

Spurtle



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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

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2026**

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HOLYROOD ELECTIONS: WHO GOT TO THE TOP



In last month's Scottish Parliamentary Elections, the 3 victors in those constituencies covered in part by Greater Spurtleshire were Sanne Dijkstra-Downie (Lib-Dem), Ben Macpherson (SNP) and Lorna Slater (Grn), all of whom have worked and/or lived in the area for years. On 20 May, Macpherson was appointed Minister for Innovation, Technology & Tertiary Education.

Among the successful list candidates, we know of some with personal or professional connections to this locality. Nevens is a Leith resident. Kinross-O'Neill was elected as a Forth ward councillor in 2022. Sangster has worked in the Westminster constituency of Edinburgh E & Musselburgh. Briggs stood as a candidate in the Leith Walk ward in 2012, has served as a list MSP for Lothian since 2016 and lives here.

Voter turnout was down on 2021. Combined Edinburgh city constituencies recorded an average turnout of 57.8%. For more facts and figures, see p.2.

TENEMENT LAW REFORM IS ONE STEP CLOSER

Legal changes affecting 900k tenement flat owners are probable in the new Scottish Parliament after the Greens, Labour, Lib-Dems and SNP made manifesto commitments to reform.

As we reported last year [bit.ly/tenem], various lobbyists and the Scottish Parliamentary Working Group on Tenement Maintenance have called for 3 measures:

- Compulsory owners associations: creating legal entities to deal with building, maintenance and repair.
- Building reserve funds: using regular affordable contributions to pay for work.
- 5-yearly inspection reports: establishing the condition of tenement areas in common ownership.

In advance of the Scottish Parliamentary elections last month, Built Environment Forum Scotland usefully tracked party manifesto pledges against its own list of 6 priorities [bit.ly/2026BEmnfsto].

At that stage, the SNP had pledged to reform the Tenements (Scotland) Act, 2004 and Property Factors (Scotland) Act, 2011 by the end of the new parliament 'to ensure repairs, maintenance and enhancement of such properties'.

BEFS, along with the Tenement Action Group, promises to keep demanding prompt enactment of these measures to ensure that 'well-maintained properties provide warm homes, affordable maintenance bills, and enhanced resilience to deal with future repairs'.



INTRIGUING MISS EVA



Image: Lyon & Turnbull.

This delightful charcoal is by Glasgow-born artist Alexander Mann (1853–1908).

It depicts 'Miss Eva Ward Holding Her Shawl' and is dated by hand: 27 March 1907.

The work was expected to fetch between £600 and £800 when auctioned by Lyon & Turnbull on 4 June.

Spurtle has failed to identify Miss Eva, although we suspect she was not one of the respectable gleaners, faggot gatherers, hop pickers or sheep who were among Mann's most favoured subjects [bit.ly/wikiAMann].

If any reader could enlighten us, we'd be delighted.

Email the address shown at top-right above.

NO END YET TO CRITICAL TRAM SNAGS



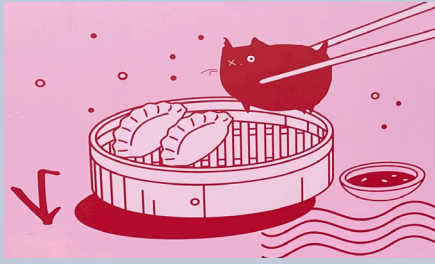
As part of the Trams to Newhaven snagging process, 155 of the most serious 'key issues' critical to the project's functionality and compliance were scheduled to be fixed by 31 Mar.

However, as the deadline passed, 11 such items remained outstanding, 4 of which cannot be tackled until Sept due to North Bridge works and the Festival roadworks embargo.

Harald Tobermann sits on the Community Councils Together on Trams group which, since 2018, has advised officials on local impacts of the project and, since 2024, has helped them identify, prioritise and monitor build faults along the route. At May's Leith Central Community Council, he welcomed progress but was disappointed by yet more delays. Contrary to Administration assertions, he insisted, the project has not been completed 'on budget and on time'.

Other LCCC members repeated their calls for tactile paving to be introduced and standardised at all Leith Walk 'continuous junctions' as a matter of urgency. Cllr Caldwell (Ward 12) is on the case.

