

West Blacket Association & Neighbourhood Watch

NEWSLETTER

November 2004

Annual General Meeting

The West Blacket Association AGM will be held on Monday November 29th at the Unionist Club, 5 Duncan Street.

730pm Refreshments and membership renewals

800pm

'The Show in the Meadows'

An illustrated talk by Graeme D. R. Cruickshank
(researcher, writer, lecturer, broadcaster).

Come and hear about Edinburgh's acclaimed International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art which took place in The Meadows in 1886. Discover the history of the Exhibition and some of the reminders that can still be found today.

*900pm Chairman's report
Treasurer's report
Election of Officers & Committee*

930pm Discussion with Councillors & Police

1000pm Farewell

Membership

Subscriptions for the year to November 2005 remain at £2/individual or £3/household and may be paid at the AGM or, if you are unable to attend, to Evelynne Hill. Newsletters are delivered to all residents, but some events may be advertised only to paid-up members.

Please return this slip to Evelynne Hill, WBA Treasurer, 37 Upper Gray Street

Name:	
Address:	

£2 enclosed

£3 enclosed

❑ West Blacket Association

For new residents, the Upper Gray Street Association was set up in 1966 to object to the proposed demolition of a Georgian villa at what was then 20, now 22, Upper Gray Street. The association subsequently expanded, as the West Blacket Association, to become the community association for the part of the Blacket Conservation Area not 'within the gates' and therefore not represented by the Blacket Association. The two associations are distinct though often confused.

For those with internet access, further details and some local history can be found at - <http://www.calamari.art.btinternet.co.uk/WBA/>

Although community associations cannot have the same constitutional status as Community Councils, the City of Edinburgh Council sees us as important conduits for local opinion. No less important a function of community associations is to foster good neighbour relations, both by organising social events, and more formally in the Neighbourhood Watch which has been active in West Blacket for more than 10 years.

The present committee membership includes some residents of very long standing, but we have been fortunate to have had infusions of new blood at intervals, including some members who have moved to the area only very recently following the new developments.

CHAIRMAN: BRIAN CHARLESWORTH, 39 MINTO STREET. 662 1725
BRIAN.CHARLESWORTH@ED.AC.UK

SECRETARY: MIKE HUNTER, 40 UPPER GRAY STREET. 667 1767.
DR.M.J.HUNTER@BTOPENWORLD.COM.

TREASURER: EVELYNNE HILL, 37 UPPER GRAY STREET. 667 0675.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH: JANE GRIFFITH, STELLA PRYDE

OTHER MEMBERS:

IRENE BROWN, 32 MINTO STREET

IAN CARTER, 3 BARTHOLOMEW HOUSE, 12 DUNCAN STREET

JACKIE GRANT, 3 DUNCAN STREET

JEFF ROBINSON, 1 MIDDLEBY STREET

CHRIS THEOBALD, 8A SOUTH GRAY STREET.

The current Officer Holders and Committee Members are willing to continue during 2004-5, but the committee would welcome new members, by election at the AGM (nominations cordially invited - to Mike or Evelynne please) or by co-option.

❑ Planning Matters

Living as we do in an Outstanding Conservation Area, we cannot change the external appearance of our houses without obtaining Planning Permission from the City of Edinburgh Council. If a house is individually Listed for its architectural or historic interest, even internal alterations may require Listed Building Consent before proceeding.

Applications for Planning Permission are notified to local residents in case they may wish to object. These notifications appear in the Edinburgh Evening News, and are copied to amenity associations such as the West Blacket Association. Immediate neighbours are required by law to have individual notification. The WBA does not always object to planning applications, but will be pleased to discuss objections and may lend support.

Objections to planning applications must be considered by Planning Officials and may be put to the Planning Committee. If the objection is judged to be valid, the objector must be informed of the Council's decision.

It is generally believed that objections from many individuals are more likely to influence the Planning Committee than a single objection from an amenity association such as ourselves. However, do not expect your objections always to influence the outcome. Applicants for planning permission are well advised to approach Planning officials in advance and to tailor their application according to advice received.

❑ Neighbourhood Watch News

This has been a disappointing year due to difficulties experienced since the implementation of 'Operation Capital' which significantly changed the way the City of Edinburgh is policed.

However, we are now promised a resumption of monthly newsletters, the format and content of which is currently under discussion. We intend to continue making these crime updates available on our notice boards in Salisbury Place Post Office, Mr Ali's in Minto Street, Nigel Griffiths' office window, and a new posting in the Cala Building in South Gray Street.

If you would like to be involved in Neighbourhood Watch, or would like to meet the police officer who has local responsibility for NHW, please come to the forthcoming West Blacket AGM. You will be most welcome.

❑ Objections and comments made during 2003-4

The West Blacket Association has looked at a number of developments in our area, in some cases offering advice, in some cases making objections, and in others asking the City of Edinburgh Council to enforce reinstatement of unapproved developments. Details at the Annual General Meeting.

❑ Tram Line 3

As many residents will know, there is a plan to develop a 3rd tram line in Edinburgh, to run from Waverley to Newcraighall. This will almost certainly run from the bridges down Nicholson St, etc. and then on down Minto St. etc. to Cameron Toll. The Minto St. section will have an obvious effect on the West Blacket area, and the pamphlet outlining the initial proposals was discussed by the WBA Committee earlier this year. The Committee was broadly favourable, but noted some concerns about the implications for traffic and bus services. The Chairman also attended an open meeting arranged by Transport Initiatives Edinburgh, the organisation responsible for planning the line. As part of the consultation process, a number of Community Liaison Groups are being established, and the WBA has been invited to send a representative to the meetings of the Newington CLG (the first will be held on October 26), which will be chaired by the TIE project manager for Tram Line 3. This offers local residents the opportunity to express their views on the project. If you have any views that you would like to be conveyed to the CLG, please contact Brian Charlesworth or Mike Hunter.

❑ Local Environmental Forum

The WBA Chairman has also been attending meetings of the Local Environmental Forum for Sciennes, Newington and Prestonfield, chaired by Cllr Mackintosh. This is intended to give representatives of local community organizations the opportunity to discuss environmental issues with the councillors and council officials, in particular the impact of a pilot scheme to ensure more local control of matters such as rubbish collection and street cleaning. The council official responsible for this is Ron Dymond from Environmental and Consumer Services, and he can be alerted by telephone or email to specific problems that need attention. It is hoped that this system will lead to an improvement in the standards of street cleanliness. Unfortunately, the sense of the last meeting was that the scheme is under-resourced, and that things have in fact deteriorated over the past few months because of personnel shortage (this will probably not surprise you). It is hoped that the council will put more resources in, so that there will an improvement at some time in the future.