

# Spurtle



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**BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER**

**Free**

## LOST BINS – WASTED OPPORTUNITY

The Council's Waste Management Team has recently removed more bins from King George V and Scotland Yard Parks. This leaves 1 bin inside (near the Scotland Street Tunnel) and 2 bins outside (effectively invisible to users).

The change follows a Bin Siting Policy ratified in May 2018. It states that the Council's capacity to provide bins is finite, bins need to be emptied without driving into green space, and it makes more sense for park users to take their waste to strategic locations.

Locals are infuriated, given that increasing numbers of people are visiting the area, and overflowing bins were already a significant problem prior to the latest round of reductions.

Meanwhile, the remaining park bin continues to require vehicular access, as does the Council's recent licence for a (litter-generating) mobile snack-van here.

Friends of the Park wonder whether to use some of their funds to donate a bin, dependent on Waste Management's agreement to empty it. The group already arranges regular litter pick-ups and will continue to do so. 'However,' a Friends spokesperson tells us, 'we do not think it is reasonable to ask our volunteers to pick up litter that park users would have deposited in a bin if only a bin had been conveniently available to do so.'

Critics say 'privatising' a civic responsibility like this is counter-productive. They call for more, not fewer, regularly serviced public bins across Edinburgh, including more general waste and bottle/can recycling points.

*Spurtle* approached the Council for comment about all this in early March, but has received no response.



### Welcome addition

Though some mutter at the generator's putter, most folk we've heard from welcome last month's arrival in KGV Park of the bright yellow Gilly Beans snack-van.

Council rules exclude the van from the paths, cycle track and setted roundel, and grass has occasionally been crossed reaching the only remaining narrow stance available. But such accidents should reduce with parking practice.

The business promises to address at least some of the litter it generates, but how well this can be managed on busy summer days remains to be seen.



## HUSTINGS 2022



Some 70 people in person and 50 by Zoom attended the *Spurtle's* City Centre ward Local Government Election hustings on 20 April. Twelve of the 13 candidates took part. For a brief overview, see Page 3. For more details, see [\[bit.ly/3EJJ4XK\]](https://bit.ly/3EJJ4XK). Image: @ElaineF2022.

## NEW HOMES AND CREATIVE SPACES PROMISED



Developers HUB and Bridges Fund Management have now submitted proposals to create new residential and commercial uses for the former Duncan's Chocolate Factory site at 27/29 Beaverhall Rd (22/01654/FUL).

The plans comprise 205 build-to-rent homes (including 52 affordable homes). HUB stresses the scheme's green heating, biodiverse roof, new public realm, and active encouragement of the area's current creative community by providing new (if fewer) artist studios and maker spaces at ground-floor (floodable) level.

Key to the design team is London and Liverpool-based shedkm architects Ltd, which says its work 'embodies simple yet bold ideas that give our buildings unique and strong identity' despite making an ass of themselves over capital letters.

HUB's press release, overegging the Beaver Lands' supposed proximity to the historic New Town, 'elegant' Stockbridge and 'eclectic' Leith caused some hilarity on social media. The apparent non-existence of next-door bohemian Broughton raised eyebrows across the barony.

Some online sceptics have criticised the proposal's size, massing, and likely effect on local population density. *Spurtle's* reaction is more positive at this stage, although we have yet to finish studying the plans. You can read them here [\[bit.ly/3Kv2iCr\]](https://bit.ly/3Kv2iCr). The deadline for comments is 13 May and a Council decision is expected by 29 July.

## CRITICS TURN ON LEITH WALK DESIGN

Social-media warriors have branded absurd and downright dangerous-looking sections of the new northbound cyclepath/footway beside the tram route on Leith Walk 'an unenforceable mess of car parking, obstruction and user conflict'.

Apologists argued that the route – which is due to open in July – isn't finished and cyclists aren't meant to be on it yet anyway.

