

Newsflash 58

February 2023



**Dundee
Civic Trust**
'Encouraging the Best'

The first fifty years

A community organisation might be described as a group which comprises a fairly large number of members, all of whom share an interest in some form of common good that will benefit the community as a whole, and not just the members of the group. For a community organisation to be successful and effective, and to have survived and thrived for as long as fifty years requires a singularity of purpose and a vision that reaches beyond the group itself.

Dundee Civic Trust is fifty years old this very month. It is, in my view as a relatively recent arrival, exactly that sort of effective community organisation. Starting with its founding ambition and purpose, the original committee and wider membership had an objective, which was encouraged by members of the Abertay Historical Society, the Scottish Civic Trust, and by its own vision to develop into an organisation that had sufficient pushing power and prestige to be able to persuade, cajole, influence, lobby, discuss, publicise and report, but never forcefully. The Trust today follows these precepts, and promotes, by gentle but constant pushing, the desire to conserve, preserve, refurbish, develop and improve the city to which we all have strong feelings of belonging. Those who have had some power to change what the city looked like were the then Dundee Corporation, and property owners, developers and architects. Fifty years ago they heard, and they still hear, the opinions of ordinary people; but those opinions, given when needed, may express a view about Dundee's historic cityscape that may be different from the one that the owners and others are themselves promoting. Too often, the promoters have wanted to destroy, replace, dismantle the fabric that *is* the city, and far too often the lowest price, the easiest option, the disruptive action, is the preferred route for them to take. That route is very often not the best one.

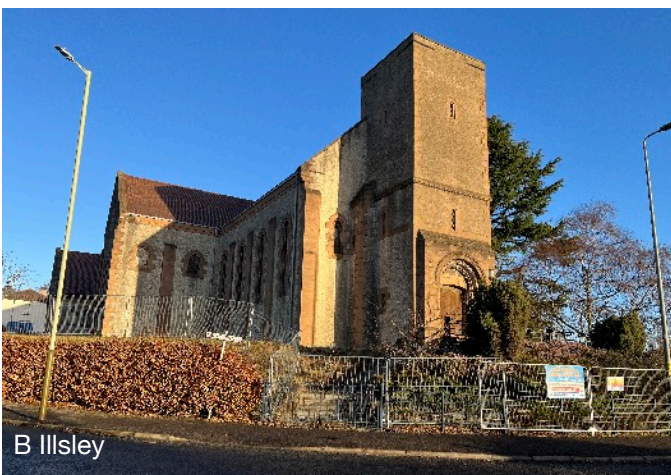
Donald Gordon



D Gordon

Craigiebank Church – the end of an era

Barbara Illsley

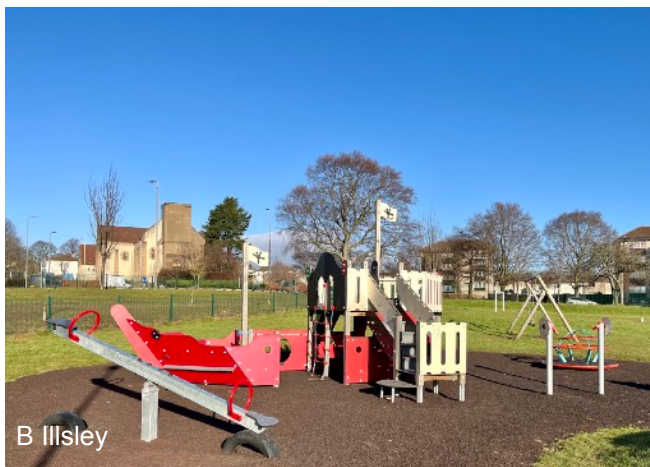


B Illsley

In September 2021, the Church of Scotland was granted permission to demolish Craigiebank Church and the associated halls to create a cleared site for potential re-development. The bulldozers have now arrived. Craigiebank Church, a Category B listed building, was designed by Frank Thomson and opened in 1938. The halls had opened a few years earlier. The Trust commented on the application for demolition, expressing disappointment at the loss of a B listed building but accepting that it had deteriorated to such an extent that retention was all but impossible. Nevertheless, we felt that the loss of the halls would be a blow to the local community and, given the Council's

policy of strengthening communities through the 20-minute neighbourhood concept, we asked that the future development of the site should take account of the need for community space in the area.

