



May

NEWSLETTER

2015

AGM and PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday 20 May at 7.30 pm Holy Cross Church Hall, Quality Street

DISCUSSION OF LOCAL ISSUES

with Darren Wraight

Local Roads Manager, West Team, City of Edinburgh Council

and Phillipa Campbell

Local Area Police Sergeant, South Queensferry

The Almond Councillors, Lindsay Paterson, Alastair Shields and Norman Work will be in attendance

The Association would welcome questions in advance so send them email to charlotte@dmain.co.uk or deliver to either Charlotte Cowe, 151 Main Street or Rod Alexander 30 Silverknowes Drive

Refreshments provided courtesy of the Association.

LOCAL ACTION LIST

The main item on the agenda will be our local action list which has been developed with the West Team to hold a record of all the local issues and problems which currently require to be addressed. The list includes major projects such as the new footpath at Silverknowes Road East, local traffic and parking problems such as at Vivian Terrace/Corbiehill Crescent and more minor problems such as damaged or missing bollards. It has been drawn up from the records of all the contacts, queries and complaints that have been received from local residents and the idea is that for the first time will provide an ongoing formal record of local issues and what is being done to consider each problem. In the past it has been all too easy for complaints to have been made through us or directly to the West Team and then for some to have been forgotten and drop of the edge as more pressing problems arise. We do not want this to happen in future and the action list is a way of ensuring it does not happen. The intention is that at monthly or bi-monthly intervals the list will be made available to local residents on our notice board and website.

At the AGM, our local List Manager, Darren Wraight, will be present for a discussion about any projects on the list and to address any queries residents may have, but we also hope that residents will take the opportunity to tell us about other local problems that they think need to be considered. We are specifically asking residents to tell us what they think is the biggest local problem in our area that needs to be addressed and we hope that as many as possible will help us by answering the question on the reverse of the membership form. We would welcome responses even from those who do not wish to become members of the Association because it is important for us to get as many points of view as possible. This is another chance for residents to let us know that what they think matters.

WAR MEMORIAL –MISSING NAMES

Due to the winding up of the Davidson's Mains Memorial Trust, the DMSA has taken ownership of the War Memorial at The Green. We know of one name which has been omitted from the memorial and we are anxious to rectify any other omissions. We also feel it is appropriate to commemorate servicemen/women from this community who have died in conflict since WW2. Due to data protection this information is not available from the Ministry of Defence or online so the DMSA would like to have the details for both these categories of servicemen/women. Contact Charlotte on 336 2494; email charlotte@dmain.co.uk if you have any information.

LOCAL 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT

Most residents will by now be aware that in January the Council gave approval in principle to the roll-out of 20 mph speed limits across the city. This followed on from a successful pilot scheme in South Edinburgh. The plan now is for a phased introduction over the next three years and after full implementation the only exceptions to the reduced limits will be on main roads which are part of designated principle traffic arteries. The provisional timetable means that the DMSA area will become subject to the reduced speed limit from early 2017. We know from our correspondence that a significant majority of local residents will welcome these proposals which research indicates will make our local roads safer for everyone but particularly for children and older people. Some of the criticism about the proposals is with regard to enforcement of the new limits but this ignores the fact that the whole concept is based on changing attitudes to speed and pedestrian safety and the expectation is that over time lower speeds will become the norm. When the plans were produced it was noted that while the majority of Main Street was to be made subject to the reduced speed limit, the short section from the junction with Silverknowes Road East/Ferry Road to the crossroads at Silverknowes Road was to be retained at 30 mph. This was absurd as this short section of road has "Slow" signs on the approach to the former railway bridge, an "S" bend over the bridge and a poor line of sight for drivers on the approach to the pedestrian and school crossing at the cross roads. We were very pleased when the Council acknowledged our complaint about the situation and we have written assurances from them that when the necessary Traffic Orders are published the mistake will be rectified.

