

October 2011

# Community Council Question Time with Chief Executive



Sue Bruce, Chief Executive, and Mark Turley, Director, SfC, met with community council members at a Question Time debate on Saturday 24 September. The event was organised by the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils and attracted community council members from across the city.

Sue welcomed the opportunity to strengthen links with community councils. She commented that she started her career as a Community Worker with Strathclyde Regional Council in 1976, which was a great grounding for her role as Chief Executive.

During discussions she highlighted the need for openness and transparency and the importance of ensuring that information, for example as part of the budget consultation, is circulated widely in an accessible format.

Key issues discussed at the meeting included: alternative business models, the Property Services situation, Community Empowerment, the Edinburgh Guarantee, Neighbourhood Partnerships and community council involvement in the Planning and Licensing processes.

A report of the question and answer session is available on the EACC website; [www.edinburghcommunitycouncils.org](http://www.edinburghcommunitycouncils.org).

# Edinburgh Community Council News

## Winter weather news

The Council has unveiled a range of measures to ensure that Edinburgh is well prepared for a severe winter.

Some of the main highlights include:

- Trebling of salt stocks for use on roads and pavements
- Investment in specialist snow clearing equipment
- Adapting existing equipment with snow ploughs and grit spreaders
- Improved staff training
- More staff moved to snow clearing duties to enable a faster and bigger impact
- Improved communications and information between the Council and the public
- Special arrangements for waste collection
- Investigating measures to prevent abandoned cars blocking roads
- Improved identification and co-ordination of support to vulnerable people
- Increasing support for locally organised snow-clearing by volunteers.



You can access the full report at Council Papers Online - [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cpo/](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cpo/) or contact the Winter Weather Working Team on 0131 529 3685 or [winter.maintenance@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:winter.maintenance@edinburgh.gov.uk).

## The principal time to comment is coming up!

The Planning Service has prepared the first key stage of the new Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP) which will replace the Edinburgh City Local Plan and the Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan. This first stage document is called the Main Issues Report (MIR) and its purpose is to seek views on the options that will be included in the LDP. As its title suggests, the emphasis is on main issues i.e. where change is needed and there is a choice of how to do so. Issues cover housing, shopping and leisure, economic growth, climate change and environmental resources, quality of place and infrastructure provision.

As this document provides the main opportunity for commenting, a major public consultation will be carried out over three months, from the end of October to the end of January 2012. This is a longer period than normal to allow for the Christmas period.

The dates and locations of consultation events and meetings, as well as an online version of the MIR, will be available from the end of October by going to: [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/localdevelopmentplan](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/localdevelopmentplan)

When the consultation period begins, all community councils will receive a letter enclosing a copy of the MIR. If you would prefer to receive more copies or if you require any further information please contact Irene Beautyman at [irene.beautyman@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:irene.beautyman@edinburgh.gov.uk) or call 0131 469 3552.



## Community councils get together for Annual Joint Meeting



Mark Turley, Director of SfC, gave the keynote speech at the CC Joint meeting on 27 June. He raised some of the challenges which lie ahead such as budget cuts and youth employment and he stressed the importance of good quality services which focus on outcomes rather than processes.

During the question and answer session, CC members exchanged views on Community Engagement and how well it is working. Some members indicated that a 'we know best attitude' still exists in parts of the Council while others had experienced a more inclusive approach.

The theme for the Joint Meeting was Engagement and Empowerment and there were opportunities in the workshops to discuss topics such as Community Ownership, Social Media and Engaging with hard to Reach Groups.

Feedback from the Social Media workshop revealed that community councils are keen to use Facebook and Twitter to reach a wider audience. Social Media will be particularly useful in attracting new members in the run up to the community council elections in September 2012

Natalie Hoy, West Neighbourhood and Local Community Planning Manager, thanked everyone for their contributions. She acknowledge that it is a challenging time for local government and communities but working together is key to trying to resolve these issues and to provide the strongest support for communities.

### What's your vision for CCs?

A review of CC training and support is currently underway. As part of the review CCs are being asked for their vision of community councils and what skills and support are needed to achieve this? Please let us know your views by completing the questionnaire at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/C85B6G2>

Feedback from the survey will help to develop a support programme for community councils.

## Community Council Round Up

### Portobello Village Show

Portobello's annual Village Show, organised by POD (Portobello Open Door), took place on Sunday 4 September featuring duck races along Figgate Burn, tug of war, hill race to the top of Arthur's Seat and back, junk and vegetable sculpture competitions, home baking and home produce prizes, a model railway, over 20 individual stalls, the RowPorty BBQ and much more!

The event was a great success and was once again blessed with sunshine. The community council stall attracted much interest, particularly the maps of the Portobello Heritage Trail and the newly launched community council survey seeking the views of residents on how Portobello could be improved.



