

GREEN NEWS

SPRING
2018



Southside
& Newington

ST LEONARD'S, SCIENNES, THE GRANGE,
PRESTONFIELD, BLACKFORD, NETHER LIBERTON

Action on rip-off rents



Edinburgh has more private rented homes than anywhere in Scotland, and they're costing tenants more than anywhere else, too.

A report by Edinburgh Greens has shown that between 2010 and 2017, new rents on two-bed homes in the capital rose by 39.8% while the average cost of living only rose by 15.6%.

Greens have been talking to residents in Southside and Newington about their rents. Half those spoken to rent privately and two-thirds thought rents were a bit or much too high.

For some, up to 75% of their income can go on rent. For many there is often very little left for everyday living, let alone a social life, holidays or saving for a

deposit. Some also complained about the quality of their flat, "too cold to study in my flat".

Now the Scottish Parliament has passed laws which enable councils to impose Rent Pressure Zones, to limit rent rises for tenants. Greens are campaigning for the Council to designate the city as a Rent Pressure Zone. Fully 70% of the 100+ people spoken to in Southside and Newington said they would support such a move.

Edinburgh Greens Housing Spokesperson Cllr Susan Rae said: "Now that the council has the power to prevent rents rising so

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drastically, faster than both the cost of living and tenants' incomes, it's time to use that power and stop tenants being squeezed by landlords like this. If rents rises can be capped at 1% over inflation, then by 2020, the city's tenants could be over £50 a month better off. Greens will continue to fight for the people who live in Edinburgh's properties, as opposed to the people who own them."

To show your support for this campaign contact Green Cllr Steve Burgess, steve.burgess@edinburgh.gov.uk

Maxed out on plastic

Large or small, plastic waste is having a devastating effect on Edinburgh's public places, especially the city's beaches and waterways.

Visible plastic waste includes bags, bottles and packaging, which doesn't break down, finding its way to canal and river courses and into the Forth.

Edinburgh Green Councillor Steve Burgess said: "Plastic waste is a serious hazard to both wildlife and people but

we can tackle it. Everyone can report waste where they see it, and council teams and community groups can remove it.

"We can all try not to leave waste and not to accept the plastic packaging pushed on us, reusing drinks bottles, choosing products that



Cllr Steve Burgess shows needless plastic waste in a school lunch bag

come in recyclable cardboard, and saying no to single-use drinking straws.

"The Scottish Government plans to ban disposable plastics by 2030. In the meantime Green

councillors will push for Edinburgh Council and its contractors to go disposable-free long before then, eliminating plastic straws, bottles, trays, cutlery and plastic-coated paper cups."

Greens make budget mark

Green councillors have secured a number of their pledges in the annual budget.

These include more money for homelessness, disabled children, energy efficiency and street trees, as well as action on private rents and the case for a tourist tax to pay for city services.

Green Finance spokesperson Cllr Gavin Corbett said: "Times are tough for council budgets. Even with the very welcome extra £12.4m gained by Green MSPs for Edinburgh, the council has had to make some hard choices in its budget. That is why I have backed Green MSPs' call for far reaching reform of council funding."

Greens have broken the deadlock on a tourist tax which could raise up to £15m a year for the city. The council will now commission a study on how the levy could work in practice.



Greens call to enforce 20mph as traffic injuries fall

Since the 20mph rollout, Edinburgh road casualties have fallen by a quarter, with serious injuries and deaths reduced even more. But Edinburgh Greens are calling for real enforcement to make sure these benefits continue.

Edinburgh Greens' Transport Spokesperson, Cllr Chas Booth, said:

"It's great to see yet another example of a previously minority Green idea being picked up by the mainstream administration.

"But we have to see that the new limit, with its real benefits for safer streets and a less congested city, is applied properly. We're listening to drivers, cyclists and pedestrians, and hearing that there's confusion and frustration, as some follow the limit to the letter while others have lapsed into ignoring it.



"Police and council must skillfully enforce the limit where it will make the most difference, choosing spots where flouting it is doing most harm, and where taking action will spread the idea that 20mph is good for everyone, and that the limit is a red line and not just red tape."

LOCAL PLACES

SOUTHSIDE & NEWINGTON has always thrived because local people have been prepared to fight to keep places for community use. Over the years there have been successes and some losses, but never apathy.



Prestonfield Neighbourhood Project voluntary management committee with project manager Linda Wright (left)

Prestonfield's unsung heroes

Have you ever wondered what happens in the yellow building with a clock tower in Prestonfield Avenue?

Prestonfield Neighbourhood Project was set up in 1988 to provide advice and information for older people in South and Central Edinburgh. Responding to a clear need, the Prestonfield Neighbourhood Centre was built in 1995. The centre provides services for older people, helping them live longer and healthier lives.

