

MORNINGSIDE COMMUNITY COUNCIL - DRAFT

Open Door, Wednesday 18 June 2025

Present

Members: Alastair Webb (Chair), Caroline McKinley (Secretary), Goff Cantley (Planning Officer), Carol Duncan (Engagement Officer), Moira Gibson (taking minutes), John Robson, Callum McLeavy, Tamsin Kilgour, Kenneth Harvey.

Ex-officio: Cllr Neil Ross, Cllr Munro.

Attendees: Polly Purvis (Local Place Plan), Jane Brown, Sheena Nimmo, Michael Levack, David Milne (Morningside Heritage Association), Paul Bailey (Friends of Braidburn Valley Park), Arne Strid.

Welcome and Apologies

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Jennifer Scarce, Iain Meiklejohn, Theo Spanellis

Police Report

There was no police report, either written or in-person. The Secretary offered to contact Police Scotland to ask if we can, at least, have a written report for each meeting. Those attending reported several incidents, including at Costcutters and the adjacent Chinese takeaway where, apparently, police were called and the culprit identified via CCTV. A break-in at a house on Pentland Terrace was also reported: police thought that the burglar was looking for keys in order to steal a car which can easily be re-sold.

Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

Corrections to the Draft minutes of the meeting in May 2025:

- 1) Planning – a proposed new telephone pole at Cluny Avenue was discussed and it was agreed that MCC would object*
- 2) Quiet Connection presentation: Following the ETRO process the scheme will go to the Transport & Environment Cttee (TEC); it is at this stage the decision between Option 3 (revised) or Option 1a/2a would be made; it would be possible for local groups (MCC/St Peters PC) to request to make deputations at that meeting. To be amended to: At this stage that TEC would recommend whether to retain Option 3 (revised) or to make changes, considering the feedback from the statutory consultation. It would be possible for local groups to request to make a deputation at that meeting.*

- 3) *Quiet Connection presentation: Attendee raised concerns about the position of the proposal to narrow Midmar Drive due to the parking of vehicles at the allotment top gate opposite No 18 Midmar drive being used for the delivery and removals of allotment materials and those tending their allotments.*
- 4) *Local Place Plan Update: CD has concerns that although the Council had developed a community engagement toolkit there is no formal funding to support community engagement activities. CD will raise it at the next EACC meeting.*

Planning

No outstanding planning matters. Work has started on the former Post Office. Concerns were again expressed about potential closure of one side of Morningside Road, a major thoroughfare, with implications for public transport, emergency vehicles and local traffic. As yet, no notice of closures has been given but all present wish any closures to be as short-lived as possible to ensure public safety.

Goff mentioned that he had recently attended a Civic Forum meeting at which a senior planning officer had outlined the difficulties in differentiating between short-term lets and small apart-hotels with DIY entry systems.

Attention was also drawn to the proposed new building on Braid Road, opposite the Braid Hills Hotel, where access on the bend may be dangerous.

Update on Local Place Plan

Polly Purvis, who chairs the sub-committee dealing with the Local Place Plan, explained that the deadline for submissions has been moved back to early Spring 2026. However, the group intends to work towards its original deadline of Autumn 2025, with continued gathering of evidence and drafting of the report over the summer months, and an in-person consultation in late September/early October. The MCC will be kept fully informed at every stage.

Financial Position

Alastair explained that the newly-elected MCC had had to take some time to sort out the paperwork, change over signatories etc. £1,469 is in the account. Within this is a grant of approximately £500 for planters. There are outstanding bills for approximately £400 for hire of Open Door for monthly meetings, £90 to insure MCC members. There may be some money to go towards presenting the Local Place Plan. Once the accounts are audited, they will be submitted to the Council so that we can draw down their annual grant to Community Councils.

Correspondence

Notice of Open Door fundraisers had been received: during the week of 23-30 June, there will be coffee mornings and a Prosecco and Pizza event, along with Big Give opportunities. The Morningside Stones project continues with notice of local 2-hour walks for up to 10 people organised by the James Gillespie's Alumni Trust. The Canal Festival is taking place this weekend.

Community Council members will meet out with this meeting to discuss operational issues as they get up to speed with the new roles and responsibilities.

Any Other Competent Business

Several attenders reported problems with dogs swimming in Blackford Pond. This endangers bird life on the pond and may damage dogs' health. There is nothing in Park Management Rules to outlaw this but, at a minimum, signs should be erected at entrances to the park.

Carol commented on the Community Engagement and Empowerment Toolkit. Her view is that guidance is helpful, but money more so if meaningful engagement is to take place: for example, our travel survey required posters and leaflets, which required expenditure. She intends to lobby the EACC on this issue.

Alastair presented powerpoint slides to demonstrate problems in identifying what road improvement works are needed, and which being executed, in our MCC area. There are different departments with different pots of money and it can be difficult to know how money is allocated and how decisions are made. We would like to see a more holistic and trackable way of identifying scheduled works, and have some input to criteria for prioritisation. Examples of key projects include pavement widening opposite Waitrose, the raised table/continuous footway at Steel's Place, problems at Canaan Lane/Woodburn Terrace. It was noted that improvement work had been made to some streets which didn't need it.

Cllr Ross explained the various processes. There is to be discussion within the Council about achieving better co-ordination and communication. Independent Assessors make decisions about which roads and pavements should be improved. It was suggested that a new criterion about how many people are impacted should be introduced, so that heavily trafficked areas are given priority. Another suggestion was that MCC could prioritise its requests for improvements, offering reasons to justify the expenditure: for example, at Steel's Place we could identify the number of elderly people falling and the impossibility of manoeuvring wheelchairs and pushchairs over the rough surface.

Meantime, the number of online reports to the Council of 'dangerous' road and pavement surfaces can often yield results.

Cllr Ross offered to contact the responsible Council officer and invite him/her to attend MCC's September meeting.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 16 July. It will be an AGM, where accounts will be signed off.