



FIFTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BLACKET ASSOCIATION TO BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30 OCTOBER 2019 IN THE OLD BELL DUNCAN STREET FROM 7.30PM

**Agenda**

- Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting (24 October 2018);
- Election of committee members and office bearers.  
 Ian Chisholm, Stan Bird and Richard Scothorne have reached the end of their three-year terms of office and are happy to stand for re-election. Mhoraig Blair is nominated to the Committee as Website and database manager. Nominations are invited to the Committee as Social convener.
- Chair’s report
- Planning report;
- Shrubbery working group report;
- Website and member database report;
- Neighbourhood Watch report;
- Treasurer’s report;
- Any other competent business

**Committee 2018–2019**

CHAIR	Ian Chisholm	11 Dryden Place
TREASURER	Anne Henderson	4 Mayfield Terrace
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	Mhoraig Blair	Arthur Lodge
NEW RESIDENTS/CARDS	Arlene Doherty	56 Blacket Place
COMMUNICATIONS	Pauline Platt	27 Mayfield Terrace
SOCIAL CONVENER	Vacant	

**MINUTES of the 49<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the BLACKET ASSOCIATION** held on Wednesday 24 October 2018 in the Old Bell. Ian Chisholm, 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 2017 AGM minutes as published and circulated were agreed as an accurate record.
2. **ELECTION of COMMITTEE** – Becky Colegrave, Phil Cullis and Eric Thomson stood down from the Committee. Anne Henderson and Emma O’Brien were elected to the Committee as Treasurer and Social Convenor, respectively. A number of residents have expressed interest in the role of Web & Database coordinator and the Committee will meet with them and coopt further Committee member(s) as required. All committee members were duly proposed and seconded.
3. **CHAIR’S REPORT** – The Chair gave his Report. He noted that the proposed Cycling Route has not progressed at present because of lack of Council funds. Social events during the year included a successful Open Gardens in June and an Architectural Tour of Blackets, which was well attended. The Chair represents the Association on the Grange and Prestonfield Community Council.
4. **PLANNING REPORT** – Richard Scothorne gave a report on Planning-related activities in the year. There has been relatively little planning activity this year. He noted the very recent court decision rejecting an appeal for development of the Hendry & Macdonald garage off Duncan Street into student flats. The property is a unique survival, being originally a stables serving the area and linked to the surrounding tenement buildings. The judgement recognised the importance of the structure and maintaining its integrity as a workspace, which is an important precedent. The Association had objected to the development over a number of years.
5. A number of queries were raised over specific residential planning applications and developments in the area. The Chair explained that members of the Committee reviewed the weekly Planning List and whenever possible raised any concerns with applicants directly, before considering whether to lodge a formal objection. However, if residents have a concern over a specific application he advised them to contact Richard Scothorne or Hugh Mackay, as the Committee cannot anticipate every resident’s potential objections.
6. **TREASURER’S REPORT** – Becky Colegrave gave her report. Funds have increased by £550. The main source of income is residents’ £5 pa contribution. Other income is received from card sales and contributions at the Open Gardens. Expenditure on the shrubberies was lower this year with no need to replace fencing or trees. A resident queried if residents who had moved away continued to pay: a small number (less than ten) do so. Becky asked the meeting to come forward with positive uses for funds. A suggestion of holding welcome events for new residents was made and will be considered.
7. **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT** – Stan Bird gave his report. The Association aims to warn residents of specific issues and risks. Residents are encouraged to report crimes and suspicious activity to local Neighbourhood Watch representatives and to the police.
8. **SHRUBBERIES WORKING PARTY REPORT** – Hugh Mackay reported on work done in the year. He thanked volunteers for their support.

9. **AOB** – A number of matters were raised by residents and discussed:
  - a. Changes to Resident’s Parking spaces to allow sharing with Pay as You Go – this has been agreed in principle by CEC but awaits funding to implement signage changes.
  - b. Vehicles speeding through Mayfield Terrace, and illegally entering Mayfield Terrace from Minto Street – noted that this is dangerous and signage is poor.
  - c. Potential for closing off roads on play days under a CEC scheme – the meeting had no objection to residents applying for this next year.
  - d. Noted that CEC clearing leaves has been reduced, resident complained that this leads to flooding as street drains are blocked.
10. **SOCIAL EVENT** – The meeting ended its formal stage at 8.15.

## **CHAIR’S REPORT 2019**

For the most part 2019 has been a successful one for the five streets. In relation to planning issues the application for the Thrums Hotel site has required a lot of attention from our planning experts on the Committee. We continue to keep an eye on the development of the Minto Hotel site; see the planning report below.

The co-option to the Committee of Mhoraig Blair has resulted in significant improvements to the accuracy of the database and to the Blacket website, which remains a work in progress. See her report below.

### **Social events**

Last year an architectural tour of the Blackets was conducted by Richard Scothorne and Hugh Mackay, our Blacket history and architectural experts. The tour was very well supported, with more than thirty residents attending. Other residents expressed disappointment that they could not make it so we arranged another tour earlier this year, but unfortunately the weather was wet and kept numbers down. Meanwhile, an architectural trail guide of the Blackets, which was written some years ago, has now been revised by the Association. It is now on the Blacket Association website at [http://blacketedin.org/downloads/Architectural\\_trail\\_of\\_the\\_Blacket\\_area.pdf/](http://blacketedin.org/downloads/Architectural_trail_of_the_Blacket_area.pdf/).

