

West End Community Council
2 June at Ashfield 61 Melville Street Edinburgh at 7:30pm
Minutes of Meeting

Present: Jock Miler (Chair), Alan Weddell, Isabel Thom, Colin Johnston, Rory O’Riordan, Gordon Renton, Martha Baur, Ian Robertson, Gordon Wyllie

In attendance: Iain MacPhail (CEC), Karen Stevenson (CEC), Anna Herriman (CEC), Alex Hamilton, Hamish Dobbie, Helen Broadbent, Sophie Cogle (minutes)

1 Apologies

Marco Biagi MSP, Sarah Boyack MSP, Deidre Brock MP, Cllr. Alasdair Rankin, Cllr. Karen Doran, Cllr. Joanna Mowat

2 The Place Standard

Will Garrett was unable to attend, however, Karen Stevenson and Anna Herriman attended from CEC instead.

Karen explained that The Place Standard is a positive initiative run within the council. The Scottish Government are starting to have discussions with the council and various others, and would like to put a Place Standard together by the end of the year. The Place Standard tries to develop a methodology and approach to looking at places. Placemaking is trying to create places people want to be in, providing the opportunities for play, walking, etc. Underpinning this is the health agenda: outdoor spaces can promote improvement to health. The council recognises that some parts of town are better provided for than others, but when coming to develop new places we ensure we think about the range of issues we deliver.

We looked at the Place Standard questionnaire. It asks you a series of questions (e.g. how easy is it for me to move around? What areas are there for children to play?) In an ideal work, we should be providing a positive response to all these questions. When we carry out an audit, we can easily work out which areas we are not providing for and it gives communities the opportunity to identify issues with their area. The City council is also going to be talking to the public. Jock expressed his concerns on the length of the one year consultation on public spaces.

The community council split into 2 groups and collectively answered 14 questions on each space: the first group focused on the area from Palmerston Place towards Princes Street, and the second was from Melville Street towards Haymarket and beyond towards Donaldson’s. Please see the attached results from both groups.

Iain MacPhail from CEC confirmed to the committee that the public spaces manifesto now been passed. He reported that 4 weeks from now we will see a difference outside Frasers and Ghillie Dhu. Repaving will take place on 17 June at both spaces and 2 Kelpie statues arrive on 28 June, on a 3 month

loan, outside Frasers. Outside Frasers has been recognised as the prominent gateway, where people would want to spend time in - it will be a civic space for major public work and art work. The shadier, less usable space (outside the Ghillie Dhu) has become the area with tables, chairs and umbrellas. CEC is keen to make these spaces about the community rather than business focussed and would really like to involve the community council. Iain stressed that he is really hopeful will be a positive start after years of tram works, working with us, The National Galleries of Scotland and Edinburgh World Heritage. Iain reassured us that they have been listening and they are doing work to hopefully reflect what has been said previously around this table. The council has learnt from the mistakes made on Castle Street where this space doesn't function well.

Alan commended Iain for what he has done in relation to the public realm work outside Frasers. Alan suggested a permanent plinth in this area and rolling art in this space for a number of months. Alan suggested that we engage with the Edinburgh College of Art. Gordon Wyllie requested the return of the ½ cow outside the Kyloe giving this area a fun element. There were mixed views on this.

Question came up on umbrellas outside The Caledonian. Iain confirmed that the umbrellas do have planning permission, albeit temporary which all forms part of the report. **Action** Iain MacPhail to send the community council the planning permission around this.

Colin asked Iain about the whereabouts of the Sinclair Fountain which was formally in the West End before it was dismantled. Colin asked if it was in council storage. **Action** Iain MacPhail to find out about this.

We came on to Atholl Crescent/Coates Crescent gardens consultation and an update on what was happening to the gardens. It was noted that some members of the community council felt that although good work was to be done outside Frasers/Ghillie Dhu, there was no joined up thinking and the CEC has not thought about the other places and how these might interact. Iain reported to the community council that there had indeed been a timelag on this project which was due to a delay in the supply chain for stone. Even though this was put out public tender, there was a genuine issue which could not be rectified. We want to get the place right first time for good, but there are now people have on site.

