

CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL
CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Item No 3

10 AUGUST 2023

DEPUTATION REQUESTS

Subject	Deputation
3.1 In relation to Item 7.5 on the agenda – Response to Motion by Councillor Campbell – Lifelong Learning Review	Jack Kane Community Centre (written submission attached)
3.2 In respect of Item 7.6 on the agenda - Meadows Jawbone Arch Conservation Project	Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links
3.3 In respect of Item 9.7 on the agenda – Motion by Councillor Caldwell – Montgomery Street Park Helter Skelter	Friends of Montgomery Street Park and Chair of the Play Park subgroup. (written submission attached)

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Item 3.1

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Culture and Communities Electronic Deputation

Jack Kane Community Centre

Item 7.5 Response to Motion by Cllr Campbell – Lifelong Learning Review

Convener, Vice Convener and elected members of the Committee thank you for agreeing to hear this deputation from the Jack Kane Community Centre.

From the outset, this charity embraces change, indeed by volunteering our time on the ground we understand the need for change within communities, whilst there are many elements of the review which should be embraced, our charity feels that we need to go back to the drawing board regarding the CECs support and development of work within our community centres.

The CEC have always stated that community centres were the cornerstones of communities, and that the partnership between the CEC and local people are invaluable. Our partnership was formed by joint working and maximising resources so that together we could accelerate our collective response whilst reducing the impact on local people. This charity has continually made this committee and others aware of questions which require answers throughout the previous eight months. At this time we still feel we are no further forward and the loss is currently being felt within our community and across Edinburgh. Unfortunately, it is safe to say that currently the dial has shifted somewhat and that at this time community centres are hardly being viewed by the CEC as vital assets for progressive partnerships to flourish for the benefit of the people and our city.

'Community centres are the cornerstones of communities'

'People and these buildings will be at the heart of the recovery'

Culture and Communities Committee on the 7 March 2023

4.6 The review of Lifelong Learning has prioritised support for community centre management committees in recognition of the importance of community centres in local areas and the need to ensure that centres are operating safely and effectively and can adapt in an agile way to change.

4.11 It may not be possible to sustain current provision across the city. But equally the Council must seek to sustain local activity which is clearly improving outcomes across the city.

This charity's view is that the rhetoric outlined to elected members is factually inaccurate and there has been no priority shown to support management committee members at all. In response to Cllr Campbell's emergency motion officers stretched this inaccurate account even further by stating that 'detailed transition plans have been developed and are being implemented to ensure effective handover' and that 'succession and sustainability should be built into all of the CECs work may we ask:





1. Have elected members viewed these detailed transitions plans which would not only contain the transition of work but also identify how the CEC will seek to sustain local activity or indeed highlight the impact of any changes?

Once again, our community is yet to view a succession and sustainability plan and argue that this should have been built into all of the CECs work including the components of the review, may we ask?

1. Have elected members viewed a succession and sustainability plan which outlines areas of work and the potential impact that this will have?
2. How will success of the review be measured alongside any negative impacts?

In June, elected members were made aware that even though the review was offered on a cost neutral basis, nearly £200k was identified as a potential saving.

1. Why cant these funds be used to design and implement a pilot within certain communities such as ours. This would mean that the fantastic work that we were involved in could be further developed and replicated across other communities as a model of best practice?

Members of the board have been meeting for months and the decision made during this review alongside the lack of consultation, consideration and communication falls short of what local people expected. We have engaged with the CEC at every opportunity to shine a light on the way forward for some community centres.

1. Understanding that one shoe does not fit all then we would politely ask elected members to instruct officers to come up with a plan which reviewed how certain community centres may have differing needs and support requirements and identify a plan of action which can be embedded within the community centre strategy and may well be out with the original scope?

At this time, we need creative thinkers, people who will look for new possibilities which reflect the changing face of some of the community centres in Edinburgh and all it seems is that the CEC through the review are seeking to reduce people and services to certain community centres which is already having a real impact on the ground. Surely as we take our great city forward, we must have a shared vision and a recognition that it was the CEC who set up community centres alongside local people so let's not level down but attempt to level up. We as local volunteers and constituents of Edinburgh, will not stand by and watch as the removal of services and the lack of direction has a detrimental effect on our centre and more importantly our community.

Yours sincerely
John Witherspoon
Chairperson



From:
To:
Cc:
Subject: Written deputation for Cllr Jack Caldwell's motion to this Thursday's Culture & Communities committee
Date: 08 August 2023 14:31:28
Attachments:

 External email >

 First time sender >

Hello,

I'd like to make a written deputation for Cllr Jack Caldwell's motion to this Thursday's Culture & Communities committee.

From - Committee Member of Friends of Montgomery Street Park and Chair of the Play Park subgroup.

The Friends of Montgomery Street Park have been working with CEC Parks team for a number of years to plan the new play park which is currently under construction. The Helter Skelter was planned for removal as part of this process due to its age but the Friends group have remained determined to help find a way to retain it. The Parks team have always listened carefully, compromised and worked positively with us to find ways forward. The Friends conducted a community consultation which concluded overwhelmingly that our community wants to retain the Helter Skelter. We found that residents considered it an iconic structure in our neighbourhood, something instantly recognisable and representative of our locality. It is beloved by children, parents and carers alike, a magnet for families - not just local but many who travel across the city to visit our park because of the Helter Skelter. It is the centre of so much joy and excitement but importantly also something that requires children to learn to assess danger and risk. The Friends group agree that the Helter Skelter needs to be in good working condition and have committed to working with the Parks team - raising funds if necessary - to achieve that.