LIVE WELL, DO WELL
STOBSWELL

STOBSWELL VOICE

Baxter Park • Clepington • Maryfield • Stobswell • Woodside

Spring 2021

IF NOT NOW, WHEN MARYFIELD?



Since the pandemic struck in March 2020 many of us have been through some of the most difficult times of our lives, we've never known anything like it, all of the problems our community faced before the pandemic have been made worse, we've seen increases in poverty, isolation, mental health issues, food and housing insecurity and on top of that we've faced the sheer uncertainty of what's going to come next.

But what now, what comes next, what do we expect of our MSPs in Edinburgh and our councillors in town? Well, for starters this article doesn't have the answers but we hope to ask some interesting questions. There are lots of different ideas on what the future could look like and what should be done. The one thing we're sure about is - it doesn't have to look like it was pre-pandemic .

There are many people working to make things better in Stobswell. With the Boomerang, Dundee International Women's Centre and Showcase the Street, we have great examples of unique institutions in Stobie that quite simply make people's lives better. And yet, for some, Stobie is one of the most difficult places in Dundee to live. Why is that?

Well, there aren't enough decent jobs, too much drugs and anti-social behaviour, we have some of the poorest quality privately rented housing in the city and far too many people live in poverty. The causes aren't all that difficult to highlight but what do we want to do about them, as a country, a city and most importantly a community?

The new Scottish Government in Edinburgh will put forward positive ideas that could be good for Stobswell. Politicians are talking about giving more power to communities like Stobie, supporting public transport and encouraging people to use it, and a new Housing Bill that will support people in private rented housing; imposing minimum standards on things like heating, security, maintenance and rent controls, and properly holding poor landlords to account.

When you add in things like reducing air pollution from large vehicles, encouraging local people to take back green spaces in their area for planting and community use, the politicians heading to the Scottish Parliament are saying the right things, but what does that actually mean for Stobie? Here's the thing - although it's the Scottish Parliament that will pass these laws, it's the council that will have to make them happen, and what happens if these laws aren't put into place? Does nothing change, do we have to just go back to how things were in pre-pandemic March 2020.

Well, this is where the questions come in and a challenge to the people that live in Stobswell and Maryfield. We are asking our local council and councillors, from all political parties, what they are going to do to deliver the substantial changes we need and when it's going to happen, because we need it now. We're fed up waiting.

So, that is what we're asking the council but it can't be all down to them. This is our community, we live here, we shop here, our bairns go to school here. We need to start to make things happen for ourselves and we can.

Everybody, the council and locals need to come together and decide what we want to change and get on with doing it, because everybody is fed up waiting.

WE NEED SPACE FOR PEOPLE



The Cooncil were awarded £2.5m from the Scottish Government's Spaces for People fund, the money is meant to help provide temporary improvements that encourage social distancing, increase the number of 20mph zones, widen pavements, help develop more people-focused places and make more segregated cycleways which will help reduce traffic and help people get out more to walk and cycle.

We've already seen some exciting results in Union Street in the city centre which are proving popular both with the public and local traders, the Cooncil have recently been carrying out consultations in Stobswell which inspired a wide range of imaginative ideas which will result in some really exciting temporary improvements in Eliza Street and Craigie Street, where developments will see people put first with seating, planting and street art all introduced to make these small streets off Albert Stret more attractive for locals and the people visiting the area.

The Stobswell Forum have been involved with the Cooncil right from the start and conducted our own online consultation on social media to gather as many people's views as possible, we're just excited to see the work start (late May early June) and the environment in and around Albert Street move forward, but we don't want to stop there, we want to see the footpaths on Albert Street widened which would help with social distancing and congestion and the introduction of outdoor seating for the cafes, along with more planting and seating along the length of the street.

Currently the Council's City Development Department see Albert Street, Forfar Road, Pitkerro Road and Dura Street as main through roads from the docks and city centre to the Kingsway. What this means for locals and visitors alike is that on a daily basis roughly 500 large trucks and inter-city buses travel through Stobswell and Maryfield passing the Morgan Academy and down our high street, so any improvements on Albert Street need to accommodate these vehicle movements.

These vehicles don't stop, they bring nothing to our community but congestion, pollution and disruption and then there are the road safety issues. These vehicles pass right by the Morgan Academy where literally hundreds of our bairns have to squeeze into narrow pavements every school day.

