



Blacket Association Newsletter

November 2022

AGM WEDNESDAY 9 NOVEMBER

The 53rd Annual General Meeting of the Blacket Association will be held on Wednesday 9 November 2022 in the Old Bell in Duncan Street from 6:45pm, with the AGM starting promptly at 7:00pm. The upstairs bar in the Old Bell has been reserved exclusively for our use.

Copies of the minutes of last year's AGM and the reports from the various committee members are given below. Please bring this newsletter with you, although there will also be some printed copies available at the AGM.

All members, prospective members, friends and residents in the Blacket area are welcome – new members particularly so. All are invited to raise any points of interest that they would like to discuss

Agenda

- Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting (17 November 2021);
- Nomination and election of committee members and office bearers;
- Chair's report 2022;
- Website and database report 2022;
- Treasurer's report 2022;
- Neighbourhood Watch report 2022;
- Shrubbery working group report 2022;
- Planning report 2022;
- Any other competent business.

COMMITTEE 2021–2022

CHAIR	Ian Chisholm	11 Dryden Place
TREASURER	Anne Henderson	4 Mayfield Terrace
MINUTES/SOCIAL SECRETARY	Hazel Clark	1 Mayfield Terrace
NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH	Stanley Bird	4 Dryden Place
PLANNING	Richard Scothorne	7 Alfred Place
WEBSITE/CONTACTS	Mhoraig Blair	Arthur Lodge
NEW RESIDENTS/CARDS	Arlene Doherty	56 Blacket Place
COMMUNICATIONS	Susan Hezlet	30 Mayfield Terrace
SUSTAINABILITY GROUP	Anne Starsmeare	13A Blacket Place
SHRUBBERY WORKING PARTY	vacant	-

MINUTES OF THE 52nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION

Held on 17th November 2021 at The Old Bell, Duncan Street at 7:50pm

Ian Chisholm, as Chair, welcomed everyone to the AGM. Copies of the Annual Report had previously been circulated by email and in printed form as the November Newsletter.

1. APOLOGIES

Ian Chisholm ('the Chair') advised that apologies had been received from Mhoraig Blair, Stanley Bird, Arlene Doherty, Joyce & Bill Gemmel, David Stevenson, Tessa & Blair Vullings and Joanna Chisholm.

2. MINUTES

The 2020 AGM minutes as published and circulated were agreed as an accurate record.

3. ELECTION of COMMITTEE

The Chair reminded the meeting that Hazel Clark had replaced Fiona Courtney at last year's AGM as Minutes Secretary, having been duly proposed and seconded. Hazel had also agreed to take on the role of social convenor. Richard Scothorne ('RS') then proposed Susan Hezlet to replace Pauline Platt as head of Communications, which was seconded by Anne Sturrock.

Arlene Doherty had agreed to serve on the Committee for another three years to deal with new residents. Her re-appointment was duly proposed by Caroline Sibbald and seconded by Hugh Mackay.

The official position on the Committee dealing with Shrubberies was still vacant. However, the Chair reported that Hugh Mackay was still organising volunteers when necessary.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair delivered his Report. The Covid-19 pandemic had meant there had been no open gardens event for the last two years, but the Committee was hopeful about resuming social events in 2022. It would be great to be able to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022 in Alfred Place.

5. PLANNING REPORT

RS reported on planning-related activities during the year. The major issue was still the Thrums Hotel's application for a new build extension. Caroline Sibbald asked when the appeal decision was due. RS advised that it was imminent and the independent appeal panel would have the final say.

6. SHRUBBERIES WORKING PARTY REPORT

The Chair thanked Hugh Mackay for the work done during the year by him and his team of volunteers for their planting, pruning, weeding and clearing of leaves. Bobby Smith was happy to help keep sweeping leaves on Saturdays. Hugh advised that the Council would supply brushes, bags and shovels by Friday and would collect the full bags afterwards. It was reiterated that residents putting their brown bins out for the team to use was very helpful too. It was agreed that residents should collect brushes, bags etc from Hugh's garden on Saturday morning if they wished to help with the leaf-clearing effort.

The Chair congratulated Hugh and the team for making a lovely job of planting flowers round the tree on Blacket Place.

