

Spurtle



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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

CROSS AND BOTHERED ON LEITH WALK

Residents and shoppers have voiced irritation at the lack of convenient and obvious pedestrian crossings through the Leith Walk tramworks.

Leith Central Community Council has secured promises of better signage for these, but no obvious progress had resulted by mid-Oct. LCCC is also asking councillors to demand temporary crossings which better reflect pedestrian desire-lines; as between Pilrig and Iona Sts.

Contractors are under no contractual pressure to be helpful, and seem to focus more on meeting deadlines than addressing local concerns. However, business owners did manage to arrange a meeting with them last month to explain problems once again, including street clutter, potholes, and a general sense of dilapidation.

Meanwhile, LCCC has parked for now its opposition to narrowed pavements along Leith Walk (Issue 311). Dealings with the Tram Team have been unproductive, and LCCC will instead register its dissatisfaction with the Transport & Environment Convener, and join Living Streets and New Town & Broughton Community Council in pushing for retrospective changes at a later stage.



BROWN RATS, TENEMENT FLATS, ALARMING STATS



Image: Wikipedia

Around 18 Gayfield households have hired professionals to deal with a superabundance of rats in the area. The creatures are present in unprecedented numbers, even during daylight hours. Up to 3 at a time have been seen investigating back-greens, clambering up tenement walls, nibbling everything, and generally looking joco about the state of the world. Curious hungry rats enter properties via broken drain covers, ill-maintained solums, and cracks in the masonry. A population of 2 can increase to 1,250 in a year, and Edinburgh is now estimated to contain about 1.1M of them. Nearby restaurant and carry-out waste, food left for birds, lockdown absences, and the displacing effect of Elm Row tramworks are possible causes for the rise in number of these sociable locals. The (human) residents' control campaign will last around 4 weeks ... if all goes according to plan.

CLAREMONT COURT TROUBLE

Police have appealed for witnesses after two incidents at Claremont Court.

In the first, on the night of 28 September, three males entered the property of a couple in their 60s and threatened them. Police described it as an attempted robbery [bit.ly/3v6E7mW].

The second incident happened on the night of 6 October. A man was forced from his car and into another vehicle, where he was assaulted. He later got out of the vehicle on McDonald Rd, where one of the assailants then tried to run him over. Police described the incident as one of abduction and attempted murder [bit.ly/3FFAlpo].



Neither of these events, or recent assaults and rape on Union St, were mentioned in bland police newsletters issued to New Town & Broughton and Leith Central Community Councils recently. Both groups are disappointed by officers not attending virtual meetings, and the lack of relevant local detail provided in communications. How unlike the Burgh of Leith's 1897 *Return of Crimes and Offences*, found in a time capsule under the Burns Monument [bit.ly/3plAnwW].

COULD COUNCIL BACKTRACK ON BIN HUBS?

The Finance & Resources Cmte last month approved a contract worth c.£1.7M to Maclay Civil Engineering Ltd for supplying and installing 1,750 bin hubs across Edinburgh.

Phase 4 of the installation, in the City Centre, Inverleith, and South Side will take 18 months, but, according to the Committee report [bit.ly/3j0LnM2], the approach in the World Heritage Site here will depend on 'a further options appraisal', including 'consultation with Edinburgh World Heritage and engagement with residents'.

Is this a major concession? Will bin hubs not be adopted in parts of the city? What is the nice distinction between *consultation* and *engagement*? New Town & Broughton Community Council seeks clarification [bit.ly/3vtDdkm].

Sceptical locals – who already question the Waste & Cleansing Service's reasoning, methodology, and justifications for bin hubs – are watching closely. Some say consultations elsewhere in the city have been cursory and too quick. Others say an enlarged system such as that proposed will not succeed without substantial extra investment.

Spurtle SUBSCRIPTIONS

Around this time each year – just as readers are starting to worry about how they'll afford Christmas – *Spurtle* asks for a donation.

