

# Spurtle



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**September  
2021**

**No 310**

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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free**

## ACOUSTIC VENUE SOUNDS PROMISING

The International Music & Performing Arts Charitable Trust (IMPACT) is submitting revised plans for a 1,000-seat concert hall between St Andrew Sq and the Register streets.

This proposed Dunard Centre is a purpose-built, acoustically excellent venue for all kinds of music, dance, and spoken-word performance. Other flexible parts will springboard education, outreach, conferencing, and creative hospitality.

Architect David Chipperfield has 'skilfully re-imagined' a structure 7m lower than the first version. This is to pacify deep-pocketed developer Nuveen, which had objected to earlier designs blocking views to and from the Golden Turd. Hence, original proposals for a domed roof, 200-seat studio, workshop, and rehearsal rooms have been dropped.



*Spurtle* likes visualisations of the auditorium interior, and is excited about attending both classical and K-pop concerts there in future. But opinions differ about the exterior's 'simple elegance'. Some say it reflects nearby fluted columns. Others think there's still too much of it, and it looks like a lift shaft stuck on a giant hosepipe connector. With planning consent granted, building could start in 2022 and last 3 years.

The charitable Dunard Fund has provided a generous £35M towards the cost; the UK and Scottish Govts £10M each; and Edinburgh Council £5M. Fundraising for another £15M has made 'significant' progress. Loose change? Visit [[bit.ly/3sjHLbK](http://bit.ly/3sjHLbK)]. See also 'Briefly' (p.3).

## COUNCILLOR FEELS THE HEAT

Halfway through a stormy BBQ season, Cllr Karen Doran (Ward 11) was grilled for over an hour by residents last month. As vice-convenor of the Transport & Environment Cmte, she had voted in favour of introducing bin-hubs across Edinburgh [[bit.ly/3ixP8ZB](http://bit.ly/3ixP8ZB)]. Locals attending the New Town & Broughton Community Council voiced their dismay.

Chair Carol Nimmo said the NTBCC disagreed with the T&E's process and principle. Officials had not consulted residents or heritage bodies in advance, and were now pushing ahead with changes using Traffic Regulation Orders.

A uniform waste-management approach would not work across the whole city, she said; bin hubs would disfigure and pollute the New Town streetscape; and where gull-proof bags are correctly used (and with better rates of recycling), they should be kept.

NTBCC backs opposition from residents associations across the area, and a legal challenge to the Council is already under way.

### Doran explains

Cllr Doran said: (1) She had responded to union safety concerns about the weight and contents of gull-proof bags; (2) Many complaints had been received about GPB users overfilling their neighbours' communal bins; (3) A trial bin-hub in Albert St had resulted in an 'enormous improvement'; (4) The design of bin-hubs had not been finalised, but they would not be 7–8m long as alleged at this meeting; (5) Elected representatives have to make decisions, and cannot consult about everything.

### Locals not convinced

Community councillors and members of the public replied: (1) There is no evidence to substantiate health-and-safety concerns, but if there *is* risk then this change transfers it from properly trained and equipped officers to the public; (2) Occasional misuse does not justify scrapping an efficient and popular system; (3) Albert St remains a rubbish-strewn mess; (4) The 7–8m figure comes from Council documents; (5) It's disgraceful if politicians have reached a decision not only without consultation but also without a settled plan.

Proposals for where to position bin-hubs in Pilrig will be discussed soon, with the first ones possibly appearing as early as November.

## CONE AND THE BARBARIANS



The Iron Duke in bronze by Steele with plastic. Anyone else noticed more Glaswegians in town lately?

## SPACES FOR PEOPLE CHANGES FOR BROUGHTON



Most temporary road and footway layouts across Edinburgh, implemented under the Spaces for People project during lockdown, are now being withdrawn. Some will return as permanent arrangements in future.

In Spurtleshire, the section between Canonmills and the Broughton Rd junction will return to something like it was. There had been complaints of congestion, with Lothian Buses reporting 3–4-minute delays to the No. 10 service. In detail:

- Removal of segregated cycle lane.
- New 1.25m mandatory cycle lane.
- New red screed advisory cycle lane across junction.
- Restoration of two southbound traffic lanes.
- Retention of no-right-turn into Eyre Pl.
- Change to segregation layout after Warriston Rd.

On Broughton St, improved pedestrian crossings for the roundabout, pavement widening, and the uphill cycle lane will undergo further review. All measures across the city will be subject to public-health guidance.

