

Longstone Community Council

Report to 2016 AGM

This is a review of most activities during the year but it's not exhaustive.

Planning applications:

In August last year we heard that 102 Kingsknowe Rd North was not going to become a day nursery as expected, but the registered office of Helica Instruments Ltd. They did not identify themselves until I contacted Companies House. Since then only a modest sign shows in the window, but only when the shutter is up. Companies House seems satisfied with that.

In August we also heard about Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association's application to build 157 houses and flats on land adjacent to the Prison (not in our area although with some effect on it). This was later approved subject to various legal agreements, but work has not yet started.

At that time, we also heard about the progress of Cruden Homes' application to build 54 flats on the site at 69-97 Inglis Green Rd, which involved the stopping up of Millbrae Wynd. That development is now well under construction.

In September we heard about the plan to build 250 student flats in Slateford on sites presently occupied by Westside Motors and the Blue Goose public house. On LCC's behalf, I attended an exhibition of the proposals at the Water of Leith Visitor Centre on 13 October. In November, the architect and the agent attended our meeting to explain the scheme and were questioned on it. Because we could not agree on this proposal, we submitted no comments on it, although Jim Scott did later attend a packed meeting of Craiglockhart CC about it. At the time we noted some other development proposals, one in Slateford, but all in Craiglockhart Community Council's area.

In March this year we heard about the City's proposal to build a nursery school in the playground of this school. Consequently, in April we submitted a comment which consisted both of an objection and a suggestion of an alternative sighting and criticism of the design. Recently we have been told that our alternative siting has been accepted, albeit with a different orientation. We're waiting to see a new planning application.

Last month we heard that the proposal to build a small block of flats in Inglis Green Gait has been refused.

It's not exactly a planning matter, but in February NHS Lothian asked for our views on the application by Wellbeing Pharmacies to open a pharmacy in an unused part of the Scotmid's store in Longstone. We supported the application and sent representatives to the hearing on the matter on 8 March. The application was later rejected but Wellbeing have appealed and are awaiting the result.

Environment:

During the year, we've discussed the problem gulley in Redhall Rd (now fixed I think), spreading weeds behind MOD housing and on the roundabout by the bus garage. I've had a hard time dealing with graffiti on various surfaces, few owned by CEC. All outstanding graffiti is now shown on a page of our website. We sought help on this matter from our MSP, but it led to no breakthrough. We should also mention the fiasco of the information board for Hailes Quarry Park, for which we obtained a grant but couldn't get anyone to erect. So the grant was returned. Another fiasco has been the trees planted beside the war memorial in Redhall Park. Because many were not looked after properly, some died and had to be cut down, leaving stumps as a hazard to grass cutters. We have complained about the bad management this reveals and the waste of money. In September we reported water leaking from the Canal onto Inglis Green Road and were told by Scottish Canals that it is coming from the Canal and that they would make repairs (not yet done). Later we also reported water leaking on the roadway from the railway viaduct. There were the usual calls for something to be done about dog fouling, fly tipping and rubbish collection. We have done what we could to deal with these complaints.

Remembrance Ceremony:

As usual we helped to arrange the remembrance ceremony at the War Memorial, last year on 7 November. It was well attended by, inter alia, members of the Royal Artillery Association, who arranged for a piper to attend.

No 20 bus:

In February there was word that the subsidised No. 20 bus service was under threat of withdrawal and members were asked to present their views on their use of buses to CEC. Later we learned that the service had been reprieved.

Secretary's email:

I should note the major change to my communications that has come about by the purchase of a new domain for LCC (www.longstonecc.org.uk), which has allowed me to use a separate secretary's email address associated with that domain, which is now also the url of our website. I thank the Council for permitting and paying for that change; it has made my life a lot easier.

Boundary changes:

In August I drew attention to the proposed ward boundary changes which will separate us from Pentland Hills Ward and put some of us into Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart ward. We made objection to a boundary that wandered across Kingsknowe Rd North following no logical route.

SC/10jun16