



May

NEWSLETTER

2016

AGM and PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday 25 May at 7.30 pm Holy Cross Church Hall, Quality Street

LAURISTON CASTLE—PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Mike Durnan, Steward of the Castle

DISCUSSION OF LOCAL ISSUES

with Dave Sinclair, Environment Manager, West Team, City of Edinburgh Council

Local Councillors, Lindsay Paterson, Alastair Shields and Norman Work and Police Sergeant Richard Homewood

The Association would welcome questions on any local issue in advance of the meeting . Please send them email to charlotte@dmains.co.uk or deliver to either Charlotte Cowe at 151 Main Street or Rod Alexander at 30 Silverknowes Drive.

An opportunity for all local residents to come to the meeting to ask about any local problem which may concern them.

The Association acknowledges the generosity of Tesco in providing refreshments for this event.

LAURISTON CASTLE

This is a very special place within our boundaries which we very much take for granted. Mike Durnan, who is the Steward of the Castle is coming to the AGM to present an overview of the fascinating history of the Castle and also to highlight what his team are doing to promote the attractions of the castle to the public and publicise the many events which are organised throughout the year. The Castle and the grounds were donated to the City by its last owners Mr. and Mrs. Reid. Mr . Reid was the owner of Morrison and Company who were a leading Edinburgh cabinet making business and he is responsible for the interior design of the house and much of the artefacts, which include valuable collections of Italian furniture, Sheffield plate, Crossley wool, and Blue John ornaments. The beautiful grounds were laid out by William Henry Playfair in the 1840's and much of the tree planting dates from that time . The award winning Japanese Friendship Garden, which was gifted by the prefecture of Kyoto is a special feature and a tranquil corner for contemplation and reflection. Throughout the year there are lectures, special events and adult and family craft workshops- just about something for everyone. Full details of all forthcoming activities and events will be available at the meeting together with methods of booking.

LOCAL ACTION LIST

Dave Sinclair, our local Environment Manager, has kindly agreed to come along to the AGM for a discussion about local issues and to address any queries about projects which are on our action list and also one or two possible projects for the future. We publicise our Action List on our notice board and website with quarterly updates and we will have copies of the list available for the meeting. We hope residents will come along and take the opportunity to let us know about any local problems which they think need to be considered, either by submitting a written question in advance or by asking the a question at the meeting. As previously we will make sure that a reply is provided if we are given contact details.

WAR MEMORIAL

As most residents will know, the Association are now the legal custodians of the War Memorial on behalf of the local community. Recently we took a decision to commission a new plaque to commemorate a serviceman from the village who had died on duty in a conflict in North Africa in 1953. The work has been commissioned at a cost of £450 and it is an advantage for matching the style of the existing plaque that the contract can be undertaken by the same company who did the original work back in 1995. We consider that our decision corrects a long standing omission and we have received a significant contribution towards the cost from the family who are very appreciative. We believe that there may be other local residents, some perhaps with links to the Memorial, who feel they also would like to contribute towards the cost of this project and any donations to the Association would be gratefully received.

