



MEETING: 19:00, Thursday 22 October 2015 Northfield Community Centre

AGENDA

1.	Chairman's Welcome	
2.	Apologies for absence	
3.	Minutes of Meeting of 17 September 2015 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters arising 	End time: 19:15
	Finance Report	Treasurer End time: 19:20
5.	Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from Environment Forum 	End time: 19:30
6.	Cycling	End time: 19:45
7.	The New Park on the site of the current St John's Primary School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from Residents Around the New Park • Revised Timetable 	End time: 20:00
8.	Progress Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edinburgh Association of Community Councils 	Secretary End time: 20.15
10.	Any Other Competent Business	End time: 20.20
11.	Next meeting 19 November	End time: 20:30

Website: www.northfieldandwillowbrae.org.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/northfieldandwillowbraecc>

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RESIDENTS AROUND THE NEW PARK REPORT OF MEETING: 5 OCTOBER 2015
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1. About 90 homes abut the site of the new park to be built on the sites of the current Portobello High School and St John's Primary School. A private meeting was held on 5 October 2015 to which the residents of all those homes were invited to consider the issues and opportunities which the major reconstruction of the site will bring. About 55 people attended the meeting representing over 40 individual addresses, with good representation from all four sides of the site. There is, as yet, no constituted body and no votes were taken.

2. The meeting heard a presentation by the Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust which has been contracted by the City of Edinburgh Council to consult widely on ideas for the new park and collect suggestions for its name.

3. The meeting considered a timetable of the events up to the end of 2018 (annexed). The meeting provoked considerable interest and it is likely that individuals will contribute to the current ELGT consultation. Further residents' meetings may be held. There is some concern that the process does not provide for the views expressed here to be considered properly.

4. This is a report of the meeting – attempting to record all points made without comment or bias. It covers:

- Construction of the new school
- Concerns arising from the new park
- Opportunities offered by the new park

Construction of the new school

5. The original consultation in late 2014 on the plans for the new St John's resulted in Option 3 being widely supported and subsequently adopted by the Council. Option 3 showed a new school stretching across the site from Duddingston Road to Hamilton Drive – it was made clear at the time that this was indicative. The drawing currently in circulation shows the new school running along Duddingston Road, ending almost at the former janitors' houses. In the meeting some expressed a preference for the original orientation as it would maintain the security of the houses in Mountcastle Drive North. Others noted that the proposed orientation creates a long neck of land on the site which might increase security problems and restricts the use of that part of the site. A squarer park site was preferred.

6. Concern was expressed about the management of demolition and construction traffic over the next three years – which will be almost continuous onto Duddingston Road (as the other streets are too narrow or involve schools) during that time.

7. There are strong concerns about the demolition processes as Portobello High School is said to contain quantities of asbestos. Rumours of explosive demolition exist which seems unlikely to happen given the proximity of houses and an operating primary school.

8. The hours of work on the site and the lighting provided will need to be strictly controlled.
9. There are mature trees on the site which many hope would be retained. In contrast, it is known that the two almonds at the front entrance of St John's are split and diseased so may be at the end of their natural life.
10. There are people who recall the construction of Portobello High School, in particular the quantities of rubbish used to level the area of the car park at the corner of Mountcastle Drive North and Hamilton Drive. Plans for the park may depend on what is buried there and the effect on drainage when the tarmac, with its associated drainage systems, across the whole site is removed. There has been flooding in recent years which remains a problem.
11. There is some appetite to retain the boundary wall to Hamilton Terrace and Duddingston Road – although it is probably concrete and is 1950's ironwork (rather than 1920's) - and the original gates of St John's.
12. The three houses on Duddingston Road (former janitors' houses) use a lane to access the back of their home which also serves an electricity substation. It is not clear whether the sketch in circulation provides for this access or whether the substation might be moved.
13. It was not clear whether the all-weather pitch shown on the new school site would be open to the public – a key question for those who wanted sports facilities in the park.
14. Some thought the new school should have a car drop-off zone as exists (despite Council policy) at Holy Rood High School.

Concerns arising from the new Park

15. As might be expected the principal concerns, relate to security of properties which have hitherto been protected, to some extent, by the presence of highly-managed public sector sites.
16. Even now, in the areas where the school site is raised behind houses in Hamilton Drive, there are occasional disturbances from people coming close to the back of homes.
17. The sketch shows a footpath from the rear of the new school to Hamilton Drive using the former service entrance of the High School. If this is provided it has two effects of concern:
 - The rear entrance will cause children to be dropped by car at that point in the narrow road of Hamilton Drive, which would need to be controlled. It might be expected that parents would drop children at the entrance in Duddingston Road but the experience at Duddingston Primary is that the pedestrian access in Hamilton Drive West attracts considerable numbers of parents keen to avoid the main road entrance. In all probability this would have to be controlled by a permanent retention of the School Streets pilot closures.

- The same rear entrance is both a concern and an opportunity for access to the park. Some people were concerned about 24 hour use of this entrance and other entrances which might be created between houses in Hamilton Drive, by people whose intent was not benign, others hoped that some link could be made with the Figgate Park.

18. A number of people were doubtful that the park would be properly maintained and suggested that part of the substantial budget should be retained for future maintenance. The problem of the site being raised above the natural level (along Hamilton Drive) requires a substantial review.

19. Some were worried that some facilities in the park would be floodlit, exacerbating late night disturbance. Others wanted some subtle lighting in the park for evening use. Others wanted it to be dark to enhance the natural feel.

