

Volume 1 | Issue 4
Date

Liberton Association Newsletter June 2021

Welcome to the fourth newsletter of the Liberton Association.

Committee News

The Committee continue to have virtual monthly meetings to discuss the way forward in regard of the preservation of the local Greenbelt land, Planning Applications, Local amenities and local history.

We check the weekly planning applications and will notify members of any Applications which may have an impact on the residents of Liberton. In addition, we will raise local issues with the local Councilors and Authorities to have them resolved. Please keep notifying us through the website or email if you have any concerns in the local area.

Unfortunately, with the current Government restrictions we are unable to have any public meetings. The next Annual General Meeting should take place late in 2021 or in May/June 2022 if permissible. If there are any pressing issues, we will have a virtual extraordinary public meeting if necessary.

Annual Membership

The annual memberships fees are due and are £5 per person. This can be paid in cash or cheque to the Treasurer, Joan Foulner, at 9 Alnwickhill Road, EH166LG, or direct to the Bank of Scotland Sort Code [REDACTED] Account number [REDACTED] quoting your surname and initials in the payment reference box.

We would normally issue the Association Financial Accounts at the public meeting in June but will send them electronically or by post in July 2021.

Edinburgh City Boundaries Centenary Project

The Committee has been involved with the planning for the Edinburgh City Boundaries Centenary Project which in 2020 celebrated 100 years since the Liberton area became part of the City of Edinburgh. We were unable to plan any community celebrations due to the covid restrictions in 2020/21 but this remains a goal once restrictions allow. We have produced a booklet 'Aboon

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the Kirk' with interesting places and facts in the Liberton area. The book has been sent electronically to all members, it is available on the website and paper copies are available from the cafe at Liberton Kirk and the Paper Rack Newsagents on Liberton brae. We ask for a small donation of £1, if possible, to cover printing costs. We hope you enjoy using the booklet with associated map, to explore your local area and learn some interesting facts. The feedback has been incredibly positive, and we are currently working on the second version which has improved photographs and corrects a few errors.

The next stage in the plan is to produce a video of the area from the air which will explain all the historic and interesting facts within the booklet. We will keep you up to date with the production and launch.

At the request of the Old Edinburgh Club (OEC) two days of walks, based on 'Aboon the Kirk' have been arranged for their members in July and August. It is hoped that in the future these will be available for Liberton Association members, and we will keep you up to date with progress.

Spaces for People

As you will be aware there are proposals to install cycle pathways on the Braid Hills Drive from the junction at Alnwickhill Road through to the end of the Braid Hill Drive. Members of the committee carried out surveys of all traffic, pedestrians and cyclists travelling along Liberton Drive to ascertain numbers using the area and the average speed of the traffic. We also carried out an online poll to ask your views on the proposals. This enabled the committee to respond to the proposals and reflect the views of the local community. The proposals have been postponed and we will endeavor to keep you up to date with any further changes.

Liberton Tower

Liberton Tower is of significant historical interest to our local story. It is owned by the Craigmillar Trust (CT) who also own much of the greenfield land in the surrounding area. The CT has leased the property to the Castles of Scotland Preservations Trust (CoSPT) who undertook major restoration work to bring the building up to today's standards. The Tower has been successfully run as a holiday let until this ceased due to Covid restrictions. Unfortunately, the CoSPT is unable to continue caring for the Tower and are in the process of terminating the lease. The furniture has all been removed and the tower and the surrounding garden are now requiring further restorative work. The Association is aware that there are some interested applicants for the lease and would hope to work in tandem with them to use the Tower for local activities. We would appreciate your thoughts on how you feel the Tower might be used benefit the local community.

Current Planning News

Link to Council's planning portal - <https://bit.ly/3w24lph>

Northfield House Hotel (Application reference 20/02562/FUL). Demolition of existing hotel and redevelopment of the site for purpose-built student accommodation including landscaping and all ancillary development.

This application was refused on 14th January on five different grounds which are detailed on the Edinburgh Council website (<https://bit.ly/3x4GEOC>). Liberton Association submitted an objection to this application, objecting to the effect on the area of such a large development, the environmental effects and questioning the size and scale of the development on a relatively small site. There were 98 objections and 28 supporting the application. At the end of March the developers submitted an appeal to the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) of the Scottish Government. The reporter, Mr Chris Norman, is making a site visit this month and will then issue a decision on the planning application. We will update Liberton residents when we hear of any decision.

