

Minutes of New Town & Broughton Community Council's ordinary meeting, on Zoom, on Monday 13 November 2023 at 7pm

Actions and decisions are **RED ITALIC UNDERLINED SMALLCAPS**. **ND** ('no dissent') means that no-one spoke or voted against a decision.

URLs have been added by the minutes secretary.

Summary of actions (to be omitted from online version)

Item	actor	Action
2.a	M Birch	supply to B Ryan the information he promised in the October meeting
4.a	NTBCC	review comms issues at a suitable point
4.b	P Williamson/NTBCC	contact GKSA, then organise an event
4.d	P Williamson	join EACC members' board
4.e	Cllr Mowat	contact CEC officers about Leith Walk 'river', pressure about the left turn onto London Rd
4.f	S Holledge, P Williamson	meet to empower PW to draft NTBCC's submission to the CC consultation
5.b.i	R Price	tweet NTBCC's response to the licensing consultation
6.c	R Price	submit objection to Canon Court planning application
6.e	NTBCC	follow up Edinburgh World Heritage management plan
7.a	NTBCC	discuss George St/First New Town plans
7.b	NTBCC	discuss 'travelling safely' update
7.c	M Birch/NTBCC	MB to circulate link to consultation to NTBCC members; members to contribute points for possible response, for discussion in December meeting
7.d	NTBCC	discuss CEC's response to the Hardie enquiry report
8.a	M Birch/NTBCC	complete and submit a deputation on communal bins and gull-proof sacks
8.a	M Birch, C Nimmo	present this deputation at TEC meeting
8.b	NTBCC	discuss CEC litter-bin siting policy
8.c	NTBCC	discuss weeds on pavements, gutters and roadways

1 Admin and welcome

1.a Attendance

Mike Birch	NTBCC	Stewart Mills	NTBCC	Cllr Jack Caldwell	Leith Walk ward
Annick Gaillard	NTBCC	Carol Nimmo	NTBCC	Cllr Max Mitchell	Inverleith ward
Stephen Hajducki	NTBCC	Richard Price	NTBCC	Cllr Jo Mowat	City Centre ward
Deirdre Henderson	NTBCC	Nick Reid	NTBCC	Cllr Hal Osler	Inverleith ward
Simon Holledge	NTBCC	David Renton	NTBCC	Alan McIntosh	Broughton Spurtle
Ken Lochrie	NTBCC	Peter Williamson	NTBCC	Harald Toberman	Leith Central CC
Susan Macinnes	NTBCC	Bruce Ryan	Minutes secretary	~7 residents/visitors	

1.b Apologies

Laura Graham NTBCC | Ben Macpherson MSP Edinburgh Northern and Leith

2 Approval of the minutes of the NTBCC AGM and ordinary meeting on 9 October 2023

- AGM minutes approved as-is – but to be formally adopted at the 2024 AGM (proposed S Mills, seconded R Price, ND)
- Ordinary meeting minutes approved as-is (proposed S Mills, seconded A Gaillard, ND)

2.a Matters arising

- ACTION: M BIRCH TO SUPPLY TO B RYAN SOME INFORMATION HE MENTIONED IN THE OCTOBER MEETING.**

3 Police report (if received)

- No report received

4 Chair's update

4.a Communications with residents' associations

- It was noted that Great King St Association (GKSA) is not receiving comms from NTBCC.
 - DECISION: HOLD OVER REVIEW OF COMMS ISSUES TO A SUITABLE POINT**

4.b Conservation matters

- P Williamson: GKSA has requested a session to advise residents on government regulations around energy consumption. I have some information on this but would like to understand better what GKSA wants. It would probably require external expertise. S Holledge and I have attended meetings on the impact of climate change.
 - M Birch: there has been a deputation on insulation to CEC. GKSA is represented on NTBCC.
 - S Mills: NTBCC has done well in comms about bin-hubs etc. GKSA members are often at NTBCC meetings, so will be informed about NTBCC activities. They have done much research on environmental issues.
 - GKSA member: long-term letting of a rural property requires a level D or C environmental performance certificate, which is very expensive (maybe £100,000). Hence the Scottish Government (SG) decided initially not to insist on such EPCs if costs were more than ~£5000. Hence the SG ambition to raise the standard of let property is high,

but the timescale and forthcoming legal requirements are unclear. Secondary glazing that meets Historic Environment Scotland requirements is possible, and this would be of interest to many people, but this would have a minimal effect on net zero efforts compared to cement manufacture or power production. While it is certain that let properties will be subject to regulation, it is unclear whether these will also apply to houses that are sold. It is also unclear whether UK-wide legislation will mis-interact with SG legislation. There are also SG and UK-wide consultations. Hence a body such as NTBCC or CEC needs to lead on educating property-owners about regulations.

