

MIDLOTHIAN GREENS BRANCH NEWS



Scottish Green Party

January 2020

Spaghetti junction: pasta its sell-by date!

Sheriffhall junction on the A720 Edinburgh by-pass has long been the bane of car drivers and cyclists and pedestrians alike.

Drivers get caught up in massive tailbacks at rush hours and cyclists and walkers just can't get safely from one side to the other. Back in 1999 Midlothian Council was actually given almost £800,000 to build a bridge over the roundabout for pedestrians and cyclists but that money was spent elsewhere.

5% MORE TRAFFIC

The proposed solution to the Sheriffhall junction problem is, surprise, surprise, more tarmac and more cement, resulting in more vehicles – Transport Scotland's own prediction is that it will create 5% more traffic – and bottlenecks further along, all for the sum of £120million.

Currently £80 million is the sum allocated by the Scottish government for active travel (that's cycling, walking, etc). The £120 million could be used to promote and facilitate not only active travel but improved public transport. In fact that sum would be almost enough money to build segregated cycle lanes alongside every A road in Edinburgh and Midlothian!

LET'S DO WHAT OTHER EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS DO

More roads create more cars and more carbon emissions. It's been estimated that the Queensferry Crossing has resulted in an additional 1 million cars crossing the Forth every year. If the government is really serious about tackling the climate crisis then it must abandon this 20thC mind-set and do what other European governments are doing with the transport infrastructures of their capital cities – enabling cycling, walking and easy and cheap (if not free!) access to reliable public transport.

Transport Scotland is consulting on the proposal now, and will be until **January 31**. Please respond to the consultation by sending an email to a720sheriffhallroundabout@transport.gov.scot.

Let Midlothian Council know that you want the Sheriffhall proposal cancelled, and the money invested in public transport and the encouragement of active travel instead. Alison Johnstone has initiated a petition which as an SGP member you will have received so please sign that.



STOP PRESS Irony news: Midlothian Council declares a 'Climate Emergency' with the aim of making the council's activities net-zero carbon by 2030. www.climateemergency.uk/blog/midlothian/

Happy new year? Sad old politics!

Welcome to a new year, a new decade and a new government — unfortunately it's another Tory model with yet another set of inverted priorities.

Once again the Westminster parliament electoral system has delivered a government with an overwhelming majority for which most people did not vote. The first-past-the-post electoral system is not delivering democracy. It might be argued that had some form of PR been in place there may not have even been the need for the EU membership referendum in 2016 and our subsequent exit. Those disgruntled Eurosceptics and ignored others would have had some representation in Parliament, and as much as we might turn our noses up at their politics at least they would have had that voice they so obviously felt they needed.

There is one good thing about the new Westminster Parliament – it's the world's gayest!

Could you donate to Midlothian Green Party on a regular basis?

Next year's Council election campaigning will require time and money. Time is always tight but so is money. If you are able to donate a monthly sum to Midlothian Green Party we would be able to budget for any eventuality.

If you might be able to help us out please contact Helen at crazydiamond2310@gmail.com.



We need people to fill the roles of:

Minutes Secretary Membership Secretary Campaigns Coordinator

The **Minutes Secretary** takes notes at each business meeting and then prepares them as a minuted report of that meeting which can be sent to each committee member.

The **Membership Secretary** contacts new members, ensures all queries from members regarding membership are dealt with, ensures that branch membership list is accurate and liaises with the Scottish Green Party membership Secretary.

The **Campaigns Officer** develops and supports campaigns run by the branch, and also acts as a liaison for local events relating to national campaigns.

Please contact Mark at mark@seaveg.uk for more details about these roles

News Brief

For peat's sake!

The Scottish and UK governments have no idea how much peat has been dug for commercial purposes and sold in garden centres, despite both administrations viewing the preservation of peatlands as a priority to combat the climate crisis.

Activist, Donald Campbell, submitted a freedom of information request to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in London asking how many cubic metres of peat had been extracted in Scotland, and the UK as a whole, in each of the last 10 years.

In reply Defra said it did not hold information on cubic metres extracted, explaining that the 'monitoring of peat use in gardening products was last undertaken in 2016 based on sales in 2015.'

The Scottish Government was also asked how much peat has been extracted in Scotland over the past decade, and Campbell requested details of sites where commercial peat extraction is taking place, including the names of companies involved.

According to SWT, Scotland has lost 94 per cent of its raised bogs over the last 200 years and that protecting and restoring those that remain is a 'vital step' towards tackling both the climate emergency and a 'crisis facing biodiversity'.

Source: *The Ferret*

Looking to 2021: Housing

We are preparing ourselves for the council elections next year and with this in mind we want to produce a series of policy papers which will reflect the topics of the Vision (see our website) document. The first, and probably most important for Midlothian is housing.

An initial draft on this topic has been produced (see below for digest) which discussed the pressures locally for housing development – an example is the current rush to build family houses to accommodate escapees from Edinburgh. Intimately tied in with the issue of housing is that of transport. Permission has been given for a new school on

land donated by Edinburgh University and this should require the creation of cycle routes, the use of electric buses alongside any consideration of energy efficient buildings and a sustainable food supply. We're intending to invite a Green councillor from Edinburgh who has some knowledge of the housing situation in the city to next month's meeting.

