

# Spurttle



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June  
2022

No 318

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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER** Free

## ELECTION 2022 RESULTS

Candidates elected in the three Spurtleshire Council wards at May's Local Govt Election were as follows.

Inverleith: Jule Bandel (Gm, 12.8%), Max Mitchell (Con, 13.7%), Vicky Nicolson (SNP, 19.7%), Hal Osler (LibDem, 23.2%). Turnout 55% (-1.5% on 2017).

City Centre: Margaret Graham (Lab, 14.6%), Finlay McFarlane (SNP, 13.3%), Claire Miller (Gm, 19.8%), Jo Mowat (Con, 21.4%). Turnout 38% (-5.7% on 2017).

Leith Walk: Jack Caldwell (LibDem, 12%); James Dalgleish (Lab, 18.7%); Amy McNeese-Mechan (SNP, 20.4%), Susan Rae (Gm, 25.9%). Turnout 41.7% (-3.1% on 2017).

Some points of interest. Turnout was most reduced in City Centre, where *Spurttle* had encouraged democratic participation by organising a well-attended hustings. This may have been because everyone assumed enthusiastic neighbours would do the voting for them, or because locals were revolted by their candidates' much vaunted virtues.

### No breakthrough for independents

Independents added colour and energy to the election, and in some cases articulated widespread frustration with the perceived unresponsiveness of officials and elected representatives to public opinion.

However, the supportive reactions to some independents' high-profile presence on social media did not translate into votes. The most successful were all in City Centre: Bonnie Prince Bob secured 117 votes (1.3%); Norrie Rowan, 84 (0.9%), Kevin Illingworth 50 (0.6%).

This was a disappointment for those who wish to empower unaligned voices on Edinburgh's political stage. It appears election campaigns are too short and come too late to reach, persuade and activate voters.

Serious independents should perhaps establish regular, methodical engagement throughout the political cycle instead, taking time to communicate thought-through policies across a range of issues rather than relying on rhetorical fireworks once every five years. Easier said than done for those with no party apparatus to support them.

### Bigger picture still blurred

Across the whole city, seats won were as follows.

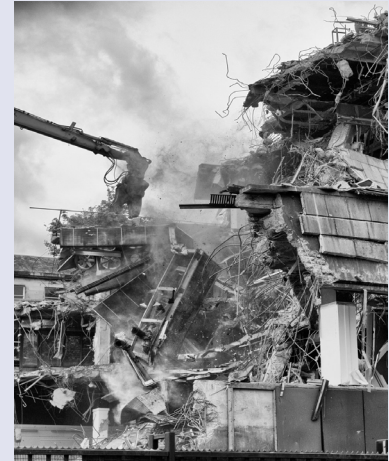
SNP (19, +4); Lab (13, +2); LibDems (12, +6); Gm (10, +3); Con (9, -8). It was clearly a very good result for the LibDems and Greens (up 100% and 43% respectively), and a very bad night for the Conservatives (down by 47%).

No party has a majority. Contrary to expectations, no lord provost was appointed on 19 May. And as *Spurttle* went to press, no coalition had yet been struck.

Labour's national leader Anas Sarwar favours only issue-by-issue cooperation. The LibDems consider differences over Transport policy as major roadblocks to reaching a deal. The Greens are willing to be wooed, but lack numbers to make any arrangement decisive without other parties' support.



## LATE LAMENTED EXCARNATED



Little by little, peck by peck, the former Royal Bank of Scotland Data Centre is disappearing like flesh from an architectural sky burial. This image first appeared on @HenniPhoto last month and is reproduced here by permission. To see more of locally based Lyn and Paul Henni's 'mostly mono, mainly Edinburgh' photography visit [[www.henni.photo](http://www.henni.photo)].

## BAD START FOR BLOOMING BIN HUBS

The recent blossoming of communal bin hubs across parts of Leith, Pilrig and Bonnington went wrong before it even got started.

Officials say that 'supply issues' (not enough bins) and staff shortages (not enough drivers) mean the new service can't operate as planned. There is no clear date for when the problems will be fixed.

Availability of bins has been kyboshed - like so much else - by Covid and worldwide disruption of manufacturing and supply chains. Unlovely old bins will therefore be retained in places.

Meanwhile, HGV drivers are finding better paid jobs with bus companies and road hauliers elsewhere. The Council can't easily match private-sector incentives since its salaries are pegged across all similarly graded workers regardless of job description. The Waste Dept currently wants 4 drivers.

