

# Spurttle



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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free**

**June  
2012**

**No 207**

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## COALITION'S TO-DO LIST IS PROMISING START

City of Edinburgh Council's new Labour-SNP Administration agreed a 'new contract with the capital' on 10 May.

The 8-page document lacks measurable targets or timescales (*Extras*, 14.5.12) but *does* reflect concerns raised at 5 local hustings held since 2010. For example, included under 'Governance' are promises to:

- operate in an open and inclusive manner with cross-party representation on committees [reflecting the public appetite for more pragmatic and consensual decision making]
- examine ways to ensure CEC is unambiguously elected member led [reining in too-powerful, non-transparent officialdom]
- strengthen scrutiny of committees and Council operations [addressing perceptions of incompetence and dishonesty].

More specifically, its 'Schedule' commits to:

- hold maximum Primary 1 class sizes at 25 whilst seeking to reduce other class sizes

- tackle overcrowding and under-use in schools
- establish affordable childcare cooperatives
- improve work prospects for school leavers
- investigate bringing empty homes into use
- enforce agreements to ensure landlords' and tenants' good conduct
- complete tram project/keep Lothian Buses in public hands
- establish minimum wage for CEC employees/no compulsory redundancies
- examine new funding for small businesses and promotion of locally owned retailers
- work to conserve city's built heritage
- spend 5% of transport budget on cyclists
- preserve green spaces
- oppose industrial biomass incineration in Edinburgh.

It remains to be seen whether the Coalition can deliver, but it does at least appear to have listened.

## NEW GAP-SITE PLANS: A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES

New plans presented for the former Martin & Frost site on McDonald Road have been greeted warmly.

EMA Architecture + Design, working for Foremost Properties (Scotland) LLP, propose a development scaled down from the 86-flats which currently have consent to one comprising 32 flats and 37 colonies (*Breaking news*, 10.5.12).

The reduced mass and overshadowing, an increase in shared or private green space, and 'an improved relationship' with McDonald Place were particularly welcomed at McDonald Road Library and New Town & Broughton Community Council displays in May.

Some concerns remain about the use of brick (potentially flat and characterless), parking, and bin positions; but most locals found the plans attractive.

Local resident Mike MacLeod said: 'I was pleasantly surprised by the consideration put into the designs. Our flat overlooks the site and while we're not looking forward to living beside a building site, it will eventually be a huge improvement'.

Developers hope to submit a full application at the end of June, and to begin phased building based on sales-from-plan early in 2013. EMA's representative said the developer had no objection to 25% of the homes being set aside as affordable housing, but whether this occurs here or elsewhere depends on the Council.

## NEW PARENTS BLAMED FOR NEW TOWN MESS



As reported in Issue 205, Council talks with street associations on new waste disposal arrangements have been delayed. Locals' calls for discussions have sometimes gone unanswered. Difficulties in establishing new efficiency savings are apparently to blame.

Meanwhile, pests across the Edinburgh World Heritage Site have entered a new breeding cycle and begun scavenging voraciously.

'Gull-proof' bags are now not, and many birds have recently developed a distinct 'Do I look like I'm bothered?' or 'Go ahead, punk, make my day' glint in the eye.

Owners of soft-topped motorcars be warned: your day is coming.



Siobhan Stewart's stunning fashion portrait is one of the award-winning images by Napier Photography graduates which will show at 'Exposed 12' in Out of the Blue's Drill Hall (Dalmeny Street) from 12-22 June. Free entry, 10am-5pm, not Sundays.

## TOP JOBS FOR LOCALS

A full list of local councillors and their new responsibilities appears in *Breaking news* (1.6.12). However, eye-catching appointments were: Gavin Barrie (10, SNP), Regulatory Convener; Deidre Brock (12, SNP), Deputy Lord Provost; Lesley Hinds (10, Lab), Transport & Environment Convener; Joanna Mowat (11, Con), Party Spokesperson on Transport & Environment; Alasdair Rankin (11, SNP), Finance & Resources Convener; Iain Whyte (5, Con), Party Spokesperson on Audit and Finance & Resources.

