

FREE!



CURRIE P5 PUPILS GET WEAVING! p33



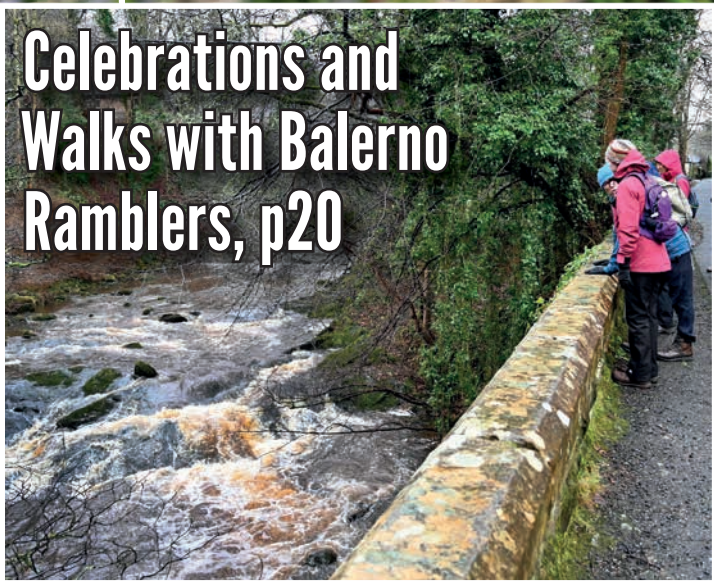
STORM ÉOWYN LEAVES ITS MARK, p2

C&B NEWS

CURRIE • BALERNO • JUNIPER GREEN • BABERTON MAINS • COLINTON



Maintaining Rural Footpaths, p12



Celebrations and Walks with Balerno Ramblers, p20



A Spring Fairtrade Morning comes to Balerno, p12

PHOTOS CREDITS: PAUL FISHER (COCKBURN); ROGER JONATHAN; CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL; FRIENDS OF THE PENTLANDS.

Launched in 1976, *C&B News* is a volunteer-led, independent, non-profit-making community magazine written by and for the residents of Currie, Balerno, Juniper Green, Baberton Mains, and Colinton.

We publish 10 monthly issues each calendar year, including two “double-month” editions (July/August and December/January) marking our summer and winter breaks.

Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the management. We reserve the right to edit or reject submissions.

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DEADLINES FOR NEXT ISSUE

ADVERTISING & LISTINGS: 11 MARCH
 EDITORIAL: 16 MARCH
 ISSUE DISTRIBUTED: 28 MARCH



Above and top left: Quite apart from giving us a reminder of Lockdown, January's Storm Éowyn brought down numerous trees along the Water of Leith Walkway—although, as usual, there were signs of locals ignoring the hastily-erected barriers. How long will it be before these much-loved routes are officially reopened? Photos: Paul Fisher Cockburn



Above and below: Members of The Meeting Place, Currie “travelled” all through Europe courtesy of The Orient Express Experience, in the Queen Charlotte Rooms, Leith. The group enjoyed an amazing afternoon tea with a virtual journey on the infamous train where murder and intrigue are the raison d'être. Thankfully organisers report that everyone made it back safely from Leith!



Left, above and below: Juniper Green Resident Michael Moorhead continues to update C&B News on the volunteers working to improve Dr MacKay's Wood, with a recent session not only tackling the ground ivy in the north west corner (where new bulbs will be planted) but also uncovering “a healthy (sic) collection of bottles and cans in the undergrowth, some of which looked to have been there for quite a while”—oh, plus a slightly rusty pair of secateurs (bottom right). Photos: Emily Ronaldson.



BRIEFLY NEWS

• **C&B AGM:** The Annual General Meeting of The Currie & Balerno News Limited – the private company, limited by guarantee and without shareholders which publishes *C&B News* – will take place on the evening of Monday 10 March. Members of the public are welcome to attend: for more details, email Gail Rankin: chairperson@candbnews.com

• **PARKING FINES:** The City of Edinburgh Council recently announced it had issued more than 8,500 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) during the first year of the capital's ban on pavement/drop-kerb/double parking. The street attracting the most PCNs was Turnhouse Road, east of Edinburgh Airport (212 in total) but in sixth place overall was Main Street, Balerno (105). (Concerning pavement parking alone, it was fourth overall.) In contrast, Lanark Road West attracted a mere 22 PCNs in total—although exactly where is not known.

• **BANK PARKING:** *C&B News* has heard that, on at least two recent occasions, the Royal Bank of Scotland Mobile Branch – which usually parks by the Scotmid Co-op on Main Street, Balerno every Tuesday, 10.15am - 11am – has been forced to move elsewhere by an otherwise rarely-sighted traffic warden. Given that even just a couple of hundred additional yards can add an almost insurmountable barrier to what is a lifeline service for some older residents, something must be done to sort this out—and quickly.

• **ROAD TO RUIN?:** Members of Balerno Community Council continue to express their discontent at the “refurbished” Bridge Road/Lanark Road West junction which, despite CEC assurances to the contrary, they consider less safe for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicular road users—not least thanks to the

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Gordon Macdonald MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Edinburgh Pentlands Constituency



Monthly Advice Surgeries

Wester Hailes Library	1 st Friday of month, 10am
Carrickvale Comm. Centre	2 nd Friday of month, 10am
Currie Library	3 rd Friday of month, 10am
Oxgangs Library	4 th Friday of month, 10am
Ratho Community Centre	5 th Friday of month, 10am

NB: NO SURGERIES DURING PUBLIC AND BANK HOLIDAYS

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Gordon Macdonald MSP @GMacdonaldMSP

Representing: Baberton, Balerno, Blinkbonny, Bonaly, Broomhouse, Buckstone, Calders, Colinton, Colinton Mains, Currie, Dregghorn, Fairmilehead, Firhill, Hermiston, Juniper Green, Kingsknowe, Longstone, Oxgangs, Parkhead, Ratho, Redhall, Saughton Mains, Sighthill, Spylaw, Stenhouse, Swanston, Wester Hailes and Whitson.
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Sue Webber MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Lothian Region



Monthly Advice Surgeries

The first Friday of every month from 10am until 1pm in the constituency office at **546D Lanark Road, Juniper Green, Edinburgh EH14 5EL**. If this time is not possible you can make an appointment by contacting me via the details below.

Contact Sue Webber
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Church Parking Extension Refused

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
C&B NEWS

A planning application to add 10 parking spaces at Colinton Parish Church has been rejected by City of Edinburgh Council planning officers because of its detrimental impact on the character of the conservation area.

While recognising that the revised proposals from the Church (now part of the Edinburgh Pentlands Parish) “will not adversely impact on its special architectural and historic interest,” the Council decided that the proposals would “not preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, due to the potential loss of mature trees”.

The 10 parking spaces were to be constructed on land 30 metres (33 yards) south of 5 Dell Road. Officials found the application “contrary to the Local Development Plan Policy Env 20 in respect of Trees, and National Planning Framework 4 Policy 6 in respect of Forestry, woodland and trees, as the proposal will unduly impact on the protected trees”.

One “neutral” commentator on the application insisted that “the addition of parking in a greenspace and conservation area should be resisted”, especially given the city’s encouragement of “active travel rather than car use”. An objecting commentator insisted that if there was any risk “to mature trees which provide tremendously valuable habitat and form part of the river corridor, then this development should be refused”.

Another suggested that, if reaching the church – located down in the Dell – was becoming increasingly difficult for older congregation members, the Church should consider running a minibus service to collect them.

There were also concerns that the additional parking would encourage even more traffic down Spylaw Street.

The Red Telephone Box on Harlaw Road has been serving as a much-loved and fully functioning community books and jigsaw exchange for nearly five years, writes local resident Sofia Soboleva.

“We would like to maintain it in a best possible condition. This year we managed to raise enough money for new glazing. BT special shop will provide the full kit including rivets and sealing tape.”

“We’re now looking for a smart head and a pair of experienced hands to help us to reglaze the box.”

• If you would like to get involved then contact hello@balernovt.org.uk



Over 60s Lunch Club Offered Lifeline



GRAHAM DANE
C&B NEWS

Members of the Golden Years lunch club at Currie Community Centre enjoying its various activities. Photo: Cyrenians.

At the beginning of February an alarming email was received at Currie Community Centre announcing the closure of the much appreciated “Golden Years” club.

This is a service provided by the Cyrenians charity to combat loneliness and isolation among the over-60s. The strong response to the news by those attending and running the club, as well as councillors and others, has led to a ray of sunshine falling on the group and those who enjoy its support. A short extension to the funding has been secured and longer-term support is still being discussed.

In a nutshell, the Cyrenians are now able to offer support and training to any volunteers who would like to play a part in continuing the club. Currie Community Centre already provides free accommodation, and the volunteers who run the Saturday morning cafe unanimously agreed to fund the food provided and other running costs of Golden Years. In addition, the chef who prepares meals for the Bees Knees nursery will prepare lunch for the weekly club meetings, which span lunchtime on Fridays.

Currie Community Centre is playing its part as a local

charity. The Centre, and Charity Co-ordinator Louise Scrivens, will be the main contact point for the group and is looking for people of any age with a sociable nature who would like to give the occasional hour or so of their time at least once a month to join a rota of helpers. Volunteers chat with the members and join in with games and activities. According to Louise, the lunch club is “a lifeline for over-60s in the community”. She is also keen to make this service for isolated and lonely people better known locally.

The funding crisis that led to the proposed closure was caused by the withdrawal of funding from many voluntary services. In response, Finance Convener Mandy Watt has proposed the City of Edinburgh Council fund voluntary organisations directly, as voluntary bodies multiply the effectiveness of funding—sometimes by as much as three times. (A decision on this proposal was due to be taken on 20 February.) So far, an extension till the end of June is in place, giving a breathing space to allow charities such as Currie Community Centre to organise a way of continuing with services such as this much appreciated lunch club.

BRIEFLY...

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lack of renewed road markings. There are also concerns that the original plans, as lodged, simply don’t match what actually ended up on the ground.

• **YELLOW LINES:** In response to parked cars making it extremely difficult for buses to travel northwards down Bavelaw Green, Balerno (especially when Currie Chieftains are playing at home), Lothian Buses have requested CEC establishes 24-hour waiting restrictions (marked by double yellow lines) on the non-residential side of the road, on either side of the entrance to Malleny.

• **OBLIGATORY BUS STORY:** In January, the CEC Transport and Environment Committee accepted the need for further discussion on improving current council-supported bus services to not just Ratho but also the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena and new Lost Shore Surf Resort.

• **CUDDIES LANE MURAL:** Colinton Amenity Association has set up a JustGiving page for donations to support the Colinton Gateway Mural Project: <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/cuddieslanemural>

• **COLINTON BINS:** The bins on Spylaw Street – no, not the controversial bin hub at the bottom, but those near the top junction with Bridge Road – are increasingly being over-filled by passing motorists, inconveniencing local residents.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

You can view plans, forms and other documents connected with individual planning applications on The City of Edinburgh Council’s Planning and Building Standards Online Services website: <https://tinyurl.com/dz8atrcd>. Under statutory legislation, comments on recently registered planning applications should relate to “material considerations” connected with the use of land and buildings—such as adherence to City Plan 2030, appearance, residential amenity (eg, noise/

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Wester Hailes Bank of Scotland to Close

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
 C&B NEWS

Constituency MSP Gordon Macdonald has warned that the announced closure of the Bank of Scotland branch in Wester Hailes, on 27 May 2025, will impact many local residents who rely on face-to-face banking services.

The closure, along with that at Corstorphine West, will mean the Gyle Shopping Centre hosting the only surviving Bank of Scotland branch on the west side of Edinburgh.

“I am deeply concerned about the potential impact of this closure on members of the community who rely on these services, particularly with the Post Office Branch in Wester Hailes also under review, which would leave local customers with no means of face-to-face banking services,” said the MSP.

According to BOS, there’s been a 37% drop in both personal and business customer transactions in the Wester Hailes branch during the last five years, with 973 customers using the branch each month (for four of the previous six months ending July 2024). They also highlight that 85% of customers were already using other branches, and internet or telephone banking.

