

## Minutes of New Town & Broughton Community Council's meeting, online via Zoom, on Monday 13 May 2024 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.

### Actions (to be omitted from online version)

Item	Actor	Action
4.a	M Birch	submit NTBCC's Meadows to George St response by 17 May
4.a	Others	submit their own Meadows to George St response by 17 May
7.a	R Price	Submit support for 37 Broughton Pl application, if he has time
7.b	R Price	submit a comment supporting the application but also noting some potential issues
9.a	NTBCC members	help S Holledge cover the webcast of the meeting

## 1 Administration and welcome

### 1.a Attendance

Fiona Banatvala	NTBCC	Stewart Mills	NTBCC	Cllr Finlay McFarlane	City Centre ward
Mike Birch	NTBCC	Richard Price	NTBCC	Cllr Max Mitchell	Inverleith ward
Annick Gaillard	NTBCC	Nick Reid	NTBCC	Cllr Jo Mowat	City Centre ward
Laura Graham	NTBCC	David Renton	NTBCC	Alan McIntosh	Broughton Spurtle
Deirdre Henderson	NTBCC	Peter Williamson	NTBCC	Paul Matthews	AECOM
Simon Holledge	NTBCC	Bruce Ryan	minutes secretary	Martyn Lings	CEC
Ken Lochrie	NTBCC	Cllr Jack Caldwell	Leith Walk ward	~7 residents/visitors	
Susan Macinnes	NTBCC	Cllr Margaret Graham	City Centre ward		

### 1.b Apologies

Carol Nimmo NTBCC | Cllr Jule Bandel Inverleith ward |

## 2 Minutes of 8th April 2024 meeting and matters arising

Approved as-is (proposed M Birch, seconded K Lochrie, ND)

## 3 Chair's update

### 3.a Edinburgh World Heritage Site Management Plan

- M Birch and I had a positive meeting with relevant CEC officials. An independent company will report on the comments received on the Management Plan, and this report will come to a local stakeholder meeting. I also met with EWH's Director about involvement of local organisations. I have now heard that EWH is developing its thoughts on such local involvement, and that trustees will meet about governance in June. After that, the possibility of a meeting with local stakeholders has been flagged.

### 3.b Canonmills Owners And Residents Association

- I have [written to CEC on behalf of CORA](#), supporting their concerns. No reply yet.

## 4 Presentation on the Meadows to George Street TRO Engagement Stage Paul Matthews of AECOM and Martyn Lings from City of Edinburgh Council

See also [presentation slides](#).

- The project is driven by 2 main policy drivers, leading to 3 key strategies and hence 3 key plans (slide 3).
  - The plans 'speak' to each other.
  - 'Our future streets' recognises that streets cannot contain everything that might be wanted by everyone.
- City centre transformation plan (CCTP) is described and visualised on slide 4.
- 'Our future streets' is described and visualised on slide 5 It builds on the CCTP.
- Co-ordination of city centre projects (internal project teams and external communication) is visualised on slide 6.
- An overview of the Meadows to George St project, one of the first CCTP components to come forward, is on slide 7.
  - Sustrans is funding some of the project. The project envisions transformation of 'cycling, walking, public spaces and accessibility for all on some of Edinburgh's busiest and most iconic streets'.
  - The reference to 'peak times' means peak times each day, not just peak 'seasons' such as the festival.
  - It should connect many cycling developments outwith the city centre.
- The project's objectives are 'a place for people', 'respect and enrich the World Heritage Site', 'sustainable and inclusive transport', 'resilient and adaptable space and 'a thriving economy' (slide 8).
- There has been much engagement about the project, detailed on slide 9.
- Data analysis (slide 10) show that enhancements for walking, public space, cycling, public transport, loading and blue-badge parking are needed.
- The project timeline is on slide 11. There was a hiatus due to COVID in 2020 to 2022. The detailed design is now ready, so is going through a statutory process that would enable construction. This process may take 6 to 18 months.
- Traffic operations are on slide 12. Proposed changes via traffic regulation orders) are shown on the right of this slide:
  - Forrest Rd (dark blue) connects Middle Meadow Walk to George IV (GIV) bridge. It would be pedestrianised, so the other sides of the triangle (Teviot Place and Bristow Place) would become 2-way.

