

THE

[free]

BURGH ANGEL

Possil: Second poorest place in Britain

News just out in the past weeks in the mainstream press that Possilpark is the second poorest community in the UK (Fergusliepark is the poorest) received little more than passing mention., despite the scandalous scale of the problems and poverty faced here.

The news comes on the back of the announcement a few months previously that the Indonesia is sending aid workers to help tackle poverty in Maryhill, and that life expectancy in the Calton is as low as 52 for men.

Possil has over the years received millions of pounds worth of 'regeneration' funding, countless 'initiatives' and 'partnerships' have been set up but the ruling labour party have been completely unable (or unwilling) to admit that people are poor because there's no decent jobs, no decent housing, rising crime levels, problems of alcohol abuse and organized criminal gangs pushing heroin onto vulnerable young people.

No amount of 'education' (vocational training, for crap jobs with low pay and no rights) is going to address the fact that the police

have been unable or (unwilling) to take heroin off the streets. No amount of scams from the brood to force people into jobs that pay the same as benefits are going to give young families a future, some hope, and a living wage, and really begin to address poverty. Labour have let working class people down across Scotland, but nowhere is that more true than in communities like ours.

Labour: *couldn't give a toss*

Report after report from the likes of the poverty alliance and other agencies have criticised Thatcherite government policies for failing to address people's real needs. In Glasgow today more people have jobs but people are still poor. The government have forced people into work, but have done nothing to address the real needs of communities in tackling poverty, because frankly they couldn't give a toss.



Poor people can't afford childcare, decent food can be more expensive, socializing is too

expensive, and if you're working in crap jobs often you've no spare time, or when you get home you're exhausted. Decent food takes longer to prepare, it's harder to be healthy, take exercise, harder to take part in all sorts of activities. The solution is not about giving everyone minimum wage jobs – we're talking about quality of life, and until this, the real issue here, is addressed working class people will continue to be sold short.

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Want to fight for our community?

Join the Burgh Angel

Contact us today. [details - Page 8] The Burgh Angel Collective is a non-party political group dedicated to promoting strong communities and independent organization in our communities, by spreading news & awareness throughout Maryhill, & the North West as well as further afield.

SOLD DOWN THE CANAL

In the last Angel we reported on the ongoing community struggle to halt a massive development along the banks of the canal at Speirs Wharf. Since then however things have been hotting up. There was a massive community victory with Speirs Wharf Residents Committee, Cedar Tenants Association and opposition politicians defeating a multimillion pound project to build a skyscraper for yuppies.

As Glasgow City Council's plans for the canal spill over into all-out community struggle the Burgh Angel sticks its oar into the murkier side of politics to fish for some answers to what's really going on behind the councils decision to hand over the ownership of the canal to a private company.

Waiting for the council to rubberstamp this widely opposed privatisation of the canal is the new body headed by Councillor Hanzala Malik. **The Glasgow Canal Regeneration Partnership** will be managing the canal as well as much of the surrounding land. It is a quango composed of the company ISIS Waterside Regeneration (a subsidiary of national quango British Waterways) and some council staff clustered around Development and Regeneration Services Department. It will make its money from the sale and development of land for housing.

And let's be clear – there is to be an absolute barge-load of it. In the small section of the canal between Speirs Wharf and Trossachs St over 2000 houses are planned – all of them for sale – all yuppie flats. But don't worry the plan is to build in tower blocks with green roofs so's they fit in...

So much of the unique green space that we enjoy in the Burgh is threatened by the privatization that it would be impossible to go into in great detail here for reasons of space. However because we feel this issue is so outrageous, and has the potential to further erode our space and our housing we will be focusing on one area in every Angel from now on. We feel that the whole shambolic outrage has been conducted behind closed doors so we thought we'd highlight a few conflicts of interest. The Burgh Angel has seen a document created for the Glasgow Resident's Network which is fighting the Council's plans.