Cllr Lesley Macinnes, chair of the Transport & Environment Cmte, sounded urgent in the run-up to May's Local Govt Election. Taking to Twitter on 11 April she announced:

- The cyclepath's deep 'taper' (changes of direction) will be flattened out to match Edinburgh Street Guidance, and a coloured surface will be laid.

- Thought will be given to increasing the difference in surface levels between cycleways and footpaths. Shallow subsurface utilities make this difficult if not impossible.

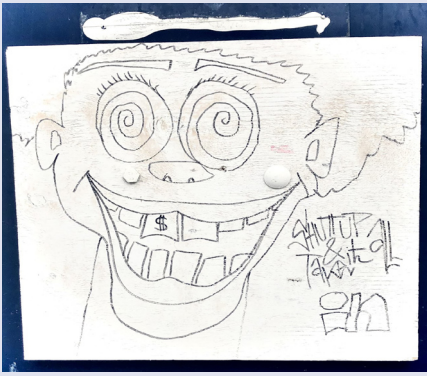
- Column lights used during construction will – as planned – be replaced with lights mounted on the tram poles.

- 'Clear issues in how the design has been applied' will be addressed as defects by the contractor.

These and some other frequently growled questions are answered on the Trams to Newhaven website at [\[bit.ly/3royXSo\]](https://bit.ly/3royXSo).



## Briefly



Permission has been granted to run the former Bank of Scotland premises at **6 Picardy Pl** as a 100-cover restaurant (21/05433/FUL, Issue 303). But to protect neighbouring amenity (from a potentially busy, late-night eatery), 'Cooking operations shall be restricted to the use of **one microwave oven, one panini machine, one soup urn, and one toaster only**; no other forms of cooking shall take place without the prior written approval of the planning authority'. **Taco Bell** will not be pleased.

A Council planning application form says Stuart Ker of **G46 Consulting Limited** seeks change of use from Class 4 Business (Office) to Class 2 Professional (dental practice) at **31 Albany St** (22/01269/FUL) Companies House lists one Stuart Ker as an accountant and former director of Glasgow-based G46 Limited, which provided '**Other food services**' until it was dissolved on 27 Sept 2016. We are perplexed.

Public art and associated works on the Grand Stair at **St James Sq** have been approved (Issues 316–17). Two objections were received, but whatever they comprised was not included on the Council portal.

The **transformed George St** design is just about done, but opinions are still sought about the **Operational Plan** (Issue 316). NTBCC will raise concerns (e.g. about accessibility, toilets, women's safety, and cyclist/pedestrian segregation) early. It wants to brief new councillors asap, being keen to avoid another **Elm Row-style** bodged fait accompli fiasco.

Locals complain of worn-out road markings, poor signage, and **speeding motorists** on Royal Ter, particularly at the junction with **Carlton Ter Brae**. Officials deny there's a problem, but Police have agreed to install a temporary, speed-gun-toting, cardboard cut-out '**Pop-up Bob**' to inspire better behaviour.

**Spurtle** was aware of 16 new local applications for change of use from **residential to short-term let** last month on: Albany St, Broughton St, Calton Hill, Cumberland St, Dundas St, Sloan St, Thistle St Lane SW, Union St, and York Pl; **15 of them were retrospective**. Applications in Abercromby Pl and Forth St were granted, another in Cumberland St NE Lane was refused.

Fiona Cowie Reflexology now welcomes old and new clients to **60A Broughton St** (below Pickles). 'Bring the feet to life and the body will heal': [bit.ly/3vhlzPE].

## Gas-guzzler campaign unfair on New Town farmers

Climate activists campaigning against 4x4s and SUVs nationwide struck again last month in Edinburgh (Issue 316). This time 'Tyre Extinguishers' focused on the New Town, where up to 40 cars on Cumberland St and elsewhere had tyres deflated on 10–11 April. In cheerily phrased advisory notes attached to windscreens, activists advised owners not to take the actions personally.

Nonetheless, many affected drivers felt annoyed, those with hybrids and e-vehicles feeling particularly let down. One who wrote to the Next Door app described the action as undifferentiated 'bullying'.