- S Hollledge: A member of Marchmont-Sciennes CC who is knowledgeable about insulation is keen to work with other CCs. There is knowledge within Stockbridge Colonies. NTBCC should bring together such expertise.
- Alan McIntosh: NTBCC should contact the [Built Environment Forum Scotland](#).
- Cllr Osler: 'a conservation and adaptation' paper, and next steps, will be discussed at the next TEC meeting. CEC is trying to understand the division of responsibilities between itself and SG.
- **ACTIONS: P WILLIAMSON TO CONTACT GKSA, THEN NTBCC TO ORGANISE AN EVENT.**

4.c Update on NTBCC officer and convenor positions

- P Williamson: NTBCC has or will soon have vacancies vice-chair, secretary, planning convenor, environment convenor. NTBCC needs to recruit new members.

4.d Edinburgh Association of Community Councils

- **ACTION: P WILLIAMSON TO JOIN EACC MEMBERS' BOARD.**

4.e Public realm – Leith Walk

- P Williamson: there is much unhappiness about the unaesthetic nature of the public realm in Picardy Place (PP) and Leith Walk (LW). A future meeting should ascertain how such costly projects delivered such outcomes. There is fear that George St might end up the same.
 - A resident: It's a traffic nightmare, especially not being able to turn left from LW onto London Rd, and hence the amount of traffic on PP. The traffic modelling appears to have been very faulty.
 - D Henderson: travelling through this area is very stressful. Much greenery has been lost.
 - Cllr Mowat: there will be planting this month LW tram tracks are a 'river' in the current heavy rain, so **I WILL CONTACT CEC OFFICERS**. I agree the 'no-left-turn' is poor, and so **I WILL CONTINUE TO PRESSURE**.
 - Cllr Caldwell: it has helped that [NTBCC has worked via CCTT](#). there are 4 relevant items on the TEC work programme, e.g. about LW side-streets, parking, review of the design. NTBCC should review the TEC action log. Local councillors will support NTBCC.

4.f NTBCC response to CEC [Community Council Scheme and Boundary Review 2023 – Phase 1](#)

- P Williamson: should NTBCC respond to this review? If so, how? NTBCC also needs to engage with neighbouring CCs.
 - S Hollledge: see my [maps on NTBCC website](#).
 - Slide 4: NTBCC's boundaries around the Moray Feu and the Water of Leith, along Princes St, on Calton Hill, along Leith Walk and around Powderhall. The northeast boundary is *between* McDonald Rd and Pilrig St. The boundary around Stockbridge is very irregular.
 - Slide 5: this shows how NTBCC overlaps CEC wards: Inverleith (part of northwest locality), Leith Walk (part of northeast locality) and City Centre (part of southeast locality). Hence NTBCC is very divided.
 - Slide 2: NTBCC has 6 natural neighbourhoods (NNs), four of which are wholly within NTBCC. Three are wholly within the City Centre CEC ward. Two are mostly or completely in Leith Walk ward. One is divided between Inverleith and Leith Walk wards. NNs were mapped in 2004> CC boundaries may relate to 2005, when multi-member CEC wards were created.
 - Slides 6 to 11 show how the NNs overlap with NTBCC. Some parts of the NNs (e.g. Princes St Gardens, burial grounds in the south of Calton Hill) NN are outwith NTBCC. Bellevue/Broughton NN's south includes Broughton St Marys. Canonmills NN is very small. There is likely to be much development and population increase in Broughton Rd/Powderhall NN.
 - R Price: this formerly industrial area is now becoming residential. It may be NTBCC's least connected area.
 - S Hollledge: hence it would have its own issues, so may wish to be firmly part of a CC.
 - Slide 12: I suggest there are 4 possible responses to the consultation.
 1. No submission to this phase of the consultation
 2. Keep the present boundaries, hence endorsing inequality of CC population numbers and lack of reform
 3. Keep present areas of NTBCC that are within the City Centre ward, leading to reduction in NTBCC's population, supporting more equal CCs population numbers.
 4. Base NTBCC boundaries on NNs which would only change NTBCC's northern boundary.
 - C Nimmo: NTBCC should make a submission, forming a subgroup to create it. I am not so keen on the NN option; I appreciate attendance by cllrs from several wards. Is this consultation a chance to create an NTBCC wishlist?
 - M Birch: I agree that NTBCC should make a statement. The consultation also asks about frequency of elections, number of officers, co-option processes. NTBCC has already stated that delaying the CC election is detrimental. I suggest that boundaries should be based on common interests, not populations.

