

FRIENDS OF GARDNER'S CRESCENT

MINUTES OF AGM HELD AT HERALD HOUSE HOTEL,
GROVE STREET, EDINBURGH ON 09:11:09

1.) Present

Derek Ainsley (Chairperson), Harry Clark, Ian Riddell, Anne Milne, Angela Reddington, Eric McAuslan, M. Claridge, Paul Miller, Paul Scott, Nikola Miller, Councillor Gordon Buchan.

The meeting commenced at 19.05 hours.

2.) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Burns, Richard Hill, Marnie Hill and Councillor McInnes.

3.) Charirman's opening address and welcome

Derek Ainsley called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance to the Herald House Hotel for the Friends' AGM. He then invited Paul Scott, a planning consultant from GVA Grimley, to give a power-point presentation on the subject of the possible rejuvenation of the area adjacent to the new Scottish Power substation in Dewar Place.

Broadly this would involve the creation of pedestrian areas, possibly a new hotel, some commercial and residential buildings, use of open spaces etc. Paul Scott stressed that what was proposed was only in its infancy and that planning permission would be needed for the redevelopment which would include Dewar Place, Torphichen Street, and the area around Exchange Square. The proposals had arisen in consequence of the work being carried out by Scottish Power in Dewar Place and had been given the title of "Exchange 2 Masterplan".

Derek Ainsley expressed disappointment when it was mentioned that Gardner's Crescent would not be included in these plans. Angela Reddington mentioned that she would raise this with her superiors at Scottish Power in the hope that Gardner's Crescent might be included in some way in these proposals.

4.) Update re Scottish Power

Angela Reddington reported that the tunnelling work that had affected Gardner's Crescent was now more than 80% completed and the tunnel had now reached Dewar Place. However, the tunnel engineers had come across a further seam of dolerite although it was hoped that they would be able to tunnel around it rather than through it. She indicated that although the tunnelling work was almost completed she was unable to say precisely when the work would be finished. She admitted that Scottish Power were way over the timescale for completion, and also over budget, but requested that residents continue to bear with them.

Angela Reddington then mentioned that a tree specialist would be asked to examine the trees in the garden area. Once the heavy tunnelling plant and equipment had been removed from the site he would be instructed to treat the soil for the benefit of the trees which would be maintained at the expense of Scottish Power for one year after the tunnelling project had been completed.

Ian Riddell raised the fact that because Scottish Power were taking so long to complete their tunnelling work there was a visible drop in support for the Friends' objectives among residents (reflected in the poor turnout at the present meeting), and a fall in momentum with regard to the pursuing those objectives by the committee. It would be necessary to rejuvenate the momentum in order to move matters forward. In addition many residents saw the tunnelling operation as a major inconvenience in their lives. Under these circumstances would Scottish Power consider making further funds available over and above those that had already been pledged so that momentum could be sustained? Angela Reddington indicated that this was unlikely. Scottish Power had already pledged £100,000 towards improving the garden area and they were over budget with regard to the tunnelling project. However, she would put this to her superiors at Scottish Power and report back at the next meeting (possibly

December).

Councillor Gordon Buchan then asked Angela Reddington if Scottish Power would be able to help “in kind” if not financially e.g. assisting with the planning application to have new fencing erected around the garden area. Ms Reddington indicated she would need to raise this with her superiors.

5.) Change of treasurer

Anne Hancox not being present at the meeting to formally hand over the office of treasurer to Eric McAuslan, Mr McAuslan introduced himself to those in attendance. He is a former banker and now an investment manager and thus well placed to discharge his duties as new treasurer. Harry Clark handed him the Royal Bank of Scotland forms that must be lodged in connection with the appointment of new office bearers and removal of retiring ones for completion and signature as appropriate. Mr McAuslan received unanimous approval and support as new treasurer and was welcomed onto the committee of the Friends of Gardner’s Crescent. He reported that the balance in the Friends’ RBS account currently stands at just over £6,000.

6.) Minutes of the last meeting

Reference was made to the minutes of the last Friends’ meeting on 1st December 2008 which were approved.

7.) Any other competent business

Derek Ainsley reiterated that he had made a number of approaches to potential sources of grant funding all of whom had expressed interest in the Friends’ objectives and seemed willing to help in some way. However owing to the longstanding occupation of the garden area by plant and machinery used by Scottish Power in connection with their tunnelling project it had not been possible to submit applications resulting in some potential sources of funding “going cold”.

Ian Riddell stressed that he and his company had expended a great deal of time and goodwill in assisting the Friends of Gardner’s Crescent thus far. He had attended meetings, prepared draft plans and costings, met individuals who would be involved etc. This would eventually need to be paid for and he hoped that his professional charges would be paid as soon as sufficient funds became available to the Friends from whatever source. Derek Ainsley noted this and Harry Clark indicated he would note Ian’s concern in the minutes.

8.) Date of next meeting

To be confirmed.

9.) End of meeting