



The Voice

Queensferry Heritage Trust

February 2018

Priory Church Planning Application



With regard to an application ref 17/05636/FUI from The Priory Church to replace two semi-derelict portacabins erected in 1999 with a single storey system to be used for a meeting room, kitchen, toilet and food store.

Mike McDowall wrote the following objection to the planning proposal on behalf of Queensferry Heritage Trust (this application was discussed at our committee meeting on 6th July).

“The proposal does not enhance or preserve the character of the conservation area or the building to which it relates; it is not compatible with the historic context; it does not employ the highest standard of materials or workmanship, all contrary to the Local Plan requirements.”

We are pleased to note that the new application shows the plans have been modified. It takes up slightly more footprint against the wall but it now has external timber cladding, lots of glazing to the north, a flat roof and a large pyramidal rooflight. Altogether it is now a quite charming little building and no further objections will be made.

Foodbank The Priory Church operates as a Distribution Centre on Thursday mornings between 11.00 and 1pm. Following a referral from frontline care agencies and charities the Food Bank seeks to help local people by providing Food Packs in times of crisis.

Local Government – Past, Present and Future,



Last Meeting of Queensferry Town Council: 12 May 1975

The Trust's first event of the year on 12 January attracted a good audience of about 40 members, despite the cold and icy conditions. Unfortunately, through accident and illness, the three former Burgh Town Councillors were unable to attend, although no doubt a good few members of the audience could recall Queensferry before 1975! Following John Murphy's welcome, Mike McDowall briefly described the history of local government from the former Royal Burgh days, to regionalisation in 1975, re-organisation in 1996, through to the present day.

We were fortunate in having the benefit of Keith Giblett, Chair of Queensferry and District Community Council, and Councillor Graham Hutchison, CEC. At the top table. Graham described his role as a councillor, the Ward structure, and the fact that there were five other Community Councils in the Almond Ward as well as Queensferry. Keith described the history and responsibilities of the Community Council and outlined some of the future challenges and opportunities for the town. The main topic of general discussion and questions concerned planning issues, new housing and tourism and the lack of any meaningful consultation as revealed in the 'Place-making' exercise. It was agreed that the present planning system was 'broken'. Graham explained the effect of various 'reorganisations' within the Council and the lack of local representation on the planning committee. Keith asked if anyone knew of the 'Edinburgh Tourist Action Group' which appears to have been formed without Queensferry.

It was finally agreed with a show of hands, that were our Community Council given the power and financial resources of the former Burgh, Queensferry would be better served.

M. McDowal

Council Chambers

The City of Edinburgh Council Office, and Museum at 53 High Street is now a white-harled block with some Arts and Crafts features. Upstairs it houses Queensferry Museum. The Provost's Room which was on the first floor is now part of the Museum. The room served both as his office and as a place to receive important visitors to Queensferry. These visitors included Queen Elizabeth II, Russian leaders such as Khrushchev and Bulganin, and other foreign leaders, among them President of Sudan Ferik Ibrahim Abhood and King Olav of Norway.



The building, built in the early 1900's, was originally the Viewforth Hotel which was a temperance hotel. It was used as the Norwegian Naval Command from 1942 – 1944 and Crown Prince Olav of Norway was a regular visitor. The building then housed the Council Chambers of the Royal Burgh of Queensferry from 1945 until Queensferry became part of Edinburgh in 1975.

At a Heritage Trust meeting this month the committee found water pouring through the ceiling when they went into the basement rooms. The alarm was raised and it was found that on the floor above a plug had been left in the sink and the tap turned on which had caused a flood and the water had begun to pour through the ceiling. Had our meeting not taken place that evening there would possibly have been considerable damage caused to the building.

Royal Burghs



Has Queensferry also got a legitimate right to be called a Royal Burgh?

The rights of royal burghs were preserved by Article XX1 of the treaty of Union between Scotland and England in 1707. However, this act was abrogated in 1975 by the Local Government (Scotland) act 1973. These towns are now sometimes referred to as “former royal burghs.”

The issue was discussed during a debate on local Government in 1972 when Ronald Murray MP for Leith asked that the government did not entirely abolish the ancient rights of Royal Burghs.

