CAMPAIGN KICKS OFF TO SAVE CAIRNTOWS PARK

By Babs Burnett

Plans for building development at Cairntows Park have sparked fierce opposition from the local community.

A recent public meeting at the Hays Business Centre was attended by around 80 people and was eventually adjourned with calls for a further meeting with representatives from PARC, the city council and developers New City Vision in attendance.

A presentation was given at the meeting by ZM Architects and although PARC have said Cairntows has been earmarked for development for several years, many local people appeared to be unaware of the plans.

At the time of going to press, an online petition started by local businessman Bob Bell had attracted over 200 signatures.

Mr Bell has also created Facebook and Twitter pages as part of the online campaign. He told the Chronicle that the community seemed wholeheartedly against the plans: “Having discussed the issue with many members of the community both online and in person, I have yet to hear of a single person who is in favour of any proposal to build upon the park.

“There are many legal objections to the planning process which will hopefully be unnecessary as I hope that New City Vision, ZM Architects, PARC and city council will see sense and abandon these ridiculous proposals before any further public money is wasted on them.”

Local councillor Maureen Child, who has signed the petition, gave up her right to vote on the council’s planning committee so she can fully support the campaign. She said: “It is simply untrue that the Craigmillar Urban Design Framework justifies the development of Cairntows Park for housing, now or at any time in the past. The community will resist this land-grab very strongly indeed, and they can rely on my full backing.”

Councillor Mike Bridgman, also a member of the PARC board, said local concerns must taken into account as the plans, which are currently at the pre-planning stage, are considered further. He said: “The public has spoken and I believe they should be listened to. Their objections will be taken through the planning process.”

PARC’s operations and finance director, Eric Adair, said provision of the relatively new all-weather pitch beside the high school was part of plans to replace Cairntows Park and said that PARC recognised concerns in relation to the loss of Cairntows Park and the strength of feeling the community has expressed.

He told the Chronicle: “While PARC, for some years, has sought to carry out some development on this site, the specific current proposals are from the developer New City Vision.

“There are normal and standard planning requirements from the city in the use of open space and PARC and New City Vision would expect to have to fulfil those requirements. In light of the concerns expressed there will undoubtedly be future consultation with the community.”

For more information and the online petition: http://www.savecairntows.co.uk and http://wwwpetitiononline.co.uk/petition/save-cairntows-park-and-protect-edinburghs-green-space/2705
Councillor Maureen Child
Labour Councillor for Portobello/Craigmillar:

will be present to hear constituents’ individual concerns

Every Monday
(except Public Holidays) at
Castleview Community Centre,
76 Craigmillar Castle Avenue at 5.30 pm

Councillor Maureen Child can also be contacted at:
City Chambers, High Street,
Edinburgh, EH1 1YJ
0131 529 3268
e-mail: maureen.child@edinburgh.gov.uk
Walk Edinburgh Week

PEOPLE IN EDINBURGH are being urged to sign up for Walk Edinburgh Week.

The week is to encourage everyone to be more physically active by discovering the joys and health benefits of walking in the capital as part of the new event taking place between 20th & 26th May.

There are 26 different group walks planned across the city over the six-day event. The walks are free to participate in and will cater for all ages and abilities.

The week will launch with the Walk-Ed fair in Princes Street Gardens on Friday 20th May from 12.00-3.00pm. Activities will include led walks in and around the gardens, plus a healthy lifestyle fair with free activities such as sumo wrestling, tai-chi, movement to music and lawn tennis.

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People wanting to take part in the group walks should register their interest as places are limited.

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/forms/form/81/en/walk_edinburgh_week

PAVing the way

PRIMARY 7 PUPILS AT Niddrie Mill Primary School are trying to make a difference in their community.

Working with the school’s behaviour support teacher and their community police officers they have formed the PAV (Pupils Against Violence) action group.

