

About the Mount

Mount Florida Community Council Autumn Newsletter – October 2010

What is MFCC and What do we do?

Your Community Council has been active and involved in doing its job for over 30 years now. We are a formally constituted group of residents who have a keen interest in what is happening in our area. Our main role is to act as a link between residents, local traders and businesses, Glasgow City Council departments and other public bodies, such as the Scottish Government, NHS and the Police. We are consulted on all major issues and our role is to keep residents informed of City Council and other initiatives affecting our area and then feed residents' opinions back to the agencies involved.

Our meetings are attended, on a rota basis, by our 3 City Councillors, Archie Graham, James Dornan and Paul Coleshill who report on issues involving Mount Florida within the Council. Each meeting is also attended by our Community Police Officer.

We meet in Clincarthill Church Hall on the 4th Tuesday of the month (not normally in Jul/Aug/Dec) and all residents are most welcome to attend and join in discussions.

We are always looking to engage new Community Councillors. To be an effective Community Councillor, all you need is an interest in what is going on in your area and a determination to make our area better for all our residents. If you can spare a few hours each month, you will find being part of your Community Council a very interesting and rewarding experience. You will be made most welcome.

If you would like to become a Community Councillor, are 16 or over and live in Mount Florida, e-mail us on mfcc@hotmail.co.uk, or come along to our next meeting on Tuesday 26th October which is our AGM.

What have we been up to this session?

Regular readers of our annual newsletter will have recognised that certain issues and problems appear in this section every year. We make no apology for this – these issues, Hampden, urinating, parking, rat running through side streets, state of roads, bins emptying are not going away.

We have held 11 monthly meetings this session – with meetings in July and August as the Kwikfit issue was live throughout the summer. Here is a short update of our main activities:

1 Kwikfit site development

A planning application was submitted to build retail units instead of flats on the site of the Kwikfit garage on Cathcart Road across from the Primary School. Local traders, MFCC and MF Primary Parents Partnership organised a public meeting, attended by around 160 residents as well as our MP (T Harris), two of our MSP's (C Gordon and A McLaughlin) and one of our City Councillors (J Dornan) – (our other two Councillors were members of the planning committee who would decide on the application – hence could not take part),

All present were totally in opposition to the proposal for a variety of reasons: some felt that building of a retail unit which is twice the size of any shop in Mount Florida will seriously compromise the viability of our local shops; some feared that opening such a business directly across from our local Primary School at an already dangerous road junction will significantly endanger pupil safety; some felt that opening a major retail unit at a position outside our designated 'town centre' as defined in City Plan 2 should not be allowed. As a result over 800 objections were submitted to the Council.

On the 17th August, Glasgow City Council Planning Committee voted unanimously in favour of the proposal. Unfortunately, our 3 Councillors were not able to be present to make Mount Florida's case – Councillor Dornan was ill, Councillor Coleshill had to attend a family emergency and Councillor Graham had earlier stood down from the Committee after being elected Deputy Leader of the Council.

It is disappointing that an application that had generated such strong feelings was voted through unanimously. A number of residents have questioned the validity of a planning system that appears to ignore the objections raised by locals and their elected representatives. Folk believe that the objections raised were valid and continue to be extremely valid. Where do we go from here?

2 Hampden Park Games and Concerts

The number of major events this season has been down on last year with only 2 concerts. As in previous years, in our opinion, Police monitoring of urinals and public drinkers continues to be inadequate. MFCC have been expressing our concerns at the low level of policing actually around the streets of our area during football matches and concerts as opposed to them standing at road, junctions, outside stadium turnstiles or inside the stadium. We will be trying to liaise with Murrayfield Community Council in Edinburgh which appears to get a superior service from Edinburgh City Council during rugby matches at Murrayfield than we do during events at Hampden.

The total lack of Portaloos continues to be a major issue for both residents and fans/concertgoers at events at Hampden. At £150 a time, their cost does not seem significant when you consider concerts attended by 50,000 odd fans paying sometimes upwards of £80 a ticket – you do the Maths!

Car Parking restrictions continue around the stadium and beyond with on-going inadequate notification of restrictions for residents with the continuing removal of cars. The experiment of removing parking restrictions in the streets south of Hampden up to Kings Park Avenue continues and the general feeling among residents is that life is better without these restrictions without any significant access problems.

