations to Planning. So the substantive planning issues mainly revolve around any consequential effects of this particular proposal and its built form.

The main issues of planning concern will therefore be those associated with:-

1. Traffic and parking,
2. Appropriateness of building design in a Conservation Area
3. Other effects on the Conservation Area

It is therefore proposed that the Community Council should focus on the following areas of concern:

Traffic and Parking: The Community Council has identified considerable local concern on the issue of Traffic and parking. The supporting document in the application does not contain a full traffic survey and appears to rely on various assertions rather than solid evidence.

Appropriateness of building design in a Conservation Area: The Community Council is unaware of any support for the proposed design of the building. The applicants appear to have spent little or no effort seeking a presentation appropriate to the Conservation Area. Once existing trees are removed this building will be very prominent from outside the Parish Church and visible from other viewpoints such as Cuddy's Lane. The Community Council is aware of substantial local concern about this.

Recent efforts in Colinton village have created the RLS trail which is now a significant contributor to the character of the Conservation Area. Local residents have expressed serious concern about the effect of such a major extension of the building's blank west wall hard up against the Long Steps which form part of the trail.

The Community Councillors were then asked for their acceptance of this approach to the presentations and put to a vote. This was approved unanimously.

The Chair expressed his view that this approach seemed very sensible under the circumstance.

The Chair then asked Iain Gotts for his comments.

IG appreciated that the Community Council had to formulate its own view on the application and that CAA had already expressed its view. He went on to say that there was a fourth topic and that was that there could be a view that this development could have an adverse effect on the commercial centre as a whole and that impact on a single shop is not part of competition, but where an application can have such an effect as to dislocate a commercial centre. He concluded by saying that he respected that Colinton Community Council had to form its own opinion.

TM pointed out that CAA has made its view very clear but he felt that in the Community Council's formal role it can support CAAs view.

CP brought up the difference between what has been proposed compared to the current building and TM went onto cover the various aspects of the development, highlighting the rear aspect which was just "a large box".

The Chair asked for comments from the audience. One question asked about intensity of use and the impact of that use. TM pointed out the difference between "change of use" from the layperson's perspective and that of a planner. Another asked about the planning regulation with regards the effect on the Conservation area. This was responded to by TM. IG was asked to respond and suggested the questioner to check on the CAA website.

The Chair asked TM to summarise his proposal and to return to the earlier point: If that approach is now accepted, is the Council in agreement that:

TM suggested that investigations should continue pro-tem to gather as much information as possible to inform a finalised representation. A draft should be made available on the website and to elected members as soon as possible.

TM went onto ask if the Community Council would grant delegated power to ratify the response to Planning and issue a final version taking account of all comments received to the Planning Sub-group, overseen by the Chair and himself.

A vote was taken and approved unanimously with one abstention

IG commented that while the Community Council and the Amenity Association are endeavouring to work together, each organisation will have at some point a divergence of views. CAAs views have been recorded in a letter of objection to the Council.

A question from the floor raised the possibility that although the proposal is not a change of use in planning terms, it would alter the character of the village. TM's view is that could be a cogent issue in terms of the character of a Conservation Area. (Note: but is it an adverse effect?)

TM went on to mentioned that the Planning Sub-Committee monitored the Planning lists each week and the group is to discuss further how best to deal with applications of note.

The first of two applications is from Merchiston Castle School to create two all-weather hockey pitches with flood-lighting and parking close to the sports club. TM pointed out that within the strategy there was a proposal for housing off Paties Road.

Another pair of applications relate to Tesco at Colinton Mains Drive 15/01563/ADV with 15/01566/FUL. Concerns were made over floodlighting and a car-wash with advertising.

ACTION: Applications to be referenced on the website.

Police Report

AM outlined matters raised at the March meeting emphasising that the unsightly temporary boarding on the door was less than satisfactory in a Conservation area. The owner of Colinton Hair design has not been able to make any progress with applications for either sliding or roller shuttering.

The Secretary gave a brief outline of responses received from Police Scotland by email and telephone calls received. A request for a Police presence at future meetings will be made.

In terms of CCTV, he outlined the best advice given by the CCTV unit and also by Police Scotland.

Councillor Aitken provided an update on the Domestic Security event which was held in Pentland Community Centre on 18th March 2015. It was attended by over one hundred. Another event is proposed for Bonaly but need to find a venue. The community will be informed once this event has been arranged.

Councillor Aitken went onto say that national resources have been added to Edinburgh to help resolve the crime situation.