The location of the church, at the centre of Craigiebank, was no accident. Craigiebank was laid out according to ‘garden city’ principles which were the brainchild of Sir Ebenezer Howard. Howard advocated a new form of urban development combining the best of the town and the country where everyone had access to affordable housing, fresh air and open space, job opportunities and centrally located community facilities.



Less well known than its sister scheme at Logie, Craigiebank was built in the early 1920s and provided bright, south facing, affordable homes. In line with similar garden suburbs elsewhere in the UK, space was left at the heart of the scheme, where Greendykes Road meets Craigie Avenue, for community facilities including a school, shops, a church and recreational space but over the years only the church and a play area were built. Craigiebank, always a popular place to live, evolved in different ways. It is served by shops on Arbroath Road to the north. Greendykes Road, one of the main ‘boulevards’, became a major arterial route with its green space filled with pylons linked to Carolina Port power station in the docks. Blocks of flats were eventually built on the unused central sites, diversifying the area’s

housing stock.

There are strong echoes of Howard’s garden city vision in today’s 20-minute neighbourhood concept. Both stress the importance of a diverse housing stock, local employment, a quality environment and a range of services and amenities within walking or cycling distance. It will be fascinating to see the next chapter of the story for this popular community.

Overgate – a fresh start?

Brian Cram

It emerged in the press recently (Courier, 7 February 2023) that the Fraser Group, controlled by Mike Ashley, is in discussion with Legal and General to buy the Overgate Centre. This could mean the return of ‘Fraser’s’ to the city and possibly a new cinema as well.

First impressions seem to be “what a great idea”! Here’s a retailer reversing the trend towards on-line retailing and going back to investing in the bricks and mortar that are the main basis of his trade. No more stressful rent reviews, ideally, and a property owner who understands that making his shops profitable will benefit the business. The property companies who own shopping centres have been having a torrid time and here is a way forward.

The old House of Fraser brand was well liked in Dundee and with the closure of Debenhams this seems like a great opportunity for Overgate to bring back an anchor store and create even more reasons to come to Dundee city centre.



Planning Update

Nick Day

In the last Newsflash, we reported on the pre-application discussions re the proposals for a **15,000 seat stadium for Dundee FC with mixed use commercial and housing development at Camperdown Leisure Park**. The Trust has expressed concerns that the development is heavily dependent on car use, potential traffic congestion, the potential adverse impact of the commercial development on well established district centres, and the impact on both Camperdown Park and the surrounding housing and industrial areas. A further meeting has been held with the developer’s consultants but little progress has been made in meeting the Trust’s concerns. A formal application for planning permission in principle is expected to be submitted in due course.



Newsflash 57 also reported on a forthcoming pre-application consultation event by Kirkwood Homes for a further **50 house development at Balgillo Heights**. Members of the Trust Planning Group attended the event, following which the Trust has expressed its opposition to these proposals on land not allocated for housing in the Local Development Plan. Notwithstanding that the proposals involve removal of the unused Neurological Centre on part of the site, development here would be heavily car use dependent and would set a precedent for yet more housing on greenfield sites. The Trust is aware that housing developers have interest in developing adjoining land north of Arbroath Road towards Drumsturdy Road that might accommodate another 700 plus houses. It is important that such development

is resisted and the focus for new housing development in the city be on brownfield sites supporting existing 20-minute neighbourhoods. A “battle royal” is expected over this issue in the preparation of the **Council’s update of the Local Development Plan**. Proposals for LDP3 will be invited later this year and we see the Trust having a vital role in contributing to this process both on this and other planning related matters.

