

GORGIE



DALRY

Gorgie Dalry
Community Council
Minutes
Monday 6th September 2021

Attendees

GDCC:

Aidan Collins – AC, Joan Gordon (Chair) – JG, Alex McKendrick (Treasurer) – AM, Mathew Reilly (Engagement Officer) – MR, Judith Sijstermans – JS

CEC:

Samantha Findlay (Assistant to Ashley Graczyk) – SF

Local residents:

Muireann Crowley (Gordie Daly Living Rent) – MC, Fiona McLean – FM, Nancy MacDonald (Garvald) – NM, Aaron Peters – AP, Liz Summerfield (Tollcross CC) – LZ.

Welcome

JG opened the meeting, welcomed everyone, and facilitated introductions.

Quorum and apologies

Apologies received from Angela Astor, Rona Brown, Dennis Dixon, and Cathy Fullerton. The meeting was not quorate.

Previous Minutes

MR proposed the minutes as accurate, and AP seconded. JG confirmed there will be a new minute secretary.

Matters Arising

Tynecastle development survey and leaflets:

MR reported that a draft survey has been made with AM and JS but will not be finalised until the planning applications - which were released on Friday evening; had been seen. He hoped to have it finished by the end of the week.

Along with the survey a leaflet will be printed and shared on the GDCC website/socials that includes a QR code that directs to the survey and planning application.

JG raised the point that NM had previously asked for Murieston to be included. MR said that as well as posting in the Friends of Murieston Park Facebook page, he could email NM to see if she would like some leaflets to distribute.

Correspondence

MR reported that correspondence had been received regarding a citywide consultation on short-term lets, but as this does not finish until October or November, it can be discussed at the next meeting.

MR noted that an offer of help had been received on Facebook, and that the relevant details would be forwarded on. MR also mentioned the GDCC received a lot TTRNs, one concerning the football game.

Correspondence regarding COVID community testing had been received, which MR confirmed had been forwarded on to the GDCC website and socials.

MR noted that Councillors Dennis Dixon – DD, and Cathy Fullerton – CF, had been in contact to ask the GDCC to look at a licence application from a previously unlicensed food truck. It was agreed that being previously unlicensed is not necessarily grounds to object, and AM said he would email DD and CF to let them know.

AM mentioned that he had been in conversation with artist Ross Blair, who previously painted murals in the Leith area. The artist asked if there are any spaces in the GDCC area for public art. AM also spoke to the Gorgie Collective about the estimated price of a mural, which was more expensive than expected. JG noted that there had been previous discussions about the possibility of more public art in Dalry and the Telfer Subway. AM said he would email Angela about the matter to discuss funding.

Engagement and Communication

MR reported that in recent months, information about COVID community testing had been shared at Tynecastle Park. The draft 2030 climate strategy consultation was

circulated on socials; as well as information about Rosebery House, Green Heart Parks at Saughton Park, and advertising consent for Gorgie Road.

A few posts to web and socials had been made about the Tynecastle development. Posts concerning planning applications have been scoring 7 times higher in terms of online engagement.

Treasurer's Report

AM reported that Neil Price – NP, will be the third party for the finances this year. AM has been unable to obtain NP's signature but has been in contact through email. AM will meet with NP in the coming weeks to obtain his signature.

Payments for Microsoft Teams were made; as well as for web hosting and the GDCC domain name. AM confirmed that the GDCC had somehow ended up with two domain names, and so the decision was made to let one expire as two domains are not necessary. The domain was paid for two years.

Tynecastle PBSA Planning Application

MR shared his screen with the meeting to display a 2-page PDF summary from the developers. The PDF has since been posted on the GDCC website. MR then discussed his findings from the planning application documents.

MR stated that there is some confusion about the total number of beds in the development, as different documents quote different figures (from 500 to 545 beds).

The summary document listed five site constraints: the North British Distillery and Tynecastle Park stadium, the Western Approach Road, a health & safety consultation zone, existing sewers that run through the site, and the category B listed building which was described as in 'poor condition' and difficult to convert.

MR then shared an aerial render from the summary document, illustrating the development and surrounding concerns (including Gorgie Farm and the People Know How community space). MR pointed out the buildings that are up for demolition and noted the development plans to keep the original 1911 part of the building.

The economic report gave three conclusions: 1. The development will create new jobs and associated spending, 2. Bring in increased spending from the student population, and 3. Increase council tax revenue from an estimated 180 properties that will be freed up as students move into the PBSA.

The summary also stated that Tynecastle F.C. and North British Distillery support the PBSAs as compatible with their operations (MR added he is yet to delve into this claim, and that these are the developers' conclusions).

The development will include sustainability measures such as bike-only spaces, electrical heating and increased biodiversity on site. MR mentioned another document that compares this development with existing PBSAs and confirmed the proposed development will have a high proportion of green space.

MR shared a render of the proposed 'student hub', which is to be repurposed from the existing school hall. MR noted the developers say they will preserve the historic setting of the building and that while the hub will be operated by them, other community groups should be able to book it for their own use. A cost for this was not mentioned.

The summary stated 15% of the current CC ward is made up of students, and that 70% of these students are in normal housing situations. Once the PBSA is built the student population will be 3,320 (20%) which the developers say is below the level that the council would consider excessive. AM raised the question of where these figures come from and asked for clarification on the actual figure that the council believes to be an excessive amount. MR explained that the figures included in the summary only contain student numbers from within the boundaries of the GDCC and do not include numbers from PBSAs without the boundary, though the developers were asked to include these figures.

