



Gorgie Dalry Community Council Meeting Mon 4th Feb 2019

Present

Angela Astor, GDCC (AA)
Rona Brown, GDCC (RB)
Arron Peters, GDCC (AP)
Iain Herbert, Gorgie City Farm (IH)
Nancy MacDonald, Garvald (NM)
Sandra Ramsay, Local resident (SR)
Michael McMullin, GDS Church (MM)
Joan Gordon, local resident (JG)
Matthew Reilly, local resident (MR)
Sonia Squires, St Martin's Church (SS)
Adrian Herbert, GDS Church (AH)
Ross Manson, architect (RM)
Sean Gilchrist, road asset manager (SG)
Cllr Cathy Fulerton, CEC (CF)
Euan Chancellor, Police Scotland (EC)
Andrew Gilles, Police Scotland (AG)
Alison Maguire, Turley (AM)
Colin Smith, Turley (CS)
Gavin Douglas, S Harrison (GD)
Nick Roberts, ICA (NR)
Jim Park, GDCC (JP)
Jim Hogg, GDCC (JH)
Rev Yousaf Gooljary, St Martins Church (YG)
Graham Angus, Stellar Restaurants, McDonalds (GA)
Graeme Russell, GDCC (GR)
Cllr Ashley Graczyk, CEC, (AG)
Eilidh Troup, GDCC (ET)
Marie Stein, TCVOA – The Caledonian Village Owners Association, (MS)

Apologies

Donald Wilson
Laura Baird
Dennis Dixon

December Minutes

Arron's name was spelled incorrectly.
JG proposed, AP seconded.

Welcome

RB: Welcome all, happy new year.

Presentation - Ross Manson, Scotmid

Drawings of new plans handed out.

RM thanked us for having him back. RM works for Manson's architects and planners. The previous plans were changed in response to recommendations. The plans were rejected by the council. The letter from the community council and some other letters of support were not recognised. The proposal has been redesigned in consultation with city planners. A public exhibition was held 2 weeks ago to show the new design. There is one less floor in height on the Westfield side – now in line with the surrounding tenements. The massing has been significantly reduced. There is a landscape deck, but it's not available to the students, just to look out onto. The windows have been canted so that they don't look into facing flats. There will be 121 bedrooms. Reduced from 150 in the first draft. The Gorgie elevation was well received – matching height and colour of surroundings, some extra windows will be added facing Gorgie Road. New CGI pictures are being drafted just now and will be added to the application. The original design was to be like a tenement, but has been redesigned to reduce massing in the middle of the site. There is more of a variety of cladding, and the colours are in keeping with the surrounds – zinc instead of copper on the roof. The service yard to the rear is the same. There will be 100% cycle parking. There are now no windows on the ground floor. The building is stepped in and landscaping reduces visibility of the back greens from the bedroom windows. The top floor has been removed from Wheatfield Terrace; it's only there on Gorgie Road.

This takes into account feedback from the planning committee. Same time scales as previously – occupied in Sept 2020, with 9 months of closure of the Co-op for development.

JG – how high is the building on Gorgie Road – gutter or ridge height? RM: It will go up to the height of the ridge (had been lowered to gutter height in previous draft).

CF – How have discussions with the committee gone? RM – fine, but we are still looking for letters of support.

RB – Thank you for coming.

All attendees introduced themselves briefly.

Presentation – student accommodation at Westfield

Three people there representing S. Harrison Developments who have delivered other local developments, e.g. Haddington Place in Leith, and a current development on St Andrew's Square. They are not just developers, but also manage and run the student developments. They run one student development in York and one in Leeds.

The site is on the corner of Westfield Avenue and Westfield Road. The site would be cleared from previous industrial use.

Transport – there are some major bus routes, and a tram stop nearby too. Vehicular access would be from the side. The site is beside Sainsbury's petrol station and Grant-Westfield and across the road from Wickes. It is an H shaped development plan, with landscaping in the middle. The plans are still a work in progress and haven't been submitted to the council yet. A mix of clusters of bedrooms with shared living space, and studio flats. The bedrooms are all en-suite. The scale and colour are to tone in with tenements. To be built of brick.

