



Top chef ensures home cooking's on the menu

Top Scottish chef Tom Kitchin has added his support to Fresh Start's Cookers for Christmas appeal.

THE MICHELIN-STARRED CHEF launched Fresh Start's appeal to buy recently homeless people a cooker for their new home and promised a £1 donation from every bill paid at his award-winning The Kitchin restaurant for a month.

The *Cookers for Christmas* appeal allows Fresh Start to buy cookers to pass on to Edinburgh families and individuals who were previously homeless but who have recently been found a home. It gives the new householders the opportunity to make a fresh start

by offering them one of the most important tools to help them.

Tom Kitchin made a trip to the Fresh Start warehouse in Ferry Road Drive to lend a hand and said: "This campaign is one close to my heart. Scotland boasts some of the best local produce available and eating well can be incredibly affordable. Giving people the tools to allow them to support themselves and their families is vital. A kitchen should be at the heart of a home and what better way to help families who have been homeless than giving them the

means to cook in a secure and safe environment."

Fresh Start Managing Director Keith Robertson said: "The people who receive the appliances have just been allocated a property and are often starting out with nothing - they don't have the means to buy such an expensive item. Clearly, the most economical way to eat well is to cook at home, so by providing a cooker we are supporting new householders to take an important first step by helping them financially and physically."

NEN NEWS DESK



Merry Christmas to all our readers. In the spirit of this festive time we bring you glad tidings...

The NEN has received a cheque for £500 from The Royal Bank of Scotland. The bank's charity committee agreed to support an application by NEN board member Eddie Thorn.

Kevin Havelock, Regional Director for Corporate and Institutional Banking at Royal Bank of Scotland, explained: "Following the difficulties that RBS experienced in recent years we are looking to reconnect with the communities that we all live and work in."

He went on: "We are very fortunate at RBS to have many staff who have been with us for twenty, twenty-five even thirty years and many of them are active in their communities. We established a system of grants to support local charities and community initiatives nominated by our staff."

"The Edinburgh Community Partnership Board has representation from every division of the bank - there are eleven people in all on the committee, each with an equal vote. We were delighted both with the volume and the great variety of nominations that came in, and we agreed our first round of grants in October. We are supporting a very broad spectrum of good causes, from supplying sports equipment to groups to helping local health charities."

Royal Bank of Scotland will donate £100,000 in a rolling programme in the East of Scotland, and one of the first forty grateful recipients is North Edinburgh News.

North Edinburgh News treasurer Eddie Thorn said: "The Royal Bank of Scotland is to be commended for their wide contribution to local communities. It is particularly pleasing that they recognised all that the NEN strives to achieve, and we are very grateful for the bank's generous support - it's much appreciated."

Kevin added: "We will be offering practical and sometimes even physical support, too - we want the charity to get more from the bank than just a cheque. Working with and providing support to the charity is a natural progression."





feedback . . .



The NEN is your community newspaper so please put your pen to paper and tell us what you think, what you feel strongly about or what makes you angry. If you would like your letter to appear in the paper it must include your full name and address, although these may be withheld at your request. Send your letters to:- The Editor, North Edinburgh News, c/o Edinburgh College, 350 West Granton Road, Edinburgh EH5 1QE

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- To produce a fair, interesting, positive, informative and independent community newspaper
- To increase community awareness and understanding of regeneration activities
- To promote the North Edinburgh area in a positive way, both locally and nationally
- To cover local campaigns and initiatives in a positive way
- To cover any negative issues brought to our attention by local people/groups, but highlight any positive responses/campaigns being initiated to address any such problems
- To counteract negative publicity from other media sources, by providing a positive/local angle on the story
- To include articles from local contributors, either groups or individuals
- To use the letters page as a forum for topical debate, fair and free speech for local people/group
- To use the letters page as a forum for free speech, allowing criticism of issues, but ensuring individuals are protected from personal attack
- To ensure all articles are balanced and that any person or group in the article is given the opportunity to present their side of the story/argument
- To implement/resolve any suggestions, criticisms etc (where appropriate to local issues) made at editorial forums
- To promote local businesses and organisations
- To ensure NEN remains apolitical
- Any letter or article which the Board or Editor consider libellous will not be published
- The factual content of any letter will be checked and if the facts cannot be verified the letter will not be published

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Please have your copy to us by Wednesday 15 Jan for inclusion in our next edition

Praise for recycling service

Dear Editor

With all due respect to Mr Pickering's laudable concern for the impact on working conditions of privatisation, may I venture a word of praise for the recycling service implemented by the Council, now augmented by the long overdue and very welcome provision of food recycling?

Surely a very positive outcome of fortnightly collections could be a heightened effort on the part of all responsible citizens to reduce the bulk of their refuse. While I concede that it is comparatively easy for me to reduce the bulk of my refuse given that my family have grown up and left home, nevertheless I take pride in the fact that with determination and commitment to caring for our environment, I now find it possible, given the comprehensive provision of recycling services, to put out my green bin – containing at most two black bags of refuse – only once every second month.

As citizens we cannot with impunity continue piling mountain upon mountain of stinking refuse into landfill. It distresses me to witness householders loading up their green bins with recyclable material when the Council is providing such detailed support in terms of recycling bins and literature, and when there are recycling points within walking distance of all able-bodied inhabitants of North Edinburgh.

Joyce Gunn Cairns
West Pilton

UNITY

Dear Editor

Unity is strength – this truth is demonstrated in the struggle to defend the NHS by both users and those who work in providing the services.

Those who are trying to privatise the NHS have a glint in their eyes of making vast profits – what a disgusting attitude, when every penny is needed to treat people both old and young.

Unity also needs expressing by people in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, Newcastle, Liverpool, London – in fact everywhere, who have the same problems of needing regular work and wages and decent working conditions to be able to make life as it should be.

This unity of needs must be expressed as strongly as the unity in support of our NHS. Private companies aching to take over the NHS and other public services and their Tory and Liberal political supporters can and will be defeated.

A. Delahoy
Silverknowes Garden

Paying the price

Dear Editor

Every week people when shopping find prices are rising quite sharply; there is no hiding this fact. Government spokespersons express surprise at the inflation rate of nearly 3%, which is based on a lower calculation anyway. Perhaps the world in which they live a rise of 10p or 20p on an item means nothing.

More and more people search for cheaper 'own brand' items when shopping – sometimes it works, other times the size or weight has been reduced so the price rise is hidden.

If the Government can put a freeze on wage increases or restrict them to 1% or 2%, then they can restrict price rises to the same level; this can be done in the name of 'fairness', to which they constantly refer!

This restriction on gas, electricity and oil suppliers is long overdue – the increases they have announced for starting this winter are amoral and shows their complete indifference to the hardship being caused.

Pressure must be put on officials of all kinds – whether they are MPs, MSPs, councillors, gas and electricity companies or supermarkets – to take very seriously the question of price rise restriction.

A. Delahoy
Silverknowes Garden



They came, they saw, they planted!

WORKING with the city council and North Edinburgh Arts, Muirhouse Centipede project organised a community bulb planting weekend in Muirhouse Avenue last month.

Working with local artist Natalie Taylor, the Muirhouse planters' hard work will be clear for all to see when the flowers appear in the Spring.



Happy birthday Rowanfield

A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY to Rowanfield Special School, which has now been part of the Drylaw community for ten years!

The school celebrated their special birthday with an extra-special party last month – and the children were all involved in planning the programme IN JUST A WEEK!

They did a great job – there was a piper, a video booth, a memories tree, food and refreshments (thanks to Miss Thomson, P6/7!), and videos of past events at Rowanfield.

Then there was an opportunity to sing the Rowanfield School song, a presentation to Mr Glover who's been a volunteer at the school since it opened and three P7 pupils devised, wrote and recorded a Rowanfield Rap – all in under an hour!

You can't really have a birthday party without a birthday cake, and Rowanfield pupils starred again – Cameron baked a lovely cake and Darren decorated it with the party's Angry Birds theme!

Head Teacher Leanne Sharpe told guests: "I think our children have done remarkably well in organising our party – every one of them has helped in some way and they have all worked really hard to make the party a success, so it's great to see everyone enjoying themselves."

Senior pupils Dale and Liam helped the Head Teacher cut the birthday cake.

Guide dog puppies visit Sainsbury's

THEY CAME, they saw and they melted hearts! Sainsbury's customers and staff raised funds to train two puppies to become guide dogs, and Jasper and Sandy – then just fourteen weeks old – called in to the Craighleith store with their walkers to say hello on 31 October.

It was also an opportunity for the gorgeous pups to meet the people who named them – Clermiston Primary pupil Eve McCall and Sainsbury's Rebecca Law won an in-store competition to name the puppies, and both were at Blackhall to meet their wee friends.



news in brief

Award for Gala organisers

West Pilton and Muirhouse Community Gala committee has received an award from the city council. The group, which managed to plan, organise and deliver a very successful Gala in just a few short weeks (and even arranged some sunshine!) was highly commended at last month's Children and Families Achievement Awards at the Assembly Rooms.

Committee chair Sean Gardiner said: "We were nominated for the award by Edinburgh Council's local Community Learning and Development team and, out of 8000 entries, we were selected as finalists. The event was hosted by Forth One's Grant Stott who was extremely happy to see an event he had been involved in had gone so far!"

North Edinburgh Transition Group

North Edinburgh's BME Transition Group has set up a new Facebook page to publicise their activities and events.

Group coordinator Adil Ibrahim said: "The North Edinburgh World Cafe Facebook page will be managed by North Edinburgh black and minority ethnic (BME) community Transition Group. It contains information about the TG and its upcoming events, photos from previous events in North Edinburgh as well as current photos. We hope that you will be able to visit and 'Like' this page, and we also hope that this page will be a good tool for us to use for sharing information, experiences, photos etc. We'd like to hear your comments."

A new email address – newworldcafe@hotmail.co.uk – has also been set up to enable the wider community to contact the Transition Group, which was set up following the closure of CORE earlier this year. Get in touch if you'd like to be added to their email distribution database.

West Pilton welcomes fifty-plus group

WEST PILTON NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE hosted three days of events last month for age 50+ which involved an activity morning, an information event and a social afternoon.

Activities included gentle exercise, Indian dance, indoor bowling, table tennis and silk flower making. Information sessions offered: benefits advice from Granton Information Centre, Personal Safety from Community Police, health checks (Edinburgh Leisure), general advice (Age Scotland), Cooking on a budget (Barri Grubb) and energy savings advice.

Then ending the week the social offered an afternoon of dancing, bingo and a sing along with a museums outreach worker showing items worn to social events in the 50's.

