

# Minutes of the 39th Annual General Meeting

Held on Thursday 13 November 2008 in St Columba's Church Middle Hall, Upper Gray Street.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the AGM and said a few words of appreciation in respect of the contribution made to Association activities by his predecessor John Cruikshank, who had remained on the Committee for part of the year until standing down. A number of residents and Committee members had tendered apologies, and Councillor Perry was also unable to attend. Including Committee there were 35 in attendance.

## **1 Minutes**

The 2007 AGM minutes had been posted on the website since its inception, as well as being incorporated in the AGM papers. Approval was proposed by Sheila McLeish and seconded by Halla Beloff.

## **2 Election Of Committee**

The Committee proposed the re-election of Ray Footman and Ian Carter, and the nomination of Ian Wylie, and these were seconded by Simon White.

## **3 Chairmans Report & Matters Arising**

Ray Footman highlighted the important matters during the 2007-2008 year as being;

(a) Rowans site (the only large development site in or near Blacket) (b) Website (c) Open Gardens event

(a) The Association had ensured that all residents were made aware of the November 2007 proposals for the Alfred Place site, and had participated, along with the action group formed to respond to the proposal, in a meeting with the architects. Later new drawings for a much revised proposal were not thought any more acceptable, but the architects had made no further contact or provided supplementary information. It must also now be assumed that the recent economic downturn will make it difficult to obtain funding for development. There ought to have been landscaping to follow demolition of the building on safety grounds, and there were suggestions for a children's play area or allotments. Either proposal would be expensive and could only be done with the owner's permission.

(b) After early delays in finding someone available to do the technical design, an intensive period of activity by Karin Froebel, Ray Footman and Ian Carter preparing the content preceded the website going live in February. The design and layout is simple but stylish, and has received complimentary comments from users. However there has been relatively light 'usage' of the website, and only a modest number of 'contact' messages via the email address links within the website. Comments about shortcomings were noted and suggestions for updating would be welcome, and particularly input on local memorabilia. These should be directed to Karin Froebel or Ian Carter.

(c) The 2008 Open Gardens had attracted a larger turn-out than in recent years despite the cool evening and this confirms how popular this annual event is with Blacket residents. In order that we can continue to hold these social gatherings in future years we need offers of 'host' gardens and

residents are therefore invited to volunteer, or perhaps persuade their neighbours to make their gardens available.

#### **4 Treasurer's Report**

Ian Lewis was away and his Treasurer's summary of the accounts was reported by the Secretary as follows; We have 105 households paying subscriptions, the majority by standing order these days (not to be confused with Direct Debit as the Associations' bank account only receives money sent to it and is not authorised to request payment from residents' bank accounts). Because the 2007 Open Gardens evening was in the autumn we have two events counted within the financial year and, along with some generous and anonymous donations, this boosts the fundraising amounts. Even with the additional one-off outlay this year for establishing the website, overall income exceeded expenditure and allowed a surplus of £329 to be carried forward to next years landscaping.

#### **5 Neighbourhood Watch**

Alison Mowat reported there having been several housebreakings and motor vehicle crimes within the area over the year, some meriting an 'alert' being sent to the local co-ordinators, and those who had provided contact details. Garden statuary had been stolen in one incident but others involved access by breaking or removing glass, or forcing insecure windows. Older cars without alarms were the target of theft or attempted theft, possibly attracted by items in view, but vandalism was also an issue. Around Halloween there had been incidents of eggs being thrown at houses, presumed to be by children, and this had been followed up by a Police visit to the University flats in Blacket Avenue. The police monthly newsletter is available by email on request to Alison. In relation to communication on NW matters Alison reported having obtained the approval of the local co-ordinators for including on the website a list of their names and 'area' of responsibility to assist residents in knowing who they can contact.

#### **6 Blacket Avenue Working Group**

Ian Carter pointed out that the Group had been formed in 1994, working jointly with the Council to revive and enrich the planting of all the shrubbery areas, to the benefit of residents and visitors alike. Activity is now predominantly maintenance but on 11 November a diseased Lime tree was taken down in Blacket Avenue. This was a particularly large tree which will be sadly missed, but replacements for this and the diseased Elm are in hand.

#### **7 Traffic And Parking**

Anger was voiced about the continuing delay by the Council in arranging for the reconstruction of the damaged Pillar at the Blacket Avenue/ Dalkeith Road junction, partly because the damage was caused by an unknown vehicle and sadly therefore no insurance claim is possible. Provision of a protective cover for the stone pieces had also not been acted upon and the matter will again be followed up with the Council. Particular concern was also expressed about the volume of through traffic within the area, and the speed of some of the vehicles. In discussion it was agreed that this, and the lack of traffic calming measures in our area, be raised as an issue with our Councillors and that traffic surveys be undertaken next year to establish traffic levels. A question was raised about when guest parking permits for the Zone 7 area would become available as they exist in the 'new' parking zones. Notification has not been received of any proposal to alter the controlling Traffic

Regulation Order (TRO) in order to provide these and early introduction is unlikely, but enquiries will be made. At the end of the meeting the Secretary and Committee were thanked for their work on behalf of the residents.

Following the business refreshments were enjoyed by all attending.