

Spurtle



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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

SPACES FOR PEOPLE – ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

On 24 June, Edinburgh Council voted to scrap some temporary Spaces for People changes (mostly for shopping centres and protected cycle lanes) and extend others for 18 months [bit.ly/3gSx8s8]. Backers said extensions are needed to assess changes in post-lockdown conditions.

Most Broughton St measures have been dropped (but not at Barony St or the Mansfield Pl roundabout). Most changes between Bellevue and Canonmills will continue.

Officials say respondents to their online survey favoured measures around schools and the city centre, but were less supportive of them elsewhere. Those surveyed by independent market research favoured making more SfP changes permanent. Officials argue the latter comprise a more representative demographic. Not everyone agrees.

Local reactions

New Town & Broughton Community Council and others question the consultations' methodology, transparency, and interpretation [bit.ly/3vU0xq2]. NTBCC regrets CEC's opaque response to its suggestions, and especially the lack of wider pavements at the top of Broughton St. Other local voices have: supported the too-short-but-useful cycle lane between Broughton Pl and Forth St, and changes at the Mansfield Pl roundabout; criticised lane reduction at Broughton Rd causing tailbacks down Canonmills; and stressed the negative impact of some pavement changes on those with disabilities.

Permanent temporary changes?

Surviving SfP measures will be retained under Experimental Traffic Redetermination Orders, which can be amended or rescinded as necessary. Cynics see here a procedural ploy to make temporary changes permanent even after pandemic restrictions end. Transport & Environment convener Cllr Macinnes rebuts that, as well as claims market research was politically manipulative.

Spurtle regards SfP as a well-intentioned cause: simultaneously ambitious, pragmatic, and flawed. We support progressing/refining changes *if* using much improved future consultation between locals and officials.



BREATHS OF FRESH AIR – FOR SOME

Councillors on the Transport & Environment Cmte moved closer towards adopting a preferred Low Emission Zone last month and will consult about it over the summer before deciding what to do next in the autumn.

The LEZ applies to all motor vehicles except motorbikes and mopeds. The aim is to implement an agreed scheme in spring 2022. The relevant report is here [bit.ly/3gtLFsY].

If proposals proceed as expected, from spring 2024, only vehicles meeting a minimum emissions standard will be able to enter the LEZ zone free. Drivers of those that fail face a £60 penalty charge (halved if paid within 30 days), doubling for subsequent contraventions within a 90-day period.

The simplicity of the evidence-based preferred scheme ('with one boundary and one grace period for all vehicle users') will supposedly help it to be understood and supported. Critics say the proposal is not ambitious enough, should at least include Queen St, and ideally extend further to the city bypass. Some fear measures may hit low-income drivers, carers, and health workers. Others say the LEZ does nothing to encourage uptake of electric vehicles.

Many locals worry that, with an estimated 20k non-compliant vehicles in the Edinburgh travel-to-work area, people living adjacent to the LEZ in Broughton, the Second New Town, and Pilrig suspect will bear the brunt of displaced old bangers. A SEPA report identifies likely increased pollution for Queen St, London St, and Abbeyhill.

Meanwhile, there is a glaring contradiction between Edinburgh Council's carbon-free aspirations on the one hand, and the city's reliance on diesel-based public transport and carbon-intensive mass tourism on the other. Discuss.



HEROIC HUMBAG



A disbound plate of 1786, etched by Thomas Rowlandson from designs by Samuel Collings, was auctioned at Lyon & Turnbull in June. The detail here shows James Boswell (1740–95) as 'The Journalist' with a view of 'Aukinleck – or the Land of Stones' (his Ayrshire estate) in the background. It was estimated to fetch between £1,000 and £1,500. Writing of Boswell in 1975, Cyril Connolly remarked, 'Silly, snobbish, lecherous, tipsy, given to high-flown sentiments and more than a little of a humbug, Boswell is redeemed by a generosity of mind, a concentration on topics that will always appeal ... and a naivety that endeared him to the great minds he cultivated. He needed Johnson as ivy needs an oak.'