Local people were invited to enjoy all of the above with transport and lunch provided each day, funded through a grant received by the PCA.



Local students support Pudsey Bear

THESE EDINBURGH COLLEGE STUDENTS did their bit to support Children in Need last month, their efforts helping to raise a record total of £27 million nationwide.

Festive opening at Stockbridge Market

Stockbridge Market is extending opening hours over the festive holidays. The market will open on Friday 21 and Saturday 22 as well as Sunday 23 December, and will also open all weekend from Friday 28 – Sunday 30 December for those pre-Hogmanay purchases.

Sharp fall in crime figures

Report indicates a decline in reported crime in North Edinburgh

RECORDED CRIME is falling in North Edinburgh. Statistics compiled for a community policing event held at Craigmroyston High School on 26 November show that overall crime in Forth has fallen by 10% over the first seven months of this year, while in Inverleith the figure is an impressive 31% – a reduction of almost one-third over the same period.

For the year to date in INVERLEITH Ward:

Housebreaking (homes) – down 42% (24 fewer houses broken into)
Housebreaking (businesses) – down 42% (10 less businesses broken into)
Robbery – down 86% (6 fewer victims)
Break-in to cars – down 46% (23 fewer cars)
Vandalism – down 55% (136 fewer victims)
Overall crime down 31%

In FORTH Ward:

Housebreaking (homes) – down 13% (8 fewer homes broken into)
Housebreaking (business) – down 58% (11 fewer businesses broken into)
Break-ins to cars – down 40% (32 fewer cars)
Vandalism – down 27% (156 fewer victims)
Fire-raising – down 40% (17 fewer dangerous fires).
Overall crime down 10%

Commenting on the figures, Drylaw Police Inspector Mark Rennie said: “These are an excellent set of figures for the area for the first part of the year (April to October). To achieve such significant reductions in vandalism in both the Inverleith and Forth wards is really important – it means less damage, a better environment and an improvement in the behaviour of young people who predominantly commit this type of crime. Vandalism is a crime which always causes a great deal of concern locally, and it often provides a guide as to the overall amount of antisocial behaviour being experienced within communities”.

“To have 292 fewer crimes (156 Forth, 136 Inverleith) in a fairly short period is good news by any measure and gives an indication that the approach taken by the local Police Safer Neighbourhood Team and the Council Community Safety Team produces results. What we have to do now is continue that focus to ensure we maintain the improvements made and seek further reductions.”

The Craigmroyston event was one of a series to allow communities in Edinburgh to have their say on how local policing should be delivered in their area. Staffed by police, fire service and council officers the drop-in session gave local residents an opportunity to discuss safety issues and to suggest local priorities ahead of the introduction of the single Police Service of Scotland next April.

Chief Superintendent Malcolm Graham, Commander of the City of Edinburgh Division, said: “We know that the key to policing communities effectively is to listen to local people and then deliver in partnership with them. These consultations are crucial to how we plan and set objectives. I am very much looking forward to hearing the feedback.”

The aim of the consultations is to make the 2013/14 Police Plan more responsive to public opinion and requirements at a ward level, with meetings being held in each of the six different Council neighbourhood areas.

Councillor Michael Bridgman, newly appointed Convenor of the future city Emergency Services Committee, said: “These meetings are a great opportunity for local communities to share their views with the police and council as to what they see as their policing priorities for the future. We would like to hear about the issues that really matter when it comes to delivering a first class police service. I would urge people to come along to any of the planned meetings, have your say and make a real difference.”



A BAD IDEA FOR CHRISTMAS

Local Police offer some sensible seasonal advice

by DAVID PICKERING

THEY MAY be one of the most requested Christmas gifts by children and young people, but parents are being warned – steer clear of quad bikes and mini-motos. Mini-motos and quad bikes are popular, but local police are eager to let potential buyers know that these are vehicles, not toys, and they CANNOT be used on public roads and streets. They're untaxable, uninsurable and so almost unusable.

The law states that to ride a bike on the road, you need to be over 16 and you must have registration documents, an MOT certificate, a driving licence, road tax, insurance and an approved crash helmet.

“It's true, it's illegal to take them onto public streets and roads – these vehicles can only be used on private land with the landowner's permission. To use them on public roads is an offence,” said Drylaw community beat officer Neil Robinson. “We're trying to get the message out to parents before they go spending money on these vehicles – don't waste your money. If we see them on roads we will confiscate them, and the owner will then be subject to a substantial charge to get the vehicle back – it's currently £170. That goes up daily if the bike is not reclaimed – costs like that are just not worth it.”

As well as potentially eye-watering fines, safety should also be a concern for those considering buying their kids a mini-moto or quad bike. “These vehicles can be dangerous

– they can get up to speeds of 20mph and if a child comes off at that sort of speed you are looking at serious injury – there have been fatalities”, said Neil. “These vehicles are readily available, particularly on the internet, and these is some very cheap and nasty – and potentially very dangerous – stuff out there. There are no registration marks or chassis numbers either, so if your vehicle is stolen the chances are you'll never see it again. We would

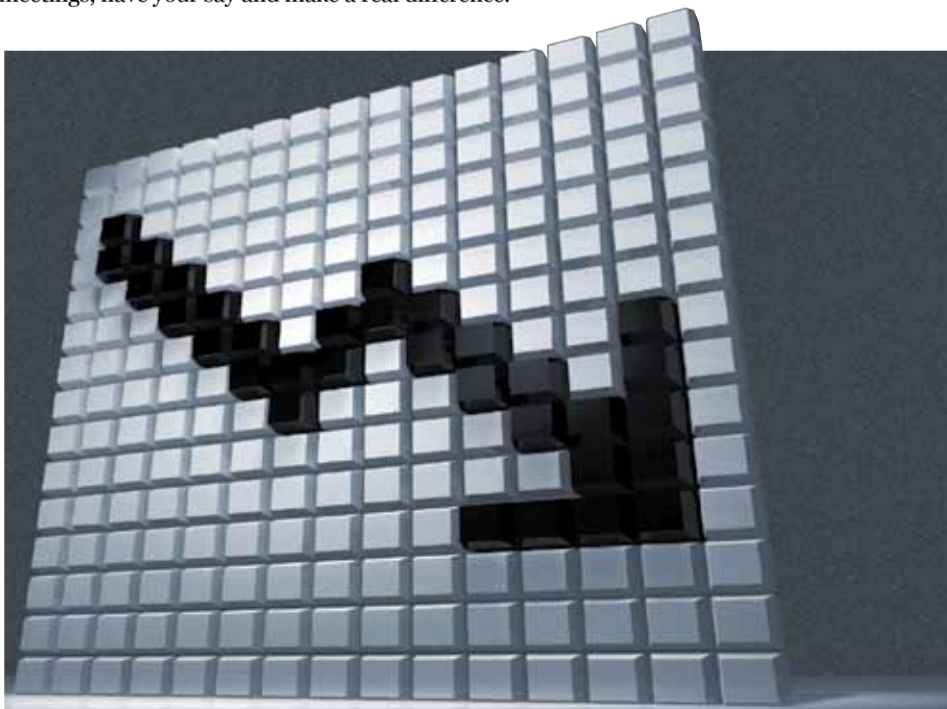
say to parents: if you care about your children, don't let them near these vehicles. If you're stuck for ideas, why not think about a good pushbike –

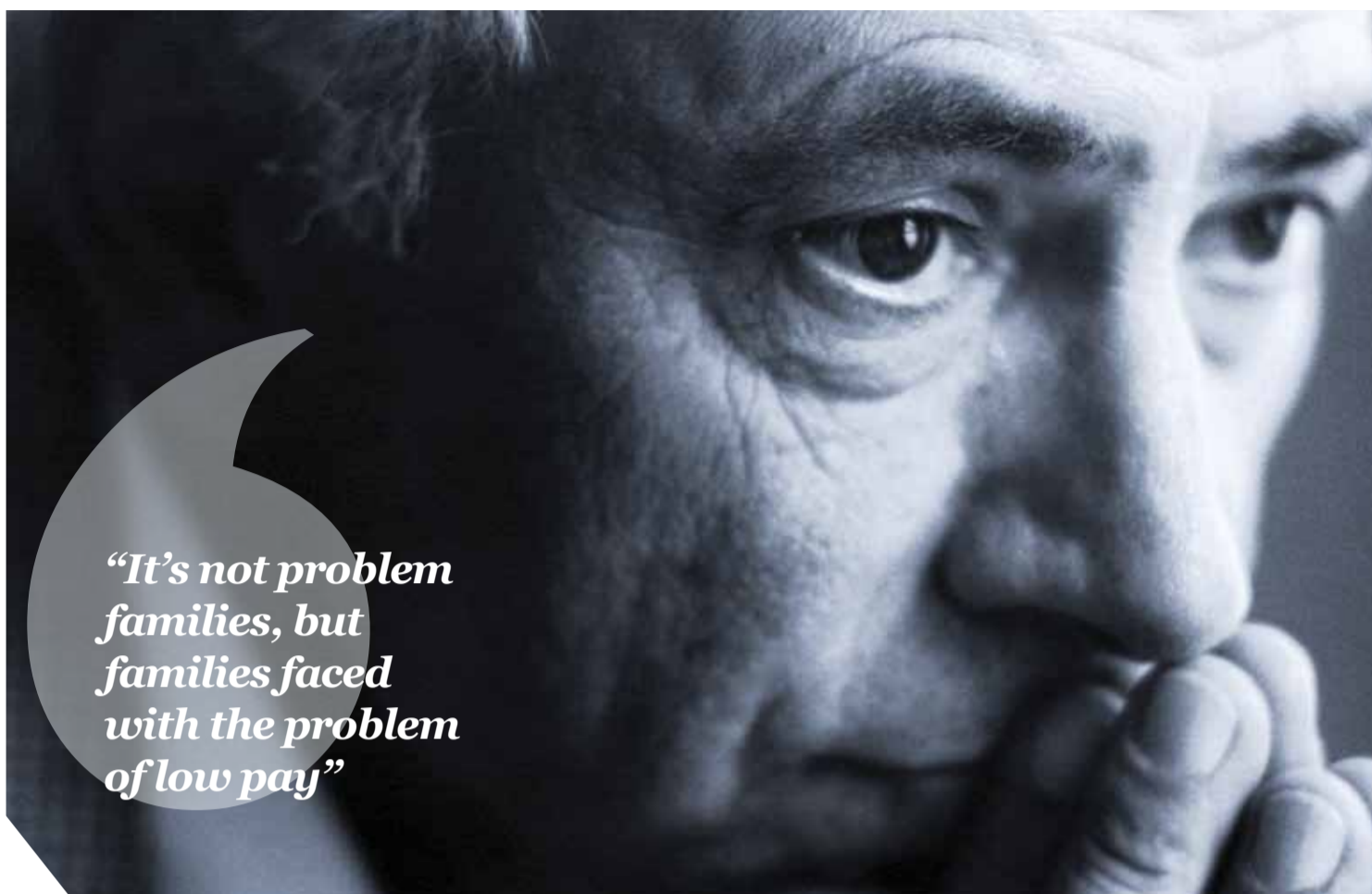
bicycles are a healthy alternative and you won't be potentially risking your life every time you get on one.”

