

NEWSLETTER



Welcome from the Chairman

We move into 2014 with some big local issues to help progress.

We've been campaigning actively for a 20mph speed limit to be introduced in the centre of Lasswade and surrounding roads. The Council is currently considering its options across the whole of its area, an update can be found on page 4.

The future of Mavisbank House and its grounds is again under consideration. We're engaging constructively with the Mavisbank Trust and other interested local groups to ensure that community views are listened to and that the grounds are made accessible in the right way. More information on page 2.

The Council has now reported on its consultation on the forthcoming new local development plan. We submitted our own comments focussing on the scale and location of suggested development sites. A draft plan is expected to be published in the Spring and we will be scrutinising this in detail.

Much of this activity has been fuelled by our tireless Secretary, Jan Jerome. Jan has been a force for good in the Society for the last seven years, but is now ready to hand on her secretarial duties. We all owe Jan a great debt.

At the AGM on April 29th, which this year will be held in St. Leonard's Church Hall, we will be electing our Officers and Committee members for the following year, and all our membership is encouraged to think about becoming involved in one way or another. If there are any willing volunteers out there, please get in touch with one of the existing Committee members in the next few weeks.

Michael Stoneham
Polton Bank



*Welcome to the 2014
Winter Newsletter*

As we prepare this edition we have so far been lucky to escape the worst of the gales and flooding that have affected so many other areas.

We continue to work with the Council on various issues detailed elsewhere in this document.

Since our last Newsletter the Society has sent representatives to the Scottish Civic Trust conference held at Linlithgow, has met with the Bonnyrigg and Lasswade Community Council and has representation on the Bonnyrigg, Lasswade and Poltonhall Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group.

We intend to continue to collaborate with local bodies with similar concerns to our own throughout 2014.

We look forward to meeting you at the various events during the year, some of which you will find outlined on the last page of this Newsletter.

We hope you have a very happy and prosperous 2014.





MAVISBANK our favourite and most well-known local “landmark” is back in the news.

Most of us attended the presentation and consultation in Loanhead in March 2013 (memorable, amongst other reasons, as the most appallingly wet weekend!) to see and listen to the current thinking of the Mavisbank Trust, a subsidiary of the Edinburgh Green Belt Trust. On display was a scheme for the restoration of the house and policies. The project has been estimated to cost in the region of £4.65m, and it is hoped to fund this from a

range of sources, including Historic Scotland and the Heritage Lottery Fund, and from grant making trusts and foundations, private donors, corporate sponsors and a public appeal. Lasswade District Civic Society is an obvious interested party, and as such we have been invited to attend and to contribute to the current public consultation. LDCS representatives have been to a couple of very enlightening and interesting meetings in Loanhead during the past few months to hear the progress and to discuss any thoughts that we might offer. A number of representatives from other community groups such as the Springfield-Mill Action Group and The Esk Valley Trust were also in attendance.

Fortunately, we are NOT being asked for money! However, The Mavisbank Trust, encouragingly, are keen to work in collaboration with Community groups to ensure sustainability once the project is underway. But it was heartening to hear that the Trust had been awarded £40,000 from LEADER Tyne-Esk Midlothian Council and Scottish Natural Heritage towards continuing development work on the Mavisbank restoration project by initially supporting footpath improvements along the riverbank from Polton and creating two new pedestrian gates into Mavisbank grounds. All of this activity will contribute to the re-submission of the Stage 1 grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, around April/May 2014.

LDCS is very happy to continue to attend the consultation meetings and would welcome any members who would be interested in participating in this project please let us know.

Grant news - £250 cash to be spent this spring

In July 2013 we were awarded a grant from CSV (Community Service Volunteers) Action Earth campaign for £250 towards the cost of any project that we wanted to do – within certain fairly relaxed and easily satisfied criteria, all of which we can meet relatively easily within our resources and our function as a local Civic Society. The grants are to improve outdoor sites and natural habitats, and we thought we could use this valuable cash assistance to purchase any materials that we needed to improve our community.

We have had a couple of very good ideas from members, and as the turkey and drams retreat into the memory for another year, we feel must get on and get the work done. We could buy trees and shrubs, pipes and ballast to repair the paths, material to make rubbish receptacles and nesting boxes, etc..

PLEASE let us have ideas. Adam Lansdown (0131 663 1230 adam.lansdown@gva.co.uk) can be contacted to progress. We shall soon be looking for volunteers as part of the conditions for receiving the money is that the community is involved in carrying out the work.

PLANNING MATTERS

NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS

We continue to be concerned about the large number of new houses planned in Midlothian and the 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. We recently attended the Public Consultation by Gladman Developments Ltd for their proposed development of either 120 houses or 93 houses and a retail unit at Larkfield on land north and south of Lasswade Road, Eskbank .

