

# West Blacket Association

## NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2025

THIS IS A WEB VERSION

**Who are we?** The WBA is an amenity association for part of the Blacket Conservation Area, from Salisbury Place to West Mayfield and from Upper and South Gray Streets to Minto Street. Our main purpose is the preservation and improvement of the general amenity of the West Blacket area. This includes consultation with the Council on their plans for parking, traffic and recycling, and on Planning Applications under consideration. We also hope to encourage good neighbour relations through Neighbourhood Watch and by organising some social events for our members. If you are not already a member, please join us.

**The Future of WBA** The West Blacket Association came about to represent a part of the Blacket Conservation area, with a longer history and distinctly different from the neighbouring Blacket Association area. However we also have much in common.

Earlier this year, we invited comments from WBA members about the idea of merging with the Blacket Association to strengthen our planning response and generate further social networks. However, from the consultation, the preference was to remain as the smaller, more intimate community that we are.

With this in mind, two of our long-standing Committee members are retiring – We must thank **Ian Carter** for all his planning expertise and representation undertaken on our behalf and **Evelynne Hill** for her many roles, including Treasurer, and years on the Committee. We are now very much seeking new Committee members to bring different ideas and expertise to take care of this distinct & wonderful local patch - please be in touch if interested.

**Planning Matters.** On 3rd October two proposed student housing developments on Ratcliffe Terrace were refused planning permission, after objections from WBA and residents. Although from different developers, the two proposals (25/02258/FUL and 25/02904/FUL on the Council planning portal) have common features suggesting some collaboration.

Both would have over-developed the site, with a combined 180 bedspaces mostly in so-called Cluster Units, and would therefore have limited alternative uses (possibly short-term holiday or refugee accommodation) in the event of a down-turn in student demand.

The more northerly of the two developments would have extended into South Gray Street which is within our Blacket Conservation Area. It would also require demolition of the former 'Causewayside Lads Institute' which has an interesting history but is not Listed or in the Conservation Area.

## Ceilidh 2025

WBA joined forces with the Blacket Association in February, for a community ceilidh in St. Columba's hall on Upper Gray Street. The Matthew MacLennan Ceilidh Band provided excellent live music, and clear, patient calling of all the typical favourite dances. We even stretched to an eightsome reel – a sign of some proficient ceilidh dancers in our midst!

The evening was a fun opportunity to catch up with neighbours and make connections across our communities. Primary school people and nonagenarians were spotted on the dance floor, with all decades in between also represented: a real all-ages affair!

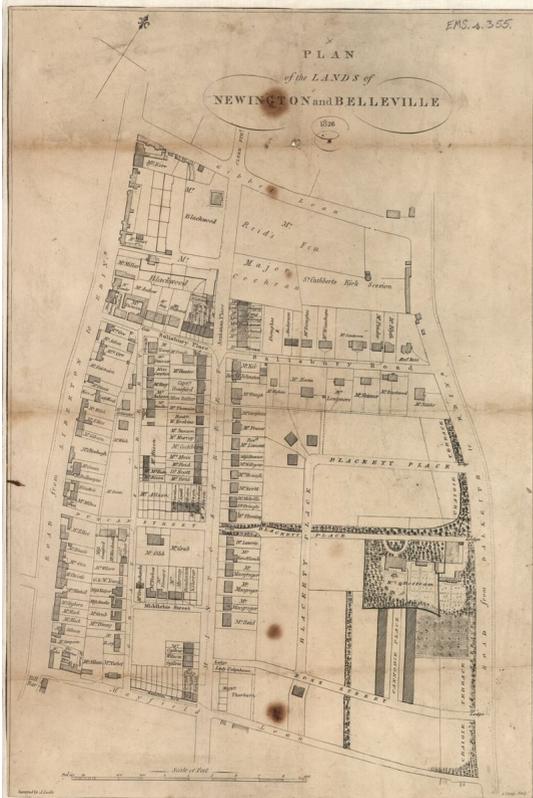
This was our first joint event and we are hoping that it will inspire us to more. It was supported by both associations, for which we are very grateful.

Sincere thanks to all the organisers, especially to Maggie Stevenson and Ian Chisholm for identifying the band, to Evelynne for the table decorations from her garden, and of course to St Columba's church for generously providing the space.

Keep on Dancing!



## Celebrating Our 200-Year-Old Map



*Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland*

<https://maps.nls.uk/projects/newington>. If you have further information or corrections, please contact Ron Hill - [rghill37@gmail.com](mailto:rghill37@gmail.com)

Moving towards 2026, the map's bicentenary, we want to raise awareness of West Blasket as an early suburb, retaining much of its 19th century form to this day. Planning of events is at an early stage, but we hope to include walks, talks and a display. If you want to get involved, help and ideas would be very welcome. Please contact Rosemary Wake - [erwake@btinternet.com](mailto:erwake@btinternet.com) – or Ron Hill.

Keep in touch through our 'West Blasket Historicals' WhatsApp group – to join contact Rosemary (phone 07811 176086 or email as above).

Many of you will know of John Leslie's 1826 'Plan of the Lands of Newington and Belleville' (*see alongside*) which you can view on the National Library of Scotland's website at: <https://maps.nls.uk/towns/rec/427>

Leslie's map shows our area as a very early southern suburb of Edinburgh. The map provides details of existing and projected buildings along with the names of occupants, owners and developers.

A project has been set up with Chris Fleet, NLS's Senior Maps Curator, allowing the map to be seen superimposed onto historic and current maps and aerial views. We are adding a layer of information on people, streets and buildings in 1826 West Blasket. We have also held a map viewing session with Chris, and trialled a local history walk using the 1826 map as our guide.

You can view it as it develops at <https://maps.nls.uk/projects/newington>.

# Annual General Meeting

## November 24th 2025

The West Blacket Association AGM will be held at the New Bell (upstairs room), Causewayside, beginning 700pm.

### ALL MEMBERS AND RESIDENTS WELCOME

The formal agenda, as required by our articles of association, will consist of:  
Record of those attending; Minute of previous AGM;  
Chair's Report; Treasurer's Report;  
Election of Office Bearers and Committee.

Then: **Cathie Wright, Jackie Grant & Sandra Carter** will tell/show the story of their '**Golden Threads Reawakened**' Tapestry.



**Present committee members are:** Maggie Stevenson (Chair), Nigel Cumming (Treasurer), Mike Hunter (Hon Sec), Kate O'Brien (Membership Secretary), Ian Carter, Lucy Charrington, Evelynne Hill, Lise Morel, Charles Warlow & Cathie Wright.

**Nominations to the committee.** Ian Carter and Evelynne Hill will be retiring after many years on the Committee. All WBA members are eligible to stand for election.

Nominations to Mike Hunter: [dr.m.j.hunter@gmail.com](mailto:dr.m.j.hunter@gmail.com)