To paraphrase the final section of this report, *whether or not the council has any respect for the findings from their own consultation what is very concerning in all this for democracy is that planning guidelines are to be ditched, and proper public scrutiny is to be made impossible.* The Council is to do away with its committee structure leaving most if not all planning applications to be decided in secret. With no upper limit on the amount of residential units that can be built in some areas the potential for high level corruption is vast. Take councillor Malik for instance. Is it in the public's interest that he should be involved in so many overlapping business and municipal interests to do with this project?

The conflicts of interest being set up here are huge with limited opportunity for public scrutiny now that the canal has been privatised.

UNDER THREAT

WESTERCOMMON

two sites forming most of the common are to be built on. Plans from the council propose a number of 8 storey towers.

APPLECROSS

the historic nature of the area is to be preserved by developing two and three storey yuppie terraces.

FIRHILL BASIN

The council wants to build a watersports centre, but unfortunately much of the basin has to be filled in...

HAMILTONHILL ALLOTMENTS

after years of trying to get the site re-opened, after the council lied to sitting tenants claiming the land contained lead, the allotments at Hamiltonhill have just been re-opened. However the plans state the allotments form "the missing edge of Ellesmere Street", and so have to be turned over to yuppie flats.

TRAVELLERS SITE

(Woodside) – plans leaked to the Angel show the site being covered by a 15 storey towerblock.

MARYHILL LOCKS

a tasteful masterplan is being developed to turn this area into a 'destination', expect towerblocks and the demolition of our homes...

[i.e. HE'LL be one of the two people to make planning decisions]

Development & Regen. Committee Convener G.C.C.

Councillor [Woodlands Ward]

Woodlands Ward "Speirsgate" [100 million pound development]

Hanzala Malik



Scottish Enterprise Glasgow Director + various other Directorships

Joint Con. Steering Group Glasgow Canal Regen. Partnership [The company taking over the canal]

[Let's suppose he has good connections with the building trade!]

HE'S THE CHAIR !!!

Some of the local areas under threat



Westercommon

(pictured next to Firhill Stadium)
Soon to be beneath 8 storey tower blocks.

Applecross



To be covered in new housing.



Maryhill Locks

In their efforts to turn the locks into "an exciting new destination," the council plans build a huge number of yuppie tower blocks, and campaigners speculate, to tear down the remainder of the area's social housing. The Botany and Valley schemes have been cleared to make way for this already.

Firhill Basin



A new watersports centre, but also to be part filled-in for new housing.



Travellers' Site

The Council's planned 15 storey yuppie tower block will make a number of local families homeless...



GHA housing disgrace victim speaks about his eviction

Tom Brown here. Since the 11th of May, the day of my eviction my health and lifestyle has been amazing. Since being removed from my home I am now staying somewhere in Glasgow where repairs are carried out, the environment is clean and tidy and well maintained, and all the buildings are vandalism free.

Why is this? Simple. GHA are not the landlords of this property.

I visit the Cumlodden area quite often and still see no work carried out and no repairs carried out. Looking now at the buildings from an outside point of view I am amazed to see the state of my once proud house, and the community where I grew up. It is amazing what a housing association can do in the space of 3 1/2 years, or should I say not do?

What I find very comical is that GHA still send me letters and correspondence to 63M Cumlodden Drive they evicted me but still send letters to a boarded up empty house and not only that, the sheriff officers who also evicted me send me mail there also. I would like to thank all the activists that came to try and stop the eviction going through but to no avail.

There is a lot of work still going on in the background to save these houses and get the work carried out that these buildings and tenants deserve. Instead of GHA telling the tenants and homeowners lies after lies and emitting their propaganda and lies in the Evening Times as well as the thousands of pounds GHA spend on advertising in newspapers and billboards telling everyone how good a job they are doing. Now let's analyse what GHA has carried out for Maryhill



Update

As previously reported, Tom Brown was evicted after refusing to pay rent when repairs were not carried out over many months to his flat on the Cumlodden Estate, in Maryhill

The Botany gone, replaced by nothing. The Valley gone, replaced by nothing. Kilmun Street, Lyndale and Barrindale coming down and shocking and disgraceful conditions people are living in. And Cumlodden Estate is earmarked next as part of the Canal Regeneration Programme. This is a return of the Highland Clearances on a smaller scale!

