

# The Elie Herald

Winter 2018



## Editorial

We have been scrutinising each weekly list of planning applications expecting at any time to find the Elie Estate's application for outline planning permission for their proposed developments at Wadeslea and the Grange but so far that page has been blank. The rumour is that the planners have taken some issue with the proposed layout at Wadeslea. Seemingly the original plans had all the "affordable" housing in one area rather than being sporadically distributed. It seems that the planners do not like to think that the affordable housing should be discriminated against by being 'ghettoised'. Well it may or may not be true but it perhaps might lead to further questions being asked of the residents as to what they are prepared actually to accept.

### Elie and Earlsferry Action Group

The EEAG (see later) commissioned a survey of the whole village. Briefly 374 responses were received which represents 987 people. The group concludes that the survey "demonstrates the need to properly *[sic]* engage and involve the local community...." And its result also shows that the majority of respondents do not support the plans of Elie Estate for development but the concerning aspect is that more than three quarters of the responders have received no communication from Elie Estates.

### Lack of Information

This is hardly surprising. For some time there had been views within the Community Council that Elie Estates 'consultation' exercise was seriously deficient in that it did not seek to obtain the views of the entire community in any recognised way. Advertising Open Events of course was likely to attract those permanently living in the villages but not the weekend/holiday makers not least of which because these events were not held at times when the villages were likely to be well populated (the cynic might think that this was deliberate). Public meetings were eschewed by Elie Estates and a second public meeting proposed by some members of the Community Council was rejected. Most of the respondents did not want to see any change to the villages and whilst 22% wanted to see more full time residents it was clearly the view that any development would be likely to have a predominance of second homes despite the remonstrance of the developers/promoters that this was highly unlikely.

### Charette

Where this leaves the putative plans we do not know but it is clear that there is a division of opinion in the community about the desirability of these plans but it is a



division which has been clear for some time. There is a hint that a "Charette" type survey is being considered which will have a wider general remit but it is unlikely to change the delicate balance between this area as a holiday destination and one in which people also wish to live full time. It would be catastrophic if as a result of any developments and serious changes to the community it not longer had the attraction of a holiday and tourist destination and a scene like the above disappeared. There is a serious risk that unless any development is handled gradually and with care the Elie and Earlsferry as we have all known it for generations will disappear and per se will lose its attraction as a holiday resort in which case the whole thing would be counter productive.

## Developments



Grangefield, that is the first house on right up the road to to Grange Hill, has lodged a planning application to

demolish the existing house and rebuild. Although in theory the outline of the new proposed house is substantially the same as the old house the modern image aspect of the new house is very much out of keeping with the road up to Grange Farm but because of the inconsistent developments along Grange Road it is more than likely to be approved but one wonders whether it is time for Grange Road to be included in the conservation area which it currently is not.

## Beach Clean



As part of Maritime Conservation <https://www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch/events> initiative for cleaner beaches 25 or so volunteers took to the

sands of West Bay on 15<sup>th</sup> September. Their efforts collected 126.5kg of rubbish. Dorothy Anderson who organised it said *"Thank you so much to the twenty-eight amazing volunteers (& their four legged friends.....extra doggie treats for you tonight) who helped clean West Bay this morning. As part of the #Great British Beach Clean run by the Marine Conservation Society, we collected:*

- 51.5kg of bagged rubbish
- 75kg of unbagged rubbish (lobster creels, BBQ, tarpaulin), which included a monster stack of tangled fishing nets that took ten of us to haul up the beach.
- 23 balloons
- 55 straws
- 64 wet wipes
- 142 cotton buds

....& one pair of underpants [(size Medium colour ombre green) - all inquiries to Dorothy!]

Also, a big thank you to Fife Coast & Countryside Trust who are going to pick up everything we collected.



## Beautiful Fife

We struggle to get past silver award despite increased efforts. The judges have two complaints this year – firstly the bird poo at Toll

Green is deemed to be offensive. It certainly is and we tried to clear it up before the judges arrived but the birds did not co-operate. Is there something we can do? There was a suggestion some time ago that "pollarding" (technical term for cutting bits off a tree) could discourage or at least

make it clear to the blighters that they are not welcome. One resident's offer of a shotgun was happily received but it was thought the bird lobby might object. Any thoughts out there from those that know their crows from the jackdaws...."stone them"- we say? The second was that there was a lack of wild flower cultivation and the EAG have been thinking about that – some ideas – the grassy knoll (q.v.Dallas 1963) to the west of main road into the village is one possibility as is a patch at the entrance to Earlsferry beside the Marne. We are also wondering about a bit of Boat Wynd. The EAG will have a think about this and see if its feasible but research suggests that it is not that easy – compare the entrance



to St. Andrews from Guardbridge and Dundee Riverside both proliferate in wild flowers. We are preparing lots of planters with bulbs for the spring and keeping our fingers crossed.

