



FORTY EIGHTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BLACKET ASSOCIATION  
 TO BE HELD ON THURSDAY 12 OCTOBER IN THE OLD BELL DUNCAN STREET  
 FROM 7.30 PM

**Agenda**

- Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting (29 November 2016).
- Election of committee members and office bearers.  
 Fiona Courtney and Hugh Mackay have reached the end of their 3 year terms of office and are happy to stand for re-election. Phil Cullis, 44 Blacket Place has been co-opted to the Committee as Social Convener and is nominated formally to join the committee. Further nominations are invited; these should be notified to the Acting Secretary, preferably in advance of the meeting;
- Chairman’s report;
- Planning report;
- Treasurer’s report;
- Neighbourhood Watch report;
- Blacket Avenue working group report;
- Any other competent business;

**Committee 2015–2016**

|                     |                   |                     |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| CHAIR               | Ian Chisholm      | 11 Dryden Place     |
| TREASURER           | Becky Colegrave   | 12 Alfred Place     |
| MINUTES SECRETARY   | Fiona Courtney    | 52 Blacket Place    |
| NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH | Stanley Bird      | 4 Dryden Place      |
| PLANNING/SHRUBBERY  | Hugh Mackay       | 42 Blacket Place    |
| PLANNING            | Richard Scothorne | 7 Alfred Place      |
| WEBSITE/CONTACTS    | Eric Thomson      | 50A Blacket Place   |
| NEW RESIDENTS/CARDS | Arlene Doherty    | 56 Blacket Place    |
| COMMUNICATIONS      | Pauline Platt     | 27 Mayfield Terrace |

**MINUTES of the 47<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the BLACKET ASSOCIATION** held on Tuesday 29 November 2016 in the Parkside Bowling Club. Hazel Dunn, as Chair, welcomed everyone to the AGM. Copies of the Annual Report had previously been circulated by email – in addition, printed copies were available at the AGM.

1. **MINUTES** - The 2015 AGM minutes as published and circulated were agreed as an accurate record.
2. **ELECTION of COMMITTEE** Hazel Dunn and Johnny Kruuk were retiring from the Committee. Ian Chisholm, and Becky Colegrave were re-elected. Two new committee members were elected: Eric Thomson as Website coordinator and Stanley Bird as Neighbourhood Watch coordinator. All committee members were duly proposed and seconded. Hazel Dunn is stepping down as Chair and Ian Chisholm was duly nominated as Chair.
3. **CHAIR'S REPORT** – The Chair asked the Committee to introduce themselves and their responsibilities for the 2016-2017 session, namely : Arlene Doherty (new residents); Eric Thomson (website & IT facilities); Fiona Courtney (Minutes); Becky Colegrave (Treasurer); Hugh Mackay (shrubbery & analyser of the weekly Planning reports); Pauline Platt (communications); Richard Scothorne (planning support); & Stan Bird (Neighbourhood watch). The Chair noted that she would be delighted to hear from any residents who would like to join the Committee.

The Chair thanked Johnny Kruuk for his contributions to the Committee. The Chair then gave her Report.

Social events during the year included a bowling day courtesy of Parkside Bowling Club; the Open Gardens in June which was well attended despite poor weather, and a plant sale in October which was a new innovation and successful in raising funds for the Association. The Association is represented on the Grange and Prestonfield Community Council, with Ian Chisholm taking over from Hazel Dunn during the year.

Ian Chisholm, on behalf of the Association, made a presentation to Hazel and thanked her for all her work for the Association.

4. **PLANNING REPORT** – Hugh McKay gave a report on Planning related activities in the year. The major development affecting the immediate area was the proposed redevelopment of the Minto Hotel as flats and townhouses. The Association objected on a number of grounds. After liaison with the developer and planners the development was approved, with significant changes ameliorating the impact of the development. The Association also reviewed and objected to a number of developments in West Blacket, supporting the position of the West Blacket Association.
5. **TREASURER'S REPORT** - Becky Colegrave gave her report. Overall Funds reduced by £10.50 over the year to 31 August 2016. The Treasurer noted that subscriptions were received from 47% of households and encouraged other households to sign up standing orders for the £5 pa contribution. Other income was received from card sales and contributions at the Open Gardens. The largest

expenditure was on landscaping with plantings and tree replacement in the shrubberies. She encouraged any non-members to join and set up a standing order.