Gordon had previously contacted Post Office Ltd urging them and the UK Government to reconsider the proposal based on the needs of the local community and other regular users of the service. He now aims to meet with Lloyds Banking Group, owners of Bank of Scotland, to obtain further details of the potential support for most most affected.

• For more information on switching your current account to another bank or building society, visit: www.currentaccountswitch.co.uk



As previously reported in C&B News, Currie Balerno Rotary's Tree of Life appeal in December raised £2,200 for Marie Curie—and here you see the presentation of a rather large cheque! Pictured are Currie Balerno Rotary's Brian Buchanan (left) and President Ian Campbell (right), with the charity's Fund Raising Co-ordinator Fiona Bushby (centre).

Round Table: Donations Continue

HAZEL LUMSDAINE CURRIE, BALERNO & DISTRICT ROUND TABLE

Towards the end of last year, Currie, Balerno & District Round Table had the pleasure of presenting a few big cheque donations to some very wonderful and deserving causes.

It always fills us with pride when we are able to support a local group to continue to offer the services that they provide to the community. All funds that we are able to redistribute are what makes the CBDRT crowd continue to commit to the events that we run each year, and strive to raise as much money as possible.

Here are just a couple of examples of big cheque presentations.

“Blood Bikes Scotland are absolutely delighted to receive such amazing support from CBDRT in the form of two substantial donations totalling £3,000,” said Phil Dodsworth, trustee at Blood Bikes Scotland.

“This is a significant amount and as we are entirely dependent

on donations like this to maintain our NHS services in the regions we cover. The scale and generosity is important and quite literally helps us keep the show on the road. Last year our fleet of 20 vehicles, and 229 volunteers, completed 9,113 jobs for the NHS in Scotland, travelling a total of 294,887 miles and saving them £352,917 (up 17% on 2023). We can’t thank CBDRT enough for this incredible support—it is so much appreciated.”

Meantime, Juniper Green Primary School (below) told us: “We are so grateful to CBDRT for this very kind donation. This will be used to purchase items for the school; in particular, to help some of our learners with their health and wellbeing, both in and out of school.”

As always, none of this would be possible without the continued support of our local communities, so if you attended any of our events last year or dropped some coins into one of our collecting buckets—Thank You!

• Visit our website: <https://cbdrt.com/> or our facebook page: www.facebook.com/cbdrt/



BRIEFLY...

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overshadowing) or traffic/parking/access issues.

• JUNIPER GREEN: Installation of automated teller machine and associated signage; 540A Lanark Road. (25/00200/FUL) Comments by 7 March.

• COLINTON: Replacement windows and doors; 2 Barnshot Road. (25/00484/FUL and 25/00486/LBC) Comments by 7 March.

• COLINTON: Reroof and upgrade outshoot section of house including existing dormer, add winter garden office; 44 West Mill Road. (25/00508/FUL) Comments by 7 March.

• JUNIPER GREEN: New entrance with external steps, loft conversion with dormer and re-roofing; 561C Lanark Road. (25/00623/FUL) Comments by 14 March.

• COLINTON: Replace existing conservatory with new contemporary extension, new large feature window to existing kitchen, new back door utility extension, replacement roof windows and interior alterations to accommodate new extensions; 9 Bonaly Road. (25/00665/LBC, 25/00666/FUL) Comments by 14 March.

• COLINTON: Removal of mature but very dangerous Scots pine to ground level; 20 Carnethy Avenue. (25/00783/TCO) Registered, 17 February.

• BALERNO: Proposed replacement of existing conservatory with new garden room, existing shed replaced with new greenhouse and garden area behind garage to be levelled to allow for new shed to be installed; 3 Ravelrig Wynd, Ravelrig. (25/00785/FUL) Comments by 21 March.

PLANNING DECISIONS

• CURRIE: Two-storey side extension, single-storey rear extension and internal alterations; 11 Nether Currie Road. (24/05977/FUL) Granted, 4 February.

• BALERNO: Remove existing

>p9

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BVT 'Tattie Day'

VAL REID
BALERNO VILLAGE TRUST

The start of the year is traditionally a quiet time for Balerno Village Trust but it's been a busier one than normal this year.

You may have seen work going on at the Community Centre on Main Street. We are completing the Centre's Sustainable Energy Project by installing air-to-air-source heat pumps to supplement the existing fan heaters. During the last two years we have fully double-glazed the windows, installed solar panels with a battery and insulated the loft space of the entire building. There is definitely an improvement in the temperature inside, which should help improve the fuel bills! Our next steps are now to improve the cosmetic appearance of the Centre: we will be replacing the current fascia boards which are tired and rotting and, during the summer, hope to give the inside a lick of paint - we'll be looking for volunteers to help, so watch this space!

"TATTIE DAY"

Thank you to everyone who came along to our first Farmers' Market of the year on Saturday 8 February; the weather was cold but not wet nor windy—which, for February, we will take as a result! Our next Market is on Saturday 8 March and is our annual "Tattie Day". We will have 10 different varieties of seed potato for sale, and also onions sets. Potatoes are one of the easiest vegetables to grow and you don't need a veg plot to grow them in—they will just as happily grow in a deep bucket, heavy duty bin bag, or the hessian coffee sacks that we'll have available for £1 each!

We will have planting guides available at the Market and look for further information on our Facebook page.

Our Balerno Gardeners group will be helping at this market too—they look after the vegetable patch at Malleny and also help tidy up Main Street, weed and plant the display boxes and provide hanging baskets in the summer. If you are interested in getting involved please email hello@balernovt.org.uk and we'll put you in touch.

Look forward to seeing you on Saturday 8 March!



Currie Primary School celebrated Burns Day with their annual Scot's Verse recital competition, reports Head Teacher Sally Hourston. "As always it was a very close competition and everyone who took part did an amazing job to learn and say their poem in their class. The winners from each class entertained us all in our Scots assembly where we welcomed parents to join us. As well as enjoying the performances of our verse recital winners we enjoyed listening to Bella playing her chanter and watching some of our children dancing a variety of Highland Dances. Also it was lovely to welcome some former pupils, Kelsey and Caragh, back onto our stage when they danced with their sister Kelcee."

Local Primary Schools Join Rotary in Lending with Care

MIKE ROWE
CURRIE BALERNO ROTARY

LendwithCare is a scheme administered by CARE International, providing a means by which we can lend modest funds to budding entrepreneurs in disadvantaged regions of the world to offer them a route out of poverty. The loans are repaid, allowing further loans to be made.

Currie Balerno Rotary was the first Rotary Club in the UK to participate in this scheme and we have done so with very satisfying success since 2011. Now the pupils of Ratho Primary and Balerno's Dean Park Primary are joining in.

We made a presentation to P5 classes at Dean Park and P7 classes at Ratho, showing what we do through LendwithCare and the sort of people we help. The presentation was well received and we invited the schools to consider participating in the scheme. Ratho's Head Teacher Peter Gibb and Dean Park Deputy Head Laura Jackson were enthusiastic about taking this forward, as were the teachers and the children themselves.

We have donated £300 to each school - money we would



An example of the people LendwithCare supports: Sambath Chay, in north-west Cambodia, and her husband are rice farmers. LendwithCare enabled them to buy a walking tractor to improve their farming efficiency. With her married daughter, Say Kunthea, Sambath has also diversified into producing Nem, a popular local fish-based snack food. Photo: CARE International UK.

otherwise have invested ourselves in LendwithCare - and the schools are already discussing which entrepreneurs to lend to.

This will add a new international dimension to the children's education and will give them an insight into the need experienced in disadvantaged regions of the world. It will also give them satisfaction in the knowledge that they are making a contribution.

BRIEFLY...

- P7>>>**
- single-storey structure and erect new sunroom extension, alteration to form full width access; 1 Lovedale Avenue. (24/06079/FUL) Granted, 6 February.
 - COLINTON: Selective reduction of three overextended Copper Beech, plus highway clearance pruning, as amended; 59 Spylaw Bank Road. (25/00132/TCO) Not make a tree preservation order, 5 February.
 - CURRIE: New rear and side extension (as amended); 11 Stewart Gardens, Curriehill. (24/05907/FUL) Granted, 10 February.
 - COLINTON: Proposed one and a half story rear extension and single storey gable extension with internal alterations; 20 Torphin Road. (24/05597/FUL) Granted, 10 February.
 - COLINTON: Create new guest bedroom in garden; Bluebell Cottage, 49A Torphin Road. (24/06247/FUL) Granted, 12 February.
 - COLINTON: Car park for church; land 30 metres south of 5 Dell Road. (24/04392/FUL) Refused, 14 February.

PLANNED ROADWORKS & ROAD CLOSURES

Note: Start dates indicate earliest anticipated beginning of work; finish dates represent conclusion of formal notice periods—actual work may finish earlier or be extended due to circumstances.

- CLOVENSTONE: Clovenstone Road, north of Clovenstone Gardens: installation of new zebra crossing; road closed until 4 March.
- RATHO: Dahmahoy Road at Ransfield Road, off-peak temporary traffic lights to enable BT access to telegraph pole; 4 March.
- JUNIPER GREEN: Belmont Road, east side of junction with Belmont Grove, road closed for sewer repairs (Clancy Docwra for Scottish Water); 8 - 16 April.

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Balerno Burns Club—Let it Blow!

ALEX J HOOD
SECRETARY, BALERNO BURNS CLUB

The 122nd Supper of the Balerno Burns Club was held on Saturday 25 January 2025 in the function hall of Currie Chieftains Rugby Club.

The Chairman and Club President, Iain McSporrán KC, started proceedings by calling for the haggis to be welcomed into the company. It was led in by our piper Ruairi Bruce and addressed by Jim Goodbrand before “Grace Before Meat” was given by Lachlan Archibald. Following the meal, “Grace After Meat” was given by Hugh Rowe, President of our sister club, the Marchbank Burns Club.

The evening's entertainment started with “Is there for Honest Poverty” sung by our resident group, Jim Weatherston, Ian Duncan, Charlie Boyle and Robert Mackie. The Toasts to the “Immortal Memory” of both Robert Fergusson and Robert Burns were proposed by Alex Hood with an appreciation given by Niall Donaldson. The “Toast to the Lasses” was proposed by



Duncan McCool and Raymond Ward replied. The Toast to “Let it Blow” was proposed by Mike Erskine and the Toast to “New Members and Guests” by John Cox with a reply from Doug Kenyon. We're unsure whether it will taste any better as a result, but the “Toast to our Cask” of Single Malt Whisky was proposed by Ken Brown. The “Chairman, Croupiers and Artistes” were Toasted by Neil Murdoch before Neil Johnstone proposed a toast to the Currie Chieftains Rugby Club as hosts. A reply was given by rugby club member Alistair Buchanan.

Songs and recitations were introduced throughout the evening by new croupiers Alan Crilly and Brent Hurley. Contributions were made by Ivor Santer, Charlie Husband, Euan Gosney, Jim West, Jim Donald, Ken McDonald, Alan Prior, Greg

McCarra, Andy McGowan, Dave Rice, Carl John and Roy Cook. Iain McSporrán gave an excellent rendition of Tam o' Shanter and the company joined in singing the “Balerno Song”, which has featured at the club supper every year since 1881. Andy McGowan, our Club Bard, gave his usual hilarious “Bard's Oration” and Ruairi Bruce performed again on several occasions during the evening. His predecessor as Club Piper for 42 years, Kerr Cowan, now 87 years young, was presented with a certificate to mark 50 years of membership of the Balerno Burns Club, “Let it Blow”.

The band led community singing on several occasions during the course of the evening and brought our anniversary celebration to a close in traditional manner with “Auld Lang Syne”.

Community for Food AGM

CAROLINE BROWN
COMMUNITY FOR FOOD

Local charity Community for Food, which continues to support around 33 families across Juniper Green, Balerno and Currie with weekly food and essential hygiene provisions, will hold its Annual General Meeting this month.

The meeting will provide an opportunity to reflect on its achievements during its five years of operation, discuss upcoming initiatives, and connect as a community. Whether you're a seasoned volunteer, partner or supporter or new to the cause, everyone is welcome!

• The AGM is on Thursday 6 March, 7.30pm - 9pm, at the Village Hall, Juniper Green.

