

THE BLACKET ASSOCIATION

(the “Association”)

MINUTES OF THE 56th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION

Held on 19th November 2024 at The Old Bell, Duncan Street at 7pm

Present: Susan Hezlet – Chairman and Communications (“SH”)
Stanley Bird (“SB”)
Richard Scothorne – Planning (“RS”)
Anne Sturrock
MaryAnn Julian
Caroline & Charlie Ross-Stewart
Muriel & David Graham
Derek Henderson
Craig & Louise McMahon
John & Caroline Sibbald
Hugh Mackay
Fiona Courtney
Phil Creswell
John Usher (“JU”)
P Brophy
D Sherman
Evie Jamieson
Alan Paterson
Jan Conway
Arlene Doherty
Hazel Clark – Minutes and Social Convener (“HC”)

Apologies: Colin Blair – Website Co-ordinator (“CB”)
Stewart Whiting (“SW”)
Ian Chisholm (“IC”)
Walter and Susan Thomson
Penny & Don Gower
Bill & Janice Gemmell
Jenifer Davidson
Patricia McDonald

1. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

SH, as Chair, welcomed everyone to the AGM. Copies of the Annual Report had previously been circulated by email and in printed form as the November Newsletter. SH advised that apologies had been received from those listed above.

2. **MINUTES**

The 2024 AGM minutes, as published and circulated in the AGM papers, were agreed as an accurate record, with one spelling mistake to be corrected.

3. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

The list of open actions was discussed. Many residents felt that an urgent solution was needed for EV chargers as the planning authorities would not permit the creation of drive-ins. Alan Paterson mentioned that the chargers at Pollock Halls were now limited to 4 hours maximum which wasn't as convenient as overnight. SB advised that the location of EV charging points was a frequent issue on the GPCC agenda, but it still wasn't high on their list of priorities due to the lack of funding. The table of actions at the end of these minutes has been updated accordingly.

4. **ELECTION of the ASSOCIATION'S COMMITTEE (the "Committee")**

SH advised that the Committee required a new Treasurer and asked for any volunteers to speak to her at the end of the meeting. The person didn't have to be an accountant or a book-keeper. Anne Sturrock was taking over from Arlene Doherty looking after new residents. Anne's election was proposed by Mary Ann Julian and seconded by Caroline Sibbald. John Usher and Stewart Whiting were joining the Committee primarily help with shrubbery related matters. Stanley Bird proposed that John and Stewart be elected and their nominations were seconded by Hugh Mackay.

5. **CHAIR'S REPORT**

SH delivered her report. Residents of the eastern end of Mayfield Terrace were delighted about the installation of the 'gully' which had finally allowed flood water to drain away and it was working beautifully. A ceilidh with the West Blasket Association had been organised for February in St Columba's church hall. There would be a band and a caller and tickets would be £5 for adults, no charge for children. People should bring their own food and drinks. More information would be provided to residents by email.

SH notified residents that the consultation on whether Edinburgh should have a tourist levy was open until December if they wanted to have their say.

6. GRANGE & PRESTONFIELD COMMUNITY COUNCIL (“GPCC”)

SB advised that there would be elections for the GPCC next year. The Council was currently reviewing the functions of the Community Council. SB found the GPCC rather frustrating - it has such a small budget, there is not much it can do. The police still never make an appearance.

SH felt that the GPCC would however, be a useful thing for younger people to get involved in and SB agreed that it would certainly benefit from fresh perspectives. Mary-Ann Julian suggested that the GPCC may find younger people from the numerous university clubs who could be interested in joining. SB reported that the GPCC did have a university representative at one point but that he hadn't appeared at the last few meetings. The GPCC has a notice board in Newington library and there is now one on Dalkeith Road.

7. TREASURER’S REPORT

AH advised that the Association’s accounts were pretty self-explanatory. The main concern was limiting expenditure in relation to the open gardens event. The £5 annual bank charge for residents’ membership fees was about to start. Anne Sturrock led the meeting in a round of applause to thank Anne Henderson for serving as Treasurer these last few years.

8. SHRUBBERY WORKING PARTY REPORT

John Usher reported that Hugh Mackay had taken him and Stewart Whiting round the area to look at what required to be done in the various shrubbery areas. John was amazed at what Hugh and his team had achieved over the last 30 years. Trying to assist with the upkeep of the area was a huge job and could be a full-time job for 3 or 4 people. The next shrubbery working party was planned for 23rd November. The Council were now good at providing large tonne bags for dead leaves to be stored in for uplift. Going forward, John and Stuart were hoping to have a date in February, May, August and November for residents to take part in the shrubbery working party.

9. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT

SB gave his report highlighting that there had been no recent physical crime, but that online frauds and scams remained the biggest issue. Now that the evenings were much darker, SB reminded residents to check that all their doors and windows were locked and that any bikes were locked and out of sight. If residents saw anything suspicious, they should call 999. AD reported that there had been a number of break-ins on Duncan Street where criminals had been removing doorbell cameras first. SB lamented the fact that the police reports received by the GPCC were quarterly in arrears.

10. WEBSITE AND DATABASE REPORT

CB was not present but his report was noted. SH reported that CB had done a great job of updating members' details. 46 out of the 137 residents on the contact database had signed the new form to show they are members. SH advised that the AGM attendance sheet this year contained a column in which residents could show they are members of the Association and encouraged new residents to join the Association.

11. PLANNING REPORT

RS presented his planning report highlighting that there were lots to be positive about, including the beautiful restoration of the wall and railings at 20 Blacket Place. There were plans to restore railings at other properties in the pipeline. Arthur Lodge's plans represented the careful restoration of one of the four Grade A listed properties in the Blackets. Three of the four had tried to get planning permission recently with varying degrees of success. The plans for the restoration of Newington Lodge also looked wonderful. In response to a question from a resident, RS advised that residents could sign up to receive notifications of local planning applications. There were sometimes up to six emails a week, but most concerned the removal of bushes or trees. It was agreed that SH should send out an email to residents informing them of how to set this up.

Action 2024.01 – Association to email residents explaining how to receive notifications of local planning applications.

In response to a query from John Sibbald, it was agreed that the Association should inform residents in the event of there being a major building project in the area.

Anne Sturrock mentioned that the list of planning applications used to be printed in the Edinburgh Evening News and agreed to find out if that was still the case.

Action 2024.02 – Anne Sturrock to find out whether the list of planning applications is still printed in the Edinburgh Evening News.

John Sibbald expressed his thanks to RS for all his hard work and expertise in keeping an eye on planning matters.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Discussions turned to the issue of broadband speeds and the fact that properties on the edge of the conservation area were able to get speeds of 900mbs. One resident in Dryden Place reported that he had tried to get connected to City Fibre (which was installed along the pavements years ago) but was unable to do so

due to an admin error which means the company thinks the area is already connected to City Fibre. This is very frustrating, particularly because BT Openreach isn't going to roll out fibre in the area until 29 January 2029.

SB agreed to mention this issue at the next GPCC meeting.

Action 2024.03 – SB to mention inability of residents to connect to City Fibre broadband installed on the pavements at the next GPCC meeting.

Finally, SH and Anne Sturrock expressed their thanks to Arlene Doherty for her time on the Committee and her warm welcoming of new residents to the area.

The meeting closed at 8pm.

SUMMARY of OPEN ACTIONS:

REF	ACTION	RESP	STATUS
Action21.01	<i>The Committee to press the Council to come up with a policy regarding provision of electric car charging points in the Blacket Area for submission to the</i>	<i>Committee</i>	<i>Council has this under review – ongoing.</i>
Action22.01	<i>SB to ask university residence rep at GPCC meeting to stop blowing leaves onto Blacket Avenue.</i>	<i>SB</i>	Still happening so SB was still asking them to stop
Action23.01	RS to find out whether the planning department were going to insist that the Thrums Hotel rebuild the listed wall it had taken down.	RS	There has unfortunately been no enforcement by the Planning Dept -CLOSED
Action23.02	RS to find out what the new building at the Thrums Hotel would be used for.	RS	2004 class 7 use hotel/ hostel which means they can house anyone who doesn't require care – CLOSED
Action23.03	RS to ask the owners of the Thrums Hotel to fix the damaged pavement and clean up the shrubbery on Blacket	RS	Ongoing

REF	ACTION	RESP	STATUS
Action23.04	RS to investigate practices elsewhere re private companies who can install car charging points into lampposts or bollards for details.	RS & SB	Ongoing – SB to continue to chase GPCC for an agreed format going forward.
Action23.05	IC to mention Duncan Street corner plot and Mayfield Terrace flooding issue at GPCC meeting.	IC	Done – CLOSED
Action24.01	Association to email residents explaining how to receive weekly notifications of local planning applications.	SH	
Action24.02	Anne Sturrock to find out whether the list of planning applications is still printed in the Edinburgh Evening News.	AS	
Action24.03	SB to mention inability of residents to connect to City Fibre broadband installed on the pavements at the next GPCC meeting.	SB	