20. Some wanted the site to revert to its original use, as playing fields and allotments. It was suggested (not by a resident) that allotments would not count as public open space under the arrangement agreed by the Council to replace the site of the new Portobello High School.

21. Car parking for park users was mentioned. Already cars bringing people to the Figgate Park are blocking Hamilton Drive – including access by emergency vehicles.

Opportunities

22. Although many concerns were expressed, there was a strong feeling in the meeting that there are many opportunities offered by the developments. Overall, the removal of a semi-derelict tower block, the provision of a primary school built to modern standards, the opening up of the skyline and the chance to provide a new range of recreations locally were all welcomed.

23. Several speakers referred to their hope for this to be an inclusive space, accessible to all and catering for a wide variety of needs. It was suggested that the local demographics should be a guide to what was provided in the park – the expectation was that people local to the park tended be older. Advice should be sought from older people's projects.

24. It was noted that the well-used Figgate play park was best suited to children under 7 and little existed for older children. The idea of an adult play park, with outdoor exercise machines, was received well.

25. A congregation point was proposed – somewhere to meet and chat, to read the newspaper in the sun, for families of all generations to play together. It was suggested that ideas from bodies such as www.playengland.org.uk should be considered.

26. An outdoor theatre was suggested, which might bring festival activities from the centre of the city. It might provide for yoga and similar activities.

27. It was hoped that dog management could be considered – a dog-free zone would be important; it was understood that it would not be possible to ban dogs altogether.

28. A theme for the park was considered – for example, a park for *exploring*, ideas, history, outdoor art, unusual plants, access to nature.
29. Several suggestions were made in relation to layout and planting:
- An area of scented plants
 - An area of culinary planting and some vertical planting; fruit tree planting
 - A natural play area – somewhere for wilder play
 - Allotments – a good number thought the tricky neck of the site would be good for allotments (if permitted on the site at all – see paragraph 19 above) – another view was that this would take a large portion of the site, restricting other uses.
 - The site is currently broadly flat and level although this has been achieved artificially. It might be possible to use some of the inevitable rubble to give some rise and fall to the site.
30. Comparison was made to several other parks which might be worth study:
- Pilrig , Rosefield and Yellowcraigs – for play
 - Aberdeen, Duthie Park

2015	Expected Timetable
August - 30 October	Consultation on ideas and name: ELGT
17 November	Craigtinny and Duddingston Neighbourhood Partnership 15:30 -17:00 Northfield Community Centre First outline designs
	Name chosen – possibly by voting
2016	
January	Final decision by C&D Neighbourhood Partnership
March	Final decision by City of Edinburgh Council
May	Planning application process for new Park starts
June	Portobello High School closes
November	Planning approval given to new Park
December	Portobello High School demolition completed
2017	
January	Construction of new St John's begins
2018	
February/March	New St John's complete and open Old St John's demolished
June	Construction of new Park starts
December	New Park opens

NEW PARK UPDATE 3

EXTENDED TIMESCALE - DELIVERY OF 'OUTLINE PARK DESIGNS' etc

The 1st stage of Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust's (ELGT) local consultation on the 'new park' ends on 30 October 2015. Craighentiny and Duddingston Neighbourhood Partnership (C&D NP) was due to make a final decision on the 'preferred design' in January. However, it has been acknowledged that this timescale is too short. Therefore the timescale for picking the preferred design has been extended to **31 March 2016**.

Whilst some of the arrangements are still being finalised, the amended timeline for the C&D NP's decision and opportunities for final local input is as follows:

2015

- **30 October 2015** – initial local consultation period ends
- **17 November 2015 - C&D NP Meeting, from 3.30pm – 5pm, in Northfield Community Centre.** (This is followed by a 'drop-in session' from 5pm – 6pm for people who can't make the meeting). ELGT will provide full details of the range of engagement undertaken, the findings and local preferences, suggestions and ideas for equipment and the name for the park etc. The Partnership will be asked to make a decision about how the name of the new park will be decided. Everyone is welcome to attend the meeting or the drop-in session. Refreshments available.
- **18 November 2015** – Portobello & Craigmillar Neighbourhood Partnership Meeting (P&C NP), in the East Neighbourhood Centre, from 6.30pm – 8.30pm. ELGT update as above including C&D NP's decision on how a preferred name will be decided.
- **Mid December 2015** – ELGT to finalise and submit the 3 outline 'Draft Plans'.

2016

- **19 January 2016 - C&D NP Meeting at 6.30pm** – ELGT will present and display the draft plans and visuals of how the park might look. The aim will be to encourage the NP and/or members of the public to ask questions, clarify any potential issues/concerns and make general comments.
- **From around mid January until the end of February 2016** (the actual dates are still to be confirmed but will be circulated and publicised). The 3 draft designs and visuals will be displayed in libraries, community centres, the HUB etc. It is hoped that the designs can also be circulated electronically for local information and final comments. Any action relating to the Partnership's decision on how the 'park name' will be chosen will be organised and delivered.
- **Thursday 17 March 2016 - C&D NP Meeting, at 3pm** – The C&D NP will make its final decision on the one 'preferred park design' and 'park name' to be submitted.
- **End March 2016** – preferred design submitted.

It's still not too late to submit your ideas or suggestions. To receive regular updates, join our e-mail distribution list - contact ELGT at: yoursay@ELGT.org.uk or ring 0131 445 4025.

The delivery date for the new park remains 2018.