

BALERNO FORUM

BALERNO COMMUNITY COUNCIL'S **FREE** QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

<http://www.balerno-communitycouncil.org.uk>

SESPlan and the LDP

The system is simply not working properly

Balerno Community Council is dismayed at the state of the planning system which can allow the processes of preparation of a Strategic Plan to become disconnected from the processes for finalising of the Local Development Plan, opening up a likely gap of up to 18 months between the finalising of the first and the completion of the second.

The outcome is absolute uncertainty. Uncertainty for developers who are now queuing up with applications for developments in the Green Belt surrounding Balerno, apparently hoping to be able to argue that their preferred sites should be given permission before Edinburgh Council have been able to respond to the revised Strategic Plan. And of vastly greater concern to the Council, that gap leads to uncertainty and anxiety for residents who have to

confront the possibility of huge developments all round Balerno. The Community Council is absolutely clear that the proper time for consideration of any such applications would have been when the Local Development Plan is settled.

The draft LDP published earlier this year made no proposals for developments in Balerno and we have no reason to believe that the revised LDP would do otherwise.

While nothing is certain at least the context in which any such applications would be determined would have been clear. Instead Balerno is faced with proposals which if allowed to proceed would change the nature of the village and the community out of all recognition and destroy the Green Belt into the bargain.

Proposals for Goodtrees

At its November meeting the Community Council heard a presentation by Geddes Consulting and Miller Homes on their proposals for development at Goodtrees Farm. Geddes Consulting and their clients had held a public exhibition on the proposals at the Community Centre on Monday 7 October. Following that exhibition the Council had written to Geddes Consulting expressing its disappointment that the exhibition had been held during the School holiday week when the numbers who could attend were reduced. It was also critical of the limited time during which the exhibition was open - 3pm to 7pm - and also of the extent of information available at the event.

The presentation on 7 November was at the Council's regular monthly meeting and was also attended also by several members of the public. At the meeting Arthur Mann, representing Miller Homes advised that 125 visitors of whom 33 had provided written responses had attended the public exhibition. He outlined the proposal that at present is for 275 houses on 42 Ha, to include 25% affordable homes on site. The total value of the development he estimated at £77M. Miller Homes envisage a further community consultation in the New Year when they have had an opportunity to develop their proposals.

Good news on Cockburn Crescent

Edinburgh City Council refused an application for planning permission for housing development at Cockburn Crescent.

The site lies within the Green Belt and such development is inconsistent with Green Belt policies. Over 500 objections were received by CEC in relation to the application including objections lodged by BCC.

The Council anticipates that the applicant will now appeal to Scottish Ministers, and that such an appeal might well be the subject of a Public Local Inquiry before a Reporter.

The Council will seek to be involved in any such appeal.

PAN process re Pilmuir

Following on the public exhibition on 3 October by Messrs Gladman Developments as part of a PAN procedure concerning possible housing development at land west of Ravelrig Road featured in the last issue of Forum, the Council wrote to the developer setting out a number of issues which had been raised with members.

The Council was in particular, concerned that certain of the developers display boards included statements or material the content of which was at variance with the Council's understanding of the facts. Accordingly the Council has sought clarification from the developers. The Council had not received any response by 8 November.

Gladman were to have made a presentation to the Council at its December meeting on 5 December but have now withdrawn.

Is there really a need for another 7700 houses in Edinburgh?

Balerno Community Council is hugely sceptical about the basis on which Scottish Government has assessed the need for more housing in Edinburgh.

SESPlan was modified in the summer to require 24,338 more houses in the period to 2024, than was identified in its earlier versions. In addition SESPlan's Supplementary Housing Guidance issued in September has indicated that Edinburgh Council's share of that requirement is for a further 7,700 houses. In company with the other Community Councils in the area the Council has sought answers from Scottish Government as to precisely how the figure of 24338 was arrived at.

Possible withdrawal of public counter at Balerno Police Station

At its October meeting the Council agreed to object to the proposal by Police Scotland for closure of the public counter at Balerno Police Station.

The proposal is included in a regrettably brief consultation by Police Scotland. While objecting to the withdrawal of the counter services, BCC are also concerned about the consequences of such withdrawal. BCC believes that closure of the station itself is more likely if counter services are withdrawn.

The Council responded to the consultation in a letter of 25 October, making a number of points including criticising the fact that only 30 days was allowed for responses to be lodged, and the vagueness of the criteria engaged in the consultation.

