

Old Town Community Council

Meeting Agenda - 9th September 2025, 6.30-8pm
The Crannie, 9 Cranston Street, Edinburgh EH88BE

Welcome and Apologies

Attending: Carolynn, Daniel, Patrick, Karen, Simon, Maria, Finlay, Claim, John, Antonia, Paul, Oonagh, Police Officers Sgt. Emma McNaughton and Amy Law,

Apologies: Sukan, Jo, Margaret, Marie, Iona, Claire

Chair: Antonia

1. Matters arising from the last meeting (minutes attached)
Antonia proposed, Calim secondede.

2. Discussion with Police

- a. Foot patrol numbers (especially in nighttime hours)
 - i. Depending on the day it varies. Sun-Thurs it will be response policing rather than foot patrol. Foot patrols Fri/Sat under night time economy. 20-26 officers on foot patrol, focused on Old Town, Princes St, New town (where there are licensed premises). Response team is based at Gayfield. West End is just community policing. St Leonards is a community based station (is 24 hours). The beats between West end and St Leonards are now malaligned - they cover up into Newington. Oonagh - who to call about CHessels Court? 101 number is a centralised number that is then diverted to the relevant station. No dedicated foot patrols Mon-Thurs, unless there is a call for it. Community policing is there until 10pm-12am depending on shifts. Mobile patrols are going on. During festival - are there extra officers? Majority of these are from Edinburgh division but there are increased numbers.
 - ii. Extra numbers in Christmas time as well, less so compared to festival time.
 - iii. Can't pass official comments on the numbers of officers.
 - iv. A pilot running in Forth Valley into a community investigation hub.
- b. Drug dealing and usage (specifically in Hunters Sq and nearby closes)
 - i. Police rely on community input/calls for drug-taking. Each morning they review the calls and track activity and direct resources accordingly. They are working closely with Simon Community/Street Work who have reopened their mental health space. Seeing good results from this, but are aware that it isn't completely solving the problem.

- ii. Should civilians confront drug users? - not recommended by police, safety should be key. If in doubt, phone the police.
- iii. JM - council workers: averaging 50 used syringes a week. Old assembly close, tron sq. aggressive confrontations with street cleaners, early local businesses. Within a 15 min walk of the cowgate, there have been 34 deaths in the last 3 years. Drug consumption room will be controversial. Has already saved lives in Glasgow. Potential options, Spittle Street and The Access Place.
- iv. MM - Dangerous in the mornings due to drug users.
- v. EMN - Can't commit anything. In Glasgow, the officers are given strict parameters that can police.
- vi. Local area commander would be able to speak about resource allocation.
- vii. New tourist tax - could this support policing and street cleaning?
- viii. The different drugs are affecting the behaviour and increase of antisocial behaviour.
- ix. Police have an initiative team (plain clothes) dedicated to drug activity. They rely on intelligence from the community and CCTV.
- x. Contact Crimestoppers, or online reporting.
- c. Shoplifting, antisocial and violent behaviour (in Hunters Sq and surrounds)
 - i. Aware of the link between hunter Sq and the shops in that area. When they are removing people, they are walking them and removing them from the area. They are working with specific businesses to ensure they are not letting things slide. There is a prevention team who regularly contact them. There is a shoplifting team who are working with local businesses and identifying key offenders. Any bail conditions will try to keep repeat offenders out of the area. Working with Thistle service to be aware of the local issues.
 - ii. Shoplifting - had success with CASBO - ASBO with a criminal conviction. 3 or 4 of these, not sure of these in Old Town, but is something that can be looked at as a longer term strategy. Used for high tariff offenders. Police give advice to shop fronts to deter stock theft.
- d. Can you tell us a bit about how resources are divided between community policing and response teams, and whether there's any movement toward restoring more proactive community roles?
 - i. Desire towards community policing, will see how the feedback comes from the pilot. Can write to Angus Robertson to appeal for this. Look at the New Town Business Improvement district.
- e. We sometimes hear frustration about how long some investigations take. Are there particular pressures on officers or systems that contribute to that, and what's being done to improve it?
 - i. Higher call volumes in the last few years - same number of officers. Working with the NHS for any mental health related calls, as this is hindering officer response times. Pilot for recording - give retailers the

option to submit a full crime report online, will reduce officers needing to attend in person and cut down on time.

- f. Is there any way for the community council to help support or advocate for more local policing presence, perhaps through partnership initiatives or feedback channels? And if that data was available, would it be helpful to influence future resource decisions?
 - Streetwork is the main partner and doing outreach to work with the homeless population. They are constantly looking for funding.
 - g. What kinds of community-led initiatives are most helpful from a policing perspective - are there examples where local partnerships have effectively improved safety or reduced demand on response officers?
- DT: Would the police be open to walkabouts? Potentially - will need to check about risk etc.

- A. Can John speak on the OTCC's behalf about the Drug Consumption Room?
 - a. Yes, John can speak about the Drug Consumption Room on behalf of OTCC.
3. Any other competent business
- a. The North-South tram consultation proposes extending the tram onto North Bridge, Nicholson Street and beyond. The consultation ends on 17 November. Is this proposal something OTCC supports or would we prefer the tram extended elsewhere, eg down Lothian Road, through the Meadows and onwards towards Cameron Toll or another route.
 - i. Drop in at Bristo Baptist Church 29th October.

Discuss next meeting, other options.

- b. Social Media
 - i. 4 social media channels, haven't done anything since May.
 - ii. Do we want those being used?
4. Carolynn will sign up for a second bank account, to circumvent.
- a. New Member - Grassmarket Community Project (GCP)
 - i. Happy for this to happen. Finlay will send the form over.
 - b. Save The Roseburn Path

Oonagh to be chair.

Roseburn path/trams to be first on the list.