They said some gas guzzlers are needed to 'tow for work' while targeted city-centre-dwelling agricultural workers with 'robust vehicles' had been 'unable to turn up to their jobs, e.g. lambing, and can't transport the sheep back into the hills'.

We suspect this is a Spurtleshire demographic not many locals have considered in much detail before.



## Picardy Place island – Helpful lack of clarity

In Issue 316, we reported locals' sense that they are being deliberately eased out of meaningful consultation about the Picardy Pl island design.

These doubts were not eased last month by supposed clarifications from the Council's Senior Project Manager Transport, Place Development in belated answer to Picardy Residents' questions.

• Q: What's happened to the consultation process which suddenly dropped off the radar in April 2021? A: *The Policy & Sustainability Cmte approved a new 'Consultation Framework Policy' on 20.4.21.*

• Q: What's proposed for next stage of engagement (not 'consultation')? A: *A decision has not been made. The project board will agree next stages once consultants supply proposals.*

• Q: Will residents, organisations, and businesses get to offer ideas? A: *Project outcomes/designs will reflect Council policies/guidelines and earlier feedback. These will be 'shared with the public so that the designs can evolve'.*

• Q: On which 'earlier consultations' will design team base its 'outline scope'? A: *'Exercises' in autumn and Nov 2017, workshops in 2014 and 2017.*

• Q: How will design team build on earlier consultations which haven't taken place? A: *Using feedback mentioned in a report to the Transport & Environment Cmte (25.1.18), plus elements of the Mobility Plan and Edinburgh Street Design guidance.*

• Q: When/where will Picardy Pl next be considered? A: *'The project was given approval to proceed by the Transport & Environment Cmte and the next stages of the project are still being developed. A programme will highlight key dates including any committee dates that will require approvals or updates brought to them.'*

The Council official in question may think he's being helpful, but to citizens side-lined repeatedly over the years, he sounds like a squid on a swivel chair. Bureau-prattle and selective readings of recent history do not impress them.

Let us repeat the 4 Gunning Principles of legitimate consultation [bit.ly/3jEPn4M]. (1) Proposals are still at a formative stage. (2) There is sufficient information to give 'intelligent consideration'. (3) There is adequate time for consideration and response. (4) 'Conscientious consideration' must be given to the consultation.

## Space to spread out on Royal Terrace

Permission is sought to convert the A-listed Halcyon House Hotel at 8 Royal Ter into a 'family home' (22/01244/FUL).

Would suit anyone seeking: 4 bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms (+ 1 bedroom and 1 bunk bedroom without), walk-in wardrobe, gym, gym store, gym shower, family bathroom, playroom with en suite bathroom, library with kitchenette and WC attached, laundry, wine cellar, 'large room', drawing room, snug, kitchen, family dining/breakfast room, 2 exterior stores and ample cupboard space throughout.

External arrangements on 4 levels to the rear include: a dining terrace, 2 formal lawns, a large seating area with fire pit, and access to the privately shared 12-acre Regent, Royal and Carlton Ter Gardens.

The property is conveniently placed for local shops and Lothian Bus services 109, 19, 26, 44, 45 and X7.



## Painfully compelling

As anticipated in Issue 316, the clearest theme at last month's City Centre hustings was disrespect for public opinion. Locals panned poor consultation by politicians and officials, their unclear recognition of differing views, and bodged policy afterwards in relation to road maintenance, Spaces for People, waste (mis)management, housing stock, planning, and Christmas markets.

A few candidates stood by their party's record while eye-rolling predecessors' shortcomings. A few trumpeted their party's inability to influence the *deplorable* previous Administration (an odd reason to vote for them in future). Others boasted of blameless track records unsullied by any practical experience whatsoever. All declared love for the voters and future devotion as community champions.

The audience was ominously quiet. One citizen expressed disbelief at such humdrum mainstream promises. Grumming in the kirk. Assertions followed about politicians who voted not to consult. The air between former Cllrs Miller (Grn) and Mowat (Con) crackled.