CRAIGIEHALL DEVELOPMENT

In Newsletters over the past few years we have frequently expressed concern about the increasing traffic flows on the Queensferry Road and the effect this has on queuing and congestion on local roads in our area. The latest Local Development Plan for the City (LDP2) from 2014 made provision for new land supply for 8500 houses up to 2024, which included 1280 at South Queensferry, 1300 at Maybury and 600 at Cammo, and the transport consultants appointed by the Council for the Plan projected that peak hour traffic flows would increase on Queensferry Road by about 35% up to 2024. Another worrying factor is that developers argue that the land provision within LDP2 is not sufficient to meet the targets set for the City by the Scottish Government and so they are now coming forward with additional sites which were not part of the plan. One such proposal is a plan to build up to 1200 houses on land at the army base at Craigiehall and on adjacent agricultural land owned by Lord Roseberry. The effect of this development would be to add a further 8% to the peak hour traffic flows over and above the projected increase for LDP2, with peak hour traffic flow being estimated to increase from the base line figure of 3850 vehicles per hour to no less than 5250 by 2024. One does not need a crystal ball to visualise the negative impact on our locality. LDP2 recognised the need for modifications to the Barnton junction for developments on the north west side of the city but otherwise there was nothing at all to mitigate the effects of traffic overload on the Queensferry Road traffic corridor. The Craigiehall developers know that the traffic issue is a major concern but understandably take the line that it is unreasonable for a single development to carry the cost when the problem is the increasing and on-going cumulative effect of numerous developments on the north west side of the city and beyond. All Developers make the charge that the Council have failed to undertake a proper strategic overview of the traffic impacts for these developments. As far as Craigiehall is concerned, a Park and Ride facility with dedicated bus lanes all the way to and from the City Centre has been suggested as an option; the resultant single lane for all other traffic on the Queensferry Road would be controversial to say the least, although it would almost certainly create an incentive for a shift to more use of public transport .

POTHoles EVERYWHERE

Residents will hardly be surprised to know that the Association gets as many complaints about the state of local roads and footpaths as on all other issues put together. This strong level of concern is reflected in the satisfaction index for road and footpath maintenance which has been on a downward trend for some time and in the most recent resident's survey on a city wide basis stood at only 50%.The budget for maintenance was not increased this year, in line with other Council cuts, but even in earlier years, when funding may not have been the issue, the city had a shortfall in the numbers of engineers to undertake the necessary work. In basic terms, if roads are not properly maintained, once the surface is broken, the rate of wear and deterioration accelerates and ever more money has to be spent on urgent repairs meaning less is available for proper permanent re-surfacing. It is a vicious circle which cannot be reversed without a significant allocation of additional funding and numbers of technical staff to plan the work. We all know of local roads and footpaths which badly need to be repaired . Some are on main routes such as Silverknowes Road East where temporary patching was carried out last year but the short term nature of that solution is shown by the fact that other sections of the road now badly need to be done. There are many less busy streets in even worse condition and for example Vivian Terrace can only be described as a local embarrassment. There are too many footpaths for us to list. Another good example of the problem with the current policy and lack of funding is the road junction at the Royal Bank . Potholes were filled in at the junction during the winter but with the heavy traffic the work needs to be repeated. Meanwhile we wait for the road surface to be permanently repaired. It had been agreed last year but is on hold due to lack of resources. Lesley Hinds, who is Convenor of the Council Environment Committee and who has responsibility for road and footpath maintenance made much of the fact she had set up a special task force to tackle the "scourge " of potholes in the city centre where there is understandable concern for the image of the city as presented to visitors and tourists. The impression given was that the task force was a new resource to speed up the repairs. What was not said was that the task force was made up of workers from other parts of the city and so locally we have seen further delays to the work we need to be carried out. Our local Environment Manager keeps us well informed and we think does a reasonable job under very difficult circumstances, but without the proper allocation of resources to reverse the current rate of decline the current unsatisfactory situation is likely to continue.

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. We are still a relatively small group and it would be really helpful to have more support. 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 .

FRIENDS OF DAVIDSON'S MAINS PARK

At the "top end" of the park the planting of wildflower seeds has been successful and is being repeated this year. The large storage container beside the Football Pavilion has been repainted in order to conceal graffiti but unfortunately the Pavilion was then itself subject to further unwelcome graffiti. Some other changes in the park may not be immediately noticeable. The long-term problem of inadequate drainage at the eastern end received major attention so that the path parallel with Quality Street is no longer flooded after heavy rainfall. The installation of a new bollard at the main entrance emphasises that the car parking area is reserved for official use only. A chicane path installed nearby makes a safe entrance for wheelchairs etc. However the increase in street-parking (mainly on Sunday mornings) leads to other safety concerns. The "Friends" of the park will soon be active in dealing with the removal of Himalayan Balsam (an invasive species) so do come and join us if you can or offer financial help to support work by "Trust for Conservation Volunteers". Douglas Cruickshank, the Park Officer, retired at the end of March and his advice and co-operation will be very much missed.

