

Spurtle



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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

NEW LIGHT ON COST OF KEYFRAMES

KEYFRAMES – the group name for the flashing stick-people on show in St Andrew Square until 28 March – has been funded using public money.

City of Edinburgh Council's contribution, *Spurtle* learns, was £42,000.

A paragraph in the 'Festivals and Events Core Programme 2016' report, which was presented to the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee last November, states that: '... to enable timely procurement of a suitable partner, a contribution of £42,000 was approved under delegated authority by the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Festivals and Events Champion and Convener of Culture and Sport'.

Deputy Chief Executive at the time was Alastair Maclean. Festivals and Events Champion and Convener of Culture and Sport is Councillor Richard Lewis (Colinton/Fairmilehead). Time pressure seems to have forced them to apportion the money before the 'fully immersive' project could be considered by the Committee. The Committee did not later discuss the project in detail at its 3 November meeting, but approved the action taken.

Funding partners were EventScotland, part of the Scottish Government's tourism organisation VisitScotland. Their contribution came to £8,000.

Essential Edinburgh and Marketing Edinburgh offered 'support in kind'. *Spurtle* is not impressed by the artistic merits of **KEYFRAMES**, its cost, or its muddy and muddled context here – see our website (6.2.15; 7.2.16, 1.3.16).



LONG GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN



In the pages of the *Caledonian Mercury* on 16 March 1792 appeared this notice concerning a beloved but unlovely sounding companion.

*STRAYED from a House at BROUGHTON,
on Wednesday night last,
A SCOTS TERRIER,*

Of the following Description :

His body is black, interjected with hairs of a dirty white colour, his legs, breast, and under part of his tail of the same colour, his ears cut close to his head, has remarkably long hair on his body and legs, is rather large for the Highland breed of Terriers, and answers to the name of [...]NEER. —Any person bringing him to the Printing Office shall receive a suitable reward, and whoever detains him after this notice, may depend on being prosecuted with the utmost rigour.

THINNER BLOCKS AND MORE SPACE FOR RBS SITE

Development consultants GVA James Barr and Michael Laird Architects presented a third draft of outline plans for the Royal Bank of Scotland site on Dundas Street late last month.

The most eye-catching changes are that the blocks fronting Fettes Row and Royal Crescent have been set back further (now 33m from the buildings opposite), and are longer and thinner ('extruded' or 'lozenge-shaped'), offering more green space in-between. Low-level buildings to the north fronting King George V Park no longer feature.

Some 350 residential units are planned (25% affordable housing), with up to 400 underground parking spaces accessed via Eyre Terrace. Traffic flow is predicted to be half the current peak level created by RBS activity.

The eventual purpose of these proposals is to gain outline planning permission following an application in April. If successful, this would establish footprints, massing and usages for any future developer who purchases the site (or part of it). Significant departure from such a consented outline would require a new planning application.

In general terms, the designs – available at [www.ntbc.org.uk] – strike *Spurtle* as an improvement on the earlier set (our website 27.11.15). You have until 4 March to comment.

DON'T BOTCH TOP OF THE WALK IMPROVEMENTS

Many locals are worried about the final phase of the Leith Walk Improvement Programme south of Pilgrim Street.

During earlier phases, CEC officials have discussed plans and made compromises with residents on nearby streets. But now it is feared CEC pressure to accommodate trams and Picardy Place development and the new St James Quarter may result in botched decisions.

A potential no-right-turn into Leith Walk from London Road was cited at last month's NTBCC meeting as an example. So too was reduced access into and out of Blenheim Place that would result from the mooted removal of a pedestrian refuge.

Critics say the plans are further skewed because Sustrans funding unduly prioritises cyclists, pedestrians and public transport.

LCCC members are dismayed by the prospect of further delays in the Programme. Last month they described potholes in the unimproved section of Leith Walk as a risk to life and completely unacceptable. They urged local councillors to push again for speedy repairs.

Briefly



Welcome **CornerCopia** – local resident Moira Ross’s Canonmills policebox where she’s begun selling **flowers, plants and gifts, and will host one-off community events** in future. Opening hours (Fri–Sat, 10am–3pm; Sun, 11am–3pm) will be extended for **significant events** such as Mother’s Day (6 Mar), and during the **long sunny days of summer**. Hold that thought. For details Tel. 07979 292497.

Broughton History Society meets next at 7pm on 7 March in Drummond Community High School. Ian Wotherspoon will talk on ‘**Three Centuries of the Scots and China**’. May explain mingin weather.

CEC has been seeking heritage or conservation groups to **sublet Old Observatory House** on Calton Hill for short-term and holiday lets. **Interested?** You have until 4 Mar (see our website 20.7.15).

