

Longstone Community Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 11 September 2023 from 7:30 to 9 pm in Slateford/Longstone Church (Session Room).

- 0 SC announced that Euan Robertson had agree to be Minute Secretary
- 1 **John Allan welcomed everyone, expressing the hope that everybody was full of enthusiasm following the summer break.**
- 2 **Attendance and apologies**
Elected members:
Steuart Campbell (Secretary)(SC), Alan Gordon (Treasurer and Engagement Officer)(AG) and Margaret Campbell (MC).
Co-opted members
John Allan (Vice Chair)(JA), William Sturgeon (WS) and Ray Donnelly (RD).
Nominated representatives:
none
Ex Officio
Cllr Val; Walker (VW), Cllr Ross McKenzie (RMcK)
In attendance
Cllr Scott Arthur (SA)
Public visitors
Anastasia Muri (AM)
SC announced apologies from Des Laughney and Euan Robertson. Also from Cllrs Heap, Key, Dixon and Cowdy.
- 3 **Minutes** of the meeting held on Monday 19 June 2023 were approved and adopted.
- 4 **Matters arising from the last minutes but not covered elsewhere in the agenda:**
SC reported that the City Archaeologist (John Lawson) had proposed to engage an independent team to survey the Long Stone. However, he stood them down because of the proposed redevelopment of the Longstone Inn. JA explained that the Long Stone was unearthed by a team of community councillors and that it originally came from the now filled-in Hailes Quarry. He observed that the view of archaeologists is that found relics should remain where they are found.
- 5 **Police report?** No report. JA commented that there has been no police presence at LCC meetings for some time and [that] it is sad that due to possible staff shortages an officer has not been present. SC said there is a Community Police Officer, Andrew Cory [who] has only ever attended one LCC meeting.
- 6 **Planning and development**
- 6.1 *Student flats in Slateford on the former Westside Motors site:*
SC reported no progress. SC had previously spoken to the site owner who lives in England but lately he had not responded. SC thought that the planning

application has expired but AG mentioned that the planning application covered demolition and so may not have expired.

6.2 *Conversion of Slateford House and Chalmers Memorial Hall:*

No further information. LCC's only interest is in the bronze memorial plaque which the owner promised to protect. Lately SC had not been able to get a response from the owner's Edinburgh representative.

6.3 *Smart's proposal to redevelop the former Booker site:*

SC had no new information. JA and AG represented LCC at a recent hearing regarding the application. AG gave a brief report on the hearing when the applicant revealed that they would consider a contribution to a bridge. SC explained that he had been unable to get any indication from the committee clerks as to when the application would return to the DMSC but he would continue to ask for it. MC remarked that Helen Brown of the Water of the Leith Conservation Trust's contribution to the hearing was excellent. JA said the LCC should express their thanks to her and to Cllrs for assistance at the hearing. SC observed that the application must return to DMSC for a decision. SA commented said the developer must have known about the bridge requirement and he mentioned the danger to cyclists from using alternative routes.

6.4 *Students flats in Inglis Green Gait*

Awaiting assessment. WS added that some trees have been surveyed and numbered and labelled. AM added the surveyor would estimate the number of more mature trees inaccessible to him at the back of the site.

6.5 *Longstone Inn redevelopment*

Awaiting assessment. AG noted the recent architect's report on the requirement for some (25%) affordable housing in the development. Because separate dedicated access to affordable housing could not be provided, they proposed the inclusion of 5 'Mid Market Rent' flats spread throughout the block.

7 **Reports from LCC member attending meetings obo LCC**

AG mentioned the deputation to council hearing on Booker Development site in which he took part. JA commented on the Canal Champion and explained the role of a Canal Champion. It is a representative that oversees the functionality of the canal and maintained for the benefit of the community. He noted that the role is currently vacant but he intimated that Cllr Heap is keen to re-instate the role. Gavin Corbet formerly had the role and was very active. MC mentioned that she and ER attended the unveiling of the plaque at WOL on 7 August in the presence of Hugh Baird, who unveiled the plaque and she mentioned that another plaque would be installed at the top of the steps leading to the aqueduct. JA said that a similar plaque is installed at the Leamington Lift Bridge. No other reports.

8 Environment

8.1 *Redhall Grove traffic control scheme (survey)*

We still await sight of the survey, so SC had nothing new to report. AG gave an account of the scheme, observing that CEC had highlighted action plans to mitigate the effects of traffic pollution on children and parents around schools. SA said that CEC is working with Edinburgh schools although the plan is delayed to introduce 'School Streets' whereby the roads outside the school will be closed to traffic at least at times of starting and finishing the school day. Some may be closed for the whole day, e.g. Canaan Lane. CEC cannot enforce it and police required to enforce but they are stretched so he anticipates signs will be erected to indicate when the street will be closed. He also mentioned the likelihood of objections mostly from the residents immediately to be affected and delivery workers. Matter to be considered by committee at year end and then to Traffic Regulation Order Process with outcome in 12–18 months. AG noted that Redhall Grove has two schools. (SC pointed out for SA's benefit that Longstone Primary and Redhall School are located on Redhall Grove and children attending Redhall are bussed in daily). It is likely the local residents would be the objectors. Every school will have issues with the prohibition and he commented that closing Redhall Grove would be unachievable. Although RMcK mentioned that planters are temporary in place to restrict traffic flow. Murrayburn primary school has a similar scheme in place. AG had witnessed confrontation at particular pinch points but in his opinion the scheme works fairly well. He confirmed that the traffic survey has been completed and SC will pursue. JA acknowledged difficulties for residents in the immediate area there are other pinch points where parents attempt drive to the school gates. AG observed that pavement parking is also a problem.