Eunice Smith Chair: Friends of Davidson's Mains Park Tel: 0131-336-2013/Mob: 07963 661011

TREE PLANTING IN SILVERKNOWES

A local primary school teacher has a proposal to plant some trees around Silverknowes as part of an educational project to help young children learn and understand about the importance of trees to the ecological system and the benefits they can bring to improving the environment. It is part of a scheme operated by the Woodlands Trust who provide packs of thirty trees to schools or community groups who have suitable locations available. The trees are all native species and a choice can be made of different types and sizes to suit different situations. It is important to note that they are not for ground cover or small copses which we know can be difficult to maintain and can be locations which accumulate wind blown litter. The question is where would the trees be planted? It has been suggested that a good location would be on the open space at Silverknowes Road East where perhaps some could be planted in two or three small groupings. This would break up the expanse of open space but would not detract from the easy access and be in any way restrictive for those who use the space for recreation, particularly dog walking. Other suggestions are to use some of the trees to extend the existing line of trees on the north side of Silverknowes Road East or to use some for the banking at the side of Silverknowes Road. At a different location an idea is to use a few to fill in the gaps on Silverknowes Avenue where some trees have been cut down over the years due to damage or vandalism. It is undeniable that this proposal has educational merit but it would be unlikely to get patronage from the Woodlands Trust if there was not general support for the idea from local residents. The Association would like to understand what local residents think about it so please let us know.

PEDAL FOR SCOTLAND EVENT

Remember the traffic chaos last year on the day of the annual Pedal for Scotland event? The main event from Glasgow to Edinburgh had been routed through Barnton, Cramond and Davidson's Mains to the finish at Murrayfield. On Whitehouse Road and Cramond Road South at the local cycle route crossing points the serious lycra attired cyclists riding from Glasgow met the recreational ones on the "wee run" from Broxburn travelling along the cycle path to the same event. The consequences were predictable and Cramond and Davidson's Mains were effectively brought to a standstill for two or three hours. The good news is that lessons have been learned and the decision has been taken for the 2016 event to terminate at Ingliston. There may be a more mixed reaction to the other decision that with the change of venue for the finish of the main race the "wee run" has been cancelled. This had become an increasingly popular event for less serious cyclists with many families and children participating and it is not a good signal when the city is actively trying to promote cycling as an alternative to car use.

NEW 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 2016-17 (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 other more general wider topics. Some recent examples of each type include the Muirhouse Estate, the Industrial Past of Granton, the Herring Girls of Fisherrow and Enemy Submarines Detection from WW1. Next year's syllabus is not yet ready but if you are interested in the group, 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 who can supply you with more details.

THE PROBLEM OF DOG FOULING

There are few issues that upset local residents more than the problem of dog fouling. While the vast majority of dog owners behave responsibly and use "doggy bags", it only takes one thoughtless owner to avoid clearing up the mess for it quickly to create a nasty problem for everyone. The most recent Edinburgh People's Survey which is undertaken annually by the Council to measure satisfaction with the city as a place to live highlighted that dog fouling is one of the biggest areas of discontent, with only 46% of residents responding that they thought the problem was being well managed, down from 62% in 2011. The level of complaints across the city has been rising and the total has more than doubled over the past two years. It was always the case that in Davidson's Mains and Silverknowes there were fewer complaints than in most other areas of the city but recently we have seen a discernible upward trend in complaints to the Association. In the past few months problems of dog fouling at Barnton Avenue, The Green, Main Street and some streets in Silverknowes have been raised with us and have been passed on to the Environmental Wardens, either directly or at our regular meetings with them at the Community Safety Forum. We have been assured the wardens always follow up by monitoring locations which are reported to them and would urge residents to report any incident which occurs. We think more should be done to impose fines and prosecutions although it is difficult to get evidence of who is the culprit.

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 or Rod. 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 and 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 may just wish to say you are happy with it!

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 Mrs. Judith Lowther Mr. Tim Mitchell 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 when we discuss our future Action List with the Council.