In 1977 Alick Buchanon-Smith , MP for North Angus and the Mearns asked Frank McElhone , Parliamentary Under-Secretary for State, why a community council for a former royal burgh was not able to use the term in its title. In reply Frank McElhone stated that the use of the title was a matter for the district council to decide when drawing up the scheme for community councils in its area. Accordingly, some community councils established since 1975, such as Linlithgow, have the term Royal Burgh incorporated in their title.

Thus it would appear that Queensferry has a legitimate opportunity to be rematriculated as a Royal Burgh by Edinburgh Community Council.

Ferry Glen Land Slip



In 2013 following a period of sustained rain a land slip occurred on made-up ground next to the Queensferry Bowling Club.

Although QF. Bowling Club buildings are nearby, no signs of movement have been identified near the property over the last 4 years.

SWECO has been appointed to carry out site investigation studies, develop a design solution and prepare a construction package. The progress has been very slow and internal design checks with AECOM has also extended the timeline.

However, all but one minor design issue has now been resolved and it is hoped that the final priced construction ready package, estimated to be about £180k, should be available by this month. The money will be sought from the Asset Investment Group.

Once an appropriate budget has been identified the works could proceed following a procurement exercise with a specialist contractor.

Access to the site is very restricted and will require considerable vehicle movement (stone fill) via the Co-op car park and cycleway.

100th Anniversary



This month celebrated the hundredth anniversary of women receiving the right to vote. The right was only for the select few who were over thirty and owned their own homes. It took another ten years to win full voting equality. The vote was won by the sheer resistance and determination of two groups—the suffragists and the suffragettes. The suffragists used campaigning and debate to argue for the equality of women while the suffragettes went a step further using “deeds not words” to force change.

While the Pankhursts and Emily Wilding Davison became household names there were many more suffragettes of note. In West Scotland, the Association for Women's Suffrage was formed in 1902. West Lothian's first Suffragette meeting was in 1909 and by 1914 there were Suffragette meetings being held in most of West Lothian.

A discussion took place in the Scottish Parliament to mark the hundredth anniversary and MSPs cited examples of the self sacrifice made by Scottish suffragettes and suffragists in the early years of the 20th century.

Unfortunately it has not been possible to find information about particular suffragettes in Queensferry .

The story of Scotland's Suffragettes will be told at our meeting on 19th April. The story will be enacted by storyteller Nicola Wright.

Planning Applications



Two major planning applications have been submitted for a substantial number of new houses to be built in South Queensferry.

The larger application which is to build over 800 new houses on the Echline Fields just to the south of Bullyeon Road is due to come before the Council Planning Committee on 21st February. This development proposal will have a significant impact on Queensferry and the surrounding areas. Local Councillors Kevin Young and Louise Young have submitted an application for a hearing at this meeting and would welcome support from the community.

If you wish to support them you can find further information on the website below.

[Subject: Major Queensferry housing planning application - how you can help](#)

[Reply-To: Cllr Kevin Lang & Cllr Louise Young](#)

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Next talk: Thursday 22nd February

Shale Mining and Dalmeny Shale Company

DR Robin Chesters :Director, Almond Valley Heritage Trust

Shale Mining was once a very busy industry, employing thousands of men and women in Scotland. Although few records still survive, the Almond Valley Heritage Trust is working to preserve those that did. They are working to digitize and make available salary records, tenancy records, employee cards, apprenticeship records, accident records and other materials. These are slowly being added to their website. The website also includes maps of the shale villages in West Lothian as well as photographs of the various miners' houses.

UNESCO plaque, Sunday, 4th March

After much deliberation it has been decided to place the plaque on the wall at the side of Jean Winning's physiotherapy clinic. It will be placed at the northern end from where the bridge can be viewed on Sunday, 4th March.

Flying Scotsman, Sunday, 20th May

The Flying Scotsman is due to cross the Rail Bridge on Sunday, 20th May.



Heritage Interest News

It would be really appreciated if members who have information or research knowledge of Heritage Interest would like to contribute to articles for The VOICE. If you have a piece you would like to share please send it to myself at

Montoisson@btinternet.com.

