

NEWSLETTER



THE YEAR AHEAD - An introduction from the Chair.

What I bring to you, as your newly elected Chair, is many years experience of the legal issues around building projects, and a keen appreciation of the beauty of our area and of the challenges faced in maintaining that quality amenity.

Our environment, old and new, natural and cultural, is one of our most precious resources. Our Society can influence the way in which this resource is managed and developed, so that future generations continue to benefit.

I want to see that we collaborate with local bodies with similar concerns; that we identify and try to influence what is really important for our members; and that we communicate with current and prospective members and publicise our initiatives, so we encourage the widest possible participation in the Society

And we'll scrutinize progress on the new local development plan, beginning with the current consultation exercise, as the likely impact of the new Borders Railway on our area gradually emerges.

With 400+ members, we're nearly twice the size of the average Scottish civic group. We want to ensure, however, that we are accessible to all those local residents who may be interested in supporting our aims. So, if you think we're doing a good job then why not recommend us to your neighbours.

Michael Stoneham
Polton Bank



*Welcome to the 2013
Summer Newsletter*

At last the good weather reaches Lasswade, let's hope we are able to enjoy much more of it before the summer is over.

Since our winter newsletter LDCS has continued to communicate on a regular basis with Midlothian Council on issues we believe local input is important.

Many members will be aware that the volume and speed of the traffic in and around Lasswade has been a cause of concern for some considerable time. We are able to report the successful progress LDCS has made via the Petition procedure elsewhere in this edition. We look forward to Midlothian Council taking action to improve road safety in our conservation village and surrounding area.

Michael Stoneham



HAPPY FIRST BIRTHDAY TO THE PAPER MILL



As The Paper Mill celebrated its first birthday on a gloriously sunny evening with a party incorporating a delicious barbecue and interactive cocktail demonstrations of equally delicious cocktails on the terrace, it could look back on a very successful year having recently won two well deserved awards.

In May it was awarded 'The Best Place for a Pint in Midlothian' in the Midlothian Food and Drink Awards. As Karen Calvert, co-director of the company owning the bar and restaurant, said 'This was special because it was a public vote to make it to the shortlist and then a panel vote, so [it was] great to know that the people of Midlothian like the new addition'.

In June The Paper Mill won 'Independent Bar of the Year' at the Dram Awards staged in Glasgow. Karen told us 'The Dram Awards are very prestigious in the licensed trade and there is tough competition from across the whole country so we were very pleased to put The Paper Mill on the map when we won. It's a great reward for the staff who have worked so hard over the last twelve months'.

In stark contrast to the torrential rains and overflowing river last July the terrace has been popular with drinkers and diners enjoying a very welcome prolonged spell of warm dry weather.

We congratulate The Paper Mill on its awards and wish it continuing success.



Help us to spend £250 improving the environment in our area !

Lasswade and District Civic Society has been awarded a GRANT of £250 by the Community Service Volunteers under their ACTION EARTH project, to the help us pay for specific projects which require a little extra financial support.

So we need lots of ideas, please, on ways to spend this money !

We meet their friendly rules (very easy and I will not bore you with them) and as long as we can get a squad of volunteers out to do a worthy task over a couple of weekends, we can reclaim our costs, up to £250.

We can spend the money on trees, shrubs and plants, nest boxes, repairs to footpaths, rubbish bins, or "appreciation displays" – or any other things you can think of that you feel that we ought to be doing in our area, and which has been held up by a lack of cash.

And as an extra, when you come along to help with the odd jobs, you too may get to wear one of the sponsors splendid tabards, with their logo and details.

To secure the grant we had to give our project a name, and we are being called the ESK VALLEY REVIVAL . This does not mean that our project can only be along the river, but as our "patch" loosely follows the river, it seemed like a good name for now.

We need ideas, please, and volunteers, by the end of September. Just drop an email, note, or call to any of the Lasswade District Civic Society committee members with your thoughts and we will get this organised and put into action over the autumn months, with a view to reclaiming our grant in the new year

We look forward to hearing from you.

Adam Lansdown, Treasurer, 0131 663 1230, adam.lansdown@gva.co.uk



PLANNING MATTERS

Development plans have been submitted to Midlothian council to build a high density housing development of 40 units next to the Polton Road Industrial Estate. In a Green Belt Conservation Area of Great Landscape Value this is a cause for concern, as is the likely increased traffic on Polton Road generated by the proposed 60 car parking spaces.

A letter of objection has been submitted on 10th July which can be viewed at

<https://planning-applications.midlothian.gov.uk/OnlinePlanning/centralDistribution.do?action=dispatch&caseType=Application&caseNo=13/00264/DPP>

The Society has submitted the following comments to the Director of Strategic Services relating to the Midlothian Local Development Plan Main Issues Report 2013.

Lasswade District Civic Society has been established for over 40 years, and its adult membership now stands at more than 400. Our constitution objectives include '... care for the beauty and character of the local area and the preservation of the general public amenity'. For these reasons, we are writing on behalf of the Society, and many local neighbours to express our concerns about a number of the proposals set out in the above document.