LOCAL POLICING

There is little doubt that the biggest local issue over the last year has been the incidence of local crime which since last summer has at times seemed like an epidemic and has certainly been running at levels which have not been encountered in this area for a few years. It started at the back end of last summer with a spate of break-ins to garages and garden sheds, often associated with the theft of bicycles, and more recently the main problem has been a high volume of house break-ins, which are part of a wider problem across many parts of the city. Other issues have included a high level of motor cycle thefts and so called joy riding, particularly on the designated cycle routes and regular and persistent levels of vandalism and anti-social behaviour, which can be targeted on individual residents and can make their lives such a misery. The local police attend our monthly committee meetings to provide us with written reports which we put onto our website to let residents know what is happening and we know that at a local level they are doing their very best to try to resolve the problems and to catch the criminals. The Police have been running a special exercise since the autumn of 2014 to put extra resources into the area, and this has included additional vehicle patrols and the use of plain clothes officers. We understand they have had some success but nevertheless we know from residents that there is much concern that there seems to be no end to the problem and many have the impression, rightly or wrongly, that police resources are stretched beyond the limit to deal with the situation. Many tell us that the thing they miss is the visible presence of a local community policeman. It gives reassurance and confidence to residents and is seen as a deterrent to criminals. The police will be represented at our AGM to discuss local policing issues so if you have any points of concern come along to hear what they have to say.

LIVING LANDSCAPE PROJECT

The Council have recently approved a new strategy for the management of green spaces which is intended to make them more attractive for residents and visitors and to encourage biodiversity. There will be additional planting of trees and herbaceous perennials instead of bedding plants. The environmental objectives are highly worthy but one possible area of contention is the fact that the proposals will mean a reduction in the budget, with specific savings being made on regular ground maintenance costs. It is planned to leave some grassed areas to grow naturally and to reduce the frequency at which others will be cut. Locally we know that a decision has already been made to eliminate grass cutting between and along the tree line in The Green and that the grass bankings on the periphery of Silverknowes Road East are not going to be cut regularly as two examples of the changes. We have some concerns about weed control at these locations but we know that other proposals are under consideration as part of the project. We would be concerned if the policy was applied to the main grassed areas at these locations and there are other locations, such as the triangles at Quality Street, at Barton Avenue and at the Silverknowes Drive/Terrace junction where some residents would think that the frequency of cutting should be increased. If you would like to hear more about the project and the implications for our local green areas details are available on the Council website at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/livinglandscapes.

GOOD TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We welcome comments and suggestions from local residents about matters which concern you. Contact us either through the website www.dmsa.org.uk or by contacting Charlotte our Secretary. Keep up to date with local events/issues throughout the year via our website and also with direct emailings on matters of importance in the community. We also welcome suggestions & comments with regard to the website i.e. if is not up to date or there are items/links/addresses/events which are missing or you feel should be there. Perhaps you just wish to say you are happy with it!!

THE GOLF COURSE PATH

Since the path between the golf courses was upgraded about two years ago there have been regular complaints about the absence of street lighting and the danger to pedestrians from speeding cyclists. The situation has been particularly dangerous around dusk and in the hours of darkness. In November last year the inevitable happened and a pedestrian was struck in the dark by a speeding cyclist. Both were hurt in the collision but were very fortunate that their injuries were not more serious. It is Council Policy to have street lighting installed on all designated cycle routes across the city but the problem with installing lighting on the path between the golf courses was that the land is owned by the Bruntsfield Links Golfing Society who were reluctant to have the lighting put in place. However, the good news is that following discussions with the Society they have now agreed in principle to allow the Council to install appropriate lighting. This will be of benefit to pedestrians and cyclists and will make the path much safer for all. The Council will now be drawing up detailed plans for approval by the Society and in due course a serious safety problem can be resolved. There have also been discussions with the Council about installing a chicane near the lowest point in the path to force cyclists to slow down at the location where their speeds tend to be highest and the need for this will be kept under review, particularly after the lighting is installed.

FRIENDS OF DAVIDSON'S MAINS PARK

In March there was an illustrated lecture which explored the links between the park and the Ramsay family of Barnton. Practical work has included an emphasis on the introduction and conservation of native wildflowers in the park. Some patches of grass were removed so that wildflower seeds could be sown near the children's playground. A Council plan to reduce grass-cutting has also resulted in another area of wildflower seeding. Most recently a class of Royal High School pupils planted locally-grown native plants in an area which had been partly cleared of Himalayan Balsam last year. Thanks to those who helped - especially with the removal of the invasive Balsam plants. Many more local helpers/supporters are needed. Do watch local notice-boards or get in touch. Dmainspark2013@btinternet.com

