

Editorial

After a period of two years we have decided to give this publication another go. We felt that during the pandemic and isolation there was little chance of our readership being able to get a hold of a hard copy (and more importantly to donate towards its production) and posting editions online was unlikely to reach the target audience. Of course, many things have happened in the intervening period. Things on which we might have had something to say but we must look to the future of this publication. It was intended to inform, intrigue and amuse the villagers of these two old Burghs.

We shall try to concentrate on things of a general nature that might interest the readership and include regular features from some of our previous contributors and some new ones. If your organisation wishes to let the village know about events, news, etc. we rely on copy being submitted to us. The preferred format is in Word, which we can then edit to fill the space. Pictures should be in hires JPEG or PNG format. We aim to complement social media, not compete with it. Not everyone is on Facebook and many don't want to be. Our news may be old news to some but breaking news for others, but we hope its content will bear witness to the many advantages of living in this lovely place.

General Updates

During lock down, of course, things have not stopped. Elsewhere in this issue there is a report on the latest position regarding the outline planning permission granted to Elie Estates for the construction of a housing development at Wadeslea and Grange Road. The permission was hedged with a number of conditions, which are currently being pursued (more below).

Motorhomes continue to be, for some, a source of irritation. A scheme was introduced this year (on an experimental basis) to designate some slots at Ruby Bay car park for motorhomes at a fee. A report from the FCCT is expected soon.

Planning application – Elie Estates

It is now common knowledge that planning permission in principle was granted for both the Wadeslea and Grange Road Developments of Elie Estates at a meeting of the planning committee in

February this year. The actual draft notice (<https://planning.fife.gov.uk/online/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PJMTTBHFI XI00>) was issued in August and contains a considerable number of conditions. Most of them are technical, but some merit a look here:

- No works shall commence on site until the requisite upgrading of the sewer system is going ahead...no unit shall be occupied on the site until the upgrading of the sewer system is complete. This at least addresses the sewer difficulties since it was known that Scottish Water were not initially planning an upgrade of the system for a few years. This will now have to be accelerated if the development is to proceed. A further application for approval ...shall include the confirmation of the condition of the Loch run culvert...should the condition not be in good working order repairs shall be undertaken. We consider this might very well be very burdensome. The Loch Run is an extensive sub-surface system, especially under Wadeslea.
- Further surveys are required relating to corn buntings and badgers. And finally
- In the event that the Grange development proceeds but Wadeslea does not there shall be a *quid pro quo* area designed for affordable housing. In other words, the affordable housing provision being included for Wadeslea has also to be included for Grange in the event that Wadeslea does not proceed.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points

Fife Council has applied to themselves (!) for planning permission to site two electrical vehicle (EV) charging points in the small car park area behind the church. The mock-up photo (right) shows what it will look like in use.



Some feel that a better location would be on the High Street, to make it easier to see if slots are vacant as a drive by, rather than having to go all the way into Kirkpark Road. As reported elsewhere in this issue, the Harbour Trust is also working on installing some EV charging points within the Harbour car park.

Visit East Neuk

One of a number of organisations dedicated to increasing tourism, Visit East Neuk, has recently promoted an app (everyone has one now!) called **East Neuk Now**. This is intended to be an aid to enable visitors to easily find local attractions and businesses. It can also be used to publicise events and functions which are being organised by businesses and others in the area. It is an important addition to the resources needed to deal with increased tourism and improve the economic sustainability of the area.



The actual structure of the tourism bodies in this part of the world is a bit of a mystery. The overarching body seems to be Visit Scotland, whose remit is to encourage tourism for Scotland. Thereafter there is the Scottish Tourism Alliance, which represents business associated with tourism. Then there are the local bodies in our case headed by Visit Fife or Fife Tourist Partnership, which again oversees the initiatives in the East Neuk and the whole of Fife, which is divided into seven localised tourist boards, one of which is *Visit East Neuk*.

