

MURRAYFIELD COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting
held on Tuesday, 12 January 2021 at 7.30pm
by Zoom
Chair: J Yellowlees

Present: A Anderson, R Brown, J Forbes, P Gregson, B Knowles,
N Macdonald, J McDonough, N Oldroyd, E Robertson, M Stevens,
J Yellowlees,
Ex officio: Cllr Scott Douglas, Cllr Frank Ross,
In attendance: 8 members of the public including the Editor of the Edinburgh
Reporter,
Apologies: R Beavis, H Whaley, Cllr Karen Doran, Cllr Gillian Gloyer, Cllr
Claire Miller, Cllr Jo Mowat, Cllr Alasdair Rankin, Jeremy Balfour,
MSP, Miles Briggs, MSP, Ruth Davidson, MSP, Sarah Boyack,
MSP, Neil Findlay, MSP, Alison Johnstone, MSP, Gordon Lindhurst,
MSP, Andy Wightman, MSP, Christine Jardine, MP.

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received as above. The Chairman welcomed those in attendance and wished everyone a happy new year in another “year like no other”. He pointed out that not many working days had passed since the last MCC meeting and, therefore, not a lot had happened

2. Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held on 15 December 2020 and Matters Arising

2.1 The Roseburn and Murrayfield Village Blether – The Chairman reminded the meeting that at the last MCC meeting the Liberal Democrat activist/volunteer, Jane Alliston, had mentioned that she was starting a local community blog for businesses and members of the public similar to the one which already exists for Corstorphine. While it is not the role of MCC to support party political endeavours, a local group would have proved useful in relation to the CCWEL and MCC will wait and see how this one develops.

2.2 The Chairman referred to the worsening situation with the pandemic and asked whether MCC should be doing anything to promote support services in the community. N Oldroyd felt that there were elderly people who needed help with collecting prescriptions and food supplies and that, while a lot of people had volunteered to help during the first lockdown, fewer were coming forward this time. A local resident suggested that residents be encouraged to form WhatsApp groups to offer assistance to vulnerable neighbours. Her own street had formed such a group in response to the first lockdown and it was still going strong. **N Oldroyd agreed to draft a notice which could be displayed on MCC’s website and notice boards advising those in need of assistance to get in touch with MCC.**

2.3 Six Nations – No one had any up to date information on plans for the Six Nations rugby internationals.

3. Police Report

PC Sam Davison had emailed a report prior to the meeting. The Chairman commented that it was remarkably similar to the previous report. Housebreaking was down but garage break ins were up with an increase in bike thefts. Road injuries were well down, the Police had been monitoring adherence to speed limits and

there had been a seasonal drink driving campaign. The robbery and assault at Roseburn Terrace on 18 November 2020 was being investigated by Corstorphine CID.

There had been two recent cases of fraud in the Murrayfield area and the Chairman had sent an email highlighting a scam involving Amazon customers. PC Davison had supplied a five page Police leaflet on fraud and MCC would publicise the salient points on MCC's website and notice boards.

4. Councillors' Reports

4.1 Old Christmas trees – J Forbes reported that in spite of the Council's instructions on the disposal of Christmas trees, the pavement on the north side of Corstorphine Road between Western Corner and Murrayfield Road had been totally blocked in two places by large Christmas trees put out for recycling, forcing pedestrians to step off the pavement into the bus lane. He hoped that MCC could advertise the problem in advance so that it could be avoided next year.

4.2 Community Christmas tree on the Old Colt Bridge – The Chairman reported that Heather Raeburn had offered to help with this again and had asked to be copied into all relevant emails. She had suggested the formation of a small group consisting of the Chairman, N Oldroyd, J McDonough and herself.

4.3 Grit bins – The Chairman referred to the recent spell of cold weather and the problem of grit bins not being filled. The three local Councillors had circulated the Council's policy on gritting and the way in which making roads and pavements safe is prioritised.

Cllr Ross confirmed that he and Cllr Douglas had asked Council officers to progress the request from A Anderson for additional grit bins in Coltbridge Terrace and he had requested a review of the provision of grit bins along the walkway through Roseburn Park. In response to a question from a local resident he confirmed that the review covered the whole of the walkway on the south side of the Water of Leith from the Baird Drive bridge to Roseburn.