8.2 *Cycle lanes and parking strips (Lanark Rd/Inglis Green Road) including the question of a controlled crossing by Kingsknowe Park (street)*

SC deferred to AG who remarked that Lanark Rd resurfacing was not perfect; white line markings are not yet restored but the double yellow lines did make a difference by controlling illegal parking. Bus stops are impeded by illegal parking. SA to pursue the yellow lines re-instatement. AG observed that the contractors were yet return to complete markings and bollard defenders for the cycle lanes. SA confirmed that the resurfacing will extend the life of the road and said that CEC is committed to resurfacing 840K square metres of Edinburgh roads. He also remarked that despite the width of Lanark Rd motorists continue to park on the pavement. Pedestrian crossing at Kingsknowe road (sic, he means Park) is not part of the ETRO but a safety survey had been completed and the work will go to tender in a month or two's time. MC was concerned about child safety now that playing fields at

Dovecot Park are back in action the crossing is desperately needed. SA emphasised it will likely be early next year before crossing is in place owing to backlog and costs quoted as £100K per installation. SC asked SA about Rurighd McMeddes who had not responded to his concern re confusing speed limits in Slateford ranging from 20 mph to 30 mph. VW will note the speed limit issues and would pursue. SA noted a speed survey consultation and remarked that the reduced speed limit from 30 to 20 mph has reduced average speed within the city. WS [?] commented that data released from the survey showed average speed on Braid Rd for example was 27 mph. JA remarked that the bollards are being removed or accidentally knocked over outside the chip shop on Inglis Green Rd.

8.3 *Lighting to the path across HQP to Murrayburn Rd*

SC reported no progress

8.4 *Flooding to the path across HQP to Murrayburn Rd*

SC said the lead officer on this matter is ill and nobody is dealing with this, however VW said the flooding issue would take priority over lighting and she will pursue both matters.

8.5 *The Burnside closure and bridge repair*

SC still waiting to hear the plan of action from Steven Knox. RMcK has not written to Knox this month but has tried repeatedly for an update. SC suggested that 'buck passing' was going on and RMcK suggested it could take a couple of years before planning given for Longstone Inn redevelopment and its boundaries. The bridge isn't owned by the council and is outwith the site of the planning application.

8.6 *Properties with no known owner*

SC no further forward. JA asked SC to remind him what properties are involved: Tunnel Path/Redhall Bank Rd and bridge/The Burnside (possibly owned by Lord Morton but nobody knows. SA remarked that, where land is not owned by CEC, records are not kept as it's not their duty. SC explained that the idea is to get the land/structures in question transferred to CEC by involving the Kings and Lords Treasurer's Remembrancer who deals with unclaimed goods etc in Scotland. SA suggests that CEC take ownership of these three properties. Canal leaking at a discovered spring.

8.7 *Graffiti*

SC noted that he and WS have worked on this problem and he has painted over various communication cabinets but the removal treatments do not work on stonework.

9 **Councillors' Report**

RMcK shared a report from a Redhall resident disgusted by the state of the City Centre and they praised an article written by Ian White in a newspaper stating that the council needs to spend more money. He was annoyed by this

and emphasised that the council is subject to overall cuts and has to find ways of raising finance, e.g. a tourist tax. He mentioned the problem with the bus gate on Manse Rd [Corstorphine] where cameras had caught so many drivers that £100k had been raised. SA said the gate shouldn't raise any money but does owing to drivers flouting the rules. CEC is the worst funded council in Scotland. VW noted staff cuts within council and overall recruitment slow down have contributed to the problem. Also the upcoming Unison strike.

JA then asked if there were any questions to councillors. RD raised question of a community project, bike park or skate park on land opposite the bus depot. Any progress? AG replied that developers often have plans but when reality overtakes and the costs are prohibitive. JA asked the meeting for suggestions at the area known as 'The Green'. Is there anything the LCC can do to achieve improvements? JA remarked that some benches have been installed in the area. SC confirmed the LCC boundary is the Murrayburn. AG agreed to look into this issue. WS asked, following the planning application for flats at Inglis Green Gait, about a parcel of land about 5 metres wide is shown in their new property deeds as shared land. Currently this area is shown as belonging to Inglis Green Gait. RMcK asked for details of this and he will pursue with planning department.

10 **Treasurer's Report**

AG confirmed that the LCC block grant has been received totalling £597.64 which is £100 less than last year and £100 less than the preceding year, most likely due to the pandemic restrictions. He expected that next year the grant will go back up. He gave the current balance is £599.74.

11 **AOCB**

RD raised the matter of Sainsbury's recycle bins being removed. They were often flooded and impossible to reach. LCC will raise concerns with Sainsbury's. SC to pursue. There was comment that Inglis Green Gait had recycling bins installed two weeks ago but these hadn't been emptied. They were supposed to be serviced every two days. RMcK remarked that neighbourhoods were being brought onto the bin collection rota and he would pursue this matter.

SC explained that he had occasion to renew home insurance and believed that Neighbourhood Watch affiliation would benefit his insurance premium. However, apparently the present Watch area is not registered. He asked anyone present familiar with the scheme and could somebody agree to co-ordinate and appraise the benefits of the scheme and offer to local residents.

SC commented on the outdoor classroom in memory of Duncan Colquhoun, a well known activist. Our commemorative plaque that was attached to the planter has disappeared and he asked the meeting to agree

that LCC replace the plaque. This was agreed.

WS mentioned Sainsbury's cafe which was closed some time ago. Could pressure be applied to Sainsbury's with a view to re-opening? SC agreed to approach Sainsbury's again.

AG mentioned bins in Redhall Park which are small and overflowing. He wanted larger bins and more frequent emptying. RMCK addressed the matter.

JA extended thanks to all attendees and closed the meeting at 9 pm.

12 Next Meeting scheduled for Monday 9 October, same venue.

SC/26sep23