One can appreciate why there should be smaller localised bodies who promote tourism in the area, but it is a bit confusing for the general public to understand the inter relationships between these various bodies. Of course, it is desirable that a local tourist body should have clear and intimate knowledge of the area it is trying to promote. So we urge you to support this **East Neuk Now** app, not only from a consumer aspect but also businesses and organisations who want some publicity. It is entirely free and downloadable as usual for Android or Apple. Follow the instructions to become a member and add your organisation's activities.

The stylised puffin logo (see above) has been adopted as the symbol of the East Neuk. However, there have been a few eyebrows raised that this puffin representation is rather exclusive to the Isle of May and might imply that puffins are readily viewable throughout the East Neuk. It seems to have supplanted the fisher lass logo that, up to now, has represented the East Neuk. We think that both could be used. Certainly the puffin is eye-catching and attractive, but the fisher lass emblem provides a historic link to the rich fishing history of the East Neuk villages. We need to get behind *Visit East Neuk* and support their hard work, which aims to improve the economic sustainability of this area.



Toll Green

Our venerable and oft admired green space (at least apart from the jackdaws) in the centre of Elie, was the subject of considerable interest from various sources when trying to research who actually owns it.



The Community Council was convinced that it was owned by a local resident to whom it had been gifted after some work was done many years ago. Despite extensive official Land Searches and intrusive inquiries the putative owner continued to remain anonymous. So, the History Society tried to establish the bona fides of the area. Searches in the Sasine Register have drawn a blank. First and foremost it is called "Toll Green" because it was at the eastern end of the grass which housed the toll gate, toll booth, water trough and pump. That accounted for the name at least between 1820 and 1870, but prior to this it did not merit being named. Significantly in the 1853 Ordnance Survey notes there is no reference to its separate existence and it does not appear in the 1853 map. However, it does appear as green space in the 1890 map.

There is a newspaper article about 1870 reference to discussion about the upkeep of the area "*When the unseemly Toll House which stood in the middle of the High Street was removed.....we expected that the ground would have been levelled and made tidy. But instead everything is left in disorder.....This small piece of ground has from time immemorial been considered.....to be the only spot in Elie to which [the inhabitants] had a sort of common right..... where our young men of a summer evening were [wont] to meet for a little innocent recreation (sic).*

The theme was continued in a later paper thus: [*Mr Jamieson* reported in 1894 that] The Toll Green was made by voluntary subscription and by the proceeds of a bazaar and afterwards handed over to the Commissioners** in trust.* he was the factor of Elie Estate.**The Commissioners were the body responsible for managing the Burgh of Elie fore runners of the town council. In our view therefore the space is publicly owned by the residents of Elie. [Rather like Chapel Green is to those of Earlsferry.]*

Environmental Action Group



You will be aware that this group of green-fingered enthusiasts separated from the Community Council to become an independent group. This arrangement has allowed more flexibility and is working well. It is hoped that what has been achieved during last summer and currently is to your satisfaction. Please let us know.

At a recent public meeting of the group a number of projects and improvements for the future was discussed. Final plans will include feedback from the community and your views would be most appreciated.

Review of last season

The barrelled golf clubs were much admired and the displays in Hyde Park and Archbold Park have been greatly appreciated and especially well used by visitors. The petunias and live daisies had done well and were worth repeating.



We had applied for and received Common Good Fund money to purchase a new easy access picnic table, which is also wheelchair friendly, along with two new benches, which have been placed in front of the church wall. We have commissioned the laying of slabs in Toll Green to support three more picnic tables and four planters.

Next year

We fear that a lack of funds will restrict what can be achieved next year and that hanging baskets, may be out of our reach, despite the attraction these have for the village. The full cost including watering is usually around £1200. On the other hand, if we can find the additional funding needed it might be worth considering.

We discussed The Queen's Jubilee (see below) and thought we should do something specific for it, but much would depend upon other groups and we would be happy to join in with them. We are keen to find out what other initiatives are in progress.

It was mentioned that the St Monans entrance to Elie had been flattened as a result of the work by the gas board, but they had resown grass seed. We have also sown some wild flowers.

Finance

We currently have assets of £1,599, most of which is earmarked for work underway. The fundraiser via JustGiving had produced £1,329 and other

donations £500. We are most grateful to the generosity of both full and part-time residents and visitors, which enables us to continue the work.