The anticipated revamping of traffic and parking regulation around Hampden/Mount Florida (Hampden Traffic Order), which would have involved consultation with residents, parents at our Primary School and MFCC, has been further postponed due to work on City Centre traffic/parking. The Traffic Order would be expected to consider the issue of drivers rat-running through side streets to avoid traffic lights – this continues to be an issue throughout the Mount.

3 M74 Extension Motorway

We had engineers from the M74 Extension team along to explain about the project and to answer our questions. Our main concern is that the new access road being built across from Holyrood Sports Centre on Aikenhead Road will bring with it a significant increase in road traffic from the M74 wanting to access Shawlands and Pollokshields etc. The issue here will be, as it is at present is that the most likely place for drivers to turn right is Mount Annan Drive with the further deterioration in road safety on this narrow local side-street. We asked that the traffic light system at the ASDA junction be re-assessed to allow right turns.

The M74 Team was not aware of the issues around Mount Annan and assured us that traffic levels would be reduced in Mount Florida when the new roads open next year. We were not convinced! We will soon find out next year – we hope they are right. Residents should note that the new junction on Aikenhead Road will change the main priority of this road to being the new access road down Polmadie Road down to the motorway.

4 Youth Activities

One of our 'things-to-do' this year was to find out what there was on offer for young residents of The Mount and to try to increase the level of activity. We had a series of visits from a Community Learning Officer from Glasgow Life (formally known as Culture and Sport Glasgow) who provided us with a document of 170 pages of what an extensive list of all the existing activities offered to young people around our area – not only in Mount Florida. We will put all this info onto our website (details below). Thanks to Garry McLeod for providing us with this wealth of information.

The next step in this project is to contact the people involved with these activities for more information so that we can raise their profile and get all our residents, both young and old, more active and by doing this, ensure that in these cash-strapped times, all these vital services are fully utilized and not withdrawn through low participation levels. There is a lot going on out there that we didn't know about – did you know that Holyrood Secondary School has a swimming pool open to women on Thursday evenings and to all on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings?

We are also very interested in making contact with all local groups – whether catering for young or old residents. We would be really grateful if anyone who runs a local activity could get in touch. We are particularly interested in School Holiday activities being organised and fully supported.

5 Church in the Mount Befrienders Service

This invaluable service continues and Stephen Kennedy, the chair of its committee came along to our meeting this year to update MFCC on its progress. The Befrienders continue to require substantial support and intend moving their base into Clincarthill Church premises where upgrading work will be required. Any resident who knows of anyone who would benefit from a visit from a befriender or who would be willing to give up some of their time to be a befriender should contact them on 0141 649 8800.

6 Local History

We had a resident, Jean Rafferty, telling us about the history of Mount Florida and how it grew into what it is today – very interesting. Community Councils in Glasgow have now been running for over 30 years and MFCC would like all Community Councillors who have been involved with us over the years to get in touch so that we can put together a record of the history of our Community Council over the years. Mount Florida looks today much like it did in 1979 (and 1909) but our community is much-changed. If you have any reminiscences of MFCC over the years, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

MFCC is keen to create a ‘History of MFCC’ which would record events in The Mount over the last 30 years. If anyone would like to get involved in such a project, get in touch or come along to our meetings.

7 Area Committee

MFCC operates on a grant of just over £400 each year. This pays for renting the premises for our meetings and for other associated expenses. It does not allow us to support local groups and activities. Our local Langside Area Committee is given a budget of around £60,000 per year to provide funds for community activities in our and Langside Battlefield and Camphill Community Council areas.

We continue to be disappointed with the lack of support requested by groups in Mount Florida area. We would ask that all groups make sure they are familiar with the procedures for accessing these funds. Groups should contact Area Development on 0141 287 4687/5643/5927. Applicants are encouraged to contact officers in Area Development prior to completing application forms which can be downloaded from the City Council Website.

8 Access Lanes

In addition to the concerns about the condition of pavements and roads in our area, the surface condition and in some cases the whole sub structure of the access lanes to our houses is a serious concern. However in the present financial situation, we are in, there is no spare money around for the lanes to be repaired.

Another issue which arose this year was that some lanes within The Mount had been ‘adopted’ by the City Council, i.e. the Council had taken over responsibility for the surface of the lane, the drainage and the overall safety of users of the lane away from the Householdors of properties which use the lane. MFCC has a map showing the ‘adopted’ lanes of our area and we will post a full list on our website.

