

Minutes of the 42nd Annual General Meeting

held on Thursday 24 November 2011 in the Earthy café in Ratcliffe Terrace

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the AGM and commented favourably on the excellent turnout of 54 residents (and two policemen) on what was a very wet & stormy night.

1 Minutes

Approval of the 2010 AGM minutes, as circulated with the meeting papers, was proposed by Simon van Heyningen and seconded by Alistair Mowat

2 Election Of Committee and changed responsibilities

With the retiral of Ian Carter AGM after many years of outstanding & all-encompassing work as Secretary, Ray Footman outlined three proposals defining the new Committee structure, principally the sharing-out of the activities undertaken by Ian as Secretary, and the reintroduction of a Vice Chairman as a lead-in to the post of Chairman.

a. Ray Footman was willing to be nominated as Chairman for one further year and Richard Seligman was willing to be re-elected for another term. This was proposed by Karin Froebel Overton and seconded by David Stevenson.

b. Hazel Fletcher and Hugh Mackay were willing to serve as Committee members which was proposed by Alison Mowat and seconded by Joanna Chisholm.

c. The filling of the role of Vice Chairman would be addressed by the Committee in early 2012 but the other responsibilities and nominations for the posts, as listed below, were proposed by Coral Prosser and seconded by Anne Sturrock.

Secretary: Bob Cupples

Planning: Richard Seligman

Social Events: Hazel Fletcher

Shrubbery Working Party: Hugh Mackay

Co-opted: Patricia Alston

3 Chairmans Report & Matters Arising

In his Annual report, Ray Footman focussed on what had remained the Association's number one topic, namely the redevelopment of the Alfred Place site. He summarised the planning process and recalled that, at the 2010 AGM, the commencement of work onsite had been anticipated after many months of consultation.

The planned development as originally submitted had been modified in detail in response to representations and approval had been given by the Council in August 2010 for 10 houses and 5

flats. But even before the AGM, a further application had been lodged (subsequently approved) replacing the flats with a terrace of 4 houses, resulting in a final development of 14 houses.

S1 Development's assessment of demand for these properties proved to be correct and during 2011 they had been constructing at a rapid pace, planning to be off site by January 2012. This was a commendable achievement for S1 and he welcomed to Blacket those new owners who are already in residence and the future owners of the remaining properties in due course.

Noting that having a building site 'next door' was never a great experience, particularly for those residents most affected, he nonetheless complimented S1 who seemed to have made every effort to minimise the disturbance and who had responded positively to any issues raised. One merit of the popularity of the houses will be that the construction phase will be completed over a much shorter time period, finishing in the winter rather than in spring or even summer.

A sad consequence of construction has been damage to both Gatepiers at the Mayfield Terrace/Dalkeith Road junction. One remained upright but the south-side one had been dismantled & stored on site by S1. Liability for repair & restoration had been accepted by the companies involved but would not take place until no further movements of large lorries – probably after January 2012.

A successful restoration of the south-side Gatepier at the Blacket Avenue/Dalkeith Road junction took place at the end of September 2011. This had been struck by a delivery lorry in November 2010 during the extremely icy weather. Most of it was dismantled and taken away for safety a few months later by the Council. Arrangements for rebuilding the gatepier were made by the Council on the basis of the cost being charged to the insurers of the delivery lorry which originally caused the damage.

Winter 2010-2011 had been very bad with heavy snow & very low temperatures and the Council had consulted widely about being better prepared. They would be promoting an initiative, Winter Weather : Working Together, over the following weeks. The Association had purchased snow shovels in order that residents can be enabled to help out if required for which Karin Froebel-Overton had offered to co-ordinate distribution should the need arise. This would also be on the website.

Ray noted that the plans for the proposed South Edinburgh 20 miles per hour speed limit pilot area had moved only slowly during the past year but were set to be taken forward soon. All Blacket residential streets will be 20mph but Minto Street and Dalkeith Road will remain at 30mph. This will (at least initially) be implemented without speed bumps but supplementary signage will be required to make the revised speed limit enforceable. Keeping the additional signage from being too intrusive would be the most sensitive issue and was the subject of ongoing discussions involving the Association.

