



May

NEWSLETTER

2018

AGM and PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday 23 May at 7.00 pm South Hall, Davidson's Mains Parish Church, Quality Street

7.00 pm to 7.30

DMSA AGM -

Proceedings and Decisions

7.30 pm to 9.00

FutureDMS — DAVIDSON'S MAINS AND SILVERKNOWES IDEAS EVENT

Presentation and Discussion

Come along and help shape the future of our community

9.00 pm Refreshments provided courtesy of the generous support of Tesco

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE AND TIME

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS GROUP

We would like to thank the whole community for the success of the Christmas lights switch-on event last year. The record turnout and generous donations exceeded our expectations. The event was very much a community achievement, with tremendous generosity and practical help from the residents who volunteered, to local organisations and businesses ranging from Holy Cross Church and the 30th Craigmmond Scout Group, to Tesco and Ye Olde Inn. We are happy to announce that we are already planning this year's switch-on event which will be on Saturday 1st December. Our group was established to organise the annual switch-on event, but more importantly, to secure the provision of the lights for the area for the years to come. Edinburgh Council did not provide any lights in 2016 and as a result we believed the only option open to us was to purchase our own lights. The group set a fundraising target of £10K to cover the purchase of new lights to replace the current display and cover maintenance and installation costs. Thanks to the fundraising activity of the group and the generosity of local residents and organisations we are delighted to report that we are half way to our target and have raised £5K. Our financial sponsors are Barnton Boot camp, Battison Dental, Boardwalk Beach Café, Davidson's Mains Dental, Davidson's Mains Gala, ELP Arbuthnott McClanachan, Haines Watts Accountants, Maitland Bowling Club, ProMOTION Physiotherapy, Progressive Partnership, and the Norhet Bar. Thanks are also due to those who are hosting our counter top collection cans in the area.

Edinburgh Council made a very late decision to provide the lights in 2017 and have recently confirmed they will continue to provide the service but only until 2020. This is the short run of lamppost lights on Main Street and the decorated oak tree next to the former RBS building. We have decided that it is prudent to continue to use the Council lights for 2018. However, it is vital that we continue with our fundraising. We will only have an option to guarantee an annual Christmas lights display once we have reached the target. Until then we are wholly dependent on the Council, who have let us down in the past. In addition to the lights display we want to be able to fund the annual switch-on event, but we could have the option to use our own funds to go bigger and brighter for our lights display. Once we have reached our target and have options, we will engage with the community on how the funds are used. We are always looking for volunteers to help with fundraising and at the switch-on event, so please get in touch if you would like to get involved. And of course, we still have £5,000 to raise, so please continue to donate to the fund, even a small amount is much appreciated and helps us along the way! You can do this in by either:

1. Donate to the Davidson's Mains Christmas Lights Just Giving Page at <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/dmainschristmaslights>.
2. By making a payment to DMSA by sending a cheque to our secretary or by making a direct payment to our account : sort code 83-18-47, a/c 00250433

VEHICLE WEIGHT LIMIT TRANSGRESSIONS ON MAIN STREET

For some time the Association has been receiving complaints about heavy vehicles using Main Street in complete contravention of the 7.5 tonne weight restriction which is in place to specifically prohibit large commercial and industrial vehicles from entering a local village environment. The only exceptions to the regulation are for local LRT buses, and other heavy vehicles who by necessity need local access to the village and the adjacent streets. Examples would be Council refuse vehicles, delivery vehicles to local shops and perhaps buses on contract hire to the local schools. Recently members of the committee undertook a survey of the problem, spending about eight hours from 8 am through to 4 pm to take photographic evidence of vehicles who may have been in contravention of the regulations and we were completely appalled by the numbers which were far in excess of anything we had anticipated. One of the difficulties in establishing whether there has been a contravention of the weight limit is that the restriction is based on gross vehicle weight and so for vans and similar vehicles where the payload is not visible there is some degree of uncertainty around the gross weight. For example if a van registered with a declared vehicle weight of 7.49 tonnes is empty, any infringement may be very marginal. For this reason we decided to pursue only those vehicles where there is absolutely no doubt that an infringement had occurred and even with this self imposed constraint we ended up with no fewer than 15 separate transgressions of the regulation. Our secretary has written to the companies to draw attention to the weight limit and to seek agreement that their drivers will be advised to take an alternative route, generally via Queensferry Road and Telford Road. In the case of any who do not respond in a constructive manner or who make an unreasonable challenge to the evidence the matter will be passed on to the Police who are very supportive of our action. We undertook a similar exercise last year regarding infringements of the 10m length limit on Lauriston Farm Road which had a positive response from vehicle owners and resulted in a definite reduction in the frequency of the infringements. We have no reason to believe that the survey on Main Street will not have a similar positive effect. We also fully understand that the positive effects of these changes to the behaviour of drivers dissipates over time and we may follow up with further surveys later.