The communal green recycling bin **disappeared** from the west end of E. Claremont St without **prior warning** in early Feb. No explanation was given. **No replacement has yet appeared**. We suspect alien abduction and **Roswell-type cover-up** by CEC.

Local charity **Care and Repair Edinburgh** hopes to receive £500 as part of the **Nationwide Building Society’s ‘Community Match’** scheme. To help, cast your vote for them in the branch at the corner of **George/Frederick Sts**. For more on C&RE’s work see our website (12.6.15).

Drummond CHS’s inaugural **Diversity Evening** will be held from **5.30–8.30pm on 10 Mar**. Stalls, food, workshops, issues and performances from around the world. **Tickets from school office**.

Some locals reacted with anguish at news of **Starbucks’s imminent arrival in Shrub Place** (our website 2.2.16). Upset stemmed from the firm’s **tax arrangements**, soft-footed gentrification of Leith Walk, distaste for the products, and the possible effect on **10+ small, independent cafés** nearby. A lone voice welcomed **investment in the area** and the extension of consumer choice. Rumours have since reached us that a **Mark’s & Spencer Simply Food** outlet may be earmarked for Croall Place.

Welcome **Eden’s Kitchen** at 32c Broughton St. The new bistro offers mostly Italian dishes using **seasonal, natural and organic ingredients**. To find out more visit [www.edens-kitchen.co.uk].

Bridge, e-mails, troubled waters

Campaigners are mounting a last-ditch e-mail campaign to prevent demolition and redevelopment of 1–6 Canonmills Bridge. They urge supporters to lobby a range of influential politicians, including Alex Neil MSP (Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners’ Rights). Guidance on points to make and whom to buttonhole is available by contacting: [save1-6canonmillsbridge@virginmedia.com].

A Scottish Government reporter found in favour of developer Glovart Investments Ltd’s appeal on 28 January. That decision, allowing redevelopment of the site, was met with huge disappointment and some anger by those who had fought to retain the low-rise 19th-century structure currently occupied by Earthy. We understand that all legalistic avenues are now closed.

Spurtle covered the news online (29.1.16) and followed up with an article by former Edinburgh Planning Convener Trevor Davies (1.2.16). He concluded that the reporter’s decision was inevitable given CEC’s earlier planning consent in 2010, but that the current system – which gives the final say to mid-ranking civil servants over locally elected and accountable representatives – is fundamentally undemocratic. Lobbying politicians at this late stage is an attempt by campaigners to circumvent that apparent impasse.



Earthy told *Spurtle* last year (see website 11.5.15) that they hope to renegotiate their occupation here in any new building. But for now, they are reassuring customers that they will remain in place until at least January 2017.

City’s Waste Services ‘not fit for purpose’

New Town & Broughton Community Council has been monitoring mess in the area for months, and has identified three areas needing improvement.

Trade waste, especially in the city centre and Leith Walk, has got worse under new arrangements (our website, 5.5.15), mostly because CEC lacks resources to check registration and enforce proper use of bins. (There are only five wardens across the city centre.)

Domestic waste collection appears overcomplicated and chaotic, with inadequate monitoring of performance and inefficient or non-existent communication between overstretched street-level workers and managers.

Street-cleaning and rapid reaction to fly-tipping are insufficient (see article below).

Cllr Lewis Ritchie (Ward 12), who attended February’s NTBCC meeting, said the problems were citywide: ‘It is clear that the system is not fit for purpose’. His two recent letters to the Head of Waste Services had gone unanswered. He was now seeking a meeting and would report back. NTBCC plans to meet officials as well, and will offer observations and practical suggestions for improvements.

Street Cleansing and Waste Services may join

Street-cleansing staff are likely to be recentralised by May with those in Waste Services as part of a new single management structure. Environmental wardens will transfer to the unified team from Community Safety.

If approved after consultation with staff, the revised system aims to improve routing and liaison to better identify and tidy overspills/fly tipping.

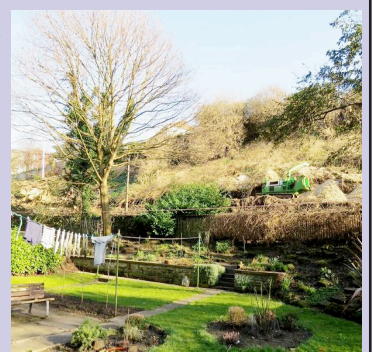
The 99 front-line workers currently deployed in Leith and the City Centre will be reorganised in one of four new administrative localities around Edinburgh. Those serving the North East will operate from a new depot which is being built at Seafield.

Sandy Hill survives ... for now

A planning application for eight townhouses on steeply sloping land between Broughton Road and the Claremonts has been refused (Ref. 15/02355/FUL).