Briefly



Seven Spurtleshire restaurants feature in the latest *Michelin Guide*. Lucky Yu's Asian-inspired offering at **53–55 Broughton St** joins established favourites Number One (**1 Princes St**), The Broughton (**46–48a Broughton St**), Vinette (**36 Broughton St**), Spry (**1 Haddington Pl**), Lyla (**3 Royal Ter**) and Eleanore (**30–31 Albert Pl**).

The **Cockburn Assoc** questions the quality, scale and design of a planned extension to the Place Hotel at **34–38 York Pl** [bit.ly/SpYPext]. 'Historic buildings,' it says, 'can and should evolve, but only where change is well justified, carefully handled, and of a consistently high standard.' Over the road, the same hotel's plan to amalgamate parts of **Nos 27 and 29** has been approved (26/00285/FUL). Also over the road, a new 'extrusion' behind the **Indigo Hotel at Nos 51–59** (26/00554/FUL) has been consented pending Splendid Hotels' agreement to contribute £38k for trams and £61k for public realm.

As forecast back in Dec (Issue 357), the **St James Qtr** will soon be rebranded as the Westfield St James Qtr. New signage is proposed for entrances at **Multrees Walk**, **Register Sq** and **Little King St**. The change of name follows Nuveen's £250m sale last year of its 25% stake to French shopping *mastodonte* **Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield**. We predict no normal person will ever use the new name.

Neighbours have given a cautious welcome to conditions set on a licence to sell alcohol in the steep garden of the Adria Hotel at 11 Royal Ter. Times for evening sales will be limited, and staff must be present to ensure guests' standards of behaviour don't slip.

While it waits for a new HQ on **E Claremont / W Annandale St** next year, the local Air Cadets Squadron, 142 (2nd Edinburgh) Squadron, is based at the Army Reserve Centre on **McDonald Rd**. With a healthy roll of 25 cadets, the leadership team of 3 now seeks extra adult staff volunteers. Email **Sgt Ewan Walker** for details [adj.142@rafac.mod.gov.uk].

Plans to demolish **32–34 Heriot Hill Ter** and build 10 homes attracted 23 objections last month [bit.ly/HHill]. A decision is expected by 12 June.

The **Water of Leith Conservation Trust** has warned amateur naturalists operating beside the river. **Breeding badgers** and **otters** (like breeding humans) are easily disturbed by bushcams **installed** too close and **retrieved** too often. Trail cameras should not be used without **permission of the landowner**. WoLCT says if irresponsible (and potentially illegal) behaviour continues they will 'discuss further options with Police Scotland and others'.

A new issue of **Montgomery Parklife** will be published soon: stories, illustrations and history by locals for locals. Free.

Holyrood election by numbers

(Turnout, change since 2021, candidate, party, votes, % share, change since 2021.)

EDINBURGH CENTRAL (54.5, -5.2): Lorna Slater (Grn), 12,680 (36%, +29.3); James Dalgleish (Lab), 8,098 (23%, -5.5); Angus Robertson (SNP), 7,702 (21.9%, -17.3); Jo Mowat (Con), 2,262 (6.4%, -13.7); Charles Dundas (Lib-Dem) 2,168 (6.4%, +1.9). Gary Neill (Ref), 1,876 (5.3%, +5.3); + 5 others totalling 455 votes.

EDINBURGH NORTHERN (56.8%, -8): Sanne Dijkstra-Downie (Lib-Dem), 12,972 (34.6%, +17.6); Euan Hyslop (SNP), 10,479 (27.9%, -13.5); Kayleigh Kinross-O'Neill (Grn), 5,289 (14.1%, +5.8); Eleanor Ryan-Saha (Lab), 3,744 (10%, -6.3); Andrew McLaughlin (Ref), 2,867 (7.6%, +7.6); Christopher Cowdy (Con), 1,900 (5.1%, -10.9); Abu Meron (Workers Party of Britain), 258 (0.7%, +0.7).

