

Traffic - and the right to be heard

Just to recap, the Central Edinburgh Traffic Management scheme proposes a comprehensive plan for a traffic-free Princes Street - and substantial knock-on effects for nearby city centre communities such as Broughton.

Spurtle has long been a supporter of the basic thrust of the proposals to get control of town traffic but recognises that they attract a wide range of views and that basic to any fundamental change is the need, in Broughton, to be equally innovative in controlling traffic flows on Broughton Street and introducing measures to protect the residential amenity of surrounding streets from use as rat-runs, for illegal parking and the like.

Given that these were matters on which people clearly had a view and were moved to express this in writing to the Council, it was particularly unedifying to observe how the Council reacted to their submissions. Were they objections, were they comments? Were they entitled to be heard at the Public Hearing (now due for Spring 2002), were they not? Would they be reported on by the Council, would they not?

One person to take this up was Stephanie Harvey of the Broughton Village Association and, shortly after they had been told they had no right to be heard, 88 people throughout the city were 'reclassified as objectors' and their right restored. So far, so good you'd think. But, as yet another local resident told **Spurtle**, he had made genuine 'comments' on protecting the Broughton area from the impact of the Princes Street scheme - while supporting the proposals in principle - but had also been reclassified as an objector and recorded as such for the purposes of the official Hearing! Which makes one want to know just how representative are the results of public consultation, and, more pertinently, what are the regulations which govern the process

for making representations. Once made, how are officials required to process them and how do they ensure information available to formal Hearings is valid and accurate? Surely such regulations exist.

We may soon find out. The BVA has taken this up with the Council and awaits a reply. Certainly there will be future occasions when genuine consultation gives people the chance for their voice to be heard. They must know that this can be simply and effectively done.

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Pledges sought by re-opened Mosque



Last month **Spurtle** reported on the horrifying fire damage perpetrated on the Annandale Street Mosque and Community Centre and the determined efforts needed to restore the building, particularly in time for observing the month of Ramadan.

The good news is that, at a packed out event on 12 November, the newly renovated premises re-opened its doors for regular worship and ready to take

Eid Ul Fitr

'Eid' - in Arabic - is happiness. One of two in the Muslim calendar, Eid ul Fitr celebrates the end of fasting for the month of Ramadan when Muslims forego food and liquid from dawn to dusk.

It will be celebrated on 15 or 16 December, uncertain because the Muslim month observes the cycle of the moon rather than the sun. This year, the month of Ramadan started on 16 November and could be either 29 or 30 days long. The lunar year is also about 10 days shorter so, gradually, both Ramadan and Eid rotate round the seasons.

Typically, the Eid day will start with taking a bath and putting on brand new clothes. Morning congregational prayers are said at the Mosque. Houses are decorated and lots of celebration food is cooked. In Islamic countries,

forward its plans to become a fully operational information and community centre.

At the opening ceremony, attended among many others by the then acting First Minister, Jim Wallace, local MSP, Malcolm Chisholm and Councillor Trevor Davies, the Chair of the Executive Committee recognised the fund of good will existing for the mosque but made a plea for this to be backed up by public funding for the many educational, social and recreational programmes still needing to be tackled.

The centre was set up four years ago by £300,000 of community

the atmosphere is like a huge all-day festival. On such a joyous occasion, everyone is greeted, adults and children exchange gifts and visits are made to family homes. The poor and needy are showered with gifts and food.

Last year the timing of Eid fell within a day or so of Christmas - here, even more enjoyable and twice the fun for the children!

This item provided by our friends at the mosque.

Poetry for today

Poems in Scots, English, Gaelic and Persian. Anger, sadness, humour, and hope. The mosque hosted a poetry evening on 10 November organised by the Stop the War Coalition with a full house of nearly 200 people and others turned away.

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donation and, despite promises of support, there has been no recognition of the role the centre plays by any of the public funding bodies. The mosque recognises the pressure on public funds, and accepts it may still have a thing or two to learn about doing what it takes to get itself onto the list of priorities! All the more reason that we should show the level of our local support.

Executive member Masud Khan points to the clear potential the centre has if resourced properly and the positive reaction from both Scottish Executive and city representatives. He is following up on this and will be letting **Spurtle** know what progress is made.

*
Our
next issue
will be February
2002. To those who
have had a good year,
long may it continue. To those
not so
fortunate let's
hope things will get better.
Thanks to all our readers, supporters,
advertisers
and Clydeside Press.
Copy for the next edition 26th January.
Spurtle
556 0903
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The words of the writers who took part expressed an outpouring of thoughts and feelings on the so-called 'war against terrorism'. It was also an occasion of solidarity with the hosts at a time of great anxiety for them. The audience left with renewed determination to speak out against the bombing of Afghanistan.

BRIEFLY

A Highly Commended Education Award from Standard Life has gone to Drummond and Pilrig Park Schools for their **special science programme** providing a course which meets the needs of S3/4 pupils at both schools with moderate learning difficulties. VG to all concerned!

And congratulations to Muriel Buchanan, appointed in November as **Head Teacher at Drummond CHS**. Six years at the school and already acting head during a period of ongoing change, Muriel is looking forward to the challenge of seeing this through to completion.

Work on renovation of Mansfield Church is due to be completed by March 2002 when it will be taken over by the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations. There will be **public Open Days from May onwards**. Further fundraising will be required to preserve the Phoebe Traquair murals but the Trust is optimistic. The site banner at the corner of East London Street has proved vulnerable to winter winds as locals will have noticed - but a major overhaul has restored it to its former glory!