So if potential costs and safety issues haven't convinced you, what about the consequences of antisocial behaviour? If you are a tenant with a Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement – whether with the council or a housing association – you need to be aware of a specific rule that affects you: by allowing any petrol driven motor vehicle to be stored in your home or common area around your home you are effectively in breach of your tenancy agreement. This could result in legal action being taken against you and could put your tenancy at risk.

Don't let a thoughtless Christmas present spoil your New Year – tell your kids to scrub the quad bike off that letter to Santa!

“If you care about your children, don't let them near these vehicles”





“It’s not problem families, but families faced with the problem of low pay”

‘IT’S CRIMINAL’

by DAVID PICKERING

Charities and voluntary organisations have launched a scathing attack on the proposed welfare reforms

THE SCOTTISH COUNCIL for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) says proposed cuts to benefits through the introduction of the new Universal Credit are ‘criminal’.

Research figures released by SCVO show that three-quarters of welfare charities expect demand for their services to increase next year as benefit cuts start to bite, while facing further funding cuts themselves.

SCVO Chief Executive Martin Sime said ‘ill-conceived’ cuts come at a time when the country is struggling to emerge from the deepest recession for generations, and that voluntary sector projects are concerned about meeting an anticipated record high demand for services.

“It’s clear from this research that Westminster’s criminal cuts to welfare are putting so much pressure on charities’ services that some will struggle to keep up with demand,” he said. “The sector is pulling together to pick up the pieces and help to mitigate the terrible effects of these ill-conceived Westminster cuts which should never have happened in the first place.”

The government is cutting £10bn from the welfare budget to make benefits fairer and more able to tackle poverty. Six different benefits will become just one – the Universal Credit – next year, with up to nineteen million people affected by the controversial reforms.

The Westminster government determines welfare payments, and insists that the reforms are necessary and fair. Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Iain Duncan-Smith said: “The introduction of the Universal Credit is not about cuts. This is about taking a very complex system and making it simpler, easier and fairer. Yes, it is an enormous change but it rewards and supports those people who make decision to go back to work. Really caring about people is

about saying: ‘look, I want to change your life with you’ – we offer positive incentives to help people to do that.”

Only so much Holyrood can do

The Scottish government has no control over welfare payments and says that the Westminster reforms are both ill-considered and are being implemented with undue haste, leaving local councils and the voluntary sector to deal with the consequences.

First Minister Alex Salmond said that only independence can give Scotland the powers it needs to develop a welfare system that allows work to pay. He told a Third Sector conference: “We need the powers of an independent country if we are to properly protect the foundations of the welfare state in Scotland. In our own hands, it would surely not be beyond our collective abilities to manage to make work pay without reducing people to penury or despair. We do not want independence for its own sake – independence is a means to greater ends, and this is a prime example of that. We want Scotland to be independent because we know that only then can we build a society that reflects our shared values. An independent Scotland can and will be a fairer Scotland.”

There is no public sympathy for those who can work but choose not to, but campaigners fear that benefit changes will hit the worst-off hardest – the poorest families will suffer most.

Alison Garnham, Chief Executive of Child Poverty Action Group, said: “It’s not problem families, but families faced with the problem of low pay and shrinking government help for families. It’s some of the hardest-working families that have been first in the queue for cuts – they’ve had their tax credits cut, their Child Benefit frozen year after year and many will have had essential help for childcare costs slashed.

“Six out of ten poor children come from working families. These are some of the hardest working people in the country – working the longest hours, for the lowest pay, in the worst conditions and with the highest aspirations for themselves and their children.

“A child in poverty is much more likely to be in poverty because they have a parent who is a security guard or a cleaner than one who is a drug addict or ‘feckless’. There is no evidence that people don’t want to take jobs but plenty that shows that people are hurling themselves at the labour market – the problem is that they don’t stick, not that they don’t try.”

Granton Information Centre is one voluntary organisation already seeing the impact of the welfare reforms. The advice centre based on West Granton Road dealt with over 5000 benefit enquiries last year, but staff have already seen a 50% rise in demand during the first six months of this year due to benefit changes that have already taken place.

GIC manager Caroline Pickering said: “Over the last couple of months we have been making presentations to other agencies, groups and health professionals to prepare them for the changes and many have been shocked by the scale of what is being proposed, and the effect it is likely to have on both their clients and patients and the services they currently provide. We are already seeing an upsurge in client numbers and there’s absolutely no doubt that this number will at least double next year as the effect of the changes are felt. At least we know the changes are coming – but we know that there are still a lot of people out there who are not aware of some major changes to their benefit entitlement. As an organisation we are as prepared as we can be, but resources are very tight. We will be facing a huge challenge.”

Huge thanks!

North Edinburgh Childcare thanks State Street

NORTH EDINBURGH CHILDCARE’S Childcare Academy programme has now supported nearly 200 unemployed people to attain their SVQ Level 2 in Childcare and to progress into jobs in the childcare sector. Despite this success, the reality is that the majority progress into low paid jobs, within a sector where the only way to sustain your employment and enhance your income earning potential is to obtain further qualifications at SVQ Level 3 or above.

Due to the significant costs involved, former Childcare Academy participants cannot afford to self fund their way through the SVQ Level 3 and sources of financial support that were previously available have long since disappeared.

Last year, we were encouraged by one of our service users Lorna Roberts (an employee at State Street Corporation’s Edinburgh Branch) to submit an application for funding to the State Street Foundation to enable us to provide 12 former Childcare Academy participants with the opportunity to undertake their SVQ Level 3 free of charge. The application was successful and the initial group of grateful beneficiaries began their 18 month SVQ Level 3 journey in November 2011. All are progressing well through their award appreciative of the chance they have been given by State Street to enhance their families quality of life. Achievement of the SVQ Level 3 will enable them to sustain their employment, register with the Scottish Social Services Council at the higher ‘Practitioner’ level, compete for higher paid ‘Practitioner’ jobs, enhance their level of household income and ultimately to progress out of ‘In Work’ poverty.

With the encouragement and support of both Lorna and Richard Walker (Client Services Manager at our local State Street) we recently submitted a second application to the Foundation to enable a further group of 14 former Childcare Academy participants to access the same opportunity and we are absolutely delighted to announce that our application has once again been successful.

We would like to extend a huge thank you to State Street for recognizing the long term implications of the situation faced by local workers earning the minimum wage and for providing our trainees with the opportunity to further their education, escape the poverty trap and progress towards earning a ‘Living Wage’.

We have delivered a number of ‘information sessions’ to staff members of State Streets ‘UK Families Network’ in relation to ‘the safety of the home environment for children’ and we are in the process of exploring the possibility of delivering some ‘First Aid’ workshops to members in the near future. We are extremely grateful for the on-going support of our local State Street and we look forward to a long, prosperous and mutually beneficial partnership between our organisations.

Gill Dudgeon, North Edinburgh Childcare

Managed weekly collections



LIKE ALL RESIDENTS in Edinburgh, I am sure those living in North Edinburgh aspire to live in an area with clean streets and open spaces, efficient rubbish uplift and the opportunity to recycle. As the Convener of Transport and Environment Committee and a local Councillor for Inverleith that is exactly what I have been striving for since taking over this role in May 2012.

Following the article in October's edition of the NEN I would like to clarify a number of important issues about the city's Refuse Collection Service and dispel a few myths which seem to have arisen about this important issue.

My personal view, and the one shared by the Labour Group on the Council, is that we fully support the in-house refuse collection service. Over the past couple of years we had campaigned to oppose the privatisation of services like cleansing and in November 2011, while in opposition, we voted unanimously as a Group against the proposal to outsource Refuse Collection. Our position on this helped defeat the proposal and led to the Council abandoning the Alternative Business Model programme which would have resulted in a private contractor taking over refuse collection and other services in Edinburgh. Therefore for there to be a suggestion that my group or I would want to privatise the cleansing service could not be further from the truth.

As a Council we are required to meet challenging Scottish Government recycling targets and we have introduced managed weekly collections as well as expanding our recycling services throughout the city. The plan is that these measures will leave us in a good position to reach our 40% recycling target by 2013. All political groups on the Council have supported this policy. Also, all groups put the savings which will result from this service change into their budget proposals. This year and the following years the Council will achieve substantial savings. Instead of paying increasing landfill charges we will be preserving services in our schools, care for the elderly and other important services.

The massive change in the Refuse Collection Service is intended to make sure that we provide a top quality service for residents while also making best use of our vehicles. As everybody is aware there have been some problems with missed collections since the new arrangements were introduced but these have reduced significantly. To allow us to deal with these challenges; Agency staff have been employed as a contingency measures.

I have instructed the Director of Services for Communities to take steps to make sure that all work carried out by Agency staff should be looked at and where it is possible, permanent staff are employed to carry out the duties involved. There will be occasions where Agency staff are used but these should only be in circumstances such as sickness cover or during extreme weather. I have asked for the action described above to be carried out by January 2013 at the latest.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our staff for their efforts in recent months and can assure them and city residents alike that this Administration is determined that Edinburgh has a modern and efficient refuse collection service which will serve the city well in future years. In order to achieve this, Management, staff and Councillors have to work together and as part of this process I have already had a number of positive meetings with the Trades Unions.

I would also like to thank residents for their forbearance during this massive change and if you have any issues regarding the cleansing service in your area please get in touch at lesley.hinds@edinburgh.gov.uk

Councillor Lesley Hinds

Just magic!

Royal Blind are world record holders

ROYAL BLIND are world record holders! Participants in the charity's 'Glow in the Park' event at Fettes College on 27 October helped Royal Blind become world record holder of the Largest Magic Lesson in the World, with 1063 people successfully taking part. Magic!

A spokesperson for Royal Blind explained: "Glow in the park' is our annual children's event that launches Light Relief Week. It is a magical sponsored walk for the children to take part in whilst fundraising for Royal Blind.

