

Minutes of the 40th Annual General Meeting

held on Thursday 26 November 2009 in St Columba's Church Middle Hall, Upper Gray Street.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the AGM, including Councillor Ian Perry who was available to discuss individual queries after the business. Apologies from various members were noted.

1 Minutes

The 2008 AGM minutes had been posted on the website in addition to being incorporated in the AGM papers which had been distributed to all households. The minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting, proposed by Bob Cupples, seconded by Richard Seligman.

2 Election Of Committee

Three committee members had completed their three years term and all were willing to continue for a further three years and there were no other nominations. Karin Froebel, Alison Mowat and Alex Stobart were unanimously re-elected to the committee. The Chairman reminded the meeting that new committee members would be welcome and anyone interested should approach himself or the Secretary for information.

3 Chairmans Report & Matters Arising

Ray Footman referred to the full Annual Report within the AGM papers and particularly highlighted key matters during the year, namely:

(a) The Blacket Avenue Pillar, at the junction with Dalkeith Road, which had sustained damage. Bertram Zank's action at the time, when the lorry failed to stop, was commended and similarly Ian Carter's persistence in trying to get City of Edinburgh Council to accept responsibility for the Blacket Pillars. Although that particular Pillar had been repaired (but had subsequently suffered further less serious damage) work continued to get acknowledgement of ownership and responsibility for maintenance from the Council for this unique characteristic of Blacket.

(b) Another very successful Open Gardens had provided another group of exceptional gardens to visit and a good opportunity to socialise and meet new neighbours. All the hosts were warmly thanked.

(c) the new licensing regime was bedding in and there was evidence that conditions attached to revised licences can be less stringent. The Association was attempting to monitor the position, including any possible infringements.

(d) Planning. At The Rowans site in Alfred Place, after two years without activity, there had recently been drilling to take soil samples and the committee assumed this might be in anticipation of a change in ownership. There has been no indication of a new planning application.

The extension of Cameron Toll shopping centre including the possibility of a cinema, although outside the area, had been addressed by the committee, particularly regarding concerns about the knock-on effects on space for parking.

The Travelodge at the end of Craigmillar Park was progressing after a successful campaign by several local associations to prevent the demolition of the Victorian villas, but there were currently issues about building noise and signage proposals.

(e) The Website, following a successful launch, had required additional software and some external help for updating. Members were reminded that memoirs and photographs for adding a human touch to the narrative would be very welcome.

4 Treasurer's Report

Ian Lewis spoke to the annual accounts. He commented that income from subscriptions was down with about 12 fewer households subscribing in the year. As all residents in the five streets were members he suggested those present should encourage non-paying neighbours to subscribe as they benefited from membership rights anyway. He also recommended payment by standing order, as the majority of members already did, to ensure that residents did not overlook making their subscriptions. The Blacket Landscaping fund was also in a healthy state because the investment in the year had been in volunteer labour rather than plants. The accounts were adopted, proposed by Ian Carter and seconded by Bob Cupples.

5 Neighbourhood Watch

Alison Mowat reported that the electronic distribution of information was proving a speedy mechanism for notifying residents of serious crimes, with other means utilised for those not on email. Monthly communication from the police was a month behind, and had stopped during PC Leadbetter's recent secondment. His return was welcomed. The most recent summary reported no house break-ins but a car had been vandalised in Dryden Place and a tricycle stolen in Mayfield Terrace. Alison thanked the team of Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators. To streamline the system Alison suggested that the co-ordinators might maintain email contact with their "patch" and that the contact details for the co-ordinators could be published in the newsletter to ensure everyone knew who they were and the households they covered. Alison was thanked for keeping in contact with the community police and maintaining an effective network.

6 Blacket Avenue Working Group

Ian Carter reported that weather had been a significant factor in this year's activity, but at least there had been no worries about watering. City of Edinburgh Council had carried out a tree survey, a combination of mapping and listing, which would very helpful in enabling the records of trees in Blacket to be confirmed.

7 Traffic Survey

Ray Footman explained that the traffic survey had been undertaken to address the perception that traffic through Blacket had increased in both volume and speed and to produce evidence of traffic flow. The process had involved logging all vehicles entering and leaving at all access points and recording their direction of travel for an hour at three points in the day from Monday to Friday during a week in June. He referred to the paper which detailed the information collected which amounted to 2,200 vehicles, the majority cars, with daily averages of 450 entering and 470 exiting, and identified the busiest junction as at Blacket Avenue and Minto Street. (The issue of parents

parking on the highway, instead of using the car park, to deliver children had been raised with the nursery.)

The survey had not been able to establish clear patterns of where traffic was coming from or speed but there was sufficient evidence to conclude that a residential area was being used as a through route between two main roads and the meeting confirmed there was unanimous support for seeking some form of traffic restraint. In parallel it was proposed to seek a solution to protecting the Pillars. It was noted that Blacket was Edinburgh's first conservation area and the dearth of traffic management measures was unfortunate. Cllr Perry advised that the Council may be able to undertake electronic monitoring of traffic levels. The Chairman expressed thanks to all who given freely of their time in mounting the surveys.

In closing the meeting – prior to the presentation by Nicholas Heath of Changeworks on energy conservation in older properties - the Chairman thanked all members of the Association who contributed during the year and particularly mentioned the Secretary, Ian Carter, for his substantial commitment.

Following the business refreshments were enjoyed by all attending.