

Blacket Association: Annual Report – 2010 / 2011

A year ago at this time we were anticipating the commencement of work on site at Alfred Place after many months of consultation. The plans were modified in detail in response to representations and approval was given by the Council in August 2010 for 10 houses and 5 flats. Before we reached the AGM however a further application had been lodged, and subsequently approved, for replacing the flats with a terrace of 4 houses, resulting in a final development of 14 houses. Interest in the houses proved S1's assessment of demand to be correct and during 2011 they have been proceeding with construction at a rapid pace, and anticipate being off site by next January. This is a commendable achievement for them and we welcome to Blacket those new owners who are already in residence and the future owners of the remaining properties in due course.

Having a building site 'next door' has of course not been a great experience for those residents most affected but S1 seem to have made every effort to minimise the disturbance and have responded positively to any issues raised. One merit of the popularity of the houses, not yet apparent, will be that the construction phase will be completed over a much shorter time period than might have been anticipated. A sad consequence of the speed of construction, or more accurately the failure of contractors to abide by access instructions from S1, has been damage to both Gatepiers at the Mayfield Terrace/ Dalkeith Road junction. One Gatepier remains upright but the south-side one was demolished. Liability for repair and restoration has been accepted by the owners of the vehicles involved but that will not take place until there are no further movements of large lorries – probably after January 2012.

Talking of Gatepiers leads on to the successful restoration of the south-side 'Pillar' at the Blacket Avenue/ Dalkeith Road junction which took place at the end of September. This Gatepier was struck by a delivery lorry in November 2010 during the extremely icy weather. Most of it was dismantled and taken away for safety a few months later by the Council. Arrangements for rebuilding the Gatepier were made by the Council on the basis of the cost being charged to the insurers of the delivery lorry which originally caused the damage.

Last winter was particularly bad with heavy snow & very low temperatures and the Council have consulted widely about being better prepared this year. They will be promoting Winter Weather-Working Together over the next few weeks. The Association has purchased snow shovels in order that residents can be enabled to help out if required – Karin Froebel Overton has offered to co-ordinate distribution should the need arise.

Plans for the proposed South Edinburgh 20 miles per hour speed limit pilot area have moved only slowly during the past year but are now set to be taken forward. All Blacket residential streets will be 20mph but Minto Street and Dalkeith Road will remain at 30mph. The pilot is to be brought in without speed bumps but supplementary signage is required to make the revised speed limit enforceable. Keeping the additional signage from being too intrusive will be the most sensitive issue and is the subject of ongoing discussions.

Apart from what might be more accurately regarded as Spring we have not had good weather this Summer but that did not spoil the enjoyment for those who attended the popular Open Gardens evening. The dampish evening and lack of warmth did not deter the intrepid Blacket residents from

making their way round several gardens and then partying until the children took their parents home. Plans are already in hand for the 2012 event. The damp summer and, more importantly, the established nature of the planting now no longer requires the frequency of attention to the Blacket Shrubbery Areas as in earlier years. Working parties have been active however dealing with rubbish and weed collecting, overhanging branches and tree sprouting, and spreading appropriate fertiliser to maintain or encourage further growth.

After some consideration Committee proposes a sharing-out of the activities undertaken in recent years by Ian as Secretary, and to reintroduce having a Vice Chairman as a lead-in to the post of Chairman. In view of the proposed changes, and with Ian proposing to retire at the AGM, Ray is willing to be nominated for one further year as Chairman. The filling of the role of Vice Chairman can probably be arranged in the fairly near future but other responsibilities, and nominations for the posts, put forward for endorsement by the AGM are as follows;

Secretary: Bob Cupples

Planning: Richard Seligman

Social Events: Hazel Fletcher

Shrubbery Working Party: Hugh Mackay

Neighbourhood Watch. There have been no serious burglaries since the end of May. This may have been because a thief was caught on that occasion, the lighter evenings, or just luck. However there have been some attempted break-ins. Residents are getting more security conscious, and some more burglar alarms have been installed. Car crimes have continued, but none have been reported since May with the exception of petrol being siphoned from a car in Dryden Place. Apart from mindless vandalism against cars, sat navs are the chief reason for car break-ins. One bicycle theft occurred in early September from a garden in Mayfield Terrace. The NW team are very reliant on residents for crime information reaching them, so please report crimes to your nearest NW representative or to Alison Mowat, NW Co-ordinator, and stay vigilant.