

Spring 2020

THE AVENUES

Extraordinary Times

It seems likely that the coronavirus emergency lockdown will continue into the summer and that there is no early prospect of the resumption of SCARA committee meetings or the getting together which is necessary or the preparation, completion and circulation of our normal newsletter. However, given the limited facilities of the Convener's laptop and zoom meetings we have been able to assemble this limited, virtual edition and we would be obliged if you would draw this to the attention of your friends and neighbours in the area. We are always on the lookout for news and views that may be of interest and assistance to the Avenue residents.

At the time of writing this we are now 45 days into 'Lock Down' and our lives have been changed beyond belief. What started as a 'strange flu' in China in January spread worldwide in weeks and arrived in our midst on the 7th of March when the Scotstoun Leisure Centre closed for a deep clean after a Scottish rugby player, who had used it, tested positive for Covid19.

Travel restricted, kitchen tables turned into classrooms and bedrooms into offices. Zoom meetings and furlough are everyday words, fights over the wifi and hands rough as deep sea fishermen's through constant washing are now the norm and flour becomes more valuable than petrol. Sirens, always in the background of city life, now seem to pierce the silence and remind us of the dangers outside and the strain the NHS is under.

Yet through all the stress of being yanked out of our comfort zones and plunged into this weird 'new' world, an 'old' world has emerged through the streets and avenues of our city. A sense of old fashioned community spirit has been blossoming amongst the Avenues for some time now, aided by the, Christmas Advent windows, Carol singing events and the SCARA Ceilidhs. But at a time when we are told to stay at least 2m away from everyone outside our immediate



family, neighbours are coming closer together like never before. Offers of help from complete strangers who live only a block away. Picking up shopping, posting mail, a friendly phone call can be invaluable to a person who is self isolating or shielding for 2 or 12 weeks.

SCARA has been very impressed with the stories of neighbours rallying together to raise spirits in these days of isolation. Whole streets have come out to sing 'Happy Birthday' to a neighbour living alone. Virtual treasure hunts have been organised, windows decorated once again this time with Easter messages and hundreds of rainbows to cheer us up on our daily permitted outdoor exercise and remind us that we must have hope. The ritual 8pm 'Clap for the NHS' on Thursday nights has grown momentum with music instruments and pots and pans accompanying the clapping from the doorsteps and even the neighbouring ships on the Clyde have been heard joining in with a blast from their fog horns. Home baking left on doorsteps by neighbours you never really knew before. Jigsaws and books exchanged in a 'help yourself' box from the garden. Half used tins of paint or packets of flour or yeast gladly passed on to a neighbour in need and received with such delight.

The hum of traffic is replaced by bicycle bells and lawnmowers. Children playing hopscotch on the street, gardens pruned and planted like never before and the smell of fresh paint wafts from open windows as so many make the most of this unexpected 'free time'.

None of us know when life will return to the way it used to be and maybe it might be better if it doesn't! Normal, for lots of people young and old, can be a strain that is not openly discussed. They may continue to struggle with getting out to the shops, transporting heavy bins up and down the lane, posting mail or even just having a friendly voice to call when they need it most. Many will miss the 8pm clap of appreciation on Thursday nights as it might be the only time they see their neighbours all week.

As pointed out to SCARA recently, not everyone wants or needs help and prefers to live independent lives but maybe some do and we can achieve something positive from this horrible pandemic. Maybe offers of help and the kindness of strangers and neighbours will continue to appear on our door mats long after Covid 19 has passed, we can hope!

PAVEMENT PARKING BAN ?



Faithful readers of this Newsletter, and many others, will be aware that the Scottish Parliament last year passed legislation which made it illegal to park motor car wheels up on pavements. They will be aware also, however, that the regulations required to bring that legislation into force have not been created by Scottish ministers. Scara has experience of the alacrity of said Scottish ministers in connection with dealing with the planning application for the Whiteinch gasifier/incinerator which has now been lying about for five years and more. I have experience of other legislation which was passed in 2010 but which still awaits regulations to bring it into force and there has been legislation in the past which was never brought into force.

All this tells us that we may have some time in hand to address the problem on our own terms. By improving the surface and conditions of the lanes which would provide vehicular access to back gardens but more about that in the next article.

There will be no solution that fits all but this is perhaps the time for us to discuss the options and input from members would be very welcome.