"This year's theme was 'Magic & Illusion' and there was some amazing fancy dress on display! We attempted to set a new Guinness World Record for "The Largest Magic Lesson" – the record was held by China and was 435 but thank you to all the people that adhered to the strict rules set out by the Guinness World Record and helped us successfully pass and take the New World Record with 1,063!!

"We saw the grounds of Fettes College transformed into a beautifully lit and enchanted walk and magic and illusion activities for the children around every corner, with a lot of the children especially enjoying the bunny rabbit at the top of the climbing wall! Thank you to all the companies that helped make Glow in the Park 2012 happen, and an extended thank you goes to Fettes College and Blacklight."



Happy Birthday GYC!

JUST HOW DO YOU CAPTURE the ten-year history and list all the achievements of Granton Youth Centre in just an hour? That was the tough task set for organisers of the local youth centre's tenth birthday celebration – but they passed the test with flying colours. And one young lad managed it in three simple words!

Granton Youth Centre's special anniversary was marked by a civic reception, requested by Forth councillor Vicki Redpath and hosted at the City Chambers by Lord Provost Cllr Donald Wilson on 23 November.

The Lord Provost congratulated GYC on reaching a significant milestone and said: "As a teacher of thirty years experience I can say that nothing is more important than raising young peoples' aspirations and self-esteem. It's vital, and Granton Youth Centre has been delivering this service in an area of high deprivation for ten years – that is a great achievement. Many congratulations, and I'm delighted to welcome you all here today."

GYC's chairperson Liz Hair has been with the organisation since the beginning and she was the ideal person to talk about the Centre's memorable events, progress and achievements – the drama productions, street work, volunteer training and employment support initiatives, the outreach work and counselling services ... a programme that continues to offer a wealth of activities and opportunities for young people in North Edinburgh.

Liz also made a surprise presentation to former manager Vicki Ridley, who moved on to pastures new after a very successful ten year career in Granton.

Who better to summarise what GYC means to them than the young people who use the service themselves? Paul Carnie – a young person first attended the centre as a callow youth (!) before moving on to become a volunteer youth worker and then a member of staff – made a short documentary about the Centre, talking to staff, supporters, partners of the organisation and of course the Centre's young people to neatly capture the essence of what GYC is all about.

Gavin Crosby, Youth Work Strategy Implementation Manager, presented awards to GYC's successful INITS youth work course participants and encouraged more people to get involved in the rewarding world of youth work, and Superintendent David Carradice of Lothian and Borders Police spoke of this pleasure at attending the reception. "The police must be part of the community and so part of the everyday life of centres like Granton, so I am chuffed to bits to be here. I'm also delighted to see our local community beat officers here today too. Working with children and young people is crucially important to our communities – it can help children change their lives and move forward, so we want both to thank you and support you in the work you do."

Perhaps the longest remembered words, though, came from young Jake in the documentary. Asked to sum up Granton Youth Centre in three words there was a long pause then ... 'an ... amazing, minted, place!'

And that's it in a nutshell, really - three words to sum up ten successful years!

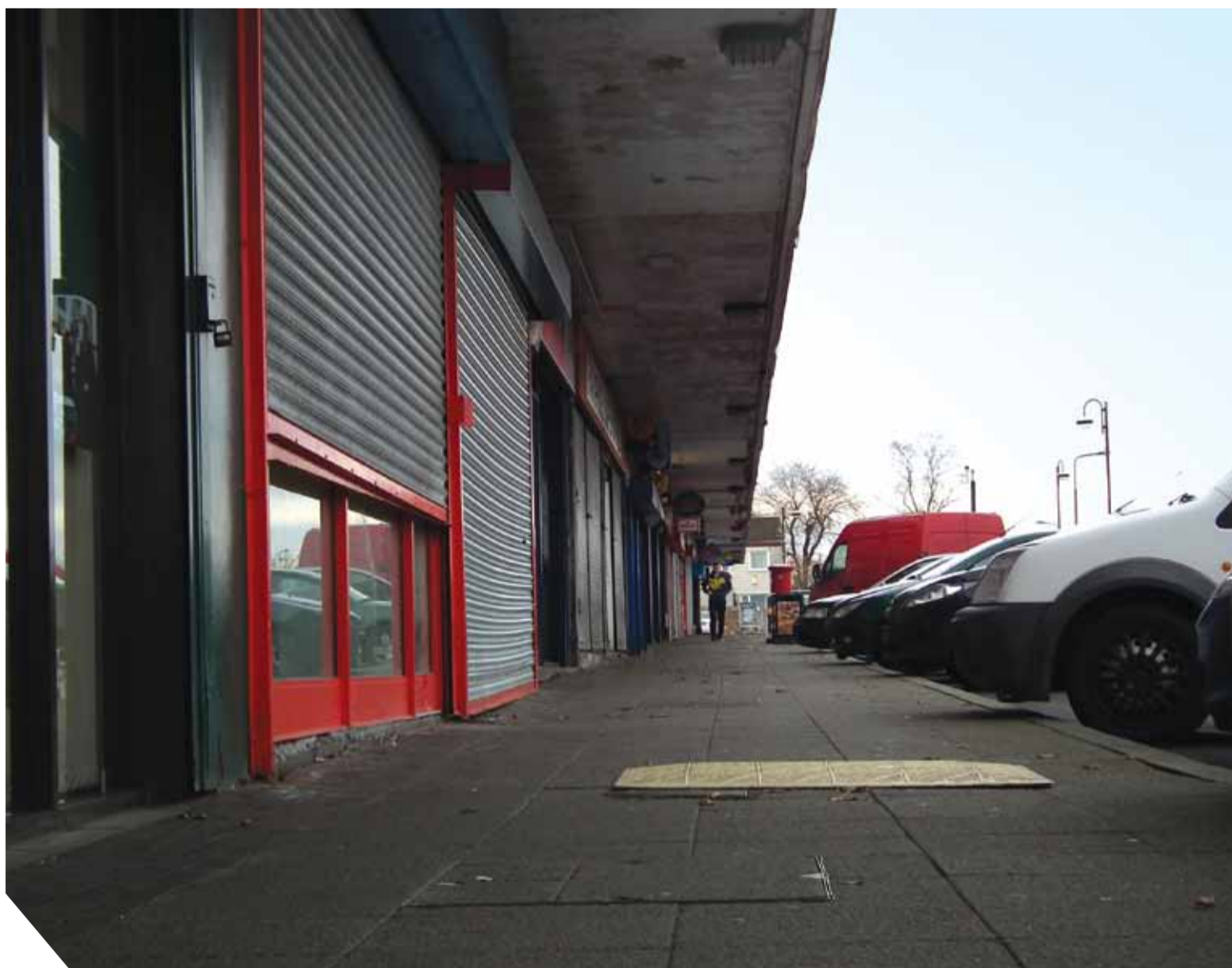
Working it out with Tomorrow's People

A free training programme in Muirhouse is looking for new participants.

If you are aged 16 – 24, unemployed, not in education or training and keen to learn new skills, meet new people and gain new experiences then please get in touch.

The Working It Out programme runs for 16 weeks and offers a range of activities and challenges that allow you to develop personal skills, volunteer in your own community, improve your job prospects and offer information and access to further education and training. Participants are supported throughout the programme and for up to 12 months after and all expenses are paid for the duration of the 16 week course.

Working it Out is run by Tomorrow's People, based in North Edinburgh Arts Centre. If you are interested in making a positive change in your life, increasing your skills to help you get a job, or interested in getting back into education, then please contact Andrew or Heather on 0798 966 9019 or e-mail aaldous@tomorrows-people.co.uk



Green award for Drylaw gardeners

DRYLAW Neighbourhood Centre is being celebrated by national environmental volunteering charity, The Conservation Volunteers. As part of the charity's regional Green Heroes Awards, Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre is being recognised for the positive environmental impact it has made.

Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre was presented with the Community Award and was chosen for their outstanding commitment to volunteering and inspiring positive environmental change in Edinburgh with The Conservation Volunteers.

Elizabeth Graham, Community Engagement Coordinator at Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre said: "Our volunteers put a lot of hard work and enthusiasm into the gardening project so it is great for this to be recognised by TCV. Everyone is welcome to come and help in the garden so we are a diverse group of people and everyone plays their part. Our main focus this year, thanks to funding from Scottish Natural Heritage, has been recording the species we have and building on this to increase the biodiversity of the area."

Through their involvement in local conservation projects, Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre has created a wildflower meadow, planted a wildlife hedge, worked with two local schools to help them grow their own, and planted two community-managed orchards.

The Conservation Volunteers' Green Heroes Awards recognise winners from six categories: Partnership, Volunteer of the Year, Project Leader, Community, Green Skills and European awards.

Chris Peach, TCV Scotland who nominated Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre said: "We're delighted to be acknowledging Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre who has given such an enormous amount of time and energy to conservation in Edinburgh. Without Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre providing their unwavering support and commitment we would not be able to enjoy the green spaces in Edinburgh we love and use every day. We hope that by highlighting the work of Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre, it will inspire others to get involved in protecting the green spaces in Edinburgh and ensure that they remain here for future generations to enjoy."

For more information about the Conservation Volunteers' Green Heroes Awards visit: www.tcv.org.uk

Dogs, drivers & daiquiris!

Easter Drylaw Residents Association's annual general meeting debate some hot topics

by DAVID PICKERING

CARS SPEEDING on residential streets, irresponsible dog owners and the run-down state of Drylaw Shopping Centre have featured prominently on local community meeting agendas for a long time now, so it was no surprise when all three issues were discussed at length at Easter Drylaw Residents Association's (EDRA's) annual general meeting in Drylaw Parish Church last month.

The meeting was well attended despite the rotten weather, with a particularly good turnout of local politicians. All four Inverleith councillors – Nigel Bagshaw, Gavin Barrie, Lesley Hinds and Iain Whyte – were present alongside Edinburgh Western MSP Colin Keir and Lothians list MSP Sarah Boyack, and the meeting was chaired by Easter Drylaw resident and Forth councillor Cammy Day.

EDRA chairperson Eileen Brash reported on another busy year for the organisation, and thanked committee members, local politicians and staff from the North Local Office for their support over the course of a year that has given EDRA no shortage of issues to tackle. Parking on pavements, the state of Groathill Road North roundabout, potholes and overgrown hedges have all received attention – some reported to EDRA and some coming to light through regular 'walkabouts' with NELO staff.

