

A VIEW FROM THE WINDOW

Sitting here, looking through my window at busy Broughton Street, I watch as mothers and dads with children in buggies toil their way up the hill. Occasionally an elderly person passes, pausing frequently for breath. Cars tear on by, waiting restlessly at red lights, mindless of the living community around them.

I wonder why no-one had ever thought of creating a small park near the top of Broughton Street. With flowers and trees, which would help neutralise the car fumes as well as providing rest for the old folk and a place for children to play.

Had the idea ever been proposed, when a site was created on the corner of Albany Street when the church was pulled down? I doubt it. An office block stands there now. Although it does have a low wall where people sometimes sit to eat their lunchtime sandwiches.

HOPETOUN VILLAGE

The March meeting of New Town Broughton and Pilrig Community Council was the occasion for the presentation of an inspired vision for the future which could put Broughton at the forefront of sustainable urban regeneration.

The meeting was packed with members of the community who had come to study plans for the proposed Hopetoun Village, as envisioned by architect Ian Appleton and Dave Rushton.

Residents living near the area marked for development had already made it clear that they wanted a largely self sustaining community, which would be linked into surrounding areas. Most importantly it would have a green space at its heart, surrounded by a mix of shops,

Later I watch the late afternoon sun pass over the gap between the two buildings opposite; the small patch of backgreen glowing in the setting rays. Soon Mr Akram's newsagent and tobacco shop will throw out a welcoming light for its home-going customers. At seven the shutters go down. They'll open again at six next morning. Newsagents aren't allowed lie-ins!

A bubble from 'Over the Rainbow' floats by, followed by the first of the evening's revellers. Sounds of merry-making are heard till the early hours in Broughton Street, as people spill out from cafes, pubs and clubs.

In contrast, my back window looks out at a scene of peace and quiet, a row of poplars etched against the evening sky. These lovely trees nearly met an untimely death by chainsaw - as reported in the July issue of the Spurtle. Thankfully they were rescued to enjoy another summer; and many, many more I hope.

Sadly, I shall not be here to see them as I'm having to move on. Goodbye Broughton Street, I'll miss you. But I hope I'll be back before too long.

houses, and a medical and neighbourhood centre. These would provide amenities to all generations including teenagers - who, everyone agreed, are poorly provided for in Broughton.

The plans contained all this and more. Most excitingly they proposed energy efficient buildings with solar panels, as well as making the area car free. The latter of course being dependent on Edinburgh Council committing itself to investing in a cohesive public transport policy, fit for the 21st century!

Your **Spurtle** reporter came away feeling inspired by a vision for a modern urban community which, if taken up, could provide a positive example for the start of a new millennium.



If you'd like to help write, produce or distribute the **SPURTLE** please contact us as soon as possible! We publish about once a month.

BROUGHTON BOOKS in Broughton Place are our "postbox". You can put a letter addressed to us through their letter box at any time OR PHONE - 556 7928 or 556 0903

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DRUMMOND STUDENTS PROTEST

On Tuesday 5th March about 100 students at Drummond Community High School poured out into the playground in a spirited demonstration against the proposed cuts in education.

"we could lose two teachers."

The protest, which was organised by 15 year old Kirsty Simpson, took the form of a one hour boycott of lessons. "If the School budget is cut by even two percent", Kirsty told the Spurtle, "we could lose two teachers." Fourth year students Billy Tomlinson and Alec Gallagher, who were obviously cherishing the unexpected break from lessons, nevertheless

"we'd get less individual attention."

agreed that fewer teachers would be bad for them. "It would mean larger classes", they said, "so we'd get less individual attention."

Everyone agreed that despite a natural tendency for young people to put school attendance way down on their list of 'Favourite Pastimes', when it came to the crunch they did value their education.

Councillor Maginnis, please take note!

Spurtle went to Drummond head Frank McGrail for the latest on the cuts - see inside.

CABLE TROUBLE

The Bellevue and Claremont area is the scene of noise and dirt as trenches are dug for a cable business spinal link. Did you get a leaflet about this before work started? Did you get the brochure about cable that should have been delivered even earlier? After much phoning, chair of the Residents' Association Eileen Dickie had a visit from United Artists spokesman Mr Quilietti. Evidently cable companies are under no legal obligation to let local residents know what's happening, but it's company policy to do so - and their contractors are instructed to deliver a leaflet to every

household before work starts. At least some leaflets were delivered, belatedly, following this meeting.

That evening the contractors went off the job leaving long sections of pipe sticking out of the lane in Melgund Terrace, right across the pavement and into the road. After a phone-call they were eventually moved late at night. If there's danger to life or limb, or the contractors don't relay surfaces satisfactorily - COMPLAIN.

United Artists construction manager Martin Webb - 477 5610

District Council's 'Clarence' - 0800 23 23 23 (up to 8pm)

FLATS SAGA CONTINUES

The story in Thursday 21st March Evening News about McDonald Road - "£5m city flats will go ahead" - was pretty misleading. **Spurtle** readers should know that there was no vote for that design of flats but rather just an acceptance of housing in principle. Barratt Homes were told to go away and rethink their design - which can only be good for residents who want to see a good end product. Specifically, they were asked to redesign the open

space element, increase the amount of family housing, and reduce the 7 storey block.

We are now waiting to see if Barratts will appeal against the District Council, or follow the Planning Committee's recommendations about redesigning - in which case we will be offering them some of our advice!

George Reiss
Chairman, McDonald Area Amenity Society.

NEW CENTRE SETTLES IN

The Stafford Centre is up and running at 103 Broughton Street.

Centre manager Alex Campbell told **Spurtle** that the positive reaction by local people has been "really heartening" - greetings from folk at the bus stop and in the shops, saying

how nice it is to see lights on and the place being used again.