Cllr Ross referred to the negative comments, particularly on social media, about the perceived failure by the Council to prepare for winter conditions and to deal with them. He felt that the criticism was unfair and said that the Council had in fact been well prepared and that the roads teams had been working extremely hard in conditions made difficult by both the weather and the pandemic.

In reply to a question from the Chairman as to who would use grit bins in Roseburn Park Cllr Ross said he would expect the community to get involved and it was agreed that this would be a suitable item for discussion at the meeting of the Friends of Roseburn Park ("FoRP") the following evening.

The meeting was advised that grit bin problems can be reported on the Council's website at <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/gritbinproblem>.

4.4 Water of Leith flood defences – At the Chairman's invitation G Sharpe confirmed that he and Cllr Douglas had had a useful discussion by phone on possible steps to progress his and his neighbours' concerns.

4.5 Covid-19 recovery – The Chairman asked where the nearest mass vaccination centres were going to be located.

Cllr Douglas said that he did not think there would be one in Murrayfield and that the provisional start date of 1 February may have slipped to mid February.

N Oldroyd confirmed that in her work at a GP practice she had received confirmation that the main city centre venue for those under 80 years old would be the International Conference Centre; there would be a drive through/walk through

centre for the east of the city at Queen Margaret University in Musselburgh and the Royal Highland Showground was under consideration. A number of medical centres – Leith Community Treatment Centre, Pennywell, Sighthill and Craigmillar, and possibly Gracemount and Mountcastle – would participate but not all had facilities suitable for mass vaccination. The planned start date is 15 February. Those wishing to take up the vaccine will be asked to make their own appointments online or by phone.

Cllr Ross clarified that GP practices will vaccinate their own patients who are over 80 years old. N Oldroyd confirmed that those who are housebound or in a care home and cannot go to the surgery will be contacted.

Cllr Douglas reported that he had been contacted by two former medical professionals who wished to volunteer to help with the vaccination programme. With some difficulty he had eventually found out to whom in NHS Lothian their details should be passed and he offered to pass on details for anyone else.

Cllr Ross asked for consideration to be given to the pressure under which many NHS staff are already working and suggested that they should not be criticised too readily.

The Editor of the Edinburgh Reporter advised that there would be a Ministerial report on the vaccination programme to the Scottish Parliament the following day and a technical briefing.

4.6 Pansy Walk allotments – The Chairman promised that the project to persuade the Council to return the works site at Pansy Walk to its former use as allotments would shortly be advertised on MCC’s website.

Cllr Ross said that, although the Council cannot release details of local people who are on the waiting list for an allotment to MCC, he would ask the Allotments Officer to email those people and suggest they register their interest and support for the project with MCC. The Chairman provided the secretary’s address: secretary@murrayfieldcc.org.uk.

Cllr Ross reported that a paper entitled “Land Strategy”, which earmarks the Pansy Walk site for 20 units of housing, is to be presented to the Council’s Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 14 January. He hoped to speak at the Committee meeting and express his opinion that the site is not suitable for housing because of its proximity to railway and tram lines and its propensity to flood.

4.7 Blocked drains – Cllr Douglas said that he had reported blocked drains at the foot of Coltbridge Terrace and in Murrayfield Gardens. N Macdonald asked him to add three in Kingsburgh Road to the list.

Cllr Ross informed the meeting that blocked drains can be reported (and pinpointed on a map) on the Council’s website at <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/gully> and via Twitter @edinhelp.

Cllr Ross reported that he had asked for a review of the policy on cleaning gullies every two years, as he felt that an annual clean after the leaves have fallen is what is really required.

4.8 Home schooling – Cllr Ross reported that the previous day there had been a problem with home schooling because Microsoft Teams was not performing consistently across the city. This was a Microsoft and not a Council problem.

He added that the Council is conscious that a number of pupils do not have access to the necessary hardware for home schooling. The Council has issued 800 iPads to these pupils and has 1700-1800 more on order. Final year pupils are a priority.

