

Spurtle



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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

CEC COALITION IN PLACE

Six weeks after the election, on 16 June the SNP and Labour entered into a Coalition Administration to run City of Edinburgh Council.

The 54-point agreement signed by Group Leaders Adam McVey (SNP) and Cammy Day (Lab) includes commitments to: build 20k new affordable homes by 2027, invest £100m in roads and pavements; improve waste services; extend trams to Newhaven if the business case stacks up; and deliver a City Region Deal. They promise 2 new secondary schools and 10 new primaries by 2021.

Members of CEC's planning and regulatory committees and joint boards were appointed on 25 May. Remaining committee conveners were confirmed on 22 June.

BROCK CLOCKS SECOND GENERAL ELECTION WIN

Deidre Brock (SNP) was returned to Westminster for the Edinburgh North & Leith (ENL) constituency at last month's General Election. She received 19,243 votes.

Her majority of 1,623 was down 6.9% on the 2015 result, but Labour's share in second place remained fairly stable, dropping by -0.4%. The biggest gainers, in third place, were the Conservatives, with a positive swing of 11%.

Contrary to many expectations, voter burn-out after the recent 2 general elections, 1 local-authority election and 2 referendums did not seem to be an issue in ENL. Turnout here was 72%, above both the Scottish (66%) and UK (68.7%) figures.

For detailed results in all Edinburgh constituencies, and comparisons with the past 3 general elections, visit [goo.gl/VuLuuO].



BID TO FIX HUMAN PROBLEMS IN CITY CENTRE

Essential Edinburgh, the management team behind the city centre's Business Improvement District, is to address increased begging and rough sleeping in the area with a new 5-year, multi-agency initiative.

It will fund an additional 2 community policemen (from June 2018) and 2 employees of homelessness charity Cyrenians to offer advice and support.

The aim of the new scheme is to build relationships and find long-term, individually tailored solutions rather than continuing to shift the problem from one place to another. A holistic approach would include tackling: mental and physical health issues, cleanliness, financial management, and hunger. It would also seek more attractive alternatives for those who find begging (which is not illegal in Edinburgh) an effective way to earn money.

In crude terms, the benefit for BID members would be fewer unsightly unfortunates deterring potential customers from spending money on fripperies.

It sounds like a winning synergy of compassion and commerce, but some people have principled concerns. Dr Peter Matthews (a senior lecturer in social policy at Stirling University), says the initiative disturbs him. His understanding is that Scottish legislation forbids BIDs from funding extra policing and street cleaning, for example, so that they don't end up 'subsidising mainstream services, or driving inequalities in services provision, as they commonly do in the USA'.

CEC's new Coalition Council has pledged to create a 'Homelessness Task Force'. We await details.

GETTING AHEAD WITH A HAT



Image: Courtesy of Lyon & Turnbull.

This small, summery self-portrait by flâneur and hat enthusiast Sir John Duncan Fergusson RBA (1874–1961) was one of many admirable Scottish works under the hammer at Lyon & Turnbull on Broughton Place last month. The piece, in conté and gouache and dating from Fergusson's impecunious days in Paris, had been estimated to fetch between £3,000 and £5,000. Instead, it reached £8,125 including the buyer's premium. For more, see [goo.gl/qtjLzb]. An auction of Contemporary & Post-War Art will be held here on 17 August.

SHRUBHILL UPS AND DOWNS

Mike Henderson, People for Places' senior development manager on the Shrubhill site, met Leith Central Community Council last month.

He said buildings will rise soon at the Leith Walk end, and be complete by May 2018. All 344 flats, 221 underground parking spaces, gym and Masonic Club should be finished by spring 2020.

He assured Shaw's Terrace residents that sandy soil conditions would prevent adjacent piling (next year) from damaging homes. But to set minds at ease, PFP would install monitoring equipment.

COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS STUDY DIVERTING MODELS

Leith Central and New Town & Broughton community councillors have met CEC officials to discuss diversion arrangements during Leith Street's 44-week closure (starting in September).

They have only limited confidence in the City's traffic-modelling software, and LCCC is concerned any pragmatic adjustments later will require delaying the Leith Walk Programme yet again.

NTBCC fears rat-running through the New Town, and has pressed for pre-closure monitoring of traffic on key streets there to establish a baseline. It also wants filters favouring right-turns out of Hanover St into Queen St.

Following earlier representations, Carlton Terrace Brae will probably close to through traffic during the Leith Street works.

Briefly



We like this depiction of a special moment between **horse and hoodie** that's appeared on a gable end beside the rump **Old Calton Burial Ground**. We dislike recent tagging on an adjacent headstone.

