

Spurtle



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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER

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Tel: 07455 770474

spurtle@hotmail.co.uk

SCOTTISH WATER PROMISES SEWAGE WITHOUT BITS

Scottish Water plans to upgrade 51 combined sewage outfalls along the Water of Leith. It will position 27 screens to reduce visible sewage-related debris (SRD) in the river and position 34 'event monitors on assets'.

SW will implement these solutions to 'unacceptable visual impacts' (and another 108 such instances across Scotland) by 2027. In or just upstream of Spurtleshire, upgraded CSO sites will be at Saunders St, Arboretum Ave, Eyre Pl, Warriston Recreation Ground and St Mark's Park.

How often the screens will be cleared is unclear. In any case, such 'aesthetic' improvements won't stop sewage, bacteria and other pollutants entering the water from CSOs.

A motion by Ward 12's Cllr Jack Caldwell last year prompted Transport & Environment Cmte convener Cllr Scott Arthur to contact Scottish Water. The details above emerged in a written response last month. Replying to him, SW said a recent review had identified 600 CSOs across the country which are unacceptable due to the impact of SRD.

It then patted itself on the back by noting that 'there are no requirements for CSO upgrades in your area from a water quality perspective alone'. *Spurtle* isn't impressed. See [bit.ly/WoLpol] and [bit.ly/No336p3].



SLOW PROGRESS ON POWDERHALL STABLES

There were short-lived social-media celebrations last month when the presence of contractors on Broughton Rd suggested electricity would at last reach Powderhall Stables. Alas, the work was for street lighting.

Spurtle continues to press for details about when power and water will allow artists' studios and community space to open here. Officials remain vague. Below are our latest (not entirely helpful) exchanges.

• Are negotiations continuing to connect water and electricity to the building? *We're working with Scottish Power Energy Networks on practicalities and programming for electricity connection. Discussions with Scottish Water around drainage are ongoing.*

• Are water or drainage connections contingent upon completion of adjacent housing? No.

• Why is it taking so long? What are the practical difficulties? *We've proposed a solution that requires special dispensation from Scottish Water, who are considering it.*

• When are connections scheduled or expected to begin and end? *Work cannot be scheduled until permissions are in place.*

• Are there additional costs involved for the Council? If so, how much? *We anticipate it will.*

• Is the Council seeking an additional source of funding to complete the work? No.

• We were told in Oct 2023 that a planning application for adjacent housing would probably be submitted by the end of the year. When can we now expect the application? *We don't have a date set at the moment.*



IT AIN'T OVER 'TIL IT'S OVER

Community Councils Together on Trams documents many continuing problems along the new extension to Newhaven. It wants who sorts them out to be agreed before responsibility shifts from Trams to Newhaven to Edinburgh Council and Edinburgh Trams. Such issues will feature in Apr's close-out report to the Transport & Environment Cmte, well before the end of defect-fixing periods in Jun and Nov 2025.

(Continued on page 2.)



THE JOYS OF SPRING



Image: Lyon & Turnbull.

This 42cm-high bronze 'Faun Playing Pipes' was one highlight of Lyon & Turnbull's Five Centuries auction (21–22 Feb). For the avoidance of doubt, that's a loincloth ceinture springing free. Perhaps. The work is by prize-winning, French classical sculptor Eugene Louis Lequesne (1815–87), also celebrated by some as a talented player and promoter of chess. The piece was expected to fetch between £800 and £1,200.

CITY CONSIDERS FUTURE OF TRANSPORT

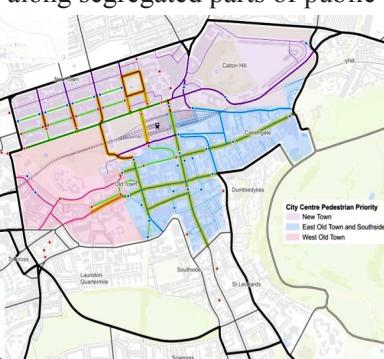
The Transport & Environment Cmte will continue assessing major changes to Edinburgh's road network [bit.ly/CECOFS], prioritising public transport and active travel in response to the climate emergency.

