



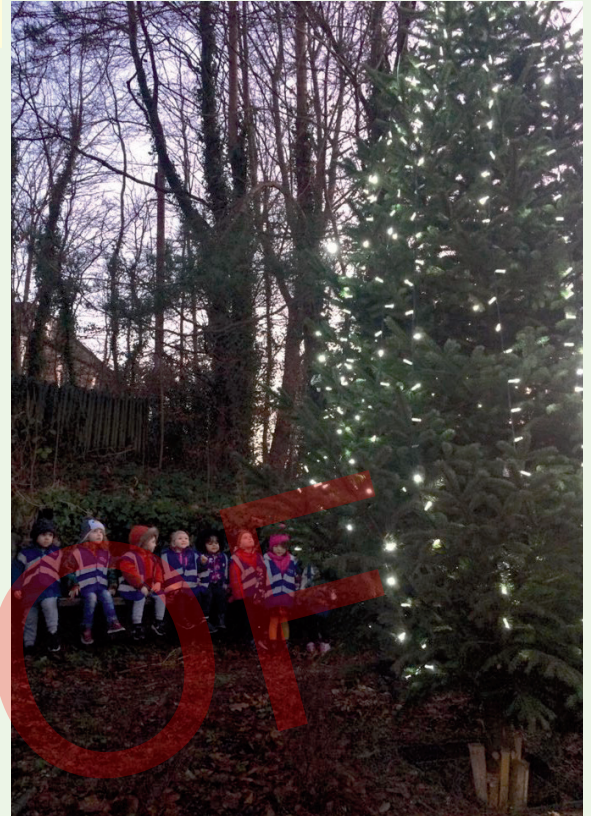
### Chairman's Report

I would like to start by wishing (belatedly) all our Members a very Happy New Year and to thank everyone who donated to our appeal for funds which ensured our village's Christmas tree and lampposts were decorated and lit up over the Festive Period. A particular thanks to local farmer Ian Barr for donating the tree, and many congratulations to Ian, who will later this year take up office as President of Scottish Rugby.

We monitor very closely planning applications in Lasswade, particularly those which threaten the precious Green Belt land around us. It is very important that you all know how, as individuals, you can make your voice heard and in this Issue of the Newsletter, Committee member Keith Chapman has set out some invaluable tips to help ensure your representations on planning applications are as effective as possible.

Our anti-litter campaign is up and running and I would draw your attention (forgive the pun!) to the Poster Competition which is open to the Primary and Nursery aged children in the area. Please encourage them to take part. The winning entries will be displayed in McDonalds at Straiton for all their customers to see and, hopefully, act upon. We are also looking for a slogan for our campaign so, again, please encourage all your family to think of a suitable strapline to highlight the need for everyone to play their part in reducing the litter problem which we currently see all around us. Lasswade is a beautiful place. Let's try to encourage litter culprits to change their behaviour!

*George Clark  
Chairman*



*Our Local VIPs from Pinocchio's Nursery  
switching on the lights in Lasswade!*

### Secretary's Report

There are a great many people to thank, for responding so generously to our 'Christmas Lights in the Village Fundraiser'. To mention two out of many Wendy, baked, produced jam and helped to organise a number of events and Heather hosted a very successful Coffee Morning. A number of Members very kindly donated generous sums to the Fund. Thank you to everyone who supported the Appeal and responded so willingly to keeping the Village lit-up this Christmas!

Members have expressed their concern and dismay at the loss of green space in the Village and Keith our Planning Secretary has written an informative guide, outlining some of the key issues to be taken into consideration when composing a response to Planning Applications. We have been very fortunate as a Society, in having had a series of Planning Secretaries, who have show great commitment to this very important function. We are grateful to the time and effort they have put into this role on behalf of us all and please, continue to contact us about any issues that concern you.

I was sent a link on Sunday 9th Feb to say that the Pond in

Springfield was trending on Instagram with #magicalplace. It reminds me of how fortunate we are to live in Lasswade, when I see others appreciating and valuing our natural heritage.

Once again I would, on behalf of the Committee, like to thank the Reps for all of the work that they carry out on behalf of the Society. Sheena our Membership will be hosting an Afternoon Tea, in their honour on Sunday 29th March, to show our appreciation of their support.

The Committee would like to express their thanks to Rosemary Buchanan, who has decided to stand down after many years of valued service to the Society and welcome David Sugden who has kindly offered to 'take over her patch.'

A number of Members have already purchased Tickets the Annual Party and I am pleased to say that they are going fast. There is however still time to purchase a Ticket and I do hope you can join us on Friday 28th February at 7.30pm, for drinks, nibbles and a very warm welcome!

*Rosemary Mackay,  
Secretary*

## Thank you to everyone who supported the Village Christmas Lights Fundraiser

There was a really heart-warming response to the Village Lights Appeal from both individual Members and local Businesses. It was a Community project, led by the Society, who are very grateful to all of those who organised and attended events and to the individuals who donated so generously to the Fund.

