

# Davidson's Mains & Silverknowes Association

[www.dmsa.org.uk](http://www.dmsa.org.uk)



## November **NEWSLETTER** 2012

### **SILVERKNOWES EASTWAY**

Most residents will know that the proposal to close the two public pathways between Muirhouse and Silverknowes Eastway was rejected by the Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee of the Council at their September Meeting.

Community representatives from Silverknowes and Muirhouse attended to make personal representations to the meeting but the telling factor in the Committee reaching their decision was a Report from the Director of Services for Communities which made it clear that closure of the pathways would be in conflict with national planning legislation and City of Edinburgh Council policy and guidelines which were to promote open access and inter-community links.

There is little doubt that in retrospect it was a mistake for the Council to promote a residents survey seeking opinions on the possible closure of the pathways. Once Silverknowes residents had responded in such large numbers and had made it clear by such a large majority that they wanted the pathways closed, the Association could not have done more to promote their interests and the case for closure, although it became progressively clearer to us that planning policies meant that it was unlikely to happen.

Many residents will recognise that the issue has been very difficult and painful for those involved and at times it became very unsavoury. This culminated in an article in the Evening News which deliberately played to the very worst aspects of the situation with a picture of the Chair of the DMSA being used to link him to journalistic comment he could not possibly support.

The real issue is the anti-social behaviour, vandalism and crime in the area and we are thankful that more recently, both from the reports we get from the Police and from the number of complaints to the Association, it appears that the problems have been at a relatively low level. (It is appreciated this is little consolation to individual victims).

Our clear advice to residents is that if there is trouble in future, whether relatively minor or more significant, the police should be contacted so that it is treated as a straightforward matter of law and order without the complication of alternative proposals.

### **DAVIDSON'S MAINS GALA**

The 80<sup>th</sup> Davidson Mains Gala in June was once again a social success and a great vehicle for local community groups using the gala as a showcase to promote their talents and activities. It was unfortunately the latest in a series of three financially damaging years for the gala committee primarily because of the appalling weather on the day. This year the gala is likely to post a loss of approximately £6000. This loss is in spite of fundraising throughout the year and a generous grant from the Almond Neighbourhood Partnership which contributed towards our purchase of a new gazebo for additional groups to use on gala day. The committee would welcome help from anyone willing to join the gala team or just to contact us with new ideas either for fundraising throughout the year or with suggestions for gala day/week. We are a friendly bunch and all desperate that the gala should continue for many years to come. If you would like to help, or even offer useful suggestions please can you contact us either via the gala web site ( [www.dmainsgala.org.uk](http://www.dmainsgala.org.uk) ) or contact any member of the gala team or Susan Robertson on 0131 336 2572.

## **RAT RUNS AND SPEEDING VEHICLES**

For some time the Association has been receiving complaints about the dangers of vehicles using the side streets in Silverknowes as rat-runs to avoid the rush hour queues in Lauriston Farm Road. Many of these vehicles are large and there is a problem of vehicles of all types being driven at excessive speed. This is a particular problem in Silverknowes Terrace and Drive which are on a designated cycle route which is being used with increasing frequency, although a general problem exists in most of the streets on the west side of Silverknowes. It has to be said that it is very difficult, with the nature of the local street layout to do anything constructive about preventing through traffic to stop rat running, although from time to time we get highly imaginative suggestions. The difficulty is that the solution of a problem for one group of residents usually leads to unacceptable inconvenience for another group.

However, the question of speeding traffic is altogether different. Following our AGM, where we had questions about the issue the Committee had a long discussion about the problem and what could be done. We have raised the matter with the police, who we are assured are monitoring the situation, but we decided we should take the opportunity to put an effort into a campaign to introduce a general 20 mph zone into Silverknowes, and then later into other local residential areas. The position of the Scottish Government is that they encourage the promotion of 20 mph zones in residential areas but the funding is a matter for Local Authorities. Edinburgh has a number of 20 mph zones and there are some quite close by, e.g. in Drylaw, but the city has been much slower than many other authorities in rolling these out.

We are unaware of any consideration previously having been given to 20 mph zones in this area and are very keen to set things moving by writing formally to the Council. In the meantime we would be very interested to hear from residents what you think about the idea. Please get in touch to tell us what you think.

## **DAVIDSON'S MAINS PARK**

The Annual General Meeting of 'The Friends of Davidson's Mains Park' will be held in the Royal High School on Monday 3 December at 7.30pm. There will be short reports on the new management plan and all interested persons are welcome to attend the meeting. Three interpretation boards are planned for the park including one which will detail the history of the area. Earlier this year volunteers helped to reduce the growth of Himalayan Balsam but further such attention will be needed next year in order to restrict the spread of the Balsam. Tree-felling work is already taking place in some areas of the woodland and the safety restrictions should be strictly observed.

## **THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP COMMUNITY GRANTS FUND**

This is a small grants scheme supported by funds provided by the Council. The purpose of the fund is to encourage and promote small scale activity at grass roots level that benefits local communities. Up to £5000 can be made in individual awards, although most awards are at a lower level. The money is available to local community and voluntary groups for one-off activities or projects which promote community involvement and activity. It can be used to help start up costs for a new group or for buying a new piece of equipment for an existing group. A good recent example was the award to the Gala Committee for a new gazebo which allowed more local groups to be represented at the Gala.

