

Spurtle



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**December
2022**

No 324

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

DRUMMOND INVITES COMMUNITY HELP

Drummond Community High School are working with the DCHS Parent Council to develop opportunities to support a reduction in the cost of the school day in line with our Drummond CORE value of Equity, writes headteacher Rachel Robertson.



We would like to offer our community the opportunity to make donations of items that will support Drummond families. These include, but are not limited to:

- good-condition uniforms (e.g., one that your young person has outgrown)
- good-condition outdoor jackets (as above)
- good-condition footwear (including trainers and football boots).

These donations will also support our drive for sustainability in line with our commitment to Reduce, Re-use, Recycle.

We can also accept items of dried food (e.g., healthy cereal bars) and cartons of juice to provide snacks to pupils through the day and toiletries (deodorant, shampoo, shower gel – a range suitable for all pupils). These will be available to S1–S6 via our ‘Take What You Need Trolleys’ in tutor classes and at a stall at future Parents’ Evenings.

Members of the community are asked to phone ahead to the school office (0131 556 2651) if they wish to make an arrangement to drop off donations at a convenient time.

SEASON'S GREETINGS



This is the last printed Spurtle of 2022. Our next issue will be published on 1 Feb 2023. In the meantime, we wish all our established readers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and extend to some of our latest new ones a special *Ласкаво просимо до Единбурга* or perhaps *тепло вітаємо в Единбурзі*. Wherever you're from, Spurtleshire welcomes you.

PLEA TO STOP NARKING PARKING

Leith Central Community Council and 3 other CCs along the Trams to Newhaven route have written to local MSPs Ben Macpherson (Edinburgh Northern & Leith) and Angus Robertson (Edinburgh Central) in hope of preventing damage to new footway paving.

Parts of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 which would make parking on footways illegal will not be in place by the time the tram route is completed. The CCs say, ‘destroying newly created, publicly financed assets and inconveniencing and endangering the most vulnerable road users, pedestrians and cyclists, is unacceptable’.

They want to know if anything can be done to speed up the process of bringing legal prohibitions into force. They ask what the Scottish Govt can do to deal with the problem of pavement parking (already evident here) before the law is implemented.

In a passing sally, the CCs note that pavement parking was banned in London by the Greater London (General Purposes) Act in 1974.

ALL CHANGE AT LONDON STREET SAUNA

Planning consent has been granted to change the use of the Category A-listed former London St Sauna premises at 40–41 London St into two 3-bedroom dwellings (22/04523/FUL).

Some of the proposed changes aim to open up internal space. Others relate to improved light and ventilation in what was before a place of mirk and steamy encounters.

Although the application suggests there will be no significant impact on the property's fabric, and original features will be reinstated, the Architectural History Society of Scotland sought reassurances about New Town conservation standards being met for replacement windows, light wells, grilles and pavings. However, no such explicit conditions were attached to the Council's decision.

The sauna operated here for over 30 years.

Customers will no doubt find an alternative ‘discreet environment’ where they can ‘relax in a TV Lounge area whilst enjoying a complimentary tea, coffee, ice cold water or selection of soft drinks’.



BRING ME SUNSHINE

A resident seeking planning permission for solar panels on a garage at 12B Cumberland St NW Lane (bit.ly/csnwl) raises an interesting question: How to marry built heritage and practical modernity?

The functional rendered-brick structure in the New Town Conservation Area dates from 1979 and is not listed. The black panels would face south on a black slate roof. No specific Council guidance on photovoltaics is available, but satellite dishes are permitted in similar locations if sensitively positioned and/or disguised.

Connecting the garage to the mains would require a 28m-long, 0.5m-deep trench costing £7,000–9,000. Running a petrol generator would annoy neighbours. Neither option would be as green as photovoltaics.

The applicant concludes: ‘I would not expect that the solar panels will adversely affect the character of the area in any way, but in fact, I hope will have the opposite effect; i.e., it shows a Conservation Area that is aligning well with the environmental challenges of our times – the old is embracing the new, and the new is embracing the old.’

Similar cases are bound to arise in future. See also Issue 317, p.2 and [bit.ly/phtvp] and [bit.ly/ewhrain].



Briefly



Filming took place across Spurtleshire last month for ITV's second series of Irvine Welsh's **Crime**, due to screen next year. Scenes were shot in the **Little White Pig** on **Dublin St**, where actor, manager, and local Emma Currie plays Dougray Scott's big sister. She married Welsh last summer. **Belated congratulations to both**. Elsewhere, *Loss and a Return*, another ITV series, filmed on **Abercromby Pl**. The 'stylish contemporary crime drama' stars Morven Christie (*Line of Duty*).