AN UPDATE ON OUR ACTION LIST

It has been a consistent theme in our recent newsletters that it is becoming increasingly difficult with successive cuts to funding and staff reductions at the Council to get local project work agreed, and even when projects have been approved there is a tendency for the target completion dates to be extended and delayed. A good example is the replacement bollards on Cramond Road South at Lauriston Farm Road which were recently put in place but to a reduced specification and after a delay of over two years. Never the less, members of the committee had a recent meeting with the Locality Roads Engineer to discuss all the current projects which was reasonably constructive recognising all the difficulties. Revised dates for all the projects were agreed with a commitment to try to meet the new target dates for those that were badly behind schedule. This includes a number of traffic surveys related to requests for parking prohibitions. Of the more significant projects for our area we have been assured the upgrading of the cycle path through the park between East Barnton Avenue and Queensferry Road is certain to go ahead this year, although the design of the connection at the Queensferry Road end and the link to the pedestrian crossing on Queensferry Road has been subject to further public consultation and will be completed later. We are continuing to press for a re-design of the alignment of the approaches to the roundabout on Ferry Road at the junction with Silverknowes Road East and until recently had expected that repair of the road surface could reasonably be delayed until the re-designed junction was constructed. However, the rapid rate of the deterioration of the surface means that re-surfacing will now be undertaken as an interim measure this year and the main project will be deferred until later. The opportunity will be taken after the re-surfacing to re-paint the badly faded road markings and the hump of the roundabout to improve its visibility which is part of the problem. A full list of all the projects on the list together with their current status is on our notice board and website for those who would like more information.

THE BOLLARDS ON EAST BARTON AVENUE

In our last newsletter we made the point that there was a strong case for replacing the permanent bollards on East Barnton Avenue with the new removable type to allow temporary vehicle access to be maintained to East Barnton Gardens at times when the access from Main Street had to be closed off. The good news is that the Locality Transport and Environment Manager has agreed to give priority to this project so that it is completed by the end of September. This will allow East Barnton Avenue to be closed to vehicular traffic between Main Street and the Church car park for the 2018 Christmas Lights Event, without any significant inconvenience to the residents in East Barnton Gardens. It will allow extra space for stalls and attractions and eliminate any risk to those attending the event from moving vehicles and be a big advantage to the Lights Committee in making their plans. The removable bollards can also be used if the west end of East Barnton Avenue has to be closed in future for any reason and it has been agreed that the Scottish Fire Service based at Crewe Toll will have a key for emergency access should the need arise; although it turned out not to be an emergency there was a situation a few years ago when a fire engine was unable to gain access due to congestion.

POTHLES AND ROADS

The Association unsurprisingly continues to get complaints from residents about the state of the local roads and footpaths, the frequency of appearance of pot holes, and criticisms about the Council responses. To be frank there are too many local problem locations to list here, although we make complaints on behalf of residents when ever we receive them. It is widely accepted and recognised that the problem is due to years of underfunding of road maintenance and repairs and that the solution can only come when there is a step change in the funding at a national level but that is little consolation for those who suffer damage to their vehicles. It is a dispiriting situation, but there is some good news that a number of roads in Silverknowes are scheduled to be repaired in the current financial year. This includes the re-surfacing of Silverknowes Drive over its complete length in a project that was originally planned to be done about seven or eight years ago at the same time as the other streets on the west side of Silverknowes but the work on Silverknowes Drive was cancelled because the project ran out of money. The other streets on the list from Silverknowes will be repaired using the tar and chip method which involves filling in cracks and pot holes before tar is sprayed on to the surface to provide an adhesive surface for the stone chips. It should be said that we understand that there are local roads in Davidson's Mains which are likely to be repaired in 2019/20 but there are no firm details available yet. One issue with the current programme is that Vivian Terrace had work done last year to fill in pot holes prior to tar and chipping and we are surprised it is not in this years programme. We have asked when the work is to be done and expect an answer soon. The complete list of roads in Silverknowes which are scheduled for repair is available on our notice board and website.

BUS SERVICE TO SILVERKNOWES FORESHORE

Many of us think that that Lothian Buses can appear to act autonomously as a law unto themselves, despite the majority ownership of the company being in the hands of the Council and the fact that the Transport Convenor and three other councillors sit on the management board giving the Council a 50% representation. The recent examples of the withdrawal of the 32 and 42 buses from serving Davidson's Mains without any prior notice or consultation, and a refusal to address the case for a direct bus link between Davidson's Mains and Cramond merely provide more evidence of the problem. Unfortunately the Association has had another recent knock back from Lothian Buses which we think is even more difficult for them to justify. We recently requested that any one of the four bus services which currently terminate at Silverknowes should be extended to terminate at Silverknowes foreshore for the summer timetable and it was refused without any detailed explanation. We believe we had a strong case for the request. The Boardwalk Cafe which opened three years ago is now so popular that it is often completely impossible to find a parking space on the road anywhere near the vicinity of the cafe or even on the complete length of the dual carriageway. The café has had a transformational effect in increasing the number of visitors to the foreshore with it being a focus for exercise and fitness clubs and sports teams who train near the café as well as the usual recreational visitors to the foreshore. The Council have latched on to its popularity and use the location as an unofficial base for all sorts of events, including charity walks and runs. A children's entertainment facility will be in place over the whole of the summer. It is close to absurd that there is no bus service with this level of demand, when all that is required is a half mile extension to one of the existing services, with less than two minutes being added to the journey time. It may be too late to get a change to the timetable for this year but this issue will be pursued.