- A McIntosh: I agree that NTBCC should take part in this discussion. A 'kaleidoscopic' CC is far healthier than one defined by architectural, socio-economic or other narrow categories. The Beaverhall/Powderhall part of NTBCC may seem different because NTBCC does not engage much with that area, having lost an active member resident there.
- D Henderson: I used to live in Powderhall. Beyond it is the Water of Leith, which is a boundary that does not fit with other CCs. Broughton St was my connection and shopping street, not Leith. It remains so, even though I now live in southern NTBCC. I too support the mix of backgrounds in NTBCC.
- R Price: the issue is NTBCC's increasing population, especially in Beaverhall. Maybe it and parts of Bonnington should become a completely new CC. (Leith Central is also very large.) The conservation area provides commonality, so removing Rodney St/Bellevue would damage this. It would also rely on Leith Central picking up matters. Following CEC ward boundaries is not necessary: NTBCC should take a community standpoint.
- A resident: Old Town CC has struggled for a long time. Issues there affect NTBCC, so could OTCC be empowered by a boundary change?
- A resident: the CC boundary should completely encompass the EWH Trust area.
 - A resident: there is a working group about EWH's governance. It should be active, and report to NTBCC.
- S Holledge: the crunch point will be in February, when CEC is due to publish proposals.
- P Williamson: the consensus is that NTBCC should respond, stating that NTBCC's current boundaries are generally OK, but some issues (e.g. sizes of CCs, conservation area, consequences for smaller areas) need more thought.
- **ACTIONS: S HOLLEDGE AND P WILLIAMSON TO MEET, THEN PW TO DRAFT NTBCC'S SUBMISSION ALONG THE ABOVE LINES.**

5 Licensing (convener's report)

See also [convener's report on NTBCC website](#). All points made by A Gaillard unless otherwise noted.

5.a Short-term let licensing scheme – 'home letting' v 'secondary letting'

- HL is when the STL host continues to live on the premises. SL is when the STL host lives elsewhere. HL licenses can be up to 3 years, SL licenses up to 1 year. SL also needs a change-of-use planning permission. Hence potential landlords need to understand how CEC will assess their lets.
 - Cllrs Mowat and Caldwell: CEC has a well-staffed enforcement team, which will investigate reports of SLs. All applicant SLs are visited, but not all HLs. The presumption is to grant licenses, but landlords make binding declarations so there are remedies against untrue declarations. The team relies on neighbours to report suspicions. Regulations will be tested. All objections come to CEC's licensing committee.
 - R Price: HL landlords' actual residences should be available from the electoral register. (Cllr Mowat noted that such checks do not happen.) Licensing fees so far are ~£2.7m, which should fund adequate enforcement.
 - Cllr Mowat: CEC is currently processing ~3800 STL applications and many other licensing matters, so costs are high. Due to SG rules, licence application forms do not ask whether landlords own other properties.
 - S Mills: CEC could ask letting agencies, or trawl their records.
 - Cllr Mowat: such agencies only accept Edinburgh applications that have CEC license numbers.

5.b Alcohol Licensing

5.b.i New draft policy statement and consultation

- There has been a consultation on a draft new policy. There has been consultation. NTBCC has [published its response](#).
 - The current CEC licensing registers are still sub-optimal. For example, wider neighbour notifications would be helpful. There are changes to permitted hours and occasional licenses (which have been abused) in the draft. There are proposals to make CCs aware of what they can request, for each application.
 - **ACTION: R PRICE TO TWEET THIS RESPONSE.**

5.b.ii Police annual report 2022-2023

- The police are undertaking some worthwhile campaigns. The report ([available on NTBCC's website](#)) has less helpful statistics than last year's report. The total number of applications has increased since last year. There should be an assessment of overprovision in next the 6 months.