Spurtle was glad to meet up with the Council's Enforcement Officers, on East London Street during November to combat the **kerbside dumping of litter**. The area is still afflicted by this vandalism but good to know it's being taken seriously. Worth repeating - again! - if you spot offending rubbish, phone 529 3030 so action can be taken to trace the culprits. Same number to arrange uplift of large items of household refuse.

Lothians and Borders Police Board is setting up a **Race Relations Adviser scheme** and is advertising for three voluntary posts as Adviser. A certain knowledge in the field of community race relations will be required but a mix of general public applicants is sought. If interested, phone Spurtle in the first instance for fuller information, 556 7727.

Drummond - the road ahead

Work at Drummond Community High School continues apace, both inside and outside the school buildings. Following up developments since last month's report, **Spurtle** was told that pupils were about to be decanted into the temporary units in the playground, freeing up the lower level of the school for internal refurbishment due for completion in February.

Outside, locals will have observed that the Cochran Terrace gate is now closed on a long term temporary basis - the permanent outcome is yet to be decided, a matter we will no doubt take up again.

A major change of plan is the creation of a site vehicle entry through the railings on Mansfield Place with a vehicle track alongside the school's perimeter with Mansfield Church to the contractor's compound in the playground. The bus stop has been re-sited and existing trees and grassed areas will be removed. This is thought best to ensure pupil safety and facilitate ongoing work and **Spurtle** continues to support what is needed to progress the refurbishment at DCHS.

Have you been left stood standing particularly at rush-hour wondering if your bus has been, gone or never was? Or did the new No.8 timetable pass you by?

Spurtle has had a steady flow of 'observations' on the subject. Broughton Village Association are asking LRC if **any monitoring is being done** - or even if direct consultation might be undertaken!

Pat Eccles has reported to the Community Council on the **'Edinburgh Trees' project** and progress for the greening of Broughton Road. There remain many other spots around Broughton where action is needed and Pat hopes various interested groups can co-operate on this. If interested in becoming active phone her on 556 7550.

However, given the possible impact on the local community, we are disappointed at the continued lack of basic information and consultation on such developments. When informed of these, local residents' group The Broughton Village Association raised issues on which they have now sought assurances from the Council's Head of Planning -

- the volume, frequency and timing of site access. Traffic flow and rush hour congestion on Mansfield Place is already of concern;
 - the effect on bus routes and timing
 - the maintenance of pavements and public road surfaces (at a time of bad weather) and the pedestrian and traffic safety issues which arise;
 - disruption to the general amenity of Mansfield Place residents;
 - the restoration of trees, grass and railings within DCHS itself.
- It may be that all this has already been taken on board, it would just be good to know.

A fascinating exhibition (now ended!) was to be seen at the Library displaying plans for the **refurbishment of Dryden Street**. In case you missed it we're delighted to reproduce a little bit of nostalgia for those who remember (or who missed out on) trams in the area.



PC Kot of The Yard Checklist

A change of image for both Scotland Yard Adventure Centre, and PC Tony Kot of Gayfield Square Police Station! SYAC are celebrating their 15th Anniversary by a complete makeover as part of which they now will be known simply as The Yard. And that's where Tony comes in.

With his eye on the New York Marathon on 4 November (undertaken in his own time and at his own expense,

training regime... well, not really, but he had done a couple of marathons sometime in the past and thought he was generally fit enough. Maybe his 19 years at Gayfield including the past seven years as a community policeman hoofing it round the Broughton and New Town area had something to do with it.

Having been selected as one of the 2000 UK runners (from 10,000



it should be said) Tony decided that all that effort might as well be put to good use and set about getting sponsorship for funds towards a much needed piece of special needs equipment at The Yard, a giant sand pit costing an equally giant £700. And that's when things took off. Over fifty commercially donated prizes rolled in, to be awarded to those buying in to predicting what Tony's time would be.

All that was left was... well, to run a marathon! He would need a strict

applicants) to join the 30,000 others from over 100 nationalities, Tony donned his jimmy wig and joined in an event he is unlikely to repeat. He told **Spurtle** the experience was unique, boosted by the New Yorkers' wish to counter the appalling events of only a few weeks before and ready to give their visitors an outstanding welcome.

And the outcome? As he no doubt told in his live interview with NBC! - he came 498th (out of 30,000) and 88th in his over-40 group. Which all sounds good for The Yard - and for Tony himself whose idea of doing something for his community goes 'way beyond his job.

Meantime, for those of us with not quite Tony's initiative, The Yard still needs funds for vital equipment. For those who feel like donating something from their Christmas budget, or joining the Friends of The Yard scheme just launched, contact Elaine Hogg on 476 4506. It could be the start of something even bigger.

Broughton Councillor, Trevor Davies looks towards 2002

"Always top of everyone's list is the large number of new building developments. I want to make sure of two things, first, that the new buildings are neither too big nor too high for the site and, second, that we try everything possible to make the buildings better - in their design, in their sustainability, in their use of green landscaping. Developers will need considerable encouragement and sometimes enforcement to meet these standards.

Then there's keeping the streets clean. The first half of the new year will see the detailed planning and then installation of street bins in all the 'non-heritage city' local areas. Experience in other parts of the city suggests that they are very good news. Also, I am looking for ways to use the licensing system for take-away shops to see that traders clean the streets near their shops. More of that later.

And on that other bugbear - traffic, the new year will see the public consultation over the Council's New Transport Initiative, whereby we'll at last start the process of investing unprecedented amounts of money in public transport and roads, funded mostly by government but in part by a 'congestion charge'. This will have a big impact on Broughton and I want to spend as much time as possible listening to local views. Meantime, people who use Broughton Street will be pleased to see the two traffic islands being installed as a boost to road safety.

And, of course, next year will see the gradual refurbishment of the whole of Drummond School."

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