



Newsletter

Autumn 2015

Welcome

Chairman's Report

The consultation period on the draft Midlothian Development Plan has now closed, and we are awaiting the Council's response to the many issues raised by a number of respondents including the Civic Society.

Our main concerns were over the scale of envisaged additional development that would result in an enlarged Bonnyrigg becoming the largest town in Midlothian.

The related social infrastructure, such as schools and medical centres, that would be needed to support such an expansion, did not seem to have been considered.

And whilst there were no specific plans for additional housing within Lasswade itself, the effect of a population boost in the surrounding area would clearly show our existing transport infrastructure to be deficient.

The impact on our heavily used roads, already due to be affected by the additional development at Kevock Vale, is all too easy to imagine.

On a positive note, the new Borders Railway is now operating, but has struggled to keep up with demand from the travelling public. It shows how popular train travel is becoming again in preference to our crowded and pot-holed roads system. But the inevitable impact is that it will stimulate development and also bring more cars onto the roads, even if only transiting to a station car park.

Our own 20mph speed pilot in Lasswade is now approaching its halfway point, and we'll be discussing soon with the Council the experience to date and ways in which it might be improved. It does seem to have brought speeds down at certain times, even if not always to 20mph or below.

Our questionnaire for members is out for response, and we'd welcome any thoughts about how to make the Civic Society even more responsive to members' needs.

We'll also be looking shortly at improving our communication through the website and at ways to reach out to potential members from those who are new to the area.

Michael Stoneham, Chairman

Dear Member

It has been an interesting summer, the Festival, the re-opening of the Waverley Line and the constantly changing temperatures. It has been a very Scottish Summer, no two days the same!!

The Society has been busy. We were represented on the Neighbourhood Planning Committee and have influenced the decision making process. The purpose of the Committee was to enable the Community to influence the development of youth, health and place-making in Bonnyrigg and Lasswade. These priorities were identified through questionnaires, distributed throughout the locality.

Lasswade has a history of realising community ambitions through the work of the Society and its members, e.g. the 20mph Pilot and the current focus on Litter reduction.

We are always looking for new projects, please contact me if there is any new area that should be addressed.

Rosemary Mackay, Secretary

Photograph Competition

It is not just books that are read at the Edinburgh International Book Festival!

You are invited to submit a photograph of the LDCS Newsletter being read in an unusual place. A prize will be awarded to the member sending in the most inventive location as judged by the LDCS Committee members.

Please send your photos to dunlop.jacquie@gmail.com



Borders Railway and Eskbank station

Well here it is – our shiny new **Eskbank** railway station! For those who have been wondering where our local station has been hiding (as there are no signs anywhere – yet) it is behind the big Tesco store and to the left of the car park and campus of Edinburgh College (the old Jewel and Esk).

The railway started a few days before being formally opened, with much aplomb and enthusiastic support, by HM The Queen on Wednesday 9th September- which coincidentally was the date upon which Her Majesty became Britain's longest-serving monarch. The Queen and Prince Philip travelled by the steam locomotive, the Union of South Africa, and stopped off at Newtongrange for the formal opening ceremony.



From the time tables that we have seen the service operates weekday trains from Eskbank to Waverley roughly half hourly, at 04 and 34 minutes past the hour; or from Waverley roughly 24 and 54 past the hour. The price appears to be about £7.00 for a standard adult day return. Lots of permutations as you would expect, so please check!

We read somewhere that some of the initial trains had been very well supported, to the point where there have been complaints about the operation of two-car trains, and not the promised three-car sets that were expected. No doubt the service will settle down once the initial flurry of curiosity subsides and we use the service for its designed purpose.

Let's give it a go !





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Planning Matters

Weekly planning applications submitted to Midlothian Council can be viewed on the MC website: <https://planning-applications.midlothian.gov.uk/OnlinePlanning/search.do?action=weeklyList>

We continue to be extremely concerned about the large number of new houses planned in Midlothian, and their effect on the amenity of Lasswade District both in terms of the increase in traffic on the roads through Lasswade and on the Lasswade Bridge and between Loanhead and the Wadingburn Junction, and the increased pressure on community facilities.

In late November 2014, Midlothian Council Granted with Conditions permission for the erection of 29 dwellinghouses and 6 flatted dwellings, formation of access roads and car parking, and associated works at Kevock Vale Caravan Park, Westmill Road, Lasswade. This work has now commenced and our concerns focus on the consequent effect of the increase in traffic on Westmill Road. Access/egress improvements at the Lasswade Bridge junction are anticipated.

The impact on Midlothian of the SESplan requirement for 12,490 new housing units in Midlothian over the period 2009 – 2024 is a cause for great concern and we question whether the requirement for this huge number of houses, set in the last decade during a period of high economic growth, is still valid. We are very concerned that without careful management, the large housing estates proposed in the Midlothian Local Development Plan Proposed Plan 2014 will turn North Midlothian into a large sprawling dormitory suburb of Edinburgh, to the detriment of the existing local communities. That the Bonnyrigg, Lasswade and Poltonhall community is expected to become the largest town in the county when taking account of the proposed housing growth causes great concern. We are very concerned about the consequent loss of Community Identity and Coalescence.

We are also concerned that many of the policies set out in the Midlothian Local Development Plan Proposed Plan 2014 appear to permit development in, and to significantly dilute the current level of protections granted to, the Green Belt, the Countryside, Areas of Great Landscape Value, the River Valleys, the surrounding area of historically important buildings and of Listed Buildings.

