



## **Minutes of Meeting of Balerno Community Council 8 January 2015 at Balerno High School at 7.30pm**

### **Present**

Trudy Allan, Tony Allen, Finlay Anderson, David Brewster, Kathleen Fiddes, Cllr Bill Henderson, Richard Henderson, Ian Hynd, Jack Kerr, Marion Milne, Bill Stark,

### **Apologies**

Brian Conway, Max Downie, Cllr Ricky Henderson, Jim Polasik, Ken Shade, Hugh Watt

### **Public**

Nil

### **City of Edinburgh Council**

Craig Dunlop, Helen Stockham

### **Preliminary Matters**

- The chair welcomed Craig Dunlop and Helen Stockham from City of Edinburgh Council to discuss the 'Friends of Parks' scheme.

### **Agenda Matters**

2. Agenda for the evening was agreed, with item 7 to be taken early to allow the CEC representatives to leave earlier. No Police Scotland representatives were present.
3. Declarations of Interest
  - BVT: Richard Henderson, Ian Hynd
  - HH: Tony Allen, Ian Hynd
4. Draft Minutes of December Meeting. Agreed subject to spelling corrections.
5. Matters Arising
  - No matters noted
6. Public Questions
  - No public present
7. Police and Fire

No Police Scotland representatives attended.

  - Details
8. Culture and Sport
  - 2G Pitch: Fundraising has now made the £40,000 mark due to a concerted effort by the local community. A leaflet drop is due to be done.

- 3G Pitch: Ready to roll our carpet to complete the surface. It is wished to do this in one operation.

#### 9. Health, Wellbeing and Housing

- Nil

#### 10. Planning Report

- Sub Group Report, provided in advance by Ken Shade by e-mail. No full page report to reproduce. A service complaint concerning the handling and interpretation of existing CEC policy relating to the extension at 8 Bridge Road has been made to CEC. It has been acknowledged, but no response has yet been received.
- Kinleith Mill. It was noted that CEC had made a recommendation to approve development of 89 homes and associated works. It has lain empty for many years, is a brownfield site and the consent is for less dense development than has previously been sought for the site. Traffic lights will be required for the junction of Blinkbonny Road and the A70 Lanark Road West. Inclusion of Muir Wood Road into the traffic signal scheme had been rejected, as the view was taken that most traffic from Muir Wood Road turns east along the A70.
- Curriehill Primary School. Redevelopment starts in February.
- Planning Policy Position (LDP). A decision on the LDP will be made by CEC on 6 February. All greenbelt applications associated with the LDP potential sites had been called in to the Scottish Ministers.

#### 11. Communities, Neighbourhood, Education, Children and Families

- Community Access to Schools. Marion Milne explained that she had attended a 'consultation evening' last night for the SW area, although it was more of an information session. The presentation talked of the council being able to take a 'helicopter view' of all available facilities and their use. There appeared to be a desire to either 'group' activities in fewer schools for efficiency or to expand the availability of schools. In the latter case, however, there are problems with availability of FMA / janitorial staff in evenings. This is a particular issue for PPP schools. There is a current 'survey monkey' online consultation (which BCC does not seem to have been invited to join). The intention is to have changes in place for the beginning of the 2015-16 session in August. Whilst previous assurances were given that there would be no change to the service provided, questions raised suggested otherwise. The future costs of hires are not known as the fee structure is not yet determined. No assurances were given on continuation of long term existing lets, or parts of 'whole premises' bookings. Locally, this could adversely affect St Mungo's hire of the school on Sundays, for example. The charging mechanism is proposed to change, but users voiced concerns about the ability to pay for bookings for a whole year up front and no detail was available on rebates where facilities were booked initially, but not needed. BCC was not invited to the session. Given the previous requests to David Bruce to engage with BCC – and his last minute cancellation of a previous event – BCC resolved to write again requesting direct engagement. A copy of the presentation is provided at Appendix 11.
- It is understood that the dentist has been successful in bidding for the closed RBS building, although this had yet to be confirmed.