The PAV group has helped to increase positive behaviour in the school and in the wider community. The group meets each week to discuss issues in the school. This has included creating a questionnaire to find out how safe and happy pupils feel in school, making PowerPoint presentations for school assemblies, peer mentoring younger pupils and organising visits to increase awareness to their cause.

Recently, the PAV group arranged for the transport police and their horses to come to the school to link in with a transport topic in P2 and P2/3. The visit caused much excitement around the school and helped to focus the children’s attention on the different roles of the police and what they thought about violence.

One pupil said: “I liked the horses because the police had to clean up their poo!”

Perhaps not the different role the police had in mind!

Two classes from St Francis Primary School were invited to join in this event and all of the children enjoyed learning together.

Following his recent visit to Niddrie Mill, to see for himself some of the excellent work done by the group, Scottish Justice Minister Kenny MacAskill said: “This is a fantastic project. Well done to the PAV group and all those involved in making the school and community safer.”

By Hollie, Leou, Michael, Natasha and Teigan from The Press Pack – an after-school writing club run by class teacher, Kathryn Foley

VIEW FROM WESTMINSTER

Holyrood Elections are being held on 5 May. Whichever way you vote, I’m urging everyone to make sure they do vote.

Only a couple of weeks ago, a constituent came into my office and told me that he hopes to start work on the rigs in the next few months. After several months on Job Seekers Allowance, his family would be more financially stable. A matter of days after his visit, the Chancellor announced another Budget that lacked growth and is going to put the UK in more debt.

Osborne pulled one rabbit out of his hat, planning to tax the oil companies to pay for a petrol reduction. Now, taxing the oil companies may be a reasonable plan, but already there are threats that this could slash jobs on the rigs. Not good news for the constituent who came to see me.

Families in Craigmillar and Portobello will see a freeze in Child Benefit and pay an extra £450 in VAT by the end of the year. Many people in work will be getting less tax credits, although some will benefit from the rise in the level where you start to pay income tax. But for many it will be a bit of ‘giving with one hand and taking away with the other’.

Without jobs our local communities cannot grow. The coalition government believes that if public spending is cut the private sector will create jobs to make up the difference. The opposition believes that the way to get out of recession is for government to target public spending to stimulate industry and create jobs. This in turn means more money coming in through the taxes paid by business and people in jobs, and less going out in benefits. This is the better way to tackle the ‘deficit’ the government keeps telling us about.

We’ve got a good example on our doorstep. Regeneration plans in Craigmillar are stalled through lack of funding for home-building and apprenticeships desperately needed to get things moving again.

I said last month that opposition parties in the council offered a budget that would have kept Blindcraft open. In Westminster my opposition colleagues have offered calculations and plans that offer an alternative: to create jobs and to train local people. There are choices to be made, whatever the government says.

Sheila Gilmore MP
Edinburgh East
The Chronicle...May 2011

NINE YOUNG PEOPLE from the local area started the Sort IT! pre-get ready for work course in February.

The 12-week course for 16-19 year olds was run by Community Renewal and based in the Jack Kane Community Centre.

The course was designed to help young people to start thinking about their futures, and get to a place where they are more ready to enter work and education.

Many of the participants had not had the best time at school, didn’t have much confidence, few qualifications and no work experience.

Some of them were getting into bother with the Police and needed to get into a routine and have something to do.

A large part of the course was focused on improving confidence, team building skills and self-awareness. It also looked at practical things such as budgeting and information on housing.

A lot of the young people weren’t sure what they wanted to do for their future careers so were encouraged to go on work tasters to try out a career. Tasters were organised in areas of work the young people were interested in, ranging from youth work and hairdressing to mechanics and construction.

Workplace visits were also organised to give an idea of how certain industries and workplaces are run.