## Elie and Earlsferry Action Group

by David Smith Chairman

The EEAG is a group, initially of 17, local individuals who were concerned in several ways about the proposed developments by the Elie Estates. The first concern was regarding the scale and speed with which our characterful village might be turned into a small town, losing most of its charm and damaging its tourism standing. The second concern was that the community had not been consulted properly. While there had been public meetings these had not been advertised effectively, hence the community at large had not been given an opportunity to express its views. Finally, in spite of over 100 objections, made in writing and by email, it seemed that none had been taken into account by our local planners it was felt they had disregarded concerns about sewerage and drainage, traffic congestion and road safety, water supplies and mobile phone coverage - all of these being particularly important in the summer months.

The group is **not** completely opposed to development. There is concern, however, at the scale being proposed. One hundred and ninety houses, a care home, retirement apartments, workshops and additional retail outlets, combined with plans to build on the current playing field felt like excessive developments which the villages might well have difficulty in absorbing.

With the clear backing of the community, as expressed through the results of the recent survey the group feels it has a mandate to make representations to Elie Estates, the planning department and Fife Councillors to continue to challenge some of the planning outlines and ensure that any extensions to the villages are in keeping with the community's wishes.

## Out of Hours Medical Care.

It will not have escaped your notice that out of hours medical care at St. Andrews has been withdrawn and we are now expected to travel to Kirkcaldy or Ninewells for out of hours medical assistance. It was apparently the case that the Health Board was having difficulty managing the out of hours care for Central and West Fife so decided to apply the fixes for these areas to the East Neuk. It beggars belief that say a resident of Elie who needs medical care has to find a way to get to Kirkcaldy or Dunfermline. St. Andrews was just reachable. Can't help feeling that this will result in more pressure on the ambulance service. A committee has been set up to persuade the Health Board to change its mind. Various heavy lobbying has been in progress and a decision is expected mid December.



## Your New Community Council



The new community council was sworn in (makes a change from being sworn at, we suppose) on 5<sup>th</sup> November (expect some fireworks then !) and here they are. Meetings usually in Sailing Club 730 first Monday of each month and open to public so please come along if you've nothing better to do. Here are the members

Angela Anderson, Sandy Bingham, Grizelda Cowan, Mark Dickson (Chairman), Angus Meldrum Treasurer, Patricia Ritchie, James Robertson, and Shelagh MacKay (Vice Chairman)

## Eating Out

Probably because of the influx of tourists and holiday makers we are pretty well served by good quality restaurants in this area. Peat Inn and The Cellar in Anstruther have both retained their Michelin stars for another year - don't we miss Bruce and Jackie Sangster - and it is a tribute to the hard work of the chefs and staff there that they manage to maintain the high standards required for that accolade. New restaurant openings are usually awaited with anticipation so six months ago a new restaurant opened in Pittenweem opposite the Harbour (actually it was Stuart Barton's first physio place, we think)



In addition to a restaurant it has a gallery. The Dory Bistro and Gallery (<https://www.thedory.co.uk/>) is a most welcome addition to the East Neuk dining scene and we would hope that it is included in the gastronomic tours currently being run by various

entrepreneurs.

## Welcome

The first thing that strikes you when you walk in the door is the welcoming appearance of the decor, wooden floors, nice lighting and space – oh how there is space. Nowadays not only are restaurant tables seldom sufficiently large to accommodate all the paraphernalia with a dining experience they are often cheek by jowl with each other such that a simple prod with one's fork you could steal next door neighbour's chips. The staff are most welcoming and the front of house smiled when we came in as she did to every visitor and it was noticeable that as soon as the door opened with a new customer the staff were on their toes. It is essentially a fish restaurant (what else standing its location – you can see the boats unloading) but it is not

pretentious, not flurried with amuse bouches and other bits and bobs. Just plain well cooked (by that we mean not over cooked) fish and it comes with the day's vegetables. Fish is nearly always a texture food and difficult to provide a distinctive taste so our respective sea bream and sea bass could perhaps have done with the addition of a piquant sauce but the full size fish (no half fillets here) was more than adequate for most appetites. The desserts are to die for but again good tasty food. Well presented but not precocious. It is not meant to be fine dining in the tradition of the Peat Inn and Cellar or even Craig Millar in St. Monans but it represents a good well organised and presented meal and Oh ! The staff - *casi perfecto*.