So let's all stand up and fight to save Cumlodden Estate and bring it back to what it once was beautiful clean closes, no vandalism and a place where children could play in safety. Let's show that we care about our homes and community even although GHA don't.

LETTERS

Send YOUR letters by email to theburghangel@gmail.com

LYONS RIGHT HAND MAN MURDERED IN BROAD DAYLIGHT

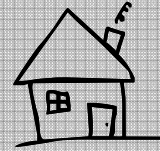
Dear Burgh Angel, A close associate of Edward Lyons junior was horrifically murdered in broad daylight last Monday morning near his home in Glenshee Street, Tolcross.

Gangster George 'Goofy' Docherty is believed to have been wearing a stab proof vest when he was attacked and stabbed in the legs by several males. The assailants then drove their vehicle over Docherty several times before fleeing the scene and abandoning their vehicle in the Easterhouse area where it was later discovered burnt-out.

This was the third attempt on Docherty's life since he was released from Barlinnie prison in April this year, the last attempt, in June, resulted in him being stabbed 16 times and he subsequently discharged himself from hospital fearing for his own safety. [...]

Letter continued page 8

Who is our landlord?



How decent housing has given way to bureaucratic stitch-ups and corrupt backroom dealings...

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Starting with Queens Cross Housing Association Local Housing Organisation...

Many ex-council tenants particularly in the Woodside, Firhill and Hamiltonhill areas of the city, where Queen's Cross Housing Association is based, seem confused about who their landlord is. The same is true for many areas of the city. At a recent poll for example, taken at a meeting in Sighthill the majority of the audience were unaware who 'Compass' – the area's LHO – were. However the Burgh Angel has discovered that many who have even had dealings with their landlord are confusing one housing association and its local guise with a quite separate housing association.

This confusion is added to by the existence of another layer - the tenants committees, or 'LHO committees'. In the wider Woodside area there are three committees, which form the tenants committees of Queens Cross HA LHO, the structure of GHA management for the area. In theory these committees take the decisions. They are real bureaucracies in themselves and they have budgets which total millions of pounds. Their funding decisions are in theory taken by tenants and sometimes a few local homeowners. Campaigners claim that it is the housing professionals from the GHA Ltd who take all the real decisions in practice, in most places across the city,

Jargon Buster

LHO – A local administrative area of the GHA. These are also membership bodies for the purposes of electing

LHO Committee – A committee of tenant representatives who have the power to take management and financial decisions in their areas. The Committee is elected by local tenants, who are 'members' which also legally usually functions like a co-op. If you want to get someone 'off' an LHO Committee you can vote them out, but you'll need to be a 'member', and attend the 'Annual General Meeting'.

Registered Tenants Organisation (RTO) – this is a tenants group which has been legally recognised the landlord and the government. In order to get a tenants group registered you have to adopt the constitution set out by the landlord, and small grants are available.

Registered Social Landlord (RSL) – this is a term government uses to identify organisations which meet certain criteria for housing according to social need.

So what is the landlord structure for ex-council tenants in Woodside/ Hamiltonhill/ Cowcaddens and who do I take my complaints to?

In each of the local areas of the GHA teams of paid staff operate independently of the 'LHO committees' and implement the decisions of those committees (and as we have mentioned, some say they

often really take those decisions for the LHO committees). These teams include housing officers, secretarial staff, receptionists but also the powerful, community housing managers and their deputies that make the ultimate decisions. **They are the most senior members of the local staff, and much of the effort of housing officers is directed at making sure you never get to speak to them.** However, if you are a tenant or a homeowner factored by GHA and you want to get your complaints dealt with it is better to speak directly to the boss, because GHA staff are good at fobbing you off. If you live in the Cedar Street, Raglan Street, Braid Square, Dundasvale, Cromwell, Burnbank, Hamiltonhill, or Trossachs street areas and you are an ex-council tenant then that person is **Stephen McAvoy**. He can be reached via email at stephen.mcavoy@gha.org.uk, or via telephone or letter at the Queens Cross HA LHO offices.

