

# EDINBURGH ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS

## Reports to the Annual General Meeting of the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils on 21st November 2019

### **Chair's Report**

As you are all aware, this will be my last report as Chair of EACC and therefore this is given with both, a touch of sadness as I have been well supported by my other elected officials and by you as members, but also with excitement in looking forward to seeing EACC continuing to develop as it must do. I would like to say it has been a privilege to serve you in this capacity

When I look back at the past 4/5 years much has been achieved but as I have continually said the speed of change, amendments and new challenges is relentless to which we must "be ahead of the game", well planned and prepared.

This year has again been filled with a wide and diverse range of subjects such as City Planning, the Tram extension, the Bus Users Group, EJB Health & Social Care, and the new Scheme for Community Councils and consultation on Governance. The city wide topics have attracted and maintained a continued growing number of CCs represented – thanks for your support so keep the positive message about EACC going. In my report last year I mentioned the areas which needed to be focused upon, communication, case studies, meeting targets and outputs, requirement for more delegation and sub-groups. Some have progressed well and some need more development.

My thoughts for the future have changed little and are still on the need for community councils to work closer together as "HUB" units mirroring the City's 4 localities.

With the growth of the city showing no signs of abating, indeed speeding up, then the voice of local democracy will have to be heard even more clearly and become more crucial. The seat at the Edinburgh Partnership can I believe be utilised more effectively and should be a topic for discussion and consideration.

The office bearers are here to serve you but they cannot operate in isolation and require a constant flow of feedback, information and pertinent topics to be discussed in order that meetings can be organised with relevant invited presenters to provide meaningful information to meetings.

So thank you for your support. Sometimes the role has been challenging but never dull and always satisfying. I would ask that you give the incoming new chair and elected officials the same encouragement and support.

I must also extend a special thanks to David, our secretary, who really is the person who keeps EACC going and without whom we would not be where we are today and in the way he has advised me over the past years. Also thanks to Judy, John and Saty.

Everyone must know when it is time to move on and allow new ideas, new impetus and new direction to be brought to the party. Most of all though thank you to you the members. This is your association and therefore it is all our responsibilities to make it work

Eric Dobbie, Chair

## Secretary's Report

Eric Dobbie has been in the Chair since before I became Secretary and it has been an interesting few years working with him and I thank him for his support and friendship. Bringing his business eye to this organisation has been useful and we hope to see him continue as representative for Gilmerton Inch for many meetings to come. We look to EACC members to bring concerns and issues to be looked at by the whole organisation and we may find these issues a source of interest to other members to discuss at our meetings. If there are common issues within Localities then we might be able to discuss and resolve any issues through working with Council officers.

We are grateful to City of Edinburgh Council for providing the facilities for us to meet. While it has been suggested we meet at various locations within Localities but the City Chambers are central and do not carry (as yet) a cost. Funding may become an issue in future and we might need to look into how we are resourced in order to continue as members of the Edinburgh Partnership.

We will continue to monitor changes being brought about by restructuring and reorganisation within the City Council. We will always listen to concerns raised by community council representatives and attempt to resolve these together. It may not always be possible; however there are innovative thinkers out there with great ideas. The new Community Plan with its three broad areas; *Enough money to live on; Access to work, learning and training opportunities* and *A good place to live*, gives flexibility to looking to improve each community area. There may be limited funding for the larger projects but little improvements can make a huge difference.

Our seat at the Edinburgh Partnership is important and going forward we hope to be able to build on our position. EACC, by way of its member Community Councils, as "*community of place*" representative, should be contributing to the success of the new plan and feeding back to the Edinburgh Partnership via our representative.

Some may have noted the Council's ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. The City's contribution is relatively small at 20.4MtCO<sup>2</sup> but this may create opportunities to improve our environment. Details will evolve in time and EACC will be involved.

I thank Eric, John and Judy for their help and advice and especially Sat Kaur who took over as representative on the Edinburgh Partnership. Her insight and advice has given us ideas as to how we can improve our support to the community plan.

I have now been in post for four years and think it's time for someone to take over as Secretary. A smooth handover is always desirable so if anyone thinks they could do this job, please speak to me.

David Bewsey  
Secretary