7. WEBSITE AND MEMBER DATABASE REPORT

Mhoraig Blair was not present but her report was noted. The Chair asked what people thought about creating a Blacket WhatsApp group. Susan Hezlet explained that it would be awkward in the event of any conflicts. Many other residents expressed their scepticism about the merits of such a group, particularly due to the number of notifications there would be. Therefore, it was decided not to take the idea forward.

The Chair then moved on to discuss the website, which everyone agreed was much improved. The database was also working well.

8. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT

The Chair read Stan Bird's report, which stated that physical crime was down and that the biggest issue remained online scams. One resident mentioned that he had found a man sleeping in his garden one morning on Blacket Place. The Chair said he would mention this to Stan.

9. TREASURER'S REPORT

Anne Henderson gave her report and advised that the only real expense for the year had been the cost of the removal of the tree stump on Blacket Place. Anne reminded the residents to pay their £5 annual subscription. A number of residents were paying more than that as they felt £5 was not enough.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Alan Paterson from Blacket Place brought up the issue of electric car chargers, given that he had recently bought an EV. He had written to the Council asking if it was possible to get on-street charging given that the area was protected and therefore residents without driveways were not permitted to create them. It was suggested that the Committee ask residents to ask the Council about this issue. Alan advised that, in the meantime, residents were able to use local chargers at Pollock Halls. The Chair

reported that the Council website showed no charging points planned in the Blacket area. The area was presumably low priority, being so close to Pollock Halls.

Fiona Courtney felt that Edinburgh Council were trailing behind other Councils in this regard. Anne Starsmeare agreed, saying that she felt the Association couldn't leave it up to politicians and big business. It was necessary for residents to bombard the Council to make a policy about chargers given that they hadn't made one yet. It was agreed that putting the Association's view forward to the Council may speed things up. It was also agreed that the Committee should come up with a policy and submit it to the Council.

Action – *The Committee to come up with policy regarding provision of electric car charging points in the Blacket Area for submission to the Council.*

The Chair advised that residents also had a voice through the Community Council. A number of members, however, expressed their concerns that the local councillor was not very proactive. It was agreed that the Chair should arrange for another husting event for residents to question local councillors in advance of the forthcoming local elections.

Action – *The Chair to arrange for another husting for residents to question local councillors in advance of the forthcoming local elections.*

Anne Starsmeare expressed her interest in helping residents living more sustainably. Many residents felt such a position would be a useful addition to the Committee. After a short discussion this was agreed and Anne was duly elected to the Committee.

Discussions then moved the issue of a lack of bins in the area. The bin on Dalkeith Road at the top of Blacket Place was always overflowing. The bin on Dalkeith Road at the end of Mayfield Terrace had gone, as had one at the end of Blacket Avenue. The Chair advised that the Council was removing bins as it did not have enough staff to empty them. This was another issue that residents could complain to the Council about in the hope of them taking some action.

A resident asked whether there would be carol singing in Alfred Place again this year, as there had been in December 2020. It was agreed that the Chair would ask Becky Colgreave to organise carol singing again this year, perhaps with the addition of mulled wine.

Action – *The Chair to ask Becky Colgreave to organise carol singing in Alfred Place in December.*

Finally, some residents expressed their architectural concerns about the new St James Quarter and the detrimental impact it had on the Edinburgh skyline.

The meeting closed at 8:45pm.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ian Chisholm's term of office as Chair has come to the end. Fortunately, Susan Hezlet has agreed to be nominated as the new Chair. You will have seen her excellent work as communications supremo. Susan has been very active in sending out Blacket Association emails to keep residents informed of developments.

Mhoraig Blair is also demitting her position on the committee, and Colin Blair has agreed to replace Mhoraig. They have very much been operating as a team anyway.

Anne Starsmeare was co-opted to the committee during the year and now needs to be formally elected. The terms of some members of the Committee have also ended, but Anne Henderson, Stan Bird and Richard Scothorne are happy to be renominated. In addition, Ian Chisholm is happy to remain on the committee as Newsletter editor and Community Council representative.