• Please RSVP via this Eventbrite link: <https://tinyurl.com/bdw486mh>

Volunteers Needed for The Meeting Place

ALLISTER MCKILLOP
THE MEETING PLACE

We are in real need of volunteers to help us with The Meeting Place. So, if you love a chat and are happy to help with teas and coffees why not pop down and help out for an hour or two. Our group consists of those 65+ in need of good companionship and good conversation.

• We meet every Monday from 10am till 4pm, serving lunch from 12.30pm, at the Scout Hall, 99 Forthview Crescent.

‘Horti’ Update

SHEILA MASON
SHOW SECRETARY

The months are passing very quickly—here we are in March, with thoughts moving towards sewing seeds for our flowers and vegetables.

The Horticultural Society would love if you could grow some suitable for entry into our Annual Show this summer. Details for the show, held on the last Saturday in August, should be on our website soon and (hopefully) available in a paper version next month.

As well as growing, there are the handcraft and home skills classes to be worked on while the wintry weather is still with us.

The committee are very proud that we can still have an Annual Show, so we do hope you will support us.

• The Horticultural Society Annual Show is between 1.30pm and 4pm on Saturday 30 August, at Balerno High School.



Right: In January Currie Balerno Rotary welcomed Nicole Misstear, pharmacist and manager of the Lindsay & Gilmour practice in Balerno, as a member of Currie Balerno Rotary and of Rotary International, writes Mike Rowe. “She represents the company – one of our Rotary Community Members – and is seen here with President Ian Campbell (right) and myself. Nicole joined with Scott Tennant of Circle Security and a representative from Dalmahoy Hotel and Country Clubs at a meeting to discuss the working relationship between Currie Balerno Rotary and Community Members.”



LOCAL UPDATES • LOCAL UPDATES

Adult Volunteers Needed at Ravelrig RDA

ELAINE JEFFRIES
RAVELRIG RDA

These are exciting times for Ravelrig Riding for the Disabled with the building of our new indoor arena almost complete. We hope to recommence RDA activities in the coming months.

Our current volunteers have done an amazing job caring for the horses during the construction period. However, we need additional adult volunteers to help with some of the work, such as mucking out, grooming horses, and general housekeeping of the yard. Volunteers are also asked to help with fundraising activities.

Previous equine experience is not essential. Training and support are provided to all volunteers.

Volunteering is a great opportunity to meet new people and contribute to your local community. We currently have vacancies for volunteering on: Sunday mornings, Sunday



afternoons, Monday mornings, Tuesday afternoons, Wednesday afternoons, Thursday mornings, and Friday mornings. The work typically takes two-to-three hours (mornings) and one to two hours (afternoons).

• Ravelrig RDA is based at Ravelrig



Gait, Balerno and provides riding opportunities for children and adults with physical and/or learning difficulties, for therapy, achievement and fun.

• To learn more, call us on (0131) 449 7994 or email: volunteering@ravelrig-rda.org.uk

Maintaining Rural Footpaths

BOB DOUGLAS
FRIENDS OF THE PENTLANDS

One of the lesser-used rural footpaths in our area is at the far corner of East Rigg. If you continue off the road at the bend and head straight on through the gate you will find a rough footpath with several muddy sections which leads to Listonshiels. (For the very ambitious you can continue over the hills towards Carlops.)

During the winter Friends of the Pentlands have been removing the encroaching gorse bushes and bramble which force walkers through boggy puddles and mud. The intention is that, with the gorse removed, a drier route will be possible on slightly higher ground at muddy sections. On the worst of any remaining unavoidable muddy sections we aim to erect sleeper bridges during the summer.

The gorse cutting needs to be completed over the winter before birds start nest-building in early spring. In future years we will need to maintain the route with an annual or bi-annual cut-back of any gorse regrowth before it takes hold again.

Another big project currently underway is re-building the bridge in Poet's Glen, the path which runs from Blinkbonny Road to Easter Kinleith. This has the additional effort of transporting materials up the narrow path to the worksite. We aim to complete this during March, weather permitting.

A Spring Fairtrade Morning

LESLEY HENDERSON
BALERNO FAIRTRADE VILLAGE GROUP

While Fairtrade Fortnight is now in the autumn, you know from last month's *C&B News* that a local Spring Fairtrade Morning event still aims to help blow the clouds away—as it has done for 20 years!

You already know the outline: now for some details. Stalls in St Joseph's Hall should include FT info, fairly-traded goods (via Go

• Visit: <https://cbdrt.com/> or contact us through our facebook page: www.facebook.com/cbdrt/

• The Currie Beer and Curry Festival is on Friday 6 and Saturday 7 June.

LOCAL UPDATES • LOCAL UPDATES

Balerno SWI

ISOBEL JOHNSTONE
BALERNO SWI

In February we had a Craft Evening when we all made name badges for ourselves—there are quite a few new members and it makes things easier if we all know each other's names. We made the badges from lovely offcuts of various tweeds, tartans and suiting materials and then attached name labels to them. All we need to do now is remember to wear them!

Competitions: Flower of the Month: Diane Johnston. Favourite Christmas Card: Maggie Cumpstey. Three Cheese Straws: Moira Stewart (first), Susan McDonald (second), Diane Johnston (third).

• Our next meeting (at the Balerno Community Centre at 7.30pm, Tuesday 4 March) features a talk on Bletchley Park.

Pentland Ladies Probus Club Update

MARION WALLACE
SECRETARY

In January Ian Mackay introduced us to the work of the Lothian Region's Blood Bikes Scotland charity, which deliver goods for the NHS throughout the Lothians, Borders and Fife. They can also co-ordinate with other Regions to transport vital medications throughout Britain.

It is an entirely voluntary organisation, with upkeep costs of around £6,000 a month. Thus it is very appreciative of any fund raising possibilities: "every mickle maks a muckle", as they say. Supporting them through the GiveAsYouLive site (see below) is a way of doing so which doesn't even cost you anything!

We look forward to our next meeting on 25 March when Mike Smith will be revealing interesting facts on the painting of the Colinton Tunnel.

• We meet at the Gibson Craig Halls, from 10am for a 10.30am start, where you will receive a warm welcome.

• To donate to Blood Bikes Scotland, visit: www.giveasyoulive.com/join/bloodbikesscotland

www.facebook.com/candbnews



• Friends of the Pentlands is a conservation charity which operates across the whole of

the Pentlands Hills. To learn more about our activities or volunteering opportunities, visit:

<https://pentlandfriends.org.uk/> or find us on [facebook.com/Friendsofthepentlands!](https://www.facebook.com/Friendsofthepentlands/)



Go Olive, Hadeel, the One World Shop and True Origin), plus a Pentlands Eco Group Seed Swap, a FT hamper and "Mill" cake to win, the Edinburgh Bike Cooperative's Smoothie Bike—and more. There'll also be an exhibition of Balerno

Schools' 2025 FT Competition prizewinning art and, at 11am, a prize-giving ceremony with the Lord Provost of Edinburgh.

Meanwhile, in the Ogston Hall, you can refuel with the Guild's great baking and Big Brew teas and coffees, alongside a children's activities table run with the help of kind Dean Park Primary School staff. You'll even catch some of our politicians and representatives, staunch cross-party supporters of similar FT Mornings here, and of FT generally.

Read our thanks in next month's issue for this event's generous support by Scotmid and many others, reminding us to support FT via our regular shopping too, at

a time when world fairness never felt more fragile.

All profits from the Morning go to Transform Trade, formerly Traidcraft Exchange. They aim to "support producers across the world, helping them build a bright future for their communities and fight for a fairer trade system [...] through a combination of direct grants, long-term support, and advocacy [...] help producer collectives and social enterprises to thrive – and show the world that a better way of doing business is possible."

• A Spring Fairtrade Morning: Saturday 15 March, 10am - noon; in Balerno Parish Church Halls, Main Street.



Jack Brown Eyecare – which has practices in Elder Street, Westside Plaza and Juniper Green – has become the fourth Rotary Community Member associated with Currie Balerno Rotary, writes Mike Rowe. "One of our key values is 'Care & Community', and so it is very important for us to find ways to give back to our local community," explained director Andy Connell. He sees a partnership with Currie Balerno Rotary as a natural development of that policy. Through its Juniper Green practice the company has already supported the resurfacing of the Juniper Green Tennis Club and, via its Wester Hailes practice, supported the Holy Trinity Foodbank—both also supported by Currie Balerno Rotary. On seeing the help Rotary is giving to Wester Hailes High School, Jack Brown Eyecare have offered to make a contribution to that, too—demonstrating this shared objective of helping those in need in the community.



Call for Beer Festival Sponsors

HAZEL LUMSDAINE
CURRIE, BALERNO & DISTRICT ROUND TABLE

The next event on the Currie, Balerno & District Round Table calendar is our highly popular Currie Beer and Curry Festival in June. The venue – Currie Community Centre – is booked and plans are already afoot for the biggest party of the year.

We are now looking for local businesses and people who would like an opportunity to sponsor a

part of the event. This could be anything from the beer tokens and wrist bands to a beer keg. All sponsorship includes entry to the event with some complimentary beer tokens and a delicious curry. There will be more than 40 kegs to choose from and, typically, around 700 party goers will see your company logo across the two days.

If you would like to have your company logo included in our line up this year, please get in touch and we will be happy to discuss options with you.

• Visit: <https://cbdrt.com/> or contact us through our facebook page: www.facebook.com/cbdrt/

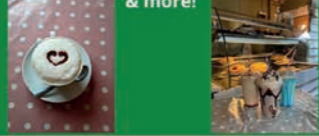
• The Currie Beer and Curry Festival is on Friday 6 and Saturday 7 June.

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DOUGLAS LOWE CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Many of us enjoy a good murder mystery on TV or in crime novels. However in March 1969, the then-relatively quiet rural Midlothian villages of Balerno and Currie were both plunged into the centre of a countrywide murder hunt.

Just before 6pm on Monday 24 March, a local woman crossing Balerno Bridge noticed a large parcel in the shallow Water of Leith below. She stopped and reported it at nearby Balerno Police Station, then an outpost of the Lothians & Peebles Constabulary (subsequently abolished and succeeded by Lothian and Borders Police in 1975). Police officers scrambled down the steep bank and found the object: it was a woman's severed leg, wrapped in a brown paper parcel and tied with string. They immediately reported this to HQ and carried out a search above and below the site. As it happened, nine hours earlier, another partially stockinged leg had been discovered on the Edinburgh to Fife railway line below a road bridge at Broomhall, just to the north of Forrester Secondary School.

The police were spurred into immediate action by this obvious murder. The Balerno and Currie area was inundated with police officers, police search dogs and a mobile crime laboratory. Currie Police Station, then situated next door to the Gibson Craig Memorial Halls (on the site later taken by the Bank of Scotland), became the headquarters of the investigation, with their police vehicles parked around the Halls. Officers had been drafted in from other forces, searching upstream of the Water of Leith; they and their support staff had their meals in the dining hall at Currie High School, with around a third of the dining hall sectioned off for their use. My wife, Enid, was at the school at the time and remembered around 20 to 30 police and civilian officers appearing in the hall at lunchtimes.

Also searched were the foreshore at Cramond and Leith, as was the River Almond. The Union Canal was dredged. Door to door enquiries were carried out in the Balerno and Broomhouse areas, with questionnaires completed for all those interviewed.

However, by the end of March, little progress had been made despite searching below all the bridges in Edinburgh and south-east Scotland, and the railway lines between Edinburgh, Dundee and Perth. Newspaper reports, having nothing new to add, understandably quietened down. Equally understandably, after all the early police activity, local interest in Balerno and Currie waned. However the police remained active, searching through the many reports of missing women that they had received.

The breakthrough in the murder enquiry occurred on Friday 2 May 1969, with the chance discovery of a female torso near Thankerton, between Lanark and Biggar. With the help of fingerprints – no DNA tests back then – the murdered woman was identified as coming from Lanark. Lanarkshire CID was immediately suspicious of her husband, a lorry driver's mate; he was duly arrested, questioned and charged. On Tuesday 27 May at Lanark Sheriff Court, he pled guilty and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

According to an *Evening News* editorial of the time, the case was notable "not just because it was a particularly gruesome crime but because the subsequent investigation was a model of cooperation between different police forces, forensic experts and the public". Nevertheless, with the conclusion of this ultimately sad and tragic story, Currie and Balerno's experience of "the leg in the burn" case passes further into our local memory.



