

Edinburgh councillor blogs – Councillor Maureen Child

✘ Dear All

The few **Syrian refugee families** Edinburgh has already welcomed to Edinburgh through the UK Government's Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme are settling in well thanks to a range of excellent public, private and voluntary sector partners. We expect to welcome more in the New Year. One of our key partners, very aptly named **The Welcoming**, are helping provide language classes and pathways into making friends – helping them form the kind of informal networks we all depend upon. The Welcoming have attracted a number of excellent new volunteers to help with their vital work, helping people settle in and make a real contribution to the life of Edinburgh. Find out more about The Welcoming here: <http://www.thewelcoming.org/>

You would be made very welcome to a **Christmas Light** service is taking place in '**Wellsprings**', 71 Whitehill Street, **Newcraighall** EH21 8QZ at **4pm on Sunday 20th December**. It will include; carol singing; a kids dance video, with a modern take on the nativity; kids Christmas crafts; candle lights; mulled wine/juice and mince pies. The offering will be taken in aid of Syrian refugees. More about Wellspring here: www.wellsprings.uk.net

Or you would be equally welcome in the **Robin Chapel**, for a more formal and cerebral Christmas experience with amazing choral singing: <http://www.robinchapel.org.uk/>

Several people from **Gilberstoun** have contacted me about the inconsiderate and quite **dangerous way people park right next to Brunstane Station** on Brunstane Road South. They said it was an accident waiting to happen. If you do ever leave your car near the station, do make sure the sightlines are clear for all other road users, cyclists and pedestrians. I was in touch with both local police and local roads team to see what we can do about it. I asked for cones to be put up again in the short term and more permanent measures be progressed.

I went along to a meeting of **Portobello Rotary** for the first time last week to hear Fiona Fitheridge speak about the **Thistle in Craigmillar** and all the work they do. It was the premier of a couple of short films where people talked about how the Thistle has helped them turn their lives around. Hugely impressive! This is only part of what Thistle do: <http://chronicleonline.net/2015/12/17/thistle-helping-you-manage-your-health/> Portobello Rotary is small but does great work and has a big impact. More here: <http://www.rotary-ribi.org/clubs/homepage.php?ClubID=110>

The Council's **local park rangers** team do a really great job, working alongside local communities and 'Friends of Parks'. They have put a few illustrated highlights here in their annual report, which deserves to be much more widely distributed and celebrated. More here: <http://www.portobelloc.org/pccpn/2015/12/14/park-ranger-service-east-neighbourhood-newsletter-2015/>

On Tuesday I was in **St Francis RC Primary School** in Craigmillar presenting booklets to P5 children on the work they had done to develop themselves '**Agents for Change**' in

their community. This is a fabulous programme run by the Jack Kane Community Centre. It really engages the interest and enthusiasm of the youngsters in learning how to be a good member of a community and get along with people. Having met the children, I am not surprised to hear the class teacher say that this happened to be most rewarding class she had ever taught – and she clearly had quite a few years of teaching experience.

More here: <http://jackkanecommunity.org/?s=Agents+for+change+&submit=Search>

I was delighted to be asked on to this year's judging panel for S5/6 young people at Castlebrae Community High School (CCHS) presenting on a charity of their choice that means a lot to them. Not an easy thing to do! This was part of the Scotland-wide Young Philanthropy Initiative which gave each group a chance to win their chosen organisation £3000. Last year, Kids in the Street (KITS) won and we heard from Kev Finlay all the prize money last year had enabled them to do. This year, the narrow winner was The Yard, with some really fabulous runners up. The choice was not at all easy and had to be based not on the merits of the charity, but how well the youngsters presented. The people who run the YPI venture said to us that four of those CCHS presentations were the best they had ever seen. Castlebrae Community High School is doing fabulous work in building the confidence of some wonderful, caring young people.

Picture here: https://mobile.twitter.com/yip_scotland/status/677134796074713088/photo/1

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is appealing to the public to **stay safe this winter** by taking the necessary steps to protect their families, homes, customers and communities.

