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# Balerno Forum

The Newsletter of Balerno Community Council

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



Like everywhere else in our country and around the world, Balerno faces tough times at present, but

## Tough Times Never Last - We'll Get Through It!



Our community is reeling from the shock of enforced isolation, limitation on freedom and continuing uncertainty. For many there is fear and apprehension about getting through the COVID-19 crisis, and concern about the effects on their own and their families' welfare and future.

*Balerno Forum* is a newsletter, first issued in November 2011. We're relaunching it now to help our community pull through this emergency together.

Remember please, however, that to get through the crisis we have to abide by the guidance issued by the Government; and also in the words of Balerno Cares - Be Kind.

We'll try to put in items of interest about the community; things that maybe you don't know about Balerno, pictures and the like.

We hope you'll like it. Balerno is a strong community, and we are fortunate both in our neighbours and our location. And there are worse places to be at present than Balerno in the spring!

## There's a lot to see on a walk around Balerno!

Balerno is a network of paths. Most of the best known are in the Pentland Hills, and Balerno is known as the Gateway to the Pentlands.

Many of the less well known are however, closer in and around the village, and there are lots of interesting and historical corners to explore, while maintaining social distancing.

The Community Council are currently looking at the state of all our paths, and will be trying to have improvements made where necessary. We'll tell you more about that in another issue of the Forum. Many of them are right on your doorstep. Remember however that just now, when you are out for a walk, it's absolutely essential that we maintain social distance.

And remember also that if you're running or cycling, please be considerate of pedestrians. Try not to run or cycle past pedestrians with less than two metres to spare. And when you're passing them try not to breathe out when you're near them especially if you're puffing a bit!



Do you have photos you've taken recently during lockdown exercise, that you'd like to share with the Community Council? You can post them to our FaceBook page and we'll see if we can transfer them from there to the

Read more about this familiar bridge over the page

Contact Balerno Community Council via FaceBook or at [balernocc@gmail.com](mailto:balernocc@gmail.com)

### Remember Social Distancing !



## So, what is so special about Balerno?

Not many people may be aware why streets are called what they are. Well, if we're lucky, the Community Council is asked by the City Council to suggest names for new streets. The most recent ones are in Kingfisher Park and Ravelrig Heights, and in the case of the latter, when we were asked in 2018, we thought the community might want to commemorate the end of the First World War by naming streets after some of those who did not come back. In future issues we'll give some of the background to some of those and other street names.

But history is also about the here and now; about what we can still see around us.

Take the Flax Mill along what used to be the Red Road, so called because it was in the recent past a red shale path, although that was only since the mid 60's until which time it had been known as the Low Ponds, a reference to the still visible retting ponds. Those had been used in the flax production process. The road leads from Mansfield Road to Harlaw Road past The Lade where there were once summer huts, built after the First World War. The story of the Hutterers in Scotland is complex. Its beginnings were altruistic when returning soldiers from the first world war were granted camping rights by landowners. But that's a different story.

The mill dominated this area from 1805 – until 1880. The final house on the left hand side going towards Harlaw Road is called the Chiminea, presumably because the mill "lum" was here, and its remains can be seen on the edge of the slope above the Bavelaw Burn. The bridge across the Bavelaw Burn was built in 1805, and beside it stand two odd-looking stone structures. People have thought they were cannon from the Crimean War but they are really stone bleach bottles which were filled with concrete, a remembrance of the area's industrial past. There was also a bleachworks a little upstream from the bridge, all part of the Malleny Mills industrial hamlet. After 1880 the mill became a woodturning mill - from which came its name as the Bung Mill - but after a catastrophic fire in the 1950's it didn't recover. The cottages on Harlaw Road opposite the bridge housed workers from the mills.

It's a picturesque corner, and like most such, it has stories to tell.



## And how are we getting on?

**Balerno is a semi-rural community, and most people travel out of the village to work. But one group who don't are the farmers, and Balerno is very much a farming community.**

We're surrounded by a countryside which really does work. So in an effort to find out a little more about how the farming community is faring at present we've spoken to Brian Fleming of Upper Dean Park Farm about how they're getting on as the farming year picks up amidst the Covid-19 outbreak.

Brian was born at Bower Cottage on Harlaw Road before moving first for a time to Kirknewton and from there back to Balerno and Upper Dean Park. His father had the farm before him, and together they worked the land until his father passed away. Brian now works the farm with his own son, and together they also do contract work on other farms in the area. They can often be seen around, in a light green Claas tractor; you'll always get a cheery wave.

This past winter was very wet, and if you're a farmer then a wet winter makes things even more difficult. While it was possible to plough and sow some of the fields, others like the one between Cockburn Crescent and Mansfield Road were only half done when the rain stopped everything. When Brian eventually managed to get machinery on the ground again only in early April parts of that field had become like concrete. But while some farmers have still some ploughing to do, Upper Dean Park is now all sown, with a mix of barley and spring wheat, and it's now time



to turn to fertilising and weed control; that will take the next couple of weeks. And then? Hope for a dry summer because that's what will produce the good yield.

Over the past month Brian has seen many more people around in the countryside than usual, and a couple of weekends ago there had been so many cars about, parking at the road side and on verges, that it was quite dangerous and difficult to move heavy machinery. His message is fairly straightforward; we welcome people into the countryside but please follow the rules. People have tried to walk through the farm yard, and that really isn't on even at the best of times, but certainly not just now with risks of infection. Farming is a hard business, and despite all the machinery to assist, it does take Brian and his son all their time to get the work done; being off ill with Covid-19 would make working the farm very difficult, and in turn that could affect production on which we all rely.