EDINBURGH NORTH EASTERN & LEITH (57%, -5.9): Ben Macpherson (SNP), 13,630 (35.8%, -14.6); Kate Nevens (Grn), 10,559 (27.8%, +19); Oliver Thomas (Lab), 7,894 (20.8%, -5.1); David Lees (Ref), 2,746 (7.2%, +7.2); Liss Owen (Lib-Dem), 1,895 (5%, +1); Haris Young (Con), 1,297 (3.4%, -7.1).

EDINBURGH & LOTHIAN EAST (56.6%, -8.8): Kate Nevens (Grn); Q. Manivannan (Grn); Kayleigh Kinross-O'Neill (Grn); Irshad Armad (Lab); Katherine Sangster (Lab); Angela Ross (Ref); Miles Briggs (Con).

Bin input a waste of time?



New Town & Broughton Community Council is frustrated that Council officials appear to have ignored local input on future waste collection and recycling in areas including Royal Circus, Cumberland St, 'Picardy Village' and Gayfield Square.

Since last summer, around 800 individuals, residents' associations and community councils have made

detailed comments on collection methods and bin-hub siting as part of the Phase 6 Communal Bin Review (CBR).

Although their initial feedback brought some positive changes, numerous other concerns were not addressed despite repeated efforts to engage officers. This spring, Waste Management officials progressed their own proposals to the Traffic Regulation Order phase before even replying to many of the questions raised.

Under TRO rules, the public can only make further comments on matters of traffic management and road safety. So, despite elected members having called for the CBR and despite NTBCC's statutory duty to make representations, the whole consultation process strikes some as a mere 'paper exercise'.

Mike Birch, NTBCC's Transport & Environment convenor, is concerned officers are repeating mistakes made during earlier phases of the roll-out which later required revising some hubs' locations after installation. 'To avoid Council expense and residents' frustration,' he told the *Spurtle*, 'it's much better to get it right now before everything is finalised.'

NTBCC has already voiced concerns to Council officials at a higher level and is now considering whether to make a formal complaint. Meanwhile, individuals, organisations and ward councillors are preparing for a coordinated campaign.

Mass tourism – control later or cap early?

In Scotland's 3rd Festival of Europe last month, a Cockburn Association event discussed ways to cope with mass tourism [bit.ly/CobrnrTrsm].

Three expert academics from across the Continent, and Essential Edinburgh's CEO Roddy Smith, addressed financial benefits and social dysfunctions experienced by cities due to low-cost air travel, a global middle class and visitor accommodation displacing homes for locals.

Belated civic reactions in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Dubrovnik, Japan, Santiago, Spanish islands, Valencia and Venice vary: modifying or selecting visitor behaviour, reducing demand, improving infrastructure, restricting and monetising access.

Effective solutions, panellists said, need long-term and consistent political leadership. This is hard to achieve under Scotland's 3 short-term and overlapping political cycles (Westminster, Holyrood, Council).

Smith argued market forces mean no theoretical limit exists to Edinburgh's growing visitor numbers. He said the benefits of well-managed tourism outweigh attendant problems.

In questions afterwards, an audience member* asked if Edinburgh could and should cap visitor numbers before they become completely unmanageable. He got no reply. Perhaps this reflects a disconnect between academic and commercial observers' sense of overtourism and the lived experience of city-centre residents.—AM. *The *Spurtle* Editor.



All smiles at ELREC



Detail, front row, L: Cllr Cammy Day.

In Dec 2025, the Forth St-based Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council voiced 'serious ethical and safeguarding' concerns about the alleged misconduct of Cllr Cammy Day (Issue 358).

ELREC wrote: 'We believe that individuals who engage in this kind of behaviour cannot be trusted and should not hold positions of public office.' Strong stuff.

However, when ELREC issued a press release about its recent AGM in Apr, included was a photograph

showing a beaming Cllr Day. We asked ELREC why.

Executive Manager Parveen Ishaq replied: 'The content published on 24 December was issued in response to media coverage at the time, on behalf of people who told us their concerns. All councillors were invited to attend the AGM, as is our standard practice each year, and attendance remains open to all.'

'Following the AGM, ELREC met councillors to discuss the matter in detail. In line with our role, we presented the views of the community on issues of significance to the city. The Council is now fully aware of our position, and it is for them to determine the appropriate course of action.'