Main: Balerno Bridge at some point during the 1950s. Middle: Currie Police Station, as it was at the time of the murder investigation. Above: The view from Balerno Bridge today. Photos: CDLHS/Douglas Lowe.

• For more information on Currie and District Local History Society, email: secretary@curriehistory.org or fill in the contact form at <https://www.curriehistory.org/contact/>
www.facebook.com/candbnews

Cooking the Books

with Balerno Resident STEF LYONS



These days it's not fashionable to eat carbs. I'm not even entirely sure what that means because carbs (carbohydrates) are in basically everything except meat and a few other things. The combination of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen together upsets enough people that you get breadless sandwiches now (which is a salad FYI), crustless quiches (omelettes) and pizza with no base (a pile of melted cheese with meat).

Over the years I've had times when I've joined in with the fad and reduced my overall levels of carbohydrate intake. In the early noughties it was all about Atkins and Low GI diets and now people are doing Keto. Personally I can't do any of them for long because I love vegetables and subscribe to the scientifically held understanding that fruit and veg are brilliant and no one ever got hurt from eating carrots.

In reducing my general carbs I came to understand something about myself. Of all the long chain, complex carbs one might eat, I could easily not eat a potato or rice for a long time. Pasta would be harder to eschew. However, let me introduce myself properly to spell this out: Hi, my name is Stef and I really, really, really love bread.

Give me all the bread. Our most ancient of foods. Every culture in the world has found some way of feeding themselves and providing energy in times of hunger with ground up plants and water. Flatbreads and crackers came about that way. Eventually it was found that using some of the dough from the previous day could be used to leaven the next batch, giving us risen bread (and the most basic form of sourdough). Eventually we discovered yeast and then in the 1960s we developed a system to make bread in bulk and quickly in order to feed ourselves loaf after loaf. I will eat naan, challah, pita, baguettes and any crusty loaf with gay abandon.

The price of bread has gone up in recent years, especially if you want to eat the good stuff. Luckily for me, my partner,



Mr Stef, is a bread-making wonder. This man has borrowed a number of my books and amassed some of his own to keep us in loaves of wholewheat and sourdough. We have not one but two starters in our fridge and not many days go by where he isn't proving or kneading something. I too enjoy baking bread but he does "the Lyons share" of it and our house smells delicious most days of the week.

I've used *Breadmaking* by Kathryn Hawkins for yummy soda bread and baguettes, but it is Mr Stef with his basic loaf recipe that feeds our house most often. His favourite books are by two Scottish bakers: *The Big Book Of Bread* and *Super Sourdough*, both by James Morton, and *Do/Sourdough* by Andrew Whitley, who co-founded a collaborative project to establish Scottish flour called "Scotland The Bread".

Not all bakes have gone to plan though. We've had bulging bread from over-proving, sourdough the shape of many wild things from too much water in the mix, not enough water, too much flour, proving time difficulties and other mystery disasters. Working with sourdough is like working with children and/or animals and has proved (pun intended) to be as volatile as working with live ammo.

We are lucky in Edinburgh to have many brilliant places to buy fresh bread. Nevertheless, I am even luckier because my daily bread is produced and provided for me fresh most days from my own oven. I'll toast to that.

• "Scotland The Bread" is in Anstruther, Fife, but its flour is used and stocked in places across Scotland. Take a look here to find your nearest store: <https://scotlandthebread.org/flourandgrain/stockists/>

Senior Snippets

with ANDREW SENEW

Welcome to our latest Senior Snippet - an advisory column with the older members of our communities in mind. Please send any ideas for future topics to: andrew.senew@homeinstead.co.uk



Looking Forward to Spring

Spring brings longer days, blossoming flowers, and warmer weather—perfect for older adults to enjoy nature, socialise, and stay active. Here are some different things to try.

Edinburgh is home to many gardens and parks that burst into life in spring. Visit them to admire blooming daffodils, tulips, and cherry blossoms. Many places offer gentle walking routes with benches for rest stops.

Walking is an excellent way to stay active and connect with others. Choose routes that suit your fitness level, from countryside trails to coastal paths.

Whether you have a garden, or just a few pots on a balcony, spring is the ideal time to plant flowers, herbs, and vegetables. Gardening provides gentle exercise and a sense of accomplishment.

Spring is a fantastic time for birdwatching, as migratory birds return and begin nesting.

Look for local art, photography, or craft workshops to explore a new hobby or develop existing skills.

Embrace the season's spirit by giving your home a fresh start. Decluttering can be both therapeutic and practical.

Spring in Edinburgh offers countless opportunities for older adults to stay active, engaged, and connected with nature. Embrace the season and enjoy its many gifts!

Andrew Senew is owner and Director of Home Instead Edinburgh, a provider of bespoke home care services: <https://www.homeinstead.co.uk/edinburgh-west>

From the Bookshelf



VANESSA FORD
LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT LEADER: CURRIE, COLINTON, BALERNO LIBRARIES

Currie, Colinton and Balerno libraries have hosted a number of lovely events over the last few months, with more to come.

Edinburgh Libraries held a city-wide *Edinburgh 900* poetry competition; the chosen winners will be printed onto bookmarks and issued in our books between April and July 2025, so look out for those and thank you to everyone who applied. To accompany this, we hosted a poetry workshop with I Am Loud Poets and held a blackout poetry zine workshop with Coin Operated Press. This also ties in with the launch of the Love Libraries campaign, with a "Blind Date with a Book" display, which will continue throughout this year.

At Currie, we once again welcomed Auld Spice ceilidh band to bring some music to our library around Burns Night. For Holocaust Memorial Day, Currie and Balerno libraries had the privilege of Jess and Eva from Balerno High School set up displays from the Lessons from Auschwitz project run by the Holocaust Education Trust. Members of the public were welcomed to suggest their hopes for the future.

At Colinton library, we had traditional scots singer Joss Cameron come to perform her sea shantie workshop! (Above.)

WHAT'S TO COME?

For International Women's Day, we will be hosting Carolyn Sutton at Currie Library with her interpretation design project, remembering the real women of Scotland who were persecuted as witches. Alison Page is coming for an author story time of Corrie's Capers for children, and a Tartan Tea Party at Currie and Colinton. At Colinton library, we have Susie Wilson coming to host an artist book workshop of Edinburgh's skyline.

• Details of all our events and times can be found in the libraries, and we look forward to seeing many of you attending our events and continuing to visit us.

Well-being



distracting ourselves with being busy or mindlessly scrolling on our phones. Or we numb the pain with food or alcohol or medication. These are all normal human behaviours when we are faced with difficulty and they are ok, but they feel self-destructive and unhealthy—making us feel better in the short term, but worse over time.

Mindful living is a way of being that is open to the entirety of each experience, as it unfolds, (importantly) with an attitude of non judgement and acceptance. In mindfulness training, we are encouraged to turn towards our most difficult experiences, rather than away. In practise,

Mindful Musings in Difficult Times

When things feel really difficult, what do you tend to do?

Perhaps you tend to feel a bit overwhelmed, or sad, or helpless about the state of the world. Maybe you feel angry, or disappointed, or powerless. Often we disassociate and turn away from the difficulties, by

we open our awareness to our thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations - no matter how great or how awful we feel. We familiarise ourselves how it feels when things are not going well, and we build our internal resources so we can face those challenges with courage and compassion.

When I embarked on learning mindfulness some years ago, I expected to become really good at it if I studied hard and practised lots! What I've learned is that mindfulness is a way of life, and nobody is really good at life all the time. No matter how much we try. But it's given me so much more strength and courage to help me face difficulties when they arise. And it helps me stay grounded and focused on what I can do to help myself and others near me, when all around the world there is so much I'm not able to change.

"Do not lose yourself in the past. Do not lose yourself in the future. Do not get caught in your anger, worries, or fears. Come back to the present moment, and touch life deeply. This is mindfulness."

—Thich Nhat Hanh

Annette Wilson is a health coach, teacher of mindfulness, complementary therapist and walk leader at Pond Wellness: www.pondwellness.co.uk



Car Security

PC SAMANTHA CAMPBELL
POLICE SCOTLAND, EDINBURGH DIVISION, PREVENTION, INTERVENTIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS DEPARTMENT

If you own a car this information is for you—simply locking your car may not be enough to keep it safe and secure. Below are a range of options which will make stealing your car more difficult, especially if several are combined – to make stealing slow, noisy and difficult:

- Physically check the vehicle doors are locked before walking away.
- Do not leave keys near windows or doors—this aids relay theft and is quicker for thieves to locate them.
- If your car is "keyless" keep the key device in a "Faraday pouch" or metal tin which prevents it receiving or transmitting radio signals to and from the car.
- If you buy a second-hand keyless car, get the key reprogrammed.
- Make sure the key and any spares are stored

- securely.
- Consider fitting a lock to the On-Board Diagnostic port (OBD) to prevent keys being easily reprogrammed.
- Use a steering wheel lock.
- Fit a pedal box, which encases the driving pedals in a high visibility secure box.
- Fit a parking bollard to your driveway to prevent thieves easy driving your car away.
- Prevent thieves obtaining your car keys via good home security: lights, alarms, quality door and window locks.
- When parking in the street try and find a location that is well lit and, if possible, covered by CCTV.

For further advice, contact our crime prevention team: EdinburghPreventandIntervent@scotland.police.uk

• Please report any suspicious behaviour or incidents to Police on 101 (non-emergency) or 999 (emergency).

Art Classes

with Jenny Matthews RSW
The HUB@531, Juniper Green

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Craft Corner:

Bountiful Bird Feed

Tips for upcycling, art and craft projects by Balerno's Lucie Novoveska

According to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, birds need high energy foods in the cold months. Feeding is beneficial for birds and fun for you, so this month we are making bountiful bird feed.

This is a simple project: all you need is seed mix, fat or gelatine, stick, twine, and paper straw. I also used washed yoghurt cups and a muffin tray. For the bird feed, I picked a wild bird seed mix which included sunflower seeds, wheat, red dari, maize and suet. This type of mix is especially suitable for blackbirds, blue tits, chaffinches and robins. I also included cranberries, berries and raisins. As I was threading all the tasty berries on a piece of string, the thought occurred that the birds will eat better than I do. That is not the goal. Many kitchen vegetable scraps are suitable to include in your bird feed, so include them if you have them around.

I had this design in my head to use a

stick as a base, so a lucky bird can rest on it while munching on the ball of goodness above. The challenge was to hold the seed mix together. I initially tried gelatine. This didn't really work; the seed mix held together but only barely. To



overcome the wobbly consistency, I would need loads of gelatine. What is nature's next best edible glue? You guessed it: fat! My seed mix already contained suet but I heated up some lard and added it. The mixture solidified in the fridge and it was very inexpensive to make.

You can experiment with any shape or use cookie cutters. I used my muffin baking tray and yoghurt cups but after some wrestling with the shape, I settled for good old fat balls. I cut a paper straw into smaller segments and placed it in while the mixture was solidifying. This straw "chimney" was removed later, leaving a nice hole to put the string through.

Putting the stick, fat ball and string of berries together was a lot of fun, as was looking outside every 10 minutes to see if the birds had found it yet. Let's help out our wonderful birds in this cold weather.



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JAMES BELL
HEAD GARDENER, MALLENY GARDEN

The end of January saw Storm Éowyn hit Malleny.

We fared "well" in comparison with other areas: we lost one tree, a multi-stemmed Cedar lost one stem, and our big Beech over the carpark lost one branch. The Beech is cable braced, meaning some of its limbs are tied together to reduce the sway of the tree, and those cables did their job very well in helping keep the tree safe. The branch lost was one of the cabled branches: reattaching the cable or reducing the risk by reducing the weight of the branches will be needed. It will take some time to resolve fully but is in hand.

All this is quite minor in comparison to some other National Trust for Scotland properties which had much bigger tree losses. Culzean Castle lost in the region of 250 trees while Threave Garden lost around 60. It will take some time to put right and replant those lost trees.

The stem of the cedar which came down has not been wasted. Sections of the trunk have been used, "Jenga" style, to provide support for another tree which has been very slowly falling over. Left to its own devices this Yew tree would end up on the ground and require more substantial pruning. In time the lower

branches, in contact with the ground, will root and provide support to hold the tree up—In 100 years' time, it will make for a very interesting tree!

