

Ecclesmachan & Threemiletown Community Council - Newsletter

April 2012

Volume 1, Issue 6

"Carpe Diem"

Landowners Development Ideas

We felt it was important to let everyone know about a process called the Local Development Plan, something that could affect us all in the future. West Lothian Council update their local plan periodically to meet statutory requirements and in doing so put out a "call for sites" to local landowners and potential developers, this has resulted in many sites in our location being put forward for possible future development.

For Ecclesmachan we have a proposal from the Church of Scotland/Hopetoun Estates to develop the Glebe Land to the east of the village. Well actually there's two proposals, a kind of "belt and braces" approach... The first is for 7.5 acres involving 10-15 houses, the second is for 2.5 acres involving 5 houses. The first is very strange, as they have included a section of land the Church sold off for private garden use several years ago. On the current local plan all the Glebe Land is designated as "Countryside Belt" AKA "Greenbelt".

You can view the actual submission documents for the above on-line here:

http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/downloaddoc/1799514/1841832/1849690/2307943/cfs_ecclesmachan

You may remember during the last local plan where Ecclesmachan was "under attack" from Walker Homes and Oatridge College, that land was "Land of Great Landscape Value". West Lothian Council refused development and then in turn, at an appeal, the Scottish Government Reporter upheld that decision. So the point here is, you need to let the Planners know now if you don't want the land re-designated as a development site, that way it would be less likely to see a formal Planning Application at a later date.

Now, for Threemiletown and it's surrounding area there's more proposals on the table, a total of 6 as follows:

EOI-0073 North Bing Philpstoun: 27 acres, Quarry.

EOI-0069 Fawns Park east on south side of railway. 148 acres, rural leisure / holiday accommodation.

EOI-0075 Playpark and Redhouse Cott's to B9080, Burnside to Canal Court. 49 acres, 400-500 units.

EOI-0195 East side of Redhouse Cott's to Trinlaymire down to B9080. 40 acres, 295 units.

EOI-0194 East of Waterstone Farm up to Faucheldean C road. 28 acres, 207 units.

EOI-0193 Adjacent to EOI-0194 east to Glendevon, north to Lampinsdub. 56 acres, 409 units.

So in summary, that's 348 acres for a quarry and over 1,400 of mixed use units, mainly residential.

You can view the actual submission documents for the above on-line here:

http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/downloaddoc/1799514/1841832/1849690/2307943/cfs_threemiletown

Then for Broxburn and Uphall again there are several submissions, one of them in particular would have a major effect on our area. The proposal EOI-0017 is suggesting developing from Dechmont along the north side of the A899 up to Forkneuk, across the B8046 almost at Binny and round the north side of Carledubs. This is described as being for residential use, site area 192Ha (474 acres), number of units 1750-2000, this would more than double the size and population of Uphall.

You can view the actual submission documents for the above on-line here:

http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/downloaddoc/1799514/1841832/1849690/2307943/cfs_uphall

A special meeting to allow residents to see some of the plans and applications has been arranged by the Community Council. There will also be the opportunity to discuss these proposals and express your opinion.

This meeting will be held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 16 May at 7pm.

Community Council Update on Traffic and Pedestrian Safety

Following our path since the public Road Traffic & Safety meeting held in April 2006, your Community Council has continued to campaign for safer roads and pavements for all in and around our villages. Since the meeting in 2006 we have held regular update meetings with West Lothian Council Officers, not only to monitor progress with the various requests, but to make comment on more recent events affecting the B8046 & B9080.

As part of this process, prior to one of our update meetings, we conducted a full survey of all traffic safety signs and pavements, entering any issues we found into the ongoing discussion. These ranged from accident hotspots to holes in pavements, some may have noticed some recent activity / changes and... there's more in the pipeline.

Here's a short list of items from **our** list that are already in place:

New pedestrian safety island installed on B8046 at Byburn junction.
Road markings re-painted on B8046 in both villages.
B8046 at Tar-Hill re-surfaced and Anti-Skid coating replaced.
Electronic overspeed indicators installed at Binny, Tar-Hill and now in Threemiletown.
All non-working illuminated signs have new lamp units installed and signs cleaned.
Pavements on B8046 Ecclesmachan / Binny have been cleaned and patched.
Foliage near signs and / or overhanging pavements has been cut back.



