

# Colinton Community Council

*here to represent you*

Minutes of the meeting of 10th March 2015

Venue: Colinton Bowling Club

## **Present**

Dr David Houston (Chair), Tom McDonald (Vice-Chair), David Bewsey (Secretary), Gordon Neill (Treasurer), Nigel Rudd, Mike Scott, Bill Alexander, Alastair Murray, Lorraine O'Shea (CVE), Iain Gotts (CAA), Catherine Lang (Co-opted after Item 7).

Cllr. Jason Rust, Cllr. Ricky Henderson for Alistair Darling MP, Gordon MacDonald MSP,  
72 members of the public

## **Apologies**

Cllrs. Aitken & Lewis, Colin Proctor (CC Member)

## **Welcome by the Chair**

The Chair, Dr David Houston, welcomed the audience and thanked Colinton Bowling Club for allowing us to use their premises and went on to describe what the Community Council does. He stated that its primary remit is to represent the views of the Colinton Community, is not political and was provided with a grant from the Council for administrative purposes only. The most important fact is that it holds public meetings to bring up matters of concern to the community and represent them to the Council.

## **Minutes of the meeting**

The minutes of 17th February were approved.

Proposed by Tom McDonald, Seconded by Alastair Murray

## **Matters arising:**

The matter of the number of signatures required to sign cheques was corrected. Two signatures will now be required, Treasurer with either Chair or Vice-chair.

The next three meetings would be on the second Tuesday of the month and not as stated in the minutes. This was changed to allow our Councillors to attend all of their respective CC meetings, where possible.

## **Planning**

### **Application 14/05261/FUL – 6 - 8 Bridge Road, Colinton**

Bill Alexander declared an interest in this item and stood down from the Community Council and joined the audience for the duration of this item.

The Chair read out a statement on behalf of Fanelli's Delicatessen:

*"We would like to make all residents of Colinton aware of the following facts. We do not own the property we occupy at 6-8 Bridge Road, Colinton, we are tenants. However much we may wish to continue to serve Colinton village our landlord has given us no option to extend our current lease when it expires in approximately 12 months' time. We are in no way associated with the planning proposals lodged with Edinburgh Council at the above property. We have not sold out to the Cooperative or indeed any other organisation. Neither we as a family nor our staff have any information or control over the proposals in place. Please do not boycott us or speak ill of us on the strength of misinformation circulating within the Colinton community as this may result in us having to close our doors permanently after almost 17 years of business. We would like to thank those who support us both as a family and a business, and we thank the Chair for reading out this statement. The Fanelli Family"*

The Secretary proposed the following motion:

*"Colinton Community Council wish to emphasise that the development application for 6-8 Bridge Road Colinton has been submitted by Kilpatrick Property Group Limited (the owners of the building) and not by the current tenants, who include Fanelli's Delicatessen. The Community Council deplores the critical comments made by some members of the public to management and staff at Fanelli's who, despite this unfair interference with normal business, are trying to continue to serve the Colinton community to the end of their lease and deserve our full support in doing so."*

The motion was seconded by Mr Neill, and supported by the whole Community Council

The Chair declared that this planning proposal presented complex issues and it was his intention to divide it into four sections: Business, Size, Conservation and Traffic and that Vice Chair, Tom McDonald would lead following comments from other Councillors and then from the floor.

### **Business:**

TMcD stated that the applicant had presumably done their homework and decided that the proposal to have a Co-op was a viable one. He went on to discuss the potential effect on other businesses. There might be an increase in the choice offered by such an outlet.

The Secretary said he had no particular view one way or the other but there was no certainty about what may happen and we have no statement that the Convenience Store would remain open even if the Co-op wasn't approved. He also suggested that we needed to be careful about

what was wished for. Competition isn't necessarily a bad thing: there are empty shops and with existing competition from Morrisons and Tesco the business community may suffer from a number of competitive effects such as the proposed Aldi development at Oxfords Road. The application has the potential to attract a greater footfall to the village.

IG stated that currently floor area is 1500 ft<sup>2</sup> including the coffee shop. Approx 1000 ft<sup>2</sup> is used for retail purposes. This contrasts with the Co-op which will have a floor area of 4300 ft<sup>2</sup>. He stated that there is no other shop in Colinton with a floor area of more than 1000 ft<sup>2</sup>. He went on to say that there are 27 business units of which only 6 are shops.