Another matter that needs to be included in LDP3 are more specific guidelines on **housing design, both to improve the appearance of developments and to achieve zero carbon emissions**. Initial discussions have been held to this end between the Trust, Dundee Institute of Architects and City Council planners. We hope to tell you more about this in the next Newsflash.





New planning applications include **another car dealership on Baird Avenue, Dryburgh** on the former Tesco warehouse site fronting the Kingsway; another substantial **warehouse on Jack Martin Way, Claverhouse East Estate** with space for 500 delivery vans; **flats with commercial ground floor uses at 10 Douglas Street, Blackness** on the site of the former IT centre; **external improvements to the University of Dundee Tower Block**; and **single storey industrial units off Rutherford Road, Dryburgh** on the site of the former Bonar House. The Trust whilst supporting the latter development in principle has expressed concern regarding the design on this prominent site as seen from the Kingsway/Camperdown roundabout.

A pre-application event has been held for a proposal to develop **72 flats and ground floor commercial development at 60 Brown Street, Blackness**. More detail is hoped for at a second consultation event. As with the proposal in Douglas Street, the principle of residential use in Blackness is welcomed, but doubts have been expressed about the desirability of demand for yet more ground floor commercial uses.

Applications decided include:

*Approval to extend the time allowed to commence **student housing development in West Marketgait** from 18 months to 3 years. This is a welcome decision recognising the complexity of getting development started on this site.



*Despite the Trust's concerns about the design, the Council have approved a **5 storey office block opposite the V&A**, to be tagged onto the ugly Agnes Husband House the HQ of Social Security Scotland.



*Contrary to the Trust's views, the Council have approved the **partial demolition of the Listed Building at 49-51 Queen Street, Broughty Ferry** for West End Garage citing "extenuating material considerations of sufficient weight to justify approval of Listed Building Consent". This building was formerly a drill hall and home to the Regal Cinema. It is understood that the site will now be used for open air car sales

* The Council have refused Henry's proposal for a **drive-thru cafe on East Dock Street** at the car wash site. Concerns re the out of centre location and traffic issues echoed the Trust's objections. The applicants have appealed to the Scottish Government to overturn this decision.

Dens Road Market – gone but not forgotten

Steve Connelly



N Elder

The recent fire that damaged the roof of the premises that were once “Dundee’s Petticoat Lane” led me to reminisce about my short-lived experience as a stall holder there in the late 1970s. The sights, the smells and the sing-song delivery of the bingo caller were all brought to mind.

The building has a history stretching back to the middle of the 19th century when Dundee’s textile industry was expanding north along Dens Road. Looking at the map evidence on the National Library of Scotland’s website shows the building was originally called Clepington Power Loom Works. It was on the present site before the formation of Arklay Street. Local directories indicate that the first proprietors were Charles Lucas & Co in 1855. Lucas was actually a Londoner, who had been a merchant in Dundee since the early 1840s. By 1850, he combined this with being a manufacturer in Forfar before moving that side of his business to Dundee. Lucas retired back to London and the factory went on the market in 1877. At the time, it contained about 90 looms suitable for linen and jute manufacturing. It subsequently changed hands a number of times and owners included H A Malcolm & Co, which was probably the firm responsible for changing the name to Rashiewell Works in the mid-1880s. It became the home of William Cleghorn’s Dundee Paper Mill Co in the 1890s before being taken over by jutespinning concerns Martin, Stewart & Co and then John N Kyd & Co. The latter firm became part of Jute Industries Ltd in 1920.



S Connelly

In 1969, a group of traders, displaced from their original Greenmarket site by work connected with the Tay Road Bridge, moved to the by-then disused factory and Dens Road Market was born. At its height, the building housed 80 stalls and was very popular. It sold fruit and veg, bedding, curtains, household goods, second-hand clothes and bric a brac (as my stall was termed). Some stalls even sold proper antiques and plenty of bargains were to be had. Dens Road Market finally closed in 2013 and since then there has been a suggestion that it be used as a bowling alley and trampoline park. Last December part of the roof collapsed and now the most likely outcome is that it will be turned into flats.

