

## BRIEFLY

Broughton Primary School P4 Football Team (8-year-olds) are looking for a sponsor for next season to help towards the cost of a new set of **football strips**. If anyone is interested and willing to help us out, please contact Paul Flynn - P4 Head Coach on 555 6854. Thanks!

*Donald Mackenzie of the Stafford Centre, Broughton Street of phoned us about a wildlife sighting on the last Sunday of November: **an otter playing at the bridge** over the Water of Leith from the Powderhall housing into St Mark's Park. Twenty or thirty people gathered to watch. And he saw a local resident taking photos: we don't know who it was, so maybe the photographer could contact us?*

Good news for residents of **Claremont Crescent**, after a spate of **car scratching**. Community policeman Simon Daley reports that he's recently arrested a woman who has been charged with 15 such offences (damage estimated at over £25,000).

**Fay Young of East Claremont Street writes:** *People from the Leith area took part in an Open Space multicultural discussion at Ocean Terminal on 20 November. The negative influence of media coverage and the need to develop multicultural relationships were among top action points which will be taken forward to the next Open Space event in a few months time. The event, organised by Leith Walk Central Branch of the Labour Party, aims to develop a non political discussion forum for the rich diversity of communities in North Edinburgh and Leith.*

## Row over street closures

On 7th November the Community Council came out in favour of removing local street closures, by a majority vote. Ten days later the hall was packed for a bad-tempered meeting on the same issue organised by Broughton Village Association. The City Council had already turned against the closures in a vote earlier that day, but local people were still anxious to vent their feelings on the subject. The verdict from the floor was overwhelmingly against the closures.

**But doubts still linger in the wider community.** The 'bus gate', partial closure at the London Street/Drummond Place junction has been at the centre of the furore: should it not have been given more time to bed in? Days before the councillors' U-turn officials were still adamant that it needed at least two months before assessment; and local police were strongly in favour of it – but decided to back-pedal on enforcement when its political future began to look doubtful. Hasty action to re-open this junction has made things worse at least in the medium term, as the Council says it can't legally re-open other closures west of Broughton Street for another 18 months; so for the moment more traffic than ever will be funnelled through by Drummond Place and London Street. And there's the suspicion that some people are using the street closures reversal as a



*Drummond Place/London St. junction*

Trojan horse to attack the whole city traffic management scheme.

**It's been a messy business.** Councillors have turned on their officials. Two of our local residents associations are at loggerheads. And an anonymous leaflet distributed in Drummond Place has helped poison the atmosphere.

**So what's the future?** Having weathered the storm at the BVA meeting, chairman Gavin MacGregor pinpoints two issues that need immediate and prolonged attention:

- 'The preservation of Broughton Street as central to the local community, and not simply an overflow for the city centre.'
- 'Consultation: no matter how rigorously the formal procedures are held to have been followed by the Council, the perception is that these do not work and that meaningful and co-operative communication is absent.'

# Trouble in Drummond playground



At the beginning of November local MP Mark Lazarowicz invited residents neighbouring Drummond Community High to discuss a pressing problem: 'gatherings of large numbers of youths late at night in the area in and around Drummond Community High School. As well as problems with rowdy and drunken behaviour, there has been damage to Drummond, parked cars, and neighbouring houses. Air weapons have been fired, apparently from the playground area, at some houses in the area.'

About thirty residents came to the meeting, also attended by the local councillor, the head teacher and the community police officer. A variety of possibilities were discussed: **Spurtle** wanted to know what progress had been made since.

A month later, community police officer Simon Daley told us 'the problem has gone away' – at least for the moment. He puts that down to his straight talking at two school assemblies; some 'robust policing'; and maybe also some weather designed to discourage outdoor gatherings! He's in discussion with colleagues covering other city areas, to make sure they don't end up just

shifting the problem around from one place to another. Councillor Davies reports that, as suggested at the meeting, the bench outside the top school gate has been removed, in consultation with donor Agnes Drummond; hopefully it will be brought back in the spring, maybe to 'a slightly different place'.

And Mark Lazarowicz told us: 'We're going to look at the possibility of setting up a Neighbourhood Watch in the immediate area. I hope we will be able to get some progress dealing both with the immediate issue, but also wider issues about facilities and activities for young people in the Drummond/Broughton area, where there is clearly a gap in provision.'

## PARKING

# Useful opportunity wasted

*New Town, Broughton and Pilrig Community Council held a public meeting on parking on 21st November, a chance to hear about and discuss City Council suggestions including visitors' and tradesmen's permits, dual-use parking bays, and underground parking. John Dickie was there for **Spurtle**:*

Parking seems to bring the worst out in many people. We had to sit through too much, too familiar, knee-jerk nonsense: the City Council treats citizens as 'cash cows'; the Council favours tourists over residents; those sadistic parking attendants! And there was a man from Merchiston who for some reason was given repeated opportunities to pursue his vendetta against Council officials – 'Mr Holmes and his cabal drive all those traffic proposals'.

Yet those officials had presented detailed ideas for improving parking, and invited comment on them. And there were genuine issues raised from the floor: in particular, the problems of local parking in the evenings – which is not covered in the Council's current proposals. Just a pity more of the time available was not devoted to this more constructive discussion.

The Council's draft strategy is available in local libraries from early December. The current consultation period ends on 27th January.

**Spurtle** is your local community paper. We aim to inform about local affairs; raise local issues; publicise the work of local action groups; make connections between 'the news' and people's own lives in Broughton; and stir things up a bit!

Contact us and:

- react to what **Spurtle** has had to say
- raise new issues

- let us know about community activities
- tell us what you feel about life in Broughton.

**Telephone** 556 7727 or 556 0903  
**Write** to us c/o Merz Art Gallery,  
87 Broughton Street EH1 3RJ –  
you can put a letter through the  
letterbox at any time.