Meanwhile in the garden, a big focus has been on growing for the upcoming year. Seeds have been sourced and sown. Our propagation greenhouse is going from quite full (of over-wintering plants) to very full (with this year's seedlings). Managing the space to keep everything alive, healthy and growing strong is a challenge. As any gardener knows, the seed tray takes up very little space, but when you pot up the seedlings, they take up 10 times the area. It's a nice problem to have, though, and always satisfying to see new seedlings appear.

February is often our peak for everyone's favourite snowdrops, but there are more bulbs to follow: daffodils, alliums and our native bluebells are all due to come in the coming months. A lot to look forward to!

- *Volunteers make a huge difference to the National Trust for Scotland and there are many benefits to volunteering with the Trust. If you, or someone you know, would like to volunteer with us, please get in touch at mallenygarden@nts.org.uk.*
- <https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/mallenygarden>

Balerno Ramblers— Celebrations and Walks



GAIL COUSINS
BALERNO RAMBLERS

It's treble celebrations for us this year: Ramblers Scotland is celebrating its Diamond Jubilee (60th anniversary) in 2025; Balerno Ramblers itself reaches "the big four-oh"; and our own midweek ramblers will be celebrating their 30th anniversary.

Plans are afoot to celebrate the 40th anniversary on 30 August with a walk and then lunch at Swanston Golf Club, while the midweek ramblers will mark their own anniversary on 7 May with a short morning walk and lunch at Currie Rugby club. Save the dates with more details to follow.

The first day of March is the beginning of meteorological spring with the Spring equinox on Thursday 20 March. This marks the moment when the sun sits directly over the earth's equator as it moves northwards. The clocks will spring forward one hour at 1am on Sunday 30 March, so we can look forward to lighter evenings, longer walking days, and welcome spring flowers as hedgerows and fields burst into life.

Queensferry. This offers easy terrain with just one steep staircase up to Dalmeny Station for the bus back to Cramond Brig—remember to bring your bus pass.

The weekend group is planning a leisurely walk in Eskbank and Dalkeith area for Saturday 1 March. On Sunday 9 March there will be a Pentland circular of East and West Cairn hills, a strenuous 10 mile (16 km) walk with a 2,362 feet (720 metre) ascent. On Saturday 15 March – postponed from December due to snow and ice – is a six mile (9.7 km) Pentland circular from the Service 16 bus terminus on Torphin Road, ascending White Hill, Capelaw Hill, Harbour Hill, and returning via Torduff reservoir to the start.

Why not join us on Saturday 22 March for a circular walk in the northwest of the Pentlands Hills Regional Park? This "moderate" 10 mile (16 km) circular walk, with a 1,037 feet (316 metre) ascent starts at the Cockburn Crescent bus terminus in Balerno, entering the Park via the Harlaw car park, following Maiden's Cleugh to Harbour Hill, passing by Bonaly Reservoir, Torduff Reservoir and Clubbiudean Reservoir, and

returning to the bus terminus via Poets Glen and Lymphoy.

Finally, on Sunday 30 March, we're having a "moderate" circular walk in the East Pentland Hills, the East Cairn, and Mount Maw Circuit. All the routes in the Pentlands are on paths and tracks that may be wet and muddy. Boots, gaiters, and walking poles are recommended.

With Ramblers walks please register with the walk leader to attend and advise if you have a medical condition relevant to your walking.

We regret no dogs are allowed on our walks. Please do not come on the walk if you are feeling unwell.

• For more details of our upcoming walks please click the link to access the Balerno Ramblers page on Ramblers Scotland website: <https://www.ramblers.org.uk>

• New members are always most welcome. We offer you three "trial" walks as a non-member, hoping that your experience with us would then encourage you to become a member.

• If you are interested in joining us, we have a mailing list which you are more than welcome to join to receive the information on forthcoming walks. Email: balerno-ramblers+subscribe@googlegroups.com

UPCOMING WALKS

The midweek group is still finalising its programme for March. There is one confirmed six mile (9.7 km) linear walk on Wednesday 19 March from Cramond Brig, through the Dalmeny estate, to South

Main image: Arthur's Seat from Bonaly Country Park. Left: Any seat will do. Top right: Colinton Tunnel. Middle: Now that's a large puddle. Above: Bracing sea air. All photos: Roger Jonathan.



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What the...?

The new "refurbished" junction at Bridge Road/Lanark Road West in Balerno continues to "entertain" local residents, not least thanks to featuring what must be among the shortest cycle lanes in Edinburgh. What, we can't help but wonder, is the point of that...?

Some have suggested that what was proposed in the plans has not actually appeared on the roads, which suggests someone wasn't keeping an eye on the job...



Harlaw Cycle Racks

I recently parked at Harlaw car park at the weekend and noticed that they had dug up and moved the bicycle rack tyre pump and bicycle tools. What a waste of public money, the cost of laying the rack, pump and tools, then digging it all out and re-siting it elsewhere.

We have a council that has said they need to put up rates because they need to generate money to help pay for public services. Looks like mismanagement to me.

Why are the people involved in planning and implementing the changes not getting together to decide when it would be best for laying the bicycle station instead of laying it and digging it up.

Who is accountable for this decision on wasting public money?

Alex Rose
Balerno

PHOTO: NIGEL DUNCAN

Remember 1975?

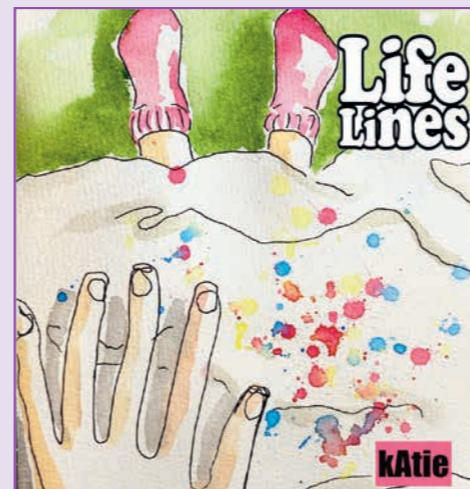
In our forthcoming May edition we're hoping to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Currie and Balerno – previously neighbouring villages in the County of Midlothian – "suddenly" finding themselves within Edinburgh's extended western boundary, thanks to Scotland-wide reorganisation of local government.

Do you remember the change? Do you believe falling under the care of the newly-created City of Edinburgh District Council (as well as the wider-stretching Lothian Regional Council) changed life in the villages for the better? Or not?

Please send us your thoughts: email Paul at editor@candbnews.com or leave your thoughts on our Facebook page.

Oops!

The Hired Help would like to publicly apologise to Bob Pritchard, deviser of last issue's idea for a people-powered tram, for the editorial brain-fart which inadvertently renamed him "Ron".



CREATING FROM BED

It was seeing the wonderful black and white photographs of Frida Kahlo and Matisse working from their sick beds that caught me one day saying to myself: "If they can find a way, so can I!"

For a long time all I could manage was doodles lying down in bed with eyes closed—so that's what I did, discovering the pleasure of simple mark-making and how interesting letting go control can be. As I began to be able to sit upright for longer spells I gathered other materials round my bed and began playing. Paints, with their ease of application and joy of colour mixing, were the most fun but cleanup took energy I didn't have to spare. Of course my bedcovers became rainbows with the inevitable overspill, but side effects like these were well worth the joy and those stains still bring a smile.

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY katie

Oil pastels need no cleanup and I find their scribbly, vibrant colour especially satisfying when emotions need a low energy bubbling out point. Collage's ticklish offcuts are not worth being in bed with!

This exploring lead me to others doing the same and what joy those friendships beyond and through illness are. Together we're now growing online creative community from our beds or homes, where we're largely confined. Sharing and making together in quiet, well-paced, manageable chunks is balm for exhausted, isolated souls.

All this has been offering glimpses of creation in years of loss due to illness. From finding small, manageable ways to get creative, many astonishing opportunities are opening—even writing and illustrating this column.

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PLANNING BY ARCHIE CLARK

City Plan 2030

If you go on to the City of Edinburgh Council Planning Portal, you will find that the main heading states that “City Plan 2030 is now our adopted local development plan and will be used to inform planning decisions.”

Had you been following the progress of a particular planning application deposited maybe a couple of years ago under the previous 2016 Local Plan, you might expect that application to be processed under the Plan applicable at the time it was lodged. If not,

then you might wonder whether someone was moving the goal posts while the game was still being played.

I don't think the position is altogether clear. While CEC may have accepted the advice of the reporters appointed to scrutinise the 2030 Plan back in June 2024, that Plan was not formally adopted till 7th November 2024 – which presumably means that proposals being received up to 6th November 2024 would be assessed under the 2016 Plan. The date when a new Local Plan becomes *the Plan* to be used by applicants and authorities is surely when that Plan is formally adopted?

Why does this matter? One

example is that affordable housing requirements changed from 25% to 35% when the old Plan was replaced by the new meaning that for every 100 houses, the number to be sold “at market price” would change quite dramatically.

The views of applicants and authorities as to the extent the 2030 Plan is the relevant one will probably be the subject of legal debate regarding when the emerging Plan could reasonably be seen as a “material consideration” in assessing applications. But with so little building activity of any size currently under way, perhaps the issue will not be seen as of great significance, except by those still looking for an affordable home.

Bank Machine

The Royal Bank of Scotland closed its Juniper Green Branch at 540A Lanark Road in June 2017. Eight years later, application 25/00200/FUL has been lodged by Cardtronics that should bring cash back to the village.

The cash machine would be located externally, to the right of the main entrance door to the ‘Daytoday’ store and close to the corner of the building. The application drawing shows a fascia-mounted CCTV camera above and adjacent to the machine.

Bonnington Mains and Ravelrig Quarry



By mid-February the Planning Portal stated that Breedon Trading's application 24/05865/FUL for a “Lateral extension to the quarry, erection and operation of Materials Recycling Plant (MRP), infilling of the quarry and restoration to the agricultural grassland at Bonnington Mains Quarry” had attracted 349 objections – and unusually, 83 letters of support. That is puzzling. It seems odd that an application of this nature should attract more than minimal support but we will have to wait for the decision to learn whether some of the correspondence has been misfiled – that has happened in the past.

By way of contrast the Tarmac application 24/06106/FUL for work at Ravelrig Quarry attracted 120 objections, and no letters of support. Letters of support are not particularly common and are more likely to be submitted when an eyesore is to be tidied up than when local amenity is to be dramatically changed.

Planning and Climate Change-1: Land Use and Miss-use: Fields of Glass

I recently read that Government is consulting on a new strategic approach to managing land use in England “to give decision makers the data they need to protect our most productive agricultural land, boosting Britain's food security in a time of global uncertainty and a changing climate”.

Almost simultaneously, my attention was drawn to a proposal to cover 340 acres of farmland in South Lanarkshire with solar panels - equivalent to fourteen Muir Wood fields or the land contained between Lanark Road to the south and the Carstairs railway line in the north, and from Riccarton Mains Road, to the west boundary of Juniper Green. The Solar Farm with its Battery Energy Storage compound would be close to the M74 and near a small settlement of only 4,300 people.

There would be approximately a quarter of a million solar panels, 50 shipping containers, a sprawling sub-station, and pylons carrying overhead power lines. The glinting mirrors will be near various aircraft flightpaths.

Applications where electricity generation is for over 50MW (this is 100MW), are referred to the Energy Consents Unit for

Scottish Ministers to determine. Covering such a huge area of farmland, and designed to last (at least) 40 years before being returned to agriculture(!), it is hardly surprising to find people perplexed and wondering how to react. The glass solar panels would be fixed to frames drilled into the ground and would not track the sun. There would be a small “wildlife corridor” in the middle; however who defended the “rights of passage” for wildlife when designing this solar farm?

When dealing with Climate Change, we adopt a fragmented approach that tends to focus separately on dealing with food security (we import roughly 40% of our food), or the built environment, or transport, or infrastructure, or amenity, etc. instead of co-ordinating our efforts and designing for all elements simultaneously. In a shrinking island with a rising population, replacing farmland with glass instead of incorporating panels on buildings or in worked-out quarries doesn't make sense – to me.

