



New Town & Broughton Community Council Engagement Plan June 2021

Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Video conferencing
3. Special meeting on Broughton Street and Spaces for People
4. Noticeboards
5. NTBCC website
6. twitter
7. Residents' associations
8. Formal Responses to local government consultations and deputations to City of Edinburgh Council committees
9. Engagement with other community councils, networks and heritage organizations
10. Use of Public Spaces for Events and Filming (formerly Public Spaces Management Plan)
11. Future plans

1. Introduction

During the past year, the New Town & Broughton Community Council (NTBCC) have been meeting by video conference. The adoption of this technology by the community council has been an outstanding success, adapting to difficult circumstances and turning the prospect of limited engagement into a renewed and reinvigorated commitment to the community. Video conferencing has arguably changed our culture, with the new possibility of holding five or six virtual meetings a day instead of one or two physical ones, bringing a greater intensity to our work.

Last year's Engagement Plan, the first one produced for NTBCC, was written in May 2020 and presented at the AGM on 12 October 2020. As such it dealt with events before the beginning of the pandemic lockdown on 23 March 2020 and a short time afterwards. Included in that previous report was a List of Neighbourhood Support Groups in the New Town and Broughton (Appendix 2) which had just been formed in response to the emergency.

The long report (17 pages) contained a lot of background information about NTBCC and the area it represents which is still obviously relevant and does not need to be repeated this year (<https://www.ntbcc.org.uk/new-town-and-broughton-community-council-engagement-plan-may-2020-2/>).

2. Video conferencing

NTBCC's last face-to-face meeting was on 9 March 2020. Soon after that date the Communications & Engagement Committee started to test video conferencing software. On 14 and 18 March we tried Cisco Webex, and then on 30 March we switched to Zoom, which thereafter became our preferred platform because of its easy interface, the quality of its video and audio, and bandwidth handling capacity. The first NTBCC meeting by Zoom was for members only on 13 April. A decision was made on May 27 to advertise future meetings on Eventbrite (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk>), and fully-public meetings were held on 8 June and then subsequently every month from August 2020 to May 2021, often with many more participants than we used to attract to physical meetings — an achievement in representing residents that prompted one of our city centre councillors to call NTBCC an “*A-list community council*”.

The ZOOM video-conferencing platform was also adopted by the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils (EACC), and the heritage bodies, the Cockburn Association and Edinburgh World Heritage enabling users to become familiar with the features of the programme. (In my capacity as Secretary of the EACC I wrote, ‘*On video conferencing: guidance from the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils (EACC)*’, online at <http://www.edinburghcommunitycouncils.org.uk>). Regrettably, communication between

NTBCC and the City of Edinburgh Council was sometimes adversely affected by the latter's decision, on security grounds, to exclusively use Skype-based Microsoft TEAMS, which many consider poorer in quality and more difficult to use.

3. Special meeting on Broughton Street and Spaces for People

In addition to its regular meetings. NTBCC hosted a public discussion with presentations on Zoom, concerning the future of Broughton Street and the response of the community to the CEC Spaces for People Project traffic measures, after distributing a leaflet to approximately 300 residents and businesses in the area, explaining NTBCC's vision for the future of the street. This event was held on 29 March 2021.

4. Noticeboards

As in 2020, the Communications/Engagement Team produced a laminated notice of NTBCC meetings which were displayed in locations throughout our area.

5. NTBCC website

The NTBCC website (<http://www.ntbcc.org.uk>) continues to be used to advertise meetings, agendas, publish minutes and consultation documents and to communicate government, council and other information to residents. It typically has over 1,750 views per month, up from 1,000 a month in the previous year.

6. twitter

The twitter platform continues to be used by NTBCC to reach the wider Edinburgh public. During the year, the number of followers rose from 1100 to 1427 — second only to the Old Town Community Council twitter feed with 1800+ followers — reflecting the increased influence of NTBCC in the community.

7. Residents' associations

The number of residents' associations (RAs) represented on NTBCC increased to six with the addition of Fettes Row and Royal Crescent Association. Regrettably, as of June 2021, the Lord Moray Feuars decided not to join NTBCC.

Meanwhile, as of April 2021, Carol Nimmo, Chair of NTBCC, is convening a wide group of NTBCC member and non-member associations to discuss waste issues in the light of changing council policies.

8. Formal Responses to local government consultations and deputations to City of Edinburgh Council committees

NTBCC made 11 submissions and deputations during 2020-2021, compared to 8 in 2019-2020. These were:

Deferral of Edinburgh Summer Sessions 2020 to 2021 – Deputation, 27 May 2020

Broughton Street Improvements – Proposal for Input into the ‘Spaces for People’ process, 19 July 2020

Joint Statement on the City of Edinburgh Council’s Policy and Sustainability Committee (Thursday 20th August 2020),

Agenda item 6.13: Update on Edinburgh’s Christmas and Edinburgh’s Hogmanay 2020/2021. As agreed by the New Town & Broughton Community Council, and other community council and the Cockburn Association, 19 August 2020

Broughton St. (& South Bridge) : Deputation to CEC Transport & Environment Committee 12 November 2020

NTBCC Statement for the City of Edinburgh Council Public Spaces Management Plan ‘Collaborative Engagement’, 25 January 2021

Proposed Demolition / Redevelopment of the Former RS Site – Summary of NTBCC’s Position, 7 February 2021

Broughton Street: ‘Commonplace’ feedback and NTBCC’s proposals, 17 February 2021

NTBCC Deputation for T&E Committee Meeting on 19 February 2021, 17 February 2021

NTBCC response to ‘retaining Spaces for People measures’ consultation, 5 April 2021

‘Trams to Newhaven’: Response to Traffic Regulation Orders for new Tram route, 12 May 2021

9. Engagement with other community councils, networks and heritage organizations

NTBCC continue to be actively involved with Community Councils Together on Trams (CCTT) alongside the three Leith community councils. Twelve meetings were held: on 30 April, 28 May, 25 June, 30 July, 27 August, 1 October, 29 October, 26 November 2020, 28 January, 25 February, 25 March and 29 April 2021.

The Five City Centre Community Councils, of which NTBCC is a member, met five times, on 15 and 28 April, 23 June, 17 August and 10 September 2020.

NTBCC also attends the Civic Forum, organized by the Cockburn Association, that promotes dialogue between city officers and community councils.

I represented NTBCC in the five Climate Vulnerability Index workshops organised by Historic Environment Scotland and Edinburgh World Heritage under the leadership of Scott Heron of James Cook University, Queensland, between 25 May and 2 June 2021.

The City Centre Neighbourhood Network finally met after a long furlough on 8 June 2021. This body is organised by the South East Locality.

10. Use of Public Spaces for Events and Filming (formerly Public Spaces Management Plan)

A group of NTBCC members consisting of Laura Graham, Steve Hajducki, Deirdre Henderson, Jenni Inglis, Carol Nimmo, Richard Price, and Peter Williamson and myself contributed to, (1) a 'collaborative engagement' on key principles and guidelines for the use of public spaces in the city, and (2) stakeholder discussions in sub-groups on seven different topics: application and approval, area conditions, engagement and communication, filming, and sustainable events (three groups for economic, environmental, and social). This work is in advance of a public consultation.

11. Future plans

We look forward to being able to resume face-to-face meetings at some point in the future, ideally while retaining the ability to connect with people through video conferencing. Whether we will be able to find facilities where 'hybrid' virtual/real conferencing is available is uncertain.

Simon Holledge, NTBCC Engagement Officer, 14 June 2021