



Newsletter

Autumn 2014

Chairman's Report

Our AGM at the end of April highlighted important local issues that are likely to gain more prominence as we move into the Winter.

There was discussion about the lack of a positive response by Midlothian Council to the Society's successful petition for a 20mph speed limit to be introduced in the Lasswade village area. Passionate feelings were expressed about what was seen as a failure to implement the requested safety measures. Two local Councillors spoke and gave their interpretation of the position.

The Council is currently taking a strategic approach in looking at all its local options before deciding how best to respond, with a decision date apparently coming by the end of this year at earliest.

The Society expects the Council to address the issues raised by our petition, after this preparatory process. Over coming months we will be actively encouraging members, Councillors and others to show strong support to help us increase the pressure for real action.

There was an excellent talk about Mavisbank, the House and its Grounds, followed in June by two arranged guided tours for members. The issue of local access also came up, and I would like to see this resolved amicably for all time. Access from the riverbank path is now much improved, which is a great first step. The backdrop is, of course, the continuing difficulty in delivering financing for an appropriate development project for the house and/or grounds. The Society's position as stated in 2010, following consultation with members, is that we favour a light touch here. This remains our position and we will continue to review and comment on proposals on this basis.

A third local issue which will increase in prominence shortly is the new Midlothian development plan. The Society, along with others, responded to the initial consultation and we now await news of firm proposals. The provision of additional housing and the related community infrastructure is clearly going to be a crucial aspect. The impact of the Borders Railway and the Shawfair new town will also have consequences for our local area, not least in continuing pressure on the road system.

We encourage members to come forward with any concerns that they may have and which fall within our remit. The Society will continue to be vigilant in monitoring ongoing proposals and ensuring the case for enhancement of local amenity is always made prominently.

All of this work will be pursued without the substantial help of Jan Jerome, who has served for 7 years in various roles on the LDCS Committee, most notably as Chairwoman and Secretary. Jan has decided to step down from her role as Secretary but will remain as a member of the Planning sub-group and as a Rep. We look forward to working with Jan in future. The Committee warmly thanks her on members' behalf for her commitment, energy and wisdom over the years. We enjoyed a very pleasant evening with Jan and her husband Alan at the Paper Mill, celebrating the important contribution she has made to the work of the Society. Note to Treasurer – no Society funds were used in the pursuit of a thoroughly good evening at the Paper Mill!

Michael Stoneham, Chairman

Welcome

Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter of the Lasswade District Civic Society. We have enjoyed a balmy summer, unusually the sun has shone during all of our activities. 2104 has been an eventful year, not least because Jan Jerome is no longer organising the Newsletter! I would like to thank Jan for all, of the not inconsiderable effort she has put into preparing previous news-letters for print. Moreover I would thank her for sharing her wonderful photography on these pages. We have taken the decision to send newsletters not only to our membership but to households in Lasswade. We believe it is important to make everyone aware of our 20 mph campaign . If you wish to comment please contact me through the Lasswade District Civic Society website.

**Rosemary Mackay,
Secretary**

Mavisbank

The Mavisbank Trust project is the first step towards saving Mavisbank House and Policies. The aim of the project is to provide access and partially restore the house, deliver a first phase of restoration to the landscape as an accessible greenspace, and create a sustainable income stream to maintain the site.

Public access to the House and Policies will be created through the formation of a new access route and an off-site car park for visitors. Key landscape features and walkways will be reinstated, with the Policies opened up as a Community Park linking to wider community initiatives along the valley of the North Esk and forming an important strategic element of the Lothian's green network.

A recent forum was held by the Mavisbank Trust to canvass views from the local community on possible future uses for the site. In a designated Area of Great Landscape Value the formation of a brand new access route across the Designed Landscape to Mavisbank House, the creation of new car parks for visitors both off-site and at Mavisbank House, and the impact of the project on the Designed Landscape, on the wildlife of Mavisbank, and on the tranquillity of the valley, are all matters of great concern to the local community, and these concerns were raised at the forum where the general consensus put forward from those present to the Mavisbank Trust was instead for a 'light touch approach' to be adopted.

The cost estimate of the project is £5 million [excluding VAT] and a funding application is to be made to the Heritage Lottery fund this Autumn.

Queen's Baton

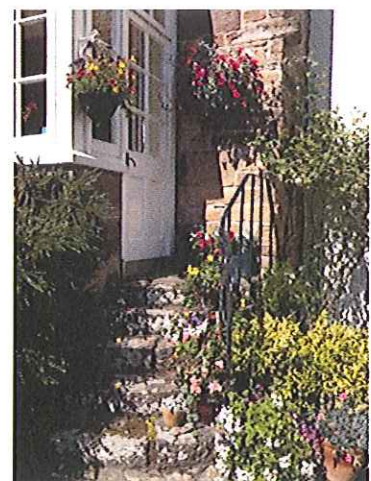
On a warm day in June Lasswade High School and the Primary School children and residents of Bonnyrigg welcomed the Queen's Baton as it made its way along Polton Street on day three of its forty day journey through Scotland visiting communities in all 32 Local Authorities on its way to Glasgow's Commonwealth Games. Sheena Dryden, our Social Secretary volunteered at the Velodrome throughout the Games.



Gardens Open Day Broomieknowe

On a sunny Sunday afternoon at the end of June a number of enthusiastic gardeners, many of them LDCS members, opened their gardens in Broomieknowe for charity through Scotland's Gardens. Midlothian Area Organiser Sarah Barron distributed the distinctive yellow signs to guide visitors to the six gardens, varied in their size, design and planting.