Bin removal

Stephen Brand

I was interested to hear that the Council plan’s to remove commercial bins from the streets of Dundee. Starting on the 1st March, these bins must be stored in the commercial premises and not on the street, except during specific collection times. It is estimated that 1200 bins are affected. This should make a huge difference to the overall appearance of the environment. It will, hopefully, reduce spillages and hence reduce the seagulls menace and vermin generally. It follows similar schemes in other cities and I hope it is properly enforced.

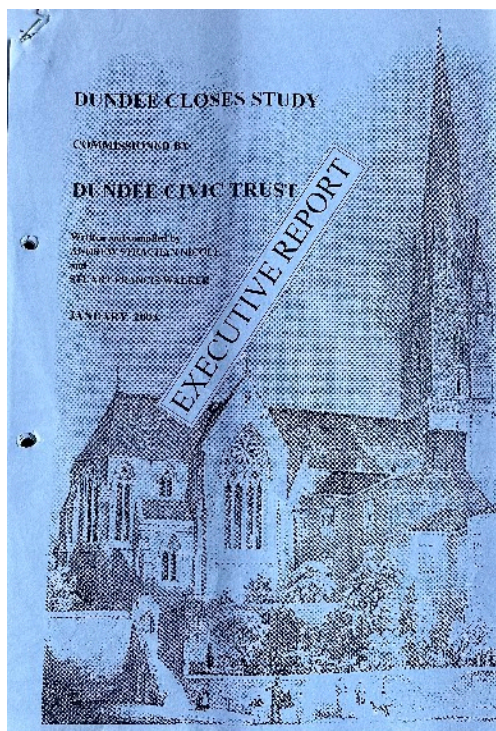
When I was staying in Cadiz old town last year, the streets were so narrow it was impossible to have bins there so the bins went put out in the evening between 9 and 11 and were collected and emptied. Necessity required this system but it worked very well and kept the streets clear of these unsightly containers. We look forward to seeing this in operation.



S Brand

Dundee Closes Study

Stephen Brand



In our 50th year, we look back 20 years to 2003 when long-standing member Andrew Nicoll and his associate Stuart Walker completed and published the 'Dundee Closes Study'. This research was commissioned by Dundee Civic Trust and received lottery funding. The object of the Study was to explore the historic centre of Dundee, an area of 700 yards by 400 yards around the old High Street. The area was divided into five segments where the buildings and closes were examined and then the potential for improvement was considered, either by conservation or re-development or both. It is fascinating to read the detailed analysis now and it is interesting that there are parallels with the recently issued Dundee City Council consultation paper on the City Centre.

The Trust has only one copy of this report in its archives, but there may also be some CD Roms with it on. Parts of the study were published in the Trust's newsletters in Autumn 2003 and in the Spring and Summer issues in 2004. There was a desire at the time to publish the Study as a book but for a variety of reasons this did not come to pass. It has, however, been uploaded to the Trust's website along with a useful map produced by Neale Elder.

Illustrated plaques were attached to a number of the closes which were publicly accessible. Many are still there today but, regrettably, most are largely indecipherable or vandalised. It may be worthwhile to reinstall these plaques but this would be an expensive exercise.

After Andrew's death in 2017, another long-standing Trust member, Jim Buist, revisited the original Closes Study; it had not been comprehensive, and Jim worked on this and produced a rather fuller study which considered and re-evaluated the original content. He updated the content to report on the considerable changes sustained in the city over the past twenty years. The result is a significant and impressive piece of work, and in discussions with him last year it was agreed that the Trust would include it on our website. His extensive piece was being edited but, sadly, Jim died a few weeks ago and he was not able to see his work come to fruition.



