COLINTON AMENITY ASSOCIATION
Established 1927

Confirmed Minutes of Colinton Amenity Association's Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 11th December 2024 in Colinton Bowling Club.

Present: Please see Appendix for list of those present at the AGM.

1 Apologies for Absence

The following tendered their apologies: Eddie Banks; Libby Campbell; Margaret Campbell; John Dent; Marion Downie; Iain Gotts; David Houston; Stuart Lauder; Chris McBain; Janet McBain; Lillian McNab; Jennifer Munro; Barbara Murray; Caroline Pearson; Michael Pearson; Alex Robertson; Cllr Jason Rust; Mike Scott; Chris Seiler; Ronnie Seiler; Lorraine Veith-Rutherford; Siobhan Watts.

2 Introduction

The Chairman, Tim Lawson, welcomed everyone to the AGM and thanked them for attending. He noted that the meeting was not technically quorate but believed that the voting results would prove to meet the requirements of the Constitution.

3 Approval of the 2023 AGM Minutes and Matters Arising

The Chairman said he believed the minutes circulated to members before the meeting to be an accurate record of the Annual General Meeting held on 8th November 2023, but asked if there were any errors, omissions or amendments to these Minutes from those present this evening. No comments were forthcoming. No matters were arising, so the meeting voted the Minutes as a true and accurate record of the 2023 AGM.

Proposed: David Bewsey **Seconded**: Andrew Paterson. All votes were in favour of the motion.

4 Chairman's report and overview of CAA projects planned for 2024/25

"Having been on the Executive Committee of the Colinton Amenity Association for many years and your chairman for around ten years, making a report of Association activities since the last AGM each year presents certain difficulties of avoiding similarity of presentation. 2024 is no exception! Referring back to last year's report, in which we tried to reinvigorate things with an ambitious programme of new proposals for projects, shows that progress has sadly not been quite as strong as we had hoped. We started with the best of intentions, but a series of coincidences outwith our control have slowed things down measurably.

Finalising plans for the creation and installation of four new 'finger' signs on Colinton's signposts (which CAA had originally manufactured about a decade ago) has proved to be far more difficult than envisaged – largely due to the abysmal communication of the firm involved in their production. The latest email from them suggests that we may take delivery of them early in the new year, accompanied by a quip "Unfortunately, nothing in the metal-casting industry moves particularly fast." You don't say! Try explaining that to our Victorian forebears! The total cost for the new signs will be in the order of £2,500, half of which we have had to pay in advance. After a number of years when Association funds have slowly accrued, during and immediately after the period of the Covid-19 pandemic when spending on any major project was more or less impossible, it is strangely welcoming to be able to apportion funds as an investment in the future amenity in our locality.

We have had our three existing noticeboards refurbished at a very reasonable cost – much lower than replacing them with low-maintenance versions. One remains outside the Bonaly Store opposite the no. 10 bus terminus, and the one that was originally on the wall of the pharmacy before the advent of the automatic prescription dispenser has eventually found a home in the recessed wall of the Osteria dei Sapori at the head of Bridge Road. We are still looking for a location suitable for the third noticeboard, but do not think its original placement in Colinton Road outside the Cottage Homes best use of the advertising space: alternative suggestions have been outside the Library in Thorburn Road and either in Spylaw Park or Campbell Park, but these locations would require official planning permission. We are happy to consider other potential sites if CAA members have other ideas.

Attempts to clean up Redford Wood and Covenanters Wood were a bit half-hearted and not well supported, but we were probably at fault for not advertising them sufficiently in advance. The saddest news to report is the final demise of our well-liked *Colinton Magazine* after several well-publicised years of financial difficulty as local businesses progressively withdrew their support from advertisements therein. The recent winter edition will be the last one in its current form. My thanks go to the sub-committee team that this time handled its production from start to finish, allowing me, as the former long-term editor, some respite from the worry and expenditure of energy. As reported in that final magazine, we hope to move to the production of an annual 'year book' type publication each November, detailing events that have happened in and around Colinton. Hopefully, we will try to retain some of the flavour of the old magazine by supplementing the annual reporting with the addition of the usual eclectic mix of articles about historical features, local people and pastimes. This will be distributed free to CAA Members but perhaps at a cost to others.