(MS)

LOVE YOUR LANES

One thing you learn early on when you join SCARA is how many residents feel about the back lanes in the area. We are regularly approached with suggestions, observations, complaints or concerns. Unlike the streets and footpaths there is often some ambiguity over just who is responsible for our back lanes. Recent conversations with Glasgow

Council made it clear that they don't see the upkeep of the lanes as their responsibility. That being the case it then falls on the residents themselves to ensure lanes are safe and accessible.

Some residents of course use their lanes daily and almost all of us use the lanes at least once a week. The weekly 'taking of the bins to the end of the lane' is certainly much more enjoyable in summer than in the dark, rain and cold. That aside it's clear that a number of residents can find it difficult to pull heavy bins along lanes if they're particularly badly potholed and cut up or overgrown.

Many people in Scotstoun already take it on themselves to improve the condition of their lane. In some cases groups of neighbours have come together to arrange for stone chips or gravel to be delivered and spread. Some have planted grass seed and regularly mow and maintain their part of the lane. Others have let nature take its course.

I would like to bring to your attention by the photographs below of three local cases where the home owners have taken matters into their own hands and improved the lane surfaces themselves,



Lane (A) was done over 10 years ago, image (B) about five years ago and image (C) this year and they all seem to be bearing up pretty well. In some cases resident's (like photo C) have opened up their back garden, making room to park two cars. This isn't always possible but if the

pavement parking ban goes into force it might certainly prove a popular option with many residents.

Even now vehicle access is often required. Many residents have garages and some have electric vehicle charging points. Emergency service vehicles might also require access. So it's important we all think about the condition of our lane. This isn't limited to the ground of course. One of the regular complaints we receive regards the state of hedges or trees. Hedges in particular stretching over a garden boundary line can not only impede access but scratch cars.

Often lanes get damaged if serious building work takes place on a residence. When extensions are being built for example heavy machinery usually requires regular access and these types of vehicles can damage the surface of lanes. This of course is a perfectly legitimate use of a lane and no one is suggesting extension building should be stopped, simply that consideration is given to any material damage that might take place to a back lane during the building work, is made good once the work is complete.

Security is also something that is raised. Our lanes are open and anyone can pass through them. Some residents have installed lighting, often movement sensor based, which is helpful in the dark winter nights.

Summer is the time to consider our lanes. There's more light, the grass is growing and more of us are actually using the lanes. Trimming hedges back, planting grass or coming together with neighbours to fill potholes or buy and spread chips or gravel can transform a back lane and make life easier for your friends and neighbours all year round.

WE STILL NEED YOUR SUBS!

The lack of a printed copy of the Avenues newsletter means you will not have received the donation envelope inviting you to donate the annual £2 cash subs through the letterbox of a SCARA committee member. However, the facility to pay your donation directly into the SCARA bank account has been available for several years, and residents have increasingly made use of that option. This year, in view of the coronavirus emergency restrictions, we would be grateful if you would use the bank transfer option if you possibly can. The details are as follows:

Account name: Scotstoun Conservation Area Residents Association (or just use SCARA)

Sort code: 80 - 07 - 75

Account Number: 06001370



Please add your house number and street name when lodging your payment.

If you do not have the facility to make online payments, then, once the emergency is over, you can drop a cash donation into our treasurer, **David Irving**, at **5 Danes Drive**.

The Association relies solely upon the donations from residents to remain operational and to act in the interests of our community, so please take a moment to make that payment the next time you are logged into your bank account. The suggested amount is £2.00 per household but any donation is welcome. The more that we receive then the better we can address issues which are of concern to our membership and, of course, the more social events we can organise... ..and, after the current emergency experience, that may be something to look forward to!

Our Unsung Heroes

We may not have Captain Tom Moore living in our area but there are plenty of other less sung heroes all going that extra mile in these trying times. Many of our residents are key workers and have been slogging away throughout the lock down to keep the county running and helping us battle this pandemic. So a big thank you to our NHS staff, postal workers, bin men, retail staff, delivery drivers, volunteers, police, teachers and many many more

that had to go out to work and put themselves at risk. We salute you. Please get in touch with YOUR lock down stories and we will add them to our next newsletter.

Finally SCARA would also like to pay condolences to any of our residents' who sadly passed away over this lockdown where funeral numbers are restricted and neighbours can't get to pay our respects as we would have wished. May they rest in peace.