5. Planning and Licensing

J Forbes reported as follows:-

5.1 Telecom mast at Beechwood Mains – The pre-application notification for a 5G telecom mast and associated equipment on the north pavement of Corstorphine Road has been approved. He was surprised to learn that apparently a telecoms company can propose a mast in any location and it will receive approval.

Cllr Douglas explained that, as 5G infrastructure is deemed essential, if the proposed location meets minimum guidelines, it will be approved. He cited as an example a mast at the top of Easter Road which had been approved without going to Committee.

J Forbes felt that there should be some oversight as to the suitability of the location. In the case of Beechwood Mains the pavement is not sufficiently wide to accommodate the mast and equipment without forcing pedestrians onto the kerb beside the bus lane of a very busy main road. He commented that Edinburgh Live had published a very unhelpful report focussing on “nimbyist” concerns and an unfounded conspiracy theory relating 5G to the coronavirus pandemic.

Cllr Ross said he understood that a telecoms company is required to investigate alternative sites and give reasons why they are not suitable. J Forbes said that in the case of the Beechwood Mains mast the company had done the first but not the second. He found it hard to believe that there is no other suitable site and gave as examples the wide pavements at the entrance to the Spire Murrayfield Hospital and the Holiday Inn.

Cllr Douglas stated that he contacted the Planning Officer and been told that the opportunity to site masts away from residential properties is limited. He had asked about the appeal process. It was agreed that **Cllr Douglas would continue to pursue the issue.**

5.2 37 Corstorphine Road – This case has now been allocated to a reporter at DPEA (Ms Amanda Chisholm). The DPEA portal states: "The reporter is looking at the documents and submissions, and will consider what, if any, further procedures are necessary in order to consider this case. This includes the site inspection arrangements (if any), the need for further information and the way in which the case will be considered, for example a hearing or public inquiry. Further details will be forthcoming in due course."

5.3 9 Kinellan Road - The withdrawn application for development of 20 residential units, involving destruction of an ecologically sensitive site with a small loch, remains the subject of press interest, largely because of connections of the applicant (the Rockshiel Trust) to the outgoing US administration. J Forbes had responded to a request for input to a Scotsman article, which has not yet appeared and may be delayed pending developments in the US. He had clarified that the high profile of certain individuals involved in the Trust was not a factor in the objections by MCC and a large number of local residents. He had also mentioned efforts by MCC and local Councillors to have the Planning Officer serve an order on the property owner to plant replacements for the trees felled without authorisation.

It is not known why the application was withdrawn or whether the applicant intends to submit a new application.

5.4 Tor development – Since the last MCC meeting he had looked in detail at the recent application for Listed Building Consent and discussed it with Neil McKerrow, who represents the Westerlea residents. They had decided that there was no good reason to object.

5.5 Alterations in the Coltbridge and Wester Coates Conservation Area – A number of homes within the Coltbridge and Wester Coates Conservation Area are currently undergoing work requiring scaffolding. If any householder has concerns that exterior modifications are being made without planning approval, a notice of suspected breach of planning regulations can be submitted on the Council’s website at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/breachplanningcontrolsform.

J Forbes said he had received an inquiry about a glass front door in Garscube Terrace which was not in keeping with the rest of the Terrace. He could find no trace of a planning application for that property, but it appeared from Google Street View that this was not a new alteration. J Forbes confirmed that if a householder reports a suspected breach online, their name is not disclosed.

5.6 Murrayfield Bar – The Chairman reported that the Murrayfield Bar is displaying an optimistic notice declaring that it will be opening soon.

5.7 G Sharpe reported that the pavements in the Baird Drive area are being dug up by City Fibre. Cllr Ross explained that this work is being undertaken by a joint venture between Vodafone, who are investing £75-80m, and City Fibre, who are based in Craigmillar, and will provide a gigabit of connectivity to every house in the city. There will then be competition between Virgin Media and Vodafone for the provision of broadband. He commented that the work had already been done, very quickly and efficiently, in his own street, but as yet Vodafone had not published details of their offers.