A plant stall, second hand gardening books and teas accompanied by delicious home baking were also on offer. The chosen charity was the Marie Curie, Ann Spence Memorial Fund. Ann was a rep for LDCS for many years. Over £1000 was raised to be shared between Scotland's Gardens own nominated charities and Marie Curie. Thank you so much to all members who supported this event.



Planning Matters

On the 10th of June, development plans were submitted to Midlothian Council to build a high density housing development of 35 units at Kevock Vale Caravan Park, Westmill Road, Lasswade. The 35 units are made up of 19 detached and 10 semi-detached 3, 4 and 5 bedroom properties, all 2 storey, and a 3 storey block of 6 2-bedroom flats.

In a Green Belt Conservation Area of Great Landscape Value this is a cause for concern, as is the likely increased traffic on Westmill Road generated by the proposed development, particularly at the junction of Westmill Road and the already busy main road through Lasswade. We have written to Midlothian Council about our concerns.

Also on the 10th of June, an application for planning permission in principle was submitted by Gladman Developments Ltd for their proposed development of 114 houses at Larkfield on land north and south of Lasswade Road, Eskbank .

And again on 10th June, an application for detailed planning permission was submitted by Cala Homes for the erection of 56 dwellinghouses, associated infrastructure and landscaping on land 160m South West Of Mayshade Garden Centre, Eskbank Road, Bonnyrigg.

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. Midlothian Council are aware of our concerns and we now await with interest the Draft Replacement Midlothian Local Plan expected in September this year.

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>

LDCS Reps

An afternoon tea was hosted by our Membership Secretary, Jacquie Dunlop to thank all our Area Reps for the valuable work they have done for LDCS – delivering newsletters, collecting subscriptions, and keeping an eye on the moving population so that new member invitation and welcome packs can be delivered. Currently we have vacancies in two areas Broomieknowe and Cuguen Place – can you help ? Contact Jacquie Dunlop through the Lasswade District Civic Society website



Community Garden clean up

We had a very successful tidy up of the Community Garden in Lasswade on Saturday 28 June 2014. As you can see from the photograph everyone worked extremely hard and produced over twenty bags of garden refuse.

We would like to thank the Council for so helpfully cutting the grass and removing the fruits of our labour (the bags).

We retired to the Paper Mill in Lasswade for well-earned coffee and cake.

All clean ups are advertised on the website - why not join us the next time ?



Twenty's Plenty – a member's plea to tackle the incessant traffic intimidation of Lasswade.

Members may remember that on 24th June, 2013, Jan Jerome and I presented a 246 signature petition to Midlothian Council and won the support of the Petition Committee Council Members who voted three to two on a motion to establish a Twenty's Plenty zone in the village of Lasswade.

At a subsequent Council Meeting the SNP majority voted to ignore the decision of the Petitions Committee, preferring instead to wait for a report from their officials, who in turn are waiting for a report from the Scottish Parliament on guidelines for the establishment of Twenty's Plenty zones throughout Scotland.

Thirteen months of prevarication by the Council, officials and councillors leave LDCS members with absolutely none of the improvements to traffic management in the Village that they petitioned for. Meantime, there have been several accidents on and near the bridge plus a head-on incident when a speeding car failed to negotiate the corner and landed up on the wrong side of the road causing on-coming vehicles to collide.

Any Lasswade resident will tell you of numerous incidents with speeding traffic as it passes through the village. The steep approaches from both directions on the A786 encourage cars, lorries, even buses to enter the Village at speeds well in excess of 30mph. However it seems that Midlothian Councillors and officials are blind to our daily predicament. Officials hide behind fatal accident statistics and pay little heed to the Conservation Village environment, especially at peak travelling times. Jan and I have sought assistance and support from our local MSP Colin Beattie. His letter to John Blair at the council did get a reply, albeit reiterating that the Council was awaiting guidance from Parliament. The matter has also been discussed at the local Community Council who are supportive but equally unable to transform the deaf and dead hand of the Council. It is almost unthinkable that elected Councillors and their officials can keep up the pretence that there is nothing wrong with traffic management as it thunders through our Village, day after day, night after night.

We have also requested that the Council carry out a speed survey of traffic as it enters the Village and we are in the process of requesting the Council to carry out air quality checks at peak traffic times in the centre of the Village. The outcome of these surveys would add hard evidence to the original LDCS petition and we do hope that our local councillor representatives will support our request.

Failing that and any subsequent action by the Council, we hope that members will support a strong campaign to achieve our Community's wishes to live in a properly traffic-calmed environment that is beneficial to people who live and work in the village be they residents, pedestrians, cyclists or motorists.

We accept that the A768 is a very busy thoroughfare but with sympathetic consideration from the "passers through" we can all enjoy a safer and healthier environment.

Ed Angus

Mavisbank Walks

We would like to express our thanks to Jamie Craig for leading not one but two interesting and very informing walks around Mavisbank House and grounds. It was a joy to share in Jamie's enthusiasm and knowledge. We look forward to the next one.

Dates for the diary

10 November 2014 – St Leonards Church Hall at 7.30 pm – Bill Tait a Gardening Expert will talk on "Plants and their Pests" (Bill will host a practical event in the Community Garden in the Spring of 2015 date to be announced)

15 & 16 November 2014 – Mavisbank House at 2.00 pm – Jamie Craig will lead a Winter's walk around Mavisbank (this is open to non- members – please contact us through the website if you wish to attend).