

Balerno Forum

Issue 1

Balerno Community Council's quarterly news-

December 2011

Your voice in and for Balerno

Welcome to Balerno Forum, the newsletter of the Balerno Community Council. We aim both to keep you up to date with what's happening in local government in Balerno and also to get your views on what should be happening and what you would like us to be doing on your behalf.

BCC wants to keep in touch with you and to involve you more in the decisions which are important for our community. We are always looking for new ways in which to let you know what is going on and to let you tell us what you think we should be hearing.

You can keep in touch at present through the BCC website and through the pages of the C&B News. Now we are publishing our own newsletter which we hope you will like. It will be available at the Library, the Post Office, Scotmid, Balerno Parish Church and the Community Education Office.

Don't miss it and don't forget to let us know also what you think about Balerno.



*Balerno
Community
Council
would like to
wish
everyone
a Merry
Christmas
and a Happy
New Year*

Ready, Steady Snow

Memories of last winter may have faded a bit over the past six months or so, but BCC is acutely aware that Balerno people may be concerned about whether Edinburgh Council's arrangements for responding to bad weather this winter will have improved.

BCC thinks that the City's performance overall was good in most of the circumstances. But that doesn't mean that we want to see bus routes terminating regularly in the village or even worse at Slateford.

Councillor Ricky Henderson has told us that the Council has unveiled a range of measures to prepare for the onset of a severe winter and that some of the main highlights include:

Trebling of salt stocks for use on roads and pavements.

Investment in specialist snow clearing equipment.

Adapting existing equipment with snow ploughs and grit spreaders.

Improved staff training.

More staff moved to snow clearing duties to enable a faster and bigger impact.

Improved communications and information between the Council and the public.

Special arrangements for waste collection.

Investigating measures to prevent abandoned cars blocking roads.

Improved identification and co-ordination of support to vulnerable people.

Increasing support for locally organised snow-clearing by volunteers.

A special leaflet has been produced outlining some basic advice and these are available in hard copy or by email.

Councillor Henderson would be happy to provide either version for local residents.

**BE
PREPARED
FOR
WINTER!**

ADVICE, INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/winterweather
[www.twitter.com/edinburgh_cc](https://twitter.com/edinburgh_cc)

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YOUR SERVICES • YOUR SERVICES

All this in issue 1

Welcome to Balerno Forum

Winter and snow arrangements

Kirknewton MoD base

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A tribute to Tom McCall

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BCC and BVT working together

Proposed Development for MoD Base at Kirknewton

RAF Kirknewton began life as a World War II grass airfield which along with the associated Richie Camp was established to the south east of the village of Kirknewton, West Lothian. The airfield is now home to No 661 Volunteer Gliding Squadron (VGS) and utilised by a local flying club. The airfield is still owned by the MoD and Royal Air Force. Richie Camp comprised of some 39 huts which lay to the south west of the airfield occupying three fields. The camp was later used to house German Prisoners of War. Some time after the war, Kirknewton airfield and Ritchie Camp were made available to several small United States Air Force units tasked with providing mobile radio facilities in Britain. Around 500 American service personnel were tasked with the interception of voice and Morse signals, including military and commercial naval traffic, with priority being given to signals involving Soviet radar and air operations. At one point, they serviced the Hot Line between Washington and Moscow.

Hansard reports showed that the airfield had officially remained "In Use" after the apparent handing back in 1967, remaining in the hands of the USAF until September 13th 1991, when it was returned to the MoD after operation Desert Storm. It was described then as a "Contingency Hospital".

As part of the drawdown of British Forces from West Germany, British forces were stationed at Richie Camp, from March 1968

to April 1986. They included units of The Black Watch, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, The Royal Scots, The Queen's Own Highlanders, The Gordon Highlanders and The Royal Scots.

There were insufficient houses for soldiers' families locally with additional married quarters provided in Lanark and Edinburgh. A Tree Preservation Order was placed on Ritchie Camp in December 1987. In 1999 the camp was demolished and replaced with up-market housing and the area re-named 'Newlands'.