*Around 80 veterans, serving soldiers, cadets and members of the public gathered in Rosebank Cemetery on 19 May to pay their respects to the victims of the 1915 Gretna Rail Disaster.*

*Also recalled were 4 children found dead at the Quintinshill crash-site. Not reported missing and never identified despite extensive researches, their bodies now lie together in the Glasgow Necropolis.*



## Briefly



Patriotic attention seekers at the **Star Bar** on Northumberland Place last month adopted this **eye-catching new paint scheme** for their exterior. To no-one's surprise, the **Braveheart-style** makeover had not even dried before unflaggingly vigilant **heritage watchdogs** sought its removal (Ref. 12/00284/ELBB).

Meanwhile, embattled **Real Foods** are not taking the threat to their signage and Broughton's retail independents lying down. Their website now contains **touching photos** of community life here, and some **pointed mock-ups** of the possible future. See: [<http://bit.ly/IQWgqB>].

**Broughton History Society's AGM** has been rescheduled for Mon. 11 Jun. in Drummond CHS. **Biscuits at 7pm** will precede **business at 7.30pm**. 'Entertainment' will follow afterwards.

**Pride Scotia** – the annual LGBT march-past, celebration and **colourful knees-up** – will take place on **Sat. 30 June**. Would-be helpers should email John Hein: [[volunteer@pride-scotia.org](mailto:volunteer@pride-scotia.org)].

**Friends of the Rocheid Path** will next meet at 6.30pm on Mon. 11 June in Stockbridge Library to discuss restoration and improvement of the leafy, bikey, doggy **Canonmills–Inverleith route**. All welcome.

As *Spurtle* goes to press, we hear **tramworks on York Place** will officially recommence in Oct. 2012 and last until Spring 2014. **Broughton St will not be closed**. Unofficially, we also hear there remain **major unresolved issues** concerning what's actually under the ground and how best to **reconfigure gradients** into St Andrew Square.

The **police box on Heriot Row** has been spruced up, reglazed, and fitted with a light on a timer. If you're very lucky, **you may even find a policeman in it**. Perhaps this would be a better venue for police 'surgeries' than Bannatyne's Health Club on Queen St (Issue 206), **which nobody visited last month**.

A nightclub at **27 Frederick St** has been granted a licence to remain open until **3am seven days a week**. City-centre residents selfishly wishing to sleep now and again are not amused.



The next monthly food market in Out of the Blue's Drill Hall on Dalmeny Street will run from 10am–3pm on 9 June. There you may meet local and specialist producers, sample what's on offer, and take shelter from the unrelenting summer sun. Pictured is Sarah Kwan who took a stall at March's inaugural market. The fire exit sign in the background had nothing to do with the heat of her condiments.



*Works by Norrie Harman will show at the Union Gallery in June. 'The Hunt' (above) – contemporary, stark at one level – is also oddly traditional in its contained evocation of greener hunts and wildernesses. How do country/inner-city and rich/poor pursuits compare across time and space? The dogs await permission to chase – who will grant it?*

## More holes, but whose holes?

The man-eating 3ft<sup>2</sup> pothole in Bellevue Rd was repaired within days of its appearance in *Breaking news* (7.5.12). However, 'Phil McAverty' still has two cousins on Pilgrig Street, reports *Harald Tobermann*.

One is clearly related (similar in appearance) and quite possibly caused by the long ago culverted Broughton Burn, although paternity has not yet been established. The other is probably more distantly related, man-made, and clearly an offspring of an unholy liaison between Scottish Water and Edinburgh Council. It suffers primarily from a modesty problem: its only coverage for the last four months has been an unfetching, yellow plastic lid.

Appeals by Edinburgh Council to Scottish Water for maintenance payments to acquire a decent manhole cover have so far fallen on deaf ears.

## Botanic Cottage update



*Regular Spurtle readers know about the 18th-century gardener's cottage which stood on Leith Walk at the entrance of the then Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (Issue 167+). Below, Dr David Rae (RGBE's Director of Horticulture and Learning) surveys progress towards its reconstruction and re-use.*

The Botanic Cottage Trust, chaired by Lord Hope, was formed to secure a new future for the Cottage after its dismantlement in 2009. The obvious location was the north boundary of the present RGBE in Inverleith. The plan is to rebuild the Cottage with as many original materials as possible and to use it as the centre for a new interactive Teaching Garden. So, after many years of neglect and decline, it will once more serve as a place of learning.