All of which leaves locals wondering why the Council has chosen to push ahead with a half-baked and untested system it now knows won't run properly.

'Institutional momentum', is one observer's explanation. 'Pig-headedness', says a second. 'It has no choice', offers a third. 'This dustcart was designed with no brakes or reverse gear.' The result is a shambolic start for a new system promising some attractive improvements: daily collections and so cleaner bins; gradual introduction of new, easy-to-open bins; cab-based reporting of fly-tipping with speedier responses.

When officials briefed Leith Central Community Council recently, there were complaints from LCCC councillors and the public about poor advance warning of where and when bin hubs would appear and how to use them.

Frustration was expressed at officials' inability to adjust system parameters, in particular siting of bins close to homes when alternative sites exist across the road. LCCC will instead address these concerns to councillors on the new Transport & Environment Cmte in due course.



## WORLDWIDE WALKS REACH BROUGHTON



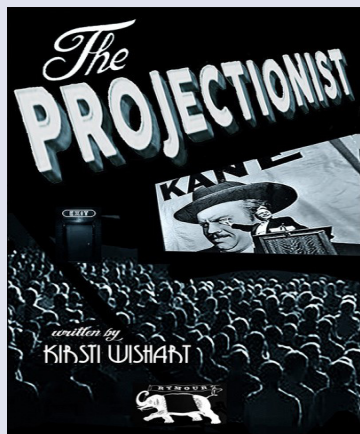
Jane's Walks are walking tours led by volunteers. They aim to build and connect individuals by walking together and talking about shared neighbourhoods. They're free, non-commercial, non-partisan, and open to all.

The idea began in Toronto in 2006 and has grown rapidly since to reach over 225 cities worldwide in 37 countries and 6 continents.

Jane's Walks arrived in Edinburgh for the first time last month. Organised here by the secular Sunday Assembly Edinburgh, walks took place in Balgreen, Willowbrae, the West End, and Broughton.

These events are clearly a sociable and positive step forward with great potential for strengthening links within and between communities worldwide. We expect to see them flourish in future. To find out more, visit [[bit.ly/3NsdQay](http://bit.ly/3NsdQay)].

## Briefly



Local author Kirsti Wishart's new novel *The Projectionist* has recently been published by Rymour Books [bit.ly/3a3yvDt]. Inspired by such **Edinburgh gems** as the Dominion, Cameo, and the old Odeon on Clerk Street, it's about the arrival of a **world-famous film critic** in a Scottish seaside town obsessed by cinema. All is not as it seems. A reviewer in *Northwords Now* described Wishart's previous novel *The Knitting Station* (Issue 306) as 'Delicious escapism and clever story telling; ideal accompaniment for a dram by a winter's fire. Just lay off the mushrooms and let the plot handle the hallucinations.' ISBN: 9781739846602.

Well done all at **Broughton Primary School!** The school community (including local fire officers) combined last month to raise £3,100+ for the Ukraine in a sponsored run round **St Mark's Park**. 'In total we ran 1,288 miles,, which was just short of our target to get to Kyiv. However, this distance is **enough to get to Ukraine**, and is still an amazing distance!' A special mention for **Giorgi Cheravetenko (P7b)**, who ran 40 laps over the course of the morning – around 10 miles.

A **17-year old male** has been arrested and charged with the attempted murder on 3 May in **Balfour Pl**.

**Everyone loves metal confetti.** At indoor events, it forms attractive, slow-falling showers sparkling under the stage lights. **Outside weddings**, it's a fun way of temporarily blinding the happy couple in a way true love never can. **Of course, not everyone loves metal confetti** – for example, oorie individuals who resent wading through drifts of **mood-enhancing, non-biodegradable glitter-litter** instead of the leaf mulch, gum, and dog faeces we've come to love and expect on Broughton St. Metal confetti is not allowed outside **Mansfield Traquair Centre** nuptials. But try telling that to the guests.

Public toilets are now available in **Inverleith Pk**. However, these are temporary facilities until Oct, not the **permanent conveniences** locals have long been aiming for. *Tant pis*. If **queues in the park** grow intolerably long, rest assured that alternative temporary loos are now also available in **Leith Links**.

The Water of Leith Walkway between **Anderson Pl** and **Bonnington Bridge** has reopened after reconstruction of a retaining wall.