So please, just now more than ever, take extra care, and when we are allowed out for exercise keep a good distance; and please, please don't go on the crops. There's lots of woodland paths to keep us busy for the summer.

One walker asked Brian the other day how he was managing with self-isolating. 'Self-isolating?', came the reply, 'I've been self-isolating for the past 43 years!' He looks well on it and we wish them a good summer and a good harvest. If you see him out and about then do give a wave!

# Your Community Council

The 2019 Community Council election process was completed last October and a new Balerno Community Council started work at the October meeting. The Council is made up of elected members and members nominated by registered local interest groups (up to 6), along with *ex officio* members.

The Council can co-opt members to fill casual vacancies, and may appoint Associate Representatives, although the latter cannot vote. Local Councillors, MP, MSP and MEPs are members of the Council *ex officio*.

The full list of elected and nominated members is;

**Elected members** ; Richard Henderson (Chair), Ian Hynd (Vice Chair), Tony Allen (Secretary), Hugh Watt (Treasurer), David Brewster, Kathleen Fiddes, Jack Kerr, Jim Polasik, Ken Shade, Dominic Simmons, William Wallace,

**Nominated members** ; Brian Conway (Balerno Childrens Gala), Emma Galloway (Balerno Village Trust, Marion Milne (BHS Parent Council), Martin Petty (Balerno Parish Church), Phil Thomas (Currie Chieftains).

In addition our four City Councillors are members *ex officio* as are our MP Joanna Cherry, and MSP, Gordon MacDonald. Our City Councillors are of course, Graeme Bruce, Neil Gardiner, Ricky Henderson and Susan Webber.

Ordinarily the Council meets monthly (except July) on the first Thursday of the month, at 7.00pm, at Balerno High School, and all of our Council meetings are open to the public. We are trying to work out how we can safely enable members of the community who want to join our remote meetings during lockdown. Watch the FaceBook page and Website for details.

## Balerno's NoticeBoard

If you're in Main Street outside Carlyle's you'll probably have seen the Council's Notice Board. In the days before the Farmers Market, the internet and Facebook, that was the only practical method the Council had of communicating with the Public. The current Notice Board replaced the original one in 2014; the original had been there for about thirty years.

We try to ensure that the Agenda for upcoming meetings is posted on the Board a few days ahead. Minutes of meetings go on the website. We also try to place notices about other items of interest and village events. If your organisation or group has an upcoming event (after the current lockdown ends) which you'd like us to publicise on the Board then please contact us at [balernocc@gmail.com](mailto:balernocc@gmail.com).



Remember social distance  
when out on daily exercise;  
Stay safe, Balerno!

## Things going on in the background

### PLANNING MATTERS

**A lot of Council business concerns planning matters, and even during the current lockdown that is continuing.**

As many of you will know Edinburgh's Local Development Plan, adopted in 2016, is due to be replaced in 2021, and the City Council are currently consulting on their 'Choices for CityPlan2030'. At the same time the City have been consulting on their 'City Mobility Plan', a 'ten-year strategy that sets out proposals to transform the way people, goods and services travel around the city'.

The closing date for comments on each of these is 30 April and it is unlikely to be extended simply because of the necessity to get the new Development Plan in place by 2021.

Balerno Community Council will be lodging comments in time, having agreed the general terms before the lockdown. However we will be making additional comments drawing attention to the fact that the underlying premises upon which the Choices and Mobility Plan were drawn up are likely to have changed fundamentally because of the effect of Covid-19 on the economy and probably on society more broadly.

### SCOTTISH WATER

It's just short of a year since Scottish Water started on the replacement of the main along Bridge Road and onto Lanark Road West as far as Somerville Road. The work was due to finish this summer after connections had been made to the new main, but all work has been suspended during the Covid-19 crisis.

Scottish water have told us that their first priority now is to maintain provision of water and waste water services to customers across the country whilst protecting the health of employees, supply chain and communities. They will continue to fix burst water mains, carry out urgent sewer repairs or clear blockages. They do ask that we help battle blockages by binning toilet unflushables. In the final two weeks of March Scottish Water attended and cleared a total of 1343 blocked sewer pipes across the country. So please don't flush down wipes, kitchen roll, blue roll and other not designed to break up in the sewage system. as they put it, only flush the three P's - Pee, Poo and toilet Paper!

And if you're looking for interesting things to entertain the kids just now, Scottish Water have a Help and Resources hub on their website where you can have fun learning about water!

<https://www.scottishwater.co.uk/help-and-resources/education>

### REGIONAL PARK

We all know that the the Park car parks are currently closed. and that while access is possible for local people by foot or bicycle only: help reduce unnecessary travel and subsequent transmission of virus.

Sheep farmers in the Pentland Hills are entering one of their busiest times of the year, lambing! It is an important time to remind ourselves about responsible access in the countryside. This is more pertinent than ever during the current Covid-19 crisis.

If you are visiting the Pentland Hills for your daily exercise, please use gloves or hand gel when using gates and stiles. Avoid fields with sheep and lambs where possible.

If you do walk through an area with sheep and lambs it is important to keep your dog on a short lead or close at heel keeping your distance from the animals to avoid disturbance.