

THE BLACKET ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING on 18 March 2013 at 21 Mayfield Terrace

Apologies : Becky Colegrave (Bec); Ray Footman (RF); Jennifer Johnston-Watt (JJW) & Patricia Alston (PA).

Present : *Chair* - Hazel Fletcher (HF); Bob Cupples (BC); Ian Lewis (IL); Alison Mowat (AM); Sheila McLeish (SMcL); Richard Seligman (RS); Hugh Mackay (HMac) & Ian Chisholm (IC).

MINUTES : Minutes of 14 January 2013 were approved.

NEW COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENTS :

BC left this item on the Agenda - he will communicate separately on this matter in the near future.

New Action 18Mar13(a): BC - communicate ideas on Committee structure & responsibilities.

PLANNING :

THRUMS HOTEL : As agreed at the last Committee Meeting, BC had written to the Chief Executive and had received a reply dated 11 March from the Acting Head of Development Management – this opened a stage 1 complaint. Prior to this meeting BC had drafted another letter stating *inter alia* that the Association were not content with the response and that the complaint would go to stage 2.

BC also pointed out in the draft letter that the three aspects of the issue (namely – 1. restitution of the fence; 2. restitution of the wall; & 3. review of the overall process) would have to be satisfactorily resolved before this was acceptable. The Committee unanimously approved the sending of the letter but AM asked that Councillor Rose be added to the recipients.

New Action 18Mar13(b): BC – send letter to Acting Head of Dev management escalating complaint.

ROYAL COMMONWEALTH POOL : **Street Market**: Due to problems with receipt of eMAILs, the opportunity to object to the trial market stalls on the space outside the recently refurbished building was missed. It would appear that the trial has been approved against the recommendation of the Planning officials but actual details are sketchy. RS will clarify what has been approved.

Amenity Strips: Various bodies including SE Community Learning & Development and Southside Association are seeking funding to make a wildflower garden out of the space outside the Pool.

New Action 18Mar13(c): RS - clarify details of what has been approved for street market.

RETENTION OF TREES : RS reported that the Council do still have a Tree Planning Officer and he and PA clarified the rules after the meeting as follows : All trees within a Conservation Area are protected and any proposed work to a tree (pruning etc) or removal requires consent from the Council. The way to obtain consent is to write a letter to the Council Planning Department outlining the proposed works and await a response. The Council currently state that if no response is received within 42days the work can be deemed permitted to proceed. Unauthorised work to a tree can incur a fine of up to £20K.

There are exemptions to protection, and again the Council should be contacted to clarify and confirm. Exemptions include fruit trees, preventing a nuisance, and dead, dying or dangerous trees. For further detailed information regarding the protection of trees refer to the CEC Tree Protection Charter dated March 2012. CEC also endorse the Tree Warden scheme from which more information can be seen :

<http://www.treewarden.org.uk/treelaw.htm>

Committee wanted clarification on the rules before sending out an item in the next newsletter in order to reinforce the importance of mature trees to the amenity of the area. RS undertook to clarify rules. Also RS undertook to ask Planning for a list of tree lopping or removal requests. RS will also contact Heriot Watt – see below – about possibility of carrying out tree survey.

New Action 18Mar13(d): RS – get definitive rules governing tree management.

New Action 18Mar13(e): RS - request Planning to provide copies of tree management notifications.

New Action 18Mar13(f): RF– include article on trees in next newsletter.

New Action 18Mar13(g): RS – contact Heriot Watt on possible tree survey.

NEW PLANNING MATTERS : 23A Minto Street : Concerns had been raised that work on the construction of a building had commenced at the rear of the garden (seen from Mayfield Terrace) but RS pointed out that this had been approved in April 2008 – it was noted that the planning permission was due to lapse under the five year rule.

Heriot Watt Student Survey : This was welcomed as way of getting general views into the Planning process.

AGM : HMac will request the presence of the local Planning officer to attend future AGMs.

New Action 18Mar13(h): HMac – contact Planning on attendance of officer at AGM.

NEW PLANNING GUIDELINES : RS understood that there was now a presumption in favour of granting planning permission whereas before there was a presumption against it in Conservation Areas. But RS will provide summary as per Action 29Oct12(d).

EXISTING PLANNING MATTERS : 8 Alfred Place : Item still on the list to go before the Planning Committee but RS to get definitive decision on planning application (has this expired according to statutory timetable?) as per Action 29Oct12(e).

GRANGE/PRESTONFIELD COMMUNITY COUNCIL (GPCC) : RF had forwarded minute of meeting – summary of main items :

Residents priority parking : Being extended into Blackford/Nether Liberton are i.e. east of Mayfield Road - starting consultation with a probable start date in early 2014.

Traffic Lights : Emphasis is on providing enhanced safety for pedestrians :

Ratcliffe Terrace/West Mayfield – installed

Dalkeith Road corridor – during day (7:00 to 20:00) controlled by Urban Traffic Control system on 104 second phasing : pedestrian lights controlled by buttons – at night, traffic is monitored by detectors while pedestrian lights still by button.

Capital roads programme : Submitted funding requests for East Mayfield; Findhorn Place; South/Upper Gray Street; Rankin Drive; & Lauder Road pavements.

Prestonfield bus gate : Converted to bus lane allowing taxis to use – fines will be levied on car use.

Pollock Halls to Ratcliffe Terrace cycle improvements : Traffic surveys in Newington/Blacket area carried out in January with view to creating link halls to Quality Bike Corridor route – also to proposed “family friendly” link to Morningside. Will be consultation on implications.

Climate Challenge Fund : seeking more information on funding up to £150,000 per annum until March 2015 for reducing community carbon footprint.