## Sea-faring matters

You may have seen this vessel pottering back and forth recently. It is an offshore wind vessel named "Apollo" and it has been backwards and forwards in the Forth recently probably carrying out manoeuvres in relation to the wind farms that they are proposing in the north sea off the Angus and Fife Coasts. The vessel was constructed in 2017 as a specialist offshore wind farm installation vessel. In case you are wondering where we got this information we recommend the app for your tablet and mobile phone "Marine Traffic" which monitors all vessels in the world. So whenever a vessel appears on the horizon at Elie Beach you can show off and tell everyone what its called, where its been and where its going. Oh and don't forget the "Flight Radar 24" which monitors all aircraft so the next time you see a vapour trail you will be able to impress your friends by saying what language the air stewardess is speaking even although you actually can't hear it but there again neither can your friends. Oh the joys of modern communications!



dances essential....

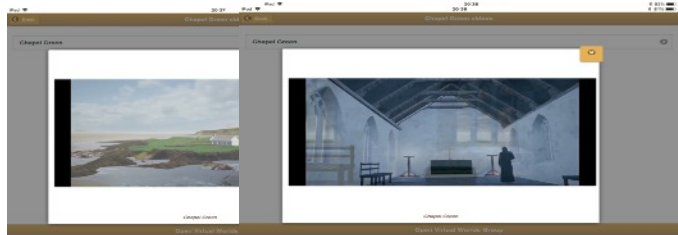
The Pavajita Night for the family 24<sup>th</sup> November - Mexican hat



# HERITAGE MOBILE PHONE APP LAUNCHED PRODUCED BY ELIE AND EARLSFERRY HISTORY SOCIETY

**A** new App has been launched for mobile devices, which will allow you to see the history of Elie and Earlsferry through the ages from the 13<sup>th</sup> Century to the current time. Downloadable for Apple and Android devices - to download search your app store Elie and Earlsferry. Produced in partnership with St. Andrews University, Elie and Earlsferry History Society has created a heritage mobile phone application which captures the history of the area through images, audios, text and digital reconstruction. A grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund made the whole thing possible. It uses modern technology to let you journey back through time to the 13<sup>th</sup> century chapel at Earlsferry. You can experience a virtual walk into the chapel and see what it might have looked like when in use. Flyovers using drones have captured the beautiful sweeping bays of both Earlsferry and Elie. These videos are complete with narrative descriptions.

In addition to the pilgrims, information on the industrial heritage of the area including weaving, mining and fishing can be accessed via the App. The story is told of transport and communications through the ages, starting with the introduction of turnpikes and toll roads. You can listen to some songs the weavers in Earlsferry sang as they worked in their cottages until the Town Hall bell tolled at 8.00pm, signalling the end of the working day. It also covers the history of the Mars Boys, who each year travelled - sometimes by foot - to Elie where they holidayed for six



weeks using the Granary at Elie Harbour as their base. Two songs about the Mars Boys have been composed for the App by Gordon Douglas, who has undertaken considerable research on the Training Ship Mars. The new App will let you experience Elie and the Royal Burgh of Earlsferry as never before. You will be able to learn more about our fascinating history using modern methods.

**To download search Elie and Earlsferry in your app store (app store for Iphone and google play store for android phones) - it's free.**

## From the Past and For the Future?

**T**he History of golf clubs in Elie and Earlsferry is illuminating. The first record of a recognised golf club is in 1787 when there was a summons for members