Queens Cross Housing Association shares an office with Queens Cross HA LHO?

Queens Cross Housing Association is in the running to become one of the housing associations to take over the management of GHA homes if 'second stage transfer' progresses.

Queens Cross Housing Association however is not always friendly with the GHA and relations aren't always smooth. Without going into too much detail about the situation the price that our houses are to be sold to Queens Cross Housing Association by the GHA is a much disputed issue between to the two organisations. The GHA also perhaps does not necessarily wish to dissolve itself as quickly as Queens Cross Housing Association might like them too. There is also the

question of demolitions of our houses. The GHA aims, according to its latest business plan, to demolish a shade under 30,000 homes in Glasgow, and in this area it is speculated that GHA wants to demolish Hamiltonhill and the St George's Estate, and we know that they are demolishing the Garscube Estate at Queens Cross.

So what about the tenant committees – The LHO committees?

In the Woodside, Hamiltonhill and Cowcaddens area the situation within the LHO tenants committees is murky. Although they are there to represent tenants many of the tenants and homeowners represented are board members of Queens Cross Housing Association, which we've mentioned is often in dispute with the GHA. The tenant committees in the area are:-

South Maryhill LHO, chaired by **Jim McCrossan** (a Queens Cross Housing Association board member);

Dundasvale, Cromwell and Burnbank LHO, chaired by **George Fraser** (a Queens Cross Housing Association board member, and a board member of the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, a national pressure group for housing associations like Queens Cross Housing Association, or North Glasgow Housing Association);

Hamiltonhill LHO, chaired by **Margaret Dillon** (the Vice-Chair of Queens Cross Housing Association).

The questionable role of Queens Cross Housing Association

In addition there is a committee to represent the collective views of all three tenant committees which **Margaret Dillon** also chairs. Any disputes that occur within the LHOs are dealt with by a 'joint consultative council' - locally that means **George Fraser**. So it can be seen that although these committees are supposedly there to represent the views

of tenants, a cynical person might say that currently they represent the views of Queens Cross Housing Association, which is irritated by how long second stage transfer is taking, and by how much our houses are going to cost them and might be in there to use the tenant committees to apply a bit of leverage on the GHA. Whatever – there is obviously a substantial conflict of interest.

Indeed during a recent residents meeting **Margaret Dillon** turned up and told those who were there that Hamiltonhill LHO are deeply concerned that if the GHA goes ahead with demolitions in the area the land will be sold by Glasgow City Council for private housing development, so if any demolitions go ahead in the area they will be fighting to ensure Queens Cross gets to build on the land to ensure that there is still social housing in the area. Now that seems like a laudable aim except for the fact that Margaret Dillon was then the chair of Queens Cross Housing Association (now the vice-chair), and until we remember that during the last financial year ending '05 the LHO committee that she chairs underspent the housing budget for the area by more than 66%, which amounts to running the housing in the area into the ground, making demolition seem all the more likely.

Nor is this Dillon's only involvement in a serious conflict of interest. Margaret Dillon is not just the Chair of Hamiltonhill LHO, Queens Cross HA LHO management committee, while being the chair of Queens Cross Housing Association – **she is also a board member of GHA Management Limited – the factoring service for the GHA.** This is a fact which should not go unnoticed given that it is here in Hamiltonhill where some of the highest recorded bills by any Glasgow homeowners for overlapping have been recorded, and where the mismanagement of GHA (M) is perhaps at its worst. Given bills of £8500 - £9000 for houses inhabited by pensioners which were purchased for £5000, in UK's second poorest community perhaps, it could be

A conflict of interest?



