

Spurtle



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**February
2016**
No 248
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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

FULL SPEED AHEAD FOR 20mph EDINBURGH

Edinburgh will introduce a citywide 20mph speed limit for vehicles this year, with a network of 30mph and 40mph arterial routes, mostly in the suburbs. Councillors voted for the change on 12 January.

The new arrangements will be phased in, starting in July. The scheme should be completed by February 2018.

Transport Convener, Cllr Lesley Hinds says the project aims to make 'safer, more attractive streets for all road users, [and follows] a great deal of consultation with the public, which found that the majority of citizens were in support'.

Given stretched Police Scotland resources, enforcement is likely to be minimal, or 'targeted' in PR-speak. More emphasis will be placed first on signposting, a 'communications plan' to educate drivers, and engineering measures where speed levels remain too high.

A year after implementation, the project will be judged by traffic speeds, road casualties, public perceptions, pedestrian/cycling/vehicle levels, vehicle journey times, and emissions.

Implementation is estimated to cost £1.14 million from existing budgets over three financial years.

Spurtle accepts that the jury is out on whether lower speed limits will reduce or increase pollution. We also concede that most drivers tend to approve lower speed limits for other people on routes they don't use themselves. However, we hope for a reduction in the number and severity of impact injuries; and for a more patient, less aggressive driving and bicycling culture across the city.

CONCERN AT CALTON HILL CLOSURE

Many locals got hot under the collar when it was announced on 24 December that Calton Hill would be closed on New Year's Night, writes *Lizzie Rynne*.

In recent years many hundreds of revellers have enjoyed a free grandstand view of the fireworks display from this vantage point. Suddenly, the Council agreed with the Hogmanay organisers that Calton Hill's uneven and unlit paths would be dangerous, and that the area should be closed off on Health and Safety grounds.

Following a hoo-ha on social media and *Spurtle's* website (27-28 Dec.), CEC rapidly issued a Section 11 order. This is required when a Land Manager wishes to restrict the public's responsible access for a time-limited period to land over which we normally enjoy such a right. CEC's own policy now advises that Section 11 orders be obtained for all park closures for events.

Given the very late announcement of the closure, and the even later publication of the S11 order, it is not clear in this case if the correct procedures, including consultation, were followed in granting the order. Some readers suspect the real motive for this closure was to encourage take-up of unsold tickets for the street-party in the city centre. Any Health and Safety concerns could have been raised months before and proper consideration given to the issues.

The whole subject raises concerns about the use of S11 orders when it comes to local authorities closing land which they themselves manage. *Spurtle* is investigating and will report back.



BEERHIVE VOTED THE BEST



Congratulations to Beerhive on Rodney Street, voted one of Scotland's best shops in The Skinny Food and Drink Survey 2016. The magazine waxed lyrical about the 'spectacular range of beers, and staff who are more than able to talk you through their various merits'. Boss Peter Sherry (above, see also Issue 209) is delighted, particularly since the award is nominated by customers themselves.

St JAMES QUARTER WORKS (JANUARY-JUNE)

January: Highways work on Leith St. Layby created on St Andrew Sq. Construction of escape staircase to John Lewis.

January onwards: Gradual removal of Leith St central reservation. Single-lane contra-flow. New pedestrian crossings to access new entrance for John Lewis.

January-April: New gas main, sewer and drainage works on Elder St.

February: Infill building on Leith St.

February-June: New gas main work on Calton Rd and top of Leith St.

March: Shopping centre and multi-storey car park close.

March/April: Erection of scaffolding around New St Andrew's House prior to demolition.

April: Completion of electricity substation at top of Cathedral Lane.

Still no news on route(s) which demolition/construction traffic will take.

PILRIG STREET PARKING PROBLEMS FOR RESIDENTS

Commuter parking on Pilrig Street is causing major inconvenience for local residents.

It is now the closest street to the city centre offering unrestricted spaces, and the consequent number of cars is dangerously restricting sightlines for drivers exiting Dryden Street and Rosslyn Crescent. It's perilous, too, for pedestrians, who have

no dedicated crossing between Leith Walk and Pilrig Gardens.

These issues are worsened by the number of lorries using Pilrig Street to avoid the McDonald Road 'chicanes'.