6. **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT** - Ian Chisholm noted that there have been a number of incidents but noted that Police Scotland also warn residents to be aware of online and phone scams. Residents are encouraged to report crimes and suspicious activity to local Neighbourhood Watch representatives, as local intelligence can assist in deterring and detecting crime.
7. **SHRUBBERIES WORKING PARTY REPORT** –Hugh Mackay reported on work done in the year. He noted that the area of shrubbery next to Aln Lodge at the East end of Blacket Avenue had been cleared and replanted, and new fencing would be erected part funded by the Council. We had also planted appropriate trees to replace felled trees, as the Council no longer has a budget for tree planting. Mr Mackay thanked volunteers who responded to appeals to help. The Chair thanked the Working Party for the attractive condition of the Shrubberies.
8. **AOB** – A number of matters were raised and discussed.
9. **SOCIAL EVENT** - The meeting having ended its formal stage, all participants enjoyed a convivial evening with refreshments provided by the Association.

## **CHAIR'S REPORT OCTOBER 2017**

For the most part 2017 has been a successful one for the five streets. In relation to planning issues this has been a relatively quiet year. We are keeping an eye on the development of the Minto Hotel site to ensure that the work does not damage the wall at the rear of houses on Blacket Place. We objected to the scale of the extension planned to the mews conversion at 23 East Mayfield. A change of architect has led to a significant improvement in the quality of the design of the extension which has now been approved.

We have been working with local resident David Elston to clarify the ownership of 23B Minto Street and liaising with the Council to see what we can do to ensure that this semi-derelict eyesore is improved.

Last May the Council launched a consultation about a proposed new cycle route linking Holyrood Park with Ratcliffe Terrace going through the Blackets. Cyclists would enter from the Dalkeith Road via Blacket Place and exit via Blacket Avenue or Mayfield Terrace. It is proposed that Blacket Avenue would be two way for cyclists but one way for motorists. The Blacket Association's main concern was to maintain the entry from Minto Street into Blacket Avenue; otherwise there would be no entry from the west into the Blackets. The Association's response to the consultation is on the Blacket website.

### **Social Events**

On Wednesday 3 May we had a walk in Holyrood Park for residents. Some of us regularly take our dogs for a walk there and we had a successful evening walk for both dog and non dog owners.

The members of the Priestfield Tennis Association (PTSA) invited

Blacket residents to come along to the Tennis Club open day on Saturday 6 May. Several Blacket residents are already members of the PSTA  
The afternoon was open to all ages and children were welcome. Tea and soft drinks were provided.

The annual Open Gardens evening was held in June. We would like to thank Lindsay and Graham Johnston (60 Blacket Place), Tom and Janet Conway (14 Mayfield Terrace), and David and Fiona MacDonald (17 Blacket Place) for the chance to have a look around their policies. Despite the slightly overcast weather, over a hundred residents descended on 17 Blacket Place for drinks and the chance to chat with neighbours. It was a generous act on behalf of Fiona & David McDonald to host the party. The search is underway for gardens for the 2018 event!

A Plant Sale was held on 7 October. It was a crisp and dry autumn day, and many fabulous plants were 're-homed'. There was a lower turn out than last year and a modest £40 was made for the shrubbery fund.

Social events are an important part of life in this area, and we are always looking for new ideas that reflect the many and varied interests (and ages) of residents. We would like to hear any suggestions you may have for future events.

### **Links with External Organisations**

Ian Chisholm is our representative on the Grange and Prestonfield Community Council. This link enables us to keep up-to-date with Edinburgh Council activities that may affect us directly or indirectly. We circulate items that we think will be of interest to residents whose email addresses we have. The Community Council has supported us in our objections to a number of planning applications, which has added weight to our case. Minutes of Community Council meetings are available on the website at [grangeprestonfieldcc.org.uk](http://grangeprestonfieldcc.org.uk)

Ian Chisholm

## **PLANNING REPORT**

Edinburgh Council planners send us each week a list of new planning applications and decisions. We review the Newington applications to identify what may affect the Blacket Conservation area and, in particular, the five streets. When there is anything which we feel affect the amenity of the area we will contribute a written view – which may set out the reasons why we oppose the application.

This has been a relatively quiet year. We are keeping an eye on the development of the Minto Hotel site to ensure that the work does not damage the wall at the rear of houses on Blacket Place. We objected to the scale of the extension planned to the mews conversion at 23 East Mayfield. A change of architect has led to a significant improvement in the quality of the design of the extension which has now been approved.

We have been working with local resident David Elston to clarify the ownership of 23B Minto Street and liaising with the Council to see what we can do to ensure that this semi-derelict eyesore is improved.

We submitted an objection to the second application to convert the old Royal High School into a hotel. Although outside our area, there are strong connections between the School and

the Blacket area – the earliest parts of Blacket Place were constructed about the same time as the School, and Arthur Lodge is attributed to the School's architect, Thomas Hamilton – and the old Royal High School is of significance to the whole of Edinburgh in terms of its architectural quality and symbolic value. The application was unanimously rejected by members of the relevant Committee.

