

Morningside Community Council news

✘ The [Morningside Community Council](#) met this week on 16th November 2011 at The Open Door on Morningside Road. The meeting was chaired by Jean Thompson and 13 other members were present, along with nine residents, Councillor Alison Johnstone MSP, WPC Denise Clucas and the guest speaker, Willie McGhee, who talked to the meeting about the proposed community ownership of the Craighouse woodlands and nature reserve.

Denise Clucas' police report started off with bad news when she related the incident of an elderly Morningside woman who was robbed of £400 and personal documents by two bogus council workmen earlier in the month. This contrasted with the positive news that overall crime in the area was down compared with the same time last month. Bike thefts and a number of house break-ins were the main reported crimes, and the police believe this could have been caused by mail being left outside of people's houses for a number of days when they went away. The police tip is to ask a neighbour to remove the mail so as not to actively encourage any criminals. She also announced that seven stolen bikes with a total worth of £3,000 had been recovered and returned to their owners.

Guest speaker Willie McGhee, forester and former member of the [Borders Forest Trust](#), spoke of the threats to greenfield sites in the area and how members of the public could come together to take control of such land – not necessarily to own it, but to have an active involvement with the management side. He emphasised that an enthusiasm for woodlands is key. He said: "It's fine having an objection to something, but it's another thing doing something positive about it".

The speaker explained that it is usually easier for a community to secure funds than it is for a 'larger' company to

do so. He suggested that about a half a dozen people could form a not-for-profit company and raise between £5,000 and £10,000 to take control of the woods and nature reserve, and interested individuals are advised to contact Mr McGhee to find out more about community woodland.

The meeting then discussed the recent flooding on Balcarres Street. Despite contacting the Council, there was an overwhelming view that the issue must be fully investigated to see how roads and drainage can be improved so that flooding of this kind does not reoccur.

Two members spoke of the recent South Edinburgh Neighbourhood Partnership forum and how their views may not have been taken into consideration as thoroughly as they might have liked. It is thought that it would be beneficial for those who are not health professionals but are still involved with the health and well-being sub-group of the partnership to be better informed on the protocol and acronyms used at the meetings, which can be confusing at times.

There was support for the proposal for a new Pizza Express restaurant to be built in the former Braid Church at 1 Nile Grove. The interior plans were circulated on the evening, with members expressing the view that they made good use of the space available. The other part of the building is to be used as a performing arts venue.

Also discussed were potential problems that could be submitted to Edinburgh Council's Local Neighbourhood scheme for Roads Capital Projects, and a number of items were put forward, including resurfacing issues, traffic islands and pavement problems.

The switch-on of the Morningside Christmas lights will take place on Thursday 1st December at 7pm. Some shops in the area will be open later on this evening.

Possible speakers at future Morningside Community Council

meetings were proposed. A Scottish Water employee, a Licencing Laws specialist and a Parking Unit member are all on the agenda for 2012 meetings.

Morningside Community Council meet on the third Wednesday of each month (except July) at [The Open Door](#) at 7.30p.m, although the next meeting is on 14 December 2011. A police surgery is held at 7pm and refreshments are available before the meeting starts. All members of the community are welcome.