GR – how many students? 430

Which universities? Not agreed at present. Possibly could be rented out to one of the Universities. GR – The community council is concerned about oversupply of student accommodation. A. There is demand, and with the larger scale comes a requirement for reputable management. UoE requires 2000 beds, has only 1000. Constrained by their land in a way that Herriot Watt is not.

JG – how much car parking? – 4 spaces, none of which are for students. There is no onsite parking for students.

MS – In the Caledonian Village there is a problem with streets blocked with cars.

CF – will it be managed 24/7? A. Yes, but whether there is someone on site full time is yet to be decided. CF. Sighthill College needs to be included. What community benefit would this bring? A. Students bring local spend.

ET – the route to the tram stop is hostile to pedestrians. A. Could look into improving this for walking.

IH – what will happen in summer holiday? A. post grads tend to be on 48 week cycle. To be determined when the selected operator is chosen.

NM – will the rooms be let out in summer? A. an example of what we might do is lease out to foreign language students. But not decided yet.

MR – what about sustainability if demand from students declines? No opportunity to re-purpose for households for affordable housing. A. Edinburgh is a densely populated city. It's hard to develop dense housing that can easily be repurposed.

GR – Is there an environmental hazard from being next to petrol station? A. an environmental report will be ordered. There is a high quality air filter system in place. The windows will be fixed, and air will be drawn in from clean side.

NM – what percentage of students will there be in the area after this site is built? A. Not well defined what the local area is, but before – low teens, after 17%.

Taking into account planned designs.

Timescale – Planning to go in in March.

JG – When is the exhibition to the public? It's already been held, but you can pass comments on through RB.

RB thanked the developers for coming.

Presentation – Sean Gilchrist, pavement improvements

SG is the road asset manager with transport infrastructure in Edinburgh.

Edinburgh has a transport asset management plan – includes cycle paths and park and rides as well the usual roads, pavements and lighting.

Edinburgh has 1500km of road 2200km of pavements. They would cost a lot to replace and are the council's biggest asset.

A road survey with lasers is undertaken to survey the condition of the roads.

36% of roads need improvement. Edinburgh council used to deal with the worst

condition roads as a priority, but the whole network was projected to decline. Now they take a more preventative approach such as surface dressing, and treat slightly deteriorated roads to make them last better. Footways are treated similarly.

It's hard to see the immediate benefit of this long term approach, but it's starting to pay off. Footways are examined by eye to score for condition. The budget is split 70% for carriageway, 30% for footway. Edinburgh invests the highest percentage of Scottish councils in the footways. The footways were prioritised by traffic – with Princes St at the top, and residential lower on the list. There is now a local footway program, so that they do get attention too. Also using more preventative approaches like slurry sealant, and micro-treatments on the footways. These faster treatments mean it should take about 12 years to treat everything that needs it. Some pavements are in such a bad way that they need a more in depth treatment.

CF – hasn't slurry got a bad reputation? SG - It looks quite black when it goes down, but does lighten over time. It is different from asphalt with the white chip, but it's better than nothing and we don't have the revenue to re-asphalt all the pavements. The slurry lasts for 7-15 years. Q – Is it a false economy? SG – there's really no alternative given the budget.

MS – Is there a lot of treatment in Morningside? Why not start in our area? SG- It's not done by area. It's done by need.

JG – what is the slurry? SG- It's like bitumen. JG – can you use recycled bottle material? SG -It's not recycled bottles, but leftovers from plastic production. Only replacing 3% of 3%. Still testing its viability.

ET – Often nice looking paving slabs get ruined by parking and cracked. SG – There is a Scottish Gov bill to stop pavement parking, but it is still going to allow pavement parking for deliveries, so still damage to paving. Need proper design of pavement with thicker paving flags to be resilient to pavement parking.

SR – What about poured concrete? SG - Utilities don't have to re-instate, would replace with asphalt. MS – concrete is very bad for the environment.

SG - Some other improvements: bus stop renewals in collaboration with Lothian buses. There is a dropped crossing budget. NEPS budget – neighbourhood environment project – can choose local investments. Traffic signal renewals work has been done more efficiently as part of other schemes.

