

# ELIE HERALD

January 2017



## FIFE DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALMOST COMPLETED

What will it mean for this community ?

The draft Fife Development Plan has been published. You will recall that at the end of 2015 there was a meeting about the plans to zone Wadeslea and Grange Road areas for housing development. The plan has been scrutinised by the planners and we now have a development plan which just needs approval from Fife Council. This is likely to be a formality. The development plan for this area has therefore zoned the field between the Wadeslea surgery and the football pitch and the field behind Grange Road as being for housing development purposes. This does not mean they are likely to be built on imminently but if an application is made for planning permission to develop either of these areas for housing the first hurdle will have been overcome. That again does not mean to say that such an application will be granted but such applications cannot be turned down simply because they are contrary to the development plan. What does this mean for the villages ?

### Consultation

Firstly it means that opposition to the principle of development of these sites may now be wasted effort. Secondly it means that if and when any application is made there will need to be a decision taken by everyone affected - and not necessarily the Community Council - on what the attitude should be to the proposals. For example it may be that the tentative proposals do not meet with your individual views as to the density of housing or the type of housing being sought. You might have misgivings about the access from the site onto the main roads and there may other concerns in

relation to sight lines, drainage etc. etc. It will be necessary in due course for opinions to be gathered about these proposals and it may be that a concerted approach is likely to have more effect than a piece meal scatter gun approach.

However the development of this nature does not, as we understand it, automatically require or expect public consultation but that if a number of individuals object or seek to have an influence on the decision then it has to be dealt with by the planning committee rather than at official level. The Community Council are also what is known as "Statutory Consultees" and if the Community Council intimate that they wish to adopt that status whether for or against the proposal's the application/s will require to be dealt with at committee level of Fife Council. Without prejudice to future decisions it is likely that the Community Council will take the Statutory Consultee line. So there seem to be a number of ways in which an objection to the proposals could be effective. It may be, for example, that whilst we can accept that some sort of development of these sites is now inevitable standing the change of the development plan, we would seek to influence by cogent argument what that development should consist of. Some part of the Wadeslea site, especially, will by requirement be designated as "affordable housing". The percentage is up to the planning committee and the politicians although such a decision could be influenced. The remainder of the site could well be owner/occupied dwellings which might be purchasable outright or rented in the form a housing association. However it is highly likely that a number of these houses will be

purchased by part time residents and holiday makers in the village. Whilst of course this village's lifeline very much depends upon the holiday trade the consequences of excessive rented and holiday homes is that the permanent population is much reduced. Local businesses have to do what they can to survive during the off peak periods and hope to recoup during the busy holiday times but the loss of a number of businesses over the last few years can be ascribable to the percentage increase in holiday homes and rentals. We cannot other than accept that this is a very attractive environment for such holiday and part time homes and also permanent residents but the consequences can be drastic to the heart and soul of any community.

### Permanent residents only ?

The permanent residents in St. Ives in Cornwall have tried to reduce the percentage of holiday and week end homes by seeking a planning condition that any new build house should not be rented out as holiday homes but should be occupied by permanent residents. In terms of the Localism Act of 2011 in certain circumstances if a majority of an electorate votes for such a clause the local authority must take it into account. This does not apply to Scotland. It seems unlikely that any such move here in Elie will receive sympathetic consideration by either the planners or the developers. It may be that if we want to try to increase the permanent population we have to make alternative suggestions. One might be that the village could benefit from retirement apartments/ homes in the McCarthy Stone type model. This would bring to the villages not only an increase in permanent residents with consequent increase in the turnover of local shops but it could also bring a degree of employment to the village which is lacking at the moment and with employment