CEC is reviewing parking across the city, and officials have recently met residents and two local councillors to discuss the problem here.

Briefly

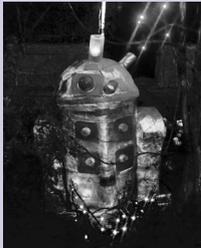


The next meeting of the **Broughton History Society** is on 8 February at 7pm in Drummond Community High School. Mike Shaw will talk about **'BBC Scotland: Early Years and the Edinburgh Connection'**.

Environmental charity **Greener Leith** is establishing an open-data map to include information in one place on planning applications/areas, neighbourhood partnerships, electoral boundaries, doctors/dentists, care homes, school catchment areas, census data etc. **It's a work in progress**, but has the potential to be very useful indeed. See: [<https://goo.gl/iN5OdX>].

Local poet and former Edinburgh Makar **Stewart Conn's** wintry Edinburgh celebration **At the Year's Midnight** ran twice on BBC Radio 4 last month. It was wonderful. You can listen again here until mid-Feb: [<http://goo.gl/a9YbmX>].

Local resident Yosef Mazon has gained planning permission to use the **police box on Broughton Rd** as a Class 3 coffee and food carry-out (Ref. 15/05365/FUL). The box will be coloured **red with gold** for the embossed castles. One letter of objection cited **likely mess and disruption**, but was dismissed as immaterial.



Christine 'Granny' Thomson's **guerrilla garden on Bellevue Pl** attracted more unwelcome attention over the festive period. First a **Christmas tree was pinched**, then so was the replacement donated by local fans. Next, her Star Wars **R2D2 was ruined** by vandals. We suspect this wanton destruction is **booze-fuelled not vindictive**, but it's a shame nevertheless. Thomson's seasonal displays **bring a smile to most people's faces**, and serve as an effective focus for her charity fundraising. **Enhanced video coverage** will follow.

Bellevue Rd **lamppost graffiti** in Dec – reading 'White Scum' – has been recorded as a **hate crime**.

The next meetings of **Leith Central Community Council** are on 18 Feb and 21 Mar at 7pm in McDonald Rd Library. **Stockbridge & Inverleith CC** meets next on 17 Feb and 16 Mar in Stockbridge Parish Church, Saxe Coburg St. For **New Town & Broughton CC**, see p.4.

Objections fail to stop Gayfield basement flats

Listed building consent was granted last month for demolition works and alterations to form five flats at 4B Gayfield Place (Ref. 15/05010/LBC). Planning permission – including change of use – was granted at the same time (Ref. 15/05009/FUL).

Three letters in support of the application were submitted, and 19 letters against on grounds including: overdevelopment, inadequate living environment, detrimental effect on a listed building, and loss of privacy. The Gayfield Place Owners Association objected. NTBCC made no comment.

A widespread but mostly unstated concern among locals was owner Cameron Guest House Group's expected use of the property as a hostel. Officials deemed this immaterial.

Officials said the proposal was acceptable here and would not adversely affect the character of the building and locale. It would provide acceptable living conditions and would not affect neighbours' privacy or light, nor would it adversely impact traffic or road safety. The application complied with the Development Plan and relevant non-statutory guidelines.

Old Royal High School: how things stand now

As reported on our website in December (17.12.15), Edinburgh councillors rejected by one vote plans for a 147-bed hotel in and around the former Royal High School on Regent Road. Detailed reasons appear here: [<https://goo.gl/HSiz6Y>].

Local politicians whose views came to our attention were as follows. Cllrs Nick Gardner and Karen Doran (Lab.), Joanna Mowat (Con.), Nigel Bagshaw (Grn), Adam McVey and Lewis Ritchie (SNP), Deidre Brock MP, Marco Biagi MSP (SNP), Alison Johnstone MSP (Grn), Sarah Boyack MSP and Malcolm Chisholm MSP (Lab.) were outspokenly against the scheme. The New Town & Broughton Community Council also objected.

Cllr Angela Blacklock (Lab.) voted in favour of the luxury hotel, describing it as an opportunity to 'protect and revive' the listed structure.

The Duddingston House Properties and Urbanist Group team were rocked by the decision, and later by the untimely and tragic death of their lead architect Gareth Hoskins (pictured) in January.