NEW TOWN CLUSTER DUST-UP COMES TO A HEAD

Those opposed to loss of gull-proof sacks and the arrival of 'bin installations' across the New Town (see Issue 307) are lobbying elected representatives and marshalling their forces in preparation for a possible judicial review.

Still smarting from poor or non-existent Council consultation with affected residents, opponents of rubbish clusters (including Edinburgh World Heritage, Historic Environment Scotland, and the Cockburn Association) say the New Town's outstanding World-Heritage-site streetscape would be damaged by such intrusions.

Bin hubs are unnecessary, they claim, when recycling could be increased by improvements to today's services such as some limited additions to existing communal bins and more frequent collections.

Proponents of the cluster scheme argue changes will improve both streetscape and service, and enable safer conditions for workers. They say that opponents exaggerate the impact, and that a widely circulated photoshop visualisation of a cluster is crude and misleading. The full text of a New Town & Broughton Community Council campaign flyer is available here [bit.ly/3zpeUG5].

Briefly



As part of its **Planning and Building Standards**, Edinburgh Council's design guidance presumes against **street clutter** and offers advice on how to minimise it [bit.ly/3qgCkji]. How strange, then, that on a recent walk about **Picardy PI** (even before its completion and the arrival of a tramstop; and not including trees, giraffes, Paolozzis, or 22 lampposts), *Spurtle* counted over 100 items of **footway furniture**.

Green King intends to restore the name of the bar at **25 Broughton Street** to its pre-2018 'Mather's'. *Spurtle* had nothing but affection for the management and staff at **The Empress**, but never relished that establishment's vomitory fuchsia colour scheme. The sober black now proposed for the exterior will put a spring in the step of every **miserabilist toper** across Broughton and the East End.

Planning Enforcement is investigating Down the Hatch's alleged unauthorised installation of up-the-flue external ventilation ducting behind **13 Antigua St** (21/00268/EOPDEV).

A satisfied customer writes: 'I would like someone to highlight again the beauty of the Broughton Pharmacy [**105 Broughton St**]. The interior is a delight to the eye and very calming. The staff are **always helpful and cheerful**. It should also be noted that they not only take returns of unused medicines but also have a box for the recycling of **used blister packs**.'

Police sought witnesses last month to an unprovoked and random assault on a 67-year-old man in Forth St. The victim was injured after being **struck in the face** on 7 June at around 9.50pm. His assailant is described as male, aged 30–40, 5'6" with a **stocky build and unshaven face**. He was wearing a dark beanie hat, hooded jumper, coat and baggy trousers. Tel. 101 quoting ref 4086 of 7 June. Or call **Crimestoppers** anonymously on 0800 555 111.

The latest 'visuals of indicative landscape designs' along the **Trams to Newhaven** route are available at [bit.ly/3dcXmDx]. Proposals for the **Pilrig St–Picardy PI** section include natural stone paving, specimen trees, seating, bins, cycle stands, pedestrian crossings, and **clock/pigeon restoration**. It all sounds fine in theory, but we await the contractor's detailed proposals.

Spurtle hears of a forthcoming application to replace the 3-storey building at **7 Henderson PI Lane** with a bigger 40-unit structure. More when we have it.

Absent friends sorely missed

In her report to last month's annual general meeting of the New Town & Broughton Community Council, chair Carol Nimmo thanked Cllrs Mowat (Ward 11, Con) and Osler (Ward 5, LibDem) for their very regular attendance over the previous year.

But she also expressed disappointment at 'the extreme lack of interest' shown in NTBCC by councillors in the governing group of CEC. 'Several times it would have been helpful to have heard from them,' she remarked, 'and, more importantly, for support from them with regard to decisions made.'

'Councillor input is invaluable in giving us relevant and appropriate background information when we discuss Council proposals, consultations and decisions. Their attendance also gives residents an opportunity to raise important issues directly with their elected representatives, which is much appreciated.'

