



# Briefly



Following a site visit in May, NTBCC has objected to that part of **W Hotel's** recent Provisional Premises Licence application to serve alcohol in **St James Sq** until 10pm. The hotel envisages pop-up structures housing: markets, retail, fashion shows, Festival/Fringe events, bars and catering. NTBCC supports residents' amenity in the **tenement block at Nos 23-6**. Two pop-ups have been refused planning permission here recently, the second of which is appealing its case to the Scottish Govt [bit.ly/StJSqbooze]. NTBCC objects to intensification of **noisy temporary uses** here. It wants alcohol licences for pop-ups to be assessed on a case-by-case basis, with permission being granted only when **planning permission** has been granted, too. See [bit.ly/No325p1].

New hoop railings round the vacant plot at **5-6 Marshall's Court** will reduce disturbance caused by motorists in search of free parking, particularly at night.

**Kuzina** is a new Greek restaurant at **18 Howe St** (formerly Papavero). Director **Konstantinos Karvelis** invites you to 'surrender to the unique world of our very own version of authentic, inspiring, and progressive gastronomy'. **Menus and more** at [bit.ly/KuzinaEH3].

Edinburgh Picardy Place Ltd has appointed Spurtleshire-based architects **Hackland+ Dore** to convert former Hertz car-rental premises at **10 Picardy PI** into a 51-bed hotel (23/01789/FUL). The design preserves what's left of the **listed façade** and improves its appearance by moving modern floor slabs back from the windows behind a **glass curtain wall**. Period ironwork railings at street level. An open internal courtyard references the **original garden** and allows daylight into central spaces. Less radical but welcome changes are planned for **Broughton St Lane** at the back. See Design & Access Statement at [bit.ly/PicPhoto1].



The **Transport & Environment Cmte** will no longer allow EV chargers to block footways. In a separate development, officials are preparing a report for T&E on the proposed **settled-street repairs** programme for the next 5 financial years.

Lord Hardie's **Edinburgh Tram Inquiry report** was at last delivered to the printer on 26 Apr. Based on *Spurtle's* recent production **experience of printers**, we anticipated it being published after 4 working days. We were disappointed.

## School rolls clarification

Recently published figures suggest anecdotal accounts circulating in Broughton – that local pupils can't find places in North Edinburgh's state secondary schools – are mistaken.

Below, we abstract details from a Report to the Council's Education, Children & Families Cmte in Apr [bit.ly/schrls]. The figures show projected school rolls from 2022 to 2032.



School	Notional capacity	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
<b>Broughton HS</b>	1200	1247	1268	1299	1286	1294	1302	1336	1331	1316	1302	1282
<b>Drummond CHS</b>	600	725	760	769	787	790	819	864	884	899	905	916
<b>Leith Academy</b>	950	905	929	944	936	944	956	961	975	966	940	913
<b>St Thomas of Aquin's</b>	750	782	786	794	792	775	770	755	727	702	674	661
<b>Trinity Academy</b>	950	968	994	1008	1013	1014	1019	1024	1024	1024	1024	1024

Excess numbers seem to be within manageable limits. The Council will 'monitor' Broughton HS, Leith Academy and St Thomas of Aquin's RC HS. Major demolition and rebuilding will take place at Trinity Academy (see Briefly, p.3). No action is required for Drummond CHS; or for Broughton, Leith Walk, St Mary's RC, Stockbridge, and Trinity Primary Schools.

### Problems

School-roll projections factor NHS birth data, Council new-housing-delivery estimates and recent trends in every school and its catchment area. They are assessed and published each year.

But the report identifies methodological difficulties in how projected school rolls are calculated and says new educational practice over space and lesson timetabling affect the 'notional capacity' metric. A review will follow.

### Misunderstanding

*Spurtle* has spoken to a reliable expert who suggests much of the 'problem' facing state-secondary pupils here concerns resources. Given current funding levels, not every school can offer every possible course to every pupil.

Hence, young people sometimes need to cross the city to find a relevant teacher elsewhere. It is not ideal, and it's a challenge to coordinate across schools. But it's not the same as anecdotal rumours about too few places.

## Councillors approve controversial housing mix

Councillors on the Development Management Sub-Cmte have consented an application by CW Properties, Cambay, and CA for purpose-built student accommodation, affordable social housing, build-to-rent flats and commercial units on a site behind 139 Leith Walk [bit.ly/3Nfk515]. There had earlier been 172 comments objecting to the proposal and 1 supporting it.

Cllrs Rae and Caldwell (Ward 12), representatives of Leith Central Community Council and local residents spoke against the proposal. Three representatives of the developers spoke in favour, including the architect.

### For and against

Five councillors agreed with the Convener, Cllr Osler, that although the proposal was not perfect, it had much to commend it. The developers had worked hard to address locals' concerns, and to build in a way which respects the surrounding urban grain. She called for developers to adjust cycle parking provision and work to secure community uses for some or all of the commercial spaces.