### Significant improvement required

In Aug, internal Council auditors criticised how initial Spaces for People changes had been conceived and implemented. They identified 'significant and/or numerous control weaknesses [...] in the design and/or effectiveness of the control environment and/or governance and risk management frameworks'. They questioned how well reversing changes in future would be costed and funded.

Their report (for the year ending 31 Mar 2021) was made to the Governance, Risk & Best Value Cmte on 10 Aug [[bit.ly/3CH28V3](http://bit.ly/3CH28V3)]. Transport & Environment convener Lesley Macinnes acknowledged early failings, but said lessons had been learned and acted upon promptly. Future measures will be rebranded as Travelling Safely.

## Briefly



Wikimedia [bit.ly/3yC4IK]

It's time to buy tweezers. Ticks have been found in **King George V Park**, so avoid wandering through long grass, weeds, or under trees here with skin exposed. Or just risk it. **Council officials** recommend this site for guidance: [bit.ly/3inIO71]. **Late spring to Oct** is the peak time for these adorable first-cousins of spiders, which can transmit **Lyme disease** during engorgement.

*Spurtle* regrets the passing in Aug of **Calum Cashley**: local SNP activist, Westminster candidate in 2010, and difficult grizzly force for good [bit.ly/3sKr1ug].

The **Council will consult** this month on whether to make Edinburgh a **short-term-let control area**. If the Scottish Govt approves these new powers, STLs not in use as the owner's principal home would need **change-of-use planning permission** after Oct 2022. See [bit.ly/2VJMLKP].

After 24 years, Broughton Property Management at **61–3 Broughton St** has closed. Isobel and Duncan have retired to do other things, with staff redeploying to Braemore on **Queensferry Rd**.

Last month, *Spurtle* covered the launch of a rival for Enterprise Car Club [bit.ly/3ABjt6s]. **Hiyacar** has begun with 15 vehicles in Edinburgh (5 of them in Spurtleshire), but invites locals to rent out their **own cars and private parking spaces**. We think it's a good idea, **but no substitute** for reduced car use, more active travel, and improved public transport.

A hairdresser and nail bar will replace Loulabelle's Beauty at **40 Rodney St**.

It's a **regretful adieu** to Villeneuve's welcoming wine emporium in **Broughton St**. This joyful successor to the famed Broughton Bookshop of yore has **succumbed** to Lockdown poor trading and ever-increasing rent. Happily, however, Villeneuve continues a **country-wide delivery service** from its home base in Peebles.

**Lothian Buses** says it's honouring an agreement to limit not-in-service vehicles on **E London St**. See [bit.ly/3yTQFiw].

**Domestic bin use** has changed, thanks to Covid. With thousands **continuing to work (and create rubbish)** from home, Council waste teams collected an **extra 3k tonnes** in June 2021 compared to June 2019.

Police confirm a **29-year-old woman** was raped in the small hours of Sunday 1 Aug. The shocking attack happened at the corner of **Union St and Broughton St Lane**. We have no further details.

## Hateful crime was not a one-off

A gay couple were assaulted and robbed outside John Lewis on Leith St last month.

In the unprovoked incident, which happened at around 9.20pm on 30 July, the men (in their 30s) were punched, kicked, and spat upon by 4 other men (in their early 20s), who used homophobic language during the attack and stole a bag. One of the victims required hospital treatment afterwards.

No passers-by intervened at the time, but video footage was passed to the Police. Three men were later arrested and charged about a week later.

This is by no means an isolated incident. *Spurtle* is aware of police investigations into two other homophobic attacks in Picardy Place on 14 September 2013 (2 victims) and 17 October 2015 (1 victim). There have been others.

Sexual-orientation aggravated crime is the second most reported hate crime in Scotland. Figures compiled by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service show reported charges at 1,580 in 2020–21, a 5% increase on the year before. Apart from 2014–15, year-on-year rises in reported charges have occurred since relevant legislation began in 2010 [bit.ly/3ikTG5x].

Racial crime is the most reported hate crime, with 3,285 charges across Scotland in 2020–21.

## Pop-ups and pugilism

Nuveen Real Estate says that when trams run between Newhaven and Broughton, Picardy Pl will become a 'key city-centre node' for shoppers visiting the St Jimmy.

