

GREEN NEWS

AUTUMN
2018



Morningside

MARCHMONT, GREENHILL, BRUNTSFIELD, MERCHISTON
MORNINGSIDE, GREENBANK, BRAIDS, COMISTON

Worth spending a penny

PUBLIC TOILET CLOSURES have affected Morningside residents. Green MSP Alison Johnstone highlights this important issue:

The UN says access to water and sanitation is an essential human right and you'd think we'd have no problem meeting that test here in Edinburgh. Sadly, in recent weeks and months, I've received letters describing the consequences of public toilet closures. They're not easy reading.

Disability Equality Scotland tell us that a lack of available facilities can discourage disabled people from leaving home and they've called on local authorities to do more to ensure public toilets are maintained. You might be surprised to learn that our Councils don't have to provide public toilets, and while the Scottish Government continues to deny local government the powers it quite reasonably seeks to better fund essential services, austerity means that Councils are selling off public property to raise revenue and make savings.

Thankfully, in some areas where public toilets have closed, local businesses have stepped into the breach. But is this the answer? Many people feel uncomfortable asking for keys or codes to access



the bathroom. And who do we charge with cleaning these toilets when their use increases?

I've lodged two amendments to the Planning Bill which is working its way through Parliament. They are intended to ensure that planning authorities have to take account of the need for public toilets and water refill locations in their development plans.

Is your local public toilet still open? If not, were you consulted about its closure? And if it has closed what's your alternative? There are some excellent local businesses who don't expect you to spend a penny to use the bathroom, and cafes and coffee shops who will happily provide tap water and refill your reusable bottle. But let's remember that this is a human rights issue and it's not something we should do on the cheap.

In this issue

PLASTIC POLLUTION:
Task force set up

SHORT TERM LETS:
Legislation proposed

RIGHTS OF WAY:
Holy Corner and
Midmar Paddock

BOROUGHMUIR HIGH:
Traffic Concerns

MARCHMONT:
Play Street Success

POLWARTH:
Pregnancy Centre
move

BRAIDS:
Road work delays

Hedge of darkness

Garden trees and hedges contribute so much to making our leafy area a great place to live but, as the nights are drawing in, please consider cutting your hedges and trees if they hang over the pavement or obscure street lights and signs. Police Scotland recommend residents keep hedges low and trimmed to prevent windows, doors and sheds being obscured and providing cover for unwanted intruders. Overgrown hedges can force pedestrians onto the road and there are more falls on leaves in Autumn than on ice in winter, so please help keep our pavements clear.



Green Councillor Steve Burgess and Young Green, Katri Hastings (with re-useable coffee cups)

Plastic pollution—no thanks!

Greens continue to campaign to reduce plastic waste

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. 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.edinburghgreens.org.uk'

Green councillor Melanie Main recently joined Friends of the Earth's #PlasticFreeFriday. Melanie said 'Living without plastic for a day wasn't as difficult as I expected- why not give it a try?'



Cllr Melanie Main outside the centre

Pregnancy and Parents Centre to move

Many people in the ward will have had involvement with the Pregnancy & Parents Centre on Lower Gilmore Place. The Centre offers friendship, information and activities to support women and families through pregnancy and early parenthood. Due to local redevelopment, it has to relocate but there plans for it to remain in the area. Expect an announcement soon. In order to fund the move, the centre will be launching a crowdfunder, details on <http://pregnancyandparents.org.uk/>

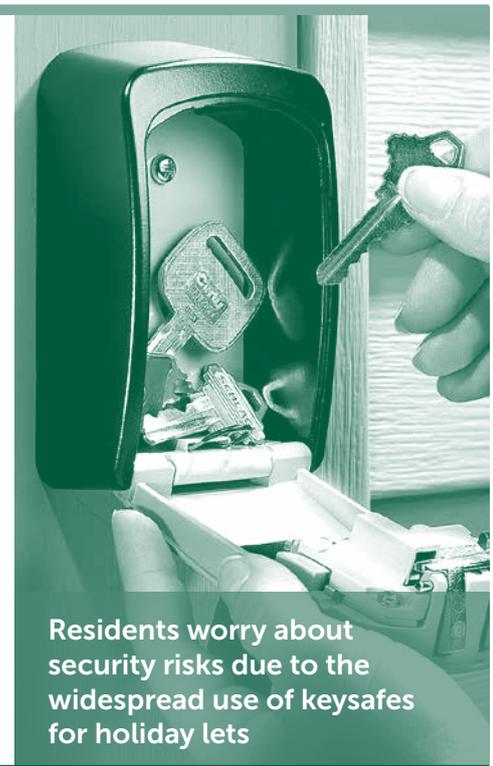
Pressure on short term lets

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 and 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."