Local organisations in Niddrie and Craigmillar were a huge support and ran sessions with the young people; we would like to thank some of these organisations including: RUTS (Rural & Urban Training Scheme), Liberton Fire Service, Edinburgh Community Food Initiative, The Thistle Foundation, Jewel and Esk College, Careers Scotland – Craigmillar, SACRO and Craigmillar Community Arts. We would also like to thank Haywired IT Centre and Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, Forth Sector, SPACE, Hunters Hall and especially the Jack Kane Centre for use of their facilities, and the HOT Team, Edinburgh Cyrenians and Prince’s Trust Team programme for additional support.

The final weeks of the course focus on employability skills including interview skills, recognising your strengths, making CVs, setting up bank accounts and completing applications for courses and jobs.

Course members were keen to give something back to their local community. They identified a need to improve some of the outdoor areas and gardens and in partnership with local housing officers will help to encourage local people to get involved and also to clear up and landscape some of the gardens in the community.

If anyone would like to get involved, they can contact their local housing officer.

Participants will be attending an options day, to find out more about volunteering, self-employment and other courses running in the city.

Some participants have already moved into employment or been accepted onto apprenticeships. Others are clearer on what they would like to do and are starting to apply for jobs, other courses and college places.

All will continue to receive support from Community Renewal to help them to achieve their goals and continue to move forward.

We will be raising funds for Community Renewal, and what we do, please get in touch with us at Community Renewal, 12-14 Niddrie House Park. 0131 629 9858.


I HAVE LIVED IN this constituency for over 15 years. I have raised my family here, I worked locally, and I have been a local councillor for 12 years.

In all these things I have tried to live out my values of living in solidarity, building community and challenging injustice and inequality, whether I was in front rooms or public gatherings, on street corners or school assemblies.

In those places I learned that politics can and does make a difference if it’s done with those who are affected by the decisions. I led the building of 34 new or refurbished schools including Holyrood, Castletown, Niddrie Mill and St Francis and I oversaw standards in schools raised across the city. In my ward I have set up innovative youth projects, campaigned on statutory notices, got playparks built, supported work with older people, started a community newspaper because I knew from publications, like the Craigmillar Chronicle, that these things make a huge difference to community living. I have delivered these and much more, but what I know, is that these things happened when, as a politician, I did things with people rather than to them or even just for them, when I acknowledged and coped with different views but committed to getting past differences to find shared solution.

Sometimes of course, politics means tough decisions. I know because both as education convener and as Council Leader, I took them. Locally and nationally we face huge challenges and we need good politicians who, by listening, learning and working together, can lead us by making those difficult judgement calls that will take us through this tough time.

The truth is I really fear for my family’s future and the future of all the other families in this constituency and beyond. It scares me that youth unemployment has risen 220% in the last 4 years. I remember what the last recession did to the talents and potential of a whole generation. That’s why my focus in this campaign has been jobs and the economy. I want to make sure we give young people the best possible start of a decent education, the chance to go university or college without the barrier of fees or have job or other training to go to.

To achieve this Scottish Labour will reinstate the Scottish Future Jobs Fund that will create real jobs and training for up to 10,000 young people who have been unemployed for 6 months or more.

We will guarantee a modern apprenticeship for all suitably qualified 16-18 year olds delivering 25,000 places, year on year. We will deliver the First Foot scheme to get first time buyers on the property ladder, providing a much needed stimulus to the construction industry.

We will introduce the new Plus One scheme, which will help the 200,000 single-handed enterprises in Scotland move towards taking on their first employee. If just one-in-five of these moved towards taking on their first member of staff, it would create an additional 40,000 jobs in the economy.

We will use the opportunities of the new green economy, prioritising the creation of green jobs in renewable technologies – aiming for up to 60,000 by 2015 – 26,000 in renewable energy; 26,000 in low-carbon technology and up to 8,000 in environmental management.

Our Green New Deal will fit 10,000 homes with community and household renewables, creating 300 new manufacturing and installation jobs, as well as around 750 training places.

We are ready to hit the ground running, we have a plan that will work for Scotland so Scotland can get working. With your support, we can make that a reality.