Alex asked Iain if a document existed outlining the details of what will be in the Atholl Crescent/Coates Crescent gardens (trees/benches etc) and to what budget? Iain informed the group that the document they did have is out of date document.

Hamish addressed Iain on behalf of the business community. They understand the delays, the problem isn't that not that Atholl Crescent/Coates Crescent gardens hasn't been achieved yet, albeit disappointing, but that the consultation hasn't taken place. Certainly the businesses want to put feedback in so hopefully we are signing off on the plan and know what the budget is. They asked for a date when a document will be delivered where we have all agreed what we want to happen there. The businesses were looking to be involved and maybe even to try and contribute but nothing has

happened to date. **Action** Iain Phail to pick it up with Fiona Rankin from the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust as they are the lead partner on this project.

Regarding the budget to help deliver the art trail in the long term, Iain specified that there is no budget from the council, but there is goodwill to bring these other types of projects in. They are hoping to bring Patricia Condry from National Galleries of Scotland and her director into the discussion as the real win is actually for the galleries.

Alex asked if there anything we can do to help in terms of The National Galleries and to support bringing people round the table. Iain informed the council that the long term plan is to form a communications plan that brings them into the room. Recognise that everything has been far too much East End focussed.

Jock spoke about the number of people going down William Street, and from a traders point of view, increasing the footfall down these streets to the gallery of modern art – could there be signposts directing visitors in this direction and also to the Gladstone memorial?

Alex mentioned that there could be a link from Haymarket station and walking to the galleries. Alex commended Iain with what he is trying to do - a much more create space for the West End would be brilliant.

Isabel asked if the Living Streets Group might be involved if we are talking about pathways through the West End. We discussed that World Heritage has an app for a walk through to West End. The business community has been in conversations about apps to encourage tourists to come into different areas. It was noted that it feels like multiple people are following parallel channels and really they should be coming together.

Gordon Renton asked about the long term plan from West End from a council point of view. Iain reported that a lot of it will be starting with the public spaces manifesto - the key public spaces. In response to this, Hamish had a meeting with Cllr Steve Cardownie and Cllr Frank Ross who reported that they saw the West end of Edinburgh having a strong bar/café area and compared it to the West End of London. The business community expressed concern – it was felt this was neither not good for the community or for business. Iain was in agreement. Hamish is waiting to hear back from them both. **Action** Iain MacPhail will bring this to Cllr Steve Cardownie's and Cllr Frank Ross's attention he recognises that we all need to work in partnership if we are going to be successful. There has got to be a balance.

Anna reported that there is also a role for community councils in informing licensing policy and licensing decisions. She has witnessed significant input from community councils and from individual community groups, police and health to the licensing board both about the statement of licensing policy over a subsequent 3 year period and on individual applications and so far they have had very little impact on the decisions made by the committee, however, the Scottish Government legislation is coming in making the need to consult much more significant and part of the statutory process. 18 months ago they did a lot of ground work with health and police on getting the data that demonstrated shelf meters of alcohol availability and impact on communities,

alcohol late licensing and licensing hours. Anna is going through this process with Leith and we will come to move onto the City centre and they would love our input. **Action** Anna Herriman to send some alcohol profiles for this area.

Ian Robertson asked for feedback on the Place Standard session. There were mixed feelings, but although different from the usual meetings, we still covered the same topics. It does prompt the conversations that need to be taken forward with a mix of different people involved. Some of the conversations had tonight will be taken forward, and where there are major issues that have been flagged up, we can flag up to the Partnership. Although we have identified issues, all too often, no action gets taken. We want to see positive, constructive action.

Jock informed the community council of the plans to have a walk about on 4 August to look at roads and conditions, and potential signpost sites. Could we make this more of a stakeholder event and invite the National Galleries and Planning Aid Scotland (PAS)?

3 AOCB

None.

4 Date of next meeting: 7 June 2015