

Gorgie and Dalry Community Council news

The [Gorgie and Dalry Community Council](#) met on 3 October 2011 in St Martin's Church Hall on Dalry Road and had much to discuss including several planning applications for student accommodation in the area.

Maria Kelly chaired the meeting with Councillor Donald Wilson among those present.

✘ The first items under discussion were the recent [Edinburgh Community Safety Partnership](#) meeting and the Lothian and Borders Police Sighthill/Gorgie September newsletter which looked at a selection of 'hotspots' in the area that suffer from anti-social behaviour.

It was reported that there is a widespread belief that the only way things will improve in the long term is the continued presence of high-visibility police, particularly around underpasses. The issue of people taking a weekend's worth of prescribed drugs from the chemist, the increase in fly-tipping, metal theft and tyre slashing and the evidence of needles in phone-boxes were other matters of concern. These give the area a 'hotspot' status which the police are to carefully monitor and, hopefully, improve. Residents are generally happier with the decrease in anti-social behaviour in the West Side Plaza, and in and around Sighthill Shopping Centre. but some are still fearful of the areas at times.


Planning matters discussed included the Morrison Street development which was once again scrutinised, with one member branding the current status of the area as a 'ghost town'. There is to be a public exhibition on 4-8 Morrison Street on Thursday 6 October 2011 with a 12 week consultation period thereafter. The current proposal is to develop the building

into a hotel, but traffic and environmental concerns were highlighted.

Plans for more student accommodation on Gorgie Road were examined, with a 'master plan' of action available to be viewed. The effect on sunlight quality and the fact that substantial important information is not yet available, prompted concerns at the meeting.

Parking and the desired restrictions for potential students were of key importance, and the alarming lack of space regarding the recent [fire on Hazelbank Terrace, Shandon](#) was given as an example of why double-parking and a sheer volume of cars crowding a small area of the community was neither safe nor desirable. Another matter discussed was the recent [demolition of tower blocks in Sighthill](#).

Councillor Donald Wilson correctly pointed out that the blocks were demolished due to density concerns. The proposed student accommodation was looked at from a long term perspective – essentially, once students had finished with the building, the renovation costs would be significant and the accommodation is deemed useless as it would be unsuitable for families.

Another student accommodation request for a site beside St Michael's on Slateford Road was mentioned, with 250 student rooms being proposed. The area does not want to discourage new students becoming residents there, but it is simply the sheer  quantity of students that appears to be a concern for some.

Plans to replace the defunct [Gorgie Dalry Gazette](#) were explored, with the possibility that Natalie Russell and Marco Biagi MSP, pictured, were to look at the options for setting up a similar publication. The meeting heard that Russell's commitments to the Edinburgh tram project may mean her involvement in the supposed project could be limited though.

Also under discussion was the NHS Biomechanics sector which

is moving to Wester Hailes, with Wilson describing the NHS's view that the train is a viable transport option from Dalry as "fanciful".

Initial concerns about three HMO applications were also addressed.

The Royal Bank of Scotland [Community Force competition](#) was of particular interest to everyone at the meeting. St Martin's Community Resource Centre is currently the second-top project that is hoping to get more votes to win vital funding to transform the outdated building into a modern community hub. Voting is open until Sunday 23 October 2011.

The initial Christmas 2011 plans for the community were discussed, with Santa hopefully coming to town on Sunday 11 December 2011. Stenhouse School's African choir, late night shopping on Thursday 8 December 2011 and an extension of the Christmas lights with banners throughout the community, are all unconfirmed but possible, plans for the festive period.

Caroline Bowell's fund for road safety improvements in Gorgie and Dalry were spoken of, with a particular request for the pavement to be widened between Lidl and the railway bridge gaining good feedback.

In terms of upcoming events, the Garvald 42nd Anniversary Celebration Party will take place on Saturday 29 October 2011 and the Garvald Open Day with workshops and mulberry bush shop on Thursday 13 October.

The Gorgie and Dalry Community Council meet on the first Monday of every month apart from in January and June. It is open to all members of the community and any organisations who wish to speak about a particular matter can do so. Even if you simply want to see decision making in action and learn about what is going on in the community, you are welcome to come along.