

WEST BLACKET ASSOCIATION

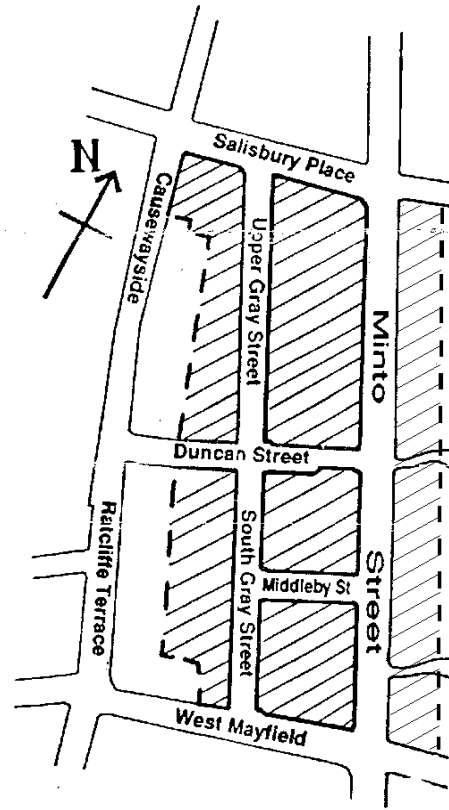
Information for Residents 2009

The Association

For new residents, the Upper Gray Street Association was set up in 1966 to object to the proposed demolition of a Georgian villa at what was then 20, now 22, Upper Gray Street. The Association subsequently expanded, as the West Blacket Association, to become the community association for the part of the Blacket Conservation Area not 'within the gates' and therefore not represented by the Blacket Association. The two associations are distinct though often confused.

Further details, including contact addresses, archives & local history can be found on our website at www.westblacket.org.uk

Although community associations cannot have the same constitutional status as Community Councils, the City of Edinburgh Council sees us as important conduits for local opinion. No less important a function of community associations is to foster good neighbour relations, both by organising social events, and more formally in the Neighbourhood Watch which has been active in West Blacket for more than 10 years.



Planning

Living as we do in an Outstanding Conservation Area, we cannot change the external appearance of our houses without obtaining Planning Permission from the City of Edinburgh Council. Trees are also protected, and permission is required to cut one down. If a house is individually Listed for its architectural or historic interest, even internal alterations may require Listed Building Consent before proceeding. Applications for Planning Permission are notified to local residents in case they may wish to object. These notifications appear in the Edinburgh Evening News, and are copied to amenity associations such as the West Blasket Association. Immediate neighbours are required by law to have individual notification. The WBA does not always comment on planning applications, but will be pleased to discuss objections and may lend support. Objections to planning applications must be considered by Planning Officials and may be put to the Planning Committee. If the objection is judged to be valid, the objector must be informed of the Council's decision. It is generally believed that objections from many individuals are more likely to influence the Planning Committee than a single objection from an amenity association such as ourselves. However, do not expect your objections always to influence the outcome. Applicants for planning permission are well advised to approach Planning Officials in advance and to tailor their application according to advice received.

Neighbourhood Watch

The Association incorporates the West Blasket Neighbourhood Watch and membership of the Association automatically gives membership of the Watch. The Edinburgh police produce a regular community newsletter which offers news, advice and announcements relating to security and crime. To receive police newsletters, email: westblacketNHW@gmail.com

A community liaison officer and community beat officer are assigned to the WBA area. They can be contacted by email, enquiries@lbp.ppn.police.uk , or telephone St Leonards Police Station, 0131 662 5000

Representation - Local Councillors, MP, MSP

The West Blasket area is, since May 2007, entirely within the multi-member Southside/Newington #15 ward, represented by Councillors Perry (Lab), Rose (Conservative & Unionist), MacKenzie (LibDem) & Burgess (Green).

The West Blasket area was until May 2007 divided between 3 local council wards (Sciennes, #48: Newington, #49: Prestonfield, #50), which are still used for Holyrood and Westminster elections.

The Newington and Sciennes wards are part of the Edinburgh South constituency for UK and Scottish parliamentary elections and the MP is currently Nigel Griffiths (Labour) and the constituency MSP is Mike Pringle (Liberal Democrat). The Prestonfield ward is part of Edinburgh East for Westminster elections where our MP is Gavin Strang (Labour), but part of Edinburgh South for Holyrood elections.

If you wish to check whether you are on the electoral roll the Electoral Registration Office can be contacted on 0131 455 7455 and its address is PO Box 468, Chesser House, 500 Gorgie Road, Edinburgh EH11 3XJ.

Waste Collection & Recycling

Houses in the West Blasket area have been issued with green wheelie-bins for general household waste. These bins are emptied weekly (currently on Fridays). Most houses also have a brown wheelie-bin for compostable waste and these are emptied every two weeks (currently on Wednesdays) in the period March to November. The Edinburgh Council has recently extended its recycling operations and houses have been issued with blue bags and blue and red recycling boxes (emptied in alternate weeks on Wednesdays). The blue bags are for paper, the blue boxes for glass bottles and cans, and the red boxes for cardboard waste. There are also now bins in Duncan Street for packaging (cardboard, cans and plastic bottles) and paper (including telephone directories).

Enquiries about waste collection, recycling and special collections can be made to the Council's Cleansing Department on 0131 529 3030. Its address is Chesser House, 500 Gorgie Road, Edinburgh EH11 3XJ.

Roads and Transport

Edinburgh Council's Clarence section deals with road maintenance, drains, street lighting, etc and can be contacted on 0800 23 23 23 (freephone).

The West Blasket area is well served by bus services. Most of the Lothian buses travelling north in Minto Street will take you to the east end of Princes Street. The nos 8 and 49 buses running south in Minto Street connect with the Royal Infirmary site at Little France and the 37/37A travelling north connects with the Western General Hospital. The no 5 takes you to Church Hill at 15 min intervals. Lothian Buses enquiry line is 0131 555 6363 and details of services can be found on the Lothian Buses website at <http://www.lothianbuses.co.uk/>

Parking in the West Blasket area is controlled. Each resident may buy a permit to park on street for £80/year, on production of evidence that they are resident in the area and that they are the registered keeper of the car. Your visitors may park in pay spaces at £1/hour, or find free parking 2 blocks south.

Libraries

The main library is located in the city centre on George IV Bridge and includes an 'Edinburgh room' for local history researches. Newington has its own branch library which can be found in Fountainhall Road. The outpost of the National Libraries of Scotland, within the West Blasket area, is the place to find maps.

*This leaflet written for the West Blasket Association
by Jeff Robinson & Mike Hunter*

To join the Association, see contact details at www.westblasket.org.uk