The process for deciding which counter service functions was core and which were ancillary does not seem to have been consulted on. Only core functions would count towards the assessment of the value of the counter services. BCC was not aware of whether there was a minimum threshold level of calls on core functions which would merit retention of the service.

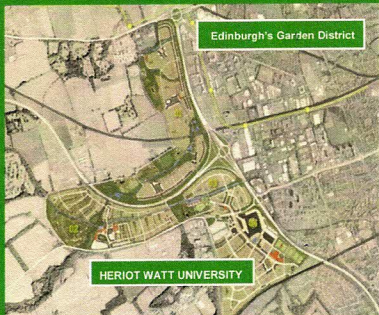
The Council believes that Balerno Police Station is a valuable part of the community, giving confidence to the public, and we believe likely also to provide a more efficient police service for Balerno. Withdrawal of counter service effectively closes off the Police Station to the public.



City Council Budget

Edinburgh City Council will set its budget on 13th February 2014. They are inviting comments from the public. You can get feedback from the Council website or from the library. BCC understand that the road repair budget is set to be cut by £1 million in order to keep the city's pledge to invest in cycling. This is good news and bad news. On the one hand it encourages a more sustainable approach to the City's transport policy; on the other and particularly for rural areas like Balerno it will mean that our potholes will take even longer to be repaired because of the peculiar system of prioritising adopted roads by the City. Rural cyclists are more likely to use rural roads than cycle ways, because that's what there is.

Garden District possibilities



At its October meeting the Council heard a presentation by Holder Planning and Murray Estates in relation to outline proposals which have not yet been submitted for planning permission relating to the development of Edinburgh's Garden District.

The Garden District would be located in the area

between the A8 and the railway line north of Currie and Juniper Green with its eastern boundary on the City Bypass and its western boundary running down Riccarton Mains Road. Garden District would run west on both sides of the M8. The site would allow for around 3500 houses.

All weather pitch

The good news spot! It is looking increasingly likely that at long last Balerno will get an all weather pitch.

CEC are quietly confident that their application for match funding from Sports Scotland will be accepted. Both Balerno High School and Dean Park Primary will benefit from moves which will also open up the prospect of establishing a strong multi-sports club in the local community.

Are we about to see something at the roundabout ?

The wheels are beginning to turn and CEC are now hoping to have the roundabout refurbished before the bad weather.

Meanwhile they are, we hope, also following up BCC's suggestion of incorporating mill stones into the roundabout design. BCC are hoping to source mill stones — so if you know of anyone who may be looking for a new home for a couple of mill stones then BCC would love to hear from you.

Fairtrade Village and Fairtrade School awards for Balerno

Balerno Community Council were represented at the Fairtrade Village Winter Picnic on 8th November when the Lord Provost, the Rt Hon David Wilson presented the certificate awarding the status to the Fairtrade Village Group.

The Lord provost also presented a certificate to Dean Park Primary School which has also been awarded Fairtrade status by the Fairtrade Foundation.

No hiding place!

**Your guide to the Community Council;
who's who and who does what.**

Following the Community Council election process in October, the new Balerno Community Council met on 7 November to elect office bearers and get down to some of the pressing issues affecting Balerno and its residents. We report elsewhere in the Forum on some of the main issues, but we thought that it would be useful for readers to know a little more about the Council and its members. So, in this issue we have pictures of most of the Council members and that means that if you don't know them already you will be able to recognise them and possibly even be better able to ask them questions if you come across them around and about. Members of the Council are keen to hear what residents think about the issues which affect them and want to be able to help wherever they can.

The Council includes both elected and nominated members. Nominated members are nominated by local organisations that are registered with Edinburgh Council.

We will give more detail in the next issue about the Council committees and member portfolios and explain something of how the Council works.

Balerno Community Council members 2013

Following on the 2013 Community Council election process held in September the new Balerno Community Council met on 3 October and elected office bearers to hold office for the next four years;

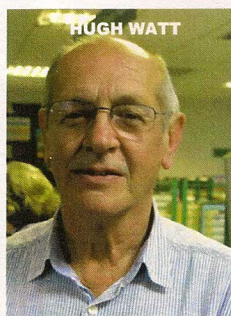
Chair - Richard Henderson; **Vice Chair** - Jack Kerr.

Secretary - Trudy Allan; **Treasurer** - Hugh Watt.

Minutes Secretary David Brewster.

Elected Members - Ian Hynd, Kathleen Fiddes, Ken Shade, Jack Kerr, Hugh Watt, Trudy Allan, Lauchie Scougall, Tony Allen, David Brewster, James Polasik.