## Friends appeal to better nature

Friends of King George V and Scotland Yard Parks have told CA Student Living (CASL) how they think plans for student housing at 72–74 Eyre Pl will negatively affect the park (21/06729/PAN).

Council criteria set out in its Open Space Strategy suggest the park is already too small for its neighbourhood. The Friends argue that a further 219 new residents (adding to the 800–900 destined for New Town North adjacent and other smaller proposed developments nearby) risks degradation of the green space from over use.

The Friends say transient students (supplementing those at Logie Green Rd, Beaverbank Pl, McDonald Rd, and Huntingdon Pl) lack a sense of community or shared ownership of a public amenity.

Pointing to the acknowledged benefits of green space for emotional and mental well-being, they urge CASL to opt instead for 'minimal housing and maximum garden space, adding to the value of what the park already offers and easing pressure on it'.

*Spurtle* shares many of these concerns and aspirations. However, urging CASL – an assertive, national developer of student housing – to foster fewer and permanent residents is like asking a shark to eat asparagus.

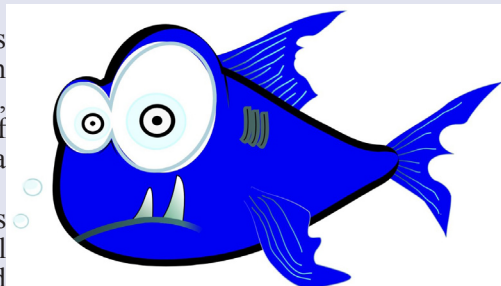


Image: Maxpixel [bit.ly/3Lxu5Sk].

### King George V Park replanting

In other news, Edinburgh Council plans to replace 61 trees removed from King George V Park with 40 trees and 25 shrubs. Planting will begin this autumn.

Shade-tolerant evergreen shrubs will comprise: Portuguese laurel, Japanese aralia, tinus, mahonia, rhododendron, and deeply tedious common box. They will occupy the park's north-western borders and the fringe beside the sloping path leading to Scotland St.

Trees to come: 5 Scots pines, 4 aspens, 11 edible-fruit trees, 6 silver birches, 6 field maples, 2 English and 2 holly oaks, 1 Atlas cedar, 1 pleasant-smelling deodar cedar, 1 coastal and 1 giant redwood.

Any tree dying within the first 3 years will be replaced.

## Creative need for affordable studios

Beaverhall House is home to 26 studio spaces with 30 associated creative businesses, including jewellery designers and makers, painters, illustrators, printmakers, photographers, ceramicists, textile designers, milliners and upholsterers. Many of the businesses also deliver classes, aiding well-being and mental health.

According to current tenants, 'These are also enterprises with local supply chains: providing products and services to the local area and economy, to national clients and international markets. In addition, the businesses and workers support other local businesses, such as tradespeople, cafes and shops.' It's a vibrant, mixed economy close to the city centre.

However, the residential-led development proposed to replace it (22/011625/FUL; Issue 317) comprises just 6 studio spaces, and how much of the remaining 719 sq m commercial space will be available to the former community is unclear. Given the shortage of suitable, affordable, semi-industrial accommodation across Edinburgh, they're worried about their future.

Interested parties tell us developers HUB may help with limited transitional arrangements for some, but ask whether HUB can also be encouraged to increase the amount of appropriate working space available. They wonder, too, if the refurbished Powderhall Stables could soon provide alternative premises.

Commenting on the HUB proposal, Cllr Jack Caldwell (Ward 12) tells *Spurtle*, 'Although there are positives in the plan, there's a worrying pattern of independent spaces being shut to make way for homes which are neither social-rent, nor offer ownership.

'Edinburgh must embrace local art entrepreneurs, especially as affordable studio waiting lists skyrocket.'





## Productive arguments start in Annandale Street

Since he left teaching in 2017 after 20 years in the state sector, Annandale St resident Michael Davies (pictured left with colleagues) has been exploring innovative ways to help young people study history.

The result is Parallel Histories [bit.ly/38cnajW], a charitable online resource for teachers and students in 330 schools and 6 countries. Employing 4 full-time staff, it provides relevant source materials and facilitates online debates, with conflict and competing senses of reality the subjects for discussion.