TMCD asked what were the effective sales space and storage space within the Co-op proposal. IG replied that the active retail area was 2394 ft<sup>2</sup> storage 1084 ft<sup>2</sup> Fanelli's have 390 ft<sup>2</sup> in the basement.

Comments from the floor included: comparisons with Craiglockhart. Premier which closed after arrival of Tesco Express. Uncertainty as to what will happen with the former Pub and Premier Food store.

Questions were asked about what might happen if Co-op didn't go ahead. TMCD suggested that KPG might then look at some different building use most of which would require another planning application. LO'S suggested the owners had looked at turning it into flats, but that wasn't feasible. She went on to speculate that the owners would look to fill the building to make the most profit.

IG stated that the building owner might wish to extend Fanelli's lease as they wish to continue.

Statement from the floor on behalf of Andy Mathur: "Andy has been in Colinton for 17 years, he owns the Post Office and has invested in the building. Andy is exceedingly worried about competition from the Co-op development."

Comment from the floor mentioned viability of the businesses and suggested that the Co-op would have a detrimental effect on businesses as a whole.

TMCD pointed out that Kilpatrick Property Group in their planning documentation stated that they were advised in summer of 2013 categorically that neither Fanelli nor the Nursery wished to continue their leases.

BA pointed out that the terms of the lease are irrelevant to this discussion because we don't know what the individual terms of the lease are.

GMacDonald MSP raised one issue to do with viability of businesses. In January this year the Post Office advertised a network transformation programme for local Post Offices. They had asked existing sub-Postmasters whether they had a business turnover of £4000 per week exc. VAT. If not they had been trying to find larger retailers like Scotmid who were willing to take on the Post Offices to piggy-back on the cash handling systems of the bigger business.

**Size:**

TMcD suggested that a shop of 220 m<sup>2</sup> would have a different character to the shops we already have, and might have preferential buying opportunities. The size of the proposed building will not have any effect on the street front but the extended gable end will be doubled and will increase the “canyon” effect to the west on the long steps. However as the sun from the east is low and behind other buildings in the morning and because of the proposed configuration of the building, shading will not be very significantly increased.

DB stated that there had been an email pointing out some of the downfalls of the building including the lack of wheelchair access to the upper level. The Co-op has offered to level the floor to make that possible.

IG reiterated the issue of size. No business can exist on retail space alone and requires storage space. He reiterated the size of 4288 ft<sup>2</sup> as compared to the current retail area around 1000 ft<sup>2</sup>. The difference is very significant.

C Arnott: suggested the building was “gauche” and that the Co-op was not the only business that could afford wheelchair access.

D Ferro asked about the Nursery. TMcD informed him that the Nursery was the stated use of the upper floor. LO’S suggested that another nursery might take on the top floor.

TMcD reinforced the point that if a different use was to be made of the nursery another planning application would need to be made.

A Stewart commented that there was a rush to get smaller grocery shops in local shopping areas. The specification is defined by client, in this case Co-op. He went on to say that if in a few years Co-op decides they aren’t making enough money the village is left with a big building with a huge rent.

BA commented on child safety issues to do with the indicated play area.

**Conservation:**

TMcD went on to look at the proposal from the Conservation area perspective. He mentioned the area having a special quality which we hope to preserve. He alluded to the visibility of the building suggesting that it was in effect a “big box”. What we see is going to be important and he suggested that, right now, it was almost impossible to see the building from anywhere except outside the Church. This is because the building is screened by a number of trees which were in poor condition and probably needed to be removed in any case. Looking up the Long Steps the extension to the building would have little effect on the skyline as it would probably be in line with the eaves of the existing building. In discussing the canyon effect down the steps at the side of the building, he said the proximity to the steps would undoubtedly have an adverse effect on the enjoyment of a fundamental part of the Conservation area.

IG made the point that he was the only Councillor who had a position on the application as he was representing CAA who has come out against the application and will be making representation against it. He went on to say the determining issue would be that of Policy which states that a development within a Conservation area should both preserve and enhance the area and in his view it clearly didn't.