Residents whose property backs onto lanes which are not ‘adopted’ should be aware that they are responsible for the upkeep and repairs of surfaces and drainage in their lanes.

9 Repairs to Stonework of the Tenement Property at end of Hampden Lane

There is fenced-off area at the end of Hampden lane on Cathcart Road. This fencing is necessary as the stonework of the tenement adjacent to the lane is in need of repair. The fencing prevents access to Hampden Lane by Cleansing vehicles and also restricts the pavement. This has gone on for many months – it is a blight on our area. We have asked for action but it appears we must await the residents of the property completing the required repairs.

In the new climate of impending cutbacks and reduced services, we all need to face reality – in the end, the only services that we can demand from our City Council are those which they are required to provide by the LAW. It’s all our duty to make sure that these statutory duties are fulfilled – you tell us and we will tell our Councillors who will address any shortfalls. Budgets are being cut and services will be affected without a doubt. It’s our and every resident’s job to keep harrying our Councillors for as good a deal as possible for Mount Florida.

10 MFCC Website

We have been making efforts to update and expand our website. Visit the Community Council website at www.communitycouncilsglasgow.org.uk/mountflorida for details about meetings, events and news of what is happening in and around Mount Florida. Or if you would like to advertise an event or tell people about your club or group or if you have an interesting story about Mount Florida please e-mail the Community Council and we will put it on the web site. We would like to thank Lucy McKay who put a lot of effort into our website as has Sam Whitmore and Jim Devine who continues to develop our site.

11 Public Access Information Terminal at Jobcentre Plus on Battlefield Road

We have also been watching the start of a pilot public access terminal at the Jobcentre Plus on Battlefield Road. This is a touch-screen facility which provides information about services and Community Councils in our area. It is up and running and we are working with the support staff at the Community Council Resource Centre in the City Chambers to extend and update the information available. There have been a few teething problems such as the blinds being closed over outwith Jobcentre opening hours and issues with the touch screen which is attached to the window. These are being addressed and, while it is not ideal having the unit located outwith Mount Florida, it has great potential as a source of Community Information available to all residents 24/7. We will continue to be involved in its development.

12 Community Noticeboard

Another ongoing project is the provision of an actual physical metal Information Noticeboard on our streets. We have permission, in principle, from the City Council for it to be erected in the triangular space at the junction of Cathcart Road and Clincart Road. We also have an offer of £1000 towards the cost of the Noticeboard from Hampden plc who would be able to advertise their games and events on the board. All we have to do now is to raise the rest of the money from our local Area Committee. There are concerns about the vulnerability of such Noticeboards to vandalism; however boards with a similar purpose and construction have been in place in Kings Park, Linn Park and around Croftfoot without any significant damage occurring. We feel that if these noticeboards are 'live' – giving residents, young and old, up-to-date information – then they will be respected and not abused.

Again, many thanks to Sam Whitmore for his efforts with this project.

What else has been happening around the Mount since last Autumn?

The New Victoria Hospital

It has been open for over a year now and all reports indicate that it is a top notch facility. The Old Vicky and Mansionhouse Unit continue as in-patient facilities as well as the A & E for 'blue light' emergency cases. Planning of the new South Glasgow Hospital, which will replace the present Southern General and the Vicky in-patient beds, continues. MFCC will be inviting NHS representatives to one of our meetings in the upcoming session to explain what is to be included in this new large installation.

It would appear that 'for the first time in Glasgow, an NHS hospital will be built with almost 100% provision for single rooms'. Each room will have a view of the outside and windows in the corridor walls. There will be very obvious advantages with this set-up – we look forward to it. Travel arrangements to and from Govan, a major concern during planning of the changeover from the present Vicky beds in 2015, will be examined.

2010 Southside Festival

We had an amazingly successful festival in May this year with over 15,000 people attending not only the 'big day' – the main Saturday extravaganza in the Queens Park Recreation Ground - but also other satellites around the Southside in the weeks leading up to Festival Day on 22nd May, including a series of very successful concerts in the Glasshouses within Queens Park. MFCC were involved in the steering group which organised the whole thing but also assisted with many of the events – most enjoyable. The venue for the festival had to be moved due to ground issues in Queen's Park which are being addressed.