This is not the first time NTBCC has voiced dissatisfaction at ward councillors' non-attendance, nor is it the first community council to do so. Local-authority elections in May 2022 may help focus elected representatives' minds and diaries in the months to come.

On a related theme, *Spurtle* is aware of some readers' irritation at certain MSPs' failure to answer emails and respond to answerphone messages, or to deputise others to do so for them. We are monitoring – your observations are welcome.



Claim and counterclaim on Council Covid advice

Leith Walk ward Cllrs Rae and McNeese-Mechan defended Council officials against criticism by Leith Central Community Council last month.

Chair Charlotte Encombe's annual report for LCCC's AGM had portrayed officials' 'controversial' advice on public gatherings during March 2019 as confused and self-contradictory. Hence, a meeting booked to take place in Out of the Blue had been cancelled at short notice.

Cllr Rae disputed the word 'controversial', and suggested confusion had been widespread at the time. Cllr McNeese-Mechan found it hard to believe officials had ever advised LCCC to meet up in person and 'cough all over each other'. Based on her experience, she could think of no similar instance among community councils and boards.

Encombe, stuck to her guns. She was backed by two other office bearers, and pointed out that her report had already been agreed by the community council.

LCCC currently convenes via the expensively acquired Microsoft Teams platform, but intends to resume face-to-face or hybrid meetings as soon as possible (Issue 295). Stockbridge & Inverleith Community Council held its first hybrid meeting in June.

No shame in more stigmas

Botanist and science communicator Dr Max Coleman fielded questions about biodiversity in a public discussion hosted by NTBCC's Environment Cmte last month. Coleman works at the Royal Botanic Gardens, and is chair of the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership [bit.ly/3cFiKBe].

Interesting points emerged, including:

- The contribution to amenity and nature of large trees in cities. Councils concerned about long-term maintenance now tend not to replace them.

- Well-chosen and positioned tree species should be encouraged, as should productive understoreys of flowers, grasses, brambles, hazel, holly, and ivy. 'Regenerative planting' (e.g. Millennium Woods like that in Pilrig Park) soon has a positive impact.

- Limited human resources available to promote biodiversity can easily be distracted, diluted, or swallowed up by attending to related Planning issues.

- 'Wild activity' in re-wilded public spaces could and perhaps should replace featureless manicured lawns. For this to happen, community understanding and involvement are vital.

- Semi-wild habitats like Holyrood Park, and 'derelict' scrubland like Granton development sites, are much richer in biodiversity than is generally recognised. They merit careful appreciation.

- Biodiverse corridors and stepping stones, including private gardens, are important for the future success of some pollinators.

- Reliance on inorganic pesticides for footways, parks, and private gardens should stop.



Image: Wikimedia [bit.ly/3wbyATmj]

Prepare to meet new Crombie's of Edinburgh

Crombie's of Edinburgh intends changing its shop name to Broughton Market. The surprise came to light in 2 planning applications for the shopfront and interior at 97–101 Broughton St (21/02902/ADV; 21/02903/LBC).

Retail diversification is evident, with proposals including a new carry-out section beside the front entrance, an over-counter servery in the far-right corner, new sections for dairy/milk/cheese, fruit/veg, flowers, bread/cakes, and craft beer/wine. The Crombie's butchery will take centre stage at the back of the shop.



A survivor under the great bay tree

Four years ago, we first celebrated the mysterious arrival of *echium vulgare*, or viper's bugloss, in the Giraffe Garden by East Scotland Street Lane (Issue 263).

This remarkable biennial, a native of the Macaronesian islands, flourishes for just two years. After its spectacular flowering in its second year, it dies, leaving an abject petrified stalk with sad ash-grey leaves like desiccated seaweed. However, it is renewed by self-seeding around the base of the original plant.

There was no evidence of such renewal around the Giraffe Garden specimen, and, due to savage frosts this winter, there remained only a stark decapitated spike.