If you would like to join the Housing working group and help to update the existing draft, or get involved with other policy working groups which we plan to create in the future to deal with the topics in the Midlothian Vision (see our website) please come along to the next meeting or let us know via email at midlothian@scottishgreens.org.uk.

From Midlothian Vision draft:

Mixed use developments

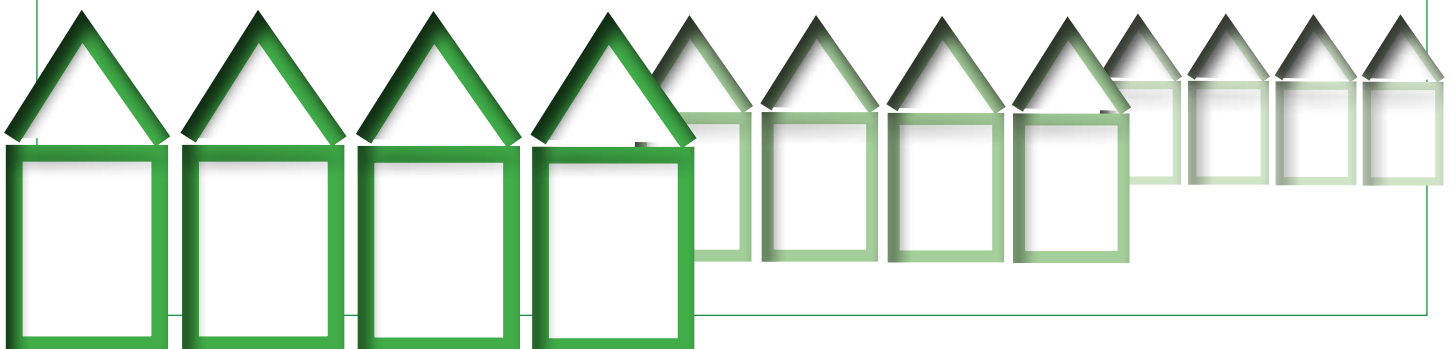
- housing, workplaces, shops, leisure and community facilities, schools and health centres are located within easy reach by walking or cycling;
- new developments make maximum use of brownfield sites and derelict or empty buildings;
- there is compulsory sale of undeveloped land.

High quality, energy efficient homes

- houses have high levels of insulation and air-tightness, reducing energy consumption;
- houses are built from natural, non-toxic materials, giving a healthy indoor environment;
- housing uses ecological design techniques such as passive heating and cooling;
- houses are built from low-energy materials;
- power and heating will come from renewable energy sources such as solar and geothermal, using district heating systems.

Homes for all

- housing is built and run by community organisations, co-operatives and the council, not by waiting for volume private house builders to allocate a small proportion of their land to 'affordable' houses;
- housing is a mix of different types to enhance social inclusion and to ensure that homes are suited to the needs of the elderly, children and families, and those with different health needs;
- tenants/owners have more control over the design and quality of new houses;
- self-managed and self-build housing schemes, run by groups of residents, are the norm.



Do you have high-resolution photos of Midlothian we could use?

Midlothian Green Party wants to create a library of images of our area – landscapes urban or rural, pics with people such as community initiatives and campaigns and family fun days – which could be used online or in forthcoming publications. If you think you might have something useful to us please contact Paul at paulmepham60@outlook.com.



Midlothian Greens Branch and Social Meetings 2020

We meet once a month for branch and business meetings, on alternating Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7.00pm to 9.00pm. These meetings are open to everyone. We also meet monthly on the first Tuesday of the month at EH Twenty Bar and Kitchen in Loanhead to socialise. The venue is on the 37 bus route and there is a stop nearby. Please contact us if you need a lift to any of these meetings.

Date	Meeting type	Venue
Tuesday 5 February	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Thursday 13 February	Business	Loanhead library, Loanhead
Tuesday 4 March	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Tuesday 10 March	Business	St. John's & King's Park Church, Dalkeith
Tuesday 31 March	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Thursday 9 April	Business	Loanhead library, Loanhead
Tuesday 5 May	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Thursday 14 May	Business	Navaar House Hotel, Penicuik
Tuesday 2 June	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Thursday 11 June	Business	Loanhead library, Loanhead
Tuesday 7 July	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Tuesday 14 July	Business	St. John's & King's Park Church, Dalkeith
Tuesday 4 August	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Thursday 13 August	Business	Loanhead library, Loanhead
Tuesday 1 September	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Tuesday 8 September	Business	Navaar House Hotel, Penicuik
Tuesday 7 October	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Thursday 15 October	Business	Loanhead library, Loanhead
Tuesday 3 November	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Tuesday 10 November	Business	St. John's & King's Park Church, Dalkeith
Tuesday 1 December	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Thursday 10 December	Business	Loanhead library, Loanhead



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