There will be 2 **pond-dipping events** in Inverleith Park this summer at 11am on **15 July and 20 Aug**. All children must be accompanied by adults. Equipment will be provided, but if you have **your own net and a white basin or tray**, do bring it. No need to book, but those being dipped must be over 3 years old.

In **Issue 263** we mistakenly ascribed part-authorship of an article in the **Broughton History Society Newsletter** to Sandra Stubbs. We meant Sandra Purves.

Daylight Robbery has lost its appeal to the Scottish Govt. The Dublin Street bar/diner had earlier been refused listed building consent by the Council for **timber seating and 'grass' matting** in the basement courtyard area next to the pavement. However, the Reporter agreed with CEC Planners that the changes damaged the **architectural interest** of the listed building and did not preserve or enhance the **character of the conservation area**. He therefore dismissed the appeal.



Prompted by locals, CEC staff last month promised to **remove this road sign** from **Albany Lane**. St Mary's RC Primary School left the vicinity over 20 years ago. Do you know of other **redundant street furniture** in the neighbourhood? If so, please let us know.

On 9 Jun the **Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh** issued a press release which began as follows: '**Our Gardens may be in full bloom, but it's beginning to feel a lot like Christmas**'. No it is not. At this point, we binned the press release.

Broughton St traders are organising a raffle ('with amazing prizes') to **benefit local charities**. The draw will be held in mid-July. Details TBC on our website.

Barwell on bins

City of Edinburgh Council's Gareth Barwell (Head of Place Management) addressed the New Town & Broughton Community Council last month.

In a candid presentation, he explained shortcomings, opportunities and progress in the collection of waste and the maintenance of clean streets, particularly in historic, densely populated, tenemental areas.

Points of particular local interest included: 11 new barrow-beats in the city centre; cheaper/more flexible special uplift charges; a steady reduction in reports of missed collections; closure of Powderhall in favour of more efficient arrangements at Seafield; the need for better enforcement of rules for those 50% of businesses using public bins for unsorted trade waste.

Barwell described the current waste-collection service, especially of communal bins, as 'not fit for purpose'. His outline options for smaller (by a third), more accessible and attractive bins emptied more often (every 48 hours) will probably go before the Transport & Environment Committee in August. Substantial public consultation will follow.

Parking confusion in Powderhall

Conversion of offices at 73 Logie Green Road to create 29 flats proceeds apace (Ref. 14/01376/FUL), but is causing problems for locals.

Contractors are parking along both sides of Powderhall Road's narrow western end, making it hard to pass (not least because of 2 blind bends). Sections of pavement and grass verges are also often obstructed.

Council officials were initially reluctant to act because double-yellow lines here had faded badly. But it now emerges that these lines were never 'adopted' by CEC and so will remain unpolicable until repainted with a Traffic Regulation Order in place ... in around 9 months to a year. In the meantime, drivers and pedestrians risk collisions, and nearby residents worry about ease of entry for emergency vehicles.

As reported in Issue 263, locals here are concerned about where cars will park after 180 permits are issued on completion of 'Canonmills Garden' at 13 Warriston Road. They have alerted developer Artisan Real Estate to the potential problems and await a reply. For background, see our website (14.4.14).

Slow progress on planning

City of Edinburgh Council's Development Management Subcommittee had not decided on applications by the Royal Bank of Scotland (Dundas Street/Heriot Row) or Duddingston House Properties/Urbanist Hotels (old Royal High School) by the respective 6 March and 20 June deadlines.

Spurtle understands slow progress has partly been caused by heavy workloads in a depleted department, and partly by delays in forming a Council Administration and active committees.

CEC is tight-lipped about RBS. There are suggestions that the current Planning Permission in Principle application may be withdrawn following criticism from Historic Environment Scotland.

CEC may perhaps conclude its glacially paced ORHS considerations in late August, unless the applicants lose patience first and appeal on grounds of non-determination.

Good times soon in Inverleith Park

The slightly shabby sundial in the aptly named Sundial Garden of Inverleith Park is to be refurbished by this time next year.

The feature was donated to the City by Councillor Joseph Kinloch Anderson in 1890, and the firm of kiltmakers and tailors of which he was a director will fund the restoration to mark their 150th-anniversary celebrations. The south face is inscribed 'So passes life. Alas! How swift', just in case any passer-by should be enjoying the weather.

Friends of Inverleith Park are coordinating the project, and have already paid for some new planting. Together with a Community Payback Team and park rangers, 6 volunteers from the Friends have made great progress in improving this area. If you'd like to help then just show up on any Wednesday morning at 10am. No gardening experience is required.

Contrary to local myth, the sundial did not originally have a gnome on.