20MPH zone : Further traffic speed data; traffic volumes & road casualty statistics being collected in March – report to be made to Committee in August.

OTHER CONSULTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS : No reports

WEBSITE : Survey results : There were 21 responses to questionnaire available during the AGM and in January Newsletter : 7 - have never looked at the website; 3 - more than a year ago; 4 - within the last 6 months; 2 - within the last 3 months; & 5 - within the last month. Reasons for looking at site included :

- To check the contents and accuracy of the website;
- To check the record of planning applications;
- Looking for guidance on planning issues ;
- Checking for local history and photographs of the area;
- Looking for general information about the area;
- Had just moved to the area and were interested to see what was there;
- Looking for information about the Street Party;
- In response to the Newsletter article.

In response to question 'Did they find what they were looking for?' 9 said YES & 2 said NO.

In terms of rating the usefulness of the site on a scale from 1 to 5 (5 most useful to 1 not useful) :
Rating 1 = 1; 2 = 1; 3 = 4; 4 = 5; 5 = 2.

Proposals to improve included :

- Suggesting suitable garden trees & emphasis on tree maintenance;
- Suggesting reputable tree surgeons;
- Keep planning applications up-to-date;
- Advertisements of interest to residents e.g. garage to let;
- More photos and old maps;
- Original railings & more on planning and architecture of the area;
- Events & facilities available locally e.g. Priestfield Tennis club;
- Office bearers contact details (particularly email addresses);
- Needs to be kept up-to-date;
- Not a substitute for the 'green book' given to new residents.

In conclusion, the small number of responses probably shows that the website is not the primary source of information for Blacket residents. Some points can be addressed (specifically contact emails for office bearers & future events for residents). Some may be addressed in future Newsletters. But the fundamental purpose of the website should be discussed, and if appropriate investment made in it.

HF will contact RF/KFO to ensure current content is up to date.

New Action 18Mar13(i): HF– contact RF/KFO re updating content on website.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH : Lead was stolen from off a wall in Blacket Avenue at night on February 28th. Little that can be done as it is outside the house. But owners need to be aware of any lead as it is an expensive commodity and easily sellable, so tempting for opportunists – need to be alert to strangers looking at properties.

PC Lynsey Collins is now our sole Safer Neighbourhood Team officer who has informed us that there will be no more Police Newsletters – but no great loss there, as they did not give the figures of crime for local areas. Also new Police number for non urgent crimes is to be 101 but not yet clear when this comes into force. This will replace the number 0131 311 3131 for the Force Communication centre.

BLACKET AVENUE WORKING PARTY : HMac reported that it was not possible to do much in the beds due to the danger of trampling the snowdrops and vinca which are coming through.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING : **West end of Mayfield Terrace**: BC will contact Council regarding upgrading the signage to be a more decisive full No Entry sign with an exception for cyclists as exists at entry into Sciennes Hill Place. This was raised some time ago by Austin Flynn.

New Action 18Mar13(j): BC – contact Traffic Department regarding full No Entry sign.

COMMUNICATIONS : **Next Newsletter**: It was agreed that it would contain details on Open Gardens and an article on Tree Retention when the details for these have been agreed - also possible item on Priestfield Tennis club.

Use of eMAIL for distribution: Approximately 60% of the households have provided eMAIL addresses which they have agreed can be used for communications. There will always be some paper copies to be distributed – managing this down in a constructive way must be objective. BC will supply AM with the current list for comparison with the NW list.

New Resident information: SMcL has been investigating what needs to be done with regard to getting information to new residents. It is proposed that a small document be produced to give basic information including the website address. New residents would be encouraged to access the website on which the contents of the previous handbook would be made available in an updated form. This proposal needs to be considered by ALL with a view to fleshing out details.

New Action 18Mar13(k): BC – produce list for comparison with NW list.

New Action 18Mar13(l): ALL – consider the new resident information proposal.

SOCIAL EVENTS : **Open Gardens** : The Open Gardens evening will be 14th or 21st June but more gardens needed. BC undertook to check if offer of the party garden in 2012 (overtaken by Street Party) was extant.

Other events : RF to contact Owen Dudley-Edwards re April social event as per action 25Jun12(c).

OTHER BUSINESS : a. eMAIL from Caroline Sibbald on archiving was carried forward.

b. HF met with Bertram Zank with regard to Transport Strategy for which submissions were invited.

c. Bertram Zank also offered to provide a copy of a survey of old railings which he has carried out.

d. BC had received letter from Alisoun Morton pointing out that not all residents were abiding by the rules regarding getting building warrant for building activities, hence avoiding costs that other residents were incurring. The general consensus was that this was potentially a short term saving as retrospective building warrant might be required on sale of the property.

As the Association has not been monitoring this aspect of the planning process (i.e. neither building warrant nor changes being made), there was little that the Association could do in this case. BC will write to her on that basis.

However Building Warrants can be accessed on the CEC Planning website provided you have the address of the property being modified – need to go into Advanced Search, supply the property address and planning and building warrant details will come up. The following developments are unlikely to require a Building Warrant :

- Replacement windows
- Replacing fixtures
- Providing thermal insulation
- All new heat producing appliances
- Balanced flues
- Lining a flue

The above is not a full detailed list – for completeness, see Clause 5 in the following website : <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0041/00412256.pdf> - “Buildings, work, services, fittings and equipment not requiring a warrant”.

New Action 18Mar13(m): BC – write to Alisoun Morton re building warrants.

FUTURE MEETINGS : Committee -13 May (**host : BC**)
Committee - 26 Aug (**host : tba**)