Nuveen has therefore applied for planning permission to 'enhance' and 'activate' Little King St by positioning 5 mobile catering units on the eastern side (21/02720/FUL). In the words it uses to prospective stallholders, this is an opportunity to 'create temporary immersive brand space' from 8am to 11pm. Artisan Roast, The Mac Man, Harajuko Kitchen, Churros Baby, and a clattering reekie generator are in full swing already.

A separate application will follow to cover the 2-storey bike racks with a canopy.

### Making a fist of it

Meanwhile, CGI visualisations for the pop-ups accidentally revealed Nuveen also has plans for public art at the lower end of the 'clutter-free' pavement. In a *Spurtle* exclusive last month, we revealed this will be the temporary site for a statue of Leith resident and former world-champion boxer Ken Buchanan. Sculpted by the Edinburgh artist Alan Herriot [bit.ly/2VJhXcR], it will offer a pugnacious alternative to Eduardo Paolozzi's more nuanced *Manuscript of Monte Cassino*.



## Been wet and getting wetter

Last month's Transport & Environment Cmte *Business Bulletin* [bit.ly/3xIzZJq] considered July's floods (Issue 309). Points included:

- Edinburgh's drains can't cope with today's intense summer storms, and it isn't feasible or affordable to replace the entire system.
- By law, individuals, not the Council, are responsible for protecting themselves from floods. They should maintain drains and drainage on their own property and take relevant precautions. CEC has no duty to provide sandbags.
- CEC is responsible for maintaining its own flood defences, culvert screens, local road and public-highway gullies, and water courses. It has fulfilled these obligations.
- Scottish Water is responsible for operating/maintaining/fixing public foul and combined sewers and the public waste-water network.
- Working with Scottish Water and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, CEC is working on a strategic 'Vision for Water Management' during climate change.
- CEC is also developing Surface Water Management Plans for areas at particular risk.
- CEC aims in future to contain the first 5mm of rainfall within new developments. This will entail 'raingardens', green roofs, and other sustainable urban drainage systems. 'Everyone can help, by thinking about "holding back" their water in their own gardens'. Even wee efforts matter.



## Revenue no substitute for public space

Social-media critics slammed last month's pop-up Porsche showroom in pedestrianised Castle St as inappropriate. They said it was at odds with Council aims for city transformation (p.4), a Low Emission Zone, and zero carbon [bit.ly/3B5cMTU].

Officials later responded saying CEC's advertising policy and standard fees/charges were followed, and the promotion had raised money for frontline services. Future change would first require political initiative.

## A better way than spray

Local environmentalist and biodiversity conservationist Simon Holledge urges locals to back a petition calling for urban and garden pesticides to be banned [bit.ly/37oclZc]. Pesticides are bad for bees, wildlife, and humans alike, and safe alternatives are available.

Holledge focuses on glyphosate, a potential carcinogen for everyone but particularly for Council officers exposed to it when spraying. Last year, residents succeeded in petitioning Edinburgh Council to stop using the chemical in Balerno streets and parks. This summer, a more expensive hot-foam substitute was trialled there.

Some locals criticise Council control of weeds. Katie Wood, for example, tells us she's fed up with the 'air of unkempt neglect' which proliferating weeds lend the city. She says they are slip hazards when wet, and damage stonework and hence the tourist economy. Officials say weeds have flourished in hot and wet weather, whilst staff resources have fallen 50% due to Covid self-isolation requirements.



### Tolerance not chemicals

Cllr Claire Miller (Ward 11) has a different approach, saying we need to be more tolerant of weeds. 'One of our biggest environmental concerns is species loss and biodiversity. Tolerance of the kinds of weeds which don't cause any damage or problem in urban environments is one of the tiny ways in which we can do less harm to our environment.'

*Spurtle* understands that the Council has 'signalled its intent' to phase out glyphosate use, but hasn't set a date yet. Deep cleansing, mulching, and strimming are increasingly used, and several times this summer officers have been spotted hoeing out footway and kerbside weeds in Bellevue. Perhaps volunteers' regular participation in such activity could help make this an efficient alternative to pesticides in future.

## The festivalisation business

Professor Cliff Hague's recent article 'The Festivalisation of Edinburgh: Manifestation and Responses' is an informative, timely, and compelling read.

He documents results of a growth coalition between Edinburgh Council, the Scottish Government, and events/festival/tourism industries. His analysis includes the meaning of 'festivalisation', a practice spawning much opaque and slippery language; and festivalisation's impact on access to and commodification of public space.