of Earlsferry Golf Society to attend their annual meeting which included dinner on the table at 3 o'clock! There are no other obvious records of this club. Then in 1830 Earlsferry Abbey Golf Club was established. The Abbey refers to the area at Doom Park at Chapel Green which was named Earlsferry Abbey by Mr. Crawford the owner of that piece of ground although there has never been any such building on it. Thereafter Earlsferry and Elie Golf Club was established. The Golf House Club (GHC) was established in 1875 and eventually Earlsferry and Elie Golf Club fell into desuetude and members either joined the Golf House Club or the contemporaneously established Earlsferry Thistle Golf Club. The traditions of the GHC have continued thereafter with minor hiccups until the present day. There is gossip however that things might be changing. The Ladies Golf Club was established in 1884. At the AGM of the GHC there was read a letter from a number of members of the Elie and Earlsferry Ladies Golf Club (EELGC) seeking parity with men in relation to starting times. Currently men are given priority for starting times at certain times during the day. It did not exactly send the Club into a flat spin but a gentle whirl perhaps - dervishes? Of course the EELGC is long established, has its own premises attached to the GHC and pays a different subscription structure and has different playing privileges and restrictions. Indeed only recently has the sign "Male Members only" been removed from the first gate. This request does raise some questions as to whether the current structure is past its sell by date in these modern times of gender and social inclusiveness. It is suggested by some that had the GHC been started today the structure would have been very different. Firstly the "artisans" club of Earlsferry Thistle and the Thistle Ladies Clubs surely would have been part of the main club. Such divisions of social class must now be an anachronism. There used to be a ban on "shopkeepers and tradesmen" joining the GHC. Thankfully that no longer subsists so the artisan nature of both Earlsferry Thistle clubs is also anachronistic if for no other reason than the clubhouse is not even in Earlsferry..... Secondly a separate ladies club might well have been the ideal in 1884 - but now? Is it time to consider a Golf Club open to all genders and backgrounds - come to think of it which section would a transgender join? It is going to take an amount of courage for the GHC to look to its future and consider such drastic innovations but we wonder whether it is not something that the club should seriously be thinking of investigating now before it is too late. While we are at it,

the GHC also has considerable influence over the Sports Club. Is it not time to think about incorporating that into the GHC, improving the facilities of the sports club and making say a general Elie Country Club type structure where all are free to join and enjoy the benefits of membership rather than the current divisions and different rights and obligations of the GHC (men's section) EELGC, Thistle and Sports Club. Would an open doors policy to all remove a "them and us" attitude of the Golf Club which some people seem to recognise? Well, it will take courage and an immense amount of good will on the part of GHC but would the ultimate aim not be to have a sports and country club where all members have equal rights to use the facilities? And while we are at it what about a major development linking the Sports club and GHC physically with a structure on the current car park. It could have a meeting place, a restaurant, an indoor bowling rink even a swimming pool and gym etc etc and might serve as a community hub if the Town Hall cannot make it. One can but dream....



## The Phone Mast



You will recall last year there was a planning application by Telefonica on behalf of Vodafone and O2 and others to site a telephone mast in the locality to improve mobile phone reception - this is almost a statutory requirement imposed on the phone companies to make as many settlements as possible incorporated into their mobile bandwidth at least at universal 4G and subsequently the new technology of 5G which is essential. The Community Council held meetings with the professionals involved and eventually a site was agreed with Sports Club and had the support of the Community Council to have it placed behind the telephone exchange to the east of the third fairway. This application was rejected by the planners and on appeal their view was upheld. The professionals are having considerable difficulty with the planning department in finding a suitable site for this essential mast. Now, whatever the merits or otherwise of the aesthetics of the structure it is vital for the proper connectivity of the village and especially the school and whilst the broadband speeds have dramatically increased now that most of us have fibre enabled broadband it is still essential that we have reliable and state of the art mobile phone connectivity. Could the planners perhaps do us a favour and meet with the professionals and try to work out a compromise? It is not as if there is any lack of support in the village.

## Animal Corner



So far my narratives have been mainly concerned with animals in their role of, dare I say it, inferior being - to be observed, humoured and communicated with

on the simplest of levels. But Nature abhors - among other things - one sided arrangements, however much homo sapiens all his wisdom would wish it otherwise. The fact remains that animals seem to derive as much, if not more, enjoyment from observing us as we do from studying them. On which side of the bars is the cage? Here is the scene..... The gentlest of breezes soften the high sun's heat - bees droned lazily about their business. I was inspecting a field when the silence was broken by angry chainsaws and the creaking and crashing of felling trees. The



lumber was neatly stacked at the entrance to my field and it was obviously the route for timber extraction. Led by a perspiring youth there appeared a large Shire horse, dragging a log by means of chains. The horse seemed rather pleased with his endeavours. After

the deposit of that log on the pile back into the trees the young man led the beast of burden for another log frantically brushing the congregating flies from his face. The horse reappeared this time unaccompanied and with the sounds of tinkling chains made his independent way into the middle of my field and with a sigh began to graze. Its youthful minder arrived belatedly to reclaim his wandering companion indicating a degree of exasperation at his charge's wandering. The horse retraced his steps with little rancour despite his meal break having been interrupted. A quite lull in proceedings and my friendly horse reappeared from the clearing dragging its chains behind him sans log but this time pursued by two of the loggers red of face and vociferous to boot. After a mouthful or two of the luscious sward he allowed himself once again patiently to be led back to his work. This performance was repeated again and again and each time the horse remained tolerant and vaguely surprised at the antics of his work mates as his companions became redder of face and more voluble. Eventually all became quiet perhaps as a result of responsibility for the job in hand but the catalyst may have been a casual remark by one of his workmates about the knacker's yard. Horse sense don't you think?



by "Clip Clop" our nature correspondent and equine advisor who talks to the horses.