Stanedykehead. (19/03525/FUL) To construct a steel framed shed to provide indoor equestrian facility (as amended). | Seven Acre Park Play Area, Stanedykehead, Edinburgh

As some residents will be aware, work has started on the construction of a very large, enclosed horse vaulting arena north of Seven Acre Park. The application for this arena/shed was approved in December 2020, after some revisions based on the objections raised by the Association amongst others. The proposal has been amended to reduce the height of the building to 5.7 metres and the original proposed colour of the shed has been changed from red to green. Enhanced planting along the boundary with Seven Acre Park will mitigate to some extent the effect of the building on local views. This application raised two worrying points. Firstly, the approval of this application weakens the Greenbelt by allowing de novo construction on a Greenfield site, which may lead in future to a more permanent development being proposed, either for recreation or housing. Secondly a significant number of supporting comments were received from individuals outwith the area. Whilst it's not clear how much influence comments from the public have on the Development Management Subcommittee, certain objections are waved aside as irrelevant, such as the need for such a facility to be on Greenbelt land at all.

Student Housing Development - Braefoot Terrace/Mayfield Road

Applications 20/02489/FUL and 20/00487/FUL were approved in 2020 for a 5 storey (too large in our opinion) student housing development on the sites of the former Braefoot Garage and Braidburn Inn. Demolition work has finished and the terraced houses on the site have gone, with the loss of five established family homes in the process. In their place is a proposed 280-300 bed development of 18 m² studios which have minimal communal social space, in the Association's opinion. Developers have already submitted three 'non-

material variations' to alter the approved design, the most recent of which removes the larger multi-occupancy apartment-like units and replaces them with more small studios. Considering the impact loneliness and isolation has had on student mental health, it's a pity these alterations are being proposed. It's not clear at this point whether this last variation will be approved, but we will update members when we know more.

Changes to permitted development rights from 1st April.

The Council has changed the rules on Permitted Development Rights. Permitted development rights are types of works, usually less complex and minor proposals such as small alterations and extensions that can be carried out without the need to apply for planning permission. From April 1st, new extended permitted development rights came into force which allow residents of both houses and flats to build structures and cycle stores within both their front and rear gardens. See bit.ly/3w1pvnz for details.

Local Development Plan. City Plan 2030

Update can be found at :- <https://bit.ly/3qz9XGr> . The draft local development plan (City Plan 2030) was supposed to open for 6 weeks of public consultation in June, until September. This again seems to have been delayed and approval of the draft plan may not pass through the relevant Council committees until early August. More when we know it.

Potential Planning Applications Update



Local green fields map in Liberton

As explained above in the City Plan 2030 fields 28, 29, 30 & 32 have been identified for potential building areas. We have no further information regarding Field 31 as this is managed by a different trust, but will continue to update you of any further applications.

Liberton Amenities

Concerns relating to amenities in the area have been given to the Committee who have followed up with the Council and other relevant bodies. If you have any concerns please let us know.

Liberton Park is used by many in the local community for recreation, the playpark, and for football games, We are still pressing the Council for a reply to enquires relating to the state of the changing rooms and what is to become of the pitch. We understand that an amateur club currently at Inch Park have advised the Council that they would like to take over this facility. They are also awaiting for a reply from the Council.

We are currently trying to get the Council to take action to repair the footpath on Alnwickhill Road between the entrance to Liberton Park and Stanedykehead. In addition, we have highlighted that there is an overhanging tree on this footpath which requires you to move onto the road.

Local News

This spring, the children from the Montessori Arts School released 14 butterflies that they had nurtured through from the chrysalis stage. A wonderful addition to our local wildlife, that hopefully will help to increase numbers in future years.

Protecting our local area

We are all enjoying the ability to use the local area for exercise and recreation however the Association has been made aware of people walking through the crops in the fields, parking on minor roads blocking access for farmers and those caring for horses. Please use the area responsibly and with regard to local residents.

If you have received this newsletter by post and have an email address please let me know on;

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