Four councillors agreed with Cllr Booth that the proposal fails to comply with: Tra 5 (too much 2-tier cycle parking); Des 1 (proximity of buildings and over-imposing facades); Des 5 (loss of daylighting amenity); Hou 8b (excessive concentration of student housing); National Planning Framework 7d (negative impact on Conservation Area).

### How much is too many?

Some of the discussion revolved around whether the proposal respects or runs rings round the Halmyre Street Place Brief, which did not prioritise student housing. Some objectors were surprised to learn at this hearing that on PBSA projects of over 1 ha, the amount required for 'normal' housing is based on a proportion of the student accommodation floor area, not on the number of units. The developers insisted they had increased the number of social housing and build-to-rent flats to take account of local aspirations. The finished scheme would, they said, be 'dynamic, varied and uplifting'.

Further development of the area, by different developers, will follow in due course. Many locals may now feel participation in planning democracy gets them nowhere.

## Attacked by an enemy within

The following unreliable advertorial appeared in the Edinburgh Evening News on 8 June 1923.

There is no worse danger when the kidneys are weak than the big family of 'uric acid troubles,' and so, when you notice that the urine is much disordered, do not be surprised if you begin to have rheumatic twinges, nerve pains and nervousness, headaches and dizziness, heart weakness, deafness and poor eyesight.

Doan's Backache Kidney Pills cure weak kidneys and enable them to prevent this excess of uric acid. They have cured cases of rheumatism, sciatica, lumbago, dropsy, gravel, etc., that had resisted all other treatment. Edinburgh people prove this true.



### Edinburgh evidence

Mr W.G. M'Cready, 14a Broughton Place, Edinburgh, says: 'I was afflicted with severe backache some months ago. I blame a cold as being the cause. I had such cruel, sharp, cutting pains across the small of my back, that it was almost impossible to keep up. There were other distressing symptoms of kidney disorder.'

'I decided to use Doan's Backache Kidney Pills, and these were most effective. A short course of them completely cured me, driving away all those agonising pains from my back. (Signed) W. G. M'Cready.'

Ask distinctly for Doan's, the Pills Mr M'Cready recommends. Same price everywhere, 3/- a box.

*Be grateful that commercial content like this would never be printed in such an undifferentiated, unsourced and unchecked manner today.—AM*

## O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us ...

Spurtleshire, the fictional county in the heart of Scotland, has been the talk of the town recently thanks to a new novel set in the area.

The book, titled *Spurtleshire Chronicles*, has been written by local author Fiona MacDonald and has been receiving praise for its vivid descriptions of the landscape and its portrayal of the county's rich history.

While Spurtleshire may not exist in reality, the book has sparked interest in the idea of creating a real-life Spurtleshire. Some residents have even suggested that the area around Broughton would be a perfect location for a Spurtleshire-inspired community, with its rolling hills, historic buildings, and strong sense of community.

However, others have expressed concerns about the impact that such a community could have on the area. Overdevelopment and a loss of the area's unique character are among the worries.

Despite these concerns, the idea of a Spurtleshire-inspired community continues to generate interest and discussion. While the creation of a real-life Spurtleshire may not be possible, the release of *Spurtleshire Chronicles* has put the area on the map and highlighted the rich history and culture of the region.

As always, the *Broughton Spurtle* will be keeping a close eye on this story and will bring you all the latest updates and analysis on the future of Spurtleshire.

*The plausible yaffery above was generated in 23 seconds by artificial-intelligence tool ChatGPT, prompted by the instruction: 'Write a 200-word article about Spurtleshire in the style of the Broughton Spurtle.' We reproduce it unedited and in full. There is, of course, a real Spurtleshire but no book titled Spurtleshire Chronicles. We have no idea if an author called Fiona MacDonald lives hereabouts. Spurtle is indeed concerned about overdevelopment of this area, but it does not resemble the landscape and rolling hills implied by ChatGPT. We have seen the future, and it's ... unreliable.—AM*



## New Cockburn Association Chair

Last month, the Cockburn Association appointed Barbara Cummins as its new chair. A chartered town planner, she has served as a convener of the Royal Town Planning Institute in Scotland and as a director of heritage at Historic Environment Scotland. She is the current vice chair of Planning Aid Scotland. Cummins has had a 20-year career in local-government planning and led Edinburgh Council's Listed Buildings and City Centre Development Management teams until 2009.

Cummins has big boots to fill: those of her former university tutor Emeritus Professor Cliff Hague, who has stepped down after 7 years. The Cockburn paid tribute to his deep knowledge of the planning system and says his forensic analysis of information helped steer the Association to a more strategic and integrated approach. He will continue to contribute to the association's work.



## Briefly



We're pleased to see the return of Duncan & Reid Antiques at Tanfield following flood damage in Dec 2022. The small but intriguing shop operates on Wed, Thurs and Sat.