The biggest issue of the year for EDRA has been the 'Twenty's Plenty' road safety campaign to raise awareness of speeding in the residential area, and Eileen said that the campaign will continue. "We ran the campaign over three months to make drivers aware of the dangers, but despite our efforts there was a serious accident on Groathill Road North when a child was knocked down near Ferryhill School. More safety measures have been introduced as a result but we will keep campaigning to ensure drivers drive with care and consideration and stick to speed limits. We plan to work with the school and the police to keep up the pressure."

Guest speaker was Mark Bannon, who heads up the North Environmental team. Mark's team of six Environmental Wardens has a huge geographical area to cover and he understands the frustration of local people when they see littering and dog fouling but are unable to do anything about it. The feeling at the meeting is that dog fouling is on the

increase in Easter Drylaw, particularly around the Easter Drylaw Gardens area. One man, who has lived in the area for 25 years, said he no longer walks his dogs locally. "I was having to clean the dogs when I got them home after walking in the Gardens, so I now take them to Silverknowes. The state of our streets is as bad as they've been all the time I've lived here", he said.

Mark Bannon accepted that resources were stretched – it's a small team and there is no local warden service after 7pm at night. "We're now an enforcement service and we aim to deal with problems at source – the days of educating people are gone. When we patrol we are high-visibility, and of course

that can create problems for us. I would like to see us adopt plain clothes patrols on occasion – that's something we can't do currently but something I'm pushing for and hope members of the public would support. I'm convinced it would make a difference, but in the meantime I urge you to be our eyes and ears. We can't be everywhere so keep us informed – if there's a problem we want to know about it, then we can target resources where possible. Resources are tight, but we do the best we can with the size of team we've got. It's a constant grind and I do understand your frustration."

While Mark Bannon was the main speaker attendees were spoiled for choice – NELO's Jennifer Lavery, PC Dixon of the Safer Neighbourhood Team both gave verbal reports, and all six politicians were allocated two minutes each to say their piece – which to be fair they nearly managed!

While the dog debate was the dominant issue at the meeting, there was also a healthy debate over the state of Drylaw Shopping Centre – both the run-down appearance and the ongoing problem of antisocial behaviour, particularly in the vicinity of the chemist. One resident described the scene in the vennel outside the chemist as 'people milling around like they're at a cocktail party!'

Politicians, police and council officers expressed a unanimity to address both these issues – working together with others to resolve problems; basically what EDRA is all about.

"The state of our streets is as bad as they've been all the time I've lived here"



The Lost History

On Remembrance Sunday 2012 the long-awaited History of St Margaret Mary's RC Church in Granton was published

by HAROLD HINDLE

THE BOOKLET COVERS the period 1937, when the parish was commissioned, through 1939 when it was opened to the present day.

Much material had been completely lost in a house fire many years ago. To acquire a photo of the original altar looked a far-fetched proposition. However, Fr Daniel Doherty, Parish Priest of the now-twinning St Margaret Mary and Holy Cross Parishes, commissioned a study commencing with an interview of Canon Michael J. Cassidy, Parish Priest of St Margaret Mary from 1976 to 2004. From him a picture began to emerge, particularly aided by the recollections of Robert Nicholson, a parishioner from the start.

As interest mounted it was decided to hold a special social, a Reminiscing Evening in the parish hall so older parishioners could add their memories. Nora Burns our musical director kept an archive of assembled photos and from here the story was spread through families by word of mouth. It was known that 'ex-patriots', even those living in Edinburgh (!) have a love for the church and may well have had some important information to be accessed. This was collated and verified as much as possible.

The final booklet was published with an integral DVD of collected photos and the set sells for £5 or the cost of a couple of birthday cards. Being fairly neat in size in can be quite easily posted abroad to far-flung friends.

It tells the story of the parish in a readable way and contains a splash of photos which will be of nostalgic value to those who knew the parish. Beyond that, it is a gift from this generation to our children's children because if the history of this parish were not written down now, it would be so much more difficult in the future. In 2039, it can provide the basis for a continual history spanning the centenary of the Parish of St Margaret Mary.

» The combined booklet and DVD at £5 can be purchased from The Thrift Shop in the Hall open on Sundays 10 to 1pm and Wednesdays 10 to 1 pm; also from our Piety Shop at the rear of the church on Sundays 12 -12.30pm. Mail order would require £1 post and packing for a single set. For further details phone 0131-226-6402 or email harold.hindle@btinternet.com.

DADS ROCK at The Prentice Centre

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Minister Aileen Campbell MSP officially opened the new Dads Rock group at The Prentice Centre on Saturday 27 October. Around twenty men and their kids attended the first local session of the playgroup that was set up specifically for dads and male carers and their children.

The Clydesdale MSP was joined by her partner Graham and their wee boy Angus at The Prentice Centre and the family had a great time! Ms Campbell said: "We received a really warm welcome and enjoyed our visit. Dads Rock is a great idea and I really do hope it goes from strength to strength, not only in Edinburgh but across the country".

Dads Rock founders Thomas and David said: "We were really delighted to see so many new faces at our first session at The Prentice Centre and we're very grateful to Aileen for showing her support by performing the launch. We're hoping that the word will spread now that we're open in Granton and we're looking forward to meeting more and more local dads as the weeks go on."

Prentice Centre management committee members and staff were on hand to welcome the new visitors to their building on the corner of Granton Mains Avenue and West Granton Road. Janet Campbell, manager at The Prentice Centre, said: "We are delighted to welcome Dads Rock to the Centre and it was good to see so many people here for the first session. The kids seemed to have a great time and we are sure it will be a success".

» The Dads Rock playgroup meets at The Prentice Centre on Saturday mornings from 10 - 11.30am with play, music time, art stuff, snack and story time - and it's all free! For more information check out the Dads Rock Facebook page or see their blog at <http://dadsrock.blogspot.co.uk/>



Bump Start Annual Review

BUMP START is a support service for pregnant women, with two bases in North Edinburgh at Pennywell and Leith.

The project has two main ways of helping women and their families. A Bump Start worker can work with individual families and help with a whole range of topics, and there is also a weekly group for pregnant women and their partners, parents and supporters called 'The Pregnancy Café' where everyone can learn more about being pregnant and preparing to be a parent. Dads - to - be are particularly welcomed at the café.

The team has public health workers from NHS Lothian, the CLD Health Literacy team, and Stepping Stones all working together to deliver the service and the project works very closely with the local

midwives. If you are pregnant and think this type of support would help you please contact your midwife and she will then put you in touch with the Bump Start team in your area.

The picture shows the Bump Start team at their annual stakeholders event in Spartans Football Club, where the team was presenting the project's independent evaluation which was carried out by COMAS.

A number of organisations were represented at the event including Multi-Cultural Family Base, CEC Community Learning and Development, Public Health NHS, Stepping Stones; CEC Social Work, CEC Early Years, Community Midwifery and Mellow Parenting.

Cathy Wood, North West Local Health Partnership



Muirhouse says goodbye to Sister Ann

THE MUIRHOUSE COMMUNITY said goodbye to Sister Ann Buckeridge at a reception at North Edinburgh Arts Centre on 19 October. Sister Ann is moving on to new challenges in Cardiff, but the wee woman with the huge heart will leave a lasting impression on Muirhouse.

Sister Ann belongs to the Daughters of Charity order, and arrived in Muirhouse just two years ago with a simple mission – ‘to help’. Help she certainly has, and it’s fair to say that there has been very little that Ann hasn’t been involved in – from the community council, various Neighbourhood Partnership Action Groups, the Voluntary Sector Forum and Muirhouse Centipede Project to name a few. Small in stature she may be, but Ann’s boundless energy and enthusiasm have been a real driving force for positive change in Muirhouse and she will be sorely missed.

Community activists, council officials and project workers joined local councillors Cammy Day and Vicki Redpath to present gifts and to thank Sister Ann for her huge contribution to community life in Muirhouse.

Modest as ever, Sister Ann said: “From the moment I came to Muirhouse I received a warm welcome and people have been so generous and kind. I am really touched by all the kind things that have been said and I have enjoyed working alongside so many dedicated people – it has been a pleasure to have been part of community life here.”

Roy Douglas, chairman of Muirhouse Salvesen Community Council, said: “We really have been so fortunate to have had Sister Ann working alongside us for the last two years. It’s hard to overstate the contribution she’s made – she has been wonderful to work with and we will all really miss her.”

The wee woman hopes to return for a visit one day – and, with the regeneration of Muirhouse beginning to gather pace, Sister Ann may find that some of the seeds she sowed will have bloomed.

Read all about it

Top author praises Craigie’s ‘illustrauthors’

A GROUP of Craigroyston Community High School students have been working with top author John Fardell over the autumn term. With John’s guidance the S2’s have produced their own story books, and the Edinburgh-based writer was full of praise for the students’ efforts when he attended his final session last month.

John spent his last session with the class looking at the students’ books – and he was delighted with what he read. He told students: “There is an incredible variety here – there are some amazing ideas and wonderful stories. I really do hope that you will keep writing.”

John was initially invited to Craigroyston by the school librarian Desmond Spiers, who explained: “The group of 16 pupils have literacy problems and during S1 they were targeted for extra support using a Literacy Programme called ‘SRA’, which is a reading support programme. Rather than having the work done with the pupils as a ‘stand-alone’ programme we wanted to embed and extend their work and progress with something outside the normal remit of the curriculum.

In 2006 and 2007 we had a very successful project with the author Keith Gray working in school for a year as our ‘Writer in Residence’ and we decided we would like to do something similar with this group of pupils when they entered S2 in August – this time we would have a writer in for a term. John Fardell was recommended to us by colleagues in other schools – he is both a writer and illustrator, having published a range of picture books and fiction books for older children and he has also contributed regularly to the adult comic Viz.”

Desmond continued: “John worked with the pupils for five sessions over the Autumn Term, talking to the pupils about how he gets his ideas for stories, how he goes about constructing a plot and then writing a story. He’s explained how pictures tell a story, along with lots of hints and tips for the pupils. He has also brought in and shown the pupils examples of work in progress from the first

rough ideas and drafts to the finished book.

“John’s visits have been funded by the ‘Live Literature’ programme at Scottish Book Trust, who pay half of the costs with the school paying the remainder. This project has also been encouraged and supported by Education Advisors in Support for Learning, English and Literacy.”

Presentations and feedback

In between John’s visits the pupils worked in class writing their own short stories which were then bound into books, and their creations were presented to the author at John’s final session on 8 November.

Summing up, he told the students: “It’s great that these 17 books are all so wonderfully different. They are all very individual and that makes them unique and exciting books. I know you have all worked really, really hard and you should be very proud of what you have achieved. Keep your drawer full of rough ideas – you have shown a real talent, fantastic”.