General future projects

The fencing around Toll Green was thought to merit an upgrade. It would be nice to replace with galvanised hooped fencing, similar to what used to be in place as shown in old postcards, but this will be relatively expensive. An alternative would be to purchase recycled plastic fencing panels, which might be easier financed by a 'sponsor a panel' initiative. We are investigating the various ideas.

Consideration might be required to again placing planters at the Toft to discourage parking on the pavement area.

The great efforts by homeowners in Earlsferry High Street, who had put out flower boxes and maintained them during the year, was also acknowledged. This had made a huge difference to the attractiveness of the Royal Burgh.

We agreed we could do with more help and that we should canvass the villagers for ad hoc or permanent help via Facebook, the Herald and word of mouth. All volunteers are welcome – please come and join us to help keep our village beautiful!

Please contact us at elieearlsferry@gmail.com

From our Special Correspondent

Contributed by Albert Lawrie

"The Thing"

We have had a deal of interest in what Albert Lawrie christened "the Thing" which spent weeks on end being towed up and down the Forth. It looked like a spare leg for an oil rig. We have it on no one's authority that it was a leg for the offshore wind farm to the north of the Isle of May and that they were waiting until it was needed, but it was cheaper to tow it up and down the Forth rather



than anchor it somewhere. So we enjoyed the game of "Where's the Thing today?" which could be answered by anyone that has a maritime tracking app which shows positions of ships in the world. Having said that Albert kindly has given a good explanation of what's happening.

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Saipem 7000

We have had some interesting vessels in the Firth recently, but none more impressive than Saipem 7000, the third largest crane vessel in the world. Normally she would travel with the cranes in the lowered position, but she was in a playful mood and blatantly flirting with all around her when in the Firth the other week.



Saipem 7000 works all over the world and is here to install the substation jacket (the bit that's under the water) on the Seagreen Wind Farm, off Montrose. The jacket has also been in the Firth, onboard the heavy transport vessel 'Dongbang Giant'. Both were in the Firth sheltering from Storm Arwen, as were many other vessels, including 'Simon Stiven' a pipe laying vessel, and Saipem 3000, both of them working on the NnG (Nearth na Gaoithe) Wind Farm off Crail. The first of two substations for the NnG WF should arrive in the Firth soon; more work for Saipem 7000.

History Society

Earlsferry Golfing Heritage Trail and Museum



We have made reference in the past to this project to celebrate and honour the large number of young men from Earlsferry who had been trained in golf club manufacture and who carried their trade and golfing expertise to other countries between 1880 and 1930. So far we have identified 40 young men in this category.

More significant however, to the general development of the game, were the achievements of George Forrester and Andrew Scott the main makers of the era. Ronnie Sinclair has put together on behalf of the Golf House Club, a very exciting collection of golf clubs made by these masters. It is the ambition to construct a golf heritage museum to display these and many other artefacts. Discussions continue with the Sports Club and the GHC. Ronnie has had an article published in the journal of the Golf Collectors Society, a worldwide organisation, and it is attracting much interest internationally. The appetite for such a tourist attraction is probably insatiable so if we allude to it in the future it may be a request for backing financial or otherwise.

The Society plans to restart talks with one planned for 20 January, when Alan Provan will share his extensive postcards collection. Watch out for more details on social media, posters and the website.

Blasts from the Past – Sarah Tytler

If you had been an avid reader between say 1850 and 1910 you would certainly have heard of or even read something by Sarah Tytler. She wrote a number of novels which were eventually very popular. But what you may not know is that her real name was Henrietta Keddie. Her father was a lawyer in Cupar but she spent much of the time in the family home at Grange Earlsferry, where her father also owned a coalmine.



Is there no end to the talents of Earlsferry People?

Why There Are Steps At The End Of Elie Pier Alan Provan



It was reported in the Fife Herald of November 1867 "In response to an earnest and very numerous signed memorial from the fishermen of the coast, the trustees of the Elie estate are erecting a light on Elie Pier. The light will be from gas, displayed in a lantern fitted with reflectors on the most improved principle."