The DMSA want to publicise the grants scheme because we think that there are many groups in our area who are unaware of the scheme and yet could potentially benefit from the availability of the funds. Much more detail about the scheme and how to apply is available on the City of Edinburgh Council's website by doing a search on community grants fund.

## **A PROBLEM WITH INVASIVE PLANTS**

There is an increasing problem in the locality with the spread of invasive plants and it might help residents to know a bit about what these plants look like and what to do if you suspect you have them in your garden. The technical term for these plants is Invasive Non -Native Species ( INNS). It was already known that Himalyan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed were present in the area, and Davidson's Mains Park has a fairly serious problem with the spread of Knotweed. However we have now learned that a new intruder, Giant Hogweed, has been found in local gardens. We are going to put photographs of these plants on our notice board and website so that residents know what they look like and there is a lot of information available about them on the Councils Website ( [www.edinburgh.gov.uk](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk) ) by doing a search on invasive non-native species.

If you suspect you have any of these species in your garden it is very important that you treat the matter seriously. The law is quite complex regarding what you should do but broadly it is the responsibility of the landowner to take appropriate action to eradicate the plants. It is inconsiderate and irresponsible to allow them to spread and in some circumstances it is illegal. Our advice is that you should contact the Council's Specialist Ground Maintenance Team by emailing [invasivespecies@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:invasivespecies@edinburgh.gov.uk) or by phone on 0131 657 4815. It will remain your responsibility to eradicate the plants but the team will give you plenty of advice about what to do. The published advice is that Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed usually require a combination of cutting and chemical treatment to ensure eradication, and where chemicals are involved it is recommended that specialist contractors should undertake the work. The residue is classified as controlled waste and contractors know how to dispose of it.

## **THE ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR**

The Royal High School K.T Choir are singing for the Christmas Lights event in the Village, and this year they are raising money for the 2013 Romania Project, in which several members of the choir are participating. In June 2013, a group of 14 sixth pupils and 2 teachers are travelling to Romania to help build houses for those who have not had an easy start in life. This project is through a charity called 'Habitat for Humanity' and their 'Home Partnership Scheme". The project is taking place over 10 days and during their time there the group hope to make a big difference to the people by helping them to build their homes. The 'Home Partnership Scheme' is where volunteers build homes with those that are going to be moving into them once they are complete. To take part in this project it is necessary to raise £25,000 for equipment and materials needed. A large number of fundraising events are planned. One of these events is the RHS take on Strictly Come Dancing which will see pupil couples and teacher couples competing to be crowned King and Queen of the dance floor. This event is taking place on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December at the Royal High School (time to be decided)

The KT singers were founded in December 1977 by a group of senior pupils led by Kenneth Thomson in order to raise money for charity by singing Christmas carols around the district. The KT choir is a branch from the main choir at the school. The two pupils in charge of the KT Choir are participants in the Romania Project, so obviously any money raised by the KT Choir this year is helping to fund the project.

## **AN INVITATION TO JOIN THE COMMITTEE - GET INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**

The Management Committee of the Association are quite a small group and we think it would be a big advantage to have one or two new faces join us. We know from our correspondence that there are many local residents who take a very close interest in all the issues affecting the local community and who could contribute positively to the work of the Committee. It would be great if one or two could join us.

No experience is really necessary with all that is required being a bit of common sense, the ability to get on with people, a genuine interest in the local community and our environment and the time to attend our monthly meetings. If this idea interests you please contact our secretary to discuss meeting the committee with a view to being co-opted. Your interest would be much appreciated and you would be made very welcome.

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

### **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH—ON**

Friday 30 November 2012

6.30 pm at Entrance to the Park

The lights will be switched-on by Councillor Norman Work.

Performance by RHS School Choir

A collection will be take in aid of their chosen charity

“Habitat for Humanity — Romania Project”

Seasonal Wine and Nibbles (with juice and biscuits for children) served courtesy of the Association in Holy Cross Church Hall.

These are provided by Tesco and the Association acknowledges this generous gesture in support of a community event.

### **CAROL SERVICE**

The RHS Choir will also be singing at a Carol Service to be held in Holy Cross Church on Friday 7 December at 7.30 pm. A collection will be take in aid of their chosen charity “Habitat for Humanity — Romania Project” to be followed by refreshments in the hall

### **STRICTLY COME DANCING—RHS VERSION!**

Wednesday 12 December in Royal High School.

Pupil couples and teacher couples competing to be King and Queen of the Dance Floor  
In aid of “Habitat for Humanity”

Time to be arranged—watch out for posters advertising the event but put it in your diary now!

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### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Chairperson:	Mr. Rod Alexander	336 3856
Vice-Chairperson:	Mr. Keith Hannay	312 8513
Treasurer:	Mr. Gordon McGregor	336 5875
Honorary Secretary:	Mrs. Charlotte Cowe	336 2494

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Dr. J. Butt	Ms. M. R. Caden	Mrs. E. Edgar	Ms. J. Chapman
Mrs. P Pattison	Mrs. E. Smith	Mrs. A. Venables	