

It's been a very busy year for FCI. Some of the issues that caused people to set up FCI still remain, although much progress has been made. We are delighted that EDI announced recently that the number of homes will increase from 340 to 453 including 112 affordable; that the district heating system is now estimated to reduce carbon and bills by over 50%; and with the decision to create small retail units instead of a large superstore. All these will make for a much more sustainable community.

We are still pushing for balanced housing provision, with a mix of house size and tenure and 'Our Space' facilities that support and encourage a socially inclusive community to be built

The area is changing rapidly and new buildings will be coming on stream during the next few years.

Boroughmuir High School is now beginning to take shape with a new deadline for pupils of January 2017. The school will take 1,165 pupils when it moves from its current site in Viewforth.



On the periphery of the Fountainbridge old brewery site, to the north, the Planning Committee passed an application for large blocks of privately managed rented housing and a hotel - submitted by Grosvenor. FCI and the Grove, supported by TXCC, objected to the monolithic scale of the development and the news that the deal Grosvenor made with the Council in

2013, pleading losses from declining land values, is to be carried forward to this application. They will only be building 6% affordable housing (36 houses) instead of 25% and will not contribute to education or transport infrastructure.

The other key developments are by Vita (the old Mecca Bingo hall/Palais de Dance) for 250 more student flats; and next to the existing tower block at the basin, a £35 million 180-bed 'Urban Villa' aparthotel by Amco and Union Hanover.



FCI are concerned with the size and scale of some of these and the folly of increasing the level of transient populations in an area already at saturation point. FCI are not 'anti-student' or against short-term visitors but the rash of such accommodation has a distorting effect on the local retail provision, and the local community. We will continue to argue and push for a more balanced population in the area.

Canal Festival

For the ninth year Re-Union Canal Boats co-ordinated this well-loved local festival - music, food stalls, water and land-based activities, crafts and kids' entertainment. The range of local groups and activities for all ages make this a success story for Fountainbridge. The Festival this year will be on **Saturday 18th June**. Contact pat@re-union.co.uk for more information and to get involved.

Re-Union Canal Boats

Re-Union, a social enterprise, plays a key role in bringing life to the canal and involving a wide range of groups. They run training and help towards employment, skills courses, organise the flotilla that opened the Falkirk Kelpies, run boat cruises, and provide free space for local projects such as FCI to meet. They also link Fountainbridge with other communities along the Union Canal and provide information for visitors who drift down to the basin.

Their presence has been sorely missed since their landlord found a fully commercial tenant for their office space, a Wax Bar, and they had to move away from the basin. The social aspect of a successful enterprise like Re-Union provides the energy and involvement that makes for a vibrant neighbourhood. The concern local people felt was demonstrated through a well supported petition to the Council to ask for their help to re-locate them back to the canalside. It is hoped that Scottish Canals will work with the Council and EDI to bring this about in the long term and to find a suitable temporary location for this local gem.



Spreading the Word

FCI's core membership is steadily growing and the 'meanwhile' projects are also building an impressive following. Over 500 Winter Newsletters were produced and hand-delivered around the Fountainbridge area, and an article written for Canalside magazine.

An **Information Cruise** in October on 'Lochrin Belle' let people know what was happening on the site and led to two sub groups being set up to look at housing and community facilities.



Our Space

We have been pursuing the vision of a socially inclusive centre on the site 'Our Space' - responding to many consultations and discussions with local people who want to see a 'heart' in this development. This centre would include health and social care aspects as well as viable social enterprises and projects working together to provide a unique space where people of different ages, and backgrounds can find conviviality, the unexpected, and a range of services. It would actively complement the arts and cultural community space that will be provided by Edinburgh Printmakers.

We are currently in the process of applying for an architectural feasibility study to examine how the different elements can work together. We envisage space for Re-Union Canal Boats, canoe/boat repair, a community garden, shared meeting rooms, cafe, a local community family project, a hydro pool and spa baths and supported accommodation or 'Step Down' facility. The Swedish owner of Akva, has expressed her support and interest in developing a rooftop restaurant /bar in the scheme.



Meanwhile Activity

In spite having to literally 'up sticks' and move across the site at short notice, the meanwhile activities have continued to grow and develop. One of the exciting events this last year was raising the **Fountainbridge Community Wikihouse** over 3 days in October. Over 70 people helped to wield mallets and get the house up and the roof on. Our thanks go to all the volunteers and the many organisations and companies who supported this project particularly Bodan Workshops, Akiko Kobayashi and staff who provided us with hours of free CNC router cutting, South West Neighbourhood Partnership and funding and volunteers from Dunedin Canmore.



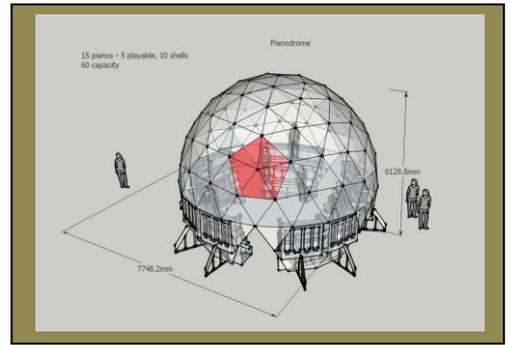
An Awards for All grant has been awarded to FCI to extend the Wikihouse, run workshops on the site this Spring and organise a Conference to take place in May. The Wikihouse founder Alastair Parvin and FCI will be in discussion at the **Edinburgh International Science Festival** on Mon 28th March 5.30pm in Summerhall. Don't miss this event!

The **Play Area** is being supported from the Waste Action Fund and will be built in late Spring to create a free play area for children using re-cycled materials.

The **Forge** metal, wood and glass workshop space is much better in the new home and has attracted more people to sessions and celebrations. Two extra containers are housing the new **Scrapstore** project and piano storage for the Pianodrome initiative that will take place this summer.

The **Pianodrome** will be an open-air amphitheatre, music/playing space to be constructed from reclaimed

pianos, led by local artists Tim Vincent-Smith and Will Pickvance. Come and help to construct it and have a tinkle on the keys!



The Grove Community Garden

continues to blossom and members planted bulbs in all the tree planters that line the site, ready for you to enjoy this Spring. They provided delicious hot apple drinks and cake for our **Winter Festival**, along with all Meanwhile projects.

The support of Tollcross Community Council made this a very enjoyable event in the dark days of Winter - fire/lights/scrapstore tree, soup from Food Sharing Edinburgh and the amazing Edinburgh Samba School who lifted all our spirits with their high energy dancing and drumming. Also thanks to the two pipers from Boroughmuir School who completed the treats on this wintry Sunday.



We now have nearly 90 full members, a supporter's mailing list of 27 local organisations and over 200 individuals.

Our monthly Steering Group meeting is open to all. Come and join us!

Fountainbridge Canalside Initiative
www.fountainbridgeci.org.uk

 Like us on Facebook