### Austerity urbanism

Focusing on Winter Festivals, Hague excels unpicking 'austerity urbanism', whereby a cash-strapped local authority subsidises a profit-making private partner and pays for extra public services consequent festival events require. He highlights temporary jobs' piffling economic benefit, and re-evaluates Underbelly's charity at a meagre £11,728. Local businesses, he argues, suffer from incoming competition; and space-value flows out of Edinburgh to asset-owners elsewhere.

Hague narrates how overcrowding, short-term holiday lets, damage to (and commercialisation of) Princes St Gdns, unsanctioned space decks, a proposed Ross Bandstand replacement, and flawed Council consultation sparked local 'resistance'.

He acknowledges related campaigns by community councils, hyperlocal media, and the Cockburn Association (of which he's chair), but omits a pivotal 2015–19 public/private combination against St Andrew Sq events.

### Pressure to pleasure

Pressure to refestivalise Edinburgh will resume once Covid restrictions lift, says Hague. Resisting it will be hard, especially with politicians and their pet mouthpieces calculating 'Objections can be washed away in waves of populist hedonism.' The Cockburn's 'Our Unique City' prospectus offers better alternatives [bit.ly/2VexXUn].

The article merits your attention, and appears for free at [bit.ly/3jiQAQOY]. Hague later amplified Cockburn distinctions between festivals (good) and festivalisation (bad) at [bit.ly/37klfoa]—AM



## Writing on house walls and steps

TO THE EDITOR OF THE COURANT.

Sir,—Allow me, through the medium of your respectable paper, to call attention to the increasing practice of chalk-writing on the walls of houses and their outer steps leading from the streets.

We are all apt to lean too much, in such matters, upon the police; but in this nuisance, and many others which are every day obtruded upon our sight, I think it is the duty of every citizen to become a policeman; in which case, instead of there being no reported charge of the nuisance referred to before the magistrates, we might expect to see an end put to practices so offensive and disgraceful.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

D.

[This letter first appeared in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 8 October 1859.]



## Briefly

A **worldwide shortage of cement** is disrupting the 3-mile Trams to Spurtleshire project. *Global Cement* says the market has been distorted by the **Suez Canal blockage** in Mar, Covid, unpredictable construction booms 'post-Covid', and (in the UK) Brexit uncertainty [bit.ly/3k06ZIn]. Tram builders are '**re-sequencing**' work to cope. Meanwhile, a report to the Council's **Finance & Resources Cmte** says **£6.57M more than expected** at this stage has been spent on the project [bit.ly/3AHorYO]. **It blames the Covid lockdown** and utilities diversions that were 'more onerous than expected'. Nevertheless, tram chiefs expect to finish **within budget and on time** in spring 2023.

**Leith Central Community Council** is concerned at plans to reduce footway widths along parts of **Leith Walk**. Under Tram Team proposals, over 250m would be narrowed to below the 2.5m minimum stipulated by **Edinburgh Design Guidance** for densely populated areas. The changes are intended to accommodate the cycleway, parking/loading bays, pedestrian crossings, bin bays, and bus stops.

On 9 Aug, **Pilrig St** closed at Leith Walk and will remain shut for 9 months. New car-waiting areas have been set up north of **Annandale** and **Iona Sts**, accessible via the citybound Leith Walk traffic lane. The temporary **Leith Walk cycleway** has now been closed.

The redeveloped and repurposed loos on **Brandon Ter** are due for completion this autumn. **The Tollhouse** has planning permission for a restaurant/café (50 covers) and is to let for £42.5k pa.

Local enthusiasts have so far crowdfunded over £3.25k towards upgrading **Drummond Community High School's** basketball court. Their campaign responds to the recent loss of a friend, and promotes the **benefits of exercise and companionship** for mental health. To contribute, visit [bit.ly/3jPrOpJ].

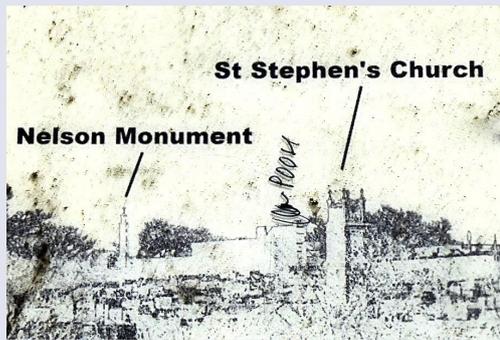
**Nine dwellings** are in the offing for the site of Hackland & Dore's unlovely shed at **16 Annandale St**. Elsewhere, plans are progressing to redevelop Beaverhall House (on **Beaverhall Rd**) for residential (built to rent) use. **Cultural space/artist studios** are proposed for the ground floor.