Buttery Turkish delight

This striking plant is flourishing on its own in a raised bed opposite the gateway to Drummond Lawn Tennis Club off East Scotland Street Lane.

It is a fine example of *Phlomis Russeliana* or the Turkish Sage. There are about 100 species of *Phlomis*, which belongs to the Lamiaceae, comprising the extensive Mint family, and they first grew naturally in Turkey, hence the popular appellation.

The sage-like grey-green foliage of this perennial is deciduous, but the glory of this species are the wonderful bravura whorls or spikes of butter-yellow flowers which glow over a long period in summer. *Phlomis Russeliana* grows to an ultimate height of 0.5–1 m and prefers a well-drained soil in full sun. The plant-range is S.W. Asia but it is recorded that Philip Miller, the Curator of the Chelsea Physic Garden between 1722 and 1771, grew many *phlomis* close to the River Thames.

Bumblebees are the only insects capable of pollinating the enticing blooms, and, happily, many have been observed swooning around our Drummond ones. It is not known who planted this *phlomis* – or is it perhaps another gift from the winds?—
JRM



Look out for: Bullfinches

Bullfinches, like their close relatives the ubiquitous Chaffinch and increasingly common Goldfinch, have a combination of striking colours and distinct plumage. The males have a deep pink chest, dark black head and beak, a powder-blue back and piebald wing feathers. The female has a similar pattern in more muted tones. Both male and female also have a distinctive white rump in flight which is often all that is seen of these generally shy birds.



Image: Wikipedia, Creative Commons.

Bullfinches are not a common site in gardens, preferring scrubland and hedges, but they are doing well in some of our less carefully manicured parks locally, bucking a national trend which has given them an 'amber' conservation status.

Bullfinches have a distinctive, powerful build which gives them their name. Their beaks are designed for heavier seeds and also removing buds, which has in the past led them into conflict with gardeners.

I've read that in Victorian times they were prized as caged birds, and that their mournful calls could be trained, using special flutes, to sing along to popular tunes. However, perhaps better that they remain free, if slightly elusive. On the plus side – if you see a Bullfinch, keep an eye out for others as outwith the breeding season they often forage in pairs or small groups. — *Miles Forde*

Not such a bright idea

Four internally illuminated advertisement panels recently attached to the front of McEwan Fraser Legal on E. Claremont St have been reported by locals for a possible breach of Planning Control. They allege necessary consent for them was neither sought nor received, and say the signs are intrusively bright. There are also fears that the signs could distract drivers at this dangerous and busy corner next to Broughton Primary School (Issue 194). No. 118 was built in 1886 as the Civil Service Supply Association warehouse. John Lumsdaine, its architect, also designed the Central Library on George IV Bridge.

Sandy Hill sing-song

Many thanks to John 'Jackie' Hogg who contacted us last month from Canada with 3 charming photographs of child life in the back-greens of Broughton Road in the 1930s and 1940s. This one dates from 1935, and shows the Christy brothers leading a 'concert' sing-song behind No. 34. A barren Sandy Hill appears in the background. The box under the 'microphone' is stamped *Buttercup Dairy Co.* (there was a branch at 26 Rodney Street, now the Edinburgh Bicycle Coop.) and *Gold Edge Margarine* (see goo.gl/rufMQz).

John Hogg lived at No. 40 from 1934–65 before leaving the Geology Department at Edinburgh University for a new post at Carleton University in Ottawa. On retirement in 2001, he moved to Sidney on Vancouver Island in British Columbia and now follows the *Spurtle* to revisit old haunts online.

See our website (1.7.17) for more images, and please get in touch if you recognise any faces in them or have memories to share.—*AM*



Briefly

Post-General Election rolling news outside **Brandon's of Canonmills**.



On 4 May, Annandale Mosque's **Shaykh Hassan Rabbani** became the first imam to address the congregation and friends of **Broughton St Mary's** as part of a service. He spoke of what unites people of faith, and **condemned those who practise violence** in the name of religion. Rabbani's address had been planned for some time, and was the latest step in a process of **growing contact, understanding and cooperation** between mosque and church. See our website (4.6.17).

The **Botanic Cottage** has won the Scottish Civic Trust My Place Award 2017. Meanwhile, the RBGE's **brisk and bouncing** Community Engagement Co-ordinator for the project, **Sutherland Forsyth**, has boinged to a new post as Head of Learning & Engagement at **Auckland Castle** in Co. Durham. We wish him well.

Club Sandwich, the narrow café at 132 Dundas St, squeezed between Finnegan's and the 'door to nowhere' (our website 26.1.15), soon felt the pinch once **Royal Bank of Scotland** left the neighbourhood. Now it's reopened as **Dundas Street Framers**, ideal for all those things you'd rather hang on a wall than eat.