In my opinion we need more people with business experience as there are very few members of any party with real first hand experience of business or how to run their own company. I can provide this experience and now having recently sold my company I am looking to devote all my efforts into being an effective MSP.

In this election the Scottish Conservatives are running on the promise that by championing the Town Centre Fund that will create real jobs and training for up to 10,000 young people; we would like to do and are starting to apply for jobs, other courses and college places.

Local organisations in Niddrie and Craigmillar and the most notable work in recent years.

Newcraighall being the most notable local people and families that have gained from paying rates. This will encourage businesses which over services and community are not only able to survive but also grow when the opportunities present.

Of course communities not only need to encourage families to stay but also grow when the opportunities present.

That is why as your MSP, I would welcome the re-introduction of prison sentences and also demand for investment in good work.

I hope, like me, you also want to see young families brought up in the area of a new home. There has been a number built in the area in recent years.

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Our local Edinburgh Eastern seat

CONSERVATIVE PARTY

BUCHANAN

REPRESENTING THE AREA of Craigmillar has been a true privilege.

Craigmillar is a great place to stay. Of course, like many areas in Scotland, it does have its problems. However, Craigmillar’s schools and organisations all work hard to ensure that the area continues to thrive and grow. There is a true sense of community spirit.

I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know the people of Craigmillar and, if re-elected to serve the constituency of Edinburgh Eastern in May, I will continue to work hard to achieve the best results for the community.

Since I was elected as the MSP for the east of Edinburgh in May 2007, I have tried my best to be available for constituents. My surgery at the Hays Business Centre is always busy and residents of Craigmillar often pop into my constituency office on Willowbrae Road. I always try to resolve the concerns of constituents and represent their views.

On a national level, I have also formed part of the first SNP Government. The SNP has worked hard to make Scotland a better place to stay. Of course, governing during these difficult economic times is not always easy.

However, despite the cuts imposed by the London government, we have achieved many of our key pledges: we have ended the long standing charge on ill health by abolishing prescription charges; the SNP government has preserved free personal care for Scotland’s older people; after four years of the SNP, there are now 1000 more police on Scotland’s streets helping to tackle crime and keep our communities safe; we have demonstrated our commitment to free higher education by abolishing the graduate endowment; the rates of small businesses have frozen the council tax for four years, lending a helping hand to hard working families across Scotland.

You need businesses to prosper but to stay and become part of them, and again in securing 1000 extra alley I do not think the elderly should be penalised by being put onto higher tariffs for continuing to do so. In order to provide those qualified for the elderly, many elderly people find it difficult to adjust to change and new types of technology. I have a lot of sympathy for that; after all stability is desirable. It seems that many will not switch over to payment by direct debit, despite knowing that the energy companies give discounts for doing so. Cash has always been the way that many have paid throughout their lives and personally I do not think the elderly should be penalised by being put onto higher tariffs for continuing to do so.

With increasing energy prices, fuel poverty is an issue for many. It is not just older people that need to look out for increasing energy prices. I used to rent an apartment in the city which offered fantastic views but in the Winter was both a misery to live in and expensive to heat owing to poor insulation. If a SNP government is returned, we will build on our previous achievements by continuing the council tax freeze; Protecting the NHS budget; Driving down crime by maintaining our extra police officers; Taking more money from criminals and reinvesting the money into our communities; Increasing our renewables target; Creating new training opportunities for our young people, including 25,000 modern apprenticeships; Keeping university education free; Ensuring new investment in early years and a school building programme.

The SNP Government will always put the Scotland first. Together, we can make Craigmillar and Scotland better.

I am seeking to be returned as the MSP for Edinburgh Eastern and I hope I can count on your support on May 5th.

SCOTTISH NATIONAL PARTY

KENNY MACASKILL

SCOTTISH LIBERAL DEMOCRATS PARTY

MARTIN VEART

KNOCKING ON A FRONT door is a bit like Forrest Gump’s “life is like a box of chocolates” as I never really know who is going to answer or what is going to be said. Listening to and meeting the people of Edinburgh during this campaign is a real privilege though. Worries over jobs, especially for young people, is a major concern, another being businesses which are being held back by government over-regulation.