MR reported on the public transport strategy contained in the documents, which stated the development will be well-served by public transport (30 mins by bus for Heriot-Watt and Edinburgh Universities, 20 mins by bus for Napier University). MR mentioned that the number 25 is the only bus that goes to Heriot-Watt, and that GDCC residents have previously raised issues about the frequency of this bus. MR noted that the developers claim there will be a positive impact on the transport links to the Union Canal cycle path. AM raised the point that although the developers claim this will encourage active forms of transport, the condition of the road surface in question is poor and the development has made no comments about improving them.

MR discussed the economic impact assessment and raised the issue that the document makes a lot of conclusions based on the Sighthill-Gorgie ward, which being such a large area, might skew the data in terms of density and population. MR noted the assessment mentioned housing problems in the area, yet the proposed site contains no general housing. MR confirmed there was no mention of impact on NHS services, no discussions with local transport providers, and no mention of contributions to local services. Although the development will be a 'car free' space, there is no mention of mitigating students parking in adjacent streets.

MR then shared plans containing details of which buildings on the site will be demolished, and more artist renders of the proposed new buildings and renovations. FM asked what the material of the building would be, and MR confirmed it would be mostly red and grey brick. MR concluded the presentation by sharing elevation drawings of the development, including the main 7-storey student housing building.

The issue of the accuracy of figures concerning the local student population was again raised when NM suggested that a definitive answer was needed, as any census data used to make the conclusions were likely out of date.

MC raised the question if any mention had been made in the documents to the impact of short term lets on the local transient population. MR confirmed that he saw no such mention in the documents he went through.

MR noted that the documents did contain a design option for a mix of general housing and student accommodation, but the plan was discounted by the developers due to site constraints and sustainability issues.

AM suggested that some of the issues raised by the documents might be worth discussing with the planning team at Edinburgh City Council and asked if a meeting with them might be facilitated. MR said as the GDCC received the official consultation letter that day, they have 21 days to respond. MR suggested getting in touch with the planning officer to ask to see briefings held at Waverley Court, and whether they could answer any questions the GDCC had regarding the development plans. AM also proposed asking for an extension.

Actions to be taken Re: Tynecastle PBSA Planning Application

MR will email the planning officer for an extension. He will also ask to attend the drop-in session at Waverley Court for more information.

JS suggested that members of the GDCC each take a look at a different element of the development documents and offered to look at the economic impact report.

AC offered to look at the noise impact assessment.

AM offered to take on the transportation statement.

MR reminded the meeting that there is a shared document that members can add their findings to.

MC from GDLR offered to email the GDCC a document that lists all PBSAs within a 10-minute walk from Fountainbridge.

The GDCC will circulate the survey for as long as possible before any objections, gathering as many responses from the local population as possible.

Haymarket Yards

MR explained that this PBSA proposal was originally for 91 beds and was approved in 2016. After emailing the West End CC, MR learned this new proposal from the same developers is for 151 beds.

MR shared on screen a render of the proposed 8-storey development and noted that the GDCC must have been noted about the development in 2016, but there is no written record of this.

The GDCC have until September 17th to make their comments on this development; the general public have until September 27th. MR asked if any action is necessary, as approval for the development has already been given.

After some discussion, it was decided that since a notification of development initiation had already been issued on the 1st of August, any objection would be difficult to make. MR went on to say that a short objection might be worth making, based on previous engagement with the local population about PBSAs. JG agreed and a consensus was reached in favour amongst the CC councillors.

AM suggested it might be worth contacting the Caledonian Village community about the matter, as the new development will be within their view. MR agreed that he would email them.

Draft Climate Strategy

MR noted that this runs out on September 12th. The GDCC was asked to fill out this questionnaire, but since the questions are written as if the respondent were a resident, MR suggested GDCC members and locals answer the questionnaire individually to give an accurate result.

AM recommended that the GDCC send a written response rather than fill out the survey.

After a discussion that raised the viability of proposed measures for local residents, as well as if the questionnaire contained any useful information regarding local developments, MR said he would be happy to try and facilitate a meeting for a future GDCC meeting.

Murieston Development Advertisement Permission

JG explained that the Murieston student development is seeking approval to advertise in the windows of what was once the Co-Op funeral parlour on Gorgie Rd.

MR noted that this has been shared on GDCC socials, and that the GDCC had not been consulted.

It was decided that while an argument could be made that this is taking advertising space away from local businesses, the space has been vacant for some time, and it is not worth contesting.

Councillor Reports

MR confirmed none had been received and apologies had been sent by DD and CF. MR will post them to the GDCC once they have arrived.

Police Reports

AM noted that the report was for the whole South-West of Edinburgh but did not contain any relevant information for GDCC area.

AOCB

JG raised the topic of Christmas planning. It was agreed that the posters for the best dressed window competition from the previous year could be updated and used again for this year. Any gatherings this year are still pending due to COVID considerations. There was also some discussion about the diversity of representation in GDCC seasonal celebrations.

AM suggested the GDCC write a letter of support because even though the GDCC area is not included, all the buses that go through Dalry head into the zone. All local transport and service vehicles will be required to comply with low emission regulations, and this will help local air pollution levels.

The other GDCC members present had no objections, and AM said he would check previous minutes for discussions about supporting local residents with older vehicles. AM will include those conclusions in his letter.

JG thanked all for attending, and thanked MR for his work on the Tynecastle Development.

The AGM will be held next month.

JG facilitated a short discussion about redistributing duties; AM will take the role of secretary while AC takes on the role of treasurer. MR suggested that the minute secretary be responsible for uploading the minutes to the GDCC website and distributing them by email.

Date and time of next meeting

Monday, 4th October, 7 PM.