DRY STUFF ABOUT LOCAL COUNCIL BOUNDARIES

We know that most residents just want decent Council services and that the very mention of issues about administrative boundaries tends to induce despair! Nevertheless some recent ill informed comment on Social Media sites makes it necessary to remind everyone why the DMSA tries to act in a pseudo Community Council role to represent the whole area. Without going into all the detail it is beyond rational argument that the local council boundaries are absurd in that they split Davidson's Mains into three separate parts. Davidson's Mains Park and all the properties west of Quality Street and Cramond Road South are in a different community council area from the main part of Davidson's Mains/Silverknowes. At the other end of the village all the houses at the south end of Corbiehill Road, Corbiehill Avenue, Grove, Gardens, the House O'Hills and Drylaw Crescent are in a separate Council Ward and Partnership Area. It is all a nonsense when the driving principle behind administrative areas is that natural communities should be protected as a single entity to allow the residents to represent their community. Given these flawed boundaries the Association has refused to instigate the local Community Council. We continue as an Association so that we can continue to try to represent the whole area of what is recognised as Davidson's Mains and Silverknowes. We do so effectively on the Almond Partnership with no discernible difference in the role we play compared to the community councils on the Partnership. The only minor difference is that we do not have voting rights but in the seven years or so of the Partnership not one decision has ever gone to a formal vote. Voting rights are a red herring and do not matter. The fact that the area around the House O'Hills is in a different Council area (Inverleith) gives us problems but we have made it clear that we would fully support any resident from that area who wished to sit on our committee and represent the area on the Inverleith Partnership as an agent of the DMSA.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - DAVIDSON'S MAINS & SILVERKNOWES ASSOCIATION

Subscriptions to Charlotte Cowe, Hon. Secretary, 151 Main Street, Davidson's Mains, Edinburgh, EH4 5AQ

NAME(S):

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE.....Tel No.....

email.....

Mailing lists are created to send residents relevant community information throughout the year. Please tick if you do **NOT** wish your email address used for this purpose. All details are held on a confidential and secure database solely for the purpose of maintaining records of the above Association

Would you be willing to deliver newsletters on an occasional basis Yes/No

Membership for 2015-16 (minimum £2 per individual or household) £2 / £5 / £10 / £ (Cheques payable to DMSA)

Receipt required – Yes/No

NORTH WEST HERITAGE – OUR LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Our area is very fortunate to have a local group who take a close interest in the history of Davidson's Mains , other local villages and the wider surrounding area. The Group organises regular presentations and discussions on the history of the area and related topics and some recent examples include the Barnton Estate, Cammo Estate, Granton, the Iron Mills at Cramond and also further afield to the Fishwives of Fisherrow, Robert Louis Stevenson, the men who built the Forth Bridge and film nights showing glimpses of Edinburgh in the past. If you are interested in the local history of the area, the meetings will take place each month from September through to April. They are open to the public for a small charge of only £2 or you can chose to become a member to participate in the group for only £10. All will be made very welcome. Anyone who is interested and would like more information should contact Charlotte on 336 3856 or charlotte@dmains.co.uk .

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH POLICE AND COUNCIL NEWS

The Association is on circulation lists for the Police and the Council when they want to circulate news, advice or information to local community groups. Last year, for the first time we thought it would be helpful to those of our members for whom we had email addresses to offer them the opportunity to receive some of the information directly from us, particularly in situations where there was some urgency in the matter, as for example with advice from the police regarding bogus tradesmen operating in the area. We are delighted that the feedback we have had from our members who used the service has been wholly positive so if you would like to be included on the list to receive these messages just tick the box on the membership list . The service is on offer to all local residents and your contact information will be treated as confidential and only for the purposes of the Association .

CAN YOU HELP THE COMMITTEE?

Once again at the time of the AGM we are asking for more help to support the management committee of the Association. Over the past couple of years three or four new members have joined to replace older committee members who have moved on but we are still a relatively small group and it would be really helpful to have more support. We have said before that many residents tell us they appreciate the work that we do to represent the interests of the local community but nevertheless we find it difficult to attract residents who are willing to give some of their own time to act on the committee. The duties are not onerous and it is an opportunity to become actively involved in decisions which can make a difference to our local area.If you are interested in the local community and the local environment, the only other attributes required are a bit of common sense, an ability to understand different points of view and an ability to work with other people. If you would be interested in becoming a member of the committee please contact Charlotte or Rod for more information .

CURRENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairperson:	Mr. Rod Alexander	336 3856
Vice-Chairperson:	Mrs. Aileen Venables	476 2085
Honorary Treasurer:	Mr. Gordon McGregor	336 5875
Honorary Secretary:	Mrs. Charlotte Cowe	336 2494
151 Main Street, EH4 5AQ email: charlotte@dmains.co.uk		

Ms. J. Chapman Mrs. S. Edgar Mr. B. Flanagan Mr. Henry Lennox Ms. Laura Thomson

Please tell us what you think is the biggest local problem which needs to be addressed ? It would help us to know .