We sympathise with some of the issues, if these vehicles don't use Albert Street they have to go somewhere else but this is our community, High School and High Street. We understand that the City Development Department are planning a survey to find out exactly how many of these large vehicles pass through our community. The survey will show that there are more vehicles or less vehicles than we estimate but misses the point, we want to see Albert Street given the best chance to prosper and we think the best way to achieve this would be for the local community and council to work together to find a solution that improves road safety and gives Albert Street the best chance to flourish and grow.

If not now, when will we have a better chance to see imaginative and ambitious change come to Stobswell's District Shopping Centre?

PANDEMIC CONNECTIVITY

During the early part of the pandemic The Stobswell Forum, working in partnership with the Morgan Academy, donated eleven Amazon Kindle Fire 7 tablets to help bairns who were struggling to get online and connect to their remote learning classes. We're proud to have helped in the most difficult of circumstances but it's also good to see both the council and



Scottish Government stepping in and ensuring that bairns aren't left behind through not being able to access the internet.

THE NORTH POLE POST OFFICE

Stobswell Forum learned that a number of children in our community would not receive Christmas gifts in 2020 due to the pandemic, furlough, higher heating and food bills and a whole host other reasons. So we got together with Hillcrest who donated their shop at 170 Albert Street, and opened a temporary Christmas Shop, "The North Pole Post Office", on the Saturdays leading up to Christmas. Lots of the local traders joined in and collected donations for us, there are too many to mention but you know who you are, thank you.

Donations came in thick and fast, with bag after bag of non-perishable foodstuffs, over 400 items of toiletries and, unbelievably, more than 550 selection boxes and boxes of sweets. We also collected 250-plus items of warm clothing and outdoor PE kit, and more than 700 new toys.

These donations were then passed on to charities and groups right across Stobswell, for local children and people in need.

Words don't sum up how we feel but we'll try. A huge THANK YOU to everyone in Maryfield and the wider



community who donated and made Christmas that bit better and of course a special THANK YOU to all of our volunteers who handed out free hot chocolate and cake to people who dropped by.

We are overwhelmed with your response, and looking forward to next Christmas already.

SHOPFRONT PROJECT



You may have seen some bright and cheerful new shopfronts appearing in and around Albert Street, well the story is that The Stobswell Forum went and secured funding from The Scottish Government's "Scotland Loves Local" fund and, working with local award-winning animator/illustrator Gordon (Gordy) Crawford and the council's UNESCO Design Office, produced these stunning designs.





Gordy has worked on public art trails, murals, exhibitions, music videos and published illustrated books in a varied career and we're hoping to get together again and brighten the area up even more over the coming months. So if you have a shop or know someone who has a shop and would like to get involved, get in touch.

STOBFEST - GOING ONLINE

At the risk of stating the obvious, we had some issues in 2020 which meant that Stobfest couldn't happen as normal. Now it's 2021 and we are determined to bring it back into this new normal, whatever that may be.

Enter Stobfest Online. We're planning a variety of different events, activities and things to do. Some of them will be online of course, but we're also going to have things you can go and do around the area in a safe, suitable distanced way.

What kind of things are we thinking?

Well, we're planning on using lots of our local art to get folks trailing all over Stobswell. We've got friends from the University of Dundee who have taken part in previous years and are really keen to come and play again. We're also wondering how we can have fun on social media. We know that there are lots of dog lovers locally – would anyone be up for contributing to a 'daily doggo' on Twitter or Facebook?

Most importantly, we'll be celebrating our talented, creative local people who make Stobswell what it is. We'd love our artists to take part in an Instagram art show over the week. We'll be running remote exercise classes, crafting sessions, and we're even hoping for live music! You can find out more on our website at stobswell.org.uk/community-events/stobfest and, as always, reach us on social media.

Have Your Say

As always, we want to know what you think. How else will we know what we should be fighting for locally?

We've set up another online survey to find out about your opinions on local play parks. If you can fill it in we'd be really grateful. You can do it in only a moment or two, though if you have longer and want to tell us more it's really useful. Feel free to give us your candid opinion, though it's always nice if you can keep it reasonably polite.

You can fill in the survey by visiting: www.bit.ly/SFPlayParks



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