We are very concerned that as a consequence of all the new houses planned there will be a significant increase in traffic on the roads through Lasswade and on the Lasswade Bridge, and on the road between Loanhead and the Wadingburn junction. These roads are already busy and queues are an everyday occurrence, particularly at peak hours when residents in the surrounding area leave for work in the morning and return in the evening. There is not sufficient information about the transport proposals in Paragraph 10.5 to know whether or more importantly how these issues will be addressed by the Action Programme which is to accompany the adopted Midlothian Local Development Plan.

We are also very concerned that as a consequence of all the new houses planned there will be increased pressure on community facilities, especially given the proposals to build on public amenities such as the Burghlee Park.

The proposal to remove Polton Industrial Estate from the protection of the Green Belt is a cause for great concern given the prominence of this location with respect to the Mavisbank Conservation Area. The proposal to make the river valley policy less restrictive is also a cause for great concern. We can see no need for the changes proposed.

Finally, while the proposed changes to the areas designated Areas of Great Landscape Value do not affect the Lasswade District itself, we are very concerned that the change in designation from AGLV to Special Landscape Area should not dilute the level of protection currently granted to AGLVs.

We trust you will take these concerns into account when preparing the Midlothian Local Development Plan.

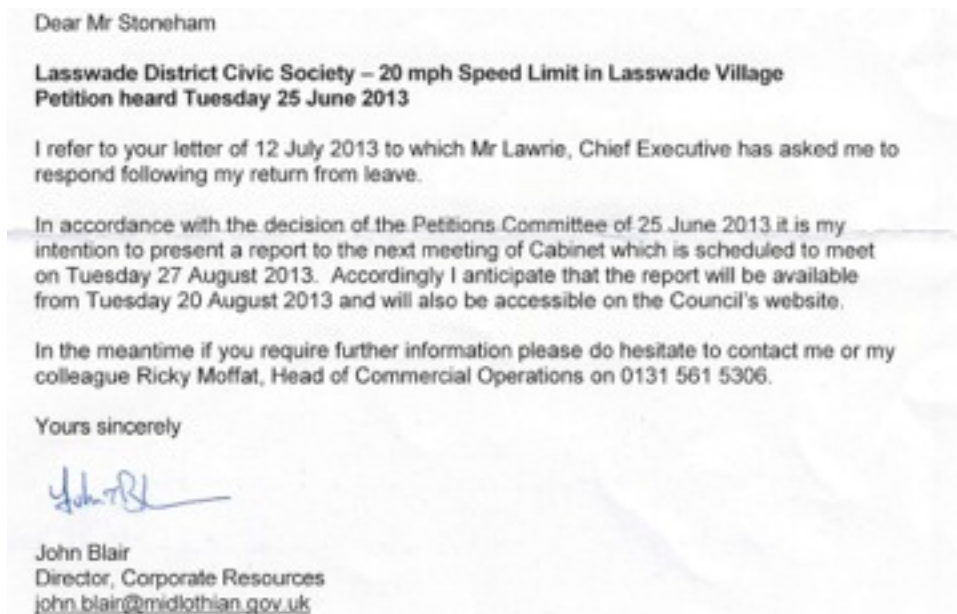
NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Members can keep themselves informed of new proposals by viewing

<https://planning-applications.midlothian.gov.uk/OnlinePlanning/>

COUNCIL MATTERS

Following on from the mention of the petition on page 1 please see below the letter from John Blair advising of the current action being taken following the successful outcome of the petition hearing. As you can see the publication of the report will be too late for inclusion in this Newsletter but as soon as it is available we will make it available on our website.



Since the publication of our last Newsletter the Lasswade Centre has been opened. Reports from users and from the first hand experience of some committee members have been very favourable. The facilities are excellent and the community is already making good use of all areas.

Opening times Mon. to Thu. 6.30am-9pm, Fri. 6.30am-8pm, Sat. Sun. 9am-6pm

Complaints from members regarding the amount of litter constantly appearing in Polton Lane were raised with the Council. Much of this litter originates from MacDonalds.

At present the Council litter pick monthly but the Council will attempt an extra pick to remove the current problem.

The concrete block which has been used as a crash barrier by Westmill Road and the Lasswade bridge has at last been removed but not before it was knocked flat onto the pavement by yet another accident. The Council is currently exploring the possibility of installing a crash barrier which would protect the pedestrian as well as the bridge.



Contact Us

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And finally whilst we are sure that all our members are responsible dog owners sadly this cannot be said of everyone. Wouldn't it be great if it could? And wouldn't it be great if litter could be dropped in the bins provided?



Diary Dates

Any requests/suggestions for outings or talks or clean ups gratefully received by Rosemary 0131 663 6651

Sunday 8th Sept 2pm - 4pm
Garden, river and park clean up followed by food and drink.

Monday 23rd Sept
Committee Meeting

Monday 7th October
7.30pm to 9.00pm in The Lasswade Centre conference room, a talk by Carol Deveney of Network Rail Scotland on the Borders Railway.

Monday 11th November
7.30pm to 9pm in Lasswade Pavilion a talk by Bill Scott of the "Recording Angels"



Several days over several weekends between Autumn and Spring members of the Civic Society have been hard at work tending to the Lasswade Community garden and clearing up litter from the surrounding area as evidenced in the photo above.