Current areas covered include the Israel–Palestine and Northern Ireland conflicts, the contentious consequences of the 1707 Act of Union, Dundas and the abolition of slavery, and contrasting definitions of great leadership. ‘This is history which is still contested, controversial and relevant.’

Parallel Histories encourages students to critically engage with the multiple perspectives offered and argue them through, in the process learning how and why such varied accounts are constructed. Since the Covid pandemic, it has pioneered a determinedly oral online tool for understanding, exchanging and challenging views which releases students from ‘the tyranny of writing’.

The aim is to help develop young people as active citizens in healthy, pluralistic democracies. To find out more, visit [bit.ly/3LyFwZT].

The website includes a particularly relevant blog by Luke Bacigalupo which, while not excusing Putin’s policies in the Ukraine, explains a widespread interpretation of ‘Nazism’ in contemporary Russia. It’s a view disparaged but very little understood by people – particularly, journalists – in the West. Its study is a useful corrective to both propaganda and ignorance.—AM



## New outdoor opportunity to drink in culture

Nuveen Real Estate, owner of the St James Qtr, seeks consent to erect temporary structures and enclosures in St James Sq (22/02035/FUL).

It would include a red-and-white 1920s Spiegel tent (up to 200 fully ticketed bottoms, 177.8 sq m), bar (14.9 sq m) and external seating (84 fully ticketed bottoms, 183.4 sq m).

The venue would operate between 10 am and 11 pm in Aug, with set-up and take-down taking an additional week each.

The application is apparently supported by a noise management plan prepared by acoustic engineers Waterman. At the time of writing, no sign of this appeared on the Council’s planning portal.

According to its Design Statement, Nuveen’s overarching objective is – through live events, themed concepts, ‘experiential activations’, and curated markets – to make the SJQ the ‘go to location for the “The Big Six”’: Fashion, Gastronomy, Music, Arts and Culture, Experience, and Interactive Digital.’

*Spartle* wonders whether a ‘Big Seventh’ should be added: Drinking Alcohol, for which Edinburgh is celebrated in some quarters.



## Lost homes, shrinking communities

Last month in our area, *Spartle* spotted 49 retrospective applications for change of use to short-term lets on Broughton, Frederick, S Rose, and St Andrew Streets, Thistle St/Lane and York Pl. We noted 1 refusal and 13 consent decisions for such local proposals.

This is just the tip of a citywide iceberg. The Cockburn Association counted 90 such applications in one week in early May [bit.ly/3ymnlyd]. It rightly says the city’s planning system was not designed, and is not supported to deal with this volume of traffic.

It is therefore meeting officials to discuss how to create a new and effective system which is fair to all concerned. It will call on the new governing Administration to significantly increase resources.

Enforcement also needs addressed if refusal of applications is to have any practical effect once the much vaunted new short-term-let control area starts in April 2023.

New Town & Broughton Community Council shares these concerns and believes Licensing should eventually be able to provide additional robust protection against STLs in inappropriate places, even when applicants have operated for 10 or more years.



## Briefly

If you have £33,400–£65,805 to spend on ‘thoughtful design’, lucky you. Genesis, the Korean luxury-car manufacturer plans to open a showroom at **20–22 Multrees Walk**. Genesis believes ‘luxury is the ultimate sophistication’ and to prove it shows 12-time champion **Sabrina Lutz** kiteboarding over sand dunes to somewhere fabulously expensive but nowhere in particular for a personally delivered test drive. Our guess is it’s Gullane [bit.ly/3KH7ke4].

Anyone interested in where all those lovely old **Villeneuve Wine** bottles won’t be when the premises at **49A Broughton St** reopen as a Wellness and Retreat Therapy Centre specialising in **naturopathic medicine** for anxiety, depression, and long-term COVID syndrome should visit [bit.ly/3KExH17]. *Slainte*.

Entrepreneur Stephen Leach proposes a new **23 sq m private roof terrace and staircase access** to further adorn the ‘1,000 sq ft elite, serviced, boutique office space offering a unique luxurious experience with an affordable edge’ at B-listed **15–16 Queen St** (22/01867/LBC). NGP Architecture Ltd’s revised designs respond ‘in a more discreet way as a sunken space’ to **Historic Environment Scotland** advice in 2019. The ‘hub’ would be invisible from **Queen St**, as would the new balustrade presumably intended to stop people falling over the now higher affordable edge. The developer acknowledges that **non-statutory Council guidelines** say there is limited opportunity for alterations to listed buildings, but points to nearby ‘precedents’ (although there is no such thing as a precedent in planning terms) at **44 and 107 George St**.