The **Edinburgh Food Project** provides emergency food for people in crisis. Text efp33 to 70970 to donate £5. For further information, visit [bit.ly/edfdpjdjt].

Circle, a Scottish charity improving the lives of children by strengthening families, has launched its winter campaign – **Sponsor the Difference** – in response to the double burden of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. To find out more, visit [<https://circle.scot>].

Advice Direct Scotland is a charity offering expert advice and support for **understanding energy bills, issues with meters, complaints and disputes, and switching suppliers**. Specialist debt and money advisers there can work with people to **assess their current situation, income and outgoings, and consider what to do next**, including a full range of free end-to-end debt solutions. Contact [advice.scot] or Tel. 0808 800 9060.

Edinburgh Council has an online **Cost of Living** page offering links to help with money worries, energy, housing and homelessness, **Scottish Welfare Fund**, free school meals & clothing grants, food, and **Council Tax reduction**. In due course there will also be a list/map of **warm and welcoming spaces/activities**. Visit [bit.ly/EdCCoL].

Thanks and farewell to the **Bluebird Café**, which ceased trading on 11 Oct at **5 Canonmills**. Welcome and good luck to the **Singapore Coffee House** (Kopitiam Café) which opened on 26 Nov with an invitation to the '**good humble people of Edinburgh**' to 'dabble into the bustling smokey world of Singaporean-style street food' [bit.ly/singcof].

A plea for peace from the **New Town Flaneur**. 'In the light of the carnage caused by a pink door [[see bit.ly/pinkprob](https://bit.ly/pinkprob) and bit.ly/huehoo-ha], we must hope no one ever mentions the mauve shutters on Heriot Row.'

Bin hubs – where are we now?

Edinburgh Council designed its 'Bin Hub' project to help fulfil the ambitious UK target of recycling 65% of municipal waste by 2035. In tenemental areas, the tiny capacity of red and blue boxes, lack of provision for all waste streams, and constant contamination of on-street communal bins requires a solution for higher recycling rates.

A sense of urgent necessity may have encouraged the Council to not justify itself too much to amenity bodies, community councils, Edinburgh World Heritage, or residents. In Nov 2021, it ran carefully named 'information events' [bit.ly/hubcon], not 'consultations' or 'engagement', and has used Traffic Regulation Orders to authorise exact siting of hubs. Cynics suggest this short-circuits objections on any issue other than loss of parking spaces.



While New Town & Broughton Community Council's campaign, supported by various residents' associations, secured a pause in bin-hub installation across the WH site, preparations for rolling-out the project continued everywhere else. The pause in the WH site was agreed in order to: (1) study the feasibility of alternative options, including underground storage; (2) trial other recycling collection methods as alternatives to red and blue boxes.

Roll out the bin hubs

Phase 1 launched in summer 2022, covering Pilrig and areas around Leith Walk [bit.ly/binmp]. Phase 2 (Corstorphine etc) is now underway. Phase 3, covering most of Spurtleshire's non-New Town, starts in early 2023 (500 new bin hub locations and associated street markings/signage).

The City Centre has been split into 2 phases to allow non-WH parts to progress as Phase 4 (roll-out late-summer/autumn 2023). The WH site (Phase 5) is paused for the feasibility study and green-gull-bag trial to be evaluated.

Trials and errors

The Council chose 10 New Town streets (out of c.40 using black gull bags for residual waste) to trial green gull bags for mixed dry recyclables (paper, card, plastics, cans). Glass collection continues with fortnightly blue boxes. The trial began in Oct and will run for 6 months (see Gt King St, Northumberland St, and Drummond Pl).

How's it going so far? In New Town streets, green gull bags seem a huge improvement on red boxes, and trial participants are buoyant. However, in Pilrig and Leith Walk side-streets, there's a depressing sense of 'bins everywhere'. Some hubs are relatively clean and not overflowing, but a typical hub is pictured top right.

Who could blame Spey Ter or Iona St residents for feeling short-changed? It seems perverse that the Council has committed to a system where the public thoroughfare is the default storage place for all residents' waste, without any effective commitment to improved standards of street cleansing, including a periodic deep-clean of every street. The bins themselves are all new and in good condition, but what will they be like in a few years' time?—*Caroline Roussot*

New HUB and a sticking block for Beaverlands

Edinburgh Council looks set to green-light a mixed development of 5–7 storeys at 27 and 29 Beaverhall Rd (22/01654/FUL).

Under proposals by developers HUB and Bridges Fund Management, the old factory, warehouse, and offices will make way for 205 build-to-rent homes (including 52 affordable homes), all constructed 'tenure-blind' to the same standard.