The Scottish Liberal Democrats have been listening and share your concerns. As our leader, Tavish Scott says in our manifesto, Solutions for Scotland, politicians cannot create jobs directly but what we can do is create the conditions for business to flourish with measures such as reducing regulation, the setting up of enterprise zones and with new regional development banks, ensuring that sound businesses are not starved of the finances they desperately need. In order to provide those qualified for work, the Scottish Liberal Democrats will be encouraging businesses and our city’s further education colleges to work together in the creation of new apprenticeships and continue in offering vocational training to those, younger or older, who need it.

Education does not start at seventeen though. While it is seldom desirable to build on green spaces, I do welcome the decision to go ahead with the new Portobello High School. Both staff and students deserve a decent work and study environment and for others who are not directly affected, such a state-of-the-art facility can only boost the desirability of the area. With my own child attending primary school, maintaining and improving Edinburgh’s education standards is a topic that is close to my heart.

This week I visited some sheltered accommodation in the constituency and met with the residents. The underlying message I hear is that once settled, many elderly people find it difficult to adjust to changes and new types of technology. I have a lot of sympathy for that; after all stability is desirable and if a certain way of doing things has been good enough for ages, why should it be changed? An example of this is paying for gas and electricity. It seems that many will not switch over to payment by direct debit, despite knowing that the energy companies give discounts for doing so. Cash has always been the way that many have paid throughout their lives and personally I do not think the elderly should be penalised by being put onto higher tariffs for continuing to do so.

The Scottish Liberal Democrats have pledged to allocate resources to insulation. For example, if you’re living in a home which was built before 1950 then you’ll probably need central heating and loft insulation. Those houses built before 1930 may need to have their original wooden windows replaced. The Liberal Democrats will be encouraging businesses and our city’s further education colleges to work together in the creation of new apprenticeships.

I believe that progress has been made. The SNP government has proved that it can govern Scotland and tackle the problems we face. Scotland is a country with so much potential and there is still much more that could be done to make Scotland better.

If a SNP government is returned, we will build on our previous achievements by continuing the council tax freeze; Protecting the NHS budget; Driving down crime by maintaining our extra police officers; Taking more money from criminals and reinvesting the money into our communities; Increasing our renewables target; Creating new training opportunities for our young people, including 25,000 modern apprenticeships; Keeping university education free; Ensuring new investment in early years and a school building programme.

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Buick and to me the basic premise is that the state serves the individual; helping those in need and encouraging all to move forward. And if there is one promise I will make to you it is this: I will listen.

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The Chronicle...May 2011
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HEALTH SERVICES
Craigmillar Medical Group 536 9500
Durham Road Surgery 669 1153
Milton Surgery 549 7300
Be WELL 657 4174
Castle Project 661 2824
Greendykes Clinic 536 9500
Health Opportunities Team 468 4600
Link In 661 1240

SCHOOLS & NURSERIES
Brunstane Primary 669 4498
Castleview Primary 661 6429
Newcraighall Primary 669 3599
Niddrie Mill Primary 468 7025
St. Francis Primary 621 6600
Castlebrae High 661 1282
Holy Rood High 661 5871
Portobello High 669 2324
Moffat Early Years Campus 661 1401
Greengables Nursery 669 9083
Haystax Nursery - Kidzcare 667 0950

CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL
Main Switchboard 200 2000
Local Office 529 3111
Craigmillar Social Work Dept 667 8500

CHURCHES
Briso Memorial 657 3266
Niddrie Community Church 669 9400
Richmond Craigmillar 661 6581
St. Martin’s 667 0944
St. Teresa’s 661 2185
Thistle (Robin Chapel) 661 3366
Wellsprings 657 1169