Permission was received from the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouse Board and construction of the tower was commenced, and the light was established on 24th January 1868.

Elie Estate requested in 1905 that the white light be changed to red. Northern Lighthouse Board recommended that the light should be changed from white to green and a more powerful burner be introduced. The light was lit by acetylene gas which is generated by calcium carbonate and water and likely the Harbour Master or one of his staff would tend the equipment several times a week to top up the water tank and renew the calcium carbonate and light on at sunset and turn off at sunrise though in poor weather the light might be left on all day. Reportedly only lit October to March.

At the end of 1929 the Commissioners approved discontinuance of the fixed green light at Elie,

though whether it was turned off at this time is not known. Elie Estate would have had to obtain permission from Northern Lighthouse Board to discontinue the light. This coincides with Sir Michael Nairn becoming the owner of Elie Estate, Elie harbour was now much quieter than before WW1, no ships were cruising the Forth and Sir Michael saw no need for a Harbour Master to be employed, so there would be no one to tend the light.

An Elie resident remembered that when he returned home after the Second World War the structure was still there but couldn't remember if it was lit or not. It is also believed that the tower was maybe demolished during the war to add to the piles of scrap metal collected for the war effort, most of which ended up in landfill.

Going by postcards of the time I believe the structure was demolished late 1940s.

Research sources:

Various newspapers. NLB Archives.

The Harbours of Elie Bay A History by Archie Rennie.

Earlsferry Town Hall

During the lock down the Town Hall Group managed to secure funding to purchase the Hall and in addition they made some early improvements. It must have been a rather thankless task standing the restrictions and the inability to get any revenue from its use. However, with the relaxation of the rules there has been an excellent response and the Hall has various activities up and running – but there is a distinct possibility that another lockdown will seriously dent plans. The Group is keen to involve more members of the community so please feel free to join the Friends of Earlsferry Town Hall – your support is vital for the success of this project and the organisers need all the encouragement they can get. They report thus:



At the end of March 2021, Earlsferry Town Hall was bought and placed into the hands of the Community from Fife Council. Earlsferry Town Hall Limited (ETHL), the company and charity which was formed to take on the purchase, then set out to carry out urgent repairs to our historic building making it useable once again as a community venue.

After much-needed redecoration of the main hall, it was opened up for use again on 25th Oct 21. Since then, the Hall has hosted a Carers Support Group, Yoga, Children's Playgroup, East Neuk Flower Club, Elie and Earlsferry Wine Club, a Public Meeting, Children's Birthday Party, and a Kid's Hallowe'en Party. The fantastically enjoyable *The Other Guys*, the A Capella group from St Andrews

University, played to a sell-out community audience recently. For December there's more of the same, plus a Wreath-Making class, the PTA coffee morning, a Home Energy Efficiency Seminar, the Community Cinema and a couple more private celebrations. All in all, it's been an extremely busy time after reopening the doors.

ETHL is building a team of Ambassadors, who will have a role of key-holding on a rota basis. The job involves introducing new users to the Hall, having access the Hall diary, and supervising opening and closing. Several of the Trustees have taken on this position and we are looking for more volunteers from the community who can help with this.

ETHL is seeking to increase the Fundraising Team. We need grants and funds to fulfil the dream of a vibrant, modern community space. There has been great success and celebration in getting to our current stage, but there is lots more yet to be done. We are looking for members of the community with enthusiasm and some administrative skills to join the group. IT, social media, secretarial skills are all sought from volunteers to assist in running the Hall.

We are now registered with [easyfundraising.co.uk](https://www.easyfundraising.co.uk) and [Amazon Smile](https://www.amazon.co.uk/s?ref=ain_text) as a recognised charity.

Lastly, our Friends programme is recommended to all the community to give a regular donation of support. All these links are to be found on the website [earlsferrytownhall.org.uk](https://www.earlsferrytownhall.org.uk)

Look out for 150th anniversary celebration of the present building next year!