#### 12. Transport and Environment

**Friends of Parks Scheme**<sup>1</sup>. Craig Dunlop introduced himself. He works for Stuart Farquar, Edinburgh South West Environment Manager. Maintenance of Parks is part of

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20180/friends\\_of\\_parks/273/friends\\_of\\_parks](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20180/friends_of_parks/273/friends_of_parks).

the Pentlands Community Plan<sup>2</sup>, which includes an action to promote the 'Friends of Parks, (FoP) scheme. Local examples are Friends of Pentland Hills, Muirwood Park, Curiemuirend Park. Helen Stockham, also introduced herself as an Education Officer for CEC Parks and Greenspace service. There are 49 constituted FoP groups, formed for different reasons. The main benefits are:

- The community has more input into the management of the park;
- The community can come up with and follow through a development plan, which would unlikely to be possible purely on CEC resources; and
- Resident led changes are often more acceptable to the community than changes suggested by CEC

Activities undertaken by each FoP group varies, but includes:

- Practical tasks, but not core maintenance;
- Fundraising, including applications for external funding which CEC cannot access or apply for; and
- Office bearer activities, as part of a formally constituted group.

Central support from CEC includes:

- A regular newsletter with information on funding sources;
- A FoP forum, which covers good practice, common issues and other matters;
- A yearly (November) networking event, which includes guest speakers and updates from CEC;
- Central FoP web page and Edinburgh Outdoors web site<sup>3</sup>;
- Posting of events on social media, with a fairly strong local following;
- Provision of a 'start up' pack for potential new groups; and
- Presence at other community events

Helen discussed some examples of FoP groups and what they had achieved including:

- Starbank Park, which had received significant improvements, got increased funding and had its profile raised considerably;
- Hailes Avenue, which has a wildflower meadow and fruit orchard;
- The external funding which can be accessed by FoP groups and the difference it can make;
- High class reinstatement of a park area used temporarily by a contractor, because there was a clear plan in place as to how the site was to be developed.

It was noted that the Friends of the Pentlands may come out of the scheme as they wish to support the whole PHRP, not just the part within CEC boundaries. Whilst it is not necessary to be a formally constituted FoP group, (BVT had received significant quantities of bulbs and fruit trees to plant locally) it helps with accessing funding. Questions from the community council included:

- The potential for a FoP group's existence to result in less CEC resources being directed towards the park concerned. Helen explained that whilst the FoP group may assist with minor maintenance, the primary maintenance would remain the responsibility of CEC. The view was expressed that the existence of a FoP group tended to ensure ongoing resource allocation to the park concerned by CEC. This recognises the need for use of heavier equipment by trained personnel.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.edinburghnp.org.uk/neighbourhood-partnerships/pentlands/about/pentlands-local-community-plan-2014-17/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.edinburghoutdoors.org.uk/>

- To what degree development and improvement was possible if residents principally wanted an open view. It was accepted that this would limit what degree of greenspace development could take place.

It was concluded that:

- Smaller spaces may have most to gain from FoP status;
- There was a need to establish community interest;
- A stall at the Framers' Market would be useful for explaining the concept and gauging residents' interest;
- The potential to raise interest in conjunction with the 'Beechgrove garden' question time, planned for March or at 'Tattie Day' in February;
- An article in the 'Forum' would help raise interest

Helen undertook to provide some 'case studies' to be used to help encourage resident interest.

**Walkabout.** Many items from the previous 'walkabout' remained unresolved, including:

- Footpaths at Dean Park;

Other matters had been addressed, including:

- The overgrown ground at the 'Label Co';
- Gullies cleaned and weeds removed;
- Renewal of Newmills Road now completed, although road hump heights are now higher;
- Lighting faults in Johnsburn Haugh and Cherrytrees are now fixed

Matters identified during the meeting as requiring attention were:

- Harlaw Road, with its elevated location increasing winter freezing. However, as it is not viewed as a 'through route' it receives low priority for gritting
- Hedges at the foot of the former tip off Harlaw Road are overhanging the road. (It was noted that landscaping was done about 20 years ago, but potentially untouched since).
- Harlaw Road surface at the bridge is in very poor condition. Cllr Bill Henderson advised that more cuts in the roads maintenance budget are likely. However, potholes should be reported to ensure that CEC knows about them. Once CEC knows about them. It is liable for any damage to vehicles.

The next walkabout is due in March. BCC agreed to produce a 'schedule' in advance to ensure that all issues were viewed and addressed.

### 13. Communications:

- Balerno Forum. This is due. Potential material includes the 20mph project, CaTS and raising awareness of walkabouts

### 14. Pentland Hills Regional Park.

- A joint committee meeting is planned for Friday 16<sup>th</sup> to examine funding issues associated with any expansion of the park.

### 15. Pentland Neighbourhood Partnership. A Funding Panel meeting is planned for 14<sup>th</sup> January, which will include requests from BCG Committee and for the 2G Pitch. Both are supported by BCC.