How would we react if a foreign company decided to install a solar farm nearby to capture power from over our heads and cart it off to England – and then sell it back to us?

Time for a National Bank

Since we lost our “last bank in town” – whether it was in Balerno, Currie, Juniper Green, Colinton, or (as anticipated) Wester Hailes – if we need over-the-counter service, we are forced to waste time travelling into town or, if we have the facility, go online. The banks cheerfully tell us that they have closed branches because people now prefer to go online. Perhaps they should be more honest and admit that it is they who have created an arguably less secure banking system where (as long as you have the ability to go electronic) you are forced to go online.

I recently rang up my once proudly Scottish Bank about a question of identity. During the time it used to take me to walk to the Bank, I had to listen to their appalling jangle frequently punctuated by the message “We apologise for the delay in answering your call. All of our team are currently serving other customers. Thank you for your patience”. At least it didn't say my call was important to them. Perhaps it's time we had a National Bank we could walk into, with outlets in the communities our banks abandoned so we can lead more productive lives – and continue to use coins for the smaller things in life?



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SCOTT ARTHUR MP
EDINBURGH SOUTH WEST

HIV VIGILANCE

Since my last column, HIV testing week has taken place in England – Scotland needs one too.

In October 2024, I visited Waverley Care's headquarters in Edinburgh and was struck by their impactful work. Founded during the 1980s, they opened the UK's first Aids hospice, Milestone House, during the HIV/Aids epidemic. Despite initial resistance fuelled by stigma, recounted by a former Firrhill High pupil and others, courageous figures like Councillor John Allan supported it. Princess Diana's visit – sharing tea with a patient – shifted perceptions, affirming the humanity of those affected.

Medical advances have since made HIV manageable. New treatments slashed mortality rates from two-to-four deaths monthly to nearly none within a year. Yet challenges persist: HIV testing in Scotland has dropped 19% since 2019, while diagnoses rise. Unlike England, Scotland lacks a National HIV Testing Week and opt-out testing in high-risk areas.

Waverley Care highlights that while the LGBT+ community is aware, heterosexual transmission now dominates, linked to lower testing rates. Partnering with the Terrence Higgins Trust, they advocate for opt-out testing and a dedicated testing week—measures proven effective in England and Wales to boost accessibility and reduce stigma. Access to PrEP is also vital, especially for marginalised groups like the trans community.

Waverley Care's efforts are key to Scotland's goal of ending HIV transmission by 2030. I urge the Scottish Government to adopt these proposals. Testing, treatment, and support must be universal. Without action, Scotland's target – and the UK's broader efforts – will falter. My visit underscored Waverley Care's legacy and the urgent need to build on past progress to ensure no one is left behind in this fight.



GORDON MACDONALD MSP
EDINBURGH PENTLANDS

LOCAL INITIATIVES

Public drop-in events concerning the Muir Wood Field Path Improvement happened at the end of last month and I took the opportunity to attend the first session (at the Hub@531) to chat with staff from consultants Pell Frischmann.

The project, which has been meticulously taken forward by Juniper Green and Baberton Mains Community Council and Currie Community Council, has secured funding through the Paths For All Ian Findlay Path Fund to improve the route between Bloomiehall Park in Juniper Green and Muir Wood Road in Currie. I had no hesitation in offering a letter of support for this project.

Both community councils have been working for many years to secure a safe route, between the two communities, which avoids the heavy traffic on Lanark Road and Lanark Road West. Everyone involved is to be commended on their continued efforts in delivering a safe route for local people.

Similarly, thanks to the efforts of local people, particularly Balerno Village Trust, an ambitious plan has been put forward to acquire the former Balerno Police Station through the Community Asset Transfer scheme, for the use of the community. Again, I have provided letters of support for this project which would see the building retained for community use.

From the extensive research carried out by BVT the preferred options for use are children and youth provision as well as meeting room space. There is no doubt that childcare provision in the area has not kept up with demand and any extra services would most definitely be welcome for families.

Many local people would also agree that there is a dire need for meeting room space to accommodate the many groups and organisations in the local area. This is an ambitious move by BVT which I have no doubt will bring positive benefits to the local community.



SUE WEBBER MSP
LOTHIAN REGION

POWER COMPLEX

Renewable energy production is causing no end of challenges as we chase the new Scottish Government target of Net Zero by 2035 (extended from 2030 as the Scottish Government had failed to hit any of its milestone targets). Now we have both the SNP in Holyrood and Labour in Westminster determined to ruin wonderful landscapes with giant wind turbines, pylons and power lines.

No expense is spared, unless it's to bury the cables, while operators and landowners pocket millions from the government when the wind is either too strong or non-existent, or when the National Grid can't cope.

Renewable energy has become an industry which is largely funded at public expense. Each of us pay the price – £15 of your electricity bill is to pay energy firms NOT to produce electricity, while your taxes subsidised producers by around £380 million last year.

Battery storage is said to be the answer so we can have resilient supply of clean power. Now there are plans to build one in Currie near the Riccarton Garden Centre. The land is designated as green belt, but the location is within the footprint of the garden centre. An application has been submitted to the Scottish Government directly as any such facility of this size bypasses the local council planners. The decision is out of local authority control and the local community will have little influence over the decision.

We must store the energy from the wind farms somewhere, and there is an argument that it should be near where people live.

Although this is not of the scale seen with other applications across Scotland, it is certainly of local interest. A further public consultation is planned for the evening of Thursday, 6 March at the Garden Centre, from 3pm to 8pm.



CLLR GRAEME BRUCE
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

+/- IMPACT?

At the recent Currie Community Council there were concerns raised about the proposed Battery Energy Storage System next to Riccarton Garden Centre. Just to be clear, it will be the Scottish Government that will decide if this goes ahead, not City of Edinburgh Council. CEC, on this type of application, is a statutory consultee. Some nearby residents have been informed by the developer but there is a question around whether a wider area should have also been consulted. There is also the concern on health and safety with regards to this new power storage system.

I would like to think that the Scottish Government will be scrutinising all the concerns that local residents may have. However, it does bring local benefit where more power can be stored from renewable energy such as wind turbines to give better power resilience to our homes and those making the transition to electric vehicles. For more information there is a drop in session in the café at Riccarton Garden Centre on Thursday 6 March, between 3pm and 8pm.

Recently, I have had concerns raised to me about the safety of pedestrians, especially children, crossing Bavelaw Green at the junction with Bridge Road in Balerno. I reported this to CEC where an initial assessment has already been done and further investigations will take place to determine the most suitable pedestrian crossing option. However, please be aware, they already have a full work programme through to 2030/31 so it will not be happening anytime soon.

Next to Bloomiehall Park in Juniper Green there are a number of council properties being brought back into use to help solve the housing crisis. The work is just about complete as I write this article but I have been made aware of debris next to the park. I have been reassured that reinstatement work to the soft landscaping areas will take place.

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CLLR NEIL CUTHBERT
COLINTON/FAIRMILEHEAD WARD

HELLO & THANK YOU

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who voted for me in the Colinton/Fairmilehead by-election on 23 January. As your newly elected councillor, I am deeply grateful for the trust you have placed in me, and I am committed to serving all residents of our community, regardless of their political views.

My immediate priorities focus on several key issues that residents have raised with me. I will push for much needed improvements to our local infrastructure, ensuring our area receives its fair share of funding for road and pavement repairs. I'm particularly focused on making sure these repairs are carried out promptly and to a high standard.

I am also committed to fighting for better transport links and will be a strong voice in the Council for good quality bus services matching local needs. Residents' views need to be properly heard before any major changes are implemented, such as on Lanark Road and other bus routes around the area.

Community safety is paramount, which is why I will be pressing for new pedestrian crossings where they are needed and making sure active travel provision is fit for purpose. I will also continue to push for proper investment in local policing: I know many residents continue to have concerns about crime in the area and want more to be done to protect people and property from criminals.

Our area's green spaces, such as Colinton Dell, are precious community assets. I pledge to work tirelessly to protect and enhance these valuable areas for current and future generations.

I encourage all residents to contact me with any concerns or issues. I am here to serve you and will always respond quickly and constructively to help improve our area. My contact details can be found on the council website.



CLLR NEIL GARDINER
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

PARK LIFE

I attended the public exhibition for the proposed Juniper Wood Path and am writing a letter of support for future funding applications. Similarly, community-led proposals for the former Police Station in Balerno were presented at the local Community Council; I am also writing to Scottish Police Authority in support.

The opening of the new state-of-the-art Currie Community High School is now scheduled for after the exams, which follow the Easter Break. The whole community will be eagerly looking forward to this.

In February the annual Council Budget was set. It's estimated that 3% of the council tax increase results from the part of Employers National Insurance rise which is unfunded by UK Government. Additional costs to third sector services (such as Adult Social Care) are estimated as £16.7m.

The Labour-led administration initially adopted all council officer budget proposals. The opposition SNP group's proposals put residents' wellbeing first, including investment in lifeline respite Holiday Hubs for disabled children in the Pentland Hills ward. Unfortunately this wasn't adopted: fortunately, funding for teachers assisting pupils during the transition between primary and secondary was reinstated.

Reflecting on the successful interaction between Pentland Park Rangers and Dean Park pupils, our group had proposed a fund to assist pupils from local schools to access the Regional Park. Unfortunately this modest proposal was not adopted by the current coalition administration.

Bike racks at Harlaw have been relocated following approval of the new toilet block. With spring definitely in the air, the Pentland Hills Joint Committee, will be meeting in March.



CLLR FIONA GLASGOW
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

BUDGETING

The City of Edinburgh Council annual budget meeting took place on 20 February, and I am disappointed that some areas so important to local residents were not reflected in the administration budget. Although increasing investment for safety around schools was fortunately included in the administration's modified budget, there was nothing on holiday hubs for vulnerable families and their children.

Education and wellbeing were at the heart of our planning and while each group had their differing agendas, it was important that in opposition we were able to put forward a budget that was innovative and addressed those issues. Our group listened to concerns around anti social behaviour and had set aside a budget for youth work with a portion set to enrol young people in the fire brigades Fire-skills Programme. We will continue to push to strengthen wellbeing within our communities and hold this administration to account.

The local community council elections have happened: nominations closed on 27 February, although there may still be an opportunity for members to be co-opted if spaces remain. Community Councils will be holding their inaugural meetings in the next few weeks, and information can be found on social media and websites.

They are an opportunity to influence the issues that are important to your community. Recently there has been a lot of work done around improving the environment by addressing paths and pavements, roads, bus services and community resources. Many local groups also participate to ensure that communities are represented at all levels. Your local elected members attend and ensure that issues are reflected within the city council.



CLLR STEPHEN JENKINSON
PENTLAND HILLS

WORKING TOGETHER

I would first of all like to welcome our newest representatives, Councillor Neil Cuthbert and Councillor Conor Savage, not only to the City Chambers but also to the pages of C&B News! I know both bring a passion for public service and a commitment to addressing the challenges faced by our residents. I am very much looking forward to working with them and to their insights and contributions as we continue to build a thriving Edinburgh for all.

With the Edinburgh Community Council elections in February, it was essential for citizens to engage and voice their opinions. These grassroots councils play a crucial role in local governance, providing residents with a platform to influence decision-making in CEC and to ensure their concerns are heard. As we entered this election period, I encouraged all eligible residents to participate actively—every vote counted in shaping the future of our neighbourhoods.

In February, the City of Edinburgh Council set its budget for the immediate year. As the capital's Transport Convener, my budget priorities reflected our commitment to fostering a safer and more accessible city. I continued to invest an additional £12.5 million in maintaining and upgrading our roads and pavements, essential for the safety and wellbeing of everyone who uses them.

Furthermore, I proposed allocating £5 million specifically for road safety initiatives, particularly focused on school zones, to ensure that our children can travel safely to and from school.

This budget not only enhanced our infrastructure but also supported the broader vision of a sustainable and connected Edinburgh. As we move forward, your engagement in the Community Council and awareness of our budget priorities will help forge a path toward a vibrant, safe, and inclusive city for all residents. Let's work together to create the Edinburgh we envision!



CLLR CONOR SAVAGE
COLINTON/FAIRMILEHEAD WARD

HELLO & THANK YOU

It's an absolute pleasure to be writing my first column for *C&B News*, as your newly elected Councillor.