Utility works are a big challenge. New works are protected for 2 years but then can be dug up by utility companies. They have to replace like for like. The carriageway is never as good once it's been dug up and replaced. Could change to 5-7 years protection of the carriageway instead. The council will always encourage utilities to do their work before re-surfacing. Scottish Gas are good at this scheduling. The penalty is only £120 for breaking these rules.

When a street is re-surfaced the street design guidance documents are consulted and consideration is given to widening footways and improving lighting while re-surfacing a street anyway. Placemaking is a part of that.

There are outstanding schemes which are approved but not implemented – a 2-3 years backlog.

Road asset management principals are followed to make the most of the money.

ET – Do you plan on reducing radii at junctions and narrowing the carriageway in response to the 20mph? SG- yes, but bin lorries still need to have access.

Speedhumps are reviewed when roads are re-surfaced, but often kept.

MR – can we feed in to say where our pavements are a problem? SG - our localities road scheme, SW is at Westerhailes. SG can provide email addresses for them.

SR. Is street lighting in your remit? – SG is more in charge of money but will send email contact for street lighting. SR- The new lighting program has only been partly done.

The council web site does have these contact details and SG will pass them on too.

Rona thanked SG.

Graham Angus, MacDonalds

GA is the franchisee at the MacDonalds on Gorgie Road and Chesser Road too. The building was redesigned and was the best performing MacDonalds in Scotland. The hours have been extended by one hour. This MacDonalds has about 70-80 000 customers. Drive through use has declined. Home deliveries have started too. 90 people are employed, and GA would like to hire another 20. It's hard to find people to employ just now. They offer flexible employment. MacDonalds organised the Great Gorgie tidy up, and will do another at the cycle path to Hutchieson Crossway. GA wants to tidy up after the business. They will probably have another clean up in April and would love it if the community council helped advertise and clean up too.

JG – The outside seating area is gone. Would you bring it back? GA- No – the weather is not always great, and also to reduce issues with loitering. But it was done to increase capacity indoors.

RB – we'd like to do a clean up in April, lets do it together, maybe with Asda too. The new funeral parlour would like to get involved too.

ET – You said there would be bike parking in the redeveloped restaurant? GA - There's none yet but it's still not on the list of improvements to make.

NM – the advertising banner last time was confusing GA - yes, will put the date on it next time.

GA has litter pickers.

RB – can link into Keep Scotland Beautiful in April.

Correspondence

None

Police Report

The local policing team have continued to tackle ASB, and have also focused on housebreakings, drugs and alcohol and violent crime.

Housebreakings

January saw 10 incidents reported. This is much higher than a typical month. All remain under investigation.

Assault

There were 9 assaults reported and to date 3 detections.

Road Safety/Initiatives

There were 8 incidents reported, unfortunately two drink drivers caught.

Theft

January saw 23 theft reports, 2 detections so far.

Hate Crime

One incident reported whereby a group of youths verbally abused each other. All parties were as bad as each other.

ASB/NPS/Incidents of Note

There was one incident whereby a laser was shone into an aircraft cockpit.

Fortunately no issues around and all passengers were safe.

Two Police Officers were assaulted whilst dealing with a group of females in possession of a knife. No injuries sustained by Police.

Operation Aftermath has been put in place to address drug use and supply in the SW of the city. Should anyone have any information regarding this I would suggest phoning Crime Stoppers to report this, a big intelligence picture allows us to take action.

To date several individuals have been charged and a large quantity of drugs recovered.

January saw a total of 424 calls, 16 of which relate to public nuisance calls.

A total of 93 crime reports were raised, 38 detected so far.

Good News

There was a significant number of drug recoveries in the area: several warrants were executed whereby dealer quantities of controlled substances were recovered.

Contact local police at EdinburghCPTSighthillGorgie@scotland.pnn.police.uk or by phoning non-emergency number 101. Follow on Twitter at @PoliceScotland or @EdinburghPolice.