- Candlemaker Row (light blue) would have a bus-gate, but loading would be allowed between 06:30 and 10:30. This mirrors proposed loading on GIV bridge and existing loading on the High St.
  - At the top of the Mound (Bank St - pink), there would be a bus/cycle/taxi gate, operating 6am to 10pm. Hence traffic moving south to north would go via Chambers St and the Bridges. A new junction would enable this.
  - There would be another bus gate at the junction of Market St and Jeffrey St, thus severing the southbound Hanover St – Mound – Market St – Pleasance route. There would still be access to Waverley station, but traffic would need to exit the way it entered.
  - The point of these changes is to make north-south through-traffic use the Bridges/Calton Rd/Leith St or Lothian Rd, leaving Meadows to George St for local access (slide 13). There will be advance signage to direct traffic to the through-routes. However, every street in the M to GS corridor would be accessible to traffic, possibly via a changed route.
  - Slide 15: George St is due to be reconfigured under the George St/1<sup>st</sup> New Town proposals. This leads to a proposed one-way cycle-path either side of Hanover St. Footpaths would be widened, and the road would have a single lane each way. There would be loading bays, a taxi rank and a disabled bay, along with bus stops on each side.
- At this point, the chair asked for detailed descriptions to be curtailed, so that there was time for discussion.
- Slide 17: most of the route would have a bidirectional cycle-path, enabling widening of footpaths and improved public space. There would be some new pedestrian crossings along the route.
  - Slide 20 shows how to view and comment on the TROs (up to 17 May). There were also some drop-in events.

#### 4.a Q&A/discussion

- M Birch: How would has the possible tram route across the Bridges been taken into account? In particular, where would northbound traffic along Chambers St go?
  - All of the city centre and wider areas have been traffic-modelled. Around 30% of through-traffic would 'evaporate'. Other traffic would move to Lothian Rd, Melville Drive, London Rd and Queen St. Depending on other factors, some might move to Queen's Drive.
- M Birch: when was the model last updated, and does it take into account current traffic volumes and planned closures? What are the expected impacts on traffic on the Bridges and Lothian Rd? Does the model include potential further closures, e.g. Holyrood Park?
  - The modelling was undertaken by the CCTP team, but I understand it used a 2016 baseline, and was then updated with 2019 data. COVID caused significant reductions, so 2019 is a worst-case scenario.
  - The modelling takes into account the planned closures. A sensitivity analysis has investigated how matters would change from the completion of the plans onwards.
  - Changes to traffic on Lothian Rd and the Bridges are in February's reports to TEC.
  - M Birch: those reports lack information on non-major streets.
- M Birch: are the mistakes made on Leith Walk (too much in too small a space) being repeated in these plans?
  - We plan to keep the design as simple as possible, and agree we can't do everything everywhere. Hence lines would be straight, walking spaces would be clutter-free, with potential impedimenta in the separation strips (between cycle-paths and carriageways). Floating bus-stops would also be simple, aiding visibility. This meets findings from Living Streets. There would be a change in level between cycle-paths and footpaths – a lesson from Leith Walk.
- M Birch: there appears not to be increased pavement widths, e.g. on the Mound. How does this meet stated priorities?
  - Footpaths would be widened from the galleries to the first bend. We are seeking a compromise with heritage bodies to enable movement of the wall and railings there [and hence footpath-widening]. We have also undertaken a pedestrian comfort analysis to find how much space pedestrians need, and have achieved desirable comfort levels along the planned design. The footpath on the west of the Mound would be widened. The Playfair steps mean that the east footpath doesn't need widening. Edinburgh St Design Guidance states that cycle-paths should be narrower than footpaths, so this meets priorities. We are looking for further improvements.
- M Birch: are you using the up-to-date version of the Edinburgh St Design Guidance and *Cycling by Design*?
  - Yes.
- K Lochrie: what will be the effect on the Leith gyratory of increased traffic on Queen St and the Bridges?
  - I'm sorry but I don't have the relevant modelling to hand. It has been investigated.
- A resident: I'm concerned that the plan doesn't consider traffic flows. For example, how should cars travel from Stockbridge to Newington? Longer routes would increase travel time and congestion.
  - The modelling would show several routes. I suspect it would suggest Lothian Rd. We accept that some people need cars. We would welcome other suggestions.
- A resident: I am opposed to the whole plan. Cycle routes on the Mound are unlikely to be used much, due to Edinburgh's hills. Closing roads would make responses to eventualities such as building repairs difficult. There are precedents of the failures of such plans.
- D Henderson: why does the cycle-path at St Andrews Square not to Waverley and Cockburn St – these are underused, and should be safer? What is Lothian Buses' response to the changes at Forrest Rd and Bristo Square?
  - Cycle routes need to be direct, otherwise people won't use them. We need to think about onward routes and where people cycle from. Lothian Buses' key point is to maintain journey times.
- F Banatvala: turning onto Bristo Square will be impossible for buses. Cyclists do not have to use Middle Meadows Walk, but could go via Candlemaker Row to central Edinburgh or along routes to the ends of Princes St. Floating bus stops are very sub-optimal, especially for visibility, so cycle-paths should be away from bus-routes.