Ground-floor workspaces (45% more than before), an external mural, and public courtyard also feature. Environmental sustainability measures include a biodiverse green roof and communal air-source heat pump supplying the whole building.

Local involvement during the planning stage and subsequent levels of approval have been high. But comments from 35 objectors included criticisms about excessive height and density, inappropriate modern design, overdevelopment of the area, and non-retention of the 'historic' Egyptian mural. None of these persuaded officials.

Most people *Spurtle* has consulted say this is a welcome improvement of the area, although some doubt how many of the original artists and crafters will complete the transition.

Resolution has yet to be achieved concerning how big a Section 75 contribution the developers should pay towards primary and secondary education in the area. The cumulative effect of the development has not been established (although estimates suggest an extra 17 pupils), and the 'applicant has expressed a reluctance to proceed' on the basis of the Council's recommended sum.

The Council, on the other hand, is being careful not to underestimate the amount, since further contributions cannot be sought once development has begun. Both sides must agree a deal before the proposal is consented.



Out of the Blue for Powderhall

Edinburgh Council's Finance & Resources Cmte has approved the award of a 75-year lease to Out of the Blue Arts & Education Trust as head tenant to run the Powderhall Stables Block.

The building's refurbishment is expected to end early in 2023. It will offer 12 studios and 2 co-working spaces aimed at start-ups, artists, and micro businesses. It also includes 2 function/events spaces for the local community.

Out of the Blue (established in 1995 and best known in Broughton for the Drill Hall on Dalmeny St) was one of 5 organisations which submitted proposals. In charge, it will sublease and manage the various spaces on a day-to-day basis. It will cultivate links with local groups, creatives, and start-ups to encourage diverse and optimum uses.

The restored stables should become a 'centre-point' for the wider Powderhall project: a mixed-tenure development of c.260 homes, new nursery school, new public realm, and community growing areas.

The Out of the Blue arrangement will generate £20K a year for the Council, plus 15% of the letting income. For nitty-gritty, see [bit.ly/PSOoftB].



Briefly



A local has called on **British Telecom** to remove the 'derelict and insanitary old phone box' on **E London St**. Too many calls of nature have been answered there.

The Council is consulting on how to extend its network of **20mph speed limits** across central Edinburgh and reduce speed limits in adjacent rural roads and hamlets. The areas nearest Broughton under review are **London Rd** and the section of **Ferry Rd** between **Newhaven Rd** and **Arboretum Rd**. View the proposals and complete the surveys here [bit.ly/20surv] by 8 Feb.

Plans are afoot to convert **21A Haddington PI** (the basement below McCall's of Edinburgh Highlandwear) from a shop to a 2-bedroom flat.



Perth-based **Feshiebridge Ltd** seeks planning and listed building consent to change the use of Category B-listed **1-1A Abercromby PI** from financial and professional services to hotel and hostels. (It secured consent for residential uses in 2021.) Feshiebridge wants an **aparthotel** at ground and basement levels comprising **5 luxury units (7 bedrooms)** with a 24/7 concierge service. The application says the proposal preserves the building's **character and architectural details** with limited alterations to its external fabric.

Summit Fitness has planning consent to change the old foundry at **28 Beaverbank PI** from industrial use to assembly and leisure. Effective measures must be applied to prevent **noise breakout** bothering neighbours.

An **enforcement request** has been made in respect of alleged unauthorised subdivision of a listed terraced house (with 9 key safes) at **11 Pilrig St**. Observers also allege it is operating as **unlicensed short-term lets**.

Solstice Wellness held its grand opening at **49A Broughton St** on 19 Nov. Its 4 providers offer health-&-wellness services including vitamin injections, perimenopause therapy, naturopathic treatments, and nutrition consultation.

In the bleak midwinter

From the Mid-Lothian Journal, 22 December 1922.

BEFORE another issue of this paper, Christmas will have come and gone. In the circumstances it is natural that we should wish to give our readers the old-time greeting—A Merry Christmas. It is in chastened mood we do so. There were days, and not so long ago, when the words seemed a mockery, for the world was in the throes of war, when the worst feelings of mankind were stirred to their depths.

Whilst the clash of arms and the destruction of life and property have ceased, there is yet cause to doubt whether we have reached the era when it can be declared that universal peace reigns.

When we look at the conditions of our own land there are many things that give pause to the thought of merry making. War's dread aftermath is still with us. Capital, which might now be going to the building of industry and the smoothing out and making happy the lives of our industrial population has been wasted in the years that have gone, and the difficulty now is to get back into the old paths of productive work.