We also submitted detailed views on the proposed changes to street layouts in Blacket as a result of the intended cycle route through the area – which in principle we support.

Richard Scothorne

## **THE SHRUBBERY WORKING PARTY REPORT**

At the East end of the Avenue we have renewed the fence, cleared out the rubbish, dug up the soil and planted Mahonia bushes. These were partly purchased with our funds and partly supplied at no cost by the Council . At the other end, of the Avenue by Minto Street, the bushes we planted have made slow progress. Hopefully there will be more colour next year. The Council pay to get the grass cut four times a year and we weed the flower bed. If anybody wishes to get involved let me know.

The trees in Mayfield Terrace and North Blacket Place have their bases tidied twice a year. After the Gardens Evening we had eight volunteers to trim the bases of the Lime trees, mostly in the Avenue. This was finished in record time. On 21st October we propose to do this again. If you are free, please turn up with an implement at 9.30am. Even if the weather is poor, the leaves will shelter us.

Apart from that we prune, weed and plant regularly. We are hoping that the many daffodils we have planted come up next spring. We were donated more bluebells which should add further colour.

We much appreciate the efforts made by residents to remove litter from the shrubbery. The Council used to sweep and spray the streets and put weed killer on the pavements and the base of garden walls. But no longer. We were told by the Council the problem is lack of resources. We asked if we could as an organisation do the job after being trained and equipped by them but this offer was rejected. So as well as sweeping up leaves, it seems it is down to residents to pull up or spray the weeds in front of our houses. It is part of the price we pay for living in such a pleasant environment.

Hugh Mackay

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

The Association received a number of reports about mainly opportunistic thefts although one - of a motorcycle - did seem to be planned and was more serious. Thefts from unguarded/unsecured work vans seemed to be prevalent. One work van was taken but later recovered undamaged. The Association alerted residents to the dangers and, based on advice from Police Scotland, highlighted ways of reducing the risk of thefts from homes and gardens. Advice on thwarting bogus callers was also disseminated. It is unfortunate that the Blacket Area is regarded by criminals as a "high value" area which is therefore worth targeting. Residents need to remain vigilant and report any suspicious behaviour or persons."

**The Blacket Association**  
**Summary of accounts for year to 31st August 2017**

| <b>2016</b>    |  | <b>2017</b>      |
|----------------|--|------------------|
| £1,527.88      | Opening bank account 1st September           | £1,517.38        |
|                | <b>Income</b>                                |                  |
| £570.00        | Subscriptions                                | £530.00          |
| £79.25         | Open Gardens Event                           | £126.00          |
| £160.00        | Card Sales                                   | £6.00            |
| -              | Plant Sale Event                             | £135.00          |
| <u>£809.25</u> |  | <u>£797.00</u>   |
|                | <b>Expenditure</b>                           |                  |
| £171.25        | AGM Costs                                    | £280.83          |
| £80.00         | Printing Newsletters                         | £43.21           |
| £391.51        | Landscaping                                  | £193.62          |
| £40.00         | Cockburn Association membership              | £40.00           |
| -              | New fence Blacket Ave/ Dalkeith Rd           | £610.00          |
| £81.00         | Website                                      | -                |
| £15.99         | Printing Blacket cards                       |                  |
| £40.00         | Cleaning of Blacket Av street lights         |                  |
| <u>£819.75</u> |  | <u>£1,167.66</u> |
| <b>-£10.50</b> | <b>Increase/Decrease in funds for period</b> | <b>-£370.66</b>  |
| £1,517.38      | Closing bank account 31st August             | £1,146.72        |

**Treasurer's report**

Income was made up of subscriptions, card sales, proceeds from the Open Gardens event and a newly trailed event, the Blacket plant sale. The latter proved very successful and will be repeated this year. Subscriptions were down on the previous year and increasing awareness of the Association and how subscriptions are utilised has been a focus during 2017, which should be reflected in increased subscriptions next year. Whilst card sales were modest this year, we are carrying stock of the Elizabeth Blackadder and Blacket Pillar cards. At £1 per card if you buy 5, these high quality reproductions are great value for money and will be available to purchase at the AGM, Open Gardens and Plant sale events in the coming year. Expenditure related to the usual items of the AGM, newsletter printing, landscaping and the Cockburn Association membership. In addition, there were one off costs arising from new fencing being installed along the Dalkeith Road end of Blacket Avenue, which were shared with the City of Edinburgh Council. Overall, funds decreased by £370 over the period but on a normalised basis, without the exceptional costs from the fencing, funds would have increased by £240.

Honorary Treasurer, Becky Colegrave