

CRAIGMILLAR PARK ASSOCIATION - SPRING 2015 NEWSLETTER

<http://craigmillar-park.org.uk/>

Dear Member (or Neighbour who did not renew membership at the AGM last year),

With an eye to the cost of circulating printed Newsletters, the Committee has decided to produce just one a year, to be distributed shortly before the AGM, and aims to keep members informed by an electronic newsletter as nearly everyone has given us an e-mail address at some time or another. This includes people who were unable to attend the AGM and pick up a membership form; if you are one of these and wish to retain or renew your membership, or rejoin, please contact the Treasurer, Liz Philp (liz@ecphilp.orangehome.co.uk). The Committee is looking at ways of simplifying membership, so that residents don't have to fill in a new form each year or are in danger of dropping off the membership list if they don't.

In this Newsletter, there is a brief summary of the AGM for those who missed it, an update on some of the issues raised and, as a break from politics and planning issues, news of two events organised within our community that I hope you will enjoy.

THE 2014 AGM

We had a good turnout of almost 70 people, one of the best ever. The formal business included a brief report from the Secretary on the Committee's activities, mostly in relation to the second draft Local Development Plan (LDP2), and the CPA's representation supporting the continued designation of the playing field at the end of Crawford Road as Open Space in the draft Plan. We also made representations to the Council on some local planning applications which we believed would have an adverse impact on the character of the conservation area, including that by Miller Homes for the construction of houses on the playing field. The Treasurer, Mark Probert, then reported on the CPA's Receipts and Payments account (circulated at the meeting) for the year ended 31st August 2014. We had a surplus of £115, but overall subscriptions were down and those present were asked to encourage their neighbours to join the Association. We then elected the Office Bearers for 2014-15: Chair: Eileen Francis; Vice Chair: Marilyn Higgins; Secretary: Peredur Williams and Treasurer: Liz Philp. We then elected the following new members of the Committee:- Rae Renwick and Christine Simpson and Willie Grieve.

After the formal business, we had a most interesting talk from our Guest Speaker, Dr Janet Sidaway, convenor of the GPCC's subgroup on the restoration of the Newington Cemetery. She called her talk "Stop here for Eccy Bank", which the tram drivers used to call out in times gone by - the cemetery was first called the Echo Bank Cemetery from the small settlement of Echo Bank opposite the cemetery. Later known as the "Newington Necropolis" it was built in 1846 to a design by David Cousin, responding to the need for non-religious burial grounds due to lack of space next to city churches. The design was supposed to resemble an English country park. Originally there were two entrances - after the building of the South Suburban Railway in the 1880s funeral cortèges regularly proceeded from Newington Station to the western entrance but it is now no longer possible to access the cemetery from this side. She described the work of the recently formed subgroup to open up parts of the cemetery and the successful opening on Doors Open Day. The Group, would welcome new members and aims to identify more interesting graves, liaise with the council on clearance, build on the site's natural resources and encourage more visitors with signs, markers and maps.

UPDATE ON THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Local Development Plan and the representations made during the public consultation last year

were scheduled to be discussed by the Council's Planning Committee on February 26th. This has had to be postponed. Councillor Ian Perry explained that the developer of the Cammo site had appealed directly to the Reporter, and the Minister had decided to take responsibility for the final decision. This has added a degree of uncertainty in relation to the supply of housing land: the Minister's decision on whether to leave Cammo in the Plan or to take it out will clearly have an effect on the release of greenfield land. Depending on the perceived need for housing land, this could affect the designation of the playing field at the end of Crawford Road. The question may be resolved at the meeting of Planning Committee on 14 May.

STATUS OF THE NATURE STRIPS

The status and ownership of the nature or amenity strips along the ends of Gilmour and Granby Roads and the end of Suffolk Road have been a continuing issue for years: nobody knows who actually owns these pieces of land. Although the strips do not belong to the City Council, the Council is taking responsibility for their maintenance. Mike Shields, the City of Edinburgh Community Parks Officer, e-mailed Wilma Elton: "Maintenance of the nature strips in the Craigmillar Park area is the responsibility of the South East Edinburgh Task Force. General maintenance, involving pruning and a tidy-up takes place annually over the winter months with an additional face up of the fence line shrubs when required once in the summer period. Winter work is scheduled to begin in January 2015. Trees are the responsibility of the forestry department, several tree surveys over the past few years showed that no work was required to the trees within these plots." The Committee and Advisors are continuing to look into the question of ownership and if anyone can shed any light on the question, please let us know!

COMMITTEE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Since the AGM, Willie Grieve stepped down from the Committee, which co-opted Morag Meldrum in his place at its meeting in November. Following an offer at the AGM, Allan Payne is now helping with the web site. Do visit it at <http://craigmillar-park.org.uk/> and let him know if you have any comments.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sunday March 29th: Bowling Club Open House

The Bowling Club in Gilmour Road invites all neighbours, whether or not interested in bowling, to visit them for an open afternoon on Sunday March 29th between 3:30 and 5:00 p.m. to get together, meet neighbours over a cup of tea and perhaps share information on our local history. This will be the last such event before the bowling season gets going again.

Sunday April 26th: Gilmour Road Gardens Open Day

As part of Scotland's Gardens scheme, seven gardens along Gilmour Road will be opened to the public for charity on the afternoon of Sunday April 26th between 2:00 and 5:00 p.m. Call in at the Bowling Club to buy a ticket - which includes teas and coffees - and pick up a leaflet describing the gardens. There are also plants for sale.

Happy Spring! Peredur Williams (secretary@craigmillar-park.org.uk)