



# Midlothian Green Party Newsletter

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January 2021

## Greater Edinburgh ... or Green Midlothian?

Earlier this month the first of two virtual public consultations was held by Straiton Park Ltd and their consultants Avison Young during which they took questions from the public about the proposed development of the area to the west and north of the Park and Ride on the A701, which they have named the 'Midlothian Gateway' – or in the words of a Damhead resident, more likely a 'Gateway to hell'.

This development of mixed use over an area of 42.5 hectares is described as 'a combination of vacant scrubland and in-use farmland', half of which is greenbelt and prime agricultural land! This will mean the end of the Edinburgh Green Belt as it will split it in two wedges, breaking the 'belt' in half.

Their plan proposes 400 homes, of which 100 will be 'affordable' properties; this number of homes presumes there would be need for a school. The allocation for specific development is not yet set but the idea is for commercial development on the east side and housing in the south west. Avison Young couldn't comment on density of development as it will be tendered to housebuilders but they said that the height would likely be 2–3 storeys.

### **SMALL LOCAL BUSINESS PROVISION?**

Straiton Park said that they would like to provide properties for small businesses – but how many of

these would be local in origin? They also claimed that Midlothian Council is desperate for hotels in the area and that one here would find favour. However, previous plans which have included hotels across their administration, and specifically in the Damhead area have come to nothing.

### **CONCERT/CONFERENCE CENTRE?**

Other leisure facilities will be considered if there is 'a demand'. This is interesting as this area has also been suggested for a concert/conference centre, a proposal put forward a couple of years ago by a former Edinburgh councillor so might there be some conflict here?

Although it's not considered necessary for the development to go ahead, the planned A701 spur road which Midlothian Council would like to see built over green belt and agricultural land in Damhead would

*Continued on next page*

Our next **social meeting**, via ZOOM, will be on **Tuesday, February 2** at 7.00pm.  
The next **branch business meeting** will be on **Thursday, February 11** at 7.00pm. We'll send you log-in details in advance of both of these meetings.

# Holyrood election 2021 updates

It was with great sadness that MGP learnt of the resignation of Andy Wightman from the party in December. He was a dedicated and respected MSP for the Lothian region and was instrumental in the campaign to save Jim Telfer's farm in Damhead from becoming the site of a film studio. A number of local party committee members have signed a letter which has been sent to the Scottish Green Party leadership, requesting more information to explain his sudden resignation.

Election material delivery is rightfully currently suspended but SGP will keep a close eye on government and health guidance in the hope that the situation improves and enables us to start delivering.

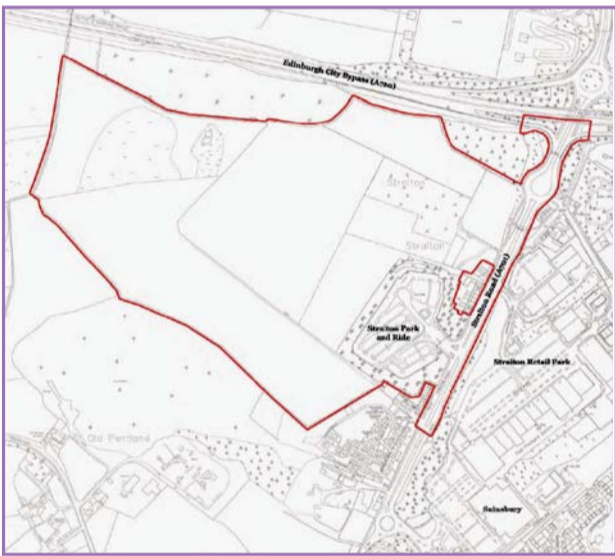
Midlothian Green Party submitted content for the January newsletter, the largest newsletter print run the Scottish Greens has undertaken since the 2016 elections. Given the covid lockdown, printing and delivery has been postponed until the end of the month, so we're expecting delivery very soon. A March newsletter is still planned although it

may be that the process may be delayed. As with the January newsletter this will be a collation of national and relevant local stories.

Five new campaign staff members started at SGPHQ on January 11 which will greatly increase capacity and these new staff members will be contacting branches, regions and lead candidates to introduce themselves and initiate discussions on how they can support campaigning.

The Scottish Green Party is also planning to run a series of campaign training workshops for members in the coming weeks.

## Greater Edinburgh or Green Midlothian? *continued*



certainly facilitate this development. It will be principally funded by the South East Scotland City Deal, with the Section 75 developers contributions still to be agreed.

**If it goes ahead this development will actively exacerbate both the climate and biodiversity emergencies. It will also destroy vitally important prime agricultural land. The new road will exacerbate traffic congestion and air pollution. All of these are unacceptable. This area of land should be used as green space for biodiversity and recreation as well as for food growing. Any other development should be secondary to these primary uses.**

You can still submit comments **until the 29 January 2021 via [www.straitonwest.com](http://www.straitonwest.com)**, where you can find more details about this proposal. Another online consultation is planned in the next few weeks to provide a further update on the proposals. Details will be posted on their website and notifications sent to those who have left feedback to the first consultation so **get in those comments in now!**



## Holyrood Elections 2021

**The campaign to get more Green MSPs into Holyrood is underway, despite Covid restrictions. Campaigning costs money.**

**If every member of Midlothian Green Party gave a monthly donation of just £1 we'd have £100 towards our campaigning fund every month – at least three people so far have pledged something!**

A Direct Debit or a standing order with your bank would mean that Midlothian Green Party would be able to rely on an income to enable it to campaign more extensively, for Holyrood and then in 2022 to put up candidates in every ward for the council elections. Can you help? Whatever you can afford would be more than welcome.

Our bank details for you to arrange a Direct Debit or a standing order are:

**Co-operative Bank**  
**Sort Code: 08 92 99**  
**Account No: 65391518**  
**Midlothian Green Party**

or you can donate through PayPal at [mgp.rosewell@gmail.com](mailto:mgp.rosewell@gmail.com).



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