Update from the Summer 2013 Newsletter.

At the end of August Midlothian Council refused the Application for Detailed Planning Permission to build a high density housing development of 40 units next to the Polton Road Industrial Estate, in a Green Belt Conservation Area of Great Landscape Value.

A huge well done to the Poltonhall Development Action Group for their brilliantly orchestrated campaign of objection .

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>



SCOTTISH CIVIC TRUST CONFERENCE, LINLITHGOW, NOVEMBER 2013

Staying Special: Protecting Local Heritage was the Scottish Civic Trust's annual conference for 2013, and was held at Linlithgow Burgh Halls on the 5th November 2013.

The conference was attended by over 100 delegates from a wide variety of organisations from members of local civic groups, through architects and planners, to government officials. The Scottish Civic Trust's Director, John Pelan, set the event against the background of significant change in the built environment sector, not least with the Draft Historic Environment Strategy and the Historic Scotland - RCAHMS Merger. The day saw presentations on local initiatives and projects focussing on the protection of heritage assets, a short talk from Derek Mackay MSP, Minister for Local Government & Planning, who took some questions from the floor and a series of short 'soapbox' presentations over the lunch break.

Maggie Broadley, of Craft Town Scotland, set out her 3 keys to success at West Kilbride - **Passion, Perseverance and Innovation** - which came up again and again, and could perhaps be the themes that community representatives took home with them from the event. The conference highlighted the extraordinary enthusiasm that communities have for their local heritage

www.scottishcivictrust.org.uk

COUNCIL MATTERS

The Society last met with the Council on 10th December and at that meeting the following items were raised:-

1. **The successful 20mph petition.** We understand we are in limbo re the above whilst we await the Midlothian wide report for which we have not been given a timescale. At a recent meeting with Bob Constable we were pleased to hear that he was proposing to pay for an electronic speed sign for Lasswade village, the positioning of same to be determined by the traffic department. A subsequent telephone call from Bob indicated that the traffic department would only consider this being positioned after Polton Road end and before the bridge. This is not in line with what we discussed with Bob, we were looking for signs on entry to the village near the current 30mph limit signs, with a view to encouraging traffic to slow down throughout the whole village and not just at one approach to the bridge. We were surprised to hear this view as we have an earlier email from the Council stating that a sign in this position would be a distraction. We would like to make it clear that we strongly oppose this proposal and we hope that our Councillors would support our stance in this instance. Whilst we appreciate Bob's offer to purchase the sign we share the original Council view regarding the distraction element of the proposed siting and also feel it would be aesthetically unacceptable in the middle of a conservation village. Despite Derek Milligan and Ian Baxter voting for a trial implementation of 20mph limit the Council elected to wait for the publication of their report.
2. **The old Lasswade Church Yard.** We have done some clearing of growth here recently, working with the Recording Angels. We cannot however tackle the tree growth that is developing in the actual buildings and are concerned that the buildings will suffer if the problem is not addressed. The Council has agreed to deal with the problem.
3. **The Viaduct.** This too is becoming overgrown with vegetation that is in danger of damaging the brick work. This is not Council owned but the Council has checked the outcome of the last annual report carried out by the owners and the matter will be addressed by the end of March.
4. **Lasswade Pavilion external upkeep.** The Council agreed to repaint and to attend to the now unsafe steps that lead down to the rear entrance.



Our thanks go to Bill Scott of the **Recording Angels** who gave us the benefit of his woodworking expertise to repair the information board in the old church yard.

Bill also gave a talk on the work of the Midlothian Recording Angels which was very much enjoyed by those who attended.

www.recordingangels.org.uk

Contact Us

www.lasswadecivic.com

JanPentlandLea@btinternet.com

07990 818 228

Diary Dates

Any requests/suggestions for outings or talks or clean ups gratefully received by Rosemary 0131 663 6651

Friday 7th March 7.30pm

Members Annual Party

St Leonard's Church Hall

Tickets from your Rep or at the door

Tuesday 29th April

AGM 7.30pm

St Leonard's Church Hall

After meeting speaker Jamie Craig who will give a talk on "The History of Mavisbank, the House and the Landscape."



In September we were grateful to Carol Deveney from Network Rail who gave us an enlightening presentation on the **Borders Railway** that is now into its second year of development with the date of completion expected to be Summer 2015. She gave us an overview of how the project came to fruition with campaigning, some of the challenges such as diverting the bypass/road at Sheriffhall roundabout, costs and experience that Network Rail have had with previous developments of this kind. We were shown aerial views of the progress to date and advised that the line would run between Edinburgh and Tweedbank, over 30 miles of track with 10 stations on route. More information at www.bordersrailway.co.uk