CHAIR'S REPORT

I am delighted to report that we have a very strong committee with all but one post filled, and I am very grateful to all committee members for their hard work during the year. Work on planning and the database/website have continued as the reports below make clear. We still have a vacancy as the Shrubbery Working Party representative on the committee, but Hugh Mackay has kindly agreed to continue leading the shrubbery working party for the present.

After an enforced absence it was good to have a Blacket residents' social event in the form of the Platinum Jubilee party held in Alfred Place in June. It was a very successful party as the numbers and joy of those attending showed. I hope we can organise the traditional Open Gardens evening next June.

As well as Chair of the Blacket Association, I am also the Chair of the Grange and Prestonfield Community Council (GPCC). This link enables us to keep-up-to-date with Council activities and I am continuing to represent the Blacket Association on the GPCC. Minutes of GPCC meetings are available on the website at grangeprestonfieldcc.org.uk.

WEBSITE AND DATABASE REPORT

We continue to 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 Blacket Association website is periodically updated for the latest minutes/committee meetings/local events etc. We have made some progress reviewing options for additional content to be added. Hugh Mackay's historical work on the five streets in the 20th century is now complete, and the intention is to add text and images to the website. We continue to welcome any suggestions for local matters that you would like to see included on the website.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Platinum Jubilee Party was a great success and we were delighted that more residents than expected attended resulting in a small surplus from the event. Landscaping costs included the replacement of fencing in Blacket Avenue.

The Blacket Association

Summary of Accounts for the year ended 31 August 2022

	2022	2021
	£	£
Opening Bank Account as at 1 September 2021	2922.97	2563.48
<i>Income</i>		
Subscriptions	770.00	810.00
Card sales	–	146.00
Platinum Jubilee party income	1541.20	–
	<u>2311.20</u>	<u>956.00</u>
<i>Expenditure</i>		
Printing newsletter	36.00	37.80
Landscaping and plants	445.00	518.71
Domain name	97.20	–
Platinum Jubilee Party expenses	1275.01	–
Cockburn Association	40.00	40.00
	<u>1893.21</u>	<u>596.51</u>
Increase in funds	417.99	359.49
Closing Bank account as at 31 August 2022	3340.96	2922.97
	=====	=====

Anne S Henderson, 1 November

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT

Following the removal of Covid-19 restrictions, there was no significant increase in the number of reported 'physical' incidents of anti-social behaviour and/or burglaries etc. As reported last year, following the trends of 'working from home' and Zoom/Team meetings, criminal and fraudulent activities switched to online scams. These remain the predominant threat. The Blacket Association again sent out several alerts and warnings about the most common scams, and how to spot and avoid them. We have also been sharing Neighbourhood Watch information with the Grange and Prestonfield Community Council (GPCC), which has posted them on its Facebook page. The Chairman and I are members of the GPCC and, until recently, we received reports in person from the Community Police Officer, which helped to identify emerging criminal activity and other things to watch out for. Unfortunately, we have been advised that no officers will attend these meetings in future, and that police reports will be in writing, quarterly and in arrears. I will scan the Neighbourhood Watch alerts and communicate these through our emails to residents. In the meantime, as the nights get darker, please carry out checks on your home window and door security and any sheds/garages/outbuildings too.

SHRUBBERY WORKING GROUP REPORT

We enjoyed a reasonable supply of spring flowers. In the Avenue it seems the north side is more successful. To the south there is less natural light and less exposure to rain. Nevertheless, we have planted more daffodils, which were donated by one of our members. We may have been lucky this time. As usual we pruned the bases of the lime trees in early summer and gave them more attention on 15 October. Ivy was tackled this year. It is good cover provided it is controlled.

We will sweep up leaves on Saturday 26 November. In previous years, such a task has made the streets much pleasanter but it does require lots of volunteers! Taking part in the annual leaf sweep is a great way of getting to know your neighbours and is an important part of our community spirit in the Blackets.

PLANNING REPORT

There's little to report. The main issue for residents remains the potential development to the rear of the Thrums Hotel. The recent demolition of a listed garden wall on the site may suggest that the approved scheme is going ahead, but it will be important to ensure that the wall is reinstated. Our local councillors are aware of the issue and we will be keeping a close eye on this and ensuring that neighbours are informed.