Now, in 2011, the MOD has laid out a proposal to reactivate the Airfield as a base for a Royal Regiment of Scotland Multi-role Brigade, perhaps accommodating some 6000 troops and support staff. This proposal would, if it did happen, inevitably involve an increase in vehicle traffic and aircraft movements through and above Balerno.

While construction of the new base might start in 2012, details are still very vague with many questions still unanswered and increasingly there are doubts as to whether it will in fact happen. However the MoD are expected to unveil their proposals in early 2012. Balerno Community Council are being kept informed by Edinburgh Council and will ensure that you are kept informed.

Community Council and Village Trust working together

A joint meeting was held between the Community Council and the Village Trust in September to explore opportunities for further co-operation and joint working for the benefit of Balerno. Councillor Paisley in the chair, said how fortunate Balerno was to have two very active groups working for the improvement and benefit of the residents.

It must be recognised that the Community Council was an elected body with statutory duties to perform with regard to planning matters and representation on the Neighbourhood Partnership as well as having a direct line of communication with the Council. The close contact with all the councillors in the area ensured that

issues in the ward were dealt with as speedily as practical.

It is, said Councillor Paisley, a well organised Community Council. Cllr Paisley also said that in the case of Balerno we also have a very vibrant Village Trust who are able to take on board improvements and events to enhance the village.

He noted the current initiatives of the Trust including:

The Farmers Market

Sustain Balerno and Tree Planting

The Music Festival In which the Trust is a founding partner, while also looking forward to possible Allotments

And possibly a working **Hydro Scheme** in the Pentlands.

A joint communiqué was issued after the meeting seeking joint meetings and further ways of co-operation between the groups to enhance the "Balerno Experience".

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in having two very
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Notes from Holyrood

Since May the staff are now in place, the constituency office at 69 Inglis Green Road, Longstone is nearing completion and my website has been launched at www.gordonmacdonaldmsp.info.

My focus as an MSP will be on the community I have been elected to represent. We are assisting constituents to resolve a wide range of matters including housing issues, sale of goods, anti-social neighbours and benefit problems.

I also visited or met in Parliament a number of businesses and organisations in and around Balerno including the Community Council, NTS Malleny Gardens, the local pharmacy, the Village Trust and the high school. At the high school visit in July we discussed, among other items, the issue of the after school club. I was honoured to be asked to lay the wreath at the Remembrance Sunday service in the parish church.

If I can be of assistance please get in touch by email: Gordon.macdonald.msp@scottish.parliament.uk or telephone 0131 348 5741.

What are Community Councils and how do they operate?

Community councils were introduced in 1975 under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. Community Councils are statutory and only exist if local people are willing to stand for election. They are "non-party-political and non-sectarian" in their discussions and decision making. The two Acts of Parliament governing Community Councils allow for them to "take any action" they deem appropriate to improve their community.

The main role of Community Councils, including Balerno, is to act as a channel for the opinions of the local community. They have the right to be notified of and respond to any planning applications which come before the local authority. Edinburgh City Council cannot choose to ignore the Community Council as it might ignore a voluntary association. Community Councils can also be involved in local projects mostly related to local infrastructure such as footpaths, parks, playgrounds etc. and local events.

Like most bodies, Community Councils are encouraged to undertake a process of renewal, specifically addressing their own representative nature and how effectively they establish public opinion within their own area. How they involve and establish links with other communities of interest and how they involve young people in their work and in their organization. If you have any views on any of this then we would like you to get in touch with us.

Membership of Balerno Community council consists of:

Elected members: Up to 16 elected members

Co-opted members: The community Council may co-opt up to six additional members with particular skills or interests that will assist them in their work. It is permitted for persons of between 14 and 18 years of age to be co-opted to represent the interests of "youth".

Ex officio members: The constitutions of many Community Councils provide that the area Councillor for the ward containing the community council area, local MPs and MSPs shall be *ex officio* members.