In Issue 317 we reported how the **Capitol Cinema on Halmyre St** had been excluded from an enlarged Leith Conservation Area following **incomplete advice** from officials. Flaws in that questionable process have now been acknowledged, and a final decision will not be made until the **Development Management Subcmte** next meets on 15 June.

**Leith Central Community Council** shares widespread local concern at proposals to erect student housing on half the development site at **139 Halmyre St**. As was made abundantly clear during the **Save Leith Walk** campaign [bit.ly/3wDxzc], ever more transient residents are not welcome in a community crying out for **permanent and genuinely affordable homes**.

In addition to some internal changes, the owner of A-listed **28 Abercromby Pl** (next to the Royal Scots Club) wants to add a period-style first-floor balcony and non-period-style rooftop terrace (22/01912/FUL). ‘**Splendid views**’ would be available from the proposed terrace to the **N and S**. Conversely, the terrace and its balustrades **would be visible** ‘from some distance away’ to the S and N. For an **interesting photographic neb** around this property, visit [bit.ly/3OUCsdK].



# Moreover ...



Food, snacks, cards, newspapers, magazines, **and much more ...** plus deliveries. Congratulations to **Anwar and Ruby**, who last month celebrated 21 years in business at **Canonmills Newsagents**.

LCCC's retro-style, 3-dimensional in-person meetings will resume in the Nelson Hall, **McDonald Rd Library** from Aug.

As the **Trams to Broughton** project progresses, responsibility for finished sections of the track (and surrounds) is being transferred from contractor to Council. Cue bunting and party poppers. Or perhaps don't. *Spurtle* hears some within **Community Councils Together on Trams** have doubts. They worry that, despite repeated assurances to the contrary from senior officials, the Council **lacks competence and administrative capacity** to understand what it's taking on – including the tram extension's proper construction and fitness for purpose – let alone how to manage it afterwards. See [bit.ly/3yDYWJZ].

**Bitumen** (loosely called asphalt) consists of non-volatile hydrocarbons and is used for roofing, waterproofing, and paving. **War in the Ukraine** has caused a spike in oil and gas prices. Oil and gas are burned to heat bitumen to **c. 150 °C during storage**. Bitumen production and consumption have nose-dived as a result. **Edinburgh's tram project** uses bitumen – lots of it. Passengers are scheduled to travel along the route extension in **spring next year**. What could possibly go wrong?

**Leith Gala Day** returns to Leith Links on Sat 11 June. See [bit.ly/37PBfUg] for updates.

**Drummond Community High School** has been awarded £1,000 in the Tesco Bags for Life scheme. Thanks to all customers who aimed **blue tokens in the right direction**. Funds will be spent widening access to the **Duke of Edinburgh Award** programme.

**Edinburgh Council** plans pre-application consultation on Phase 3 of the former waste transfer station site at **165 Broughton Rd**. Online consultation will run for 3 weeks from 6 June, plus a live digital event from 3–7 pm on 12 June (TBC). For those yet to emerge **blinking and bewildered** into the 21st century, 'leaflets, posters and information boards will be circulated in the local area'. Try not to trip over them.

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Printed by Minuteman Press, 63 Elm Row.

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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.**

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**Next meeting: 7pm on Mon. 20 June.**  
**See website below for confirmed venue.**

<https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>

christians against poverty

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*"I am here to help and serve all constituents in Edinburgh Northern and Leith. If there is something I can assist you with, or if you would like to discuss any issues or ideas, please contact me or come and see me at one of my monthly Drop-in Help & Advice Surgeries."*

**Drop-in Help & Advice Surgeries**  
**Friday 1 July 2022**

**9:30 to 10:30**  
Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre, 11 Pilton Drive North, EH5 1NF

**11:00 to 12:00**  
Prentice Centre, 1 Granton Mains Avenue, EH4 4GA

**15:30 to 16:30**  
Leith Community Centre, 12A Newkirkgate, EH6 6AD

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## NEW TOWN & BROUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**Representing locals' views to City of Edinburgh Council.**

**You're very welcome to attend.**

Come along and make a difference. Next meeting: **Mon. 13 June at 7.00pm.**  
**Venue/format TBC.**

[www.ntbcc.org.uk](http://www.ntbcc.org.uk)