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 see Andy's 'Homes First' campaign at <https://greens.scot/homesfirst>



Residents worry about security risks due to the widespread use of keysafes for holiday lets

Banking on rights of way

Edinburgh's Green councillors are leaders in protecting our paths



Cllr Melanie Main and Morag Jones, the local campaign lead, on the right of way at former Bank of Scotland, Holy Corner

Keeping Holy Corner safe for pedestrians

Planning permission has been given for the former bank at Holy Corner to be converted into a pub/restaurant, but with the condition that the right of way must be clearly defined in the landscaping.

Earlier this year, Green Councillor Melanie Main worked with local residents gathering evidence that led to the Council registering the pathway in front of the building as a claimed Right of Way. Councillor Main said 'The community voice was heard- open access across the site would have been closed off for good. I'm pleased Signature Pubs changed their plans to include the right of way. Recognition of rights of way in the planning process here will help protect other green spaces including Midmar Paddock'.

Midmar Field at Blackford Hill

The Local Nature Conservation Site much loved and used by families and dog walkers, is up for sale yet again. Cllr Melanie Main said 'I am pleased to support the local campaign to Save Midmar Paddock. Rights of way could play a pivotal part in securing the field's future as an open, public space, once and for all.'

New Boroughmuir School Safety First

When Cllr Melanie Main discovered that the Council Transport Committee had not taken any action on a public petition she asked for it to be put back on the agenda. The petition, signed by more than 250 parents and local people, calls for improved road safety for the new Boroughmuir High School pupils as they head to school over Viewforth Bridge. Melanie met with concerned residents who witness issues daily, and visited the bridge: 'I have seen for myself the dangerous driving, parking on pavements and pupils spilling onto the road. Action needs to be taken now before there is a serious accident.'



Cllr Melanie Main has joined local people in calling for action before there is a serious accident

Call for action on roads

In September, Cllr Melanie Main took the Council Head of Roads for a tour of Morningside streets where much needed road work has been delayed or not delivered. She explained 'I have asked for commitments to be kept and resources to be found to make our streets safe. I share residents' constant

frustration at the lack of delivery year on year, whether it's a short double yellow line, flood prevention drainage or pavement realignments. I'll be reporting back to residents with committed timescales for Greenbank Road, Braidburn Terrace, Braid Crescent and Newbattle Terrace. I would like to hear from anyone who has unresolved issues in their street'.

Playing Out days bring people together



Cllr Melanie Main welcomed the recent 'Playing Out' event in Arden Street, Marchmont which featured fun, games and homebaking.

Edinburgh Playing Out, a parent led group supported by Green Councillor Steve Burgess, campaigned successfully for an Edinburgh Play Street policy. Residents can now close their street to allow children to play. Cllr Main said 'It's not just

the free play benefiting the children- neighbours meet, a sense of community starts to build and isolation starts to be broken down. The challenge now is to make playing out the norm, not just a one-off event.'

If you would like help planning your play street in 2019 contact marchmontplayingout@gmail.com

Contact your local Greens

Melanie Main is the Green councillor for Morningside.

Contact Melanie on 07775 665 499, 529 3181 or melanie.main@edinburgh.gov.uk. Meetings by arrangement.

 www.facebook.com/CllrMelanieMain

 [@melaniemain](https://twitter.com/melaniemain)

You can also contact your Green MSPs, Alison Johnstone and Andy Wightman, at alison.johnstone.msp@scottish.parliament.uk and andy.wightman.msp@scottish.parliament.uk or 0131 348 5000

Edinburgh Greens

 www.facebook.com/EdinburghGreens

 [@EdinburghGreens](https://twitter.com/EdinburghGreens)

www.edinburghgreens.org.uk

Bonnington Mill
72 Newhaven Road
Edinburgh EH6 5QG

Councillor Melanie Main

Melanie has been a councillor since 2012.

The group of 8 Green members of Edinburgh Council are working together to fight for jobs, investment in schools, safe roads, green spaces and putting more power in the hands of local communities. Melanie is the Green Health and Social Care Spokesperson, sits on the Edinburgh Integrated Joint Board, working to integrate and improve health and social services, and is vice-Convenor on the Council's Audit Committee.



Find out more

Get involved in Green activity in Morningside and around the city.

SUBSCRIBE to regular email updates from Edinburgh Greens: bit.ly/egsubscribe

LEARN MORE by visiting our web site for more news and regular updates from your Green councillors and MSPs www.edinburghgreens.org.uk

HELP US deliver Edinburgh Green News in your area bit.ly/egvolunteer

DONATE to help fund Edinburgh Greens campaigns bit.ly/egdonate