Treasurer's Report

Christmas lights £156.46

Gorgie farm café rent at Christmas lights. £150.

Christmas window award cost £10 to get engraved.

Shop for foodbank at Christmas £143.44

Balance is £1860.68

Bill for hall rent coming up soon.

Planning, HMOs, Licencing

Springwell house has been approved for conversion to flats. The application to demolish the public toilets on the corner and replace with the wall has been approved too.

A vote was held on supporting the scotmid application and a majority approved supporting it.

Councillor reports

Cllr Ashley Graczyk gave her report as follows.

Rona Brown got her well deserved award for Good Citizenship for her work with the community council, St Brides, the Adult Learning Project and the Forget me Not Choir.

There are issues with the street of archways, seems like business waste is being dumped in residential waste, causing a nuisance. Dumping is an issue in the Caledonian Crescent area: sofas, fridges, etc. The council is good at picking the stuff up when it's reported.

A local resident has got a photo of someone fly-tipping and reported to the council.

There have been lots of complaints about Airbnb – noise from parties, throwing glass bottles, in Dalry Gait in particular. It is not within council's remit; it's for the Scottish Government to legislate on Airbnb. There are lots of keyboxes outside stairways (holiday lets). Residents are getting very frustrated.

There was a Common Weal public meeting about how Brexit affects EU citizens last week. On the panel were Joanna Cherry QC MP, Dr Craig Dalzell, Dr Mireille Pouget, Ellen Höfer and Ben Macpherson MSP and a recording of it is available here: <https://independencelive.net/event/1441>. Gorgie Dalry has a very high percentage of EU citizens so their situation after Brexit is of concern locally.

There is an upcoming event on placemaking on Feb 23rd at 1pm with the Gorgie Collective – Placemaking - what resources do we need for our community?

On March 22nd, at 6.30pm at St Martins Church, Dalry Road – there will be an event on Housing and Student Developments – how to make effective objections.

There will be an MSP and a council planning officer there to say how to make objections that will be addressed by the council.

Planning

What about the Westfield development? They're quite vague about everything. At the presentation in December were vague and no more concrete since then. Graeme says the Scotmid development is more in-scale with the surroundings. There needs to be a balance between bringing people into the area, and housing students to free up other housing space in the area.

JG – no office on site to supervise the students is a concern.

Grant Westfield next to it may be replaced, they said at the meeting.

AP – suggests posting about this on the web site, MR will send relevant info to post about this planning application.

Parks

Dalry Community Park does need attention. It needs more bins. People buy alcohol in Lidl, then drink in the park and throw the bottles and cans away. We need CCTV in the Lidl car park facing the park.

Events

Jim Park will be in a play about Food banks at the Assembly Rooms on the 26th and 27th of February.

<https://www.assemblyfestival.com/whats-on/formation-festival-food-bank-2019>

The jazz festival has started at St Brides. There are music lessons for £2 on Mondays. Many different artists from around the world will be at the Jazz festival.

AOCB

Local newsletter.

AP questions whether it's a good use of money. YG – A4 colour leaflet would be more attractive. Not to be sent through doors, but to be distributed at community centres, etc to be picked up by those who're interested. It would be useful for networking and contact details. Would have info from different community groups and events.

Would cost £210 for 500 leaflets. Plan to do twice this year. Have agreed a budget for up to £500.

AP thinks there are better things we can spend our money on and does not support this.

It can be done cheaper by us designing it, and only paying to print it.

RB – can we set up a team to design.

MR and JG and YG to help design. RB can help distribute to St Martins, St Brides, Costas, swimming pools, local libraries, Sainsburys.

Summer fair – AG – unfortunately no funding from the council for this. But the Jazz festival is looking for groups to work with.

Big Hearts were thinking of a week long festival. YG – what about the one day festival in the park? G in the Park. YG – how would we organise this? Maybe in collaboration with St Michaels and St Martins. St Brides would like to take a stall. Suggested talking to Craig Dunlop, parks officer.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Mon 4th March at 7pm, Gorgie Dalry Parish Church, 190 Gorgie Road, EH11 2NX. In the big hall, open to the public because of the 2030 consultation.