Notwithstanding this dead bat, it seems odd that ELREC:

- now frames its original statement as written on behalf of others outwith the organisation when the statement itself didn't mention them and was signed 'ELREC'
- invited (or did not exclude) someone whose behaviour, it asserted 4 months earlier, merited immediate resignation
- allowed Board members (including Chair Foysol Choudhury MSP) to be photographed beside someone whose earlier behaviour, ELREC had said, raised 'questions of public interest, accountability, and community safety'.

Contested grounds and short-term lets

Leith Central Community Council and Place Edinburgh recirculated *Spurtle's* front-page story in Issue 361 ('Short-term lets not fit for purpose'). STL practitioners on social media criticised the context of the piece without disputing the facts we reported.

Save Self-Catering in Scotland said the article had a poor grasp of the reality, in which local self-caterers see their incomes axed whilst investors in foreign apartments and student accommodation flourish.

'Ne Obliviscaris' blamed botched Council policies which punish law-abiding STLs and favour black-market ones. David MacKenzie agreed, pointing to the potential dangers of unsafe and unlicensed businesses.

The Scottish Govt risks losing another judicial review, said 'Antthe', who suspects Cllr Mowat's record of opposing STLs may prove more problematic than supposed loopholes.

'I have no objection to purpose-built accommodation built to the standards required', said Duncan Martin. 'My problem is when accommodation which meets the spec for permanent residence is removed from that market for short-term use.'



Bike use mounting

Edward Tissiman, writing on Bluesky last month (@[edtiss.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/edtiss.bsky.social)), noted that 2,568 cyclists passed the cycle-lane counter outside the OMNi Centre on 30 Apr.

This was the highest daily total since counting began in Jan 2022. Voi Bikes may be a contributory factor. The total would have been higher had cyclists leaving the route further north been included.

Meanwhile, pedestrian casualties on Leith Walk have dropped from 12 in 2019 (including 2 deaths) to a total of 4 since 2021. Between 2015 and 2024, says Tissiman, only 2 collisions on the Walk have involved cyclists.

Trams, cycle lanes and fewer cars (and/or their combination) seem to have improved safety. However, critics argue these figures do not reflect near misses or a widespread pedestrian perception of increased risk from cyclists.



'Emerald necklace' no longer adorns

In an online article published by the *Spurtle*, artist and local resident Mike Worobec makes an impassioned plea to restore 'Edinburgh's lost vistas'.

Worobec calls for extensive work to trim the 'overgrowth' of New Town greenery. In doing so, he seeks to restore the Georgians' vision of 'scale, light and proportion', whereby gardens should exist in controlled harmony with the architecture which frames them.

'Edinburgh, he says, 'deserves better than passive decline disguised as greenery'. He envisages a long-term and coordinated programme of curatorship. 'It will require selective thinning, reinstatement of open lawns, reintroduction of sightlines and proper arboricultural care.'

Worobec links the opening up of vistas with his desire for greater public access and shared civic space. He proposes gardens acting less like 'barriers' and more like pedestrian routes across the city.

Some critics say public access was not part of the original vision, and never will be so long as private gardens, property ownership and the obligation to pay for maintenance are established by statute. Others claim these spaces remain beautiful precisely because access – with its associated business and wear and tear – is limited.

Worobec's article raises many interesting issues. It was posted on 29 May here [bit.ly/BkNws].



Briefly



Oliver Barratt MBE (1941–2026), former Chair of the Cockburn Assoc, died on 17 April. During his years in post, writes **James Garry**, from the 1970s to 1990s, 'he helped shape how the city understood and protected its architectural heritage. His leadership was vital at a time when that heritage faced sustained pressure from powerful redevelopment forces and changing planning priorities. ... Through careful research, thoughtful advocacy, and a commitment to public engagement, he helped establish a more informed and constructive approach to civic debate in Edinburgh.' Garry's full obituary appears at [bit.ly/OBMBE].

Litter-picks take place on the last Sat of each month in **Pilrig Park**. Meet at the Balfour St entrance, 10.30am. **Fun-runs** for juniors (4–14 yrs) and accompanying adults (15–122 yrs) start at 9.30am every Sun.