Heritage specialists Simpson and Brown are leading the design process. The upstairs lecture room will be left as in Professor John Hope's day, while downstairs space will be a classroom/workroom, storage and toilets. Outside, behind a single-storey wall at each end, there is room for a glasshouse, potting shed/tool store and picnic benches. Landscape architects ERZ are leading the Masterplan for use and design of the Teaching Garden (behind the large beech hedge).

Funding is sought from the Heritage Lottery Fund (a Stage 1 application is under way) and other bodies and individuals. Match funding will come from the RGBE.

*A longer version of this article appears in Extras (7.6.12).*

## SNPG looks ahead



Queen Street's splendidly rejuvenated Scottish National Portrait Gallery has reached the Art Fund Prize's shortlist with 3 others (being the only Scottish institution to do so). The award 'recognises, celebrates and stimulates originality and excellence in museums and galleries across the UK', not least by handing the winner a cheque for £100,000. A decision will be announced on 19 June. Soon after, HM the Queen will officially open the building in July. And on 1 August, Christopher Baker – currently Depute Director of the Scottish National Galleries – will take over as Director of the SNPG.

## Twitter pooch has local roots

Coincidentally, the 1,000th person to follow @theSpurtle on twitter last month was @Warristondog: ‘... just a dog, living in a cemetery, watching the world go by’. The terrier in question is usually to be found in Warriston Cemetery on the obverse of a memorial cross to his master, Horatio McCulloch (1805–67). (McCulloch is actually buried with his mother and sister a little to the east in Compartment N.)



A noted Scottish landscapist, McCulloch is most famous for his Highland scenes, but he favoured also the Water of Leith. He had moved to Edinburgh in 1838 and settled first at 12 Howard Place, so it is not surprising that some of his works should depict very local scenes: for example, women drying clothes on the steep bank next to what is now St Mark’s Bridge with a train approaching beside Warriston Cemetery in the distance.

On one occasion in the RSA, McCulloch’s favourite dog – memorialised at Warriston in 1872 by James Drummond and erected by friends – famously clashed with the dog of his rival landscapist and personal enemy Sam Bough (1822–78). It is not clear who was victorious.

@Warristondog, however, insists Bough was a gent and loves his painting of Portobello beach. ‘All lies about the dogs taking sides, by the way – only humans do that sort of thing’. AM

## Fashion in our midst

Fashion has been steering changes among the youth, writes Felix Kimathi (right), Spurtle’s occasional Kenya correspondent. Both boys and girls have kept their eyes open to check what is happening in relation to the dressing code.



On the streets you’ll meet them, the ‘dot-coms’ dressed in designer labels, hanging chains on their jeans and necks, and with expensive watches, rings, ear-rings and jewellery just like celebrities. Those are the boys. Girls on the other hand put on hipsters and expensive jewellery. Collectively, jeans are the young stars’ pride.

Those who work in offices or love looking rather official you’ll meet in suits or skirt suits and designer shirt.

Generally all these clothes that are in fashion are so expensive they are a challenge to many families with humble financial backgrounds. This has caused a lot of chaos since, in order to buy them, many young people use school fees and others do frauds without their parents’ knowledge. No wonder then jeans are not allowed in offices or in professional careers.

Parents hate this. They don’t acknowledge fashion, like when they find their boys in three-quarter shorts sagged below the bottoms, tied in some designer belts. If you joke around them near these scenes you can easily get a spank on your face. But fashion is in everyone’s nerves: neither can it be avoided nor be kept aside – THE YOUTHS’ PRIDE!

## The Yard – celebrating 25 years



Twenty-five years ago, The Yard (on Eyre Place Lane next to King George V Park) was just a large, outdoor playground run from a portacabin by a committed team of part-time playworkers and volunteers, writes Chief Executive Celine Sinclair.

Today, it is recognised nationwide as a centre for excellence in inclusive play, and provides safe and adventurous play opportunities for over 1,500 children and young people with additional support needs, between the ages of 3 and 25.

The Yard is the only such indoor and outdoor centre in the East of Scotland. It is open 6 days a week, 50 weeks of the year, providing: family sessions, training courses on inclusive play, a supported adventure play centre for Edinburgh and the Lothians’ special schools and a variety of clubs for teenagers with additional support needs, children aged 3–8 and young adults aged 18–25 years.

