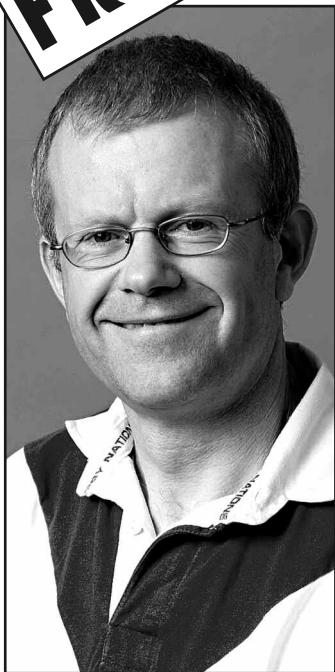


# THE BURGH ANGEL



**FREE**

## Democracy under threat?



Councillor Mason's protest was answered by suspension

With the elections firmly behind us, there are fresh scandals surrounding new government ministers, and there have been warnings that Scotland's democracy is under threat.

A petition has been launched into the number of spoilt ballots (over 10% of all votes cast in Maryhill were discounted), calling on a UN investigation.

Many believe the scandal is worse than the Florida vote

rigging in 2000 in the USA. Turn to Glasgow and before the election Councillor John Mason was suspended from Glasgow City Council in March by an unelected Government 'Code of Conduct' watchdog.

Councillor Mason sat on the Lord Provost's chair before a Council meeting to protest about the lack of democracy being forced on the Council by the Labour majority.

Councillor Mason told the

Angel, "...in particular we disagreed that there were to be no opposition councillors on the main executive committee."

Several non-Labour Councillors have stated that they are excluded from decision-making teams through undemocratic methods. Mason got off lucky due to the election, but could have faced a 9 month suspension, for making his stand, but the council executive still remains totally undemocratic.

### Housing

## Councillor confirms luxury developments

Councillor Hanzala Malik confirmed to The Burgh Angel recently that Westercommon has been approved for house building.

The common land between Hamilton-hill estate and Firhill is currently used by locals for dog-walking and a quiet place for fresh air and exercise.

While the area could be turned into a proper park, the Council and its private developers have opted to destroy the

tranquillity as part of their canal regeneration plan for upmarket private housing and businesses.

Malik was Executive Member for Development and Regeneration Services at the Council during the last term and is coincidentally the Chair of the Forth and Clyde Canal development partnership company which is building the luxury housing and businesses over the next few years.



Woodside councillor Hanzala Malik has business links

## Tom Brown, from Maryhill, is Glasgow's first rickshaw driver.

He pulls many times his own weight in tourists down the streets of the city centre. His employers at Barrhead Travel are working to get ten rickshaws on the streets soon. Tom has led the initiative and got the bosses to see the potential for tourists and locals alike.



## Feature - Housing in Maryhill

# Maryhill “consultation” disguised

**O**n the 17th of April representatives of community groups were invited to a Stakeholder Masterplanning Workshop to discuss ‘Integrating the Regeneration of North Maryhill’.

The Burgh Angel was not invited, of course. But we sent a reporter anyway and we can confirm what you may already suspect: Maryhill is being divided up among GHA, ISIS and Glasgow City Council.

The workshop was designed to give the impression we were being consulted. There has been, right enough, a kind of consultation with the public some months back. But the public said social housing, preserve the green space around the canal, no road developments. Professional consultants Tower and Hyslop had rather different ideas in mind. Guess which way the masterplan is going?

## Exciting Time for GHA

The workshop began with an introduction by Neil Bell, head of planning at the council who told us how the council and ISIS (the private business development wing of British Waterways) formed The Glasgow Canal Regeneration Partnership in 2003 and how the masterplan they came up with had now been approved. Mr Bell never mentioned that although £5 billion is being spent on the Masterplan, the council is cutting support to community groups and charities. David Fletcher regeneration guru of GHA then

stepped up to inform us how excellent they were at community engagement and claimed general endorsement of the plan.