**e-mail**

broughton.spurtle@blueyonder.co.uk

## LOCAL COMMUNITY SHOPS

# Use them or lose them

Some of our local shops are struggling against the odds: should we worry?

A recent newspaper article says that Tesco has bought up smaller shops 'and built 600 Tesco Express outlets in just three years. Last week it revealed plans for 600 more. Before Tesco Express, convenience and one-stop shopping could rightly be viewed as different markets. But Tesco Express outlets sell the same goods from the same suppliers as Tesco superstores and benefit from the same buying power and marketing campaigns.' (*Guardian*, 12th November)

Here on our own doorstep, three general groceries near the Tesco Express in Leith Walk have already gone under. Itrat Mohammad is still in business in Croall Place, just opposite the Express, but he estimates a 20-25% drop in turnover since it opened. This is a much more serious threat than the long-familiar supermarkets: just across the street, and offering even longer opening hours than the traditional hardworking corner shop.

But it's wrong to think that your shopping will always be cheaper at the Express. **Spartle** found that some of Itrat's prices compared very favourably, for example: his jug



container of milk cost 89p, to their £1.11; the same size packet of cornflakes was £1.29 from Itrat, £1.44 across the road; and he'll sell you two 2-litre bottles of Coke for £2 that will cost you £1.37 each at the Express. Newspapers are a standard price, of course; and Itrat boasts a wider range of magazines than you-know-where.

There's maybe a wider range of items at Tesco Express than in any one

corner shop, but in the long run the newcomers may spell less choice overall: 'Bicester, in Oxfordshire, has five Tescos and little else', says the same *Guardian* article. And there's also something to be said for a friendly chat instead of waiting in an impersonal checkout queue.

So perhaps we should check what we can get at our local community shops first, before looking elsewhere.

## MCDONALD ROAD FIRE STATION

# Celebrate safely

*Graham Doig of Green Watch sends this message:*

As the festive period approaches it is important to think a little about home fire safety. At this time of year there is an increase in the number of domestic fires. This is due mainly to extra decorative lights, candles and decorations.

Decorative lights: check the fuse is able to handle the current, replace bulbs if they blow, turn lights off at night or when you are out, don't let lights touch flammable items.

Candles: don't leave them unattended, ensure proper disposal at night, keep them in secure holders and away from combustible materials.

Decorations: keep away from heaters, lights, the fireplace and candles.

Remember when having fun to keep yourself safe! For further home fire safety advice, or to arrange a FREE home safety visit, please call 0800 169 0320.

Enjoy your festive period.

## Malcolm Chisholm MSP

Edinburgh North and Leith



Constituency office:

86-88 Brunswick Street, EH7 5HU  
Tel: 0131 558 8358 Fax 0131 557 6781

Saturday surgeries:  
9am Leith Library

10.30am Royston/Wardieburn  
Community Centre  
12pm Stockbridge Library

## Have you got a story?

**Spartle** is your community paper.  
Phone 556 0903 or e-mail  
broughton.spartle@blueyonder.co.uk

# Adult students in Toledo

*Drummond's adult education organiser Brigit Harris reports:*

We've been funded by the British Council to participate in an international project focusing on language learning, developing international friendships and communication. 'Tandem Plus Learning' has partners in France, Spain, England, Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland.

In November 2005, three adult-education students learning Spanish, their Spanish tutor and

the project co-ordinator went to Toledo in Spain to meet their international partners for three days. Everybody had a great time speaking not only Spanish but also French, German and English and sharing food and drink. It was a fantastic experience, giving the learners and tutors alike confidence in learning and teaching.

For 2006, the international meetings are planned in France and in the Republic of Ireland. Why

don't you join an adult education class in French or Spanish at Drummond, and you might have the chance to come too?

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**New Town  
Broughton and Pilrig  
Community Council**

**Vacancy for Community Councillor**  
The Community Council represents  
the views of local residents to  
Edinburgh City Council.  
There is a vacancy on the Community  
Council. If you think you might be  
interested phone the Secretary for a chat.  
The next meeting is on  
Monday 6th February, 7.30pm at  
**Drummond Community High School.**  
Secretary Annette O'Carroll 556 7586  
E-mail aocarroll@onetel.net

**Mark Lazarowicz**  
MP for Edinburgh North and Leith



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Tel: 0131 557 0577  
Fax: 0131 557 5759  
Email: mark@marklazarowicz.org.uk  
Website: www.marklazarowicz.org.uk  
Friday advice sessions:  
4.00pm Stockbridge Library  
5.30pm Constituency Office

## Contacts

**Bellevue and Claremont  
Residents Association**  
Yvonne Pryor 466 1144

**Broughton Road Group**  
Pat Eccles 556 7550

**Broughton Village Association**  
Stephanie Harvey 557 2762  
(daytime)

**Dicksonfield Owners and  
Residents Association**  
Scott Richards 557 8879

**Friends of Hopetoun Crescent  
Garden**  
Mitchell Manson 557 1933

**Gayfield Association**  
William McNair 556 4493

**Hopetoun Village Owners**  
hopetounvillage@yahoo.co.uk

**Powderhall Owners Association**  
info@powderhallvillage.co.uk

**Redbraes Residents  
Association**  
George Hosey 467 6151

**New Town Broughton and  
Pilrig Community Council**  
Anette O'Carroll 556 7586

**Broughton History Society**  
John Dickie 556 0903

**Cllr Trevor Davies**  
Broughton Ward 529 3221  
Surgery at Broughton Primary  
School, Weds. 6.30pm to  
7.30pm

**Cllr David Guest**  
New Town Ward 558 8823 or  
529 4268. Surgery at 67  
Northumberland Street on  
Mondays from 6.30pm to 7.15pm