I want to start by saying a massive thank you to the residents of Colinton, Oxfangs, and Fairmilehead for putting your trust in me. It's an incredible honour to represent our community and I'm already hard at work engaging with residents and delivering on what matters most to you.

As promised during my campaign, my biggest priorities are:

- Rebuilding trust in local politics by being a proactive Councillor—holding regular surgeries every month, attending Community and Parent/Teacher Councils as required, and offering home visits to all that need them.
- Ensuring funding protects our local services and improves our roads.
- Giving residents a strong voice in protecting our beautiful green spaces.

Since being elected, I've hit the ground running, attending my first full Council meetings, undertaking my induction, and holding my first surgery alongside Scott Arthur MP at Oxfangs Library.

Be it concerns about local services or individual casework, I'm here to listen and take action. Councillors can't fix everything overnight, but I believe in being visible, accessible, and honest about what I can do to help.

This column is one way I'll keep you updated, but I also want to hear from you.

If there's something you'd like to raise, please don't hesitate to get in touch. You can reach me via email at cllr.conor.savage@edinburgh.gov.uk. I will also be publishing a regular schedule of surgeries around the ward soon.

I look forward to working with you all over the coming months and years. Together, we can make our community an even better place to live.



RICHARD M HENDERSON
BALERNO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

NO JOINED-UP THINKING

Parking arrangements in Balerno are a mess. Overall, capacity in the village centre is insufficient for demand; and, where there are restrictions, the rules governing these are confused and confusing.

A wish for all-day parking in recognised car parks is understandable given that our local bus services do not provide adequate coverage across the village. Distances from home to the nearest bus stop in many areas measure well over the recommended maximum of 400 metres, and it's much further if you're talking about the outlying areas. Yet all-day parking reduces availability, and it impacts both on short-stay users and local traders.

There is also obvious confusion as to what is permitted so far as parking in Main Street is concerned. Can parents park to drop off and pick up at nurseries? Can Blue Badge holders park there? How exactly do pavement parking restrictions apply, especially given the absence of clear definition between road and pavement? While there is real scope for debate as to whether the restrictions are in fact legal, over 100 pavement parking fines have been issued during the past year putting Main Street amongst the highest earners for CEC.

Predictably, perhaps, we find also that the RBS mobile bank is no longer able to provide services from Main Street. That has obvious implications for shoppers and businesses. The mobile bank is also in the nature of a life-line service; especially for those with mobility difficulties.

The fact that there were so many pavement parking fines illustrates both the confusion there may be over the rules and also the dearth of alternative parking space. The cumulative effect is inconvenience to users of the village facilities and potential damage to trade. It really is high time that provision for parking in Balerno village centre was reviewed.



DR KEITH JAMES SYMINGTON
CURRIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

FEBRUARY NEWS

As I write this, nominations are open for Currie Community Council Elections 2025! At our February meeting, Returning Officer Councillor Fiona Glasgow discussed the election process and advised that they would remain open until Thursday 27 February.

More generally, our February meeting had a varied spread of topics. Residents raised the ongoing issue of potholes along Riccarton Mains Road. Councillors Graeme Bruce and Stephen Jenkinson acknowledged that longterm resurfacing is not always feasible due to ongoing budget constraints, with only essential routes receiving priority—and, unfortunately, RMR did not make it onto the 2025/26 capital budget list, meaning it will have to wait until next year. Residents should keep reporting potholes as this will keep the road in the spotlight and they will be fixed with temporary material. (The downside is that this material is not designed to last a whole winter.)

Cllr Bruce highlighted the removal of 270m razor wire at Donkey Lane and pledged to pursue improvements to Pentland View Car Park lighting. Cllr Glasgow reported on Dolphin Gardens, where pest control and bin concerns appear to have stabilised as there were no further reports. Engagement will continue to ensure it continues to move in the right direction.

The Currie Green Spaces group is gaining momentum with local MSP Sue Webber in attendance at the last meeting. Various issues with paths and green space damage were discussed, including what options there are to resolve them.

Finally, Kevin Kealy spoke on two planning items: the draft application to upgrade the Muir Wood Field path has been generally well received. Secondly, there are plans for a 100 MW Battery Storage Facility; consultation begins 2 March so watch this space!



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Currie P5A Weaving with Expert

LUCY AND SKYE
P5A, CURRIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Currie Primary School P5 were weaving with an expert from Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life. They learnt how to weave, where materials come from and tried some of their own weaving

that they enjoyed very much. The expert, David, showed them how to weave in stripes or just in one colour. They learnt where, wool, silk, cotton and polyester comes from. They learnt what weaving is and what we use it for.

P5 had the most amazing time trying out weaving for the first time. Some were inspired to try more and harder designs. Thank You David!

Handel's Messiah for Community Choir Spring Concert

MARGARET KIERAN
COLINTON & MERCHISTON COMMUNITY CHOIR

Following a very successful and enjoyable Christmas Concert, local residents are now welcome to join us for our Spring Concert, singing Parts 2 and 3 of the glorious Handel's Messiah.

We will be led by our inspiring Director of Music Tim Coleman and accompanied by the well-known Morley Whitehead on the organ, as well as by a quartet, a double bass, a timpanist and two trumpets. We hope it will be an exhilarating evening. Please do come along!

• Our Spring concert starts at 8pm on Monday 31 March, in the Memorial Hall at Merchiston Castle School, 294 Colinton Road. Doors open 7.30pm.

• Tickets £10 (£5 for under-18s) available from choir members or on the door—cash only.

• For more information about the Colinton & Merchiston Community Choir, consult our website: www.colintonchoir.org or visit our Facebook page.



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Community and not-for-profit listings are free of charge. Email whatson@candbnews.com, including: Day/Date, Event Title, Venue, Time, brief details, and contact phone/email details.

WEEKLY

MONDAYS

• **ST CUTHBERT'S PLAYGROUP:** St Cuthbert's Church Hall, Westgarth Avenue; 10am - 11.30am. Every Monday during term time. £2 per family. Play, craft, refreshments, singing. All Welcome. Contact: stcuthbertscomms@gmail.com for more information.

• **MONDAY MAHJONG:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 10am - noon. Join our regulars, any experience level is welcome, newcomers can watch and learn and join in when you feel ready- the tile game is like rummy with layers of complexity but easy to start!

• **THE MEETING PLACE:** Currie Scout Hall, Forthview Crescent; 10am - 4pm. A community cafe for those 65 and over, all carers and anyone looking for good company. Free exercise class, refreshments and games. For further information email: themeetingplacejcb@outlook.com

• **MONDAY MORNING POP IN CAFÉ:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 10.30am - noon. Come for a cuppa every Monday morning, our volunteers will welcome you for a cuppa, a chat and perhaps a game of scrabble. Donations welcomed but not required.

• **COFFEE, CAKE & COMPANY:** Redeemer Church Edinburgh, 64 Bridge Road, Colinton; 10.30am - noon. Drop in for free coffee, tea, a cake and a chat every Monday morning. All welcome. For further information see: www.redeemeredinburgh.org/cc/

• **LUNCHTIME RELAXATION:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 12.15pm - 1pm. (NOT 10 or 17 MARCH) Join Raymond at lunchtime to enjoy a guided relaxation to calm the mind and ease stress. No booking required, please drop in.

• **BALERNO BRIDGE CLUB:** Gibson Craig Hall, Currie; 1.20pm for 1.30pm start. Contact 07504 306062 if interested.

• **BOOKBUG AND BABY**

GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 1.30pm - 2.45pm. Stories and songs for babies and toddlers. Meet other parents/carers for friendship, peer support and share a cuppa. Lovely warm and welcoming space.

• **BABERTON SCOUTS GROUP:** Juniper Green Church Hall; 7pm - 9pm. If you want some more information or would like to join, please email: cubs@babertonscouts.org

• **MONTHLY BOOK GROUP:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 7pm - 9pm. We have a waitlist in place for this popular group, and we'd love to start a new social book group to meet monthly, later in the week or at the weekend, but we need a small group of friends to perhaps kick this off. If this is of interest to you please get in touch: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

TUESDAYS

• **KNITTING GROUP:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 10.30am - noon. A very popular, welcoming group for novice and experienced knitters alike. Email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

• **COMMUNITY YOGA CLASS:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 1pm - 2pm. Spaces are available for this popular lunchtime class with Monica from Karma Tree yoga. Cost £6. Please enquire by email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

• **ITALIAN CONVERSATION GROUP:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 2.30pm - 3.30pm. Please drop in to practise your Italian language skills in an informal setting.

• **PENTLAND JUNIOR SINGERS:** Balerno Parish Church; 6pm - 7pm. Fun, friendship and singing for ages 8-14. New members welcome! More information, email: Pentlandjuniors@gmail.com

• **PENTLAND SINGERS COMMUNITY CHOIR:** Balerno Parish Church; 7.30pm - 9.30pm. Come and share the joy of singing! New members welcome. For further information, email: pentland_singers@yahoo.co.uk

WEDNESDAYS

• **LADIES BADMINTON GROUP:** Juniper Green Church Hall, Lanark Road; 10am. We play for fun and have a short break for coffee and a chat; new players welcome. Contact: Linda Sharp, (0131) 453 4985.

• **BALERNO RAMBLERS MIDWEEK GROUP:** Meet for walks in the Lothians, Fife, the Borders and further afield. For walk details contact M Timmins on 07917878955. Follow Balerno Ramblers on Facebook.

• **PENTLANDS SPORTING MEMORIES CLUB:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 1.30pm - 3pm. Pentland Sporting Memories—sports blether with a group of enthusiasts who enjoy a great sports story both old and new, questions and laughs (usually at each others expense) in a very relaxed and friendly environment.

• **THE OCTAGON CLUB for Adults with learning disabilities:** Gibson Craig Hall, Lanark Road West; 7pm - 9pm. Contact Claire Maloney: 07999 410721

THURSDAYS

• **ACCESSIBLE YOGA COMMUNITY CLASS:** the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 2.45pm - 3.45pm. Accessible Yoga community class (free, donation welcome) Join experienced yoga teacher Bijam who offers a fully accessible class, suitable to anyone including wheelchair users or those with chronic health conditions who may find benefit from gentle exercise, breathwork and meditation. Please email to enquire about spaces: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

• **65th EDINBURGH COMPANY, BOYS' BRIGADE Anchor Boys (P2 & P3) and Junior Section (P4-P6):** Gibson Craig Halls, 158 Lanark Road West, Currie; 6pm - 7.30pm. For more details, contact: bill.brown53@yahoo.com

• **PENTLAND ART CLUB:** Balerno High School; 7pm - 9pm. Join us and allow your creative juices to flow. We practise a variety of skills in a range of media with occasional demos from guest artists. Plenty chat and a friendly atmosphere. New members welcome. Contact: ros.salton@outlook.com

• **PENTLAND BRIDGE CLUB:** St Margaret's Court, Juniper Green;

7pm. We play competitive bridge in a friendly atmosphere. Less experienced players welcome. For further information visit: www.bridgewebs.com/pentland/ or email: mthkjb@gmail.com

FRIDAYS

• **THE MEN'S SHED at the Scout Hall:** 99 Forthview Crescent, Currie; from 9.30am. We offer various activities and a chat over a cuppa with new and old friends. Come on down! <https://pentlandsmensshed.org>

• **COFFEE AND CONVERSATION;** Currie Library, Lanark Road West; 11am - noon.

SATURDAYS/SUNDAYS

• **BALERNO RAMBLERS WEEKEND WALKING GROUP:** a busy walking group with a programme of interesting walks in a variety of locations. Some walks may be more challenging than the mid-week programme. Visit: www.ramblers.org.uk/balerno, www.facebook.com/Balerno-Ramblers, or email: enquiries@balernoramblers.org.uk

SUNDAYS

• **65th EDINBURGH COMPANY, BOYS' BRIGADE Company Section (P7 - 18 years old):** Gibson Craig Halls, 158 Lanark Rd West, Currie; 6pm - 8.30pm. For more details, contact: brown53@yahoo.com

FORTNIGHTLY

FIRST & THIRD MONDAYS

• **FORGET ME NOTES GROUP:** St. Cuthbert's Church Hall, Westgarth Avenue, Colinton, 2pm-4pm. Sing and socialise with old friends and new. Contact: stcuthbertscomms@gmail.com for more information.