Plans are well underway for next years' festival on 28th May. As always, every helping hand and piece of support is warmly welcomed by this years' steering group. If anyone has any ideas for events or activities – get in touch with MFCC. If anyone can give up their time or has any particular expertise in organising events or is willing to help by distributing information/publicity materials – please get in touch with MFCC. There was a massive turnout on what was a fantastic day this year; however a target for next year is to spread the word wider across the whole Southside – a really big area.

Queen's Park Arena Project

This project is a pilot project initiated a year and a half ago by the Scottish Government to see how Community Councils from an area can work in partnership. The job for the four Community Councils which surround Queen's Park, including two members of MFCC, is to refurbish the amphitheatre which operated as the Queens Park Bandstand until it was burnt down in the 90's.

Huge progress has been made. A design competition attracted over 60 entries from architects all over the UK. Work on the design is now underway with the competition winner, Glasgow-based ZM Architecture. There have been many really great ideas for the groups and performers who will be using the space once it has been completed. Applications for funding have been submitted for phase 1 of the project (the refurbishment of the amphitheatre). Further funding will be required to complete phase two (the construction of a performance structure). The group has set up a company with charitable status which will eventually operate the Performance space, and aims to put in place infrastructure to make the space financially viable.

Shops

Over the last few months, a significant number of new shops have opened around The Mount. We now have around 100 shops and businesses in Mount Florida with only around 10 vacant properties – our healthiest position for a good number of years and a position which compares favourably with similar areas across the city. Having a thriving local shopping centre is a great benefit to our community. MFCC welcomes inputs from all stakeholders to develop relationships and promote community cohesion.

Church Amalgamation

In May this year, our 2 Church of Scotland parishes of Mount Florida and Battlefield East amalgamated to become Clincarthill Church. We would like to pay tribute to Rev Alan Raeburn who retired after a lifetime's service to our community as minister of Battlefield East Church. We wish Alan and his family all the very best wishes in his retirement and similarly wish Rev Mike Gargrave good luck in his ministry of the new parish, renamed Clincarthill after the historical name for our area.

Primary School Issues

Mount Florida Primary Parent Partnership is the Parent Council for Mount Florida Primary. The committee is made up of 12 parents and co-opted members Rev Neil Galbraith from Old Cathcart Parish Church and Mount Florida Out of School Project and the meetings are attended by the Head Teacher and other members of staff. The Parent Partnership represents the views of the 'Parent Forum' (all parents and

carers of children at the school) and seeks to encourage parental involvement and to work in partnership with the school to enhance the school experience of all the children. Last session the committee was successful in getting a commitment from Glasgow City Council to replace the school windows. There is no timescale at present for the work. Meanwhile the windows on one side of the school have been re-pointed and painted to stop water ingress. The repainted windows and areas under gutters look great but make the rest of the school look neglected. Repairs to internal ceilings have also carried out.

As well as the main committee there is a very active fundraising sub group who last year raised £4500 for the school from our Christmas Fayre, Spring Fling, school discos, a Family Highland Games and a Film Night. The Christmas Fayre and Spring Fling are open to all the community to come and sample some home-baking in the tearoom and to have a browse of the stalls. If you would like to get in touch with MFPP, their email address is mfppp@hotmail.co.uk. Geraldine Moreau has served as chair of MFPP for the last 3 years and we would like to thank her for all her hard work for the benefit of the children and the school.

Community Policing

Andrew McWhinnie has been our Community Police Officer since 2008. Andrew and his colleagues have provided an invaluable service to MFCC over these 2 years and we would like to record our thanks to him. He has now moved on and PC David Lochore and PC Joanne Boyd have taken over as our community officers; they will be "on the beat" from now on in Mount Florida. Andrew, or a substitute officer or officers, has been in attendance at all of our meetings and has been able to report that crime levels in our community remain at a low level apart from events at Hampden.

Contact with your Community Policing Team can be made via e-mail to:

Langsidecommunitypolicingteam@strathclyde.pnn.police.uk or by telephone on 0141 532 4923. Urgent issues apart from emergencies can be dealt by contacting the Police Call Centre at Helen St on 0141 532 3000.

Our advice as usual is for residents to contact the Police at the Call Centre if you have any concerns – each resident with concerns should call – the higher the number of calls regarding a particular incident, the higher the priority the incident will be given by the Police.