They may well appeal the decision to the Scottish Government, or return with a more modest hotel proposal (fewer rooms, less visual impact) between now and the expiry of their exclusive contract with CEC in 2022. In theory, CEC still considers a hotel to be the best option for the site.

Meanwhile, the Royal High School Preservation Trust has applied for planning permission to rehome St Mary's Music School on the site (Ref. 15/05662/FUL). The proposal has broad support within the 'Heritage Lobby', although some purists consider it to be yet another unpardonable despoilment of Thomas Hamilton's masterpiece (see our website 8.12.15).

Last month, St Mary's Music School announced a list of celebrity backers for its proposed move, including: Dame Evelyn Glennie, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Simon Frith and Richard Hillier (our website, 18.1.16).



Holyrood on the horizon

Known candidates for the Scottish Parliamentary election on 5 May are as follows.

Edinburgh Northern and Leith: Iain McGill (Con.), Jack Caldwell (Ind.), Lesley Hinds (Lab.), Ben Macpherson (SNP).

Edinburgh Central: Ruth Davidson (Con.), Alison Johnstone (Grn), Sarah Boyack (Lab.), Alison Dickie (SNP).

Lothians (top 3 in order): Ruth Davidson, Miles Briggs, Gordon Lindhurst (Con.); Alison Johnstone, Andy Wightman, Lorna Slater (Grn); Kezia Dugdale, Sarah Boyack, Jallal Chaudry (Lab.); Angela Constance, Fiona Hyslop, Jil Murphy (SNP).

The selection process for Lib-Dem candidates was well underway but not complete at the time we went to press.

Anyone seen Milo?

This timid, 7-month-old, male tabby has been missing from Balmoral Place since the start of January.

He has small patches of white on his paws and chest, and is thought to be hiding around or even in someone else's home.

Milo's chipped but has no collar.

Please send sightings or other useful information to us at spurtle@hotmail.co.uk or c/o Narcissus Flowers on Broughton Street.



Essential St Andrew Square

As locals contemplate illuminated stick-men in St Andrew Square this month and next, *Spurtle* searched Essential Edinburgh's website [www.essentialedinburgh.co.uk] for insights into the bog below. Here we reproduce some choice morsels gleaned on 20 January 2016.

- 'A Business Improvement District (BID) is an arrangement where businesses identify opportunities to the benefit of their own activities in their local area.'

- Christmas in Princes Street Gardens and St Andrew Square Garden, 2014, 2.7 million+ visitors.

- August 2014 Festival, footfall up 72% at east end of George Street and up 11% on South St Andrew Street.

- 23–24 May 2015, Spa in the City 7,000+ visitors.

- 12–14 June 2015, Film in the City, 12,500+ visitors.

- 23 June 2015, Farm to Fork, 10,000+ visitors.

- In 2014–15, of Essential Edinburgh's total income (£1,647,864), £542,011 derived from St Andrew Square Garden and coffee pavilion. EE finished the year £40,068 in deficit.

- 'Clean & Attractive: The city centre must be seen as an exemplar area for cleanliness, meeting and exceeding national targets. ... Ensure a noticeably improved environment to give an enhanced experience.'

- 'St Andrew Square was built in 1770 and is a key part of the New Town design.'

- Garden Event Guidelines: 'The Garden must not be used for any purpose that may cause excessive noise or nuisance to the surrounding businesses; the Garden must not be used for any of the following uses: Fairgrounds, Staged events featuring amplified pop/rock music, Skate boarding/roller blading, Staged events featuring amplified recorded/piped music, Public meetings, Rallies, commercial sale of alcohol other than where ancillary to and consistent with a use permitted, Burger vans or stalls and/or fast food outlets.'

- 'Managed and maintained by Essential Edinburgh, the Garden continues to be a tranquil and attractive focal point for employees, visitors and locals. It has also played host to some excellent events and activities during this year, such as the Ryder Cup activities, Fringe Festival, Edinburgh's Christmas and Essential Edinburgh organised events; Farm to Fork, Spa in the City and Film in the City. As part of the maintenance of the Garden, improvements have been made to the paths with horonizing on worn path corners and strengthening of the turf with grasscrete.'

