



Gorgie Dalry Community Council Minutes Tuesday 4th May 2021

Attendees

GDCC:

Angela Astor – AA, Rona Brown – RB, Aidan Collins – AC, Joan Gordon (Chair) – JG, Alex McKendrick (Treasurer) – AM, Mathew Reilly (Engagement Officer) – MR, Judith Sijstermans – JS

CEC:

Denis Dixon – DD, Samantha Findlay (Assistant to Ashley Graczyk)

Local residents:

Dan Heap – DH, Fiona McLean – FM, Nancy MacDonald (Garvald) – NM, Aaron Peters – AP, Andrea Price (St. Michael's Church) – AP_r, Henry Hudson (Gorgie Dalry Stenhouse Church) – H?, David McLennan – DM, Liz Summerfield (Tollcross CC) – LS, Andrew Mitchell – AM, Adam Wheavil – AW

Tynecastle High Developer Team:

Alex Orr (consultant) – AO, Dan Teague (S1 Developments) – DT, Luke McLellan (S1 Developments) – LM, Steven Black (JLL) – SB

Welcome

JG opened the meeting, welcoming everyone. AM facilitated introductions.

Quorum and apologies

No apologies were received. The meeting was quorate.

Matters Arising:

AM contacted Edinburgh Help and Councillor Ashley Graczyk (AG) about bins blocking tactile crossings in the area.

AM contacted AG about builders blocking roads in Murieston Crescent.

MR contacted developers regarding the Tynecastle High Development and circulated information about High Street Tweak project.

Previous Minutes

The minutes were proposed as accurate by AA and seconded by AM.

Correspondence:

AM noted that main correspondence was on Tynecastle High development. The CC was made aware of a planning application at Caledonian Village.

AM noted that trees were being built in Dalry and North Merchiston Cemetery and White Park and that he received an update on the wall in North Merchiston Cemetery. It may take a while due to working times negotiated with Network Rail.

FM had received a letter from Network Rail regarding the wall saying that the work was to be finished. AM suggested this work might have been in demolishing it.

Treasurer's Report

AM noted that there was little to report. Funds spent on topping up the phone and hustings, and money needing to be paid back to AM for bulbs.

AM will be preparing a year end report for CEC and the AGM.

AM provided an update on the Tesco Community Engagement Grant. Has submitted the report to Tesco, including a £200 underspend which may need to be paid back.

AM suggested adopting a scheme from Murrayfield CC looking for 'micro-projects' from the community as a way to spend remaining funds.

Engagement and Communication

MR shared High Street Tweak events and videos from the GDCC-hosted hustings on website and Facebook. MR and JG thanked Alex and organisers of the hustings.

NM asked why the details of the park clean up had not been shared on the website. JG and MR noted that it was kept to a small group due to Covid regulations and thus not advertised widely.

JG discussed need for a minute taker. MR and JG noted that a paid minute taker could be used, but they could not be a member of the GDCC. MR, JS, AP, and AC all offered to do the minutes as part of a rota.

Planning

AM noted a few applications were put in: the former Tynecastle High development, a licensing application for an existing café, and an application on Distillery Lane for temporary portacabins for construction happening east of the Haymarket development.

Councillor Reports

DD discussed Ardmillan obstructions due to construction and noted that they are aware of and have adjusted obstructions. Considered that the Murieston construction seemed okay but asked for anyone to get in touch regarding issues. AM explained that the issue was the visibility of pedestrians.

DD is aware of the planning issue behind Caledonian Village and has been in touch with Crudens, who own the land. AW had also had contact with the council regarding the issue.

DD noted that no windows would be facing housing and said that he would follow up through a contact at the council and the Resident's Association. Estimated time that the cabins were up would be maximum 2 years. The space will be offices for people working at the Haymarket Development.

DD asked about the North Merchiston Cemetery issue. FM, MR, and AM offered clarification on where the issue was and what happened. DD noted he could chase up Network Rail if it was their responsibility and asked for communications to be e-mailed to him. APr noted that the North Merchiston Facebook page also contained pertinent information.

Tynecastle High Development Discussion

Presentation

AO introduced attendees of the meeting and the consultation process that is being undertaken.

DT introduced S1 Developments and Teague group of companies. S1 do about 10% student and 90% residential housing. Noted a number of other developments done by S1 including 50 residential units being developed in Polwarth, Harrison Gardens development, and the Robertson Avenue development as well as Gorgie high street commercial units owned by the group.

LM noted that this project was at an early consultation stage. Provided a history of the site. LM highlighted the nature of the area and the benefits of the existing building, including a study by conservation consultants. S1 would like to retain the original school building and restore grand staircase, cupola, and school hall. Ancillary buildings, in less good shape, would likely be removed and built upon.

LM discussed the constraints on the site:

- Western Approach Road (due to noise and emissions);
- lack of daylight due to embankment from Approach Road;

- distillery (cannot negatively impact their operations, health and safety concerns, and noise/odour);
- Tynecastle Stadium (issues with noise and light pollution during matches);
- Sewer running through the inner part of the site.

These constraints were noted as the primary reasons for student housing development due to a single point of control for ventilation/noise. LM presented a suggestion for the concept of the development, with a central courtyard as the hub for buildings. Everything would face this 'collegiate-type' courtyard to buffer from surrounding constraints. The development would be car-free, with cycle provision linking to local cycle paths and Roseburn development, sustainable water heating, and bio-diverse. The listed existing building would be prominent in the profile of the development.

LM recognised concerns about student housing and noted that student housing more suitable due to these constraints. Student use also provides opportunity to create a community space and have consulted community groups to understand what the community needs not only within the site, but also surrounding area.