So, had it been another of those garden dreams for the winds, borne forever away? It was vaguely forgotten about until suddenly, in early June this year, I stumbled upon it, and was astonished to find new leaves studding the stem. Clearly, it was vigorously alive; something none of the authorities consulted suggests can happen. Have *Spurtle* readers experienced similar phenomena?

For now, this Broughton *echium* looks certain to recrudescere for another season under the great bay tree, with its rapturous blue blossoms inviting the bees to come again. The Giraffe Garden has bestowed upon us another blessing!—*JRM*



Briefly



Eden Seafood has replaced Bob's Fish at **34 Rodney St.** We wish Bob Quinn every success in whatever shoal he joins next.

Star Pubs & Bars plans an extensive refurbishment, new name, and extra community oomph for The Broughton at **284 Broughton Rd.** In the revamped 'Corner Shop & Social', two distinct dining areas – 'where customers can enjoy breakfast, lunch and dinner' – will appear between the bar and lounge. Elsewhere, booze and sport as usual.

On 17 June, 20-year-old Ewan Fulton was sentenced to 38 months in prison for **culpable homicide**. He was also placed on the sex offenders register for an indefinite period. Fulton had earlier pled guilty to abandoning 15-year-old Mhari O'Neill on **Calton Hill** one evening in Dec 2018, when she was injured, drunk, and vulnerable. Her body was discovered next morning, death being attributed to **hypothermia and intoxication**.

Scotching rumours, **Cllr Booth** last month received CEC confirmation that neither the **old Royal High School** nor **Lothian Buses' Annandale St depot** had been discussed with owners or the Scottish Govt as sites for a **Gaelic-medium secondary school**. See Item 10.22 [bit.ly/3qxr4bW]. Lothian Buses told *Spurtle* that, after **90 years in Broughton**, it has no plans to move.

A **temporary outdoor structure** has been approved for Edinburgh Academy Junior School's sports field at **10 Arboretum Rd** (21/02355/FUL). It will be a classical music venue to serve the **Edinburgh International Festival** in Aug, seating a potential 670 audience members over 23 performances. **Access, litter, lingering, noise and sustainable-travel concerns** were answered or addressed by planning conditions/informatives. Could this be a model for future post-pandemic events, **dispersing culture** beyond the city centre?

Bakery Andante has opened a new branch at **49 Broughton St.** It offers artisan breads, pastries, patisseries, coffees, teas, brunches, and lunches with **vegan and coeliac options**. Andante's artisan loaves are baked fresh each day without recourse to the 'various chemicals, additives and improvers' used in making inferior products faster. For online purchases and home-delivery details, see [bit.ly/3zGgl2U].

No social-distancing at all-night rave

M. Jullien's series of promenade concerts was terminated last night by his fourth annual bal masqué. The order and propriety with which this species of entertainments have been conducted has brought them into popularity with the higher and middle classes, and the theatre was last night crowded to excess.

The arrangements for the ball differed very slightly from those adopted on previous occasions. The orchestra was thrown back to the extremity of the stage, and the extensive platform formed by the pit and stage was carpeted, and afforded an ample area for the votaries of Terpsichore.

The decorations were most chaste and elegant, and did great credit to M. Jullien's taste. The band, which was led by M. Jullien, consisted of 108 musicians, including Koenig, the celebrated performer on the cornet-à-piston. We need scarcely say, therefore, that the music was performed in the most admirable style, and seemed to afford high satisfaction to those who were present merely as spectators.

By twelve o'clock the dress boxes, many of the private boxes, and the galleries, were fully occupied; and the promenade was so much thronged that it was with great difficulty the *maitres de cérémonie* could preserve space enough for the evolutions of the dancers.

Nearly one-half of the visitors were attired in fancy costumes. Polkas, mazourkas, and quadrilles were danced in succession; and at the time we left, so far from the dancers showing any symptoms of weariness, their appetite seemed but to have grown by what it fed on.

The most judicious arrangements were made for the exclusion of persons likely to create disturbance, or cause annoyance to the visitors; and no untoward event occurred to mar the pleasure of the evening's entertainment.—*Abridged by AM from the Caledonian Mercury, 1846.*



Image: Charles Hermans, Bal Masqué.