Annual subscriptions of any amount are welcome (we suggest £15 for hand deliveries, and require £22 if posting copies). Subscribers provide stabilising financial balance, help us remain independent, and represent a loyal pool of friends to whom we can turn for advice when necessary.

Just to be clear, none of our contributors or team members gets paid from the paper and website. We are a not-for-profit organisation run by volunteers.

If you're able to help, please make out cheques to *Spurtle*, and leave them c/o Narcissus Flowers at 87 Broughton St. Remember to tell us your address. Or email us at [spurtle@hotmail.co.uk] to arrange an electronic transfer. Thank you.

Briefly



Established over a century ago and run in the early days by the Crolla family on **Union Pl** (now **2 Antigua St**), the popular Deep Sea Chippy, like all carry-outs, did well not to sink without trace during Lockdown. We wish all concerned there, battered but unbowed, **every success** in future. There are now new mystery plans for a mezzanine floor. More when we have it.

At the next meeting of the **Broughton History Society**, on 4 Nov, Peter Yeoman will talk on 'Healthcare in Early Medieval Scotland'. **Members free, visitors £2**. Bring your own leech. For details see [bit.ly/3DMCRcC].

Bross Bagels – whose Montreal-inspired breads (dough includes eggs) with New York deli-inspired fillings are available in **Leith, Bruntsfield, and Stockbridge** – will soon fill a hole beside the St Jimmy entrance on **Little King St**. Its Waverley Mall shop has closed.

As part of the Council's 5-year, £117M **Active Travel Investment Programme**, adopted last month [bit.ly/30svp7n], c.£151k has been earmarked for developing in 2022/23 the early stages of a concept design for the disused **Powderhall Railway**. Beyond that, further design work must await completion of **lease and land acquisition negotiations** between the Council, a freight operator, and Network Rail.

Officials at **Lothian Buses** have promised not to increase the number of journeys along **E London St** until May 2022, and then by only 2 extra journeys per day at most. To cope with displaced traffic during engineering work on **Leith Walk**, the Tram Team aims to reduce the **volume and speed** of E London St traffic by reducing the carriageway and introducing a **temporary controlled pedestrian crossing**. To reduce vibration, they will also resurface parts of the damaged road surface on **Leopold Pl**.

Transport Scotland has awarded Edinburgh Council £2.2M to install 66 electric-vehicle **on-street charging points** between now and 31 Mar 2022. Nearby spots and number of bays: **E London St** (4); **Heriot Row** (8); **India St** (4); **Montgomery St** (8).

Many interested observers applaud the Council's intentions for **Carbon Neutral Edinburgh 2030**, but question its ability to deliver on time. See [bit.ly/3DVkMrZ] and recent **Cockburn Assoc posts** on embodied carbon and electric vehicles [bit.ly/3AYhQc8].

Permission was granted on 6 Oct for **housing to replace original plans for a hotel** as part of the New Town Quarter on **Dundas St** (21/03481/FUL). Demolition of existing structures will now begin, starting with garages next to **King George V Park**.

Little time left for short-term lets responses

Campaigners **PLACE Edinburgh** support the Scottish Govt's proposed licensing scheme for short-term lets. They say it's affordable, and checks will help protect legitimate businesses, visitors, neighbours, and communities. Concerns include:

- Need for robust tools to tackle overprovision.
- Delayed implementation allowing unlawful STLs which have operated for 10 years to become legal.
- Online platforms not being held accountable for advertising unlawful lets.
- Licensing allowed for properties in breach of Planning law.
- Not enough tools (e.g. fines) for effective enforcement.
- Potential for Scottish regulations to be bypassed by companies based elsewhere in the UK.

PE's full case and proposed solutions are available here [bit.ly/3aRkMNn]. Members of the public can voice their opinions via the Edinburgh Council consultation here: [bit.ly/3FKJvAS]. The deadline is 5 November 2021.

Will new path be too wide and too fast?

