

## MCDONALD ROAD PLANNING APPLICATION Not right yet?



Last year's controversial planning application to develop the Martin and Frost site in McDonald Road was eventually withdrawn. In January Stuart Milne Homes and Malcolm Fraser Architects called a public meeting to discuss a revised proposal for a residential development with commercial units. Community Council planning convener **Bob Stewart** was there:

Residents raised a range of issues including style of the design, parking, noise, traffic, and the proposal to close the gap by building against the tenement gable – deeply unpopular, especially on the part of residents who would lose windows.

My view is, there is still insufficient opening into the site. Industrial black-blue brick on key street elevations will certainly make the building stand out, but also makes it very foreboding. And I'm not comfortable at all about the proposals regarding residents' windows. The Community Council planning group

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will review the application once advertised.

The application was advertised on 21st January, and can be seen on the City Council's website or at 1 Cockburn Street (Ref. No. 05/00021/FUL).

### **Spurtle** is your local community paper.

We aim to inform about local affairs; raise local issues; publicise the work of local action groups; make connections between 'the news' and people's own lives in Broughton; and stir things up a bit!

We'll support people looking for a fair deal, but not protect privilege. We're not connected to any political group or party. And we don't get a grant from anybody to finance the paper.

We invite you to contact us and:

- react to what **Spurtle** has had to say
- raise new issues
- let us know about community activities
- tell us what you feel about life in Broughton.

Telephone 556 7727 or 556 0903

Write to us c/o Broughton Books, 2a Broughton Place, EH1 3RX – you can put a letter through the letter box at any time

#### e-mail

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## Contacts

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Mitchell Manson 557 1933

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**Cllr Trevor Davies**  
Broughton Ward 529 3221  
Surgery at Broughton Primary School, Weds. 6.30pm-7pm during school terms

**Cllr David Guest**  
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**Mark Lazarowicz**  
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# Spurtle

February  
2005

Tel - 556 0903  
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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER**

No 122 broughton.spurtle@blueyonder.co.uk Free

## Vote YES in the referendum!

Between 7th and 21st February we'll have the chance to vote on the City Council's plans to tackle transport problems, which include congestion charging. From the tone of some of the opposition, you'd think cars were to be banned from Edinburgh – not charged a maximum of £2 a day to come into the city!

- 42% of Edinburgh households do not have access to a car.
- Congestion charging in London: before, 40% support, six months after, 60% support.

'Just another way to take our money off us!' is one reaction to the proposed congestion charges: in fact the Council will be obliged to spend any income from the charge on transport improvements to benefit us all. There should be no charge on car journeys until more improvements to alternative means of travel are in place: three new railway stations have already been opened, park and ride schemes introduced, a new 'Fastlink' bus service for West Edinburgh started in December, and screens for real-time information for bus passengers have begun to appear at bus stops; and there's more to come before introduction of the charge, including extra bus services starting the week before. But the best improvement will come from the increased speed and reliability of buses due to reduced congestion.

Supporters of the Council's proposals include the environmental and public transport groups. And contrary to what some would like us to believe, not all business interests are united in opposition.

Many of us may have genuine reservations about the congestion charging element in the Council's proposals: about the exact route of the inner cordon, perhaps, or whether £2 a day will really be enough to persuade many people to make fewer car journeys. But the Council is committed to review the scheme at regular intervals if it comes into force, so there's the possibility of improvements

in the future. Meanwhile the time for delay is long past. For decades any suggestion that car use should be restricted has met with fierce resistance; and politicians have feared to grasp the nettle. The need for action to make our streets safer, healthier and better to live in is now urgent. And after all those years of dodging the issue only a combination of carrot and stick has any chance of success.



There's a Food Co-op every Wednesday, 9.30am to 12.30pm, in the residents' premises in Redbraes Park. On offer are good quality and value vegetables, fruit and other items associated with healthy eating. Janet Reid (on the right) and her friend Mary both agree that it provides a valuable service to the elderly and others in the local community. The project is run by Edinburgh Food Initiative. 'Why not come along and see what they have to offer', says Redbraes activist Davie Thomson. 'It's worth the visit!'

**Editorial, production and distribution:** Alan McIntosh, Anne Aarsten, David Watt, Eileen and John Dickie, Fiona Watt, Gavin MacGregor, Ken McKay, Davie Thomson, Norma McKendrick and Tim Puntis. **Published** 11 months each year (not January). **Printed** on recycled paper by Clydeside Press Ltd, 37 High Street, Glasgow, G1 1LX.

## BRIEFLY

Congratulations to **Joy Hendry** of Broughton Place, editor of the literary magazine *Chapman* for more than 30 years. On 28th January she received an honorary doctorate from Edinburgh University for services to literature.

*Broughton had a Zoo before Corstorphine and a Botanic Garden before Inverleith. Our Zoo lay between present-day Bellevue Street and East Claremont Street, the Botanic Garden between Haddington Place and Hopetoun Crescent. Alan Bennell will tell the story of Broughton's Botanics at our History Society's meeting on Monday, 7th February, 7.15pm at Drummond Community High. Visitors welcome (£1).*

The Broughton Road Project have their AGM on Saturday, 26th February, 10.30am to 12.30pm at McDonald Road Library. Alan Booth from the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers will speak about their work at Redbraes and show slides.

*Drummond's Parent Staff Association meets on Monday, 7th March, 6.30pm at Drummond Community High. The main topic for discussion will be the School's Social Inclusion Policy; other items on the agenda are planned collaboration with senior students to run a ceilidh and a car boot sale, plus any school issue you'd like to raise. Any parent, carer or staff member can attend. For more information contact Rob Hainsworth on 556 1594.*

Date and details of a meeting of local PTAs and PSAs to discuss **congestion charging** will be announced after the referendum results are announced on 22nd February.