MISCELLANEOUS
Adult Learning Link 652 6324
ARTSPACE 659 4759
Bingham Community Centre 669 8778
Bingham & District 50+ Project 669 0606
Business Community Connections 652 0367
Boy’s Brigade (28th Craigmillar Richmond) 665 7294
Business Incubator Project 661 8888
Caring in Craigmillar/PhoneLink 669 2920
Craighill Edinvar Housing Association 657 0600
Craigmillar Community Centre 661 4064
Craigmillar Ability Network 661 6677
Community Learning & Development East 661 6834
Community Renewal 629 9858
Craigmillar Adventure Project (CAPRO) 652 1557
Craigmillar Arts Centre 669 1432
Craigmillar Credit Union 661 9942
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A LOCAL LIFE

Niddrie House resident, Robert (Bobby) McEwan, has been a community activist and member of Hunters Hall Housing Co-op for many years. Now in his 70s, he has decided to cutback on his community work and put pen to paper, recording his memories of living in the area for over seven decades.

This month Bobby takes us through his school days, sat at the back of the class in St Francis Primary School, starting his first job at the age of 14, the Territorial Army and working at the Woolmet coalmine in nearby Danderhall.

I REMEMBER THE WINTERS when it was too cold for us to play outside, we would take it in turns to go into one of our houses to play a game of snakes and ladders, draughts or cards.

My older brother gave me and my pals lessons on how to play a harmonica, or a mouth organ as we called it. We were quick learners and after a few weeks practise, we went round playing carols to the old people in our area. We would sometimes play to the passengers on our local bus to raise money to buy new harmonicas. It was fun and the people seemed to enjoy it as much as we did. My parents and their friends sat round the table playing a friendly game of cards. They played nine card brag and other games to pass the time away. Some of the women friends would sit and listen to their favourite programme on the old wireless or radio as its called now. The programme was Mrs Dale's Diary. I remember when my father rented our first black and white television. My pals ran home from school at lunchtime with me to watch The One O'clock Gang. It was a real family show. The stars were Larry Marshall, Charlie Sim, Moira Brodie, Jimmy Nairn and Dorothy Paul, who was later to star in The Steanmie.

In the early days, our families had to go to the old steamie wash house in the Southside of Edinburgh to do all their washing. This gave them a chance to have a blether with friends that still stayed in the old houses in the town centre.

I wasn't very good at some of the subjects that we were taught at school. This was due to what the doctor called a lazy eye. My left eye had a bad squint in it that limited my vision. I also had a seat at the back of the classroom which didn't help as I couldn't see the blackboard properly. I was told to get glasses. I refused as I didn't want to be called 'four eyes'. I could have had an operation to help my vision, but my mother refused to have it done as my cousin lost his eyesight. He went totally blind after he reached his target. I worked in that job till I was 16. I then decided that I wanted to be a coalminer. Like some of my schoolmates, I was sent for training and as I passed my medical, I started beside my mates at the Woolmit mine in Danderhall, about a mile from where I lived. There were another two coalmines close to our area at that time, the Klondyke at Newcraighall and an opencast mine at the Wisp.

While I was working in the mines, I decided to join the part-time Territorial Army along with my mates. We decided to sign on for three years. After we were accepted, we were all sent to the Royal Scots Lowland Regiment. It was called the Dandy Nines as it was the 7/9th Lowland Division. It wasn't only great fun, it gave us extra money and it helped to keep us all fit.

During my service in the Territorials, I tried to enlist in the regular army to be like my father and my two brothers. Unfortunately I failed my eye test. After I served 18 months in the Territorial Army, I became ill and had to give it up along with my job in the mines. I had two operations and a short spell on the sick. I managed to get another job as a machine operator in the North Bridge Rubber Company in the Fountainbridge area of Edinburgh. I had a few more jobs after that before I reached retirement age. My only regret was that I followed the 'big money' and didn't consider serving my apprenticeship to become a fully qualified tradesman.

......continued next month