**Councillor's Report**

**Councillor Maureen Child, Labour Councillor for Portobello/Craigmillar Ward**

**February 2015**

**Community Grants Fund - You Decide!**

Small grants are available from the community grants fund under the Portobello/Craigmillar Neighbourhood Partnership, but all local people have a chance to decide which projects to fund. A grant of up to £1500 might not quite fit for what you want to do, or it might provide match funding or seed funding for a bigger idea. Come along and find out about this method of deciding on funding and also find out what other funds might be available for whatever it is you want to do at the **funding workshop** event is arranged for **Wednesday 25 February in** the East Local Office/Craigmillar Library, Niddrie Mains Road between 2pm and 4pm. Or you can get an application form, more information and help by phoning 0131 529 6374 or email: graham.rowan@edinburgh.gov.uk

**Local Development Plan – Brunstane and Telferton Allotments**

No decision is being taken on the Local Development Plan (LDP) until the outcome of a planning Appeal for a housing development on land in the west of the city, at Cammo. This will now be determined by the Minister responsible for planning, Alex Neil. If the Council do not know the numbers of housing units we are to provide more land for, we cannot take a decision at this point. It is hoped that the Reporter will have finished hearing the Appeal and a final decision will be made by the Minister on Cammo before the next Planning Committee which is scheduled for Thursday May 15. This is an issue affecting the whole city, East as well as West. I assured local people that the land they work as allotments at Telferton has the planning system’s protection from development, despite the owner wanting it designated for housing in the new LDP. There is no Council proposal to make the allotments a housing site. A previous application was refused by Committee and sustained at Appeal. The site that is in most contention locally is at Brunstane and I am glad to see there is a lengthening on-line petition to protect the Green Belt there and there is time for it to grow even more signatures by May. The less land released in the West, the more the East is threatened.

**Magdalene Growing Projects**

The Magdalene Community Food Growing project is run by the Community Alliance Trust and will bring together residents at Magdalene ex-Council estate to build their own community garden. It has been awarded a £119,251 Scottish Government Grant. Fifty community members will be offered space and training to grow their own healthy produce which will have low food miles while practical cookery workshops will be available to show how to reduce food waste. The garden will provide a base for establishing other edible landscaping projects in the estate in the coming years.

**Jack Kane Centre Garden Project**

I am delighted that the Jack Kane Management Committee’s own growing project is going ahead and got planning consent last week. There is lots of enthusiasm and community involvement in the project which should see ‘spades in the ground’ in the next couple of weeks with the construction almost complete by the end of March.

**Brighton Place Consultation**

Portobello Community Council and Portobello Amenity Society are each undertaking consultation on the options for resurfacing Brighton Place among residents and further afield. This will inform the Council’s own consultation, which has not yet started. Clearly there are more people affected by the work– including traders, those who travel up and down the street in and out of Portobello on foot, by bike, bus or other vehicle; those whose livelihoods, living space or property will be affected by the work and those who will have to live more closely with the outcome and those who pay for it. We await the outcome with interest. Yet another contentious issue for the residents of Portobello and Edinburgh to deal with!

**StAnza Poetry Festival Launch**

Sheila Gilmore MP and I attended the taster session for the StAnza Poetry Festival, St Andrews in which Craigmillar poets are involved. We listened to performances both local and from further afield, including the Edinburgh and Craigmillar Makars. The stand out performance, for all of us, was the young performance poet Agnes Török. She was a revelation. She is one to watch for the future, I think. At Portobello Book Festival, one day?

**Health Opportunities Team (HOT)**

Health Opportunities Team (HOT) is an independent charity committed to improving the social, emotional and sexual wellbeing of young people. HOT work across the Portobello and Craigmillar areas and have become one of some 2,100 organisations across the UK to receive a brand new ‘Red Plaque’ in recognition of its vital work, supported by Comic Relief funding. They can be found in schools, in the community, or in one of their Drop-Ins. HOT has just introduced a new service called the Substance Misuse Project. The aim of the project is to provide therapeutic group and 1-1 support for vulnerable young people, aged 12-25, who are struggling with their own substance misuse, or are affected by their parent’s substance misuse. I will be happy to support the launch of this new service.

**20 mph Speed Limits – Next Steps**

There is a bit of a rearguard action being fought on the proposals to make about 80% of Edinburgh’s roads 20mph limits. This is being combated by Living Streets, cycling lobby organisations and a local campaign to extol the life-benefits of the proposals. The detail of what is proposed is going to come back to the Council’s Transport and Environment Committee in March.

**Local Opportunities for Older People (LOOPS)**

This project helps put older people in touch with activities, volunteers and other people to break the cycle of isolation they might otherwise feel or get in touch with the services they need. LOOPS is holding a social event for anyone over the age of 65 on Monday 30 March from 4pm to 6.30pm at the Volunteer Centre Edinburgh, 24 Torphichen Street EH3 8JB. There will be fun activities and information on things like affordable warmth and fun things to do. Non alcoholic cocktails and cupcakes are on offer. LOOPS phone line is 0131 603 8311 for more information or help on anything at all.

**Bus Lane Network**

A few people have been in touch about the changes proposed to bus lanes throughout the city. Surveys showed there was little or no delay to buses during off-peak periods 9:30am and 4:00pm, Monday to Friday. The Transport Forum suggested there should be a trial of peak period only operation. It would also allow motor cycles to use bus lanes during the times when they operate. The traffic regulation order for an 18 month trial of the new arrangements is currently being advertised and several objections have come forward. These objections will be considered when the period ends in March, and the result will be considered by the Transport and Environment Committee on June 2nd. If you want more detail on this, I can send you a briefing if you would like more detail on the background.

**My Contact Details**

My regular reports and updates on local issues are freely available by email. Just let me know if you want to be on my distribution list. I also put hard copies in the libraries to pick up. My contact details are: Councillor Maureen Child | Labour Elected Member | Portobello/Craigmillar (Ward 17) | City of Edinburgh Council | City Chambers | High Street | Edinburgh | EH1 1YJ | Direct Line 0131 529 3268 | Phone/Text Mobile 07718 666 481 or Follow me on Twitter @MaureenChild1