In broad terms, its 'Our Future Streets' report favours closing the city centre to through traffic, restricting it to Dalkeith Rd, London Rd, Queen St, Queensferry St and Lothian Rd. Possible effects on Holyrood Park and the Second New Town aren't clear, but unspecified mitigating measures of uncertain efficacy may follow.

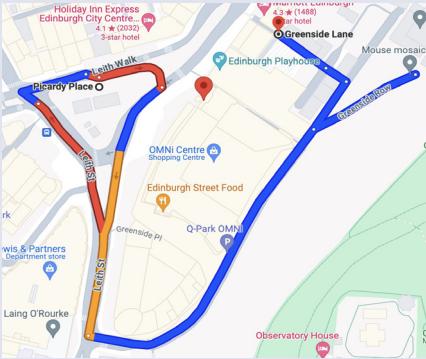
Parking restrictions in Zones 1–8 may extend to weekends and evenings (until 10pm). Whether to introduce all such changes (and many more) in one fell swoop or over time is moot.

Meanwhile, controversy attends the potential tramline from Granton to the BioQuarter and beyond (see 'Modal and Routing Summary', p.8 [bit.ly/trmRsb]). A route using the Roseburn Corridor would maintain pedestrian access but reroute cyclists along segregated parts of public roads.

Some critics deplore that Backers claim green benefits (compared to a complicated alternative via Orchard Brae and Dean Bridge) far outweigh any demerits.



Briefly



On 5 Feb, a **MAN panel van** driver became the 4th person in recent weeks to try driving down 3 steps at the **Leith Walk** end of **Greenside Lane**. Predictable result: a vehicle wedged fast, freed slowly and general derision. Updated **Google Maps** recommend access via **Leith St** and **Greenside Row** (see above), but the steps don't appear on Street View (dated June 2023). **Apple Maps** also don't show the steps. They mistakenly advise accessing by foot while offering **general advice** to motorists: 'Be safe and pay attention to your surroundings. **Always observe posted signs and local laws.**' On 9 Feb, after sustained prompting from Ward 11's Cllr Finlay McFarlane, a **lone and vulnerable-looking bollard** was put in place.

Acclaimed chef **Tomás Gormley** opens a fine-dining restaurant this month. The 24-cover **Cardinal on Eyre Pl** offers an evening 13-course tasting menu with a shorter selection available for lunch. Dishes will highlight **Scottish produce**, flavours based on pickling, fermenting and a wood-fired barbecue. One of the **7 cardinal sins** is gluttony. For a possibly prescient description of **Eyre Pl** in the spring, see Canto VI here [bit.ly/Dlnfrn].

At Feb's full Council meeting, Cllr Whyte mentioned *Discerning Cyclist*'s reckoning of **Leith Walk** as the worst cycle lane in the world. T&E convener **Cllr Scott Arthur** acknowledged problems which diminished pedestrians' priority ranking. He said changes were already being considered to improve pedestrian safety around the floating bus stop on **Elm Row**.

Useful advice on **maintenance, management and energy efficiency** in Scottish tenement buildings is at **Under One Roof**: [bit.ly/un1rf].

A headless dummy dressed in Regency fashion appeared outside **Powderhall Stables** last month, looking the worse for wear. Reader **Alan Young** posted images as night fell on 4 Feb [bit.ly/0heid]. The body had disappeared by morning.

BrewDog will open a bar at **4 Waverley Bridge** (23/07066/LBC). One Gayfield resident objected, saying consent would appear to condone directors' **alleged abhorrent attitudes and malpractice**. A **North Berwick resident** was less principled, demanding at least 1 cooled cask at bar level serving real ale on gravity dispense. **Neither comment was material.**

More stormy blasts last month, more communal bins **blown to bits**, more rubbish in streets. Problems stem from: (1) **weather**, (2) **unlocked or unlockable** main lids flying open in the wind and sometimes detaching, (3) fragile hinges on main and subsidiary lids breaking in **gusty conditions**. If the waste hubs are to work, the Council must invest in stronger bins more suited to **Edina's boreal brattles**.

It ain't over 'til it's over

(Continued from page 1.)

But CCTT wants other uncertainties/needs acknowledged or clarified [bit.ly/CCTTNB].