In recent weeks the Police have been surveying residents to ascertain the highest priorities which residents have around Mount Florida, so that the Police can use this information to prioritise targets for the coming year's planning.

Bin-Emptying and Uplift of Bulk Items

For many years, the days for normal bin emptying as well as the uplift of bulk items such as furniture or domestic appliances has been well known by most residents. However after the change to 7-day-a-week rotas with the Cleansing staff, all the days and routines seem to have ceased to exist. When MFCC enquired with The Cleansing Dept about details of the days and streets for bins and bulk uplift, we were told that the rotas are more complicated than before due to the lorries not being able to have such a wide range of streets in a shift.

Our advice to residents is to phone the Land & Environments Services Contact Centre on 0141 287 9700, who will provide them with details of regular bin emptying days well as details of bulk uplift as well as recycling bin information. If the response received or if the service generally is not up to the expected standard, as always, residents are advised to contact any one of their 3 City Councillors.

Rats

There have been a number of reports of rats being observed around our area recently. There was a problem in Second Avenue Lane which has been addressed by the City Council. There have also been persistent reports of rats around the Hangingshaw area – exacerbated, in our opinion, by the food vans which operate there during events at Hampden. MFCC will monitor this issue – as before, if any residents observe any rats or their droppings, they should contact City Council Pest Control on 0845 270 1558.

Road Resurfacing

The poor quality of the surfaces of our roads and pavements around the city remains a major issue for drivers, cyclist and pedestrians. In our area, some progress has been made – Kings Park Avenue and Second Avenue have been resurfaced. Second Avenue surface was in a disastrous condition. However, although the road was resurfaced with a high-tech material which comes with a long guarantee of durability, after about 5 or 6 week in the summer, the area next to the kerbs which on Second Avenue is not really driven on at all, was still soft which could be broken up with finger pressure. After enquiries by MFCC, we were informed that if the surface is not bedded in by traffic, it would require to be rolled. This has now been done and the surface, although quite bumpy, has been fully hardened. Residents are again advised to contact RALF (Roads and Lighting Faults):

<http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/en/Residents/GettingAround/RALF/RalfApplication.htm> or telephone 0800 373635 if they are aware of road surface defects. If residents' cars are damaged as a result of such defects, the website 'potholes.co.uk' provides advice on what to do to recover expenses incurred.

Some concerns have been raised with us regarding cyclists using the pavements because the road surfaces are so dangerous.

Atrocious Winter Conditions

How can we forget our winter? For the second year running, our City Council was not able to keep our roads and pavements safe. The situation was undoubtedly exacerbated by the change in working shift patterns by Land and Environmental Services Department which operates our road gritting/clearing and cleansing services. The states of our roads and pavements were a disgrace. The changes to the refuse collection rotas meant that some residents did not have their bins emptied for 8 weeks! The response from the Council was non-existent and communication from L & ES was sadly similarly lacking.

Residents who receive the Glasgow magazine will know that during the coming winter months, they can collect up to 10kg of salt for gritting paths and pavements from Polmadie Depot – any day 10am -4pm. There are 810 grit bins placed around the city – residents are advised to contact 0141 287 9700 if these bins are left empty during the winter months. If you don't get the Glasgow Magazine but would like to, contact the Magazine on 0141 287 0902.

Communication between MFCC and Residents

There are 3 ways for Residents to contact and inform their Community Council of their opinions:-

- 1 Come along to our meetings in the Clincarthill Church Hall on 4th Tuesday of each month
- 2 E-mail us on mfcc@hotmail.co.uk
- 3 By phone – if you phone 0783 191 2652, leave a message and your phone number, we will get back to you as soon as possible if you require information.

Contact Details for City Councillors

Paul Coleshill 0141 287 5372
James Dornan 0141 287 3751
Archie Graham 0141 287 7048

Details of surgeries can be obtained by phoning these numbers

Dates of MFCC Meetings in Session 2010/2011

Clincarthill Church Hall – 7pm

September 28th	February 22nd
October (AGM) 26th	March 22nd
November 23rd	April 26th
January 25th	May 24th
	June 28th

We sincerely hope that you have found our Newsletter interesting and informative. Remember, that without a healthy two-way dialogue between us and yourselves, your Community Council cannot operate effectively. By all working together, we can make Mount Florida a better place for us all. We very much look forward to seeing or hearing from you.