Lucky Escape

Some local residents' had a rude awakening on Monday 27th April when a van travelling along Danes Drive at 4.45am mounted the pavement and crashed into a lamp post.

It appears that the driver experienced a tyre 'blow out' which caused him to lose control and smash into the lamp post narrowly missing a row of parked cars on Danes Drive between Dunglass Avenue and Ormiston Avenue. Residents quickly alerted the police



and ambulance services both arriving in a very short time and luckily the driver escaped serious injury. The road remained closed for four hours while they waited for the recovery vehicle to remove the van which was quite badly damaged.

Thankfully, given the very early time of the accident meant the road was extremely quiet and there were no pedestrians around otherwise someone could have been very seriously hurt on this usually busy road.

The lamp post is currently out of order and has been reported to the council for repair.

The Whiteinch Gasifier (Incinerator)

Most members will be aware that, about 6 years ago, W H Malcolm Ltd applied for local authority permission to build and operate a gas-fired incinerator/ oven in South Street to dispose of certain types of waste materials. This would involve a tall chimney stack emitting waste fumes 24 hours a day and a huge amount of lorry traffic bringing waste to the facility. While the application was granted initially, local residents raised an appeal to Glasgow City Council who allowed the appeal and refused permission. WH Malcolm Ltd then duly appealed to Scottish ministers against the decision by the City Council. Despite having overruled by a number of years the relevant statutory time limits there still has been no outcome from Scottish ministers.

In the meantime, the context of this application has shifted immensely, very much against the proposed operation. The coronavirus emergency lockdown has led Scottish Air Quality to find that nitrogen dioxide readings have now fallen sharply in Scottish cities, providing an opportunity to investigate the effects of improved air quality. For example, current research at Harvard University reveals that a minimal increase in traffic pollution which, incidentally, is accepted by WH Malcolm Limited as being the anticipated a result of their proposed operation, will result in a 15% increase in the Covid 19 death rate (Herald 20 April 2020).

The days of actively increasing pollution in Scottish cities, even to a minimal extent, appear to have passed into history. Nevertheless, we continue to await a decision by Scottish Ministers



Leading Warriors' player to leave Scotstoun

We were sorry to hear that Glasgow Warriors legend and Ormiston Avenue resident Daniel (DTH) van der Merwe is leaving the club and the area this summer. The Canadian international holds the distinction of scoring more tries than any other player in Glasgow Warriors history, amassing 54 tries in his two spells in Scotstoun, indeed van Der Merwe is the all-time second highest try scorer in the Pro 14 championship. His time in Glasgow coincided with the Warriors most successful spell, with try-scoring Pro 14 semi-final and final appearances along the way. Along with two Pro 14 titles DTH has played at 4 World Cups.

It's not just Warriors fans who'll miss DTH. Their neighbours and the many friends they've made in Scotstoun are going to miss the whole van Der Merwe family. *We wish them well and hope they leave Scotstoun with happy memories.*

Drinks in the garden!

The Garden Shed Drinks Company was established in 2017 by local Norse Road residents Maxine and Ryan Grant together with Ruaridh Jackson (who currently plays for the warriors). When Ryan's rugby career with the Glasgow Warriors was drawing to an end, a visit to Eden Mill Distillery had inspired him to try his hand at distilling.

They purchased a miniature copper still and tried to find local ingredients to use ie brambles from the lane, dandelion root and lavender from their own garden. After four months trial and error the 'Garden Shed Gin' recipe was finalised and after their license for a mini distillery in their Norse Road garden shed was rejected by the council they approached Eden Mill who offered to distil a small batch at their distillery.

Initially their gin was only supplied to local delis, bars and restaurants but fast forward to today and they have gone from strength to strength and enjoyed huge success. It has been nominated for Scottish London Dry Gin of the year as well as winning a silver medal at the world Spirits competition in San Francisco. It is also now being exported to over twenty five countries worldwide



The environment is something they're passionate about so a portion of their profits are donated back to environmental charities. They have partnered with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust and Trees4Scotland, planting one tree for every 6 bottles of gin sold.

They are currently offering a free gin delivery service with 6 free tonics to Scotstoun residents.

Bramble Peach Gin 50cl with 6 x free tonics £30

Garden Shed Gin (70cl) with 6 x free tonics £35

Email enquiries@thegardenshed-drinksco.com and they can arrange non contact delivery.

We'll raise a glass to their continued success!