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"Elie and Royal Burgh of Earlsferry Community Council"



usually comes requirement for housing. It will not however help the demographics ! e lying empty. A possibility of converting Earlsferry Town Hall into business units seems unrealistic not only because of the considerable cost of refurbishment to a reasonable standard – the entire back premises would probably have to be demolished – but there are doubts as to whether any such units would be attractive business proposition. Earlsferry is just that little bit out of the way – just as Elie – and parking at least at peak times in Earlsferry is improbable. So the belief that employment possibilities could be increased by provision of such units in this area seems optimistic. It is true that if there was, reasonably close by, a source of employment like for example a hotel/golf course complex we could look to an increase in employment but whilst Dumbarrie looks a possible future source of golf course development it is more likely that employees will live in or around Upper Largo/ Newburn rather than the higher priced areas of Elie and Earlsferry – perhaps that accounts for the new development at Lower Largo. So what can we do ?.... and do we need to do anything just now with no firm proposals on the table ?

**Debate**

We would suggest that there should be an on going debate in the villages to enable people to be informed and make up their own minds. It is highly likely that there will a wide variety of different opinions but if influence is sought it will need to be coordinated the best way possible. Your Community Council, contrary to some views, has not made up its mind whether to back any schemes or otherwise and it was clear from that meeting we had at the end that the village was sharply divided and a similar division appeared in the Community Council. The Community Council currently does not have a policy but it is there to represent the interests of the community and whilst it does have certain advantages when making representations to planners it does have to have the backing of the village. We and the planners really need to know what your views are so now is the time consider formulating them.



**Speed limits**

There has been some debate over the last year or so about the speed of vehicles coming into the village. We are all concerned about the apparent speed vehicles arriving over both railway bridges. To that end we asked Fife Council to consider a 20 mph limit at Park Place and over the old railway bridge at Baird Place. We were told that before they could do so they would have to monitor speeds to see if was necessary. They installed band tracks for a month at Park Place and that showed that the average speed crossing the bands was 19 mph and thus a reduced speed limit was not necessary. This was greeted with incredulity but when analysed it is highly probably accurate. The actual bands were positioned just north of the Woodside Road outlet. With the work on the High Street restricting passage many vehicles were taking the short cut along Woodside Road both coming into and out of the village so that what was registered was the vehicle from a standing start turning right onto the main road or turning left into Woodside Road ..... a bit of a waste of time perhaps. However there is proposal to install a Puffin crossing beside the school crossing Park Place. We await its installation and an answer why it is different from a Panda or Zebra or even belisha.

**Yoghurt Van**

An application for a mobile frozen yoghurt van at Ruby Bay has been granted. The Community Council were not advised and we understand that there is no requirement for the community to be consulted. We have asked the licensing committee of the Council to consider making intimation to community Council a matter of procedure.



**Yurts are coming!**

Whilst on yoghurts and its diminutive “yurts” ? , Elie Estate has been granted outline permission for the erection of 9 tents like things on the spur of land on the coastline to the east of Ardrross which we think may have been at one time part of the railway line. The permission contains various conditions and one of which is that the tented structure (not the wooden bases) have to be removed during the winter months that is assuming they survive the autumnal gales !

**Earlsferry Town Hall**

We have not entirely given up on seeking a resolution to the state of this building. A recent ish survey suggests that sums in excess of £270,000 would be needed to bring it up to a reasonable standard and that of course is as it is presently laid out. If any proposals were forthcoming to change the internal parts of the building to make for example community space, or residential or office units considerably more would need to be spent. One possibility is to enter into a partnership with a developer who would develop the building and provide “community space” for our use.



**Bric a Bracs**



We have since our inception been the subject of a number of critical comments about language or innuendoes used. A number of readers have complained about the offensive nature of some of the journalism. Let us be clear - offending is not part of the intention of this outlet. It is to inform and stimulate debate. If in the course of that ambition people are offended then be that as it may - we suppose it means people are reading us.