On the agenda and valid future changes from that list to take place soon are:

Speed reduction from 60mph to 50mph B8046 between Ecclesmachan & Threemiletown.
Extension of 40mph speed limit further south on the B8046 at Threemiletown.
Removal of old lamp-posts in Threemiletown and resurfacing pavement.
Installation of warning signs on B8046 for hidden junction at Huntercolme Hospital / Binny Plants entrance.
New chevron sign for staggered junction at Greendykes North Road / bend B8046 at Binny.



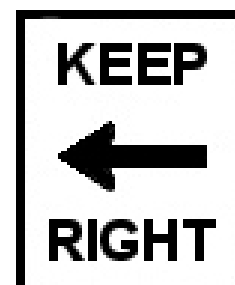
Also agreed from the agenda but longer term and funding dependant are:

Addition of pedestrian safety island on B8046, crossing west/east to follow pavement.
Removal of hump on B8046 in Threemiletown.
Installation of traffic lights at staggered junction B8046 / B9080 Threemiletown
B8046 Ecclesmachan village speed tables.
B8046 Ecclesmachan crash barrier upgrade.



A full and up-to-date status report document for this project can be viewed from the link at:

<http://www.ecclesmachan.org.uk/news.htm>



Community Council AGM

The AGM of the Ecclesmachan and Threemiletown Community Council will be held in the village hall at 7.00pm on **Wednesday 2nd May**.

Any resident who has an interest in becoming involved with the Community Council is urged to attend. We do need your support if we are to continue to represent the local community.

Similarly, if you have any local issues you wish to bring to our attention, please do come along and speak up. An opportunity for general questions will be given towards the end of the meeting.

Local Paths Projects

Last year, just a few months after the Community Council paths project was completed, one of our gates was stolen from the path between Ecclesmachan and Longmuir. We were successful with a Special Project Grant application and received funding not only to replace the gate, but also to purchase materials to add several additional security measures to all the gates on the paths. To help with security Lothian and Borders Police donated a bottle of Enigma Tag marking fluid, so the gates are now all marked with a coded ultraviolet tag which is registered on the national security register.

This year we had hoped to complete a new project to link the path from Uphall to Binny Craig with the path from Ecclesmachan to Longmuir using an old registered Right of Way (LW150). The route would have taken walkers down the slope to the south-west of Binny Craig (with new steps on the steep slope), then north under the west face alongside a pond and out onto the farm-track at Hangingside. From here there's a choice to go west (left) to Longmuir or east (right) to Ecclesmachan. However, due to various difficulties encountered during negotiations with the landowner, we recently decided to abandon that project.

Obviously we were disappointed to have to make that decision, as this section of path would have linked two major countryside paths in the area and provided longer routes for people to use safely. However, this is a recognised Right of Way and can be used in its present state, just be aware that there is a very steep section and some muddy bits on the route, but with some care it's an enjoyable walk.

Meantime as the grass starts to grow, preparation is under way for summer maintenance on the three paths we have "adopted." Our brush-cutting machines (petrol powered trimmers) have been serviced and will be in action a bit earlier this year with the first cut planned for the end of April. If you are in a position to help with this maintenance we would be glad of some assistance, the work ranges from strimming long grass to trimming back side growing bramble shoots and from clearing ditches to applying wood preservative. You can download a copy of our volunteer form from the web address shown below, simply fill out and drop it off at the village hall, marked for the attention of the Community Council.

Download from http://www.ecclesmachan.org.uk/documents/paths_volunteersheet_2012.doc

OR contact us by email via:

<http://www.ecclesmachan.org.uk/cont.htm>

Village Hall

Since the repainting work carried out in July 2011, the Village Hall Management Committee have continued in their quest to upgrade and modernise the hall to provide a comfortable venue for a wide variety of uses.

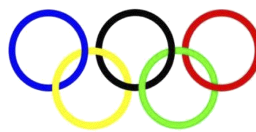
Our recent Community Council meetings have certainly been more comfortable, as we now have soft seats to sit on and we have also enjoyed some heat from the radiators instead of relying on hot air and two layers of thermals!