‘This is a very exciting time for us’ he said. No doubt a sincere statement.

Not everything they proposed was bad. There was a lot of talk about a ‘central park’ in Gilshochill, opening up green spaces where people fear to tread and connecting the community to the canal, creating pedestrian links across the area and developing play space for kids. But this is tokenism compared to the favours being granted to property developers.

## Guantanamo Glenavon

If you live in the Glenavon towers, it’s as if everything has been designed to prevent you getting to ASDA, just north of the flats. A 10ft high steel fence has been erected around the whole complex to thwart anyone having the temerity of thinking of a short cut. If you escape from Guantánamo Glenavon from the south you have to walk along roads where traffic tears down the hill and where you often see the wreckage of joy riders wrapped around trees. Once you get down the hill near Summerston Station there is no pedestrian crossing of any kind on Arrochar St. This is the main access road to the shopping centre and is always busy with fast traffic.

The time scale for Glenavon



*Forth and Clyde canal-side footpath blocked and benches removed. The 5th of May, during an Old Firm match. The area is now the exclusive*

redevelopment is 10 years and awaits the £5 billion makeover. We need cheap and simple improvements before someone is killed. Masterplan Shmasterplan! Give us that crossing. Give us pedestrian access from Glenavon to Asda and Summerston station now.

## Commercialising Maryhill Locks

The workshop on Maryhill canal locks was all about commercialisation. ISIS and the council were keen to build a visitor centre and associated car parks. This is against what the people said they wanted in the consulta-

tion. The canal is about wildlife and relaxation, not making money, and in any case visitors should be encouraged to arrive by the towpath (which as we speak is being reconnected with the city centre) by boat and by train (the new Kelvindale station joins the canal a short walk or cycle from the locks). The talk is about green values, the action is about increasing traffic.

## Rising House Prices

Most important of all is the housing issue. The kind of housing that is to sweep over Maryhill is going to be beyond the reach of the peo-

# ses true nature of Masterplan



*the public space above was enclosed with an 8ft high fence built on  
ive preserve of the Mondriaan estate in former Ruchill.*

ple who now live here. We will be moved out in a reminder of the Highland Clearances. We can see what's coming in the Mondriaan estate, the new houses off Ruchill St, pretentiously named after the abstract Dutch artist Pieter Cornelis Mondriaan, whose *Composition with Yellow, Blue, and Red* finds a feeble echo in the facades of the houses. The Mondriaan flats have nothing to do with Maryhill, its heritage or its culture, they are for "New West Enders"; and they start selling at £1/4 million.

stake" scheme, whereby we will be able to buy a proportion of a house in conjunction with a social landlord. So you will be able, for instance, to buy 60% of a house. But without control of the housing market all that will happen is that prices will rise up to the level that buyers can be stretched to. If sellers can get buyers to pay £225,000 for a house, then they will try to get you to pay £225,000 for 60% of a house. It's the law of supply and demand. We are not convinced by homestake.

The Masterplanners tried to reassure us with the "home-

## Comment

### The City Strolls webmaster offers an alternative to consultation methods which leave Glaswegians in the cold

#### Public Consultation?

Architects drawings, fancy screens, pictures with meaningless text and half a dozen "creative" people, a few councillors discretely tucked away in the audience and a selection of usually unimpressed locals. Just another heavy developer bias, consultation rap.

The script is always planned out in advance to favour business interests. -

"The local residents just need to understand where we are coming from then they will get it". "So first, this person will talk, then this person will talk, then this person will talk. Then the audience will be allowed to question them on things they don't understand." "And then we will split up into smaller groups to discuss even more things you might not understand". And so it goes. Someone will be taking photographs showing everyone consulting with each other. The photographer will be framing the pics. For the next glossy publication showing how receptive folk are to our ideas. This is what's called public consultation.

