

GREEN NEWS

AUTUMN
2018



**Liberton
& Gilmerton**

THE INCH - LIBERTON - MOREDUN - ALNWICKHILL
GRACEMOUNT - GILMERTON - SOUTHHOUSE

Green Councillor
Alex Staniforth
urges you to sign
the tourist tax
petition at:
[greens.scot/
tourist-tax](http://greens.scot/tourist-tax)



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Support for 'stay n pay'?

Edinburgh Greens have launched a public petition calling on the Scottish Government to allow councils to bring in a transient-visitor levy or 'tourist tax'.

Currently only residents pay for services like waste collection and city museums, but it's estimated that a 'stay n pay' scheme could raise £10-20million from visitors every year.

Green Councillor Alex Staniforth said: "When Greens first proposed a visitor levy eight years ago it was rejected by the Council. Now nearly everyone is in favour. The Council is having talks with tourism chiefs and working on a case to put to Scottish Ministers, so I'm hopeful." To help put pressure on the Scottish Government, please sign our petition at greens.scot/tourist-tax

Cyclists get green light on danger junction

The Liberton Brae/Mayfield Road Junction has long been a horrendous part of the ward for Edinburgh's cyclists.

Those on a bike find that they have to negotiate merging and splitting lanes, parked cars and an inadequate cycle lane that have to be abandoned for some of the turns. After consultation with the local Community Council, bike riders will now have priority lights in order to get a head start onto the junction ahead of the rest of the traffic.

Local cycling campaigner David French said: "This is an acknowledgement by the Council that the road layout here isn't great for anyone. But there is still more that can be done. Only two of the five roads that converge at the junction have pedestrian crossings, for example".

Pressure on holiday lets

Green MSP Andy Wightman has proposed that Parliament amends forthcoming planning laws to require properties used for short-term lets to obtain planning permission for change-of-use. Councils would then be able to refuse or approve applications for short-term letting in domestic properties.

Andy Wightman said: "It's estimated there are now more than 10,000 short-term lets in Edinburgh. Where these are not the main residence of the landlord, they reduce the availability of housing

for people who actually need to live in the city. This is pushing up rents as well as inflating house prices. I hope the Parliament will support my proposal to get to grips with this issue."



Green MSP Andy Wightman seeks planning legislation for holiday lets

Edinburgh Council has also recently called on the Scottish Government to allow it to introduce a licensing scheme for short-term lets which would ensure the quality and safety of

accommodation for visitors.

If short-term letting concerns you, please visit Andy's 'Homes First' campaign at greens.scot/homesfirst



Forcing buses to overtake other traffic delays everyone

U-turn on 7-7-7 bus lanes

Edinburgh Council has bowed to pressure from Green councillors and transport organisations. Bus lanes will go back to being used only by buses, taxis and cycles from 7am to 7pm, 7 days a week.

This reverses the previous decision to allow cars and other vehicles into bus lanes during peak times. For instance, Lothian Buses were finding journey times had suffered. Green transport spokesperson, Councillor Chas Booth said:

"We voted the first time against the weakening of bus lane protection. I'm relieved the Transport Committee has thought again. Public transport has to be fast and efficient to meet residents' needs; encourage people out of cars; and reduce congestion and pollution in the city."

Should Drum Street be one-way?

Drastic measures will need to be taken on Drum Street to keep traffic moving in the area, says local Green activist and community councillor John Nichol.

There are three new housing estates going up in the area - two on Gilmerton Station Road and the Kinloch Green development on Candlemaker's Park. Bernard Hunter also wants to build a retail park and hotel on their existing site in the area, substantially increasing non-residential traffic going through the conservation village.

Drum Street is already swamped with traffic, so the Council will have to come up with something innovative to ensure that cars and buses can keep moving. So what should be done? Could it be turned into a one-way street? If residents were banned from parking on the street, where would they go? Could the area be turned into a 'resident and public transport only' zone?

One thing is for sure - Drum Street is no longer fit for purpose.

Council charging ahead with brown bin collections

Edinburgh Council's controversial introduction of a charge for collecting garden waste has not gone down well within Liberton Gilmerton ward.



Will charging for collecting garden waste lead to more fly-tipping?

As one of the areas of the city with the most garden space, residents of the ward have been particularly hard hit with the charge. Problems with the Council's website have caused havoc for those trying to register and there have been calls for the scheme to be scrapped or postponed.

Local Green activist John Nichol said:

"The fear is that charging for collecting garden waste will lead to more fly-tipping. If the Council go ahead with making residents pay, then they'll have to ensure that the service they provide is better than the current one. We've all experienced our bins sitting on the street for days after the collection date, with no sign of when, or even if, the bins will be emptied."

Inch House golden jubilee

Inch House celebrated its 50th anniversary as a community centre this summer with a 'Birthday Bash'.

Coming hot on the heels of last year's 400th anniversary celebrations of the building itself, the Birthday Bash was designed to get the local community into the building and discovering how many activities go on there.

Local Green Party member John Nichol, who sits on the committee for the community centre, said:

"Inch House has been through the wringer recently with roof repair work covering the building in scaffolding for a year, and then Edinburgh Council removing some services.

"The Committee has come out of this more determined than ever to get the community using, and possibly owning, the centre. We've got big plans and I'll be excited to see them come to fruition as we go forward."



Back in 2016, prospects for Inch House looked grim



Bridgend Farmhouse launch party

Share in Bridgend's inspiring growth

Bridgend Farmhouse launched a community share issue in September, as part of the final push to pay for the restoration of the farmhouse and building of workshops. Within 10 days they had raised a fifth of their target of £50,000.

The farmhouse runs various regular family workshops, courses and drop-in days. It also has a bike maintenance workshop, community history project and a café. It can be booked for private events.

Support Bridgend's growth by buying community shares: www.bridgendfarmhouse.org.uk/community-share-issue

Playing out

Are you interested in closing your street for play?

After a successful campaign by 'Edinburgh Playing Out', and a popular pilot year in 2017 with 54 car-free street sessions for children to play and neighbours to gather, this year saw the scheme made permanent.

Search for 'Play Streets' on edinburgh.gov.uk to apply.



Plastic pollution – NO THANKS!

David Attenborough's 'Blue Planet II' recently raised awareness of the impact of so called disposable plastics, especially on sea-life.

Green Councillor Steve Burgess has won agreement from Edinburgh Council to set up a task force to tackle the city's plastic pollution. Pressure from Green

Councillors has already replaced plastic water bottles in school packed lunches and secured backing for a city-wide water-bottle refill scheme.

Green Councillor Steve Burgess and young Green, Katri Hastings celebrate the Council's new task force, set up to tackle plastic pollution in Edinburgh.

Young Green, Katri Hastings, has been working with Steve on ideas for plastic-reduction such as a reusable coffee-cup scheme for cafes. Katri says: "For ideas on how you can help reduce plastic pollution, you can read my blog on 'Single-use plastics' at www.edinburgh.greens.org.uk"

Diary Dates

GILMERTON/INCH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

meets at Gilmerton Library on the 3rd Monday of the month at 6pm

LIBERTON AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL

meets at Liberton Kirk Centre on the last Monday of the month at 7pm

SOUTH EAST EDINBURGH GREENS meet at Nelson Hall, 5 Spittalfield Crescent EH8 9QZ on the 2nd Thurs, 7pm. Open to all Green supporters

Contact your local Greens

Ward Greens: Contact John Nichol (john.nichol@edinburghgreens.org.uk) to get involved in Green activity in Liberton & Gilmerton and around the city.

Your Green MSPs: Alison Johnstone and Andy Wightman - 0131 348 5000
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