At the end of 2011, The Yard was the only Scottish charity to appear on the BBC Children in Need National Appeal Programme, and in 2012 – with its services operating at capacity – it is now looking forward with confidence at what can be achieved by it becoming a national organisation enabling every disabled child in Scotland access to play.

To find out more—including information on Saturday and holiday access for local families, fundraising and volunteering – visit: [http://bit.ly/9K8Hc4].

## Briefly



Green screens on new fencing around Drummond Tennis Club are only a temporary measure, relieved neighbours have learned. They will be removed after about 2 seasons once ivy has regrown sufficiently to afford bashful players some privacy. In the meantime, ‘vulgar’ YONEX screens have themselves been screened to avoid visual and aesthetic disturbance.

Leith Open Space and Greener Leith invite locals to discuss first steps and grand designs for Leith Walk’s future at Out of the Blue Drill Hall, Dalmeny St, on 5 June, 6–9pm. Notably, the meeting does not include Council involvement, and promises to maximise public input.

Kimberley Reed has had a slow-ish start to the season by her standards, reports father Scott. She won gold in the Hammer at the East Under-18 District Championship on 13 May with a distance of ‘just’ 47.14m. But awful weather and the prospect of sitting an Advanced Higher Chemistry exam the next day led her to pull out of the Discus event held later. Spurtle will follow her progress throughout the summer.

A 60-strong American Youth Choir from Atlanta, Georgia, will sing its way around 3 local churches (including Pilrig St Paul’s and Broughton St Mary’s) from 7pm–9.30pm on Fri. 15 June. For full details of how to avoid them, see Events.

Plans to close Columba House, the Drummond Place home of the Scottish Catholic Archives, and to divide the collection there, were robustly discussed in the Herald last month. See: [http://bit.ly/LLivE2].

Local ‘souped-up ceilidh band’ Whisky Kiss performed for the Selangor St Andrew’s Society in the Hilton Hotel, Kuala Lumpur on 26 May. Master of ceremonies for the night was Broughton-boy-made-good, comedian Craig Hill.



## Moreover ...



The **Leith Festival 2012** runs from 8–18 June. Leith Gala Day is on Sat. 9 June. For more information see: [<http://www.leithfestival.com/>].

The **1882 T.C. Lewis pipe organ** at Broughton St Mary's Parish Church has been awarded a Grade 1 certificate by the **British Institute of Organ Studies** (see Issue 179). The award recognises its importance to the nation's heritage, and the need to **carefully preserve it** for future generations.

The **New Town & Broughton Community Council** would welcome up to 5 new coopted members between now and elections in Sep. 2013. They're open to new ideas and new voices, and don't expect an open-ended commitment. See *Breaking news* (15.5.12).

**Thomas and Bé Bruno-Meiller** at The French Fancies are raising money for their neighbours **Waverley Care**. On 19 June they will take part in a **sponsored abseil from the Forth Rail Bridge**. What next in the London St patisserie – drop scones?

City Licensing say **Hawke & Hunter's garden area** behind Picardy Place can stay open **till 11pm** so long as it is **always stewarded**. Neighbours have been greatly troubled by noise recently.

Actor and all-rounder **Stephen Fry** filmed scenes in and around Lyon & Turnbull on **Broughton Place** last month (*Breaking news*, 9.5.12). He plays a crooked art professor in **Doors Open** – a TV comedy heist caper based on an **Ian Rankin** book. Fry's recent tweets conveyed much nostalgia for the city, but less affection for its refreshing weather.

### STRUGGLING TO WRITE A REPORT, AN ESSAY, AN ARTICLE?

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Royston Wardieburn Community  
Centre, Pilton Drive North: 12 noon.

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### Alison Johnstone MSP for Lothian Region



On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

Contact me on 0131 348 6421  
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**Friday advice sessions:**  
4.00pm **Stockbridge Library**,  
no appointment necessary;  
5.00pm **5 Croall Place**;  
other surgeries throughout the  
constituency – phone for details

## New Town/Broughton Community Council

The Community Council  
represents the views  
of local residents to  
Edinburgh City Council

Next meeting:

Monday 11 June

at 7.30pm

Drummond Room

Broughton St Mary's Parish  
Church, Bellevue Crescent  
(Drummond Room)

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