*How come developers' portacabins have been parked in Barony Place playpark? Broughton Village Association investigated, and found the developers have done a deal with the City Council: in return for temporary parking space they'll fix a wall that needs rebuilding.*

In November we reported the recent death of film-maker Jack Shea of Forth Street. Now a tribute website created by his friends is up and running: [www.jackshea.co.uk](http://www.jackshea.co.uk)

JOHN W B CALDWELL

## Broughton loses local historian

*Jack Caldwell celebrated his 89th birthday in November, then died suddenly on 13th January. John Dickie of Broughton History Society writes:*

Born and bred in Stockbridge, Jack and his wife Mamie bought a house in Rodney Street in the late 1940s – where he lived until moving to sheltered housing a couple of years ago. For over fifty years he was a well-kent face on the Broughton scene, being particularly active in the life of St Mary's Church in Bellevue Crescent as an elder, in the drama society and as church historian. In the 1990s he produced a series of leaflets to help congregation and visitors alike appreciate the Church's architecture, stained glass and organ; and then in 2000 a fascinating short history of the church from its planning in 1820 to its union with the church in Broughton Place in 1992.

But his historical knowledge went far beyond the story of his church.

Sometimes when I was rushing somewhere and met Jack in the street I'd get impatient with his endless flow of memories. Then it dawned on me what I was missing through this pointless hurry, and I began to listen



more carefully. Eventually we agreed to get organised, and the result was a wealth of local history recorded during many happy hours of interview. After reading the transcripts he sent me copious corrections and additions; and just last month a note in his Christmas card asked anxiously after how my editing was progressing!

### BROUGHTON STREET ROUNDABOUT

## Curse or blessing?

*Last year two local cyclists wrote in to suggest that the roundabout at the foot of Broughton Street should be replaced by traffic lights and crossings at the crossroads. This would make life safer and more pleasant for cyclists and pedestrians – and flowers and seating in the corners of the junction could compensate for loss of the roundabout flowerbed. Eric Robinson of Broughton Place disagrees:*

A big mistake to do away with the roundabout with the idea that it will help vehicle/pedestrian problems. With the roundabout gone and traffic lights, traffic coming up and down

Broughton Street with the lights in their favour would have even less inclination to slow down at the junction – already their speed can be frightening. Why not speed cameras and a pedestrian crossing somewhere below the church? In that way all four streets would have pedestrian crossings. Traffic apart, the raised island provides a welcome patch of colour with its flowers, and is an end-stop to an increasingly attractive shopping street.

*As we reported in November, a pedestrian crossing is planned for Mansfield Place.*

### URBAN FOXES

## Basil Brush – friend or foe?

*In the past we've reported on various local sightings. 'A large dog fox with magnificent red rusty coat', for example, 'its forepaws draped over the apex of the roof on Lothian Buses' garage'; or the lady at her garden gate in the dark who bent and patted a dog's head – when it turned away she saw its tail and realised it was a fox! Local residents seemed to welcome those glimpses of wildlife: but are attitudes changing? Fiona Watt investigated for Spurtle.*

Urban foxes – noble wildlife or dangerous vermin? It's a general presumption that numbers of urban foxes are on the increase – but recent research on urban fox populations in the UK suggests that populations have remained stable for 20 years. While there are those who enjoy urban wildlife, not everyone is happy to share their gardens with wild animals.



Bellevue resident Jean Meiklejohn has seen foxes scampering across her lawn and having a snooze at the bottom of her garden. Jean is very firmly in the dangerous vermin camp: 'They have stopped me from enjoying my garden in the summer' she says. 'They use the gardens as a toilet – I have seen five of them running across my lawn from my kitchen window – and we believe there is a fox lair in the gardens of Bellevue Street.'

Speaking in support of our furry friends, Edinburgh-based Advocates for Animals (AFA) say that problems caused by urban foxes are few and are easily resolved without killing. A spokesperson said 'most fox "nuisance" experienced by people in urban and suburban areas comes under three categories: digging, fouling, and noise – all part of natural fox behaviour. Most problems can easily be prevented by using safe, approved chemical repellents'.

'Foxes are a self-regulating species,

and cannot overpopulate, but will always breed back to replace the numbers lost since the previous breeding season, so when foxes populate an urban area they are very difficult to control. Some cities have

advise the use of Renardine, a strong smelling liquid that can be spread around the garden on rags, as a fox deterrent. If foxes are fouling your garden, they advise pouring coarse sand and Renardine on top of it – if



*Photographed at Redbraes on 13th January, by local resident Davie Thomson*

tried culling but it has not worked, as other foxes simply come in from outside the area to replace them. Pest controllers who offer a "control" service will omit to tell you there is no such thing as a vacant territory – if you remove one fox, another will take over the territory within weeks.'

Solutions? Edinburgh Council Environmental Services Pest Control

you persist with this, the foxes may get fed up and move on (preferably not into your neighbour's garden!).

To receive practical advice, anyone experiencing problems with urban foxes can contact AFA's The Fox Project on 01732 367 397 or call its Fox Deterrence Helpline on 0906 272 4411. or visit [www.thefoxproject.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.thefoxproject.fsnet.co.uk).



### New Town Broughton and Pilrig Community Council

#### Vacancies for Community Councillors

The Community Council represents the views of local residents to Edinburgh City Council.

We are looking for two people to fill vacancies on the Community Council. If you think you might be interested phone the Secretary for a chat, or come along to our next meeting on Monday 7th February at 7.30pm in the library, Drummond High. Secretary: Annette O'Carroll 556 7586  
E-mail: [aocarroll1@onetel.net](mailto:aocarroll1@onetel.net)

### Malcolm Chisholm MSP Edinburgh North and Leith



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12pm Stockbridge Library