Read more

here: <http://chronicleonline.net/2015/12/14/stay-safe-this-winter/>

Nice photo of **Craigmillar Castle**, the impressive and superbly preserved, former fortified residence of Sir Simon Preston – as every child in Castleview Primary School will be able to tell you, particularly by the time they learn all to be official tour guides for their peers in P6/7. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=858618487589501>

From time to time I get asked – does this development have planning consent? Is it being built as approved? A refreshed **planning enforcement charter** sets out the enforcement process and how enquiries can be made. The dedicated online form ensures the enquirer provides all the information planning officers need to allow an investigation to proceed. The online form is easy to use and can also be accessed on mobile devices. The form and charter are available at: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/planningenforcement This means an improved and quicker service, with fewer delays, although paper-based enquiries are still welcome.

Planning Aid Scotland is now called simply PAS – which is confusing for those of us who use that acronym locally for **Portobello Amenity Society** (PAS)! PAS nationally offers free, impartial and professional planning advice to help people understand and engage with the planning system. pas.org.uk PAS locally can and do help local people get to grips with the planning system. I am pleased to know that both organisations are lending support to the fight to retain the **allotments at Craigentenny/Telferton**. I was pleased to meet up with two of the campaigners to give them some advice on how to get their message across.

A Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) has just gone in to the planning service for the Local Development Plan proposed **Brunstane site** and Portobello Community Council have put details up on their website. More here: <http://www.portobelloc.org/pccpn/2015/12/17/proposal-of-application-notice-received-for-brunstane/>

To get more details on this application, or any other, do go on to the Council's website www.edinburgh.gov.uk/planning You will get full details of how to comment or get involved with any live planning application or search any planning history of sites which interest you. An application been lodged on 30 November for a **cycling facility at Hunter's Hall Park** associated with the Jack Kane Centre. The reference for this one is 15/05530/PAN.

Here's a nice picture of **Portobello Hornets** young rugby players in their smart new strips – thanks to sponsorship by **The Espy!** [Photo](#)

Boating by **Portobello Beach and Pier**, 1885: This is the picture for July in the Lost Edinburgh Calendar for 2016. The pier: fb.me/7SADG0Bih

Portobello Town Hall's next regular Monthly **Ceilidh** 8 January 2016. Start the weekend in full swing, at the regular monthly Friday night ceilidh with great live music from the Canongate Cadgers, first Friday of the month. Dancing 8pm until 11pm, no need to book. Just pay for your ticket at the door.. Pay at the door £8 (£6 concessions), organised by Cadgers Music

Factory. This Ceilidh Event suitable for all ages and abilities. All dances are explained – the band has a caller. Doors open 7.30pm (Dancing 8pm -11pm) No need to book, just pay at the door on the night. Under 16 's Free Entry. All welcome. <http://www.meetup.com/ceilidh-meetup/events/227163463/>

One of my constituents pointed out how many local roofs in Craigmillar and Niddrie now have **solar panels** retro-fitted. These may well be Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association properties, fitted with energy saving solar panels under a scheme to tackle fuel poverty and reduce household energy bills. I am told that 105 properties in the EH16 postcode have benefitted from this investment. More here:

http://www.castlerockedinvar.co.uk/about_us/company_news/technology_trial_underway_in_£7_million_project_to_tackle_fuel_poverty.aspx

And finally – I hope you like the attached photo of our up-cycled bonsai Christmas tree (attached).

A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all!

Best wishes

Maureen

Councillor Maureen Child | Labour Elected Member | Portobello/Craigmillar (Ward 17) | City of Edinburgh Council | City Chambers | High Street | Edinburgh | EH1 1YJ | Tel 0131 529 3268 | Mobile 07718 666 481| Twitter @MaureenChild1

p.s. My face-to-face Councillor Advice Sessions, or 'Surgeries', are usually every **Monday at 5.30 pm** in **Castleview Community Centre**, 76 Craigmillar Castle Avenue (Phone 661 4064) and then **at 7 pm** in **Portobello Library**, 14 Rosefield Avenue (Phone 529 5558). Now also at Craigmillar Library, 101 Niddrie Mains Road, EH16 4DT, 1st Wednesday of the month, drop-in session 5pm-5.30pm, thereafter by appointment only up until 7.30pm.

Please phone me on Direct Line 0131 529 3268 or Mobile 07718 666 481, or email maureen.child@edinburgh.gov.uk to check availability, make an appointment or request a home visit.