

Blacket Newsletter - 15th September 2012

A great Street Party on 3rd June

Many thanks to all those who helped organize and support the Jubilee Street Party, which was held in Alfred Place on the afternoon of Sunday 3rd June (in place of the usual summer Open Gardens evening). Around 250 people attended (including 75 or so children and also some Belleville Lodge residents) in what, for this year at least, must count as good weather.

Thanks in particular to Hazel Fletcher and her team. Their careful planning and execution of the event - from the opening procession and live music, through entertainment & games for the youngsters, provision of a drink or two for the adults and excellent food contributed by many residents of the 'five streets' - helped to produce a thoroughly enjoyable and friendly time for the many locals who came along. The event also realized a modest surplus for Association funds.

Vice-Chairman elected

As reported to and agreed by the last AGM, when Ian Carter stood down after many years' service as Secretary to the Association, henceforth the Secretary's main duties would be shared between several people, including a Vice-Chairman.

This entailed Bob Cupples taking over as Secretary, Hazel Fletcher as Social Events Secretary & Richard Seligman as Planning Monitor. Alison Mowat also kindly agreed to continue to supervise Neighbourhood Watch matters.

Ray Footman also intimated he too intended to stand down – from the Chairmanship - with effect from the 2012 AGM. The Committee has elected Hazel Fletcher to the vacant post of Vice-Chairman, on the understanding she should take over as Chairman when Ray Footman steps down in November.

At the same time, the Committee wishes to renew its appeal for new members so, if you may be interested, please contact Hazel Fletcher.

The Epic of the Gate Piers

The semi-demolition in 2011 of the two listed Pugin stone pillars at the junction of Mayfield Terrace and Dalkeith Road by sub-contractors' lorries is, at long last, to be made good, after repeated representations from the Committee. Currently the plan is that the stone masons, who have had a busy order book, are due to do the restoration work in late September or early October. Residents should note it is likely the roadway will need to be closed for a few days while the work is done.

Planning matters

Blacket, for the most part a unique blend of stone-built villas situated within mature gardens and walkways, was the first district in Edinburgh to be designated a Conservation Area. But we need to be vigilant in maintaining this character. Two planning issues put particular pressure on this, namely parking within original garden spaces and the lopping or removal of trees – with regard to the latter, it should be noted that every tree in a Conservation Area is covered by a Tree Preservation order, requiring formal planning consent for any changes.

While a minority of properties in the area have front garden drive-ins dating back to earlier planning regimes, it is understood that latterly, in general, the view has been that the further loss of front garden space and plantings to parking will be contrary to the general character and amenity of the neighbourhood.

The Committee has taken the view that applications for further garden-based parking spaces should be opposed, in line with the City of Edinburgh planning guidelines: see www.edinburgh.gov.uk/planninganddevelopmentonline. These guidelines are being reviewed and the new, draft proposals can be seen at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/planningconsultations.

Driving the wrong way into Blacket

Concern has been expressed by a number of residents about vehicles driving into the west end of Mayfield Terrace from Minto Street, contrary to the 'no entry' for motor vehicles regulations, and with an increased danger of accidents or injuries for exiting vehicles or pedestrians not anticipating 'against the flow' traffic.

While it is probable the vehicles concerned are from outwith the area, if there are any residents' cars going this way, their drivers are reminded of the possible dangers to third parties, particularly children and older residents. At the same time of course, residents exiting from Mayfield Terrace on to Minto Street should be aware of the possibility of illicit incoming traffic.

Our Neighbours in Belleville Lodge

There has been some discussion within the Committee and with the Matron of the Belleville Old Peoples' home (which is located on the corner of Blacket Avenue and Place), about the possibility of the Association helping to set up a scheme, whereby local resident volunteers might periodically visit and provide some musical or other entertainment sessions. If you think you might be interested in contributing or giving a hand in organizing this on a regular basis, please contact Ray Footman.

2012 AGM

An early warning for your diary – this will be held in the 2nd week of November, probably Thursday 22nd or Thursday 29th at a venue yet to be finalised.

Ray Footman: Chairman

Bob Cupples: Hon. Secretary