#### Alternative "Public" Consultation

Representatives from the

local area meet with city officials and prospective developers to state their ideas, needs and requirements for their community. An agreement is made on how the Consultation is going to be pitched. Both parties having a full opportunity to explain their case. If there is any bias it should be on the residents part, as it's their neighbourhood and their lives that will be affected by any regeneration.

At the event as well as charts on social housing and promised jobs projections, a chart showing projected profits and full interests of the private parties involved should also be on display.

A budget should set out, as part of the project, to allow the local population to employ their own independent expert, to explain how the changes or redevelopment of their area, will impact on their community.

A stronger "public right of reply" should be allowed in council publications, which at present strongly favours the developer, rather than the public. Who, after all are planning authority Glasgow City Council meant to serve?

## Community

## Long-running community radio station gets full-time broadcasting license

**Sunny Govan 103.5FM has been broadcasting one month a year for nearly a decade, but as of March this year they are now broadcasting full-time.**

A non-profit radio station, they play everything from chart hits, old classics, to local, unsigned bands.

They have over 80 presenters, all are volunteers and their enthusiasm and range of interests keeps the station vibrant.

"We tell all our presenters don't ask what your community can do for you ask what you can do for your community"

The founder Heather McMillan spoke at a rate of knots about their proactive

approach to community.

"The first step is for presenters to go and adopt a community group that they can then use in the jingles and so on. If you're in a community group or know of a local hero who deserves a bit of attention get in touch"

They promote local people, bands and goings on. Like the Angel they aim to give a loudhailer to the folk who don't normally have their voices heard in the media. Regular slots showcase the cream of local talent.

If you can't get the station on your radio, you can also listen to it on their website: [www.sunnygovan.org](http://www.sunnygovan.org)

What a waste yet again of money to pull the flats down. My mother was one of the first tenants in 29 Glenavon Rd. We came from a room and kitchen in Fingal St. She is now 80 years old and what a prospect it is for her knowing that at her age she will be turfed out to god knows where in the city.

Will the GHA be footing the bill for flitting, decoration, new carpets etc? I don't think so.

Open your eyes GHA and get out into the city and see what's needing changed instead of doing it from a cosy office in the city.

*Very unhappy daughter of a Glenavon Rd tenant.*

*Aileen Adam*

On passing Maryhill primary was again shocked to see it empty and boarded up.

Is this to be yet another private housing development in Maryhill?

Can you let me know what's happening to it please.

*Ex pupil*

Dear Burgh Angel

The Scottish Election was a travesty and as far as we are concerned, must be rerun.

It seems that upon voting for a list MSP, you had to vote for a regional MSP at

the same time otherwise your ballot would be dismissed as spoilt.

I did not know this and neither did any of my socialist friends. We just voted for Rosie Kane and ignored the regional candidates, none of whom a true socialist could ever vote for. This means that none of our votes counted.

Ken Ritchie, the chief executive of the Electoral Reform Society, said the situation was "shocking and intolerable" but that "we have no reason to believe there's any political bias". Shocking and intolerable, true, no political bias, false.

The truth is that if you voted socialist but for no other, the system eradicated your vote. This is a grave injustice. It must be remedied.

*Norman Armstrong  
Maryhill*

## Letters

Dear Burgh Angel

I stay in Shiskine Drive Flats. I have had dampness since October. It has been reported numerous times and it has still not been sorted. I have two sons.

*In the last issue we asked readers to respond to the question, "Do you think Buchanan Galleries should be allowed to build over the city's bus station?"*

One reader said "Inappro-

priate use of funds, loss of well known access to outer Glasgow. Why ruin a system that works? We do not need or require the above changes."

*Dear Burgh Angel*

Shocked to read your news letter was an under statement. The demolition of the houses in north Maryhill (Glenavon Rd) in particular. Has the GHA visited this blocks since they took over?

**THE BURGH ANGEL** is run by local volunteers. We have no connection to the local or national government or political parties. 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.

Get the Burgh Angel from

**Yellow Bird on  
Maryhill Road  
&  
Tchai-Ovna on  
Otago Lane**

as well as shops, pubs  
and libraries.

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