

Mayfield and Easthouses Community (MECC) Minutes of meeting

7th August 2024 7pm - Meeting held in Mayfield Church

ATTENDEES

Robert Hogg (Chair), Judy Thomson (Treasurer), Theresa Morrison, Craig Gallier, Stephen Liddell, Cllr Bryan Pottinger, Gus Morrison, Michael Hogg, Sharon Hill, Michael Davidson, David Bishop, PC Jason McFarlane.

Apologies

Cllr Peter Smaill, Susan Ryan, Lindsay Herriot-Masoka

1. Welcome and Apologies

RH welcomed everyone and noted the apologies (noted above). AGM to be postponed again. Last month's meeting minutes were approved by CG and RH. RH updated the meeting that he still hasn't heard back from the manager of Newbattle Medical Practice after reaching out.

2. War Memorial in Easthouses

- RH gave an update on the above he suggested it worthwhile to check out the Facebook page which is updated regularly. There has been great progress, and a lot of hard work put into this.
- Remembrance Day in November. Reminder to include Easthouses Primary School.

3. Police Report Highlights

- PC Jason McFarlane read out highlights of the police report for the month of June.
- Increase in thefts, with shoplifting being a significant issue. One individual is notably active, leading to discussions about targeted operations in plain clothes.
- Anti-social behavior, particularly by juveniles, is on the rise, exacerbated by free bus passes allowing youths to travel and cause disturbances in different areas.
- A car crash at Mayfield roundabout involved a disqualified driver under the influence of drugs, causing significant damage. The driver was apprehended, but the victim is still dealing with insurance issues.
- A serious arson case highlighted issues with Midlothian Council's housing policy, as a known troublemaker with a history of violence was placed in a vulnerable community.
- Discussions covered the challenges of addressing juvenile crime due to limited consequences for young offenders.
- The police are working to manage anti-social behavior and shoplifting through a combination of increased visibility and targeted interventions.

4. Planning

Safe Walking Route to Easthouses Primary School:

- Phase 1: Focus on improving connectivity between Kippielaw Estate and Lothian Drive in Easthouses. Approval is pending, with no guarantees. Plan is for them to walk up Maryburn Road to join the main Easthouses Road for the rest of the way
- Phase 2: Involves linking Lothian Drive to the school's back gate (behind Roanshead Crescent) but this is subject to funding and landowner approval. There is disappointment over delays and lack of progress.
- Discussions on opening the back gate at the school for safer access are ongoing, with issues surrounding the school's and council's involvement.

Crawlees Road Junction:

- An email from the planning department indicated that the safeguarded route was not considered in the initial planning stage, which was before COVID. This has led to concerns over missed opportunities for better traffic management and safer routes. There may be another chance during the detailed application stage.
- The council is accused of failing to address these issues during the planning process, and there is a push for a new traffic assessment (the previous one was conducted during lockdown).
- Agreement to contact Newtongrange and Gorebridge Community Councils.

Housing Developments:

- SL represented the Midlothian Federation of Community Councils at the June Council meeting to ask for a change to a recent vote for more housing than is needed. The outcome was the vote was changed to the 'minimum' amount of new housing instead which was preferable. There was further debate about site selection criteria and types of housing required.
- There is resistance to including new major housing developments in the local plan (MLDP2). Concerns were raised that the planning department is still considering new sites despite community opposition.
- It was noted that 50 units is the maximum to be classed as a windfall site and a new Housing Land Audit (HLA) is needed.

Development of Town Centre:

- At a recent meeting with Midlothian Council, the possibility discussed of housing between Hawthorn Centre and Bogwood Court/Park. No mention of social housing, only affordable housing. CC suggested Bogwood Court and Mayfield Place for social housing. Idea to retrofit Bogwood Court and for it to be wholly residential. In It Together group need to meet and discuss in more detail. Need a structural report on Bogwood Court. It was mentioned to include the sites in the development plan but that is not desired by CC.

5. Environment

- CG highlighted fly tipping issues on land owned by Springfield which is ongoing. He suggested getting a webcam (plus SD card plus batteries) installed up there to try to prevent this. CC to look into possibility and legality.
- Blackcot Drive has been cut back. Mayfield Park grass cut on the day of the meeting too. A cement mixer has been dumped near the bins at Blackcot.

6. Councillor's Report

- Cllr Smaill sent a report:
 - Planning- significant reversal of Planning Committee endorsement of additional housebuilding achieved at Council meeting on 25 June. Particular thanks to Stephen Liddell for his powerful contribution to the debate and the support from nearly all the Community Councils.
 - £20m Mayfield development fund- seeking information as to whether this has survived change of UK Government.
 - Lovell development- further complaint sent via Planning
 - Overgrown/overhanging bushes - raised issue at area near junction of Easthouses Rd and Lauder Rd, and W of Health Centre Blackcot/Suttislea. Result not know but will inspect.

- Safeguarded route(Crawlees) - have expressed concern and suggested a site visit for Councillors. Also raised the desirability of a segregated cycle/footpath on old railway line at Lothian terrace-Wester Suttislea.
- Safe Routes to School proposal Kippielaw to new Easthouses Primary – visited, supportive.
- Council enclosure of common access area reallocated property to detriment of existing tenant - have suggested site visit.
- Planning - note Saltire permission extension sought.
- Sycamore Rd renewal, Fly tipping – aware of issues.
- Council finance - further delays to Hillend Alpine Coaster due to Scottish water issues - unbudgeted financing costs of £0.5m involved since will not open until after schools return, so no revenues till the autumn.
- Capital plans still unaffordable especially schools and social housing, due in part to £196m cut across Scotland for the latter by Scottish Government.
- Cllr Pottinger discussed grass block parking on Bogwood Road and parked cars on bus route. CC in support of any intervention. Recently attended a meeting with positive outcomes/actions for Easthouses bowling club (security of lighting and cctv needed due to anti-social behaviour) and improvements at Easthouses Play Park.

7. Treasurer Report

- This month, the charge to hire the church hall has increased to £54, from £30.
- Money was received into the CC account from Councillor's funds and promptly paid back out to David Bishop for the War Memorial work.
- Grant received from Midlothian Council for £350. This is for administrative costs and venue hire. Current balance is £7114.78

8. Other Business:

- A meeting was scheduled to happen this week regarding the new Easthouses Primary School. However, disappointingly, this has been cancelled in favour of an open day planned on Tuesday 13th August. Another meeting is to take place with Education Department about communication of school news. Following a rumour, it will be confirmed if the new School will open on Wednesday 14th August as planned.
- Concerned shown that people applied for Free School Meals and Uniform Grants had not yet heard back and school starts next week.
- Agreement to ask Kirsty McNeill for a meeting. Plan to discuss the proposed £20million for Mayfield and the Town Centre redevelopment project.
- RH thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was closed. Next meeting will be September.