£978.36 was raised in total and £450 donated to the Bonnyrigg Lights Committee, as Lasswade's contribution to the decoration of the Village. The remaining funds will be held over until next Christmas. Ian Barr offered to donate and transport the Tree and several of the children from Pinocchio's Nursery were delighted to officiate at the 'Grand Switch On' of the Lights.

### The Paper Mill

Very kindly donated drinks and set aside the area to the rear of the Restaurant for a Coffee Morning, this was very well attended by Members and their friends. There was a Talk given by local Potter Renae Bell (pictured below) about the inspiration behind her work and there was a raffle, with donated prizes. In fact a number of those attending, enjoyed it so much that they suggested we make it a regular Event!



The Paper Mill took a Collection Tin for the Bar and donated a £40 voucher, which will be raffled at the Annual Party on Friday 28th February.

Special thanks to Karen and Courtney from The Paper Mill for their wholehearted support of the Fundraiser.

## Website & Social Media

We are excited to report that the new LDCS website is ready to go live! With its more contemporary design, finding the information you want; including forthcoming society events, links to relevant Midlothian planning applications and responses, newsletters and committee minutes will be easier and more intuitive. LDCS members will now be able to set a password of their choice and thereafter access photos of society events, committee meeting minutes and newsletters.

Importantly, 'behind the scenes' our new website and database will streamline membership and finance administrative tasks, really bringing the society into the 21st century.

The website has a page dedicated to the history of Lasswade.

### Pinocchio's Nursery Lasswade

We were delighted that the Nursery staff were so keen to involve the children in Fundraising for the Lights. They organised a Cake Sale, where the children baked in the Nursery and sold the resulting produce to Parents. The children were rewarded for their efforts, when they were invited, as the local VIP's, to switch on the Lights. (pictured below)



### Laird and Dog Hotel

The Laird took Collecting Tins for the Bar and offered us space to hold a Fundraising Quiz Night. We might yet take them up on that offer! We were grateful for their enthusiastic support for the project.

### Polton Inn

The Polton Inn, although not benefitting directly from the decorations in the Village, were keen to offer their support and took Collection Tins for their Bars.

### Luci's Restaurant

Thanks to Luci's for donating a £30 voucher to our Raffle. We are very fortunate to have businesses, which wish to promote and support local causes, operating in the Village.



## Planning and Lasswade District Civic Society

The Civic Society maintains a watching brief over planning applications which might affect the character and amenity of our community. Assessment of planning applications is a standing item on our committee meetings when such applications are discussed and a decision is made as to whether comment is required from the Society. Over the past two years I have undertaken the role of monitoring the Midlothian Council planning portal <https://planning-applications.midlothian.gov.uk/OnlinePlanning/> and researching potential issues. We note, in particular, if any comments from residents are submitted and take into account any 'material planning considerations'. We have looked at about 40 applications and passed comment on six.

This phrase, 'material planning considerations', is of great importance as it is only on the basis of these matters that a council can make judgements about applications. They are part of planning legislation as set out in law determined by the Scottish Parliament. Midlothian Council has a guide to make a comment on their website - [https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200167/planning\\_applications/34/search\\_and\\_comment\\_on\\_planning\\_applications](https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200167/planning_applications/34/search_and_comment_on_planning_applications). The material considerations are listed on page 2 with the most important of these being compliance with the Local Development Plan and in the context of Lasswade, the effect on historic buildings and conservation areas. It is also made clear what is not material and lists some of the more common comments which cannot be considered. When making a comment it is always useful to read the developers statement on the portal and base any comments on potential flaws in their argument for approval of the development. It is also reasonable to look at individual circumstances and the potential for loss of amenity but this is not something the Society would necessarily comment on.

The actual process consists of an initial assessment by planning officials who look at relevant issues and produce a report for councillors who make the actual decision. All Midlothian councillors are members of the planning committee. Permission can be refused at this stage but developers have the ability to have this decision looked at again at the Local Review Body (LRB) who can reverse this decision. Objectors do not have access to the LRB but can make submissions. Notice of appeal to the LRB appears on the planning portal and is communicated to those who made comments on the original application. There is a further level of appeal to Planning and Environmental Appeals division of the Scottish Government, commonly known as 'the Reporter'. Their report cannot be appealed and the only way to challenge this is to apply for judicial review in the Court of Session.