## James Braid Signs

We are still hoping that at the entrances to Elie we will be able to erect a sign showing that it was the birthplace of James Braid the Open Golf Champion. Contrary to popular belief he was born in Liberty Place and not Earlsferry but since his parents were resident at Grangehill Farm – his father was a ploughman – his birth was registered at Kilconquhar hence the mistaken belief he was born in Earlsferry. Of course latterly his mother lived in Linmara in Earlsferry High Street where there is a memorial plaque in his honour.



## Beach Project

We are happy to report that David Bell the consultant engaged to advise about the beach and dunes has produced his findings and suggestions for future management. The report is in the hands of the Beach Group (which consists of beach side proprietors and others with an interest in the area and new members always welcome) and consideration is being given to various ideas to assist the preservation of the dunes and also hopefully to reduce the amount of sand blown deposits in the adjacent gardens and South Street/ Fountain Road area. If anyone wishes a copy of the report and recommendations it will be available in the library and via a drop box link. Contact the editor is you wish this. We are also more than happy to acknowledge the funding provided for this survey by the Big Lottery Fund.



## Fireworks again!

Whilst we do not want to put a damper on New Year celebrations and the impromptu fireworks displays on Hogmanay we would like to remind everyone that it is an offence to set off fireworks after 1 a.m. on New Years Day Chapter and verse - : You must not set off fireworks between 11pm and 7am, except for: Bonfire Night, when the cut off is midnight. New Year's Eve, Diwali and Chinese New Year, when the cut off is 1am. Fireworks had been noted at 1.15 a.m. on Hogmanay.

## Rubbish issues

Whilst on the subject of New Year we have had to report issues with the rubbish bins in the village. Firstly the recycling centre behind the Church has been inundated with bottles and the receptacle for them rapidly filled up and overflowed – says a lot about the residents – however..... #Since there are no landfill bins at either the lighthouse or the church (we have asked for one but Fife council is reluctant to install a land fill bin in case it is used by commercial waste depositors without have to pay the appropriate fee. The litter bins on the High Street and elsewhere are not designed to take black and white bag household refuse We appreciate that those renting property often cannot put rubbish out for collection at convenient times but we plead that if the bins are full please take a short trip to the recycling depot in Pittenweem and deposit rubbish there – there is a land fill skip, bottle bank and much more besides. And the guys that run it are welcoming.



## Greenhouse ?

We have to gear up for the spring and summer which includes filling the tubs and boats with suitable plants. We suffer from the lack of nursery facilities in the village. We desperately need access to green houses where we could sow seeds, pot them on, prick them off (or whatever it is you do with them) so that we could have an enviable display of colour in the summer – perhaps even graduate to gold award.. If you have a green house in your garden which you seldom use please contact us and offer us the use of it to do whatever one is supposed to do in a greenhouse.



## Good turnout for Carol singing . . .

The Carol singing round the tree on Toll Green this year was a huge success and many thanks to all who attended (some 200 hardly souls) and also thanks to George Harvey who led the singing, and Bill Lamont who provided the music and also Carol Birrell and others who organised the event. Some £200 was collected by donations. Well done to all involved!



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## Garden and window boxes competition

The winners this year are Douglas and Leslie Humphreys whose garden was adjudged to be the most spectacular and the window boxes section was won by Mr & Mrs Edwards. Neither recipients were available for comment when the Herald reporter contacted them but there is a rumour that Douglas acquired his green fingers from his many years thumbing the magazines in his newspaper shop or perhaps it was all down to Leslie. The Herald reporter tried to doorstep them but could not find a convenient step. Congratulations to Woodside.

## Water Pressure Concerns

If you tried to take a shower in the early part of the summer holidays your trickle would have been disappointing. It was seen that consumers in Earlsferry complained so Scottish Water operated a valve switch which had the effect of reducing the Elie supply to a trickle. We are glad to report that thanks



to the intervention of Councillor Riches the definitive position is that there was a fault at a vale at Ovenstone farm which resulted in the pressure varying. That has not been fixed and a monitoring exercise undertaken. It is hoped that we may now have consistent water pressure.