Look out for: Goosander

Once a rare sight due to persecution, the striking Goosander is now a regular visitor to the cleaner and restocked Water of Leith. These large ducks are members of the Sawbill family, so named for their thin serrated beaks which they use to snatch fish, pursuing them underwater using their powerful rear-set, webbed feet. Don't be fooled by the delicacy of their beaks, though. These are not only precision instruments that can pick up individual insects, but are also capable of snagging substantial fish which are then swallowed whole. Traditionally, Goosanders nest in more northern areas, but they have been recorded breeding on the Water of Leith – which constitutes another small, but significant, local conservation success.

How to see them: Goosander congregate in the river basin towards Leith, but hunt up and down the length of the river. They are conspicuous in flight due to their size, colour and long-necked profile. As ever with ducks, the males have the brighter plumage: a striking dark-green head, with scarlet beak and feet. Although their bodies appear black and white at a distance, closer inspection shows a subtle pink hue. Females have a grey body and a distinct tuft on their russet heads.

Also look out for: While peering over the bridges and walls that line our river, keep an eye out for the ultra-fast and iridescent Kingfisher. Usually seen only as a flash of electric blue and orange, their sharp calls are a giveaway to their passing. They are there! — *Miles Forde*



Community Cinema aims to enchant

The New Town Community Cinema is an innovative scheme by the charity Scottish Historic Buildings Trust to bring the Glasite Meeting House (33 Barony Street) back into regular public use.

Last month it announced two strands, one for adults and one for families, which will screen on alternate Fridays between now and 22 April.

'Capital Cinema' (starting 7.30pm, £6) will show stimulating but accessible movies featuring Paris, Budapest, Rome, Buenos Aires, New Delhi and Tehran.

'Alternative Kids Classics' (starting 2.30pm, £5 for children, under 3s go free) will comprise films which enchant and challenge young people and their older companions – everything from *Belleville Rendez-Vous* to *Hugo*, *The Secret of Kells* and everyone's favourite *The Goonies*.

Spurtle thinks the scheme has great potential as a social hub at the heart of Broughton – a great place to broaden horizons, discuss ideas, meet neighbours and make new friends. We'll carry online previews of the following Friday's presentation, and invite all our readers to respond with relevant thoughts of any length in their own time.

For more information, visit the Facebook page at [https://goo.gl/ZiGXx2] or pick up a leaflet from No. 33.

Briefly

New LED street lighting on Dalmeny St is to be improved after complaints by locals. Leith Central Community Council (LCCC) has raised concerns about **timing and extent** of lighting here and on **Iona St**. Cllr Nick Gardner says 4–5 complaints and/or intervention by an elected member will **prompt CEC investigation** into similar cases.

Good things come in 3s. First, an obscure part of **Napier Bathrooms and Interiors'** Canonmills exterior featured in *Spurtle's* festive **Spot the Spot Competition**. Then the business was nominated by trade peers in 2 categories of 'the prestigious **kbbreview Retail & Design Awards'** as UK Bathroom Retailer of the Year and UK Bathroom Showroom of the Year. Managing Director and dachshund-whisperer **Johnny Bacigalupo** says he is thrilled. Winners will be announced on 7 Mar in Birmingham.

Following **David Bowie's death**, there appeared in the *Guardian* on 18 Jan an account of his lack of enthusiasm for a lovingly prepared **Fray Bentos pie à la Northumberland St** in 1969 [http://goo.gl/lgXhkd]. Bowie's brief but colourful sojourn on **Cumberland St** in the early 1970s was recalled in *Spurtle's* Issue 227 [http://goo.gl/rxvNvl].

Welcome **Tazza di Caffè**, which appetisingly fills the gap left by Ravenous at **44 Dundas Street**. For mouthwatering delights, see **Facebook**: [https://goo.gl/4Ahenu].

Edinburgh parks have won a record **29 Green Flag Awards** in the national 2015 competition. Among them were **Hopetoun Cres Garden, Inverleith Park, King George V Park and Victoria Park**. The scheme, run by Keep Scotland Beautiful, recognises those parks providing '**safe, clean and pleasant** spaces where people can **relax, meet, play and exercise**'.

LCCC foresee **potential conflicts of interest** now that tram-minded Council officials are to handle the **Leith Walk upgrade**.