Nominated members - Finlay Anderson (*Balerno Community Centre*), Marion Milne, (*Balerno High School Parent Council*), Bill Stark, (*Balerno Bowling Club*), Max Downie (*Currie Rugby Club*), Richard Henderson (*Balerno Parish Church*).



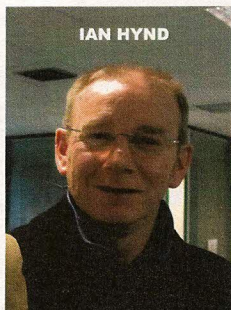
HUGH WATT



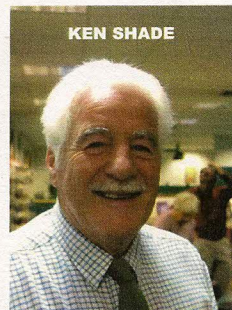
BILL STARK



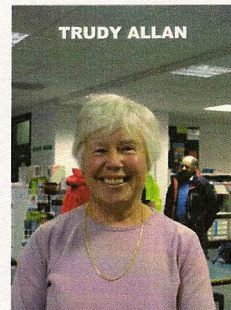
MAX DOWNIE



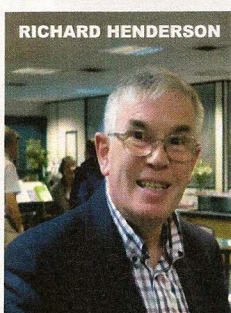
IAN HYND



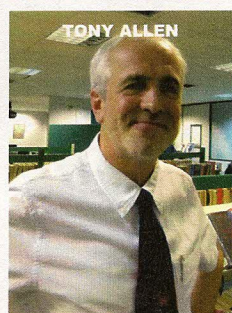
KEN SHADE



TRUDY ALLAN



RICHARD HENDERSON



TONY ALLEN



FINLAY ANDERSON



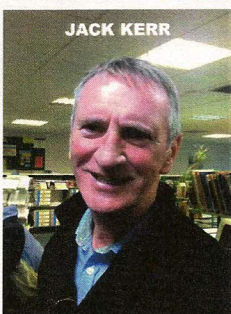
MARION MILNE



DAVID BREWSTER



KATHLEEN FIDDES



JACK KERR



JAMES POLASIK



LAUCHIE SCOUGALL

Commonwealth Games baton relay

Scotland needs up to 4,000 people to carry the baton on its 40-day trip – and you can help to find them. Organisers are looking for friendly people who help out in their local community. They might lend a helping hand at a sports club, do voluntary work or just be good role models – it doesn't matter, as long as they've made a difference to that community. To find out more and to nominate someone – go to www.glasgow2014.com/baton-relay and give Scotland's local champions a thank you they'll never forget!

Balerno Forum

This is the first issue of the Forum following on the autumn election process which sees Balerno Community Council re established and with fifteen members. The Council faces a challenging period from the off as it confronts three major housing proposals along with the process involved in the consultations on the new Local Development Plan. Aside from that we are also facing challenges to the local services as first of all the public counter service at Balerno Police Station is threatened with closure.

Balerno is a strong community. It is looked on as a community that works, and the Community Council wants to ensure that it can continue to work for the benefit of all.

To do that we need your help however, and you can help by contacting individual Community Councilors to tell them what you think needs to be done. That is why we publish their photographs so you will know who you can contact. If you do then we will ensure that your concerns are passed on. You can come to the monthly meeting of the Council and you can speak to Councilors at many of the local village events like the Farmers Market.



Ricky Henderson's column

Balerno Fairtrade Celebration. It was a great pleasure to attend the formal presentation of Balerno's certificate in recognition of achieving the status of Fairtrade Village. Much hard work has been carried out over a lengthy period by local volunteers and congratulations are due to everyone involved. The Lord Provost was on hand to formally present the certificate at a ceremony in Balerno High School. Deanpark Primary has also been recognised as a Fairtrade School and it was encouraging to see so many local people young, and not so young, taking an interest in fair trade and social justice and actually turning words into action.

Green Belt Concerns - Many local residents continue to contact me about the threat to our Green Belt land around Balerno. The current spate of planning proposals has, I believe, been prompted by the Scottish Government's Strategic Planning process and their insistence that Edinburgh releases more land for housing development.

Edinburgh's draft Local Development Plan (part of the national strategy) was recently agreed by the Council's Planning Committee, including the retention and protection of the existing Green Belt policy and boundaries, which was welcomed by most Balerno residents.