Planning is an area where differences of view can lead to conflict. Planning law is an attempt to balance the interests of various parties. It has been recognised that the balance has not always been achieved in the past and a new planning law was passed last year. The planning framework arising from this is still in development. More information can be found on the Transforming Planning website <https://www.transformingplanning.scot>. Included in this is a framework for community engagement which includes the development of Local Place Plans. This framework is still in development and comments can still be submitted for this first stage. A guidance leaflet is available <https://www.transformingplanning.scot/media/1146/npf4-early-engagement-have-yoursay-leaflet.pdf>. For those particularly interested there is a planning roadshow in the Quaker Meeting house in Edinburgh on the Wed 18th March. To apply to join the workshop on that day, go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/national-planning-framework-4-scotplan-2050-workshop-edinburgh-tickets-92019120667>

## Lasswade History Project

Earlier this year Wendy MacMillan and I were privileged to meet Mrs Grace Costello for a coffee at the Papermill. Grace vividly recalled fascinating tales of growing up in Lasswade during the 1940s and 50s and really brought Lasswade's recent past to life. Grace brought along a copy of the book 'Old Lasswade and Bonnyrigg' by Oliver Van Helden (1997) and as we viewed the old black and white photographs on each page, she recalled details of the people who lived in the various houses depicted, the numerous shops and their proprietors in the centre of Lasswade and other features of this bygone age including a dairy farm, the old church, the carpet factory and blacksmiths.

The history page of the new LDCS website will include more fascinating snippets from oral histories provided by Grace and other former Lasswade residents. Please take a look!

We would like to thank Mrs Grace Costello and others who have generously given their time to this project.



Lasswade village more than 100 years ago. Looking up to the old school.

## Lasswade and District Civic Society Annual General Meeting

Our AGM will take place on Wednesday 29th April from 7.30pm at St. Leonards Church Hall.

Cameron Manson will give a talk on 'The Esk - the influence of the river on the settlements through which it passes'

## Dates for your Diary

Friday 28th February	Annual Party - at 7.30pm in St Leonard's Church Hall, Dobbie's Road
Sunday 1st March	Litter Pick and Garden Clear-up - Meeting in the Community Garden, Lasswade ( <i>opposite Laird and Dog</i> ) 2.30-4pm Please bring gloves and gardening tools. There will be Coffee and Cake.
Sunday 29th March	Reps Afternoon Tea - Invitations will be sent out
Sunday 5th April	Litter Pick and Garden Clear-up - Meeting in the Community Garden, Lasswade ( <i>opposite Laird and Dog</i> ) 2.30-4pm Please bring gloves and gardening tools. There will be Coffee and Cake.
Wednesday 29th April	Annual General Meeting - at 7.30pm in St Leonard's Church Hall
Monday 1st June	Litter Pick and Garden Clear-up - Meeting in the Community Garden, Lasswade ( <i>opposite Laird and Dog</i> ) 6.30-8pm Please bring gloves and gardening tools. There will be refreshments.

## Invitation to Newbattle Apiary

Following a talk last year, at our AGM from David Hennesey NBA, we have been invited to visit the Apiary at Newbattle Abbey on Sunday 28th June 2020 from 2.30 - 4.30pm. There are ten places available and if you would like the opportunity to look inside a hive and learn more about the fascinating life of the bee, please email Rosemary - [dequinceyrose@aol.com](mailto:dequinceyrose@aol.com) to reserve a place.



## A members' reflections on a problem that taxes us all

### Our littering problem: it's a symptom, not the disease

A short walk from my house in Lasswade takes me into the valley of the North Esk. The river path south goes into spectacular Roslin Glen, and north into the Mavisbank House estate. For me, these are oases of peace and respite from Midlothian's increasingly frenetic environment. The Esk Valley is also a vital sanctuary for animals whose habitats are rapidly being entombed beneath roads and identikit suburban villas.

I despair, and sometimes rant online, about the amount of litter that people leave in these precious places. Plastic bottles float down the river, carrier bags stay tangled in branches for years, baggies of dog waste pile up beside the path or hang like ornaments in the bushes. Fast food packaging is jettisoned from cars and flattened into the tarmac. All over Scotland, people visit our beauty spots, take selfies and leave their rubbish behind. Even the plastic sheaths protecting baby trees break down and pollute our waters.

It's easy to blame a few thoughtless individuals. However, litter is a symptom of a greater disease: powerlessness. The forces that affect our lives feel too big to fight. We know about the climate emergency, but not what to do about it. We don't always like decisions our politicians make, but wonder if our votes make a difference. Even in our own lives we feel helpless. We know what we should do to be happier and healthier, but life is so stressful that those changes seem impossible. If we believe we have no power, we soon forget that our actions matter. Governments and multinationals

trash the planet on an industrial scale, so who cares if I throw a crisp packet in the river?

But we do have power, and we have responsibility. Local groups such as the Lasswade and District Civic Society, where I live, do regular but often unrecognised work for the environment. They will be having a litter pick in Lasswade on 5 April, 2:30- 4pm, meeting opposite the Laird and Dog pub. Everyone is welcome. We all have the power to be the change we want to see in the world, step by tiny step.

**Rebecca McKinney**

*Rebecca McKinney is a writer, counsellor and community worker. Her novels, *The Angel in the Stone* and *Blast Radius*, are published by Sandstone Press. Follow on Twitter @BexMcKinney*



**Thanks to all who gathered this on our last litter pick - hope to see you again on 5th April.**