Councillors unanimously agreed with officials to refuse on grounds of failure to comply with planning policies, scale, and impact on residential amenity.

It reads like a comprehensive rejection, and there are some hopes now of a resident-led buy-out. However, developer Provincial Property Holding Ltd could still appeal. For more detail, see our website (10.2.16).



Naebidy kent ... til noo



This graffiti on Bellevue Place (and more like it on Calton Hill) has been bothering *Spurtle* for over a month: 'TÔ BOLADA, MAS NINGUÉM SABE'. No amount of Google Translate translated it. We eventually realised it was Portuguese, and so consulted the Rev. Graham McGeoch and Brazilian wife Telma of this parish.

They recognised it as slang from the urban funk music of Rio de Janeiro, and that it means 'I'm crazy, but nobody knows'. It's been reconjugated here into a female voice from the original male one of the lyrics sung in the Rocinha favela.

Broughton: roughly one square mile and the world at our doorstep. We wonder whether *our* urban funk is influencing graffiti in Rio de Janeiro.

Ziggurat plan 'too high'



Ziggurat have applied for planning permission to extend their new block at 7 Shrub Place and create 38 extra bedrooms (Ref. 16/00191/FUL).

This would bring the number of students housed here and across the road – by Ziggurat alone – to over 500. They argue that this is not an 'excessive concentration' (see our website 26.1.16), but Leith Central Community Council disagrees.

LCCC members are also sceptical about any more six-storey structures crowding the area, and – after Ziggurat's problems matching doors with pavement levels in the existing structure – do not believe the developers have yet proved they can build and manage competently.

Look out for: Curlew

The Curlew is a bird of the empty coastline and wild moors of Highland Scotland. At some time in the past they found a no-doubt quiet, sheltered, wintering and feeding site in the fields to the south of the Forth. Since then, the city has spread north engulfing this winter resource. Fortunately, enough such grassy areas have remained as sports pitches, and here Curlews and other waders use their long probing beaks to hunt for worms. Curlews have been added to the international conservation Red List, so the creeping erosion of green space in the capital may perhaps represent a loss for people further afield, too.

How to see them: Curlews often flock. They are about the size of a small gull, but differ in their deceptively uniform brown plumage, elegant form, and unfeasibly long curved bill. They are shy, and usually move off in the early mornings to quieter areas of the city, their mournful liquid calls a clue to their presence overhead.

Also look out for: Oyster Catchers – the boldly piebald and orange-beaked cousin of the Curlew – can also be seen and heard quartering the city in search of grassy areas. Less shy than the Curlew, they have been recorded nesting on flat roofs where, despite their size, they aggressively defend themselves against marauding crows and gulls. — *Miles Forde*



Image: 'Mike' Michael L. Baird, Creative Commons

Wings of Desire on Princes Street

This charming angel is situated in a recess at the top of the vertiginous space between British Home Stores (64) and Great Scot (70) on Princes Street

No. 64 was once the magnificent palazzo-style North British and Mercantile Insurance Company, designed by Sir George Washington Browne (1853–1939). No. 70 was the 1886 creation of the remarkable Hippolyte Blanc (1844–1917), best known for his church buildings in the Gothic revival style. Here was the Edinburgh Café where the high teas must have been very high indeed. Thankfully, Blanc's splendid, red sandstone, gabled front is still intact. The angel is all that remains of the Washington Browne façade, where it formed part of an elaborate frieze between second and third floors (see <https://goo.gl/fuu541>). It is a bitter-sweet vestige of late 19th-century Princes Street, when its reputation as one of Europe's finest boulevards was richly deserved and before it largely succumbed to avarice and brutalism in the 1950s and 1960s. — *JRM with thanks to John Knight OBE for highlighting this elusive gem, and to Edinburgh Central Library for research aid.*



Briefly

On 11 Mar, in the week of International Women's Day, LGBT Health's **Women's Wellbeing Group** will stroll the Dean Path from Stockbridge to the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and take in the '**Scottish Modern Women**' exhibition. For more details, times and prices, contact alison@lgbthealth.org.uk or Tel. 652 3283.

Friends of Inverleith Park have been adopted by Tesco's '**Bags of Help**' scheme, which puts money raised by the 5p carrier-bag charge to good local uses. The Friends will receive **between £8k and £12k**, depending upon how many people nominate them in Tesco stores before 6 Mar. They plan to spend the money on **outdoor fitness equipment** 'designed for more mature individuals, but also suitable for all'. **See their wish list** here: [<http://goo.gl/DcKbtD>].

Six new members have joined Leith Central Community Council (LCCC) after an interim election in Feb. LCCC is now once again **fully quorate with a voting membership of 14** (expected to rise to 15 soon on completion of paperwork).