FRIENDS OF DAVIDSONS MAINS PARK

After some deliberation by the Council, work has just begun on a further drainage solution for the SE corner of the woodland. This work is mainly necessitated by the affect of permanently waterlogged ground around the roots of mature trees close to the houses in Quality Street. It is also envisaged that new marginal planting and improvements to the water quality will allow increased biodiversity in that area of the woodland. Proposals are also going ahead for the painting of the football container, using artwork from students of the Royal High School. This will be implemented in June and is hoped to reduce the opportunity for offensive graffiti on the container. The Friends have been offered a number of fruit trees and soft fruit bushes to establish an orchard area in the park. These will be planted shortly. Michael Jump, a new Park Ranger, has joined Fiona and Jen on the council team, so we hope for improved backup for our future projects.

The group will be attending the Future DMS event on the 23rd May.

Dan Smith Chair, Friends of Davidson's Mains Park 0131 312 8330 or 07713099010

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LOCAL POLICING ISSUES

Regrettably the incidence of anti social behaviour and criminal activity in our area has taken a recent upturn after a quiet period over the winter, perhaps unsurprisingly with the advent of longer periods of daylight and relatively warmer weather. Thankfully the problems have been no where near the levels which caused so much outrage and distress for many residents in 2017, although it is appreciated that is little consolation for anyone who has been a recent victim of crime. There are problems with anti social behaviour caused by groups of youths (of both genders) who congregate in the area in the evening and seem to be intent on just causing trouble; most of them are from out side our local area but not all of them. The recent Jurassic Kingdom event at Lauriston Castle was a predictable target for their interest. One positive note has been that Tesco, in an initiative with the police, allocated additional staff resources to ensure there were absolutely no thefts of alcohol in the evening and that definitely acted as a disincentive to the attractions of our area for these youths. Housebreaking is an on going problem with garages and outhouses being a target, often for stealing bikes. The police continually offer security advice on these matters to residents, but we get reports of theft through doors being left unlocked and windows left open. Another recurring problem has been the incidence of youths joyriding on stolen motorbikes on the cycle paths in particular but also elsewhere. We had evidence with the fatal accident in Silverknowes a couple of years ago of the serious consequences which can arise with this type of crime and more recently there was an incident in Drylaw with a similar tragic outcome. The police undertook a targeted operation to arrest a number of the youths who were suspected of being involved in this activity across the city and have recently purchased off road motorcycles to help combat the problem. There are well recognised issues about police funding and resources but locally we believe the police have generally done their best to respond appropriately to any problems which are reported to them. The strong message is to always report suspicious behaviour or criminal incidents when you are aware of any situation either on 101 or on 999 for serious and urgent problems.

LOCAL REACTION TO THE JURASSIC KINGDOM EVENT AT LAURISTON CASTLE

Last year the Council approved a policy to try to increase the revenue from their property by hiring out the facilities for public events. Few would object to a strategy to bring in much needed revenue to the depleted Council coffers, provided any planned events were appropriate for the particular locations , and that any judgement about the suitability was not distorted by the prospect of the additional funds. This was the background to the Jurassic Kingdom event which took place at Lauriston Castle over the school holidays at Easter. There was very little notice for the event but the Association received many comments about it in advance from concerned residents. The main worry was about the suitability of the Castle grounds to support an event over seventeen consecutive days without suffering damage to the environment, but there were also complaints about the restrictions to the area available for regular users of the grounds, potential traffic management problems, and the inadequate parking provision with the potential congestion and inconvenience for local residents. On the other hand it was clear that many parents with young children were looking forward to the display. As things turned out many of the predicted problems proved to be justified, with in particular, the condition of the site resembling a quagmire by the end of the two weeks, a situation which was not helped by weather which at times could be described as biblical. Feed back from those who attended was very mixed and it is difficult to generalise but broadly those who had attended with young children tended to be more positive than others who were critical of the facilities and the conditions. The Association welcomes the fact that the council are to undertake a review of the planning and organisation of the event and we have already made some suggestions for improvements, although it may be unlikely that another event on the same scale will ever be approved for the site.

DATA PROTECTION ACT MAY 2018

New data protection legislation comes into force in May so it is important to make a clear statement about the Association's policy with respect to the storage and handling of personal data, although it should be added that the policy as specified has always been in place and does not require any change to be made by the Association. The Association may hold any or all of the following items of personal information on its membership database; name, address, telephone number, mobile number, email address, allocated membership number, membership and contact history, membership payments, and bank account details. The information is held only for contact and communication with the individual member and will not under any circumstances be passed on to any other party without explicit approval being given by the individual. Similar conditions will apply to the personal details of non members, local residents or any other private party who contacts the Association. None of the personal details of the sender will be passed on to any other party without the specific approval of the individual concerned. Individuals have the right to request at any time the details of the personal information which the Association holds on them and to request that it is changed or removed. It is clearly in the interests of all Members of the Association to ensure that their personal details are always accurate and up to date.