The annual Open Gardens evening was held on Friday 21 June. We would like to thank Susan Hezlet (30 Mayfield Terrace); the residents of 36 and 38 Mayfield Terrace; Patricia Cacho (46A Blacket Place); and Don and Penny Gower (48B Blacket Place) for the chance to have a look around their policies. A special thanks to the Gowers for hosting the traditional end-of-evening drinks and the chance to chat with neighbours.

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 may 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**

A quiet year overall. Some minor applications – most of them focusing on the creation of more spacious and appealing kitchen/living areas. The only major application was for a modern extension to the rear of the Thrums Hotel. The planning application attracted twenty-six objections and the application for listed building consent attracted nineteen objections. Both applications were withdrawn following an indication to the applicant from Planning that the applications could not be approved. The scale of local opposition is likely to have been a factor in this.

The Association's own objection highlighted a range of policies that the proposal appeared to contravene. We set out the flaws in the case that was made that the extension to the rear of the adjacent Minto Hotel created a precedent. And we pointed out that the 'link building', which was to be demolished, formed one of a matching pair of wings to the original Georgian house – and that these matching wings were a feature of the houses on Minto Street.

The application provides a useful reminder that there is, even in a built-up and cherished area such as the Blackets, always scope for a damaging development. And it showed that a substantial local response can be effective. A big thank you to all those who objected and wrote to our local councillors!

Richard Scothorne

## **SHRUBBERY WORKING GROUP REPORT**

Since the last Newsletter we have pruned the bases of the lime trees, maintained and watered young trees and bushes, weeded and cleared litter and builders' waste. It is a shame that the daffodil season was not more colourful. The tree canopy blocks out sun and rain, but we prune the branches and we always hope to find a new spot to plant. Periwinkle (*Vinca*) is our most successful flower.

The main problem is ivy. It is climbing up trees, walls and fences and it has to be controlled. Initially, we viewed it as good ground cover. Now it has been too successful! So that will be the target for the next work party. The request for volunteers will go out online. But if you are not linked up and would like to be involved on a Saturday morning, phone me and I shall keep you informed.

Litter is the usual problem. If one has a suitable bag in a pocket, one can help. But the gas repairs made matters worse. Some residents may think that the streets are cleaned by the local authority. That is why we pay Council Tax. Forget it! The Council may send a lorry occasionally but that is a bonus. We take this up with Councillors and doubtless they try, but this does not work. If we want the five streets to look good, we have to take individual action by sweeping our pavements and picking up the litter others have discarded.

Hugh Mackay

## **WEBSITE AND MEMBER DATABASE REPORT**

We maintain a database of residents' addresses and emails solely for the purpose of communication regarding local matters. Access is restricted to limited committee individuals, and the database is encrypted. Please let us know if you are new to the area and wish to be added to our circulars. The website has recently been updated for 2019-to-date. We are reviewing options for additional content to be added currently, and would welcome any suggestions of local matters you would like to see included.

Mhoraig Blair

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT**

Since last year's AGM, the Association received a number of reports of criminal activity. Fortunately, there were no serious crimes and most were 'opportunistic' ones. Unfortunately, there was an outbreak of graffiti, which was unsightly but was quickly removed. The Association issued alerts of risks to residents and/or property along with advice from Police Scotland (which is available from their website), suggesting ways of reducing, in particular, risk of thefts from homes and gardens. As advised previously, the Blasket Area is considered by criminals as a 'high value' area and as worth targeting for 'an easy job' – car windows left open, keys left in sight, bikes left unlocked. Because of this, residents, as ever, have to be aware of the risk and to stay alert. If you see anything suspicious or people behaving strangely, don't hesitate to report it.

Stanley Bird

# TREASURER'S REPORT

The Blacket Association

Summary of Accounts for the year ended 31 August 2019

	2019 £	2018 £
Opening Bank account as at 1 September 2018	1704.21	1146.72
<i>Income</i>		
Subscriptions	665.00	575.00
Open Gardens event	119.56	129.80
Card sales	67.00	45.00
Christmas card sales	205.00	-
Plant sale	-	37.50
	<u>1056.56</u>	<u>786.80</u>
<i>Expenditure</i>		
AGM costs	-	14.40
Printing newsletter	21.50	39.50
Landscaping	-	135.91
Website license	97.20	-
Christmas card costs	563.90	-
Cockburn Association	40.00	40.00
	<u>722.60</u>	<u>229.31</u>
<i>Increase in funds</i>	333.96	557.49
Closing Bank account as at 31 August 2019	<u><u>2038.17</u></u>	<u><u>1704.21</u></u>

## Treasurer's report

Overall, our funds increased by £333.96 in the year to 31 August 2019. Income is up due to increased subscription monies, arising from one-off donations and the sale of Christmas cards. The cost of these cards is reflected in our expenditure, but we will see the benefit of this income in future years as we do with Elizabeth Blackadder cards which continue to sell well. This year we have had to renew our website licence – this payment covers three years.

Anne Henderson, 1 October 2019