New Town & Broughton Community Council, Friends of King George V Park, and a local amenity group have been discussing with developers how best to link King George V Park with the NCN75 cycle path entering it from the consented 'New Town Quarter' behind Dundas St.

Five possible options were mooted, each intended to preserve the safety and amenity of park users, and avoid conflict with cyclists.

However, local participants now feel Council officials tried to bounce them into agreeing just one 'final proposal' in mid-Oct. This will increase the width of the southern path through the park from 1.5–2m to 3.5m, upgrading its compacted-stone surface to tarmac or bound gravel (bit.ly/3BStEhe).

Critics say a calm green space is being sacrificed for an unnecessary cycle route on which bikes will travel too fast for pedestrian and canine comfort.



Pragmatism prompts payment

Edinburgh Council has voted to make an interim £56.4M payment to Nuveen (the St James Qtr developer) for completion of 'growth assets' and £1.3M towards Picardy Pl works.

These arrangements form part of the Growth Accelerator Model (GAM) agreed in 2016, and the sums – which cover improvements to the public realm – will be reimbursed by the Scottish Govt based on an anticipated increase in business rates [bit.ly/3AKujA2].

Most of these improvements are now complete. Those which aren't – including lighting on Leith St, Cathedral Lane, and Little King St; steps leading to shops on St James Sq; and the multi-modal transport interchange at Picardy Pl – have been delayed for reasons beyond Nuveen's control.

Although it could be argued that payment to Nuveen was not due until full completion, the Council chose to proceed in order to preserve a 'positive working relationship'. Green councillors urged stricter application of the agreed terms to extract maximum value for money.

The Council will retain £5M until the remaining elements are finished. The final bill for growth assets under GAM is capped at £61.4, but the Council has agreed a separate extra sum of £1.5M to cover 'additional enhancements' to Picardy Pl.

When and how the Picardy Pl island design will follow what kind of consultation with whom are marginally less clear than squids in a liquidiser. We are reliably informed details will be made available 'in a couple of months'.



Taking a wrong turn

A reader tells us that over half the traffic turning right into Scotland St from Royal Cres does so using the wrong (near) side of the island. 'The junction is quite complicated, thanks to poor signage, but there is no excuse. Given the increased number of cyclists on the roads, many of whom come careering down the hill at a fair lick, the chance that one day they will be met by a car, or more likely, a delivery van, must be quite high.' Officials have been informed twice about the danger, so far to no obvious effect.



Shots in the arm for lockdown refuges

The National Lottery Community Fund and IKEA UK have awarded £4,750 to the Hopetoun Crescent Garden Green Space Serendipity Project.

The money will help organisers build on community use of the Garden, which increased a lot during lockdown. They plan cultural events here for all, regeneration of barren areas, and a sensory play area for children. They'll also work on improving bio-diversity, and reaffirming links with local schools for nature-inspired educational opportunities.

Eileen Dickie, Chair of HCG Friends says, 'We know people have found the peace and natural environment here to be very beneficial over the last 18 months for their mental well-being, and we need to ensure that continues.' To get find out more, visit [bit.ly/3pdZ7Y2] or [bit.ly/3b2CnCS].

High standards

In other news last month, 35 Council-managed parks in Edinburgh were awarded Green Flags by Keep Scotland Beautiful. 'Green Flags are given to those parks that give everyone access to a safe, clean and pleasant green space where they can relax, play and exercise,' says Culture & Communities Convener Cllr Donald Wilson.

On this occasion, the awards recognised Inverleith, King George V and Scotland Yard, and Victoria Parks, and Hopetoun Cres Gdn – which achievements we salute. But for the 15th consecutive year, St Mark's Park did not feature. Why not?

Broughton Primary School opens

The new school erected by the Edinburgh School Board on the site of Blandfield House has been in occupation since September, but the formal opening ceremony takes place to-morrow.

The building is an adaptation of the Renaissance style of architecture, and presents an attractive front to Broughton Rd.

