



Lasswade District Civic Society

Autumn Newsletter 2009

Introduction from our Chairman

Welcome to the Autumn, 2009 news sheet of the Lasswade Civic Society. It provides a summary of our main activities in the months ahead and an update of recent news. It is being delivered to those members who do not use the website (where there are more details and instant updates on issues and links to the new electronic planning applications). We hope that members will accept this arrangement. We want to use the web site as the main means of communication and discussion, since it is the most effective way of keeping the community up to date with developments and seeking wider views. But we will keep a periodic news sheet so long as members wish to have it. Do keep in touch with your views!

David Sugden

Footpaths

A priority of the Lasswade District Society is to maintain access to the footpaths in the Esk Valley. We can report that Midlothian Council have agreed with the owner that he shall unlock the gate blocking the **Polton entrance to Mavisbank policies**. This restores public access to the grounds of Mavisbank via the Polton route whilst exercising sensitivity to the occupiers of the adjacent cottages. Any problems should be reported to the Land Services Section of Midlothian Council on 0131 561 5386

Melville High Drive, currently blocked with a locked gate, is classified as a Right of Way (LM 178) by Midlothian Council and we have demonstrated in a letter to Scotways that it has been used for centuries (details of the letter are on the website). Scotways are discussing the best way forward.

Planning Information

On the reactive side of our activities we continue to monitor all planning applications on a weekly basis through the Midlothian Council Planning website. We select and respond to applications and always try to be objective and professional in our approach to the Planning Authority.

During the last twelve months we have created a Planning Sub-committee and co-opted Tom Delaney and Jeff Dunbar onto it. Any Letters of Objection written on behalf of the Society will be posted on the website for all members to read and to use them in writing their own response to planning applications.

Given the current financial climate and the spin-off it has had on the construction industry the number of contentious planning applications has been much lower than in previous years. Over the past twelve months the Society has objected to the following applications :

1. Erection of two dwelling houses at 27/29 Westmill Road. **Approved July 2008.**
2. The development of a Hotel and Pub/Restaurant at Melville Dykes Road by Whitbreads. **Approved March 2009.**
3. Application to remove specific conditions of ownership on Kevock Nursery Lasswade. **Approved February 2009.**
4. Application to construct 14 houses and 34 flatted dwellings at St. Anne's Path Poltonhall was **withdrawn** after over 100 letters of objection were received.
5. Application No 09/000228/OUT to change the use of the ground at St. Anne's Path from Agricultural land to Housing land submitted in March and **still to be determined** by Midlothian Council.
6. Application No. 09 00304/FUL to erect four flatted dwellings on a tarmaced area adjacent to St. Ann'e Path/ De Quincey Road Poltonhall. Within the village envelope but encroaches on Greenbelt at the rear, so **objection under consideration.**

Whilst we have fewer applications to deal with, the downturn in the construction industry and property markets has had a more serious impact on our local environment. Several sites in Lasswade are now on hold and some have been left undeveloped.

1. Old Mill Site consent for 10 houses for sale.
2. Howden and Weldon Site granted 2008 3 houses Section 75 agreement.
3. Lasswade primary School still vacant, two houses granted for part of site
4. Barony House, partially constructed sub frame eyesore and loss of trees.

One major new development is the EPlanning System which came into operation at the end of April moving planning from a paper based process to an electronic one.

The whole system is now much easier allowing applications to be lodged online and giving access to all related documentation so you can now read every application, including plans, from the comfort of your home instead of the local library.

Bill and Anna Dobson memorial:

We are going ahead with the construction of steps in Lasswade Park adjacent to the War Memorial and intend to have a bench at the top in memory of Anna and Bill Dobson. It will have a small plaque on it bearing the words "*In memory of Anna and Bill Dobson who gave so much to their local Community.*"

Website update

The website is now well established (www.lasswadecivic.com) and has been running relatively trouble free for some time. We have posted the content of the August News Letter on the website but as you can see have produced a printed copy for circulation to members for whom we do not have an e-mail address. Members are notified by e-mail if there is any new information available on the website, so even though anyone can access the website at any time we will continue to send printed information to you if we cannot alert you by e-mail. We also have members who do not have (or want!) access to a PC and therefore will always be communicated with in print. If however you do receive e-mail and would be happy for the Society to contact you in this way but have not yet given us your e-mail address, you can do so via the "contact us" facility on the "Committee/Contact" page of the website. I will then add you to the membership group e-mail. Please give your name and address in the comments space so that I can match your e-mail with the membership list.

Local news roundup

Traffic : Since the AGM the Committee has made representation to the Council on behalf of the members regarding the speed of the traffic through Lasswade village and down Polton Road. We have received the following response which has been placed on the website: "It is our intention at this stage to place one speed cushion in the middle of the three chicanes leading down from Dobbies Road junction. We are not proposing any additional measures at this time. We are placing the order for the pre-formed cushions now and we will programme their installation once they have been delivered. Due to the nature of the work we will have to organise a road closure for a day so that will be best done on a Sunday probably. Given our current work programme and the time for delivery I would anticipate this happening September/October time but this very much depends on how we get on with the current programme"

Village shop: By the time you receive this you may well be aware that the Lasswade Village Shop has re-opened as a flower and gift boutique called "Flowers in the Attic" but we were able to give advanced notice of this on the website. Lynne and Carole specialise in floral design and offer a personal service including home visits for funeral arrangements. They are mindful of the fact that this is a local shop and will stock juice and confectionary and would welcome essential stock suggestions from local residents. The shop can be contacted on 660 3549.

Community garden: We have also asked on the website for volunteers to join a permanent gardening party to look after the Community Garden Lasswade. If you would like to volunteer please contact us on 0131 660 5352.

Diary dates 10th Oct. 1030 am. "Highlights of the Ice Age in Edinburgh"

Saturday morning excursion led by David Sugden (en route to a pub for lunch?). Meet at the Lasswade pavilion at 10.30. All welcome! Transport can be provided.

Monday 16th Nov. Talk by Neil Grubb "Springwatch Lothian" Pavilion 7.45pm