ALTERNATE THURSDAYS

• **COLINTON SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE CLUB:** St Cuthbert's Episcopal Church Hall, Westgarth Avenue; 7.45pm - 9.15pm. Come and enjoy Scottish country dancing with us. We have an excellent, very patient teacher, live music and lots of fun. £5 per evening, pay on arrival. Come on your own or with a partner, you'll be made very welcome. Tel: 07751 186359 or 07483 814099.

>p37



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FRIDAYS 7 & 21 MARCH

• **TABLETOP GAMING IN JUNIPER GREEN / BABERTON / CURRIE: Juniper Green Parish Church; 6pm - 9pm.** Play board-games, card games and wargames. Everyone welcome, adults, children and their families. For more information contact Eric Ducreux Juniper GREEN Board-Gamers @boardjg - www.boardjg.co.uk

SATURDAYS: 1 & 15 MARCH

• **FREE ART & CHAT: Currie Library, 210 Lanark Road West; 10.30am - 11.30am.** An opportunity to practice your art, and enjoy a free cuppa too! PS: Bring your own art materials. Questions? Call: (0131) 529 5609, email: currie.library@edinburgh.gov.uk, or just come along on the day.

DAY BY DAY

SATURDAY 1 MARCH

• **SILENT DISCO TASTER SESSIONS: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; from 2pm.** Have you ever wondered what a silent disco is like? Come along to the Hub for 45 minutes to enjoy some music through headphones in the company of others. No charge, but donations welcome. Booking essential: <https://hub531.appointedd.com/> or by email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

MONDAY 3 MARCH

• **COLINTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY: Dreghorn Loan Hall (Upper); 8pm.** "Scottish Women who chose to challenge," presented by Jackie Sangster. For more information visit: www.colintonhistory.org.uk

WEDNESDAY 5 MARCH

• **PENTLAND PROBUS CLUB: Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church Hall, Juniper Green; 10am.** "Staffa", an illustrated talk by Karen McCormack. New members welcome. Further enquiries from Club Secretary Leslie Hannaford on (0131) 453 3012 or email: lesliehannaford@blueyonder.co.uk

• **BALERNO PARISH CHURCH GUILD: The Ogston Hall, Balerno Parish Church; 7.30pm.** Lesley Turner will talk about her work with the Street Pastors.

• **THE 'LIT' (COLINTON**

LITERARY SOCIETY:

Dreghorn Loan Hall; 7.30pm for 8pm start. AGM, followed by a talk from Hanna Dyka who introduces us to the work of Pavlo Tychyna, one of Ukraine's leading poets, and his connections to Scotland. For more information visit www.colintonhistory.org.uk

FRIDAY 7 MARCH

• **GARDENING GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 10.30am - noon.** Gardening Group (1st Friday of each month) All Welcome - experienced or novice, pot planters or allotments. This month, planning topics, speakers and visits for the year ahead. Email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

SATURDAY 8 MARCH

• **BALERNO FARMERS' MARKET: Main Street, Balerno; 9am - 1pm.** More information, visit balernovt.org.uk/category/balerno-farmers-market or email: hello@balernovt.org.uk

SATURDAY 15 MARCH

• **FAIRTRADE MORNING: Balerno Parish Church Halls, Main Street; 10am - noon.** Celebrating 20 years since Balerno's first Fairtrade Morning in 2005.

MONDAY 10 MARCH

• **LET'S TALK BUSES: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; noon - 1pm.** Run by the "Bus Users" charity, which champions the rights of bus and coach users. Find out how they're working to make bus travel a viable choice for all.

• **MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; from 7pm - 9pm.** Relaxed social events with engaging activities and a wellbeing focus, an opportunity to try a new activity and chat with a cuppa. Anyone over 18 is very welcome. Book online or just turn up: <https://hub531.appointedd.com/> or email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

• **CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY: Gibson Craig Hall, Currie, (back hall); 7.30pm prompt.** "Following the Lums - and Smoke", by Douglas Lowe. For further details see: <https://www.curriehistory.org/>

MONDAY 17 MARCH

• **MENTAL HEALTH and WELLBEING: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; from 7pm - 9pm.** See Monday 10 March.

• **COLINTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY AGM: Dreghorn Loan Hall, Colinton; 8pm.** Final meeting of the current season, including several short talks by members. Free to members, £5 per meeting for visitors. www.colintonhistory.org.uk

WEDNESDAY 19 MARCH

• **BALERNO PARISH CHURCH GUILD: The Ogston Hall, Balerno Parish Church; 7.30pm.** Annual General Meeting and Social Evening.

• **CRAFTING- CLAY EGG HOLDERS (adults only): the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 7.30pm - 9pm.** Use air dry clay to create your own beautiful, decorative egg tray! Materials and advice provided. Free of charge but we welcome your optional donation. Tea, coffee and nibbles will be provided. Online booking at: <https://hub531.appointedd.com/> or by email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

FRIDAY 21 MARCH

• **CRAFTING- CLAY EGG HOLDERS (all ages): the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 2.30-4.30 pm.** See Thursday 19 March.

SATURDAY 22 MARCH

• **BALERNO VILLAGE SCREEN—PADDINGTON IN PERU (PG): St Joseph's Hall, Balerno Parish Church; 2.30pm.** Free tickets: www.balernovillagescreen.com

• **DAFFODIL TEA: Gibson Craig Halls; 2pm - 4pm.** Organised by Currie Kirk Guild, in aid of the Guild Project, "Crossreach". Tickets: £5 (Tea/Coffee, Home Baking) Daffodils will be on sale, book stall, tombola.

• **BALERNO VILLAGE SCREEN—CONCLAVE (12A): St Joseph's Hall, Balerno Parish Church; 7pm.** Free tickets: www.balernovillagescreen.com

MONDAY 24 MARCH

• **CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY: Gibson Craig Hall, Currie, (back hall);**

7.30 pm prompt. Annual General Meeting. For further details see <https://www.curriehistory.org/>

• **COLINTON GARDEN CLUB: Dreghorn Loan Hall, Colinton; 8pm.** Guest speaker: Professor Kevin Frediani, Curator of Dundee University Botanic Gardens. More info: <https://colintongardens.org.uk>

TUESDAY 25 MARCH

• **BALERNO FOLK CLUB: Balerno Bowling Club, 5 Ladycroft; doors open 7.30pm for 8.15pm start.** This month's guests are BrÒg, featuring legendary piper Gary West (on pipes, whistles, vocals and guitar), virtuoso fiddler Greg Borland (on fiddle and bass), and the sensational Sandy Brechin (on accordion). Members and Guests welcome.

TUESDAY 25 MARCH

• **NEW- MENOPAUSE SUPPORT: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 8pm - 9pm.** Session 3, focusing more on the mental health issues, as well as the choices we can make to support our mental health both now and in the future. Whether you want to feel informed and prepared, are experiencing difficult symptoms already, or maybe further on in your journey and have some insight and advice you would like to share ... all very welcome. Free-please book a space to receive a reminder. Online booking: <https://hub531.appointedd.com/> or by email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

THURSDAY 27 MARCH

• **OPEN MIKE NIGHT: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 7pm - 9pm.** Poetry and spoken word. Keep the evening free and come along. Details: <https://www.facebook.com/Hubat531/>

MONDAY 31 MARCH

• **COLINTON & MERCHISTON COMMUNITY CHOIR SPRING CONCERT: Memorial Hall, Merchiston Castle School, 294 Colinton Road; doors open 7.30pm for 8pm start.** Local community choir sings Parts 2 and 3 of the glorious Handel's Messiah, accompanied by organ, quartet, double bass, timpanist and two trumpets. Tickets £10 (£5 for under-18s) available from choir members or on the door—cash only. www.colintonchoir.org

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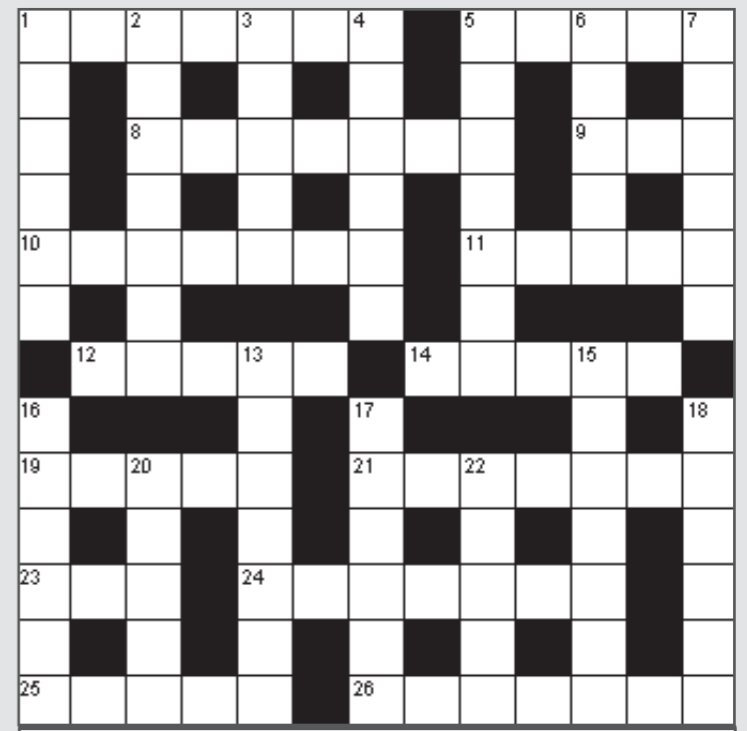
£25 PRIZE CROSSWORD

PRIZE CROSSWORD BY PUZZLECHOICE.COM

To enter, please scan or photograph the completed puzzle and email it to: editor@candbnews.com before noon, Friday 14 March 2025. The winner is picked at random from all correct entries received.

Good luck everyone!

- | ACROSS | DOWN |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Requested the presence of someone. (7) | 1. Models of excellence. (6) |
| 5. Prominent. (5) | 2. Speculation. (7) |
| 8. Closest. (7) | 3. Impart skills or knowledge. (5) |
| 9. Compete for something. (7) | 4. Is afraid of. (6) |
| 10. Expressed mirth. (7) | 5. Actual. (7) |
| 11. Scope. (5) | 6. Corvine bird. (5) |
| 12. Started. (5) | 7. Cricket team. (6) |
| 14. Mentally responsive. (5) | 13. Had a lofty goal. (7) |
| 19. Inexpensive. (5) | 15. Adult male chicken. (7) |
| 21. Imaginary creature. (7) | 16. Weighing machine. (6) |
| 23. Pasture. (3) | 17. Pinnacle. (6) |
| 25. Pay out. (5) | 18. Apprise. (6) |
| 26. Proposition deducible from basic postulates. (7) | 20. Efface. (5) |
| | 22. Visual representation. (5) |



NAME

ADDRESS

POST CODE PHONE

Please tick here if - on being selected as the winner - you would be happy to be contacted to arrange a bank transfer instead of receiving a cheque.

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LAST ISSUE'S SOLUTIONS

Our congratulations go to Chris Robinson from Balerno who won last issue's Crossword prize.

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Work Begins at Juniper Green Tennis Club

PAUL MURPHY
JGTC COMMITTEE CHAIR

The much anticipated programme of works at Juniper Green Tennis Club began on Monday 27 January, starting with the removal of the existing blaes playing surface which will be replaced with an acrylic painted macadam surface.

The transformation of the courts will provide an all-weather surface and enable all year-round play for the first time in the club's long history. The LTA Park Tennis Project contractors, Sportex, have – at time of writing – already made good progress during the first three weeks of the scheme. By the time of the April edition of C&B News is in the shops, the new surface should be

laid and awaiting the next stage painting process after a necessary curing period.

Other less encouraging news concerns the pavilion roof which suffered external damage to the felt covering and also the rain gutters during Storm Éowyn. The club is seeking to repair the damage with the help of our insurers and local roofing contractors.

Photo: Juniper Green Tennis Club

• If you would like to find out more about the club's redevelopment plans and/or would be willing to assist the club then please email us at junipergreentennis@gmail.com

• Regular project updates can be found on the club's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/junipergreentennis>