Independent Pakpahan-Campbell's call for transparency, and Illingworth's ambitions for refurbished furniture elicited rumbles. Then Rowan's 'disgust' at how the city was run sparked a bolt of applause. Then all hell broke loose: Bonnie Prince Bob denounced the 'asphyxiating grasp' of 'half-arsed careerists and opportunistic apparatchiks'. Thunderclaps, lightning strikes and class conspiracy all round. After the storm a little sun: Carson clarifying that his politics stemmed from a simple urge to avenge himself on the Council for a £70 bin fine.

The evening nearly ended on a note of levity. Instead, a complicated question on sexual/gender equalities. Some answered it. Some ducked it. Some galloped or blundered into varying depths of morass and sank gurgling before the horrified eyes of voters thinking, 'There but for the grace of God go I.' People are awkward. Democracy's difficult. Hustings are painfully compelling.—*Jaundiced of Claremont*

## Hard heritage choices in time of climate change

Difficulties around protecting and improving historic properties during climate change were apparent in two cases last month.

The first involved adjacent basement properties on Fettes Row which were refused permission to install removable flood gates (22/00033/FUL; 22/00037/FUL). Officials said the proposed changes would have a detrimental impact on the properties' architectural merits and setting.

The Architectural History Society of Scotland had objected to the choice of materials and extent of work. Along with Edinburgh World Heritage, it argued that 'If flooding is an issue at the site, prevention should be explored through drainage, landscaping or specialist flood prevention systems.'

Elsewhere, objections were raised to proposed installation of 15 photovoltaic panels on an A-listed building in a conservation area at Royal Ter (2200916/FUL). Critics say the panels would spoil the building's external appearance, imperil its fragile fabric, and make future maintenance harder to access.

New Town & Broughton Community Council broadly supports solar panels, but finds fault with Edinburgh Council's inconsistent application of its own non-statutory guidance on what is acceptable in heritage terms. NTBCC wants clearer, binding rules from the Scottish Govt on such issues, but recognises any such change would come too late to affect the capital's City Plan 2030.

## CHS pupils promote period dignity

Pupils at Drummond Community High School lead the way in bringing period dignity to all students with a new initiative to make free period products accessible in school and to take home.

Megan Wright (S4) told *Spurtle* there was a culture of girls asking each other for period products due to the lack of free, accessible items. As it is now law to offer free period products, pupils decided to act.

S5 student Rachel Barlow says pupils can now access tampons and other requisites such as reusable pads and moon cups in the school's welfare room and every toilet. If students require more than emergency supplies, they can order what they need to take home.

The pupil-led group is working hard to promote and manage the service in school, to advise pupils how to order (or report missing) stock, and to develop a peer-led education programme based on experiences and best practice from other schools across Edinburgh and beyond. A Drummond S3 Media group led by Fatima Shams is also creating a video to teach period dignity to all pupils and to remove stigma.

Headteacher Rachel Robertson says pupil feedback given to the group shows young people feel less stress now they can access period products in school and feel more able to attend classes while they have their period as a result.



## Briefly



Congratulations to Dundas St's **Trigg Hair Studio**, recently named **Make-up and Hair Salon of the Year** in the Scottish Wedding Awards 2022.

Edinburgh Council has submitted its controversial **Low Emission Zone** proposal to the Scottish Govt for approval, possibly by 31 May (Issue 308). Interestingly, the LEZ includes **Elder St** [bit.ly/3veLIQC] and would thus affect **noisome old bangers** accessing the Bus Station. Will CEC enforce this with **effective camera surveillance**? Don't hold your breath.

At the next meeting of the **Broughton History Society** (2 May), Sandra Purves will talk on *200 Years of the Union Canal*. Gongoozlers **jumping in by Zoom** should first email [spurves004@btinternet.com].

The plan to knock down **Smithies at 49–51 Eyre Pl** and replace it with 7 flats over 3 storeys has been withdrawn.