**Dundonald St** residents beset by 'a stupendous rotten pong and clouds of bluebottles' have traced the source to a **W Scotland St Lane** property. Our informant urges all those affected to keep badgering Council **Environmental Protection**.

As predicted in Issue 309, the Council will announce a preferred bidder to develop the **old Royal High School** in Oct. Confirmation came in the **Finance & Resources Cmte's** Aug *Business Bulletin*.

After 40 years as the Adira Hotel, **11–12 Royal Ter** are returning to separate dwellings. Original layouts and features will be restored.

# Moreover ...



St Stephen's Church

Nelson Monument

Dr Kirsty W (@kirstiw) noticed a helpful addition to the **Inverleith Park** viewpoint sign. A Twitter wit later noted, 'It's a building of very little brain.'

**George St's radical remodelling** has taken another step forward, with approval given in Aug for the final fundamental design elements and key principles of an operational plan [bit.ly/3CQ9iX1]. Stage 3 of the **Spatial Coordination Design** will now be completed, alongside identification of key project processes. In 2022, officials will start securing the necessary statutory consents for construction between 2023 and 2025. Some observers want **further flexibility** on service and restricted-mobility access, others seek **reassurances** about enforcement/management (especially regarding traffic) being integral to the design. For George St, all the design costs and 70% of construction costs have been met by a £20M grant from **Sustrans Places for Everyone**. The Council will pay the remaining £12M. See [bit.ly/3z2XIFu]. Further detail on funding will be available in Oct. The George St project forms part of the 10-year £420M **Edinburgh City Transformation Strategy**, agreed in 2019. ECTS aims to cut motor vehicles in streets, create more pedestrian and cycling space, and deliver an enhanced public realm.

**New Town Qtr news:** (1) Now that a Section 75 agreement has been signed, demolition of the former RBS buildings on Dundas St can start; (2) Discussions continue about cycle access to and around **King George V Park**; (3) Neighbours are concerned at potential **light and noise** disturbance from roof terraces; (4) Critics say **differences in roof levels** mean access to terraces won't be quite as egalitarian as earlier supposed (Issue 309).

A 58-year-old cyclist was ambulated to hospital after a vehicle knocked him off his bike on **Mansfield Pl**. The hit-and-run happened around 7.30am on 4 Aug. Police called for **witnesses and dash-cam footage**.

**Square & Crescent** plans to replace offices with 42 flats on **Henderson Pl Lane** [bit.ly/3klzW1w]. Proposals include an amenity courtyard, private terraces, and **green roof**.

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## RODNEY STREET BARBERS

Julie 07989 441557, 42 Rodney Street  
Tues-Fri, 11am-5pm; Sat, 10am-2pm



## LEITH CENTRAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL



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

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Make representations to City of Edinburgh Council, other public bodies and private agencies on everything that matters locally.

**Next meeting: Monday, 20 September.**  
Venue and format TBC. Visit the website at <https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>



**Deidre Brock MP**  
Edinburgh North & Leith

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### Surgeries

Every first Friday 1-2pm Constituency office 166 Great Junction St	Every third Friday 1-2pm Stockbridge Library
Every second Friday 3.30-4.30pm McDonald Road Library	Every last Friday 4-5pm Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre

**0131 555 7009**  
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**Ben Macpherson MSP**  
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Edinburgh Northern and Leith Constituency

**Covid-19 Update**  
Because of Covid-19, and in accordance with the law and advice, my office is closed to the public until further notice. My team and I are working remotely and continue to assist constituents as normal.

**Telephone/Video Call Advice Surgeries:**  
I have also had to cancel my weekly face-to-face advice surgeries. Instead I am holding regular telephone/video surgeries each week. Please leave a voicemail or email my office to book a 15 minute surgery appointment and someone in my team will get in touch to confirm a time. (May 2021)

Email: [ben.macpherson.msp@parliament.scot](mailto:ben.macpherson.msp@parliament.scot)  
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**NEW TOWN & BROUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

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