Elie Harbour Trust



It is sometimes easy to forget that Elie institutions only function because people are prepared to devote their time and effort to running them. So it is with the Harbour Trust, which is responsible for managing one of Elie's most iconic assets.

We were pleased to receive an update of their work over the recent lock down period.

- Pier repairs in excess of £30k have been carried out to stabilise the end of the pier.
- The car park ticket machine has been upgraded to enable payment by card.
- A new locked gate system has been installed at the pontoon area.
- There has been an upgrade to the CCTV.
- New signage has been installed.
- In addition, the Trust is planning to install electric vehicle charging points.

We often take this work for granted and it is nice to acknowledge the hard work of the trustees.

The Queen's Jubilee 2-5 June 2022



You will be aware of celebrations for the 70th Anniversary of The Queen's accession to the throne planned for Summer 2022. The May Bank Holiday Weekend will be moved to Thursday 2 June and an additional Bank Holiday on Friday 3 June will see a four-day weekend to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee - the first time any British monarch has reached this historic milestone.

This is a unique celebration and we should, as a village, be joining together to do something(s) to commemorate this event. We hope that interested bodies will co-ordinate their efforts to make it a memorable weekend.

One idea is a procession of floats representing the various societies in the village to process from the Chapel Green to the Harbour where there might be a civic reception for all to enjoy, perhaps with a barbeque and a bar. Other ideas might be some form of commemorative structure on Toll Green – the EAG is looking at a Jubilee Arch at the fountain end of Toll Green. Another idea might be special floral tributes. It would be most useful if efforts of various organisations were coordinated to avoid duplication of effort. Let's put on a good show.



Soapbox

Residents v Second Homes v Air B&B

We have frequently visited this contentious area. The East Neuk of Fife is a tourist attraction; it has world-class golf courses, excellent restaurants, rich history and multiple leisure facilities. It is little wonder that it is a popular place to live, have a second home or let out your property.

Each category of participant has an obligation to the community. Each of these competing interests are in a way essential for the robustness and thus balance of the economy of the East Neuk. The residents complain about the influx and seek to limit the number of second homes, which are for the most part unoccupied. Their agenda includes limiting the number of units that are let via Air B&B.

The principal - and justified - complaint being that the cost of houses is beyond the local residents competing with wealthier potential second homeowners. The proposed licensing scheme, which is yet to be properly formulated, is likely to apply a licensing system to casual and short term lets. Some will view this as a tax imposition too far

and abandon letting out their property when they are not enjoying its facilities. The more commercial B&B market may have to decide whether it is viable to pay a fee for a licence, potentially for each property. The reduction in these units is obviously good news for the resident population but not for businesses in the area.

Not so long ago Earlsferry had nine grocer's shops, a baker's shop, a café/tearoom, at least two butchers, and more. Now there are none. This is often laid at the door of the second homes' market in that for most of the year the lack of occupants means that businesses cannot survive on a short seasonal trade. There has to be a balance. No one has yet come up with any formula which will give credence to this balance. It must therefore be the case that each of the protagonists will have to learn to compromise. The residents will have to tolerate the influx of tourists, the second homeowners will need to put more back into the community by using the local shops and hostellers rather than use supermarket home delivery, and the Air B&B market may need to vet its customers more closely.

There is no easy answer. The Fife Coast and Countryside Trust has started to see if this balancing exercise can be effective in the control of motorhomes in our various attractive locations. Some local residents would like to banish them completely, but that is a selfish attitude – better control through proper regulation is the way forward.

We acknowledge that the economy of this area depends almost exclusively on tourism, we have to adapt and tolerate the inconveniences that sometime flow from this influx. Especially when the accommodation available is almost exclusively self-catering. We should also embrace our visitors by creating attractions for them to enjoy.

Christmas Holiday Arrangements

Here we would have liked to publish details of various events over the Christmas and New Year periods but the current Covid uncertainty makes this difficult. Please submit to elieearlsferry@gmail.com



**FESTIVE
PROGRAMME**
see website for details
shipinn.scot



**The Elie Herald welcomes
feedback – please try and
be constructive though!**

Contact us at: elieearlsferry@gmail.com