Among these: delivering independent quality assurance; accurate accounts of removed, resolved and unresolved defects, including affected utilities; establishing who monitors and pays to mend signal faults; clarifying the extent of, and responsibility for, damage on diversion routes.

Leith Central Community Council's Harald Tobermann says, 'We have repeatedly expressed concern about the consequences and costs of elapsed time before outstanding issues are addressed and properly resolved ... let alone the eroding impact on the public perception of the project. In this spirit, we would be happy to contribute in the run-up to the April report.'

Redesign for 'Powderhall Junction'

On 16 Feb, consultants Stantec concluded the latest in a 5-month series of in-person and online public consultations about the future redesign of the McDonald Rd/Broughton Rd junction.

A rethink is supposedly required because of probable increased traffic and more complicated access arrangements if and when housing is completed on the former bowling greens and waste transfer site (2027 at the earliest). Sustrans would fund, although some have doubts about whether traffic levels will indeed rise.

Stantec's preferred option was for bike lanes on the immediate approach to and exit from the junction, separated from vehicles by kerbs or bollards. Cyclists could choose to use these or not. Cyclists and pedestrians would avoid each other by crossing on separate signal phases.

Relocating Car-Club spaces to nearby streets would allow footways to be widened on the school side of McDonald Rd as far as Blandfield. Footways would also be widened on both sides of Broughton Rd between the junction and N Pilrig Heights.

Most people *Spurtle* has spoken to supported the plans, and we understood Lothian Buses and the Fire Service felt the same way. But to the astonishment of many, Stantec has now shared a substantially different proposal in outline with a few select stakeholders (e.g. Spokes) but not with the general public it made much of consulting earlier. We'll give details as they become available.



Potential smell is bad news for custard

Krem Karamel, the café, bakery and bookshop at 68 Inverleith Row, won't be allowed to operate an oven and hob without 'prohibitively expensive' ventilation (23/06424/FUL).

KK has received no complaints from adjoining properties so far, but Environmental Protection says unless the café sets up adequate extraction there are potential adverse effects for neighbours from cooking effluvia. Councillors on the Development Management Sub-Cmte agree.

KK opened in Feb 2022. Eight months later, the *Herald* named it one of Scotland's 10 best bookshop cafés. Reduced to using one toaster, sandwich machine, soup tureen and microwave oven, owner Didem Aysem Dogru says the business may have to close.



In a separate case, Lionacre Properties (SC) Ltd is appealing to the Scottish Govt against similar restrictions on a potential Taco Bell carry-out below residential flats at 6 Picardy Pl [bit.ly/efflva].

Changes considered for community councils

Following a 10-week consultation, Council officers have produced a draft scheme and boundary revisions for Edinburgh's 45 community councils [bit.ly/cmccs]. The public now has until 8 Apr to respond.

Detailed changes to CC governance and constitutions won't thrill most *Spurtle* readers long. Oddbods may follow the link above to peruse them at their leisure.

Proposed boundary changes would see Stockbridge & Inverleith and New Town & Broughton CCs exchanging pockets of territory. NTBCC would gain St Stephen's St, the lower reaches of Dundas St, and the north half of Royal Circus. SICC would adopt an area north of Henderson Row including Edinburgh Academy, Perth St, Glenogle Rd, Ettrickdale Pl and Liddesdale Pl. SICC would also absorb Buckingham Ter and Belgrave Ter from West End CC. Leith Central CC would persevere with its existing borders.

The new boundaries will have no impact on free trade and travel in north Edinburgh.

Latest news on short-term lets

In December 2023, in judicial review proceedings brought by the Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers, Edinburgh Council's application of the Scottish Govt's STL legislation was found to be unlawful.

The aspect found to be at fault was the retrospective nature of Edinburgh's Control Zone, in that it applied to STLs already in operation on the commencement date of the Zone in Sept 2022.

So it seems that existing STLs, even on tenement stairs, should be allowed to continue in business; on the other hand, getting permission for new ones looks as difficult as ever.

The Council's planning portal gives a rather different impression, however. Hundreds of applications have been made, both retrospective applications and new ones. Both categories seem to be treated in exactly the same way – almost all applications prior to Sept 2023 have been refused.