We are, however, nearing completion of the editing process and new photographs have been taken to illustrate the study. The updated study will be ready in the next couple of months and members of the Trust will receive notice of it going live on the website. It is a very good read and full of interesting information.

In the meantime, on the next page, you will find photographs of some of the close entrances which were included in the original Dundee Closes Study. Do you know where in the city centre they are?

Where are these closes?

Answers on page 10

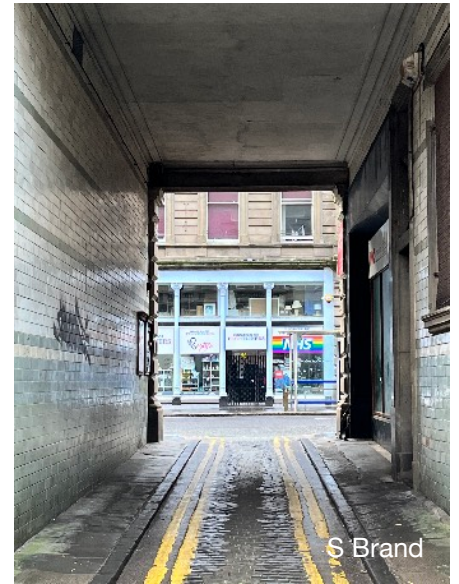
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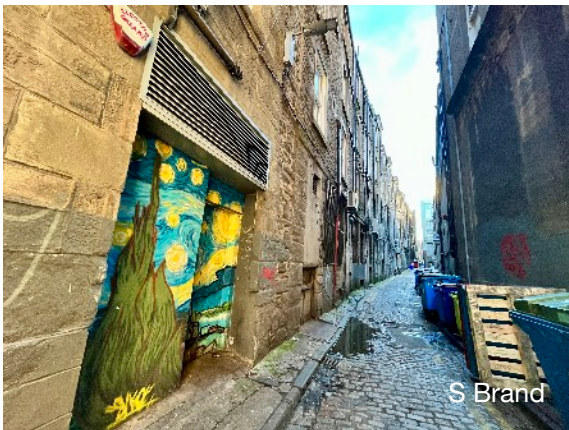
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Northern Relief Road no more?

Donald Gordon

In the dying hours of last year, The Courier reported that Scottish Government ministers had, in effect, pulled the plug (or filled in the pothole?) on any realistic prospect of a bypass of Dundee's Kingsway from Invergowrie to Forfar Road, that noisy, congested, polluted few miles of dual carriageway that directs virtually all of the traffic to and from the Aberdeen area through a largely residential area of our city. This is naturally very much to the detriment of the health and wellbeing of thousands of local residents, not to say the inconvenience, delay and misery of thousands more local travellers. "Integrated transport plan", "decarbonising public transport", "better active travel infrastructure": all good and sound phrases maybe, but what do they actually mean? Not a great deal, I think.

What this area of Dundee really needs is for large volumes of through traffic to be removed from this part of the city. Kingsway is already thoroughly "carbonised", and it is high time that it wasn't.

There are two points to mention here – well, there are a lot more, but I will stop at two: first, "proposed mitigation" measures around Kingsway are suggested. Any steps that are taken to make travel easier along that road will not reduce the amount of traffic, but will increase it. It will not reduce the pollution, but will increase it. It is exactly the opposite of what should be done. And consider the expense, the *increased* infrastructure and the disruption of "measures" in Kingsway? We can only guess at that, and the economic and human cost.



Traffic volumes have been increasing at about five per cent compound per year for decades, and with the apparent calls for economic growth there is every indication that these volumes will continue to grow. Internal combustion engines will be with us for another forty years at least. To continue to direct through traffic along this route is an example of poor planning: to encourage it by expensively "improving" Kingsway is folly.