*Article submitted by Sean Watters, Portobello CC*

### Marchmont & Sciennes helps to shape new HMO regulations

MSCC has been influential in shaping the new regulations relating to HMOs by participating in the working group set up by the South Central Neighbourhood Partnership.

The campaign was led by community council member, Anne Laird. The aim was to ensure that the Council has powers to consider the needs of the whole community when granting a licence, taking into account the needs of all residents. Members of the CC have been able to make a valuable and practical contribution to this group which has representatives from other community councils, senior Council officials, students and landlords.

The legislation will enable the Council to take wider consideration of how increased living accommodation in HMOs can affect other occupiers, and cause problems in tenements when granting licences.

*Sarah Sandow, Chair, Marchmont & Sciennes CC*

### Queensferry & District celebrates 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday

Queensferry & District CC, one of Edinburgh's longest established CCs, turned 25 this year. The community council is well known in the community as a very active local group. Members have been proactive in a range of issues such as planning applications and consultation on the new Forth Road Crossing. The community council also has a reputation for its innovative communication techniques and is one of the first community councils in Edinburgh to use Facebook and Twitter.



### Juniper Green makes plans

Juniper Green is planning to celebrate the centenary of Bloomiehall Park with a number of community events next year. The CC believes that the quality of life and the well being and cohesion of the community are enhanced by opportunities for people to come together to inform themselves, or to socialise and enjoy themselves with neighbours and friends. Richard Watt, secretary of Juniper Green CC, commented, 'as a community council we see the organisation of such occasions as an essential part of our role, one we flatter ourselves that we have performed during the first 20 months of our existence.'



Richard Watt, Secy, Juniper Green CC

## Planning & Scotland's Zero Waste Plan

The Scottish Government's Zero Waste Plan sets out ambitious targets to reduce our waste. Planning Aid for Scotland is running a series of waste planning training events to explore how the Zero Waste Plan will impact on the planning system - and how community councils can engage effectively with waste planning issues.



The training event in Edinburgh will take place on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2011

### How to take part

These one-day **training events** are free to attend, however those wishing to take part must register in advance to guarantee a place. To register, please contact Kathryn on [training@planningaidscotland.org.uk](mailto:training@planningaidscotland.org.uk) or 0131 220 9730.



## Health in Mind

Communities Connecting is a service supporting older people in West and South Central Edinburgh who have become lonely and isolated and have lost the confidence to take part in community activities and groups and using local facilities and services.

Communities Connecting supports older people to find out what is going on in their local area and, through matching them with a volunteer helps to build their confidence to get out and access community resources, try new things or take up old interests once again.

Alison McGhee, Support Worker for Health in Mind commented. 'We are currently recruiting new volunteers who are available during the day who will support an older person to get back out into the world again, helping to rebuild confidence and connections.'

For more information about volunteering with Communities Connecting, please contact Alison or Julie on 0131 225 8508 or email [jools@health-in-mind.org.uk](mailto:jools@health-in-mind.org.uk) or [alisonmcghee@health-in-mind.org.uk](mailto:alisonmcghee@health-in-mind.org.uk)

## Edinburgh4Community - free resource for finding funding

Libraries have recently purchased a subscription to [Edinburgh4Community](#) which gives information to groups and individuals who are seeking funding. Access is free. It can be accessed on a People Network computer in a Library or from any internet enabled PC.

To access out with library premises the user must be a library member as a membership number is required. [Membership](#) is free and can be done online or in person at any library. Please pass on this information to any of your colleagues or community groups you think might be interested in this free resource for finding funding.

## Play Area Action Plan

The Play Area Action Plan aims to guide the improvement of existing play areas and to identify new opportunities for facilities across the city. A draft document has been prepared and is now available for public consultation until 18th November 2011. If you would like to find out more about the Play Area Action Plan and respond to the consultation, please follow the link below:

[http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/495/parks\\_gardens\\_and\\_open\\_spaces/764/play\\_areas](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/495/parks_gardens_and_open_spaces/764/play_areas)

Hard copies of the report are available on request

## Edinburgh Association of Community Councils (EACC)

The next EACC Executive Meeting will be held on **Thursday 10 November at 7.30 pm** in the City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh.

For further information about the EACC visit [www.edinburghcommunitycouncils.org](http://www.edinburghcommunitycouncils.org).

**Please send articles for the Newsletter to:**

**Community Council Liaison Officer, Services for Communities, Council Headquarters, Waverley Court, 4 East Market Street, Level C:4, EDINBURGH EH8 8BG, Tel 469 3838,**

[Community.councils@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:Community.councils@edinburgh.gov.uk)