NTBCC objects to **licensing applications** to amend music conditions for the **St Vincent bar, Barony bar, and W. Princes St Gardens**. The presumption is many locals would be disturbed in upper floors, adjacent buildings or parts of the Old Town where noise is channelled up by the slope.

This **cracked but improving piece** caught the eye of *Spurtle* team member **Rhys Fullerton** in Jun. It's one in a series of 10, 54cm-diameter plates at **Edinburgh Printmakers** and forms part of Eric Great-Rex's exhibition of prints and ceramics '**My Cat Knows What I'm Thinking**'. The exhibition continues on Union St until 15 Jul.



Moreover ...

City-centre police are running **Operation Ostenburg** over the summer to reduce anti-social behaviour (e.g. aggressive begging, drinking, drug taking) at spots like Hunter Sq and the Broughton St Big Foot Country. **Operation Serimon** targets anti-social youth behaviour, e.g. around S. St Andrew St and Waverley Mall, and offers evening youth centres as an alternative. **Operation Gorpeck** takes a welfare-based, multi-agency approach to rough sleeping. **Operation Scandium** continues to target motorbike theft. Enforcement of 20mph speed limits has taken a back seat as police focus on security after recent Manchester and London terrorist attacks.

The mystery of 'communal bin-creep' (whereby bins drift from designated spots) was explained by a senior CEC official last month (see p. 2). The causes are 50% **careless replacement** by CEC staff and 50% deliberate **private driver nudges** to facilitate parking.

David Chipperfield Architects has won the competition to design a new **1,000-seat concert hall** and home for the **Scottish Chamber Orchestra** behind Dundas House in St Andrew Sq. DCA's past UK projects include BBC Scotland at Pacific Quay (2007), The Hepworth Wakefield and Turner Contemporary (Margate) in 2011. For more see [goo.gl/ud3Pt5]. Meanwhile, **Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop** confirmed on 15 Jun that the Scottish Govt is keen to see proposals for the venue included in the **forthcoming City Region Deal**.


Developer **S. Harrison** proposes a new **Malmaison bar/restaurant/hotel** (80+ bedrooms) at 20-22 St Andrew Square. A formal planning application is expected within 1 or 2 months. Edinburgh World Heritage, Historic Environment Scotland and the Cockburn Association have **no particular objections** to remodelling the largely 1960s office interior.

The 11th North East (Broughton St Mary's) Scouts have been **preparing for summer camp** in the Bernese highlands of Switzerland this month. 'Training has comprised simulated **high-altitude trekking** conditions in St Mark's Park, extreme cheese and chocolate eating, and **emergency yodelling practice**,' reports Scout Leader Scott Richards. This builds on an earlier visit to **McDonald Rd Fire Station** to acquire skills for the Fire Safety Badge. 'It's useful to be able to put out any fires we start,' says Richards, more singed against than sinning.

Spurtle Team: E. Dickie, J. Dickie, M. Forde, R. Fullerton, J. Hart, M. Hart, D. Hill, A. McIntosh, J. R. Maclean, S. Michael, M. Orr, L. Rogers, C. Roussot, T. Smith, D. Sterratt, E. Taylor-Smith, D. Young.
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AM DECORATING

Your local painter & decorator **Alastair McAlpine**
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 **Deidre Brock MP**
Edinburgh North and Leith



Regular Surgeries

Leith: 1st Friday of the month
1-2pm, 166 Great Junction Street
Leith Walk: 2nd Friday of the month
3.30-4.30pm, McDonald Rd Library
Stockbridge: 3rd Friday of the month
1-2pm Stockbridge Library
Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre: Last Friday, 4-5pm
dbrockmp.scot
Tel: 0131-555 7009
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LEITH CENTRAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL



A forum for local people who want to engage with and work for their local community.

Participate in local democracy.

Make representations to City of Edinburgh Council, other public bodies and private agencies on everything that matters locally.

Next meeting at 7pm on 21 August
Nelson Hall, McDonald Rd Library
leithcentralcc.co.uk/meeting-dates

f/BenMacSNP @BenMacpherson

Ben Macpherson MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Edinburgh Northern and Leith Constituency



Constituency Surgeries

(no appointment necessary)

Every Monday:
5-6pm at
Leith Library
28-30 Ferry Road
Edinburgh
EH6 4AE

Every Friday:
4-5pm at
Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre
Pilton Drive North
Edinburgh
EH5 1NF

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NEW TOWN & BROUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL represents the views of local residents to City of Edinburgh Council.

You're very welcome to attend.
Come along and make a difference at our next meetings
7.30pm, 14 August
Broughton St Mary's Parish Church, Bellevue Crescent
www.ntbcc.org.uk