## The Beach

Ivy has been cleared (she did not apparently protest) from in front of Siward and Ruddon Grange and the area will shortly be replanted with marram grass. It will be necessary to fence off a small area here to preserve it until the grass takes. There is an idea to plant indigenous wild flowers as well which will thrive in the sandy environment.



Further ivy removal is planned from in front of Earlslea. The September high tides along with the south to south easterly gales of late have resulted in more of the dunes being removed and much of the regeneration after last year's storm seems to have been lost. Conventional wisdom

suggests it will re grow but it will take some time.

## Herald Archive and on line

If you could possibly be interested in previous editions of this august publication or you do not wish to be seen acquiring a copy via usual outlets we have created a website in which you will find all past editions and this one its <http://www.elieandearlsferry.net> (note that there is no "s" after the http and you will not find it if you google it)

Steve needed to identify local people who had expertise, equipment or premises that would be useful. Over the past two years, the list has been added to regularly and premises identified for use as a central meeting point if required. To co-ordinate an emergency, VIPER has controllers – Steve Blaney and Angus Meldrum who would work together to get a fast reaction to any emergency situation. The meeting points will be : Elie Sailing Club, Elie Church Hall and The Pavilion.

It could be a power cut, a flood, deep snow, road blocked, accident or a fire in the village. The organisers are especially keen to look after older people and those not so mobile in the community and a list is prepared of those who would require special attention. There is also a need to have stocks of food, water, warm clothing and blankets. If you feel you could contribute something – your experience, equipment or materials – please contact Steve on 01333 330564.



VIPER has been so well received, that Gillian Duncan, from East Neuk First Responders, has adopted the concept and is forming a new group along the same lines for the East Neuk. This team will be known as ENCEPT – East Neuk Communities Emergency Planning Team. Oh how we love acronyms - no point in having a title

unless it converts to a catchy acronym. You will hear more about this group from Gillian in due course.

We hope we never have to activate VIPER – but if we do – let's hope we can make a difference . . .any suggestions, any offers of assistance or comments would be very welcome. It is a great credit to Steve for this initiative.



VIPER  
MEETS  
COBRA



Over many years in the UK, when there is a crisis, national government calls on their security team COBRA for a reaction to the crisis. Two years ago Steve Blaney conceived the idea to have something similar in the event of an emergency in our village. Of course the first stage of any such idea is to fix on a name – acronym so much the better – Steve fixed on VIPER – (Village Initiative Preparing Emergency Reaction) and introduced it to the Community Council who enthusiastically endorsed it but as usual left it to someone else (namely Steve) to do the work. The purpose was to set up a team of local people who could offer assistance in an emergency before the emergency services arrived. On their arrival the VIPER team would assist or stand down as instructed by the professional who would be on the scene and in charge. We muse that the crash in Anstruther last weekend might have been such an event.



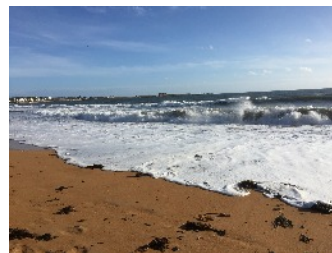
Produced by Graham Johnston [info@grahamjohnston.scot](mailto:info@grahamjohnston.scot)

## Blast from the past

ELIE 1832

There was discovered, on Tuesday morning last, on the beach below Earlsferry, a considerable portion of a full sized coffin, covered with fine black cloth, and white mounting; one of the handles only remained attached to it. A circumstance so unusual has of course given rise to much conjecture; but as neither the lid nor any plate has been found, it must for the present remain a mystery. In all probability some body-snatchers, after emptying it of its contents, have taken advantage of the prevailing southerly gales, to set it adrift from the other side of the Frith.

## And finally



We cannot but mention the glorious week end of 3/4<sup>th</sup> November when the sea was spectacular and the sky fantastic....would it not be shame if developments in the village lead to a reduced appreciation of this....