John clearly possesses an infectious enthusiasm for books and 13-year-old Keiran Blackie was particularly inspired by working with the author. “John was brilliant to work with – he gave us lots of helpful tips and ideas and he was also very funny sometimes! My book is called The Best Accident and the idea for it came while I was watching the Paralympics on television. It took me around seven weeks from start to finish – I enjoyed writing it and I do like the way it looks now it’s finished. I’ve tried to write before but this is the first time I’ve really succeeded, and it has given me confidence – I think I will hopefully do another one.”

Teachers Margaret Beveridge and Eric Freund did the majority of the classwork with the pupils, and both were full of praise for John. They said: “He helped reinforce lessons already undertaken with the students, fired their imagination and left a body of work that we can build upon and extend over the coming months. We hope we can repeat this excellent project again next year.”

by DAVID PICKERING

Every single book received positive comments and there was helpful feedback for each writer – among the comments:

‘Nice simple uncomplicated style’

‘Great use of white space – makes the pictures stand out’

‘Great work – go for what you find interesting’

‘Very striking – fine story and excellent design’

‘Wild, psychedelic colours and a really, really good fantasy story’

‘Lovely ideas on themes of friendship – wonderful illustrations’

‘Great first sentence for a story and mixes text and pictures really well’

‘Very original, with some fantastic cartoon baddies. A good fun, exciting story’

‘Nicely laid out – excellent mix of excitement and humour’

‘Very dark, bleak opening but you can start a story like that. Great atmosphere’

‘Nice use of wild lettering and curly writing, sort of Pop Art collage. Unique style’

‘Really good use of illustration, unique and personal’

‘Nice style with fluffy thought bubbles – I really like the diary format’

‘A collection of poetry with a contents page – some lovely contrasts here’.

In short, John was impressed!



Talking transport in Inverleith

Lively discussion and debate at recent conference

AROUND NINETY PEOPLE attended Inverleith Neighbourhood Partnership's 'On the Move' event held in Broughton High School last week. The theme of the evening was transport, and local residents were encouraged to share their opinions at the 'round-robin' style event.

Participants moved from table to table to discuss a new topic, with each conversation supported by and helped along by an expert from that particular field. The six themes were public transport, winter weather planning, cycling and walking, road maintenance, road safety and parking – and unsurprisingly each topic generated healthy discussion and debate!

The views expressed at the event were all noted and the main findings and suggestions will help to guide transport planning policy both in Inverleith and further afield. Inverleith Neighbourhood Partnership convener Councillor Gavin Barrie thanked organisers

and participants and said: "It was great to see so many people here at Broughton High School, with everyone contributing to an interesting and informative debate. I've no doubt that all of the councillors and officers here this evening are listening and want to hear what you have to say, but we can only do that when you talk to us and you've done that tonight. We may not like everything we've heard, but this has been a very useful and worthwhile exercise for all of us – thank you for participating."

Broughton High School students were heavily involved in all aspects of the event, and they did a superb job – from providing the music and technical support to presenting and live 'tweeting' – posting discussions as they happened around the tables out to the worldwide web, sharing Inverleith's thoughts on transport with the whole of cyberspace! They also took photographs and have submitted a conference report (see below).

On the Move conference report

IT IS ALWAYS REFRESHING when Edinburgh youths and local residents alike get the opportunity to pose queries or concerns they may have about their community. It's even more encouraging when people with the power to influence and change take the time out to listen.

Broughton High School was the venue for the Inverleith Neighbourhood Partnership Community Conference on 15 November, with a focus on transport. Presented by North Edinburgh News' Dave Pickering, around 100 attendees had an opportunity to engage in open discussion with some of Edinburgh's key transport figures.

The set-up consisted of six different tables: parking, winter weather, road safety, road maintenance, walking/cycling and public transport. Attendees moved from table to table throughout the evening, offering everyone the chance to make their voice heard.

City of Edinburgh Council's Tony Lear discussed winter weather issues with admirable clarity. He said the Scottish government has given local authorities £750,000 to address potholes throughout the winter, and

confirmed that more funds will be set aside for off-road cycle paths. This winter will see pre-treatment and gritting on North Edinburgh cycle paths for the first time, and Mr. Lear also said local care homes, sheltered accommodation and school access routes will receive priority treatment.

With many parents attending the conference, road safety was a topic of particular interest. Many parents raised concerns over the poor lighting in local streets, and highlighted crossing difficulties at the bottom of East Fettes Avenue. Helen Bourquin also raised concerns over cycling restrictions in the Comely Bank area.

While the local cycling infrastructure was generally praised, council official Phil Noble announced that design standards for walking and cycling in Edinburgh are to be revised. Mr Noble said that the Government has also increased the budget for the marketing of walking and cycling, and added that 5% of the total £16 million transport budget will be spent on cycling next year - around £1.5 to £2 million.

There was praise for Lothian Buses' Ian Bieniowski – the public transport company's pricing system,

customer service and general consistency were all applauded.

Certainly worthy of special thanks are Broughton High senior pupils Fraser Young and Calum Chapman. They again volunteered their time towards helping set up the technical aspects of the evening, an essential element in the event's overall success - particularly the 'warm-up' musical performances from Broughton pupils. The pair regularly volunteer their technical knowledge and organisational acumen at all school events - they couldn't have done it without them!

The only downside of an otherwise encouraging evening was the technical problem with the event's twitter feed. Broughton High School pupil volunteers were given iPads to regularly update the event's twitter feed through the hashtag #inverleithconf, but the server became unresponsive midway through the event.

Nevertheless, the evening generated very positive feedback on the whole. It would appear that the future is bright for the local residents as far as transport is concerned.

Robbie Thomson, Broughton High School

Outstanding Oaklands!

Local school MOVEs on up to become Centre of Excellence

OAKLANDS SCHOOL is to become a MOVE Centre of Excellence – only the third school in Scotland to achieve that status. The special school on Ferry Road will receive the MOVE quality mark on Monday 17 December.

MOVE (Movement for Learning and Life) helps children who have complex disabilities to:

- **Acquire and maintain increased independence in sitting, standing, walking and transferring,**
- **Learn, gain and maintain more mobility through transference of skills,**
- **Experience better health, enhanced personal dignity, improved communication skills and access to education.**

The MOVE programme uses a family and person-centred approach to improve mobility skills, helping children with complex physical and learning disabilities to better direct their own lives.

MOVE teaches functional motor skills that the child will need as they grow and begin to access the wider world outside of school and home life. The skills taught aim to help children to reach identified goals – maybe learning to walk 50 meters so they can walk from a car to the entrance of a cinema, being able to sit unsupported so they can travel by bus or perhaps being able to pivot transfer to access toilets in the community where disabled facilities can be poor.

These increased abilities decrease the burden of care for families and care providers, and also bring new opportunities for greater participation in family life and for inclusion into the wider community.

Oaklands School first MOVED in 2003, and now supports 23 pupils on the MOVE programme – four pupils have graduated from MOVE. The school has enthusiastically embraced the MOVE concept, and annual MOVE Day celebrations are a particular delight at Oaklands – whether that's travelling through space or enjoying an unforgettable Strictly Come Dancing event!

The school was visited by MOVE Partnership's CEO Nigel Carter in September and he was clearly hugely impressed – a subsequent Quality Mark report stated:

'The MOVE Programme at Oaklands School is of high quality and is **outstanding** as compared against the components of the MOVE Quality Mark. The programme is **outstandingly** led and managed by Anke Baillie, the MOVE Programme coordinator, with **outstanding** support from the Head teacher, Maureen Mathieson, the leadership team and the Oaklands MOVE Group, who are ensuring that all possible time, effort and resources are being made available to ensure the success of the MOVE Programme.'



Scottish Gas support for MS Therapy Centre

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS (MS) Therapy Centre in Edinburgh has been adopted by Scottish Gas as its local charity partner. Scottish Gas Business Services in Granton has pledged to help the MS Therapy Centre for at least the next 12 months through fundraising activities, providing IT support, refreshing the website and by staff volunteering at the Centre itself.

It is estimated that there are approximately 2300 people in The Lothians alone who live with Multiple Sclerosis. The MS Therapy Centre, which covers Edinburgh, Fife, The Lothians and The Borders, costs £180,000 to run per year with the majority of this money coming from fundraising and charitable donations.

David Stewart, HR Manager at Scottish Gas said: "Scottish Gas is proud to support the MS Therapy Centre Lothian as its local charity partner. Over the next year, our people will hold fundraising and volunteering activities for a fantastic cause that helps so many people living with MS."

Carole Macartney, Chairperson of MS Therapy Centre said: "This announcement is going to make such a difference to the people who use the Centre and also to our amazing team of volunteers. I am looking forward to meeting the Scottish Gas staff as the partnership grows and would like to thank them very much for nominating the MS Therapy Centre as their charity partner."

Scottish Gas has already raised £180 through a raffle among its Granton HQ staff and is organising a further programme of fundraising events.



Pudsey Bear's team transforms The Yard

THE YARD adventure playground in Eyre Place Lane is a much-loved facility, offering a safe and welcoming place to play for children with special needs and their families and carers. The building and its grounds were showing inevitable signs of wear and tear – but now it's been transformed thanks to the BBC's DIY SOS programme and a huge team of willing volunteers!

Last month Nick Knowles and his team – which included more than 300 volunteer builders who answered the call for help – got to work to turn The Yard into an even more special place in a special DIY SOS Children in Need challenge.

Over just nine days, the team committed an incredible 9500 hours of labour to the labour of love – and what a superb job they made of it! The interior of the building has been completely revamped with a new kitchen, windows, heating system, office area, dedicated under-fives space, an art room and a stunning sensory area, while outside the transformation was equally stunning – a seated patio, gardens, resurfaced and neatly edged paths, climbing frames and a host of other attractions.

It's an unbelievable transformation that's truly appreciated by 1500 children and their families who make up The Yard community.

Six year old Jamie is autistic, and for mum Gillian The Yard has proved a lifeline. "The Yard is a really special place, much more than just a building. It's very hard to put into words the difference Nick and the team have made. It's just wonderful."

Thanking the DIY SOS team and the army of volunteers, The Yard's Celine Sinclair said: "I know there was lots of blood, sweat and tears to make this happen but there must have been a magic wand in there somewhere too! A lot of our children and young people have complex special needs and we try to make life fun and more fulfilling for every one of our families. We do that because we care, and you've proved that you care too – and for me and all of my team that's truly uplifting. We could not have wished for a more wonderful present – thank you!"

BBC presenter Nick Knowles said: "The people who have done this work have really poured their hearts and souls into it, not because they had to but because they really wanted to. That's inspirational, isn't it?"