For applications made from mid-Sept onwards, a few are singled out for refusal, for reasons which are not readily apparent. Perhaps they have attracted objections from neighbours or perhaps the decisions have something to do with the characteristics of the properties. But the vast majority, representing a backlog of hundreds of cases, are still sitting 'pending assessment'.

It's hard to escape the impression that the Council is under-resourced, unwilling to implement the legal ruling, and has yet to make its mind up on what to do. I suspect more wranglings will follow over what constitutes an 'existing' STL. Is 10 years the hurdle? Does the whole period need to have been under the same ownership? How is the period evidenced? And so on.—Caroline Roussot



Briefly



The Broughton St Mary's church building opened in **Bellevue Cres** on 12 Dec 1824. This year the congregation will mark the bicentenary with a series of special events. **Session Clerk Ian Buckingham** says, 'We would like to hear from all those who have a connection with the building and invite anyone interested to **share memories and photos** of the church and its people.' Email all contributions to: BSM200@bstmchurch.org.uk.

We regret **Little White Pig Ltd** kitchen/bar on **Dublin St** has oinked its last. Closed, sold, no wee-wee-wee all the way home.

Plans have appeared for 2 new paved paths entering **King George V Park's southwest corner** from the **New Town North development**. Five new trees here will replace 5 removed ones.

Friends of Calton Hill have used an award from the Community Grants Fund to return 160m² of land, about **16% of the total eroded areas** needing attention. The new grass should be walkable by early this month and well bedded-in when **Beltane celebrants** cavort all over it on 30 Apr.

The Broughton History Society will meet next at 6pm on 4 Mar in **McDonald Rd Library**. Leslie Hills will talk about her new book **10 Scotland Street** [bit.ly/No365p3].

Pepe's **Piri Piri Chicken** ('home of fresh flame-grilled pepe'licious™ chicken') may land at **38–9 Elm Row**. The firm, which has 183 UK outlets and 2 in the UAE, proposes new signage, an aluminium shopfront, and fire-door to the rear.

City Planners have concluded a Section 75 agreement anent **27 and 29 Beaverhall Rd**. The developer will contribute c.£646k for secondary-school infrastructure and deliver 52 affordable homes.

From the Scotsman (15 Jan 1938). 'Traffic "jam" in Edinburgh.' Traffic was disorganised for nearly an hour last night in **Broughton St**, Edinburgh, when a tramcar left the lines after being struck by another tram which was proceeding from **York Pl**. There was more consternation when a Post Office van was involved with yet another tram, and **private car owners** found it difficult to disentangle themselves from the "hold up."

Family-run restaurant **Da Vinci** at **73 Broughton St** is now family-run Italian wine bar **Goose 73**. Affordable tapas – bruschetta, ham and cheese – replace 3-course meals. Few Da Vincis have been so thoroughly goosed since the days of Michelangelo. The canny commercial pivot responds to **post-pandemic/inflation-related spending changes**. Spurtle knows of other local hospitality firms reaching similar conclusions.

Lothian Buses' timetable changes from 24 Mar will improve frequency and reliability on local Services **7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 16, 23, 25, 27 & 49**. See [bit.ly/lotbus].

Young people's chance to shine

Think Circus, Leith Walk Police Box and the Active Inquiry Theatre Company will join forces this summer with free skills training and musical and theatrical performances.

They will showcase and encourage young locals' creativity. Activities will include an outdoor, accessible live event at Croall Pl on 17 Aug.

In a funding pitch at this year's Leith Chooses participatory budgeting process, organisers said, 'Our 3 organisations came together because we want to show what a great place Leith is. We will highlight local talent including future Fringe performers, create dialogue and action, build up children's and young people's ambitions, and support local shops and cafés by bringing more visitors to Leith.' More nearer the time.

The problem with parking

From the Edinburgh Evening News, 18 Apr 1923.

A distinguished London contemporary recently published a comparison between the American parking methods and the non-existence of parking in this country. Taking a leaf out of the article, it would be necessary to imagine car upon car lined up at an immaculate angle all round St Andrew Square, and half-way along George Street on either side, "standing there all day long".