Floorplans illustrating a proposal to convert retail space at **80 George St** to mixed restaurant, leisure, and public-house uses (20/01207/FUL) show ground and first floors of the six-storey structure populated by **22 faceless loners** playing virtual darts by themselves in cubicles [bit.ly/3tYgJZW]. NTBCC says there are too many city-centre drinkeries already, and will object. **Edinburgh Evening News** journalists have recently been installed upstairs.

Cyclists welcome a new opening for them in the rat-run barricade on **Gayfield Sq** (Issue 316). Why, they wonder, can't a similar opening be provided in the downhill barricade on **Leith St**?

Those behind the Leith Depot Public House at **138–40 Leith Walk (Stead's Pl)** have applied to extend into the former shop at No. 142 (22/01471/FUL).

Discussing proposals for its new management plan with local stakeholders recently, **Edinburgh World Heritage** representatives were reportedly stunned to find amenity groups felt **ignored, neglected and little understood** by them. They have promised to reassess the body's commitment to community, one of its 5 key Strategic Objectives.

In Issue 316 we wondered why the **Heriot Row police box** isn't open more often for wired coffee-heads. We now learn business has been **disrupted by slow cabling** of new EV charging points nearby.

**Solstice Wellness & Retreat** aims to turn premises at **49A Broughton St** into a therapy centre specialising in 'Naturopathic Medicine for Anxiety, Depression, and Long-term COVID Syndrome'. There are no effective therapies for missing **Villeneuve Wines** [bit.ly/3DMLDYo].

# Moreover ...



In Issue 313, an **avian admirer** drew our attention to the likely consequences of installing an unintentional pigeon perch on the **Dryden Ter** elevation of McDonald Rd Fire Station. Sure enough, the elevated recess is now **gathering guano**. The grille serves no practical purpose except to make the window glass inaccessible for cleaning. Our correspondent favours removing this decorative flight of fancy.

Proposals for a new canopy, external bar and seating in the outdoor corridor beside the **Omni Centre** have been withdrawn for reasons unknown (21/06504/FUL). The **Cockburn Association** supported this public use of a currently 'purposeless space'. The **Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland** objected to removal of trees and planters and a cluttered design. **Adjacent businesses** opposed the quality of design, impact on setting, reduced access to **Calton Hill**, encroachment upon fire-escape and assembly points, potential mess and disturbance (bit.ly/3uoiYWv).

Police and in-house security are stepping up patrols in the **St James Qtr** to tackle evening youth disorder. Young people from as far afield as Fife are **flocking to hang out** here, where – says owner Nuveen – 'whether you're a solo traveller, on a romantic getaway or taking a trip with the whole family, you'll find fun at every turn'.

**Barky Boys & Co's** plans to open a dog crèche and day-care centre at **19A Haddington Pl** have failed. They will be restricted to operating a Class 3 restaurant / coffee / snack bar. Neighbours had objected to **strange dogs** relieving themselves in a private garden at the rear.

Temporary pre-booking arrangements for Edinburgh's **household waste recycling** centres, introduced in May 2020, will be made permanent. Officials say the system **reduces queues and overcrowding**, and improves the atmosphere for staff and customers.

The interment of John Ross Maclean's ashes will take place in **Lairg Cemetery, Lairg** on 17 May at 2.30pm (Issue 314). Those planning to attend are asked to inform relatives via [spurtle@hotmail.co.uk] by 9 May.

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## LEITH CENTRAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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



**Participate in local democracy.**

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

**Next meeting: 7pm on Mon. 16 May.**  
**See website below for confirmed venue.**

<https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>

## Deidre Brock MP Edinburgh North & Leith



Regular constituency surgeries are now resuming by appointment only.

Full details can be found on my website [dbrockmp.scot](http://dbrockmp.scot) or contact my office by email or phone for more information about surgery dates and locations.

Stay safe, Deidre.

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**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)

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**NEW TOWN & BROUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Representing locals' views to City of Edinburgh Council.

You're very welcome to attend.  
Come along and make a difference. Next meeting:  
Mon. 9 May at 7.00pm.  
Zoom details will follow.

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