- F Banatvala: we need a guarantee that CEC will consider more than just road safety and traffic management.  
*ACTION: M BIRCH TO SUBMIT NTBCC'S RESPONSE BY 17 MAY.* This will be an objection, focussing on impacts on NTBCC's area.  
*ACTION: OTHERS TO SUBMIT THEIR OWN OBJECTIONS,* because NTBCC's submission will not have any extra weight.

## 5 Transport

See also [convener's report](#). All points made by M Birch unless otherwise noted.

### 5.a Update on LEZ following meeting with CEC Transport staff

- CEC's responses to our questions are [here](#). CEC does not have information on non-compliant vehicles, so can't predict impacts. CEC is relying on Scottish Transport data from 2022. Cameras are not yet working or delivered. There is no financial support available apart from for businesses seeking to retrofit. CEC is relying on nationwide scheme for disabled exemptions, and has no information on application numbers. No additional monitoring is planned, but the city mobility plan may enable some monitoring. It is questionable whether CEC is ready for the LEZ to start on 1 June

### 5.b Agree response to Meadows to George Street TRO

See item 4.a above.

### 5.c Status of Rose Street repairs

- Cllr McFarlane advises that CEC is pursuing and charging SPEN, who dug up the road ~2 years ago. However, delivery or replacement stones (from China) has been delayed, so the tarmac is temporary and the road will be made good in time. A new TRO will partially close Rose St, so we hope the work will be done before then.

### 5.d Change to airport bus routes/future of bus station

- These buses will be removed from St David St to Waverley Bridge, because the former's width will be reduced. NTBCC has asked whether Waverley Bridge is being properly used.
- We understand that the bus station site's owner is not will to extend the lease beyond 2027.
  - Cllr Graham: the site is owned by a pension fund. Negotiations are 'quite promising'.

## 6 Licensing

All points made by A Gaillard unless otherwise noted.

### 6.a Supplementary Statement of Licensing Policy: 'Overprovision' – consultation closes 13 May 2024

- I have submitted [NBCC's response](#). In brief, this states that overprovision monitoring should remain, due to 'healthy scrutiny', and be extended to other areas. There is presumption against granting licenses in areas of overprovision.

### 6.b Beltane Fire Festival on 30th April – queue management

- Pavement at the top of Leith St had been widened, during the St James development, to enable better access for pedestrians, wheelchairs etc. Then the Newsroom pub applied for a tables and chairs permit. This has reduced the width available for pedestrians etc to less than before the widening. Worse, the permit was given by CEC transport, and this is an overprovision area, but the licensing board (while sympathetic) could not refuse the relevant licensing application. This was granted on 29 April. The next day was the Beltane Fire Festival: the unused tables and chairs were in place, seriously impeding queues of people. There are some policy breaches in all of this.
  - F Banatvala: it is possible that such issues would affect the planned wider paths on Meadows to George St.
  - M Birch: this issue is already affecting George St? It is a transport issue.

## 7 Planning

All points made by K Lochrie unless otherwise noted.

### 7.a 37 Broughton Pl, Broughton Hotel, internal and external alterations comments by 17/05 – 24/01498/FUL

- This is a 4-storey Georgian house. There would be some internal improvements and some minor external changes. NTBCC should support this application.
- *ACTION: R PRICE TO SUBMIT NTBCC'S SUPPORT* (if he has time).