5.c Street trading and market operators consultation

- See [convener's report](#) (page 1). I welcome feedback towards creating NTBCC's response.

5.d Sexual entertainment venues (SEVs): CEC regulatory committee evidence session on 27 Oct

- CEC was prevented from banning such venues, but one has closed. Due to this legal challenge, CCs were invited to attend the October evidence session, but could not attend. NTBCC would have liked to engage with Tollcross and West End CCs on this matter. Glasgow Council (GCC) has licensed its remaining SEVs.
 - Cllr Mowat: GCC number of SEVs was capped due to the existing SEVs having 'grandfather' rights.

6 Planning

All points made by R Price unless otherwise noted.

6.a Concerns over planning (class use/enforcement) and licensing for cafés

- RP and A Gaillard: some former LW retailers (class 1a) and offices have become cafés (class 3 or 4), reportedly without permission, so there is concern over CEC's awareness and control. There is concern over the overall transformation: cafés might start as small (takeaway) concerns but expand onto the pavement. 3 such premises on Elm Row have

breached planning conditions, but not enough for enforcement. Neighbouring residents' insurance may no longer apply because of such breaches. Other businesses may be concerned about losing custom to such 'unfair' competitors.

- C Nimmo: Shouldn't cafés have toilets?
- A resident: it is intended that George St (GS) is restored to its Georgian status, but it is occupied by 'ghastly' temporary wooden structures that do not match Edinburgh World Heritage intentions. There are environmentally unfriendly space heaters. NTBCC should object to all of this, both in George St and elsewhere.
- S Hollledge: stage 4 of the GS redesign will soon consider street furniture and landscaping, so all is to play for, but there are concerns about the process.
- D Renton: expansion of business onto pavements seriously hinders users of scooters and mobility aids.

6.b Update on STL planning applications and licensing register

- The CEC STL planning process is under stress, due to ~600 applications since October, of which 10% have been determined. There was already a backlog. The licensing register shows ~3600 STL applications: 3400 remain unassigned. SLs account for half of these. Less than 10% of licenses have been issued, so licensing fees (see item 5.a above) should be used to resource the process properly.

6.c Proposed development in the Canon Court aparthotel car-park ([23/06328/FUL](#))

- Many residents have contacted NTBCC about this. Cllr Caldwell and I attended a relevant meeting. The application has poor designs. *[I WILL SUBMIT AN OBJECTION ON BEHALF OF NTBCC.](#)*

6.d 1 Broughton Market ([23/06502/FUL](#)): change of use from office accommodation to serviced apartments

- This new application is architecturally broadly acceptable, so the question is whether the change of use is acceptable. There are 9 public comments so far, of which 8 are objections. The closing date is 24 November. CityPlan2030 calls for redeveloping this area as housing, although I agree preserving employment is valuable.
 - D Henderson: the plans imply that the front desk would not be permanently staffed. This area is residential, and the lanes provide safe areas for residents, so this accommodation would need monitoring by staff.
 - K Lochrie: Drummond Civic Association is against the loss of jobs would bring: this has always been a working area. The building would be broken into very small flats, run by an overseas company. It appears that supervision would be remote. There is no mention of improvements to the area, and it would become a building-site with churned-up roads, so there should be a restoration/contribution condition.

6.e Edinburgh World Heritage management plan

- M Birch: this plan has been due for quite some time, but is not apparent on any CEC agenda.
 - *[ACTION: NTBCC TO FOLLOW THIS UP.](#)*

6.f Edinburgh Council's conservation and adaption initiative

No discussion

7 Transport

See [convenor's report on NTBCC website](#). All points made by M Birch unless otherwise noted.

7.a George Street and the First New Town project (update on side streets)

- This will be considered at CEC's January TEC meeting, so is held over.
 - A resident: GKSA strongly believes that CEC's approach to developing street schemes is badly flawed, for example causing disconnection between north and south along Princes St and concentration of traffic in shopping streets. CEC needs to consider the city as a whole.

7.b Travelling Safely update (including Waverley Station masterplan/Waterloo Place bus trial)

- This is held over for the same reason.