There will be an open day eventually, but Centre users don't want to rush it. They'd rather be well settled in first, and ready to entertain us.

DRUMMOND MARKET - FIGURE IT OUT

Responding to our comments on the proposal for an outdoor market in Drummond's playground last month, the School's Head teacher Frank McGrail told us he considered consultation "crucial". That was why he'd contacted our local councillor and the Community Council. Delay in making a decision on the matter was unavoidable if there was to be full consultation first, both with the local community and within the School itself. But the decision on whether or not to agree to letting the playground to Universal Markets will be his: the Education Department cannot force him to do so. (Even if he does decide to let the land, Universal Markets would then still have to apply for planning permission - an opportunity for local objections.)

Spurtle decided to carry out its own door-to-door survey - not a blanket coverage of everyone who might have

a view, but a typical sample of residents living around the boundaries of the playground. We circulated houses with information and a questionnaire and called a few days later to collect specific responses and gather in any general comments.

See **Spurtle** survey results below

Clearly, there is at present an overwhelming resistance to the plans and, even amongst those more open to the idea, there were real concerns on the doorstep.

There was no lack of additional comment, much of it showing that this market was not a response to a local need - there are already nearby markets, a supermarket, St. James Centre, not to mention a variety of local shops. It is rather a speculative venture aimed at incoming customers

Survey Results

1. Were you previously aware of outline details of the proposed market?	
AWARE	43.6
NOT AWARE	56.4
2. Is your immediate reaction favourable?	
FAVOURABLE	25.6
UNFAVOURABLE	69.2
3. Would you use this market for your own purposes?	
USE	30.7
NOT USE	66.6

4. As a local resident would any of the following cause you concern?		
• noise	YES	71.8
	NO	28.2
• traffic/parking	YES	84.6
	NO	15.4
• litter/refuse	YES	84.6
	NO	15.4
• smells/other pollution	YES	82
	NO	18
• general disruption	YES	61.5
	NO	35.9

MARKET FOOTNOTE

A Saturday market would remove a major resource for the community at weekends as one of the few playspaces for children and teenagers available locally. This playground is an important meeting area for children and it is not clear that there would be a substitute if the recreational use of the playground at weekends was withdrawn. A better development

would be to upgrade these grounds as a high quality recreational area for the community.

Fran Wasoff
Bellevue Place

This is just one paragraph from a longer letter which generally reflected the findings of the survey.

in large enough numbers to make it worthwhile. And on property which should perhaps remain for community benefit in any case.

There was no shortage of knock-on effects mentioned - early morning deliveries, vastly increased vehicle movements, inadequate parking, pedestrian safety, security or vandalism of property and cars, additional noise (such as piped music), public toilet provision, the encroachment of waste and litter and discarded fast food well beyond the boundaries of the premises.

It was striking that people welcomed the chance to give their views, irrespective of the opinions expressed. We are grateful to all those who took the trouble to respond - and regret that anyone wishing to was missed. But that needn't prevent you contacting us even now. Use the questions shown below to express your view, or let us know of other issues. Contact us with your say at: **Spurtle** Postbox, Broughton Books, 2a Broughton Place or phone 556 7727.

5. Can you see benefits for the local community?		
	YES	33.3
	NO	64.1
6. Are your views affected by the funds being provided to		
• Drummond Community High School	YES	12.8
	NO	87.2
• Regional Council	YES	7.7
	NO	87.2

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PICTURES OF BROUGHTON

The event that took place at Drummond recently, when Charlie Miller collected some interesting snaps from local people, went very well. But he is looking for more.

Almost everyone has a box of old snaps somewhere, and it is worth looking them out. Charlie's idea is to make a collection of snaps that show family life in the Broughton area in the past and in the present. The photos could be in the backgreen, front garden, school picnic - as long as it's happening in Broughton he would like to see it. So start searching out



Broughton Court, site now part of St. Mary's Primary School playground. (Lent by Ella Brodie)

those old photos, or think of others that have left the area who might have snaps taken in the area - roughly from Leith Walk to Canonmills, and from McDonald Road to Dublin Street.

Charlie's planning to have another collection in Drummond quite soon: if you want to get in touch with him, phone 557 6004. When he has enough photos he hopes to put on an exhibition.

DRUMMOND AND THE CUTS

A month ago we were talking about a 5% cut in education budgets: the 2% figure that's now emerged is obviously better than that. But as Drummond Community High's Head pointed out to Spurtle, that's on top of last year's 2% - part of "the constant erosion of public education." "We're a rich society", says Mr McGrail, and we should be funding improved educational provision, appropriate to a modern society.

There's a separate budget for community education at the School, and here the cuts are much more than 2%. In calculating how many teachers to fund, the Education Department allows for the adults that come in to join School classes - that allowance has been cut from 2 to the equivalent of 1.4 (around a 30% cut). And for paying part-time tutors of special adult classes there's a 5% cut in funding.

On the main School budget, funding for two fulltime teachers has been cut. That's how the Education Department has calculated the cut in Drummond's cash. But it's up to the

heidie where in the curriculum the cuts will be made: which subjects will lose teachers - or are there other ways of saving some of the money? Savings on books and equipment seem out of the question - that's already down to £50 per student per year; but he'll have to look at things like energy savings. "This is not an authoritarian school", says Mr McGrail; there has to be lots of consultation before he makes those hard decisions.

Apart from the cuts, Drummond is already losing staff because of a falling roll. But it's not all doom and gloom. New First Year intake of students suggests Drummond's roll will rise; and in spite of the cuts money has been found for a new Home Economics room, and other smaller improvements such as new blackboards.

Mr McGrail sees a tough two years for Drummond, and then better days ahead.

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