After a long struggle to get the Planning Dept. of the City of Edinburgh Council properly on board, the proposed mural project for Cuddies Lane, to lead down towards Spylaw park and on to the most successful Colinton Tunnel mural, has at long last started. Planning permission was granted in June after some significant changes had to be made to the scale of the project. This has relied on the energy, expertise and time of various members of our community, but it is fair to say we are grateful to the particular inputs of CAA members, Mike Scott, Eddie Banks and Iain Gotts who have largely driven the project forward. We are also grateful to the assistance of Rob and Ailsa Evans of Laverockdale Crescent who gave excellent support to Iain's final planning application. Phase One of the project was the creation of a mural on the gable wall of Colinton Village Pharmacy depicting activity in the old smiddy that once existed there. This artwork was realised and installed before *Art in the Park* in August, and has attracted much attention. The capturing of several grant awards and donations has meant we are just about ready to start Phase Two. This involves the repainting of the orange wall on the west side of Cuddies Lane to return it to its original off-white, prior to the construction of the mural on weather-proof boards to aid maintenance and access to down-pipes, etc. This preliminary preparation involves a professional painting firm and will hopefully be completed in time for components of the growing mural to be installed sometime in the summer and autumn.

The other thing to report has been the movement towards a full merger of Colinton Community Conservation Trust into Colinton Amenity Association, with the transfer of its heritage assets.. We have had a number of joint meetings between our Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees of CCCT over the course of the year, increasing an appreciation of what is involved in such an amalgamation. More details are quoted under AOCB, but it is important to report that we are looking to complete things by the end of March 2025 which is the financial year-ends of both charities. John Barry and Simon Lloyd will formally join the Executive Committee and Andrew Paterson is already a committee member of both organisations: this is important, as we need them to join our team with their expertise and vested interest in maintaining the heritage achievements of CCCT. Continuity is crucial.

Finally, one final item that continues to give cause for concern: the inexorable loss of momentum as our membership numbers slowly falter and impetus slows because your Executive is under increasing pressure. As Chairman, on a number of occasions I have asked for new members to come forward and help the Executive Committee carry out its role of preserving and enhancing amenity in the Colinton area. When I first joined the Executive Committee it numbered around 16-18 people with varying backgrounds, skills and expertise, all sharing a love of the area where we live and wanting to put our efforts back into the community to fulfil the aims of the Association. At that size, there were sufficient people to support the various Conveners looking after the areas of interest of the Association, and that guaranteed some sort of 'succession planning' for when Conveners stepped down. We now number just 11 on the CAA Executive, which is insufficient to run things as we used to. We either have to find 'new blood' for the Executive or explore new ways in which to run the Association We now live in a different world, where people seem less likely to volunteer themselves – although this might just be our perception as we find ourselves struggling. Two members of the Executive Committee (Pamela Williamson and Eddie Banks) leave us at this AGM. We are fortunate that, due to other reasons, John and Simon are joining us, but it still leaves us three or more committee members short of where we could usefully be. I therefore implore the membership to come forward to help – in whatever capacity they can, however limited – to run CAA. Our committee meetings are approximately bi-monthly, so that is six meetings a year (or about just 12 hours of your time), plus any additional help you can give to carry out one or more of the projects we organise. Please come forward with offers of help. CAA is 97 years old and that centenary celebration is tantalisingly close… please help ensure we get there!"

5 Treasurer's Statement of Annual Accounts 2023/24

Gillian Battison, the Honorary Treasurer, presented the Association's annual report and accounts, the document having previously been circulated by email to those attending this AGM and placed on the CAA website. No advance

questions had been forthcoming. The accounts have been prepared on an ‘income and expenditure’ basis in accordance with the guidance provided by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

“We ended the year with a surplus of just under £2,000. This compares last year with a surplus of around £9,800. This is mainly the ‘mural effect’ as we generated a lot of funding for this project in 2022-23. Several grants are likely to come in for work on the mural and CAA intend to contribute the promised £2,000s to the Mural Fund. We had held back making payment until City of Edinburgh Planning Dept had approved the plan.

As a result, reserves overall are around £33,500. In 2022-23 we had the 'mural effect’, less so in 2023-24 while we awaited planning permission and we are likely to see a ‘mural effect’ again this year.

CAA has a current reserves strategy with the aim to keep a minimum level of reserves of £10,000 and a maximum of £25,000. We slightly exceeded this amount, taking the funds set aside for the mural project into account. I expect there to be a lower unrestricted balance this coming year.

Generally, income and expenditure and quite close The main expenditure in 2023-24 was for producing a magazine in Summer 2023 costing just under £2,500 with advertising income of around £1,600. Gillian produced a slide comparing Magazine income and expenditure over a five-year period. Traditionally we haven't been able to meet costs of the magazine from the advertising income. That trend continued in 2023-24. Because of timing only 1 magazine issued in the financial year (Summer 2023 then ‘late spring 2024).

We have a number of projects commenced in 2024-25.

We received just over £2,000 in income from members subscriptions this year, a decrease of around £300 over the previous year.”

David Robinson, as the Independent Examiner, reported there were no concerns with the accounts, but he discussed the unrestricted reserves in as much as that OSCR does not approve of Charities raising money without planned spend. He also thanked Gillian for her stewardship of CAA’s finances and for her meticulous record-keeping that makes it simple for him to review the Charity’s affairs. If it is the wish of the Members, he confirmed he would be willing to continue for another year as the Charity’s Independent Examiner.