Second, the Scottish ministers should realise that through large volumes of traffic, particularly large lorries, emit huge amounts of pollution when travelling slowly, or worse, at a stop/start in long queues. Vehicles, in order to cause the smallest amount of emissions, need to move at a steady, constant speed. If a single-carriageway road, *without* any intermediate junctions, is constructed between Longforgan and Tealing, the level of total noxious emissions will fall, and will be largely removed from the built up areas through which the traffic must at present pass. Thus, the by-pass will be used only by traffic which is passing through between the north and the south and which has no business (in both senses) in the city. Without junctions, it will be substantially cheaper to build than the sort of over-engineered, full-blown bypass that misses Aberdeen at great cost.

As part of the "decarbonising" agenda, this should be considered afresh.

Net zero housing

Bill Lynch

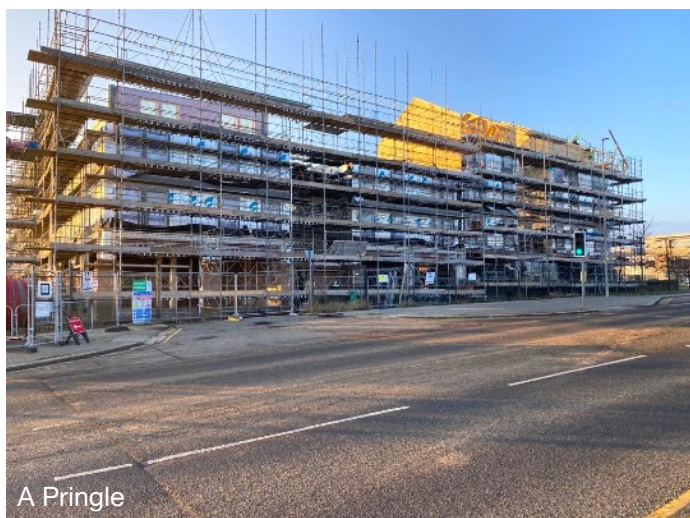
February 2023 is a very auspicious month for those individuals and organisations invested in Planning, from planning professionals to local communities. On Monday the 13th of February 2023, to be precise, Scotland's National Planning Framework (NPF4) came into force. This is, in effect, the National Development Plan for Scotland to which every Local Development Plan (LDP) will have to adhere. Dundee is to begin evidence-gathering and consultations later this year for its new LDP which is likely to become operational by 2026. Local Place Plans (community plans) will influence the content of the new LDP. It is understandably a lengthy process.

NPF4 is required by law to contribute to the following 6 outcomes:

1. Meeting the housing needs of people living in Scotland including, in particular, the housing needs for older people and disabled people;
2. Improving the health and wellbeing of people living in Scotland;
3. Increasing the population of rural areas of Scotland;
4. Improving equality and eliminating discrimination;
5. Meeting any targets relating to the reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases and
6. Securing positive effects for biodiversity.

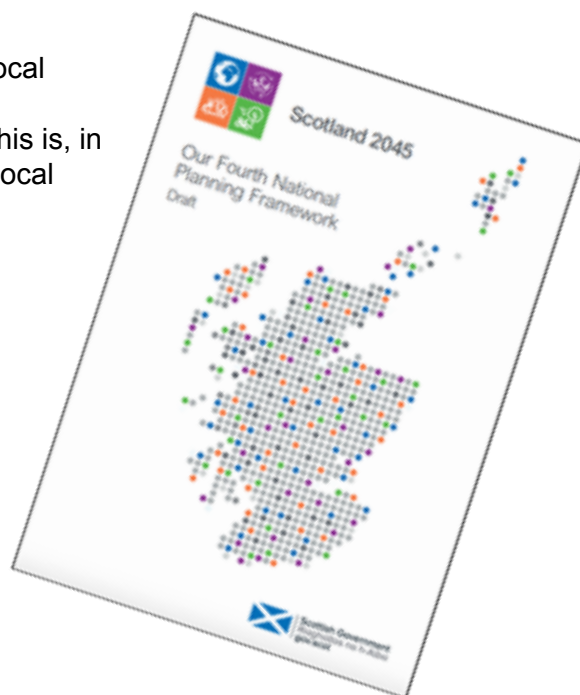
Whilst all of the above have a direct relevance in shaping 'places', planning can make most significant contributions to outcomes 1 (meeting housing needs) and 5 (reduction of emissions) as Scotland heads towards its intended net-zero target by 2045. The design and quality of housing are critical elements that can assist with meeting this target.