Margaret Dillon

Dillon Chairs Hamiltonhill LHO, and is a director of GHA Management Limited, GHA's factoring service. However she is also a very prominent member of Queens Cross Housing Association, and has stated she is working hard to ensure that should any demolitions take place in Hamiltonhill she will be trying to secure the land for Queens Cross Housing Association.



George Fraser

Board member of Queens Cross Housing Association, but also curiously a GHA 'tenant representative' and the chair of Dundasvale LHO, of the GHA.



Jim McCrossan

Board member of Queens Cross Housing Association, yet also GHA 'local homeowner representative', and the chair of South Maryhill LHO.

suggested, there is something more going on than merely ripping people off for overcladding given Dillon's prominent role.

What do Queens Cross Housing Association want with our community?

While we are discussing the role of Queens Cross Housing Association, and what they would like to get out of Hamiltonhill from the involvement of their chair and others in all aspects of the areas housing it is also interesting to note that the **Executive Director of Queens Cross Housing Association, Frank MacCabe**, turned up at a meeting in the Possilpark community and stated that he would like to see a model of development in Hamiltonhill similar to what has been seen in Ruchill (soon to be renamed Parkhill to encourage housing sales), where 70% of houses are bought, with the rest being given over to so-called competitive rents. Can most people living in our areas and communities at the moment really afford to take out a mortgage for a 150k flat? Frank certainly can. He earns an undisclosed sum of money, lives in leafy upmarket suburbs and stands to gain a substantial pay rise if Queens Cross Housing Association win their battle to take over the mismanagement of our homes from the equally corrupt Glasgow Housing Association.

Homeowner Strikes Back At Unfair Charges

In the last issue of the Angel we brought you news of the emerging Glasgow Residents Network – an

organisation of ordinary Glasgow citizens and residents associations.

Now we can bring you news of this new organisation's success: The network has been in existence for only a few months and already as a result of 'The Homeowners Revolt' has won a meeting with the Chief Executive of the Glasgow Housing Association, Michael Lennon, as well as forcing them to make major concessions to right-to-buy homeowners, and talks are under way to allow them to take longer to pay off the unwanted debts incurred through GHA works, with better loan arrangements.

However on the 1st of August the network achieved another major victory. Mrs Gunning was told by a housing official when she queried her bill, "Well take out a loan – You had better pay up." Her kids have left home and she thought she had finally paid off her mortgage, until GHA told her that they were carrying out works on her house that she didn't want and couldn't afford. She was very angry about this and asked for a factors meeting (her legal entitlement). GHA refused.

Mrs Gunning is not a rich woman and works shifts. She bought her home because it was a lot cheaper than renting it, and raising a family it made sense because she knew she'd be there for many years to come. She doesn't have £6,500 to pay upfront for overcladding works, and she didn't want them. Given how GHA were treating her, and the fact that she felt it was unjust and wrong Mrs Gunning decided to resist the imposition of the work on her home. She has become the first person in the city to successfully do so, and the way in which she did will hopefully become a lot more commonplace across the city in the months to come.

On the morning of the 1st a number of local Riddrie residents, members of the Carntyne and Riddrie Tenants Action Group and people from across the city converged on Mrs Gunning's home to prevent GHA officials and council workmen from erecting scaffolding outside to over

overclad it. Over twenty in all were able to stop Mrs Gunning from being victimised. Let's hope that this type of resistance will spread, to make GHA's policy of ever increasing charges on homeowners unworkable.

For more information on the Glasgow Residents Network see :

www.glasgowresidents.wordpress.com

Victory for Cedar Court

In issue one we highlighted the plight of residents in Cedar Court, who faced lifts that were subject to constant breakdown among other issues. We are therefore very pleased to report that due to a successful local residents campaign, new lifts mechanisms are being installed while we go to print.

2nd CONFERENCE OF THE GLASGOW RESIDENTS NETWORK

In earlier editions of the Angel we have been covering the development of the Glasgow Residents Network – an organization composed of residents groups from across the city.