6. Traffic and Transport

6.1 Just Eat bikes – Cllr Ross stated that the contract for the provision of the Just Eat bikes is due for renewal and a review is being undertaken into the uptake in various areas. Some stands which had not proved popular have already been removed and he anticipated that during the year there will be a restructuring based on the data on use which has been collected.

6.2 The Tor workforce – N Oldroyd reported that she had emailed Dr Afshar of AMA about her concerns over the conduct of his workforce. He had been away on annual leave but his personal assistant had replied and assured her that a strongly worded instruction had been issued to all AMA staff and sub-contractors. Their conduct with regard to driving, parking and litter has improved but N Oldroyd fears that they are now breaking Covid-19 regulations.

6.3 Surface of Garscube Terrace – A Anderson complained again about the poor quality of the recent road repairs in Garscube Terrace and added that those in Wester Coates are equally poor. She had taken photographs. **Cllr Ross** said that all repairs are supposed to be inspected. He **undertook to look at both areas himself and, if necessary, contact the appropriate Council officers.**

7. Friends of Roseburn Park

B Knowles reported as follows:-

7.1 Refurbishment of the drinking fountain - A satisfactory water quality report has been received. The design of the fountain has been completed. A final check on budget and funding is needed before work begins.

7.2 Sakura Project – Roseburn Park is part of a UK-Japan Friendship project which involves planting 6,500 cherry trees throughout the UK. Roseburn Park has been allocated 30. Planting is due to take place in the tree planting season November 2021 to March 2022 and community engagement will be needed to plant the trees,

which are a gift from the Japanese government. The rugby clubs who use the pitches in the Park have offered to help dig the tree pits.

7.3 Armoury War Memorial - Cllr Ross confirmed that this project awaits the attention of the Lord Lieutenant's office and has been delayed by the pandemic lockdown.

7.4 Cafe development project - This is to be reviewed. A satisfactory water quality report has been received.

7.5 Western playing field drainage – The contract has still not gone out to tender. J McDonough reported that that should happen in the next 10 days.

7.6 Walking guide for the Park similar to the one for Murrayfield/Roseburn - FoRP are progressing this proposal.

8. Treasurer's Report

8.1 The Treasurer confirmed that there had been neither income nor expenditure in December and the balance on the account remained at £1,893.

8.2 Micro projects - He reminded the meeting of the plan to spend up to £250 apiece on a series of micro projects. Of those originally proposed only a plaque to commemorate Samuel J Peploe's connection with 7 Devon Place remains. This project is being championed by the Chairman and M Stevens.

The Chairman told the meeting that the National Galleries 2020 diary contained reproductions of 15 paintings by Peploe. He would send it to R Beavis. He added that there is a plaque outside Peploe's birthplace in Manor Place. He has asked the Roseburn Shoe Repair shop for a quote for the Devon Place plaque.

In reply to a question from the Treasurer J Forbes said that he had not progressed the idea of a plaque on the wall beside Milestone 2 on Corstorphine Road. A further plaque beside Milestone 1 had also been discussed. He felt that the plaques should commemorate the Glasgow/Edinburgh turnpike road rather than just the milestones. At the last meeting J Riddell had offered to draft suitable wording. It was agreed that **J Forbes would pursue that offer and ask the Roseburn Shoe Repair shop for a quote.**

9. Social Engagement

The Chairman reported that there are new items on MCC's website. He encouraged everyone to take photos and submit items of interest to the webmaster.

10. Any Other Competent Business

10.1 M Stevens reported that the residents of Balbirnie Place are suffering from a serious rat infestation. The rats come from the overgrown parts of the cycle path. The Donaldson Area Amenity Association has leafletted all of the houses and businesses in its area with advice to secure bins and has written to the Council.

The Chairman commented that Roseburn Cliff has had a similar problem.

10.2 The Chairman asked whether MCC should be doing more to utilise the Murrayfield Grapevine to promote community engagement, e.g. in relation to Item 2.2. J McDonough said that R Beavis is already pursuing that avenue.

11. Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 16 February 2021

Subsequent meetings: 30 March, 18 May 2021.

Minutes approved at meeting of 16 February 2021.