Unfortunately, the Scottish Government has instructed that more housing land must be brought forward. This is currently being considered and any proposed changes will be subject to further consultation before another LDP decision is taken, probably in May next year. I am opposed to changing existing policy and will continue to express this view.

Balerno Police Station - It was disappointing to learn that Police Scotland is proposing to close the public counter at Balerno Police station. The rationalisation of police forces across the country was meant to deliver efficiencies through economies of scale; less senior officers, HR, IT departments etc so its worrying to find that front line public services have been targeted as a source of savings.

And finally... may I take this opportunity to wish all Balerno Forum readers and their families a Happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year. I hope everyone gets the chance to enjoy the festive period and spend time with friends and family.

Contact Details - Telephone 0131 529 3269 or e-mail at ricky.henderson@edinburgh.gov.uk - or in writing at the City of Edinburgh Council, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1YJ. Visit my blog at <http://rickyhenderson.blogspot.com> or follow me on Twitter - @henderson_ricky

Regular surgeries, at Currie High School 1st Monday (during school term) at 7pm or Balerno High School 3rd Monday (during school term) at 7pm

A message from Bill Henderson



Dean Park Primary School enhancement of their environment in relation to Health and wellbeing and the 3-18 Philosophy of Education.

Dean Park is currently working hard with the local authority to try and secure a Legacy Grant to enhance their school sporting facilities. After lengthy consultation with the school community it became clear that it was the view of pupils, parents and others that much work needed to be done to enhance the school sporting facilities, most notably the school field.

An action plan was put in place to assess what would be achievable using their current school resources and PTA fundraising. This involved consulting with granting bodies to see where additional resource could be located. It was identified that applications could be made to:

- The Legacy Grant for sport
- Food Fund for raised beds and enhancement of school potential to develop sustainability
- Sustran for Bike Shelters

In collaboration with Balerno Community High School, the Primary School has extended the school field project to include Community Parkland. The local Authority with the help of David Jamieson is looking at the best possible options to take this forward. Mrs Shanks HT has a meeting planned with Craig Dunlop from Parks to look at the boundary options and Graham Croucher from the Local Authority is kindly helping with the enhanced application. This is very exciting and will provide the Primary School with two full size pitches for Pupils up to S1 for competitive games and four practice pitches for all age groups. The pitch on the community parkland would be open to all community users out with school hours free of charge and there would be no access restrictions (except to dogs).

The Primary School is also delighted that a team of parents have built a large number of raised beds beside the old clinic and look forward to adding a poly tunnel in the near future. In addition to that, another parent has started a campaign to raise funds for an edible orchard beside the raised beds. More information can be found on the following link: <http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/deanpark-primary-school>.

The food produced will be used at Dean Park and at Balerno High School as part of the technologies curriculum.

Finally the school is delighted to have received a Sustrans bike grant which means they are looking forward to the installation of several new bike sheds to encourage more children to bike to school.



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Gordon Macdonald MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for
Edinburgh Pentlands Constituency

Pentlands MSP - ADVICE SURGERIES

Wester Hailes Library	1 st Monday of the Month at 6.30pm
Carrickvale Community Centre	2 nd Monday of the Month at 6.30pm
Currie Library	3 rd Monday of the Month at 6.30pm
Pentland Community Centre	4 th Monday of the Month at 6.30pm
Ratho Community Centre	5 th Monday of the Month at 6.30pm

See details @ www.gordonmacdonaldmsp.info

Dominic Heslop writes



Education, one of the main priorities for parents in every community, always dominates our minds. I think of the lady who attended my surgery recently and who has moved into our area for the sole purpose to see her child educated at one of our two great high schools. The involvement of parents is a key factor why primary and secondary schools in the Pentland Hills Ward are so successful and achieve so much.

Let me give you some examples. I recently attended the prize giving at Balerno High School and it was so impressive to see so many pupils receive so many deserved rewards for their achievements. The level of attainment in examinations is to be applauded and I pay tribute not only to the pupils but also to a fine team of staff and supportive parents who make this school something of which Balerno can be proud.

I was also recently at Currie High's Parents in Partnership meeting where there was a presentation by PC Jimmy Dee, the school link police officer for this area, who talked about a relatively new problem which thankfully is being tackled successfully, namely cyber bullying. Following the discussion about the, then, forthcoming Christmas Fair showed parents very willing to take on all manner of tasks to make it a great day for all.

Similarly, I was at an event at Nether Currie Primary where a great amount of fun took place with parents and pupils undertaking a 'brain storming' session to think of ideas for the school's forthcoming year.

It sounds simplistic, but obvious that a school only gets better and better by the engagement of everybody in the community.