### 7.b Royal High School, conversion to music centre, comments by 17/05 – 24/01804/FUL

- The new application would do away with the music school, but create a national centre for music. There would be some internal alterations to create rehearsal and performance spaces and a bar/café/restaurant. Non-original buildings would be demolished, to create open/event space. Historic Environment Scotland supports this application.
  - R Price: there has only been one other comment on this application.
  - *ACTION: R PRICE TO SUBMIT A COMMENT SUPPORTING THE APPLICATION BUT ALSO NOTING SOME POTENTIAL ISSUES.*

### 7.c Blenheim Place, new house on 'greenfield' site, comments by 31/05 – 24/01889/FUL

- This is for a private house, just downhill from Greenside Church and next to office buildings. The house would occupy almost all of the available site, and its second storey would rise pavement level. It would obstruct views of the church, and rely on other land for its views and sunlight. CEC had advised this greenfield site had been made to look derelict by removal of trees and vegetation, and it will be difficult to create a suitable plan for this site.
  - S Holledge: removal of 19 trees was absent from the application's site history – the site had been woodland. Tree protection orders are supposedly not necessary within conservation areas, but this case gives that the lie.

**7.d Increasing number of applicants looking to install slimline double glazing**

- F Banatvala: full double glazing is possible in Grade A listed buildings, looks better and is more economic. CEC should promote and accept such full glazing.

**7.e Other points**

- We will soon meet the developers of the Calton Square office building, and report on this next month.
- R Price: an application for a 9-flat development at Canon Court has been refused. There had been many objections, and NTBCC has been congratulated for supporting residents.

**8 Environment****8.a Overflowing bins in New Town**

- Held over to June

**8.b Communal Bin Review, Phase 5, Area A**

- P Williamson: I and Mike Birch will meet with a relevant official this week, and report back to NTBCC. (Area A includes Queen St, N Castle St, Frederick St, Greenside Rd, Calton Rd and roads in the Old Town.)
  - M Birch: NTBCC should encourage people to report overflowing bins, because reports have suggested this issue is reducing. I spoke with George St and Queen St residents and businesses: they were barely aware of the forthcoming communal bins, some of which will be in different locations to current ones. Bins will be immediately outside the two Queen St residential properties. NTBCC needs to use any opportunities to affect locations.
  - F Banatvala: there is no sign of the promised consultation/information from Edinburgh World Heritage and CEC.
  - Cllr Mitchell: there will be information events on Phase A. People cannot submit comments at these, but can do so otherwise. There is a review in a May 2023 report, and [letters](#) are being issued, i.e. lessons have been learnt from Phase 3. Some of the concerns about lack of information may be due to Royal Mail not delivering letters.

**9 Culture and Communities**

See also [convenor's report](#). All points made by S Holledge unless otherwise noted.

**9.a Briefing on City of Edinburgh Council Culture and Communities Committee forthcoming meeting on 16 May**

- After 4 months of little happening, this month's C&C agenda is packed. There is far too much for NTBCC to cover in a short time. (The agenda came out on Friday; the meeting is on Thursday. The deadline for submissions is Tuesday.)
  - P Williamson: the short time and large volume prevent CCs from consulting and representing their communities!
  - R Price: NTBCC should make its views on Princes St gardens known, perhaps via a written submission. Personally, use of the Ross bandstand would be acceptable, but impact on the gardens would be unwelcome.
  - F Banatvala: can councillors help NTBCC with the lack of notice and volume of topics?
  - Cllr McFarlane: councillors are hard-pressed to cover so much material. Some reports were 'to follow', adding to the pressure. People can email committee members, asking for amendments, or ask to make oral presentations.
  - Cllr Graham: I will submit an amendment asking for the bandstand and Princes St gardens matter to be held over.
  - S Holledge: NTBCC is concerned about events that go out with the bandstand's curtilage, and closure of the gardens for many weeks.
  - Cllr McFarlane: The Princes St report asks for a decision, so is urgent. Last year, it was decided to allow up to 4 major events, i.e. those that go outwith the bandstand's footprint. One of these would be Chrstmas/Hogmanay, one for opening and closing the festival. The festival has now indicated it doesn't want to use the bandstand, so 3 events are open. It is anticipated that these would be the subject of a 3-year deal, enabling longer-term planning, but there still would be no more than 4 major events each year. Closure and hoarding off views from Princes St is a police requirement, but this could be tightened.
  - R Price: 'evenst' could last longer than 1 day, leading to extended impacts on public access to the gardens.
  - ***ACTION: NTBCC MEMBERS TO HELP S HOLLEDGE COVER THE WEBCAST OF THE MEETING.***

**10 Councillors' reports**

No discussions

**11 Any other business**

NTBCC's AGM will be part of its June meeting. NTBCC's accounts are being verified.