The network held its second conference on the 21st of October, aimed at bringing together more residents organizations and individuals to discuss common problems in our neighbourhoods and communities.

The topics for discussion were 'regeneration' and how we are being sold out; the struggle against mass housing demolitions, the struggles of right to buy homeowners, the GHA's rent restructuring review, and the problems of antisocial behaviour in our communities

A conference report will be drawn up and interested people should telephone **07976718111**.

The network has also produced a newsletter rounding up some of the creative community activities that have been taking place across the city in the past few months. If you would like copies of **Community Action – Issue 1** ring **07976718111**



The User Manual aims to build strong communities.

A GUIDE FOR AND BY THE PEOPLE OF GLASGOW

Bob Hamilton tells us about the Glasgow User Manual, a new community-based project which looks set to change the way both Glaswegians and outsiders see their city

We are currently collecting information for the Glasgow User Manual, which will become a Glasgow guide listing all the things that are going on in our city.

It is a reference you could pick up or have a look at if you wanted to find something to do by yourself or with the weans or to meet people, to find new places and things to do other than watching TV. We are asking folk to help us collect information about what is happening in your local community, as well as what interesting projects are taking place.

The User Manual will be a "ground up" publication and will operate as a sympathetic "ear" and "voice" for the working class people and groups their events, meetings,

culture, activities and ideas which are rarely listed in other publications.

"The Community Cookbook"

If you have an idea just describe it as best you can in your own words or get your mate to help you. We all have at least one idea that we are keen on. Its good to share it with others. We want to encourage people who don't do this kind of thing, so we will help you in any way we can. Of course we don't discriminate, we will even take your ideas if you are an expert.

"Any information is relevant, please let us know, even if you don't think it is so important!"

Describe your area, some news, an event, a bit of local history, someone you know that does something special or nice, a picture of yourself doing something, photographs of your neighbourhood, a fact or urban myth. It can all add up to something that will put the place you stay on the map If you have a suggestion, about the website, something you don't understand, something that could be done better what you like or could improve on. You can send that also. We can produce something here that, when a visitor to our city asks, "So what's Glasgow about?", we can smile and say,

"Here! Read this!"

Glasgow User Manual is available on the Internet at www.glasgowusermanual.com

Letter continued from page 4

[...] Docherty hit the headlines when bent lawyer Angela Baillie was jailed this year after she was caught smuggling heroin and other drugs in to Barlinnie prison for Docherty. The supergrass that tipped off the authorities about Docherty's smuggling operation then claimed that he was hit with an electric cattle prod and abducted by Edward Lyons junior and his gang of thugs. He then claimed that he was tortured and stabbed and that Edward Lyons junior wrote the word 'Grass' on his forehead before dumping him on Balmore Road.

Edward Lyons uncle, David Lyons, owns an MOT station and car sales on the Balmore Road that he purchased for convicted drug baron Alex Donnelly.

His other uncle Johnny Lyons has recently surrounded his Milton home with state of the art CCTV cameras.

Shortly after Docherty was released from prison in April, Edward Lyons junior was shot in the mouth on the doorstep of his mothers' home in Cathay Street Milton.

His father, also Eddie Lyons, is the boss of the controversial Chirnsyde Community Initiative, which is currently under investigation and had half its funding withheld by Glasgow City Council.

It is believed his funding runs out next week and it is possible that he will be removed from his position.

This possibility is welcomed by many locals who want Lyons out of the Chirnsyde Centre in the interests of children's safety, as they believe Chirnsyde is being used by Eddie Lyons as a criminal recruitment centre.

Best wishes, [Name withheld]

About this paper: The Burgh Angel is run by local residents on a voluntary basis. We have no connection to the City Council or the Housing. We will print what we believe to be the truth and are not afraid to offend if the truth needs to be told. We would also welcome any comments or ideas you might have. When contacting us, please tell us whether or not you want your name published in the Burgh Angel - we will not identify you without your permission.

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