Major proposals to update **Trinity Academy** include retaining/extending the B-listed, red-sandstone Victorian structure, **demolishing and replacing everything else** and landscaping new outdoor areas. The new school should open in academic year 2026/27. More at [bit.ly/onTrinAc].

**Calton Hill and Pilrig Park** are among the first 10 Edinburgh parks recommended for **improved lighting** in a report to the Culture & Communities Cmte last month. Priorities were set according to **5 criteria**: presence of local destinations; transport links; Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation; connecting paths; and perception of safety. Steps will be taken to balance the sometimes contrasting needs of **people and wildlife**.

**Edinburgh Council** wants to hear from residents about the challenges of owning, inhabiting, maintaining and adapting **listed buildings**. Those wishing to respond should come out from under their umbrellas and visit the **consultation hub** here [bit.ly/Edruins] by 11 June.

**Tom Ross and Michael Huddleston's FAQs on Dementia** launched on 5 May in **Stockbridge Library**: 'No question too big, too small, too embarrassing, too strange'. Published by **Sheldon Press**, it's available as an e-book or paperback (£12.99, ISBN 13:9781399802550).

Coming soon to **29 Broughton St** is **Stòr Lifestyle**, stocking ethically sourced 'hand-crafted products from **independent makers**, homestead design and inspiration'. If you're the kind of person who needs an **oiled-beech-and-wild-boar-bristle hairbrush**, this is the place for you. Visit [bit.ly/StorBrSt].

The annual **Drummond PI Gdns** party on 24 June will have added significance. It marks the 200th anniversary of the Gardens receiving their charter.

**Parking attendants** began riding Lothian Buses last month to target **incorrectly parked vehicles**. Some observers welcome the initiative, saying it will **reduce disruption** and encourage sustainable low-carbon travel by public transport. Some say it will merely allow parking attendants to **continue ignoring infringements** without going out in the rain. Others still say all this is irrelevant because many **determined bad-parkers** either don't pay fines or factor them in when setting prices for city-centre customers.

# Moreover ...



Gardens in **Canonmills, Stockbridge and the New Town** open to the public for one day on 25 June. Under the **Scotland's Gardens Scheme** umbrella (appropriate, given the Edinburgh summer), the trail starts in **Logie Grn Gdns** and ends in **Royal Circus S Leisure Gdns**. Tickets cost £8. Profits go to charity. See [bit.ly/opengdns] for details.

BT's proposal to erect a street hub (superfluous great lump) 10m west of **4 Brandon Ter** has been refused (23/00138/ADV). Officials said it would have a **negative effect on amenity**.

Demolition of the final RBS building on **Dundas St** should be all but complete by July, but a portion of it below street level will remain in place as retention works and rock anchors are undertaken, as happened for **Fettes Row**. 'Construction-cost inflation has presented a significant challenge', **Edison's Ross McNulty** tells us, 'but we are now working towards commencing Phase 1 of construction works with Graham Construction in Q3 this year at the **Eyre PI/Eyre Ter** side of the site'. Follow-on phases are forecast to commence Q1 2024.

Drummond Lawn Tennis Club's application to floodlight courts in the enclosed **Bellevue Backlands** [Issue 327] has not gone down well. It had attracted 116 comments last time we looked: 20 in support and 96 against. Critics included the **New Town & Broughton Community Council** and **Drummond Civic Association**. Points made against the proposal included: negative impact on the character, setting and appearance of the **World Heritage Site and New Town Conservation Area**; increased motor traffic; noise and light pollution at night; and disturbance of wildlife. The application has caused an unprecedented interruption of the **100-year harmony** between club and residential neighbours.

David McLean at Edinburgh Live has written an interesting article about a former **Broughton engineering firm's** contribution to the RMS *Titanic*. World-famous Brown Brothers at the **Rosebank Works** (on Broughton Rd beside the cemetery) designed and manufactured a **hydraulic telemotor** which allowed one man in the wheelhouse to control a 101-tonne rudder at the distant stern of the ship. See [bit.ly/BrnBros].

In Issue 328, we muddled **King William IV's spouse** Queen Adelaide with his sister-in-law Queen Caroline. We thank scrupulous **Dr Richard de Soldenhoff** for pointing out the error of our wives.

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## HELP US REDUCE BUSES & OTHER HEAVY TRAFFIC IN LOCAL STREETS!

Residents in **E London St** and surrounding areas aim to petition Edinburgh Council for a traffic count, urgent road repairs, better traffic management, replacement of selected setts.

To find out more, email: [tarels@icloud.com](mailto:tarels@icloud.com)

## LEITH CENTRAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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



Leith Central Community Council

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. 19 June, Nelson Hall, McDonald Road Library.

<https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>

### Ben Macpherson MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Edinburgh Northern and Leith Constituency



"I am here to help and serve all constituents in Edinburgh Northern & Leith. If you need assistance, 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

Email: [ben.macpherson.msp@parliament.scot](mailto:ben.macpherson.msp@parliament.scot)  
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As your Lothian MSP I want to listen, take action and make a lasting difference.

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