

# THE BLACKET ASSOCIATION

(the “Association”)

## MINUTES OF THE 51<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION

Held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at The Old Bell, Duncan Street at 7:50pm

Ian Chisholm, as Chair, welcomed everyone to the AGM. Copies of the Annual Report had previously been circulated by email and in printed form as the November Newsletter.

### 1. **APOLOGIES**

Ian Chisholm (“the Chair”) advised that apologies had been received from Mhoraig Blair, Stanley Bird, Arlene Doherty, Joyce & Bill Gemmel, David Stevenson, Tessa & Blair Vullingsh and Joanna Chisholm.

### 2. **MINUTES**

The 2020 AGM minutes as published and circulated were agreed as an accurate record.

### 3. **ELECTION of COMMITTEE**

The Chair reminded the meeting that Hazel Clark had replaced Fiona Courtney at last year’s AGM as Minutes Secretary, having been duly proposed and seconded. Hazel had also agreed to take on the role of social convenor. Richard Scothorne (“RS”) then proposed Susan Hezlett to replace Pauline Platt as head of Communications, which was seconded by Anne Sturrock.

Arlene Doherty had agreed to serve on the Committee for another three years to deal with new residents. Her re-appointment was duly proposed by Caroline Sibbald and seconded by Hugh Mackay.

The official position on the Committee dealing with Shrubberies was still vacant. However, the Chair reported that Hugh Mackay was still organising volunteers when necessary.

### 4. **CHAIR’S REPORT**

The Chair delivered his Report. The Covid-19 pandemic had meant there had been no open gardens event for the last two years, but the Committee was hopeful about resuming social events in 2022. It would be great to be able to celebrate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee in June 2022 in Alfred Place.

5. **PLANNING REPORT**

RS reported on planning related activities during the year. The major issue was still the Thrums Hotel's application for a new build extension. Caroline Sibbald asked when the appeal decision was due. RS advised that it was imminent and the independent appeal panel would have the final say.

6. **SHRUBBERIES WORKING PARTY REPORT**

The Chair thanked Hugh Mackay for the work done during the year by him and his team of volunteers for their planting, pruning, weeding and clearing of leaves. Bobby Smith was happy to help keep sweeping leaves on Saturdays. Hugh advised that the Council would supply brushes, bags and shovels by Friday and would collect the full bags afterwards. It was reiterated that residents putting their brown bins out for the team to use was very helpful too. It was agreed that residents should collect brushes, bags etc from Hugh's garden on Saturday morning if they wished to help with the leave clearing effort.

The Chair congratulated Hugh and the team for making a lovely job of planting flowers round the tree on Blasket Place.

7. **WEBSITE AND MEMBER DATABASE REPORT**

Mhoraig Blair was not present but her report was noted. The Chair asked what people thought about creating a Blasket WhatsApp group. Susan Hezlett explained that it would be awkward in the event of any conflicts. Many other residents expressed their scepticism about the merits of such a group, particularly due to the number of notifications there would be. Therefore, it was decided not to take the idea forward.

The Chair then moved on to discuss the website which everyone agreed was much improved. The database was also working well.

8. **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT**

The Chair read Stan Bird's report which stated that physical crime was down and that the biggest issue remained online scams. One resident mentioned that he had found a man sleeping in his garden one morning on Blasket Place. The Chair said he would mention this to Stan.

9. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Anne Henderson gave her report and advised that the only real expense for the year had been the cost of the removal of the tree stump on Blasket Place. Anne reminded the residents to pay their £5 annual subscription. A number of residents were paying more than that as they felt £5 was not enough.

## 10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Alan Paterson from Blacket Place brought up the issue of electric car chargers, given that he had recently bought an EV. He had written to the Council asking if it was possible to get on-street charging given that the area was protected and therefore residents without driveways were not permitted to create them. It was suggested that the Committee ask residents to ask the Council about this issue. Alan advised that in the meantime, residents were able to use local chargers at Pollock Halls. The Chair reported that the Council website showed no charging points planned in the Blacket area. The area was presumably low priority, being so close to Pollock Halls.

Fiona Courtney felt that Edinburgh Council were trailing behind other Councils in this regard. Anne Starsmear agreed, saying that she felt the Association couldn't leave it up to politicians and big business. It was necessary for residents to bombard the Council to make a policy about chargers given that they hadn't made one yet. It was agreed that putting the Association's view forward to the Council may speed things up. It was agreed that the Committee should come up with a policy and submit it to the Council.

**Action** - *The Committee to come up with policy regarding provision of electric car charging points in the Blacket Area for submission to the Council.*

The Chair advised that residents also had a voice through the Community Council. A number of members however, expressed their concerns that the local councillor was not very proactive. It was agreed that the Chair should arrange for another husting event for residents to question local councillors in advance of the forthcoming local elections.

**Action** - *The Chair to arrange for another husting for residents to question local councillors in advance of the forthcoming local elections.*

Anne expressed her interest in helping residents living more sustainably. Many residents felt such a position would be a useful addition to the Committee. After a short discussion this was agreed and Anne was duly elected to the Committee.

Discussions then moved the issue of a lack of bins in the area. The bin on Dalkeith Road at the top of Blacket Place was always overflowing. The bin on Dalkeith Road at the end of Mayfield Terrace had gone, as had one at the end of Blacket Avenue. The Chair advised that the Council was removing bins as it did not have enough staff to empty them. This was another issue which residents could complain to the Council about in the hope of them taking some action.

A resident asked whether there would be carol singing in Alfred Place again this year, as there had been in December 2020. It was agreed that The Chair would ask Becky Colgreave to organise carol singing again this year, perhaps with the addition of mulled wine.

**Action** - *The Chair to ask Becky Colgreave to organise carol singing in Alfred Place in December.*

Finally, some residents expressed their architectural concerns about the new St James Quarter and the detrimental impact it had on the Edinburgh skyline.

The meeting closed at 8:45pm.