At 6.50pm on 11 Jan, a woman resisted 2 men's attempt to steal her bag on **Pilrig St**. They ran off across the park. One is described as white, in his 20s, slim/medium build, around 5ft 8ins tall with a **full beard**. He was wearing a dark or navy-coloured Parka-style jacket with a hood, and dark trousers. A **second lone woman** was robbed of her bag by 2 men on **Dalmeny St** at 7.15pm. They escaped southwards towards Sloan St. Both are described as white, around 5ft 6ins tall and wearing **dark-coloured hooded tops**. One wore a lighter-coloured top underneath, the other had a scarf partially covering his face. Police have **increased patrols** locally, and appeal for information.

Welcome **Mandala Flow** to dramatically improved premises at **16 Rodney St**. The clinic offers reflexology, 'energy medicine', reiki and **emotional freedom techniques (EFT)**.

Moreover ...

Too many hearts and roses this Valentine's Day? For gay, bi and trans people primarily identifying as male, LGBT Health & Wellbeing will screen cult-horror **Zombies of Mass Destruction** at 7pm on 11 Feb of 9pm (9 Howe St). It's an everyday tale of a gay male couple and an Iranian woman battling a **zombie apocalypse and small-town bigotry**.

An application to amend planning consents for **external flue and internal cooker arrangements** (Ref. 15/05675/FUL) suggests KLR and RCR International Ltd's long-awaited '**continental-themed café and retail super-deli**' at 120 Dundas St is still on track.

Hot on the willow-stripped heels of radio and TV appearances at Hogmanay, local band Whisky Kiss's debut album **sexySOUNDS** reached No. 5 in the UK iTunes chart after **just 3 days**.

Network Rail at Waverley Station recently sought planning permission to: **alter and extend** Platforms 5, 6 and 12; **remove** ancillary building and structures; **install** overhead line electrification equipment; **relocate** an escalator, waste compactor and signal gantry; and **reprofile** platform surfaces (Ref. 15/05062/LBC). The application was granted by Fast Track Decision.

Note for your diary: the annual **Edinburgh Book Fair** – heaven on earth for collectors of rare, antiquarian and second-hand books, ephemera and manuscripts – will take place on **4–5 Mar** in the Radisson Blu Hotel at 80 High St.

Permission to convert an A-listed 3-storey office building at **12 Gayfield Sq** to form two new flats on the ground and first floors (Ref 10/03645/LBC) **has been renewed**.

No. 62 Broughton St, next door to Nom de Plume, is now home to **Lifeline Project (LP)**, which moved here from York Place in November. LP comprises the **Edinburgh and Midlothian Offender Recovery Service**, an admirable and far-sighted scheme committed to supporting male and female offenders aged 18+, especially those dealing with drug and alcohol misuse. It offers **intensive, one-to-one recovery support** to people moving back into the community. Its multi-faceted services '**value people**' and **seek to 'achieve change'** also for individuals returning here from Scottish prisons. LP is supported by City of Edinburgh Council, Midlothian Council and NHS Lothian. **For Edinburgh details**, Tel. 444 3142, e-mail [emors@lifeline.org.uk] or visit [www.lifeline.org.uk]. — *JRM*

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LONDON1 HOT SHAVE BARBER

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Alison Johnstone MSP for Lothian Region



On the 1st and 3rd Monday of the
month during term time I hold a
surgery for Lothian residents at the
Scottish Parliament between 11am
and 1pm.

Please call to book a surgery
appointment or to arrange another
time and venue that is convenient for
you.

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Property Management

Deidre Brock MP Edinburgh North and Leith



Regular Surgeries

Leith: 5 Feb
1–2pm, 166 Great Junction Street
Leith Walk: 12 Feb
3.30–4.30pm, McDonald Rd Library
Pilton: 26 Feb, 4–5pm,
Royston/Wardieburn Comm. Centre
Stockbridge: 17 Feb, 6.00–7.00pm
Stockbridge Library
dbrockmp.scot
Tel: 0131-555 7009
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New Town/Broughton Community Council

THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL
REPRESENTS THE VIEWS
OF LOCAL RESIDENTS TO
EDINBURGH CITY COUNCIL

Next Meeting:

8 February

at 7.30pm

**Broughton St Mary's Parish
Church, Bellevue Crescent**

www.ntbcc.org.uk/contact/