As usual, the infant department is on the street floor. There are eight class-rooms, besides the headmaster's and lady teachers' rooms. On the first floor there is the same number of class-rooms for the accommodation of the juvenile department. A third floor on the front portion of the school contains five more class-rooms, and there are also rooms intended to be used for practical cookery and science teaching.

For recreation purposes and for manual instruction excellent provision has been made. In the basement there is a large swimming bath and gymnasium, with cloak-room accommodation, while a detached building, situated in the boys' playground, has been fitted up as a first-class workshop for the boys. This building has been economically planned so that, from the fall of the ground, a play shed has been formed underneath it. The playgrounds are extensive, and are laid with granolithic pavement.

The school is heated by steam pipes and ventilated by a fan, driven by an engine, which exhausts the vitiated air from the different class-rooms. In the class-rooms there is accommodation for about 1560 children,* and the cost of the structure, including the janitor's house adjoining, is about £24,000. Mr Robert Wilson, Queen Street, was the architect.

Edinburgh Evening News (25.11.1896). See our website (1.11.21) for more controversial coverage of the day. *Today's school roll is around 400.—AM



And never the twain shall meet

Concerning the item in Issue 311 (p. 4), one thing that makes naming local service lanes even trickier is the now unnecessary 'East' prefix in E Claremont St.

In 1826 the name for today's Saxe-Coburg St and Ter was Claremont St, with Claremont Place used for the adjoining part of Henderson Row. The west side of E Claremont St was complete by 1853 (and already called *East*), with the opposite side still occupied by the Royal Zoological Gardens.

Around 1890, the Stockbridge Claremont St took a 'West' to distinguish it further from the Broughton one, but became Saxe Coburg St in 1968. Claremont Ter changed to Saxe Coburg Ter in 1980. (An alternative Claremont Ter – today's 34–68 E Claremont St – appeared in 1878 but disappeared from Post Office directories in the 1920s).

It is high time to drop the 'East' from the one remaining Claremont St, and it should not be used in naming the service lanes here. Claremont Grove Lane or Claremont Bank Lane might serve. Or, in the vein of Hatters Lane, how about Stablehands Lane, or perhaps some zoological association such as Polar Bear Lane?

Claremont, with this spelling, alludes to a former residence in Surrey with royal connections, more about which is here: [bit.ly/3lsvqqa] and here [bit.ly/3iT5mwf].—*Caroline Roussot.*



Briefly



The former Jewson premises (Issue 306) at 72–74 Eyre Pl Lane are being demolished.

Planning permission has been granted to plonk an enormous telecoms mast on Leith Walk next to **Gayfield Sq** (21/03810/FUL). The Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland said the pole would '**stick out like an inverted fifty-foot high black bottle brush**', and argued that positioning it here would **neither preserve nor enhance** the Conservation Area, Edinburgh World Heritage Site, and nearby listed buildings. **More subtle alternative sites** were available in the vicinity, it said, but had not been investigated.

As reported in Issue 310, Transport officials are considering which temporary **Spaces for People** measures to retain, modify, or bin. In a departure from earlier statements, they now propose reviewing changes to **Mansfield Pl** roundabout and **Broughton St**, and restoring the former lane layout at the top of **Canonmills**. Significant vagueness attends these considerations.

We are delighted to report that the **Royal High School Preservation Trust/St Mary's Music School** have been accepted as Edinburgh Council's preferred partner for developing the **Regent Rd** site. For background see [bit.ly/3FTJlaL]. For **questions, clarifications, and a new fly-through video** see Skyscraper City Edinburgh at [bit.ly/3vaJnWC].

Fresh proposals have been raised to improve parking behind the Atlas Hotel at **30 London St**. The plans aim to minimise loss of green garden ground, **avoid intruding** upon neighbours' property, and **improve privacy** by raising the boundary walls to their traditional height (21/05133/FUL).

The hair and nail bar at **40 Rodney St**, promised in Issue 310, opened for business last month. It's called **Studio 40** for reasons which will doubtless become apparent over time.