Question/Answer

AM asked about the census data on student numbers being out of date. LM agreed and noted they were looking for up to date numbers, perhaps through council tax. DT added that they were looking at the benefits of the student numbers to high street businesses. AM asked for clarification on what ward was being discussed. LM noted they would take a cue from the Community Council area. AM noted CC area makes sense and perhaps Tollcross/Fountainbridge (but not Saughton) makes more sense.

JG asked how many beds it would be. LM said it would be 450 to 500 beds.

DH asked what processes they would undergo in order to assess impacts on the local community and how the architecture would fit in with the local area. LM said they would seek to pick up on the industrial heritage of the site. LM noted that they have commissioned people to consider the specific economic impact of student and residential housing and the impact on facilities.

AM asked if they would consider the economic impact of residential development with young families and whether that would be sent to the GDCC. LM noted they would be looking at that and that this would be put through the planning system. DT added that S1 do not think that young families would like to live in this space and that the space would be more easily managed for students (window opening, noise, etc.).

MR noted that residents were concerned about an overprovision of student residential housing and that the analysis should extend more into Haymarket and Fountainbridge to show the provision. MR argued for an analysis of the inner zone in Gorgie and Dalry couched within a wider analysis given density of housing in GD as opposed to Sighthill. LM agreed but noted that it cannot be pushed in one direction and that it should go in both directions.

MR asked who the architects and conservation consultant were. LM said the analysis will be done separately by Biggar Economics, the architects are MLE, and the heritage consultant is Hurdrolland.

JS noted that the consultation did not seem open given that the decisions seemed to have already been made and that the analysis was not really considering the effects or option of residential housing. JS highlighted that the CC did not have the same resources as S1 and asked the developers to consider the community aspect more. LM noted that residential remained an option, and that they were trying to bring forward the argument for why student housing works. DT noted that they had brought forward the Robertson Avenue development with 1000 residents.

AA highlighted current over provision of student housing in the area and asked if housing could not be of a quality standard for non-students whether it would be appropriate for students. AA noted that students cannot be controlled outside of the housing in terms of noise. AA argued that student housing did not help the community because of temporary nature and asked about the provision of GP services, which are already over-taxed in the area. LM noted he did not mean he sought to control the students but sought to control the development in terms of air quality and ventilation. LM highlighted that they would like to include a community space.

FM supported Angela's statement and asked whether there was truly a market for the flats, and whether there was an over-provision, especially given remote learning. LM noted that the student population is increasing by 3% every year. LM stated that students can be controlled in terms of opening windows where residential cannot. DT added that amenities will be provided such as a gym, study, and green space.

FM asked about Macfarlane Smith and a blast zone. SB noted that they have a zone, but it does not cover this site. AM asked about a blast zone for the distillery. SB noted that it is not a blast zone, but to do with storage tanks spillage.

MR noted that saying that high quality residential is not suitable for this site is unfair as people do live in Gorgie, close to the site. DT apologised and noted that while some housing in Gorgie might have one or two constraints, this space has all of the constraints of the area.

AA noted that the new development across the street from the Tynecastle High space had significant demand immediately after being built.

APr raised that health and safety issues should become less of an issue as electric and sustainable sources of energy become more prevalent. LM confirmed that they would be seeking to use sustainable practices and technologies.

AM noted that GDCC wanted to see the site developed, but there was no interest in full student accommodation. AM asked if residential would be possible given the health and safety concerns, would they take this forward? AM noted that parking should not be a constraint on residential development. DT noted that for residential there would be less cars but not zero cars. DT answered that they would consider an element of residential, not the whole site residential.

JG stated a concern that there would be inadequate infrastructure in terms of buses and the doctor's surgery. JG asked what medical centres the developers had supplied alongside developments. DT explained that they contributed £1000 per flat for medical alongside other developer contributions.

JG wrapped up the conversation.

Caledonian Village Planning Application

AW presented the planning application being put forward behind the residential blocks at Caledonian Village for the Haymarket developers to use. Noted that the area was currently a space with trees and that the portacabins will take up this space and there is no clear proposal of how the trees and space will be returned. Asked whether the CC might be able to respond to the planning application noting these issues.

JG noted that it doesn't seem convenient to the Haymarket site or other building sites.

AW noted that the space was kept green by the community and that there would be an infringement on privacy and light for those flats closest to the area. AW also argued that the 2-year time period could extend on further.

NM asked about where the traffic would go for the area. AW confirmed that this was a question and that there was already a concern about parking in the neighbourhood.

AA confirmed that developers park in the area nearby the Haymarket development already. AA encouraged AW to write to the developers, to confirm the hours of work, and to contact residents in the Dalry colonies.

MR confirmed that the project could go on much longer and that the time scale is an issue. MR also asked that the GDCC vote and suggested that the objection is based on the Resident's Association's concerns.

JG called for a vote and the community council supported the objection to the planning application.

AM suggested that AW look at the Planning Democracy tools for the resident's association's response.

DD noted that he wasn't sure exactly who was building and for what development. He confirmed that Distillery Lane was being used for parking, but that the proposed portacabins were likely to be used as offices. DD noted that clarification would have to come through before the planning application goes through. AW asked whether Cruden owned all the land and DD confirmed.

DD noted on the Tynecastle High development that Gorgie is a designated town centre and that the Local Development Plan might have limits to student housing near the town centre. AM said he was not aware of such a limit. MR noted that he would check that again.

AOCB

JG suggested that AP be co-opted on the community council at the next meeting.

RB thanked DD for helping to arrange materials for the community clean up last month and noted that the CC now has litter pickers donated by the council to do further clean ups.

JS offered to do minutes for the meeting.

AM suggested that AC takes over the treasurer's role after the AGM while AM takes on the secretary's role. AC agreed. The AGM will be in June.

Date and time of next meeting

Monday, 7th June, 7 PM.