Charity seeks local support for local service

The North East Edinburgh Counselling Service faces closure unless it can plug an £80k funding shortfall.

Over the last 25 years, NEECS has offered professional counselling to hundreds of locals aged 16+ with a wide range of mental-health needs. It provides an accessible alternative to long NHS waiting lists and unaffordable private services. Covid pressures have increased demand for its work, for which £5–45 client contributions are sought, depending on patients' means.

Council funding dried up at the end of 2019, and alternative sources are scarce due to pandemic-related competition. To save money, the charity has left its Haddington Pl premises, and counsellors are working by video call or phone. They hope to resume in-person service as soon as finances allow.

NEECS (SCIO No. 23482) now seeks contributions large and small to keep going. Donations can be made via JustGiving here [bit.ly/3gxUYsZ].



Moreover ...



Lothian Buses has identified a section of **Bellevue** where the carriageway – patched after water-main repairs – has subsided. When buses pass over, **disturbing vibrations** result for residents in the nearby crescent. LB has asked Edinburgh Council to fix the problem, and is diverting some buses via **Broughton and McDonald Rds** instead. Locals who like being vibrated disturbingly are advised to stand at the end of **E Claremont St** and wait for a lorry.

If you plan to escape the **heat of Edinburgh** this summer by visiting London's cool and spacious acres, consider your mode of travel. LNER says its Azuma trains produce up to **513% less carbon emissions** than flying.



Work has started to transform the grubby-looking former Powderhall Stables on **Broughton Rd**. Formulated by Collective Architecture, the plans will provide studios, co-working and flexible function spaces plus kitchen facilities. A **new plaza** will emerge in the old yard at the back. Edinburgh Council seeks **potential operators** for the premises, which are due to open early next year.

Revised plans to demolish **108–14, 116 Dundas St** and create 48 flats and 3 commercial units went before the **Development Management Sub-Comte** in June (20/05645/FUL). In response to requests from residents, NTBCC, and **Cllrs Barrie, Mowat, and Osler**, a decision was narrowly taken to consider the matter again at a later hearing.

Following **Cllr Alasdair Rankin** (Ward 11) stepping down as Finance Convener, cross-party colleagues last month thanked him for his **'polite, thorough, and mostly consensual approach'** to overseeing 8 Council budgets. He was praised for his 'rigour and gravitas', and described as having been an **encouraging role model**.

The **St James Quarter** has opened.

Spartle Team: E. Dickie, J. Dickie, J. Hart, M. Hart, D. Hill, A. McIntosh, J. R. Maclean, S. Michael, M. Orr, C. Roussot, E. Roussot, T. Smith, D. Sterratt, E. Taylor-Smith, D. Young.

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LONDON1 HOT SHAVE BARBER

Appointments not necessary,
18 Rodney Street, Tel. 557 2393



LEITH CENTRAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Leith Central Community Council

A forum for local people who want to engage with and work for their local community.

Participate in local democracy.

Make representations to City of Edinburgh Council, other public bodies and private agencies on everything that matters locally.

Next meeting: 16 August on Microsoft Teams.
For local information visit the website at <https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>

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Member of the Scottish Parliament for Edinburgh Northern and Leith Constituency



Covid-19 Update

Because of Covid-19, and in accordance with the law and advice, my office is closed to the public until further notice. My team and I are working remotely and continue to assist constituents as normal.

Telephone/Video Call Advice Surgeries:

I have also had to cancel my weekly face-to-face advice surgeries. Instead I am holding regular telephone/video surgeries each week. Please leave a voicemail or email my office to book a 15 minute surgery appointment and someone in my team will get in touch to confirm a time. (May 2021)

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NEW TOWN & BROUGHTON
COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Representing locals' views to City of Edinburgh Council.
Tell us what you think and make a difference.

Next meeting:
Monday 9 August on Zoom.

Contact us at
www.ntbcc.org.uk