The Chair commented that we were still having communications issues receiving notifications as we are entitled but hoped this would be resolved very soon, and he also hoped we would have a Police presence at the next meeting as well as local crime reports.

Presentation by Health in Mind

Natasha Iregbu, a student working with Health in Mind presented information about social groups for over 65s in the area. The Community Connect project receives referrals from the Social Work team. There will be a drop-in event for over 65s every Friday until May 29th. Lastly she mentioned the LOOPs project which takes place in Currie Library on Tuesday afternoons. More information will be placed on the Community Council website.

Neighbourhood Partnership Sub-Groups

The Secretary mentioned that he had attended the Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership on behalf of the Vice-chair due to illness.

Dates of the future PNP sub-group meetings were discussed. Future dates are as follows:

7 May 2015	Health & Wellbeing	Currie Library at 2pm
20 May 2015	Funding Panel (6pm)	SWNO at 6pm
25 May 2015	Environment & Transport	SWNO at 2pm
01 June 2015	Community Safety	Oxgangs Neighbourhood Centre at 6pm

The Chair expressed a desire that overlap or more than one member attending was preferential to no attendance.

The Secretary intimated that the next Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership meeting would be on 16th June at Gibson Craig Hall, Currie at 7pm and that it was well worthwhile attending.

The EACC Question & Answer session on 25th April 2015 will be attended by at least one Community Councillor.

Complaint

The Chair intimated that a complaint had been made against Mr David Bewsey, Community Councillor about alleged comments made across the counter at the Colinton Convenience Store to Mrs Sab Mathur. The matter still under investigation by the Chair and Vice-Chair and on conclusion it would be reported back to the Community Council.

AOCB

The Chair commented that the CC was still having budget issues and while all the paperwork has been completed, we still don't have a bank account. The Treasurer stated that it would be available "soon".

The 20mph speed limit initiative was mentioned. BA gave a short update on CEC Transport & Environment. He had only just received a report from the Council but had not studied it in detail. Mr Andrew Paterson commented that two roads were noticeably missing, mentioning Torduff Road in particular given its length, narrowness and lack of pavement. BA mentioned that he and the Chair were drawing up a prioritised list. MS stated that the Road Traffic Act applies equally whether they are adopted or un-adopted, and most are self-limiting when it comes to speed. BA stated that the list was not limited to 20mph; that was just one area that was being looked at. The CC would be liaising with the Council on what actions are appropriate and what finances are available to rectify issues identified. The Chair mentioned the discrepancies between Bridge Road and Comiston Road/Morningside Road. The Chair asked for a show of hands for the inclusion of Bridge Road in the 20mph scheme. The public were 13 to 1 in favour.

A member of the audience suggested that Bridge Road was used as an alternative route when the Bypass was blocked.

The Secretary discussed the Neighbourhood Environment Programme (NEPs) which the Community Council should have an input to. This is part of the Discretionary Roads & Footways Budget and would be in the order of £33.3k for Ward 8, to be divided between the three Community Council areas. He went on to allude to several projects which have been on the list for a number of years, namely the footway between Mackenzies Restaurant and Mackenzies Cottage. The guardrails at the traffic lights which are apparently beyond repainting and perhaps need to be replaced by the new galvanised type, however the latter was estimated to cost in the region of £38k when this was discussed a few years ago but should nevertheless be left on the list. He suggested that while the NEPs budget was limited, there could be other sources of funding which Council Officers might be aware of which would allow there more expensive projects to be taken forward.

Iain Gotts suggested cooperation with CAA to reinforce requests to tackle various issues.

The Chair mentioned that the new toilets were apparently safe in recent budget cuts. LS mentioned the closure of Juniper Green and Currie's public toilets and the nearness of these facilities to the Water of Leith Walkway.

Other Questions from the floor:

A question about the two footbridges in Dreghorn Woods was asked and the need for repair to these bridges. The Secretary agreed to speak to Mark Hamilton about this matter.

The issue of problems exiting from Spylaw Street was mentioned as was the matter of a mirror on the opposite side of the road.

Dates of Community Council meetings

The Chair stated that Colinton Community Council meetings would always be on the second Tuesday of the month except when a break is taken during the summer.

The Secretary explained that during the Bowling Club open season, it would not be possible for the Community Council to use the Function Room but the next meeting is expected to be in the Red Room immediately to the right as one enters the Clubhouse

The Chair intimated that the Agenda and Minutes would be posted on the website

Date of next meetings: 12th May 2015 at 7pm

Future meeting Tuesday 9th June 2015

The meeting closed at 8:30pm.