Visit Stockbridge for Scotland's top customer service



ST STEPHEN STREET in Stockbridge is the first retail destination in Scotland to be accredited with a world acclaimed award for excellence in customer service. The street has been accredited as a WorldHost Recognised Destination for customer service excellence recognised by the World Host Customer Care programme.

The programme was originally developed by the Province of British Columbia to train the 44,000 volunteers and tourism staff who made the 2010 Winter Olympics such an outstanding success. More recently, the programme has been adapted by leading employers and training providers for the UK market. It was also used to train the volunteers at the 2012 London Olympics in customer care.

Cllr Frank Ross, Convener of the Economy Committee, said: "High quality customer service is key to ensuring that your customers want to use your business again and again. This is a tremendous achievement for everyone working in the Street and this will help to put the location firmly on Edinburgh's retail map. Businesses in St Stephen Street have shown commitment to excellence through their training from Edinburgh Skills Shop."

Kirstine Hale, Director of Edinburgh Skills Shop said: "We are thrilled to have been involved in the accreditation of St Stephen Street becoming the first World Host destination in Scotland and want to offer our congratulations to all of the businesses who successfully completed their part in the WorldHost training."

"It is a huge achievement for a group of traders to come together and recognise the importance of excellence in customer service. The street is filled with wonderfully different boutiques and independent businesses, all of which deserve the highest of recognition for this accreditation."

George Robertson of Vox Box, said: "A significant number of businesses in the street benefited from the excellent training day sponsored by the Council. We all learnt the importance of how to improve customer service, attract new business and very importantly encourage repeat business. The more business a retail street gains the greater the likelihood of more staff being taken on, especially young people and thus in the long term providing more employment in the area. Small businesses, I believe, are key to reducing unemployment."

First AGM for Elizabeth Maginnis Residents Group

ELIZABETH MAGINNIS RESIDENTS GROUP held their Annual General Meeting on Thursday 8 November in Elizabeth Maginnis Court. Councillors Vicki Redpath, Cammy Day and Allan Jackson were in attendance. Also in attendance was Mike Maginnis, husband of the late Elizabeth Maginnis, and he donated eight pictures to be hung up in the building.

The following were elected to serve on the Management Committee:

Andy Buchan – Chair Evelyn Ross – Vice Chair
Terry Kirby – Secretary Kenny McLachlan – Treasurer.

The group has been busy throughout the year with various fundraising initiatives. Evelyn Ross, Vice Chair and fundraiser within the group wrote to the First Minister, Alex Salmond and the Lord Provost, Donald Wilson asking for a donation of a bottle of whisky for a forthcoming raffle, to which they were happy to oblige.

Evelyn commented: "We would like to thank the First Minister and the Lord Provost and everyone who donated. We are also hoping that Mark Lazarowicz MP will donate something."

Mark Henry, Edinburgh Tenants Federation





From Glasgow's mean streets to Muirhouse

GLASGOW CRIME WRITER Alex Gray received a warm welcome when she visited Muirhouse Library during Scottish Book Week. The award-winning author discussed her love of books, how she gets ideas for her stories and read extracts from her latest novel, *A Pound of Flesh*.

Alex has had a love of books and reading from her earliest years – as a child she was lucky enough to have had an older sister at secondary school, so she grew up with Greek myths and legends, Scheherazade and the Arabian Nights! The author also recalled one particularly prophetic primary school teacher who told Alex – who was then eight years old – she was convinced that she would become a writer when she grew up!

It was actually some years later that the teacher's prophesy finally came true – Alex turned to writing when illness forced her to quit her job as an English teacher, and decided to write crime novels because she enjoyed reading them! She's since gone on to write six best-selling novels.

The writer said that she has always been very interested in people and what motivates them, and that the initial inspiration behind her ideas is inquisitiveness and curiosity: wondering 'what if ...?' Alex remains an enthusiastic member of a local writer's group and offers advice to aspiring authors when dealing with publishers: 'Three Ps – politeness, patience and perseverance.'



PEP volunteers let their hair down

George Reavley, Pilton Equalities Project's recently appointed Volunteer Coordinator, reports on an event held to thank PEP's trusty band of volunteers:

PEP's annual Volunteers Social Evening took place on Thursday 1 November at Queensberry Bowling Club. This is one of those occasions where PEP staff organised the hall and buffet arrangements, giving their time freely to show how much they value the services of our excellent volunteers, who contributed an amazing 7,518 hours in the past year.

The evening consisted of a quiz, buffet, raffle and music, aimed to integrate volunteers and introduce them to other PEP volunteers and staff in a social setting. In total 30 volunteers attended, plus the PEP staff who's aim was to make the evening as fun as possible. The first task was for the volunteers to choose a team and name them.

Warm welcome for Muirhouse photography exhibition

BORGA PRADA GARCIA'S eagerly-awaited photographic exhibition opened at North Edinburgh Arts Centre on 6 November. Friends, colleagues, local residents and at least one of Borja's photographic subjects came out in strength to support the 'Welcome to Muirhouse' event.

Borja spent the best part of a year photographing people and buildings in Muirhouse and Pennywell while studying at Telford College, and the 'Welcome to Muirhouse' photo-essay for his Photography HND achieved top marks.

The project became a labour of love, and Borja's affection for the people he met during his time in the area shines through the images on display at North Edinburgh Arts. It's taken a lot of work over the last few months to get the exhibition open, but Borja is delighted that his work is on view in Muirhouse.

"I am so pleased that the exhibition is here in North Edinburgh Arts Centre. I wanted my pictures to go on display in Muirhouse before they go anywhere else and for local people to see them first – it was important to me", he said.

Borja wanted to portray Muirhouse in a positive light, and his work achieves that. "I was aware of the very negative image of



Muirhouse, but I found it a fascinating place with many warm and welcoming people who I now call friends. It's too easy to just make assumptions about people and places: I hope I show the real Muirhouse – the place and the people who live here – in my images."

Borja decided not to make a formal speech to open the exhibition. "I am still working on my English language and I would prefer the occasion to be informal and friendly. I thank everyone for coming, of course, but yes, I will let the photographs tell the story themselves."

The exhibition has now closed, but there will be further opportunities to see Borja's work in North Edinburgh. Keep an eye on the NEN's blog!

Tough times ahead

PEP's Annual General Meeting

CHAIRPERSON IRENE GARDEN said she wanted to be positive when she welcomed guests to Pilton Equalities Project's (PEP's) annual general meeting on 26 October, and she started out that way. However her report quickly turned to PEP's trials and tribulations – it's been a particularly tough year, and the signs are that it's not going to get any easier any time soon.

"Once again our staff and volunteers have worked above and beyond the call of duty to ensure we continue to deliver our services", she told the meeting at PEP's West Pilton Park office. "To quote George Johanson, one of our directors: 'another difficult year in tempestuous seas!'"

PEP today is a fundamentally different organisation to the former Pilton Elderly Project: community transport and services for older people was the primary focus of the old PEP, but as funding priorities changed over the years so has PEP – the community organisation has diversified and added learning and training elements to the daycare and community transport services it was best known for.

Six teams formed; they were: 'The Smarties', 'The PEP Heads', 'The Smilers', 'The Marshalls', 'The Volunteer Vixens (+ 1 fox)' and last but not least, 'The Happy Lot'.

The hotly contested quiz consisted of five rounds throughout the evening, but in the end there had to be a winner. In third place were the competitive 'PEP Heads' but they were outsmarted by 'The Smarties' who came second! The victors were the vivacious Volunteer Vixens (+ 1 smiling fox), who were triumphant after playing their joker card!

All in all, it was an enjoyable evening where volunteers and staff enjoyed some banter and dancing, mixed with a lovely buffet which was enjoyed by all who sampled it. The evening ended with a raffle with the top prize being a delicious food hamper.

We hope to repeat this with another social activity next year and would like to thank Barrie from Floorplay Events and Queensberry Bowling Club for hosting us once again. A huge 'thank you' also to all the PEP staff whose hard work made the evening possible.

» If you would like to find out more about our volunteering opportunities and services please contact us on 0131 315 4466 or via the PEP website, www.pepequalities@btconnect.com

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MUIRHOUSE SLIMMING CLUB

Muirhouse Slimming Club meets in the ground floor flat, Birnie's Court, Muirhouse View on Thursdays from 6– 7.30pm.

£5 joining fee, then only £2 per week

The Club Leader and existing members offer ideas, encouragement and recipes to help each other reach their goals and there are also day and evening outings throughout the year.

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Phone & Fax: 0131 552 4568
Email: scheme.granton@mha.org.uk
Website: www.mha.org.uk

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WEDNESDAYS

Computing for Beginners (day),
Pilates for Beginners (evening).

THURSDAYS

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Course.

FRIDAYS

Music Keyboards, Digital Photography Editing,
Art, Painting & Drawing, Jewellery Making.

For our full programme go to
www.craigroyston.edin.sch.uk

More info: call us on 538 7285 or
email admin@craigroyston.edin.sch.uk



Like us on Facebook at
Craigroyston Community Classes.



Muirhouse & Salvesen Community Council

c/o Muirhouse Millennium Centre
7 Muirhouse Medway EH4 4RW

t: 0131 467 3578

e: Muirhouse&salvesencommunitycouncil@live.com
w-www.muirhouse.wordpress.com

MEETING DATES – 2012/2013

every 3rd Tuesday of each month

18th December

22nd January TBC

19th February

19th March

16th April

21st May

18th June

Granton Information Centre (GIC)

provides free, impartial and confidential advice and assistance on a range of issues including welfare benefits, housing advice, tax credits and debt.

Drop in sessions (Granton Information Centre):

Monday & Wednesday: All HOUSING issues: 9.30 – 12.30

Tuesday & Thursday: BENEFITS & MONEY ADVICE issues: 9.30 – 12.30

Outreach:

Tuesday: 10.00 – 1.00 CREWE MEDICAL CENTRE
(Only for patients of Crewe Medical Centre)

Tuesday: 2.00 – 4.00 MUIRHOUSE MEDICAL GROUP
(Only for patients of Muirhouse Medical Group)

Home visits and appointments may be available on request.

Telephone/Fax: 0131 552 0458

134 – 138 West Granton Road, Edinburgh, EH5 1PE



Councillor Lesley Hinds
Labour Councillor for Inverleith

Surgery Times:

Wednesday (during term time)
6pm Ferryhill Primary School, Groathill Road North
7pm Stockbridge Library, Hamilton Place

Contact phone: 0313 529 3235



Alison Johnstone
MSP for Lothian Region

On the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month during term time I hold a surgery for Lothian residents at the Scottish Parliament between 11am and 1pm.