### 16. BVT Report / Update

- BVT has applied for a Postcode Lottery grant for the running of the Farmers Market and towards the 2G Pitch.

- Laura Thomas has been appointed as a second (part time) member of staff
- Walled Garden. It is hoped progress will be made on this in the late spring
- Harlaw Hydro. The new electrical substation is being installed in February, with electrical connection expected in March.

17. Arrangements for Council Business.

18. Upcoming Events

- (i) Beechgrove Garden question time, 12<sup>th</sup> March, with Jim McColl
- (ii) Photography Competition, with a cash prize. Entry forms are available from Balerno Post Office and online from the BPC or BVT web sites. Closing date for entries is 6<sup>th</sup> March, with an exhibition planned for the end of March into the beginning of April. BCHS art department are keen to be involved.

19. Councillors' Reports

- No additional matters noted

20. Office Bearers' Reports

- Nil

21. AOCB

- One of the low level communications / power boxes at the new mobile phone mast by the old station was noted to have the cover missing;
- 4 broken limbs were known to have occurred during the last icy spell. It was noted that gritting is on one side of the road, so will not include the entrance to BPC, the Mill Cafe, which is also the pedestrian route from sheltered housing at Larchfield Neuk to the Main Street.

22. Dates of next meetings

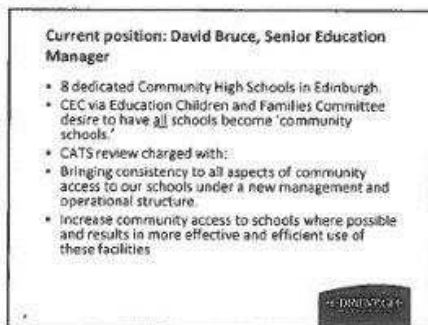
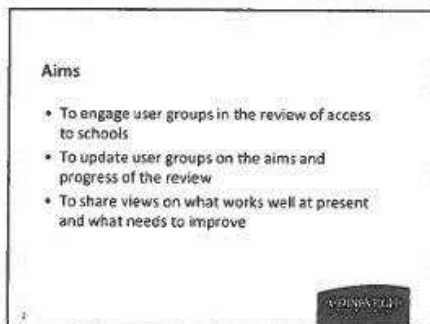
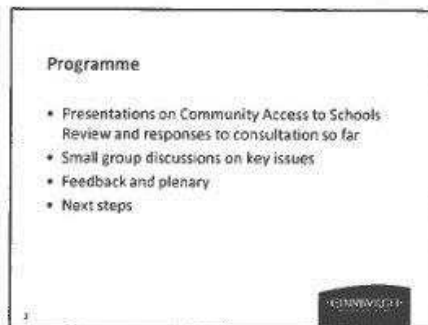
- 05/02/2015
- 05/03/2015
- 02/04/2015
- 07/05/2015
- 04/06/2015

## Abbreviations Used

BCC	Balerno Community Council
BCG	Balerno Children's Gala
BCHS	Balerno Community High School
BMF	Balerno Music Festival
BPC	Balerno Parish Church
BVT	Balerno Village Trust
CEC	City of Edinburgh Council
CIT	Community Investigation Team (Police)
CPT	Community Policing Team
DPPS	Dean Park Primary School

HH	Harlaw Hydro
LDP	Local Development Plan (Planning)
LRB	Local Review Body (Planning)
LRW	Lanark Road West
MP	Member of Parliament
MSP	Member of Scottish Parliament
PAN	Pre Application Notification (Planning)
PHRP	Pentland Hills Regional Park
PNP	Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership
PS	Police Scotland
SESPAN	South East Scotland [Strategic] Plan
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
SPP	Supplementary Planning Policy
SWCF	South West Community Forum
TPO	Tree Preservation Order
TRO	Traffic Regulation Order

## Appendix 11: Presentation from Community Access to Schools 'Engagement Session'



**Ambitions of the CATS review:**

- Development of an area based structure to oversee all aspects of community use of schools managed through the Community Learning and Development (CLD) service.
- Harmonisation of charges for use of/letting school premises and fees charged for adult education programmes.
- Citywide online booking & enrolment system for adult education programmes & letting of school facilities.
- Utilise school facilities more effectively & efficiently.
- Improved customer service.
- Where possible, increase use of school facilities through new initiatives and partnerships e.g. Sports hubs.