There were a number of comments from the floor. Tom was asked to describe the ground layout and proposed building to the rear of the shop as one resident was unclear. Comments were made about trees. NR explained that Arboriculture has given permission for their removal as they were overgrown, not significant specimens and at least one had Dutch Elm disease. The applicant had offered to replant other trees if City of Edinburgh Council required their replacement.

**Traffic:**

The Chair introduced the traffic issue and delivery issues, with the layby accommodating a large truck between the hours of 7 am and 8am. TMcD suggested that the applicant's traffic report was not completely convincing in that the applicant had suggested that parking wouldn't be aggravated by a Co-op. He went on to say that those who live in the village will be aware of the traffic problems. Issues about parking are time dependent and the applicants are obviously looking for a greater footfall. The applicant will be looking for a larger turnover and this is possibly an important part of the village in retail terms.

Another issue is location, close to the traffic lights. TMcD suggested that a case might be made that some form of betterment might be gained from this development

Comments by IG relating to "what-if" scenarios regarding large lorries supplying the shop and the potential for vehicles to block access to the layby.

Comments from the floor suggested that deliveries to other shops in the village cause similar issues throughout the day. The issue of the position of the Bus Stop at Dantes Restaurant was brought up.

Comments concerning the construction phase were aired.

BA suggested that the issue of delivery to all outlets caused issues.

It was suggested that Colinton CC should look at parking issues within the village and surrounding area. Proposed by TMcD seconded by DB.

The Chair suggested people visit the Survey on the ColCC website.

A straw Poll was taken: 36 against, 8 unsure and 3 supported the application.

Various suggestion from the floor as to how we might best communicate with local residents included, Noticeboards, posters in shop s, Library, and Churches, Twitter, email list, and website.

Two offers to help with distribution of leaflets were received.

The Chair restated that the Community Council will submit a holding position by the deadline of Friday 13 March with Planning and request a delegation be heard from the Community Council when the item comes before the Planning Committee.

**Police Report**

The Secretary summarised the Police report which had been submitted to Colinton Amenity Association two weeks prior. He alluded to the high crime rate in the month from 22/01/15 to 23/02/15 which included 32 items including thefts and break-ins, a bogus call and tampering with an ATM machine. The Secretary went on to say that he and the Chair had attended the Fairmilehead CC meeting at which the local PC suggested that extra vigilance was needed and that personal safety was of prime importance and it was not advisable to challenge these criminals if found on one's property.

BA mentioned matters raised at the recent Community Safety Committee. He emphasised the need for feedback from the community. (His report and the minutes will be posted on the website).

AM raised the issue of small break-ins to small businesses, specifically Colinton Hair Design. Use of shutters had been objected to and CCTV had been refused. He argued that a temporary wooden board was less attractive in a conservation area than shutters.

AM proposed that the matter of security be looked into, seconded by the Secretary.

Cllr Rust mentioned the Crime Prevention meeting being held by Police Scotland on Wed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at Pentland Community Centre.

**Co-option of Community Council member:**

Proposal of Catherine Lang as a co-opted member. Agreed unanimously

**Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership Sub-Group representatives & membership of South West Community Forum (SWCF):**

Proposal to join SWCF. Proposed by DB, seconded by BA - Agreed

A decision who on the Community Council should lead on the various specific local issues and on the Pentlands Neighbourhood Partnership Action Groups is to be taken at the meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2015 after discussion amongst the members. As these groups are well covered by Colinton Amenity Association, it would be a cooperative brief with CAA.

The Partnership action groups are:

Funding Panel

Environment & Transport

Community Safety

Health and Wellbeing

SW Area Board

**Other Questions from the floor:**

Tom McLaren brought up the issue of the cutting down of Cherry Trees along Colinton Road outside the Barracks but no trees are being replanted while a lot of trees are being planted in the City Centre. He read out a letter from the Council Forestry Manager

**Action:** The Chair suggested the CC should look into this.

Mr Brass brought up the fact that in 2020 Colinton will have been part of the City of Edinburgh for 100 years. **Action:** CC to note this idea and review it for medium term action.

Meeting closed at 9pm.

**Dates of next meetings: 14<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at 7pm**

Minutes approved – 14th April 2015