Abroad, the circumstances of the nations are even worse than they are with us. Our ancient foes, as well as our Allies, are struggling with financial difficulties, which forbid that confidence so necessary to the re-establishment of trade relations. It is not because other countries do not need what we can supply that business is stagnant. The cause lies in the tearing up of the mutual confidence that previously existed, and in the apparent unwillingness of the politicians and financiers to meet their lawful debts.

... There is no sign of settlement, and good wishes, which the season suggest, must be chastened with the knowledge that the nations of the world are yet far from realising the ideal of the message of the angels given so many centuries ago of 'goodwill among men.'—*Condensed by AM.*



Cockburn and the common good

As Princes St Gdns are once again sheeted over for Edinburgh's Christmas, the Cockburn Association held its annual lecture last month on the subject of *Edinburgh's Common Good Land – Use and Abuse*.

Andrew Ferguson, a lawyer and author of the textbook *Common Good Law*, provided a useful recap of what common good land is and the obligations of local authorities to manage it for the benefit of their current residents.

The impact of recent community empowerment legislation was explored: councils are, since 2016, under a statutory duty to consult residents before selling or changing the use of common good property, and to 'have regard' to their views.

What realistic brake this requirement imposes on local authorities is debatable. It was enjoyable to hear the uses to which the common good fund has been put in past centuries – for example, in 1911, £425 was expended for the provision of coronation mugs to the schoolchildren of Edinburgh. And up to the early 20th century, the fund was used to support numerous social and civic clubs such as allotment societies and dog-breeding clubs. *Caroline Roussot [Spurtle will return to this subject in the New Year.]*



Moreover ...



A contorted willow 'threatening' pedestrians outside **9 Howard PI** faces a 50% chop and shaping. It sounds bitter and twisted.

The **Edinburgh Patisserie Company** wants to build a pink pergola for seated posteriors outside the EL&N London café at **5 St James Sq**. The plan includes planters and a 'portable waiter station' for very small staff arriving by model railway. **Residential neighbours** are once again concerned about potential noise.

Edinburgh Licensing Board must prepare a new policy every 5 years and ensure it helps to: prevent crime and disorder, secure public safety, prevent public nuisance, protect and improve public health, protect children and young people from harm. (**Loud cheers all round.**) How any such policy can achieve these objectives when ELB never seems to turn down a new application to sell alcohol in the city centre is unclear. (**Booze everywhere.**) With pop-up Festival venues mushrooming across more and more of Edinburgh, including in or near residential areas, *Spurtle* wonders about the **wisdom and necessity** of granting licences to lubricate such events. Members of the public have until 20 Dec to offer views on current and extended licensing hours, children and young persons' access, temporary licences, and overprovision at [bit.ly/Edbooz].



In Issue 323 we reported Nuveen ECF's plan to cover the **OMNi Centre's** roof with solar panels. One neighbour objected, saying the panels would be visible from many viewpoints on the NE side of **Calton Hill**, contrary to non-statutory Council guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. Last month, Council officials determined there would be **no adverse impact** and gave consent. See also 'Bring me Sunshine', p.1.

A brief Christmas conundrum. Apart from their being poetic fragments in the Scots leid, **identify 2 connections** between: 'Sing it aince for pleasure/Sing it twice for joy' and 'Drums in the Walligate, pipes in the air/The wallop in' thistle is ill to bear'. **Answers in Issue 325.**

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RODNEY STREET BARBERS

Julie 07989 441557, 42 Rodney Street
Tues–Fri, 11am–5pm; Sat, 10am–2pm



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: 7pm, Mon. 16 January, Nelson Hall, McDonald Road Library.

<https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>



Leith Central Community Council

Deidre Brock MP

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Dr Iain Gordon Brown

AULD GREEKIE ATHENS OF THE NORTH



Mon 12 Dec at 18:30
full info: bit.ly/AHSS-Greekie

Winter lecture series
at Augustine United Church,
George IV Bridge, and on-line.
Bookings via Eventbrite



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"I am here to help and serve all constituents in Edinburgh Northern and Leith. If there is something I can assist you with, or if you would like to discuss any issues or ideas, please contact me or come and see me at one of my monthly Drop-in Help & Advice Surgeries."

Drop-in Help & Advice Surgeries
first Friday of every month

9:30 to 10:30
Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre, 11 Pilton Drive North, EH5 1NF

11:00 to 12:00
West Pilton Neighbourhood Centre, 19 West Pilton Grove, EH4 4BY

15:30 to 16:30
Leith Community Centre, 12A Newkirkgate, EH6 6AD

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