7.c Response to HES consultation regarding Holyrood Park

- CEC has created a draft response. NTBCC should also consider responding - the consultation closes 19 December. NTBCC should also encourage residents to respond.
 - R Price: I agree with encouraging residents to respond, but this is outwith NTBCC's area.
 - S Hollledge: much of this consultation is about land management, and so is beyond NTBCC's scope.
 - *[ACTIONS: M BIRCH TO CIRCULATE LINK TO CONSULTATION TO NTBCC; MEMBERS TO ADVISE MB OF POINTS FOR POSSIBLE RESPONSE.](#)*

7.d Report on outcome of Hardie Inquiry

- The report recommends adoption of some Hardie recommendations, but will go to CEC in December, so is held over.

7.e East London St

- See [transport report](#). NTBCC has asked Cllr McFarlane about progress of the traffic and noise surveys. This matter will come back to TEC in January.

7.f Picardy Place

- The response to NTBCC's FOI request for dimensions arrived last week. It contains no data. NTBCC could appeal.
 - R price: Picardy Place has been strimmed. It is clear that pedestrian desire-lines do not follow the pavements.

7.g Low emission zone

- NTBCC met with the project manager today. There are concerns about monitoring, e.g. traffic displacement not being monitored.

7.h Trams

- NTBCC met with the trams team this week about public realm issues. Some issues remain, e.g. NTBCC has not yet seen the road safety audit (due this week). There are many safety issues along the whole route. The business plans for handover from the trams project to CEC is due to go to the trams board this month. Local CEC cllrs should have oversight of these plans, because they will bear the consequences.

7.i Participation request

- NTBCC is concerned that it is not benefitting as anticipated. Changes to the process will be made but if these do not work, a fresh participation request would be made. For example, ETROs have been delayed by 6 months: further delay is due to more errors being discovered.

8 Environment

See also [convenor's report](#) and [report on communal bin review](#), both on NTBCC website

8.a Communal bin review (including plans for World Heritage site)

- P Williamson: plans going to TEC this week show that the Old Town will have communal bins, much of NTBCC ('area B') will have gull-proof sacks (GPSs), and waste collection in other parts of NTBCC will be decided in due course. This seems sensible, but engagement needs to be done very well. Area C residents' opinions have not been sought.
 - C Nimmo: in 2020, NTBCC's survey showed that an overwhelming number of residents want GPSs.
 - M Birch: the report does address some of NTBCC's concerns, e.g. that one size does not fit all. The trial has shown a significant increase in recycling, so CEC officials now see that there are better alternatives to communal bin-hubs. Kerbside collection is seen as better – it encourages individual responsibility. Consultation, education and especially engagement lead to much more recycling. The report recommends that the trial is extended, looking at more frequent recycling collections, smaller non-recyclable waste capacities, campaigning to increase food-waste collections. NTBCC should emphasise all of this via a deputation.
 - M Birch: the [APSE](#) report had recommended underground bins, but these are impractical for Edinburgh, so the choice is between communal bins and kerbside collection. NTBCC's heritage investigations showed that the former would have a detrimental impact. This has been acknowledged by APSE. Hence NTBCC should encourage CEC to engage with communities, but avoiding a patchwork of arrangements. Thanks to Cllr Mitchell for his support.
 - M Birch should submit a written deputation, and attend the TEC meeting to reinforce key points.
 - A resident: I endorse MB's statements. CEC now understands that GPSs are soft wheelie-bins. Elsewhere, such bins are the best solution, but here there is only space for GPSs. CEC workers agree that GPSs have increased recycling by 250%, and CEC officials agree that GPSs are a workable solution for CEC and for residents. Engagement has been key in this, so engagement in area C is necessary.
 - S Mills: Thanks to all who have encouraged GPS use. We also need all residents to take part fully.
 - A resident: East Lothian Council seems to be better at educating people than CEC. CEC needs to lead on education.
 - Cllr Mitchell: it is possible to have street-by-street arrangements: phase 4 is proof of this.
 - A resident: I meant that one side of a street should not have bins and the other side GPSs. Bins are harmful.
 - Actions: M Birch to circulate a draft deputation. NTBCC members to comment so that MB can submit it.
 - Action: M Birch and C Nimmo to present deputation at TEC meeting.
 - The [submitted deputation](#) is on NTBCC's website.

8.b CEC litter-bin siting policy

Held over

8.c Weeds on pavements, gutters and roadways

Held over

9 Culture and communities**9.a Presentation/discussion on Edinburgh Council's community council review**

See item 4.f above.

10 AOCB

No matters raised.