And the suggestion in the Midlothian Local Development Plan Proposed Plan 2014 that Lasswade District, an ex-mining community which has suffered subsidence leading to extra reinforcement of foundations for building work, could become a fracking site is of further concern. Midlothian Council are aware of these concerns.

On 24 December 2014 development plans were submitted to Midlothian Council to build five houses with an access road and associated parking area at Springfield, Lasswade. The site lies in an area of Protected Green Belt Land designated in the Midlothian Local Plan 2008 as Protected Countryside, Protected River Valley and an Area of Great Landscape Value, and which abounds the Mavisbank Conservation Area. As such any proposal for change of use of land in such a sensitive location is at risk of contravening the Resource Protection and Detailed Development policies set out in the Midlothian Local Plan, and importantly could set a dangerous precedent. The application was, however, withdrawn at the beginning of June.

On 14 July 2015 an EIA Screening Opinion for a proposed solar farm at Melville Landfill Site Lasswade was submitted. The Planning Department have confirmed the application for the proposed development will require an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Litter Champions for Lasswade

It has been suggested that the ideal people to determine the litter picking calendar, are those most affected by the thoughtless disposal of detritus on our streets and green spaces.

Please contact Sheena Dryden on sheena@drywat.idps.co.uk or Rosemary on 663 6651, if you would like to represent your area. You will not be expected to pick the litter but to inform Sheena or myself of problem areas or incidents of fly-tipping. These areas can be dealt with by either 'guerrilla picks', where a team focusses on a particular area or for inclusion in our programme of regular litter picks.

We look forward to hearing from anyone who can help us trial this approach.

Golden Tickets

Here are Peter Collins and his son Douglas enjoying the Golden Ticket trip. Peter carried the Commonwealth Games Baton in recognition of his work for the Loanhead community.



Relaunch of LDCS Website and Facebook Page

Given that Facebook has become, for some, the preferred medium for information gathering, we have decided to link our Website to our Facebook page.

We intend to advise members of initiatives, news and events not only through e-mails and Newsletters but also by streaming information through the website and Facebook.

It is our intention to having this up and running by November 2015.

LDCS communications

If you receive emails to your inbox from updates@lasswadecivic.com then you will know when LDCS events are happening and will receive for example appropriate notice of the AGM when it occurs in April.

If you are one of those members who says- 'I didn't know there was a clean up/ garden tidy/ social gathering and if I had known I would have liked to come along' then now is the time to send me an email so that I can add your up to date contact details to the LDCS database and you need never miss out on the action/fun in future. Please email me dunlop.jacquie@gmail.com thank you!

Membership Matters

The Membership Secretary is delighted to welcome new area representative Mrs Patricia Eason to the team. Patricia will collect subscriptions, deliver Newsletters and generally keep an eye out for new residents (and therefore potential new members of LDCS!) in Kevock Road.

Many thanks to Patricia for stepping up as George Archibald stepped down. This allows the Membership Secretary to concentrate on her own area of Broomieknowe and Lower Broomieknowe as well as the overall running of the membership lists.

As always the adage 'many hands make light work' applies to such roles.

Currently the Westmill Road area is covered very efficiently indeed by Howard Turner but his area covers many more households than other representative's areas and I would ask if there is someone living in the Westmill Road area who would be willing to share Howard's list of members please.

The duties are important to the smooth running of the Civic Society but not too onerous and a good way of keeping up with the neighbours! If anyone feels they might be able to help Howard out in this area I would be very pleased to hear from you. Email dunlop.jacquie@gmail.com.

Litter picking dates

We have some litter picking days arranged (all weather dependent) with coffee and cakes as a treat to finish.

Sunday 11 October 2015 – Meet at the Community Garden- 2.30-4pm

Sunday 8 November 2015 – Meet at Springfield Mill entrance – 2.30-4pm.

Sunday 7 February 2016 – Meet at Lasswade Cemetery – 2.30-4pm.

Thoughts and photographs from the Neighbourhood Plan

In November 2013, 7,500 surveys were distributed across Bonnyrigg and Lasswade. These Surveys gave people who were prepared to share their views, an opportunity to express their feelings and concerns about the local community.

It is interesting to hear how others perceive, the environment in which they live.

Some of the positives expressed were that people enjoyed, peace, quiet and green space. Community/ Friendly atmosphere, good transport links, good local walks and cycle ways and personal safety were also mentioned.

Some, however were concerned about loss of quiet and green space as a result of over development. There was some disappointment expressed over poor public transport, shabby town centre and lack of facilities for young people.

Overall it was good to hear that others value our local environment and seek to protect our natural heritage.



We would like to thank Margaret McLaren for taking some beautiful photographs to illustrate the Neighbourhood Plan.

Dates for the diary

Sunday 11 October 2015 - Lasswade Community Garden clear- up 2pm-4pm

Wednesday 11 November 2015 – Talk with Bill Tait on Gardening – 7.30pm Polton Bowling Club. There will be refreshments

Friday 4 March 2016 – Annual Party with drinks and canapes – St Leonards Church Hall 7.30 pm – Tickets £5

Monday 25 April 2016 – AGM –St Leonards Church Hall at 7.30pm – Speaker TBA – there will be refreshments

Committee members

Michael Stoneham (Chair), Rosemary Mackay (Secretary), Adam Landsdown (Treasurer) Jacque Dunlop (Membership Secretary), Sheila Murray (Planning Secretary), Sheena Dryden (Social Secretary), John Blackwell and Steve Knott