Martin Veart is Lib-Dem candidate for **Edinburgh Northern & Leith** in May's Holyrood election. Alex Cole-Hamilton, Hannah Bettsworth and Jacqueline Bell are the top three on the **Lothians list**. Lee Chalmers will stand in the Lothians for the new **Women's Equality Party**.

An **online petition** (open until 10 Mar) is calling on CEC to remove nests of **troublesome gulls**, first in North Merchiston, then across the city. See [<http://goo.gl/9H2oZS>].

Stockbridge & Inverleith Community Council meets next at 7pm on 16 Mar in Stockbridge Parish Church, Saxe Coburg St; **Leith Central CC** at 7pm on 25 Mar in McDonald Rd Library.

An **early-mature tree** at 70 E. Claremont St (beside the Territorials' garage) is set for the chop following diagnosis of **Dutch Elm Disease**. Fewer than 5,000 elms now remain in Edinburgh, down from **35,000 in 1976**. We very much hope a new tree will be planted here soon to **restore form and shade** to this corner with W. Annandale St.

LCCC will call for restricted parking to be extended from **Pilrig St to the Forth**. Locals say the area has become congested and unsafe due to **commuters' cars** occupying both sides of the road during working hours. Any such change would take a **year to enact, probably longer**.

Big savings should follow closure of the aging and expensive to maintain **Powderhall waste plant** in 2018, once a new facility at Millerhill is operational. Likely savings will be **£1.6m per year** (excluding property running costs). The figures appeared in a review for CEC's **Finance and Resources Committee** on 2 Feb.

Moreover ...

Mohshin Syed – a 15-year-old student at Drummond CHS – has been selected by the Junior Academy of the **New York Academy of Sciences** to meet Microsoft mogul Bill Gates in the Big Apple. Mohshin will travel with his parents this month, after his research project on **Global Warming** caught the eye of judges. He is **one of only 10 teenagers** so recognised from among thousands of young people who applied worldwide. For a longer article and **Mohshin's report**, see our website (1.3.16).

In its 'Urban Conscious' event at the **Biscuit Factory** in Bonnington on 11–12 Mar, the student-run **Edinburgh Charity Fashion Show** will support Albany St-based **The Rock Trust**. Booking and details at: [<http://goo.gl/FHwUxF>]. More about The Rock Trust at: [<http://goo.gl/36Vt7d>].

Local minister **Graham McGeoch** has been looking at 2011 Census data to assess the pastoral challenge facing Broughton St Mary's. Writing in last month's **Broughton Beacon**, he noted that in this parish of 12,000, 15% identify as Church of Scotland – the same number as mostly speak a language other than English at home. **Almost 1,000 people are children or teenagers (under 18)**, and 60% of the population is aged under 40. Some 55% have a university degree, and 43% work full time. See also p. 3.

An interesting Twitter discussion unfolded on 15 Feb. @EllaTasm and @CityCycling discussed whether the name of **Leith Decides** was misleading and discouraged eligible organisations from bidding for CEC funds in parts of Broughton (and elsewhere) which **don't identify with Leith**. Criticism of geographically clumsy names for wards like **Leith Walk** (which covers Abbeyhill) and community councils like **Leith Central** (which covers Ferry Rd opposite Victoria Park) followed.

CEC is responding to demands from **musicians and venue managers** to relax strict regulations that music must be 'inaudible' outside the venue. Last month, officials reviewed the situation and proposed **changes to local and national licensing policies**. They pledged to keep live music central to CEC's **Cultural Policy**, and encouraged the music community to get involved in **further discussions**. For a full report, see our website (28.2.16).

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Fax: 0131 557 6781

Saturday surgeries:
Leith Library, Ferry Road: 10am.
Royston Wardieburn Community Centre, Pilton Drive North: 12 noon.

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I also offer appointments at community venues around the constituency if that is more convenient. Please call to arrange.
marco.biagi.msp@scottish.parliament.uk



Alison Johnstone MSP for Lothian Region



On the 1st and 3rd 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
Alison.Johnstone.msp@scottish.parliament.uk

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Deidre Brock MP Edinburgh North and Leith



Regular Surgeries

Leith: 4 March
1–2pm, 166 Great Junction Street
Leith Walk: 11 March
3.30–4.30pm, McDonald Rd Library
Stockbridge: 18 March,
6.00–7.00pm
Stockbridge Library
dbrockmp.scot
Tel: 0131-555 7009
deidre.brock.mp@parliament.uk



New Town & Broughton Community Council represents the views of local residents to City of Edinburgh Council.

You're welcome to attend our next meeting on
14 March at 7.30pm
Broughton St Mary's Parish Church, Bellevue Crescent
www.ntbc.org.uk