Token gestures. The Yard hopes its Edinburgh service (for disabled children up to age 18 and their families) will benefit from customers using **green tokens** in the Community Matters vote at Waitrose (Comely Bank Rd). This round of the funding programme (disbursing grants of £500–£1,500) ends on 30 June. In the corresponding Stronger Starts scheme running with **blue tokens** at Tesco on Broughton Rd, Friends of Pilrig Park School want to raise money for their **Breakfast Club**, allowing hungry pupils to make the best possible start each day.

The Famous Spiegeltent will not operate in **St Andrew Sq Gdns** this summer after organisers failed to complete paperwork on time for the Council. **Planning Convener Cllr Griffith** says venue staff were told about national planning requirements but missed the deadline. She says the Council has a duty to insist on commercial users sticking to 'robust processes'. Those who objected to the FS's **inadequate and late measures** to safeguard trees here in 2025 [bit.ly/SpStAretro25] and Essential Edinburgh's chronic stewardship of the space will welcome this year's non-reappearance. *Spurtle* applauds the Council's rumbledum and smeddum, which are long overdue.

In **Tenement Town**, Diarmid Mogg's researches include past residents of **10 Picardy Pl, 75 Broughton St, 11 Dundonald St, 23 Scotland St and 4 Fettes Row** [bit.ly/EHtnmts].

Responding to complaints from nearby residents' associations, **Police Scotland** has conducted speed-gun checks on vehicles travelling through **Drummond Pl**. The burly uniformed officers, in high-vis yellow jackets, standing mid-carriageway at one end of the thoroughfare, clocked no drivers exceeding the 20mph limit. It's mystifying.

This year's **New Town Church Book Sale** (Issue 361) raised £67k for Christian Aid.

Moreover ...



After Council planners refused consent for its residential redevelopment of **57 Henderson Row** (Issue 358), Royal London now proposes an extra storey and new slated mansard (visualised above). **Other changes** are larger 1-bdrm flats, a greater proportion of 3-bdrm flats and more dual-aspect units. The number of apartments has dropped from **65 to 63** (26/01640/FUL).

Broughton Primary and Nursery Schools' Summer Fair is on 6 June (11.30am–2pm). 'Welcome to the Jungle!'. **All welcome.**

In Dec 2025 (Issue 357) we reported assurances **Cllr Macfarlane** (Ward 11) received about imminent replanting of 4 dead trees in **Picardy Pl.** Nothing has happened since. We now hear the trees will indeed be replaced after the **Parks Dept** assumed routine maintenance of the space in May. We trust it will not repeat the original **2023 mistake** of planting trees which were already dead before anyone got a chance to neglect them.

New Town Qtr developers say build-to-rent is no longer a viable option in Scotland. On **Henderson Row**, Royal London is reconfiguring its former office as build-to-rent. **New Town Qtr** developers say a hotel on the site is no longer a viable option. Across the road on **Dundas St**, **Evans Dakota** plans to turn the site of Centrum/ BUPA Houses into a hotel.

Once again there are concerns about survival of the No. 13 bus service linking Lochend to Craighleith via **Canonmills, Broughton and the New Town.** Users say Midland Bluebird's service is unreliable and its ticket machines keep breaking down. Whether to renew the Council subsidy of the route will be discussed in July.

The long overdue **Edinburgh World Heritage Management Plan (2025–35)** has been published. Its 188 pages of strategies to preserve and enhance the outstanding universal value of the **Old and New Towns** await you at [bit.ly/EWHmp].

Congratulations to the **Edinburgh Minute**, which 60 media executives from around the world chose as '**Best Newsletter (Regional/Local)**' in the Global Media Awards last month. The jury described it as 'A simple but strategically relevant local news model.' This is deserved recognition of founder **Mike Macleod's insight and hard work**, and of the vibrant Edinburgh communities he has found new ways to interconnect.

After 4 years at **138 Dundas St**, **Artisan Pasta Maker** has gone into liquidation with the loss of 16 jobs. The failure followed an HMRC investigation into unpaid tax bills. This is just a temporary closure for the business, **orzo staff** say on **Google Reviews.**

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