

Ratho & District Community Council

Engagement Officer's Report for year ending March 2020

The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) amended the Scheme for Community Councils in anticipation of the Community Council Elections in the autumn of 2019, incorporating into the new Scheme the post of Engagement Officer. At its first meeting following the elections it was agreed that the office of Secretary and Engagement Officer would be combined at the present time. The reasons for this were two-fold.

- All communications from the City Council come to the Chair and Secretary,
- and the Secretary had over the previous years established a presence on local social media channels where residents felt able to make contact for enquiries, both in relation to the posts but also on other issues.

Ratho & District Community Council is a very large area comprising 3 relatively sizeable villages as well as other smaller communities and we appreciate that different parts of our area have different characteristics and priorities. Some 7 years ago the decision was taken to post on existing social media sites, rather than setting up our own Facebook group or pages since the Community Council is part of the various communities and not a separate entity. There are 7 different Facebook pages and groups set up by residents and items are posted on these as appropriate.

We do, also, have a Twitter account, but find that this is not particularly well-used by residents, and the limitations on the size of posts does not provide sufficient space for many CEC publications and information bulletins. However, small topical items are posted there (eg emergency road closures) as well as relevant retweets from the City Council or other statutory bodies. The Twitter account is also used to contact particular council accounts seeking information on behalf of residents (eg Edinburgh Travel, Edinburgh Travel, Planning Service) though limitations on the size of messages often means using email instead.

In addition we provide email updates to residents who prefer to receive these via a Google Group (which is GDPR compliant). These items are duplication of updates on Facebook as we know not everyone wishes to use social media.

For the 6 months October 2019 – March 2020 there were

- 93 Posts on Facebook
- 99 Twitter Tweets and Retweets
- 25 Emails to residents on our mailing list, covering 51 items of relevance to our area.

Along with other Community Council members I attend public meetings on particular issues – planning meetings with developers, and CEC meetings on such items as City Plan 2030 and the City Mobility Plan - to meet residents and hear their views on the topics under discussion, providing advice on commenting if this is appropriate and requested.

However, the most important part of the job continues to be listening to our residents to find out the problems and liaising with City Council officials and Councillors to seek early resolutions.

Kate Watt