Apart from a spell in April, 2011 had provided little in the way of summer weather but that had not spoiled the enjoyment for those attending the popular Open Gardens evening. The dampish evening and lack of warmth had not deterred the intrepid Blacket residents from making their way round several gardens and then partying until the children had taken their parents home. Plans were already in hand for the 2012 event.

4 Treasurer's Report

In the absence of Ian Lewis struck down by a golf injury on the day of the AGM, approval of the accounts was proposed by Richard Seligman and seconded by Anne Sturrock.

5 Neighbourhood Watch

Alison Mowat welcomed the two policemen, PC Leon Malinowski & PC Graham MacCormack, both members of the local Safer Neighbourhood Teams along with PC Lynsey Collins, who was unable to be present being on a different shift.

Noting that there have been no serious burglaries since the end of May, she assumed that this might have been the result of the thief involved being caught but while there had been some attempted break-ins, residents were getting more security conscious, including the installation of more alarms.

With the exception of petrol being siphoned from a car in Dryden Place, she also noted that car crimes had occurred but none had been reported since May - satnav systems seemed to be the chief target for car break-ins. There also had been one bicycle theft in early September from a garden in Mayfield Terrace.

She emphasised that the Neighbourhood Watch team are very reliant on residents reporting crime information to their nearest NW representative or directly to her. She also encouraged everyone to be more vigilant in the dark winter days & nights before passing over to PC Malinowski.

PC Malinowski endorsed Alison's encouragement to be vigilant and was able to provide some background to the police processes & to the successes in the Blacket area in 2011. The Safer Neighbourhood Teams are focussed primarily on crime prevention and are keen to meet with residents to discuss any security issues. The Response Officers in patrol cars deal with emergencies.

He encouraged all incidents to be reported to the police as well as the NW team. Dialling 999 will get these reported & those deemed by the police requiring immediate attention, will result in a patrol car being dispatched. Regardless of the outcome, this will deliver the intelligence that helps the police to keep tabs on the crime and criminals active in the area.

He also encouraged all residents to email him (or his fellow Team member PC Lynsey Collins) with any incidents, particularly those for which getting through to the telephone staff had not proved possible. He also asked to be emailed when residents were away from home and he and his colleagues will take extra interest in those properties. Click on the links for: PC Lynsey Collins or PC Leon Malinowski.

In response to a question, he encouraged the use of shutters or fully closed curtains (along with lights on a time switch) while away from home but warned against half shut curtains which only advertised the empty nature of the property.

6 Blacket Avenue Working Group

The damp summer and, more importantly, the more established nature of the Blacket shrubbery had moved the emphasis from planting to pruning. Working parties remained very active with rubbish and weed collecting, overhanging branches and tree sprouting, and spreading appropriate fertiliser to maintain or encourage further growth. Extra volunteers were sought for 2012.

Other Business

The issue with Nursery parking appeared again. Despite there having been an improvement following intervention by the Association and the police in this regard, the problem with poor and pavement parking was highlighted and the possibility of having double yellow lines was raised. Bob Cupples undertook to ask the City of Edinburgh Council if this would be possible.

The Traffic Lights at the Mayfield Gardens/East Mayfield junction were raised as a safety issue as there is no way for a driver to see if the lights have changed, having driven into the junction. This junction is used very frequently by most of the residents of the area and again Bob Cupples undertook to contact the City of Edinburgh Council.

Presentation

Ray Footman marked the retirement of Ian Carter from his role as “super” Secretary with the presentation of a leather-bound volume of maps of Old Edinburgh. He noted that Ian was being replaced by four individuals in the new Committee structure. Ian was his usual modest self playing down the scope and length of his tenure as Secretary but he did point out that he was swapping one job for another as he was already in post as the Chairman of the volunteer guides at the National Museum of Scotland.

Conclusion

Following closure of the formal business there was an interesting talk with photographs of the Buildings Listed in Edinburgh since the Second World War. This prompted several questions of the presenter Dawn Mc Dowell of Historic Scotland which possibly whetted the audience’s appetite for a further talk going into more detail into the listing of particular buildings.

Following the business refreshments were enjoyed by all attending.