It can readily be gathered that were even half of the vast motoring community of any American business town transported here to Edinburgh, besides obvious symptoms of motoring manomania, there would be nowhere to "park" one's car. Were it necessary to drop in somewhere in Princes Street, one would have to leave the car somewhere about the foot of Hanover Street.

By reason of the legality of parking in the streets, motoring America has found itself in a bewildering jungle, which is proving most difficult to get out of. The busiest streets have their quota of "autos," and there is always present the fear of a traffic "jam," or congestion, which, once commenced, takes hours to clear.

Numerous typically American ideas have been suggested, such as parking on the roofs, which may be reached by means of a runway, or subterranean garages constructed under squares and other broad open spaces. These two solutions aren't likely to be called for here, but Edinburgh would certainly benefit by a few garage spaces in conveniently situated parts of the city. Such spaces would be a great boon to summer motorist visitors.



Moreover ...



Historic Environment Scotland, Edinburgh Council and Edinburgh World Heritage have together produced new **Management and Action Plans** for the city's UNESCO world heritage site. They now seek views. **Key issues include:** raising awareness of the WHS; responding to the climate emergency; conservation and maintenance of buildings and public spaces; control, guidance and contribution of new developments; and a sustainable visitor experience balancing tourists' and residents' needs. For details, visit [bit.ly/lDrk]. **Consultation closes on 8 Apr.**

A proposal to brick up 2 side-facing windows at **1 Brandon St** has been blocked by officials. The **Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland** objected with opaque points about Georgian blinds.

Fabric and wallpaper design studio Timorous Beasties opens at **35 Northumberland St** soon. If it dares. Elsewhere, Mór Bakehouse opens at **12 Leith St**.

Cardiff-based **Dalata Hotel Group PLC** aims to convert empty office space (formerly Virgin Money) at A-listed **28 St Andrew Sq** into a 167-bed hotel (24/00257/FUL). The **1897 building's original features** (including marble staircase) would be retained or revealed. For a **brief virtual neb**, visit [bit.ly/28StASq].

Seventy-One Steps, a 'casual brunch café and bakery' will open soon on **Rodney St**. It's the offspring of The Bearded Baker, located 71 steps up the road. We're confident **homemade toasted and filled bagels** here will surpass David Nash's charred oak and coal creation in the **Yorkshire Sculpture Park**, which frankly tastes horrible.

Ardstone Capital last month informally consulted on plans to modernise the triangular 1990s office block on **Greenside Row, Leith St** and **Greenside PI** next year. Façade, windows, and entrances would be the most obvious changes. Improved environmental standards are promised.

The **Nightcap Bar** – a 'small, cosy, intimate, late-night' space now operates (5pm–3am) at **3, 3b or 3c York PI**, depending on which online source you believe. **Members only after midnight**, no sensation anywhere at all after 2am.

Police statistics list **831 recorded drink/drug driving** offences across Scotland from 1 Dec 2023 to 2 Jan 2024. **By Division:** Renfrewshire & Inverclyde 24, Forth Valley 40, Argyll & W Dunbartonshire 41, **Edinburgh 45**, Dumfries & Galloway 55, Fife 57, Ayrshire 60; Lothian & Borders 61, Tayside 62, North East 81, Highlands & Islands 89, Greater Glasgow 107, Lanarkshire 109. It's unclear how these figures reflect **sobriety levels, behaviour patterns and population numbers** across regions. No statistics are available for people drunk in charge of a sofa.

Spurtle Team: E. Dickie, J. Dickie, C. Ellis, J. Hart, M. Hart, D. Hill, A. McIntosh, S. Michael, M. Orr, W. Quinn, C. Rousselot, E. Rousselot, T. Smith, D. Sterrett, E. Taylor-Smith.
Post: Broughton Spurtle, c/o The Yard, 61–3 Broughton Street, EH1 3RJ.

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<https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>



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[0131 555 7009](tel:0131 555 7009)

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Ben Macpherson MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Edinburgh Northern and Leith
Constituency



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

Email: ben.macpherson.msp@parliament.scot
Telephone: 0131 600 0134

[@BenMacpherson](https://twitter.com/BenMacpherson) [BenMacSNP](https://facebook.com/BenMacSNP) [@BenMac](https://instagram.com/BenMac) www.benmacpherson.scot

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