Please call to book a surgery appointment or to arrange another time and venue that is convenient for you.

Contact me on 0131 348 6421

Alison.Johnstone.msp@scottish.parliament.uk



Malcolm Chisholm MSP

Surgeries every Saturday 10a.m. at Leith Library and 12 noon Royston Wardieburn Community Centre

Constituency Office:

5 Croall Place, Edinburgh EH7 4LT
Tel: 0131 558 8358 Fax: 0131 557 6781.
Email: Malcolm.Chisholm.msp@scottish.parliament.uk
Website: www.Malcolm.Chisholm.org.uk



Mark Lazarowicz, MP

Member of Parliament for Edinburgh North & Leith

Weekly Surgeries:

(No Appointment Required)
4.00pm Stockbridge Library, Hamilton Place
5.00pm Constituency Office, 5 Croall Place

Constituency Office:

Mon-Fri 9.30-12.30 - 1.30-4.30
5 Croall Place, Edinburgh EH7 4LT
Tel: 0131-557-0577 - Fax: 0131-557-5759
Email: mark.lazarowicz.mp@parliament.uk
Website: www.marklazarowicz.org.uk

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to pre-register your interest in the Powerhoop classes.

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community directory

ADVICE

CORE (formerly Black Community Development Project)	467 7990
Community Renewal	332 8773
Drylaw Police Station	343 3171
Granton Information Centre	551 2459
Lothian & Borders Police HQ, Fettes	311 3131
North Edinburgh Credit Union	466 5006
North West Carers Centre	315 3130
North Edinburgh Volunteer Centre	629 4202
Mark Lazarowicz MP Constituency Office	557 0577
Pilton Citizens Advice Bureau	332 9434

CHURCHES/PLACES OF WORSHIP

Bellevue Baptist Church, c/o Salvation Army, Wardieburn Drive	551 5191
Blackhall Mosque, Queensferry Road	343 3802
Blackhall St. Columba's, Queensferry Road	332 4431
Bristo Baptist Church, Queensferry Road	332 9488
Church of the First Born, West Granton Green	551 5361
Drylaw Parish Church, Groathill Road North	343 1441
Granton Baptist Church, Crewe Road North	552 0915
Granton Parish Church, Boswall Parkway	551 2159
Granton United, 125 Boswall Parkway	552 3316
Muirhouse St. Andrew's, Pennywell Medway	476 9525
Old Kirk, Pennywell Road	332 4354
St David's Episcopal, Royston Mains Place	01890 819063
St Margaret Mary's, Boswall Parkway	552 3957
St Paul's, Muirhouse Avenue	539 0085
St Serf's, Ferry Road	249 4899
Seventh Day Adventist, Boswall Parkway	0777 239 1405
West Pilton Christian Centre, West Pilton Park	343 6391

COMMUNITY CENTRES

Drylaw Neighbourhood Centre	315 4989
Muirhouse Millennium Centre	467 3578
Royston Wardieburn Community Centre	552 5700
The Prentice Centre	552 0485
West Pilton Neighbourhood Centre	551 3194

OLDER PEOPLE

Drylaw Rainbow Daycare Centre	343 6643
LifeCare, Stockbridge House	343 0940
Pilton Equalities Project (PEP)	315 4466
St David's Wednesday Wanderers & Smarties Club	538 6262

FAMILIES

Circle Scotland (formerly Family Service Unit)	552 0305
Granton Child and Family Centre	552 4808
Haven Project, Craigroyston Primary School	332 9269
North Edinburgh Childcare	332 8001
Pilton Retreat, Ratho	333 1659
Stepping Stones North Edinburgh	551 1632
St David's Crazy Kids Club	538 6262
The Yard, Eyre Place Lane	475 4506
Women Supporting Women	551 1671

HOUSING

Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association	657 0600
Central Muirhouse Low-Rise Tenants Association	467 3570
City of Edinburgh Council North Local Office	529 5050
Edinburgh Tenants Federation	475 2509
Fresh Start	476 7741
Housing Support Inclusion Service	529 5093
Manor Estates Housing Association	337 3222
Muirhouse Housing Association	336 5282
Pennywell Tenants and Residents Association	476 2359
Port of Leith Housing Association	554 0403
West Granton Housing Co-operative	551 5035

HEALTH/WELFARE

Bangholm Medical Centre	552 6363
Barri Grubb	551 1671
Craigroyston Clinic	315 2121
Craigroyston Dental Clinic	332 7930
Crewe Medical Centre	552 5544
Davidsons Mains Medical Centre	336 2291
Inverleith Medical Practice	552 3369
Living Well North Edinburgh (formerly Stress Centre)	343 6375
Minor Injuries Unit, Western General Hospital	537 1330
Muirhouse Community Slimmers Club, Birnies Court	552 6477
Muirhouse Surgery	537 4343
NHS 24	08454 24 24 24
North Edinburgh Drug Advice Centre (NEDAC)	332 2314
North West Carers Centre	315 3130
Pilton Community Health Project	551 1671
Stockbridge Health Centre	225 9191
Western General Hospital	537 1000

RECREATION/ARTS

Ainslie Park Leisure Centre	551 2400
Blackhall Library	529 5595
Granton Library	529 5630
Leith Library	529 5517
Muirhouse Library	529 5528
North Edinburgh Arts Centre	315 2151
Screen Education Edinburgh (formerly Pilton Video)	343 1151
Stockbridge Library	529 5665
The Spartans Community Football Academy	552 7854

SCHOOLS/EDUCATION

Blackhall Primary School	336 1023
Broughton High School	332 7805
Community Learning & Development Forth	552 5700
Community Learning & Development Inverleith	332 6316
Craigroyston High School	477 7801
Craigroyston Primary School	343 6465
Edinburgh's Telford College	559 4000
Davidsons Mains Primary School	336 1184
Ferryhill Primary School	538 7382
Flora Stevenson's Primary School	332 1604
Forthview Primary School	332 2468
Granton Primary School	552 3987
Pirniehall Primary School	332 5256
St David's Primary School	332 3500
Stockbridge Primary School	332 6109
The Royal High School	336 2261
Trinity Academy	478 5050
Wardie Primary School	552 3896

YOUTH & CHILDREN

CHILDREN 1st bfrinds Service, The Prentice Centre	552 8265
Fet-Lor Youth Centre	332 4506
Granton Youth Centre	467 5854
Muirhouse Youth Development Group	332 3356
Pilton Youth and Children's Project	332 9815
The Yard, Eyre Place Lane	476 4506

If your group or organisation would like to be included in the Community Directory please email us at northedinnews@gmail.com



Community celebrates the rapid rise of Blackhall Athletic

Broughton High School was the venue for a reception to mark the formation of a new local football club last month

IT'S BEEN A RAPID RISE – six months ago Blackhall Athletic didn't exist, but now has teams playing in three football leagues!

Club chairman John Adams explained: "Blackhall Athletic really came about through conversations in the pub! A number of parents were talking in the Blackhall Lounge – their kids were members of a team but the boys were not always getting a game. Everyone agreed that it was important that the kids get a chance to enjoy taking part in sport, no matter their abilities. It was from those conversations that the idea for the club was born".

John is retired, but remains very active within the community and he was 'coerced' into helping parents set up a new football team for boys from Blackhall and the surrounding neighbourhoods. In August, just months later, Blackhall Athletic had three teams playing league football.

That's a cause for celebration and last night parents, coaches and players got together at Blackhall Athletic's Broughton High School home to say thanks to the people who made it all possible – Carey, Peri, Blackhall Sports Committee,

"We will never be results driven – Blackhall Athletic is very much a community football club"

Inverleith Neighbourhood Partnership and Craigleith Blackhall Community Council have all shown their support for the new club through sponsorship.

John added: "We've received tremendous support from a number of sources. To make a success of something like this you really need two things – money and dedicated people to volunteer their support. It's been quite a lot of hard work but we have both in place and we're now able to offer young people the opportunity

to come along and get involved, enjoy a game of organised football whatever your skill level. We will never be results driven – Blackhall Athletic is very much a community football club, all about sporting endeavour and playing the game in the right spirit. Everything is set up for the boys now – we have good coaches and the facilities here at Broughton are first class."

Robert Ure is the Active Schools coordinator based at Broughton High School's Sports hub. He told guests: "Blackhall Athletic is the first club to be launched from the hub here so this is a very exciting time. We are delighted to host Blackhall Athletic, and I'm delighted they have made their home here at Broughton. Our aim is to offer sporting activities for everyone – we provide a wide range of sporting opportunities with lots of different options, from dance to rugby and everything in between, so come along and give it a try!"

Blackhall Athletics has two Under Tens teams and an Under Thirteen side too. Given their meteoric rise, don't rule out more teams and age groups being added to that list some time soon!



Not sosobad

Fans out in force for Fairtrade football

STAFF, STUDENTS, FRIENDS AND FAMILY came out in force to support a football first recently when teams competed for the inaugural Edinburgh College Cup, a Fairtrade Football tournament held at the new Edinburgh College on 11 October.

Twelve five-a-side teams made up of staff and students came together to raise awareness of the fair-trade movement through football – and they raised over £300 which will go towards environmental projects happening both in and around the college.

The money raised at the October tournament will contribute to prizes for the innovative Green Dragons Den project, which will be held next year. The Green Dragon's Den initiative will encourage students to come up with green innovations and then present them in front of real live 'dragons'!

Sean McDonagh, Learner Development Tutor at Edinburgh College, organised the event. He said: "The support from the staff and students for this event was simply fantastic and it really helped create a real awareness of what the Fairtrade movement is all about – equality and working together."

"There was a real feeling of camaraderie, experienced by all teams throughout the duration of the day and I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who took part and donated."

The Scottish Fairtrade Forum donated Fairtrade footballs to the college and Street Soccer also helped out by providing referees on the day. The event is part of Edinburgh Colleges' overall aim to achieve Fairtrade status.

The winning team on the day was Real Sosobad, who scored 14 goals and took home the Edinburgh College Cup trophy – not sosobad at all!

Martin Rhodes, Director of the Scottish Fairtrade movement said: "A lot of the equipment that's produced for sport is made in sweat shops, usually by children in very poor, in fact, brutal conditions. One of the things that we want to develop is more links between sporting events and the Fairtrade movement."

Edinburgh College has a clear commitment to supporting and encouraging environmental and sustainable practices and offers and encourages the use of fair-trade products across all of its four campuses.

Wishing all our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all at The NEN.