A hot nutritious meal is provided daily, and those who attend help plan the programme, including art and social activities. This is updated weekly at www.southedinburgh.net/pnp/activities.

If there is something you, or someone you know, may be interested in, call into the centre or phone 620 7222.

Sick Kids sold

The Sick Children's Hospital has now been sold to developers, and the Community Buyout group was not allowed to challenge this. Local Greens believe there are serious questions to be asked about how the sale was handled by the NHS and the Council.

There will now be a mix of high end and 'affordable' housing, with 350 student and two business units. However, Marchmont and Sciennes Community Council have worked hard

to make the community consultation process as effective and inclusive as possible. They have ensured preservation of the original hospital block, and free access

Community ownership for Astley Ainslie?

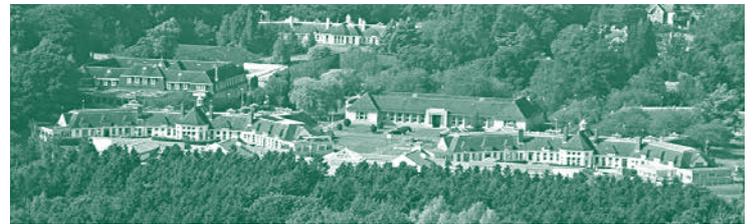
Two public meetings have been held by the Astley Ainslie Community Group with the aim of considering community ownership of the Astley Ainslie hospital site which is being sold by the NHS.

There is considerable interest in this, with innovative ideas for using the site to maximise both local and wider community benefit.

The focus is now on attracting local people with relevant expertise.

The group look forward to support from as many people as possible.

If you would like to be kept up to date with developments contact AstleyAinslieCommunity@gmail.com or follow them on Facebook.



Cinema to return after intermission

Renovation of the former Odeon in Clerk Street is due to re-start, after stalling for over a year.

The unique 1930 Art Deco cinema closed in 2003 and locals then campaigned to save it from demolition. New owners, G1 Group, announced plans to reopen it in early 2016, but halted restoration work after a few months. Whilst the planned reopening is widely welcomed, concerns remain about G1 Group's employment practices, as highlighted by the #BetterThanZero campaign.

throughout the site and to the Phoebe Traquair murals. They have reduced the number of student units, lowered the intrusive roofline of the new student block, and

moved most car parking underground. Sick Kids holds a special place in the hearts of Edinburgh's people, so there will be a memorial garden in front of the original block.

Homes or holidays?

Local Greens have been working with Andy Wightman MSP in Southside & Newington to gauge the extent of and issues with whole flats that are let out for short-term, holiday rentals.

Over a quarter of people surveyed had one or more such flats in their block or stair, usually one, but in one case seven out of twelve flats.

We heard of cases in the City Centre where only one flat in a whole block was let to residential tenants.

People were evenly split between thinking the number was OK, and thinking there were too many.

The issues people raised were care of communal areas, occasional noise and anti-social behaviour,

plus worries about security and lots of different people coming and going. They thought these flats can drive up rents and take homes off the market for rent or sale.

There were some positive thoughts about it being nice to welcome people on holiday and hotels being expensive. There were also reports of neighbours persuading landlords to revert to long-term lets and a landlord himself explaining that he was doing so for ethical reasons.

Two-thirds of respondents supported Andy Wightman's campaign to amend planning legislation to give Council powers to regulate this activity.

If you have been affected, Andy wants to know about it. Share your story on greens.scot/homesfirst/share-your-story or if you want to be kept in touch with the campaign email andy.wightman.msp@parliament.scot



Local Greens hoping to hear your views



A Good Causey

In response to feedback from local people Causey Development Trust has revised designs to make West Crosscauseway and the surrounding area a safer, more welcoming and attractive, pedestrian and cycle friendly, better meeting the needs of residents, businesses and the local community.

<http://www.thecausey.org/news.html>

Diary Dates

GRANGE & PRESTONFIELD COMMUNITY COUNCIL meets at Cameron House Community Centre on the 3rd Wednesday, 7pm.

SOUTHSIDE COMMUNITY COUNCIL meets at Nelson Hall on the 2nd Monday, 6:45pm.

MARCHMONT & SCIENNES COMMUNITY COUNCIL meets at St Catherine's Argyle Church Halls on the 4th Wednesday, 7:30pm.

Contact your local Greens



Your Green councillor: Steve Burgess is the Green councillor for Southside & Newington. Contact Steve steve.burgess@edinburgh.gov.uk or 0131 529 3274 to arrange a convenient time to meet at a local venue, your home or the City Chambers.

Your Green MSPs: Alison Johnstone and Andy Wightman on 0131 348 5000
Email Alison: alison.johnstone.msp@scottish.parliament.uk
Email Andy: andy.wightman.msp@scottish.parliament.uk



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