**Notable 'external factors' impacting on CATS review**

- Chief Executive's forthcoming report to Council on 11<sup>th</sup> December 'Organise to Deliver' states:  
*"Delivering services on a locality basis is shown to:  
- improve outcomes for our service users  
- increase customer satisfaction"*
- Current financial climate/Council's budget position - further efficiencies to be identified.
- Review of other council services e.g. Janitorial and cleaning services may also impact on school availability outwith core hours.
- Citywide review of use of sports facilities - including schools, will report in March 2015



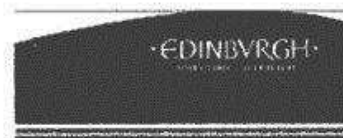
**Review implementation timescales:**

- Phased approach, first phase commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014 - staff transferred to CLD and area hubs being developed:
  - North - Drummond CHS
  - South - Liberton H.S
  - East - Leith Academy
  - West - Forrester H.S.
  - South West - Currie CHS
- Phase 2 from April 2015 including transfer of remaining staff to support new CATS structure - clerical staff.
- Proposed revised scale of charges to be presented to Council's Finance and Resources Committee February 2014



**Future consultation**

- Further meetings with existing user groups in Neighbourhood areas in January 2015
- CATS user survey open until February 2015
- Input from elected members via Access to Schools Member/officer group and Finance & Resources Committee February 2015






Survey of school user groups – David Maguire,  
Principal Officer – Engagement and Involvement

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/catss>


- The survey has received 114 responses so far
- Those responding use facilities at the following type of school:

• Nursery	0
• Primary	19
• Community High School	80
• Other high school	23
• Special school	10




Why school and not other facilities?

- The location
- Value for money
- The facilities on offer
- The suitability of the accommodation
- Parking facilities



Purpose of let?

- Sports club/facilities
- Youth and/or children's activities
- Adult education
- Community activity/groups
- Events

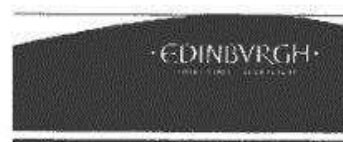



Is your experience of using school facilities a positive one?

- 92% said 'yes'
- 8% said 'no'


Most common positives:

- Helpful staff
- Easy to book
- Good facilities
- Good relationship between community and school



**Most common negatives:**


- Lack of cleanliness
- Some communication problems in schools – staff did not always know that a let had been arranged
- Some negative staff attitudes



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**How important is consistency in charging across the city?**


- Most (54%) say it is important whilst 25% think it isn't and 21% in middle



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**Are current charges fair?**

- 86% said 'yes'
- 14% said 'no'



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**How would you rate your current experience of booking arrangements?**

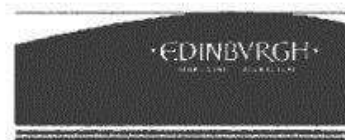
- 86% rated their experience as either 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent'
- 8% rated it as satisfactory
- 7% rated it as unsatisfactory

The most common positive reasons cited were:

- Helpful staff
- Good communication
- Easy to use booking processes such as forms
- Good working relationships




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Some negative reasons included:


- Some unhelpful staff
- Glitches
- Communication problems with staff not informed of lets
- Complicated system



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**Online booking?**


- Respondents were asked if they would use an online booking service if this was available:
- 44% said 'Yes'
- 15% said 'No'
- 41% said 'Not sure'



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**If unable to book at chosen school, would you like to be offered same facility in alternative school?**

- 56% said 'yes'
- 44% said 'no'




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**Most helpful way to book facilities?**

- Respondents were asked what the most helpful way to book school facilities would be:
- Through the individual school 61%
- Through one office in the area the school is located 3%
- Centrally through a dedicated lettings team 17%
- Online 19%

Many respondents stressed the importance of the relationship with staff who know facilities and who can be flexible. Direct contact with the school was also cited as facilitating good communication.




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**Improvement suggestions:**

- Current arrangements are very good/ do not need to be improved.
- More notice of any changes in lets
- More information to be made available on school facilities
- Better internal communications within schools regarding lets
- Address issues with access arrangements



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CATS report to Education, Children and Families Committee May 2015:


- <http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/3351/education-children-and-families-committee> (Item 7.7)

CATS Q&As

- <http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20216/children-and-families-services/984/community-access-to-schools-review>

CATS survey

- <https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/ctf/review-of-community-access-to-schools/consult-view>




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**Discussion groups**

Issues from the survey, review and your experience:

- Communications
- Booking systems
- Charging
- New structure
- Other issues?

What do you think? What are the key issues?  
How could they be addressed?



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