This is a valuable community resource and we hope everyone will support the Hall Committee in their endeavours, make more use of the Hall and take part in the various events held there.

The AGM for the Ecclesmachan & Threemiletown Village Hall Association will be held on **Tuesday 15th May 2012 at 7:15pm**. Everyone is welcome & refreshments will be served.



Olympic Flame Visiting Broxburn



*Scotland's
moment
to shine*

The Olympic Flame will pay an historic visit to West Lothian on Wednesday 13th June and local residents are being invited to join the party.

The first stop in West Lothian will be at an event for schools at the magnificent Hopetoun House where it will be greeted by more than 500 school children.

The convoy will then visit Broxburn where at 5.20pm the Olympic Torch Relay will continue along North Greendykes Road, East Main Street and Newhouses Road carried by Torch Bearers wearing white and gold uniforms.

To mark the occasion a number of events and activities for residents, visitors and children are being organised during the afternoon in Broxburn leading up to Olympic Torch Relay's visit.

Oatridge College - Community Projects

Following the open evening held at the college at the end of August 2010, where a number of suggestions were put forward as potential ideas, the college have now put some of these ideas into place.

Here are some of the initial suggestions:



- Improving the college sports facilities
- Establishing a community orchard
- Village flower planting (village in bloom)
- A new children's play park
- Provision of community allotments
- Sign posted estate walks
- Wildlife viewing areas
- Low ropes course
- Use of more college facilities by local residents
- Programme of events for local people
- Assistance in redeveloping the village hall

On 18th March a plan drawn up by students at the College to create a Community Orchard for the neighbouring villagers of Ecclesmachan and Threemiletown became a reality.

Volunteers turned out to plant 25 apples trees, all of them traditional Scottish varieties - Bloody Ploughman, James Grieve, Galloway Pippin, White Melrose, Tower of Glamis and Scotch Bridget. In years to come will provide an educational resource for the College and a regular supply of fruit for local families willing to help with maintenance and harvesting.

Another event for this project is planned for 2pm on **Sunday 27th May**, where training will be given on how to prune and feed the trees to encourage healthy growth.

Also under way with support from the National Lottery-funded Awards for All, the college is setting up a community demonstration allotment where anyone, from schoolchildren to experienced allotment societies, will be able to learn, free of charge, from the experts.

Oatridge's plan is to use the Awards for All cash to cover the construction of an 11 x 32 metre plot, which will include a greenhouse, shed and fencing and the purchase of plants and seeds. The College will absorb teaching and maintenance costs, though it is hoped to recruit volunteers from the community and the student body to help with the latter.

Lothian and Borders Police Surgeries



The local community police officer holds open surgeries outside the Village Hall on the first Wednesday of the month (6pm - 7pm) prior to the Community Council Meetings. Any member of the community who has any concerns about policing or crime in the area is invited to discuss these in confidence.

Events Information

Mother and Toddlers Group

The mother and toddlers group meet in the village hall on a Wednesday morning 9:30 - 11am. Mums (dads, nannies etc. are welcome too!), babies and toddlers are all welcome to join this small friendly group.

Hall Management Group

As well as the day to day administration of the village hall, they organise dances, whist drives, the hogmanay party and a Burns supper. The hall can also be hired for private functions etc. Contact Joyce Hornby on 01506-853194 for more details.

Leisure Group (Over 60's)

This group meets in the village hall every Wednesday 2 - 4pm, September to June, dominoes, snooker and cards are on the table. There are also occasional events held throughout the year. Contact Margaret Allan on 01506-857726

S.W.R.I. Ecclesmachan Institute

Meet on the first Thursday of each month from September until June (no meeting in January) in the village hall at 7:15pm. For further information contact Jan Cameron on 01506-852679

Gala Day 2012

This years Gala Day will be on Saturday 2nd June, meeting at the Village Hall at 1:45pm for a 2pm start.



Weblinks:

<http://www.ecclesmachan.org.uk>
<http://www.pathsforall.org.uk>
<http://www.neighbourhoodwatch.net>