Yellow lines sought for safer

Following concerns raised by local residents and Balerno Community Council, Councillor Ricky Henderson has asked the Council to look into the suggestion that double yellow lines be placed around the junction of Johnsburn Road and the roundabout at the church. This would restrict parking at this location and make it much safer for pedestrians to cross the road particularly elderly residents from Larchfield.



Maintaining our Village

Recently there has been significant reduction in the effort and quality of the service provided by the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) in maintaining our green spaces. This situation has been going on for several years and is not as a result of current financial cuts. The Balerno Community Council (BCC) have now embarked on a concentrated effort to improve this situation and you will be pleased to know that it is meeting with some success.

Amongst the issues being addressed by the BCC are -

Maintaining Marchbank Park - the CEC is constructing a maintenance plan incorporating a schedule of related activity which CEC are committed to honouring;

Pathways - CEC have also now committed to resurfacing the most badly eroded areas of the pathway that runs through the Marchbank Park.

Roundabout - BCC referred the poor state of the round-about at the foot of Johnsburn Road to the CEC, resulting in the weed infested soil being removed and plans for the planting of low level Juniper ground cover in the immediate future.

Planted areas - Failure by the CEC to maintain planted areas around Main Street had resulted in weed infestation. BCC action has resulted in an entire clean-up of the area.

'Walk-about's - BCC members regularly accompany CEC staff and Councillors on inspections of areas that are in need of attention by the CEC, and we are able therefore to bring things directly to attention.

Improvements - The BCC are continually investigating projects that will benefit the community and we will be consulting on a proposal to introduce a small woodland within Marchbank Park.

We need you to tell us if you notice things like potholes, missing drain covers, broken paving or street lighting not working.

Contact a Councillor directly or through <http://www.balerno-communitycouncil.org.uk>

Balerno Community Council in search of a logo

Balerno community Council needs a logo; we are looking for something that will give the Council instant public recognition, allowing everyone to see when the Council is involved. So we asked Balerno High School to help and together we organised a competition from which we have amassed the amazing total of fifty-four entries. The difficult part comes as we now have to select a winner. We will let you know in our next issue how we got on. In the meantime, we'd like to thank all those who submitted their ideas—here are just a few of them.



Important contact information

We're on the Web
www.balerno-communitycouncil.org.uk

Balerno Community Council meets on the first Thursday of every month at 19.30 in Balerno High School.

Members of the public are encouraged to attend the Public Question time to put their concerns to the Community Council during the meeting.

POLICE	0131 311 3131
PENTLAND MEDICAL PRACTICE	0131 449 2142
BALERNO COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL	0131 477 7788
DEANPARK PRIMARY SCHOOL	0131 449 4529
LIBRARY	0131 529 5500
COUNCILLORS—RICKY HENDERSON	0131 529 3269
ALASTAIR PAISLEY	0131 529 4066
RON CAIRNS	0131 529 3278
GORDON MACDONALD MSP	0131 348 5741
CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL	0131 200 2327
LOTHIAN REGION TRANSPORT	0131 554 4494
SOCIAL SERVICES	0131 469 2801
ST. JOHN'S HOSPITAL LIVINGSTON	01506 523000

Planning. A tribute to Tom McCall

Planning and Balerno Community Council have always been linked together by Tom McCall as Planning Convenor. Sadly, at the wonderful age of 91, Tom died within a few hours of attending the October BCC meeting. As always he was in good form offering his professional architectural opinion on planning matters, based upon the facts and guided by volumes of official CEC planning guidelines plus the latest local plan for Balerno and south west Edinburgh.



Tom had given thousands of hours of his time in support of the community. Both Balerno Community Council and the community at large are saddened by his passing, but they are also deeply appreciative of all that he did for us and for Balerno.

Balerno Community Council Members

Ken Shade	Ian Hynd
Trudy Allan	Hugh Watt
Kathleen Fiddes	Richard Henderson
Dr. Ken Stephens	Lauchie Scougall
Tony Allen	Peter Reekie
Jack Kerr	Marion Milne
Bill Stark	Max Downie
Ricky Henderson	Alastair Paisley
PC Steven Aitken	