A **Scottish Govt Reporter** is considering an appeal against Council refusal of permission to redevelop **37a and 39 London St** as 8 short-term lets (Issue 306). Supporting information is available on the **Scottish Govt's DPEA website**. It includes a neighbour's blistering appraisal of both the original application and a Council official's assessment of it [bit.ly/3AQV71J].

Hackland & Dore has submitted new plans for 9 flats at **16 Annandale St** (21/05382/FUL), replacing an unlovely shed with a better tenemental conclusion and director's pension fund.

Moreover ...



Only now that a To Let sign has appeared outside 42 London St are some people realising Casa Angelina will not reopen. Instead, Marie Claire Semeraro and the Team have been selling 'plant-based food with passion' from Stockbridge and Leith Markets since this time last year. Research into the new venture's name – Puddin' Pop – has proved eye-popping for some.

After considering responses to its Low Emission Zone proposals, the Transport & Environment Cmte has opted not to change: the size of the LEZ; the length of the grace period; or plans not to apply local exemptions. An as yet vaguely described Network Management Strategy will address vehicle displacement and publicise sources of funding for vehicle adaptation. The city-centre LEZ, scheduled for May 2022, is promised to improve air quality across a wider area, too [bit.ly/3DXjcWp].

Last month we reported Nuveen's hopes for Cathedral Sq as outdoor overflow bar/restaurant space. This month, we report Nuveen's ambitions for St James' Sq (21/05177/FUL): 12 temporary party shacks, a stage, bar, enclosures, and 'dog grotto' for 9–10 weeks (including set-up and take down) in each of winters 2021–22, 2022–23, 2023–24, and 2024–25. The 'Bar Hütte' project would comprise a 'mini alpine village' offering live music, DJ performances, après-ski fun without the tedious requirement of skiing, and 'carol-oke' in snug private huts accommodating in total up to 132 people (not counting Hunde).

Despite two objections from the public, Edinburgh Leisure has received permission to demolish the East and West Sports Pavilions in Warriston Recreation Ground. It said they were unfit for purpose, derelict, and becoming a danger to the public. 'They are also subject to scavenging and illegal access for vandalism.' If only they had been better maintained and secured earlier. Cllrs Mitchell and Osler have reminded officials to protect the Maxwell Shennan Memorial Fountain adjacent.

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RODNEY STREET BARBERS

Julie 07989 441557, 42 Rodney Street
Tues–Fri, 11am–5pm; Sat, 10am–2pm



LEITH CENTRAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL



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

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Next meeting: Monday, 15 November.
Venue/format TBC. For details contact <https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>



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Surgeries

Every first Friday 1-2pm	Every third Friday 1-2pm
Constituency office 166 Great Junction St	Stockbridge Library
Every second Friday 3.30-4.30pm	Every last Friday 4-5pm
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LEITH WALK POLICE BOX

Novel November pop-ups
– always something new(-ish)



Fri 5 Nov, 11am–5pm: Typewronger 4th birthday party – books, cake, jelly babies. All welcome!

Thurs 11 and Sun 21 Nov: Instant Design – creative art prints and stuff.

Fri 12, Sat 13 and 19 Nov: Being Human Festival of Humanities.

Fri 25 Nov, 12–2pm: arts & crafts in aid of Four Square homelessness charity.

Fri 26 Nov, 1–1.30pm, 1.30–2pm: Tenement Tales – a childhood in Leith, storytelling for all ages.

@leithwalkpolicebox

Ben Macpherson MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Edinburgh Northern and Leith
Constituency



Covid-19 Update
Because of Covid-19, and in accordance with the law and advice, my office is closed to the public until further notice. My team and I are working remotely and continue to assist constituents as normal.

Telephone/Video Call Advice Surgeries:

I have also had to cancel my weekly face-to-face advice surgeries. Instead I am holding regular telephone/video surgeries each week. Please leave a voicemail or email my office to book a 15 minute surgery appointment and someone in my team will get in touch to confirm a time. (May 2021)

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NEW TOWN & BROUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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