Housing is believed to be one of the largest emitters of carbon, accounting for some 40% of all CO₂ emissions globally. Reducing its impact would be significant in the quest for net zero carbon. When examining carbon use in buildings, there is a need to factor in fabric-efficiency as well as operational efficiency as both contribute to overall carbon emissions. Fabric efficiency essentially accounts for embedded carbon that has been used in generating all components of the build; steel, timber, plaster, glass, wiring down to screws and nails etc., all of which require the use of energy in their manufacturing processes. Operational efficiency accounts for energies needed to heat, and cool the buildings during occupancy.



A Pringle

Edinburgh has committed to the creation of 444 net-zero housing units, billed as Scotland's largest net-zero build programme, as part of the Granton Waterfront Development scheme. Phase D1, consisting of some 71 apartments (1,2 and 3 bedrooms), is almost complete. The development uses off-site factory produced panels that provide consistency and a quicker build. A communal air-source heat pump and PV panels result in higher operational efficiency. The combination of fabric and operational efficiencies should equate to net-zero carbon. The apartments are to be rented as a mix of social housing, mid-market rent, market rent and some private sales tenures.



Many of the net-zero schemes around the country are being driven by the social housing sector. However, a recent article in the Times entitled 'The all-weather homes' (January 8, 2023) showed that large housing developers Barratt and Bellway are working in collaboration with the University of Salford using its new climate laboratory to test energy and ventilation systems in full-scale houses at temperatures ranging from -20C to +40C to determine which will cope best with our changing climate. Numerous new developments and smart systems are likely to become mainstream in the near future.



Bath and North East Somerset have recently become the first local authority in England to include a stipulation in its LDP that net-zero housing should form the key focus of future planning applications. This plan was adopted in January. Could this be a way forward for local authorities here in Scotland? Developers would not only be provided with certainty but could take-up the mantle of helping new owners and tenants remove the need to deal with heating bills and to live in healthier environments knowing that they are also making a contribution to reducing Scotland's carbon emissions.

The Trust is collaborating with colleagues from Dundee Institute of Architects to devise a series of 'conversation workshops' to which organisations and individuals will be invited. The aim is to help inform Dundee's stance on housing design and sustainability which it is anticipated will incorporate a net-zero approach.

We have a way to go but the journey has begun. We very much look forward to reporting on the results of the forthcoming conversation workshops and on Dundee's first net-zero housing development.

Where are these closes?

Answers

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Croom's Close | High Street |
| 2. Doig's Court | Castle Street |
| 3. Meadow Entry | Looking to Commercial Street |
| 4. Coultie's Wynd | Nethergate/Whitehall Crescent |
| 5. Cathedral Court | Exchange Street |
| 6. Pullar's Close | Murraygate/Albert Square |
| 7. Ogilvie's Court | Crichton Street |
| 8. Macintosh Close | Albert Square |

Future events

Dates for your diary

16 February 2023

7.00pm Discovery Point

Caishlan Sweeney, 'Meanwhile at Eden Project, Dundee'

This will be our annual joint meeting with Dundee Heritage Trust. It is the DHT turn to host, so the talk will take place at Discovery Point at the usual time of 7pm, when Caishlan Sweeney will continue Iain Flett's story to update us on progress with the Eden Project at Dundee.



16 March 2023

**7.00pm Dundee Art Society Gallery Roseangle
AGM followed by Kirsty Maguire, 'Passivhaus'.**

20 April 2023

**7.00pm Dundee Art Society Gallery Roseangle
Bruce Keith, 'Bridgescapes'**



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