The annual accounts were passed unanimously by the meeting.

Proposed: Tolibjon Tursunov **Seconded:** Stephen Wallis

Re-election of David Robinson as Independent Examiner

Proposed: Wendy Evans **Seconded:** Tim Lawson

Tolibjon suggested that more projects be entered into to explain and hopefully use some of the retained funds. However, he also advised that care should be taken in doing so in order to be able to fund any remedial work required to the CCCT assets. Gillian agreed that members would rather contribute towards a project than donate money randomly so identifying money for specific projects would be practical.

6 Election of Office Bearers

Executive Committee members required to be elected or re-elected.

No new Office Bearers were elected.

Re-election of Wendy Evans; Paula McClements and Siobhán Watts

Wendy Evans	**Proposed**: Tolibjon Tursunov	**Seconded**: Andrew Paterson	Passed by the meeting
Paula McClements	**Proposed:** David Bewsey	**Seconded**: Gillian Battison	Passed by the meeting
Siobhán Watts	**Proposed:** Paula McClements	**Seconded:** John Jamieson	Passed by the meeting

Executive Committee members Eddie Banks and Pamela Williamson stood down.

The Chairman issued a welcome to anyone who would like to become an Executive Committee member.

7. Any Other Competent Business.

i. One comment had been submitted in advance to the Secretary. David Houston of Colinton Community Council (**ColCC**) asked that CAA consider nominating an individual as a representative community councillor (on behalf of CAA) as we did in 2015. While this could be done at any time, the start of a new cycle would be ideal. This was not considered to be suitable for AOCB, not being the business of CAA. However, the Chairman addressed the point: with so few Executive Committee Members covering multiple roles, it is unlikely that any volunteers will be forthcoming at this stage.

ii. With a declining membership, the death of major fund raiser Duncan Campbell and no projects on the horizon, Colinton Community Conservation Trust (CCCT) was likely to fold. CCCT and CAA share motives so a merger seemed reasonable. As the principal driver of the **CAA/CCCT merger**, Simon Lloyd gave further comment. A draft agreement has been written up and viewed by both the Executive Committee and a legal expert. A form was submitted to OSCR in early December. OSCR has since advised that they are content with the transfer of assets and responsibility for maintenance of same. There will no longer be a requirement for two insurance policies, although the one inclusive one will be more expensive. Although impossible to evaluate and offer complete reassurance, Simon advised that maintenance currently undertaken is washing and waxing the Robert Louis Stevenson statue and repairing flaking paint on the Colinton Timeline on Woodhall Road. Tolibjon suggested that the reserve Fund be raised to £30k to cover possible costs.

iii. June Rutterford suggested that we ask our members what they perceive CAA's role to be. Do we have pet projects? Tim replied that since the development of the Polofields, there had been no major event to cause major concern in Colinton. Perhaps the Redford Barracks development would in future cause an uprise of feeling, but that is several years away.

iv. June Rutterford also asked about the poor state of **Gillespie Road Bridge**. Tim confirmed that CAA had approached CEC two years ago with the plan to paint the railings ourselves, with advice regarding paint type, but that CEC had insisted that the work had, for health and safety reasons, to be done by them. CEC has still to set a date for the work to commence and has not yet tendered for the work. CAA has in the past cleared the weeds from the bridge, as have other local people, but in 2024 CEC performed one weeding after complaints.

v. John Barry suggested that the **membership fee** be raised from £5. This has been considered at various Executive Committee meetings but with consideration of the Reserve Funds, membership would likely consider an increase unnecessary. David Robinson confirmed, from experience, that the Executive's belief that to ask members to increase their annual standing order would result in many memberships being cancelled, rather than incur the inconvenience of changing the amount.

vi. Tolibjon Tursanov has been working on improving **CAA's social media presence**. Having worked on a long familiar website working with linked pages, the current software is now insecure and unsupported. The intention is to introduce an interactive website that will attract a younger and perhaps new audience. Tolibjon's plan is that we ask the local community to participate with the input. The context of not losing touch with the Colinton community is very important and the Executive Committee have still to decide where the focus is to be. Gillian added that the ability to join CAA, pay membership fees and make donations online would be beneficial.

The meeting closed at 8.48pm.

Appendix

CAA AGM 2024 Attendees

First Name	Surname	
Tim	Lawson	ChaIr
Wendy	Evans	Secretary
Gillian	Battison	Treasurer
Andrew	Paterson	Membership Secretary
Paula	McClements	Exec Comm
Tolibjon	Tursunov	Exec Comm
David	Robinson	Independent Examiner
John	Barry	CCCT
Simon	Lloyd	CCCT
David	Bewsey	
Donald	Doull	
Tori	Graham	
John	Jamieson	
June	Rutterford	
Stephen	Wallis	