## Elie Bank Branch closure has effects

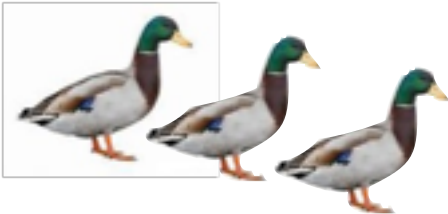


The closure of the Royal Branch has had some knock on effects. There is no CCTV camera at the ATM so there is no record of attendees and withdrawals. There have

been occasions anecdotally where a card has either been swallowed or the card has taken an alarmingly long time to be spat out. There is no sign at the old bank premises showing the visit times of tardis bank and the waste paper basket has been taped up presumably to avoid having to empty it ! All these matters are being taken up with the bank and we hope that there will be something to report next time. We're on the case !

Braids Bar has applied for a variation of its licence to enable it to play live and acoustic music. Remember the ball room at Queens Hotel....long time ago.

## In for a Duck . . .



My travels took me , eventually to the University of York, where yet another encounter with my animal friends took place. From my opening sentence you might possibly conclude that I am referring to the student population, but no, the shy and nocturnal campus domesticus had migrated for the vacation and was not expected to return for some days yet, if ever.

The grounds and buildings of the University are a joy to see. Construction started in 1968 or thereabouts and the basic concept is one of low buildings scattered round a landscaped, meandering lake and connected by walkways and bridges. Fountains and willow trees abound and there is a resident population of ducks, geese and moorhen. The college residences rejoice in such names as Wentworth, Goodricke, Vanburgh, Langwith Derwent and Alcuin, and there is a music and concert hall, sports centre and a library block perched on a hill and resembling a modern cathedral or space station,.

Being an enthusiastic, if inefficient, participant in that sport which is fortunately no longer utterly down cried to by the reigning monarch, it was perhaps appropriate that I should find myself in Wentworth College for the duration of my stay. My apartment was both comfortable and well equipped – a large beer barrel stood in one corner bearing the legend “Please do not remove”. My room was situated on the ground floor and half the outer wall was taken up by a full length window, clear in its upper half but opaque and reinforced with wire mesh in t its lower section.

When I first arrived at the college, I had just completed a somewhat lengthy journey and was fatigued both in mind and body,. I hastily unpacked, washed and sank gratefully into the deep and comfortable armchair that stood beside the window. I had had the foresight to bring with me a giant sized bag of crisps and a packet of cheese biscuits to repel any onset of hunger that might assail me at any time between meals and it was to those refreshments that I turned in my hour of need. No sooner had I opened the receptacles with the inevitable accompaniment of crackles and rustles, then another alien noise joined the acoustical chorus. I paused – Crips between bag and mouth. From the other side of the window came a rapid tap tap tap against the opaque pane near the ground. I opened the sliding

panel in the upper half of the window and peered out, seeking the source of the commotion. There on the ground beneath sat a handsome drake who regarded me hopefully out of a golden eye and made small quacking noises concerning the potential donation of foodstuffs which might be surplus to my requirements. A handful of crisps was gratefully accepted, as were two cheese biscuits.

The following morning, on opening the curtains, I was greeted by both the sun and a renewed and more insistent tapping on the window pane. My visitor of yesterday, the drake, had brought his missus to breakfast and the delay in room service was quite intolerable, I duly dispensed crisps and biscuits before leaving to attend to business elsewhere. That evening, there were three drakes, a duck and a moorhen hammering at the glass and my stock of comestibles had become sadly depleted. I was about to lean out to explain the reason for my lack of attention when there was great clattering of wings at the open window. The drake, his patience obviously at an end, confronted me beak –to- nose. Cowed I distributed the remains of my edibles and departed rapidly from the wrath of the non –paying customers. Hopefully there will be plenty more pickings to be had when campus domesticus return.