

News

COME CLEAN NOW OVER SCHOOLS SAY PARENTS

WESTER HAILES
SENTINEL

The Greening
of Hailes



Report by **MARK SMITH**

LOCAL parents have called on Lothian's education chiefs to come clean over the future of Wester Hailes primary schools.

And Babs Burnett, of Murrayburn Grove, says the confusion over possible school closures in Wester Hailes could disrupt her child's education.

Ms Burnett says she doesn't want to send her five year old son, Greig, to Dumbyden Primary School because she fears for its closure - so she has applied to get her son into Westburn Primary School.

But Lothian Region Council's Education Department say there is no room at Westburn - so she must send her son to Dumbyden.

"What's the point of me sending my son to a school that is going to close, but I don't want to disrupt my son's education."

She added: "Myself and other parents I've spoken too would feel a lot happier if we knew we were sending our children to a school with a safe future."

There is to be only one primary one class at Westburn next session with 33 children in the class - the maximum number allowed.

There are also six parents on the waiting list, but Frank Hepburn, of Lothian's Education Department has ruled out the possibility of another class being set up.

"I can't deny that there will be a closure."

Cllr Margaret McCulloch says one class can be set up at Westburn. It would mean employing another teacher and that is out of the question.

The *Sentinel* reported earlier this month that there was a major shake-up of schools in Wester Hailes underway.

Margaret McCulloch, Hailes Regional Councillor and a member of Lothian Region's education committee, said recently: "I can't deny that there will be a closure. But all school closures are handled sensitively, and we will make sure that there is little disruption to children's education."

SENTINEL VIEW

RUMOURS of at least one primary school in Wester Hailes closing are rife at the moment.

And two weeks ago, Regional bosses admitted that there was going to be a review of schools in the area.

We applaud their desire to talk to all the people concerned before coming to a decision.

But we would ask that they now put an end to all the

confusion and come clean with their plans.

All this uncertainty is damaging the morale of teachers, parents and pupils alike.

If, at the end of the day there has to be school closures - then so be it.

But let's end all this speculation and get on with the important job of giving our youngsters the education they deserve.

THE 'greening' of Wester Hailes took another step forward recently when local kids unveiled their new wildlife garden.

And during the garden's launch at Clovenstone Primary School the last shrub was symbolically planted by Cllr Maginnis, Lothian Region's education chairperson.

Helping Cllr Maginnis do the honours was six year old Melanie Cranston, a primary two pupil at the school.

Clovenstone head teacher Mr McIvor, hopes the garden will help pupils get a better understanding of nature. He said: "The creating of the garden not only is educationally worthwhile but enhances our environment and has helped staff to instill in our youngsters renewed awareness and respect for the natural world."

The garden has taken eight months to complete and has involved children

from primary one to primary seven.

The pupils have helped in every aspect of the garden from the design to planting the bushes and shrubs.

Alexey Janes of the Wester Hailes Land Use paper was the guest of the project, and to show their appreciation they presented him with a surprise present after the launch.

He said: "I'm very happy with the way the garden has turned out, but it's due mainly to the kids who've worked together brilliantly to make it possible."

Amazingly the whole garden cost only £130 to create thanks to donations of materials from Edinburgh businesses. Practical help from the Scottish Conservation Project and Wester Hailes Management Agency also helped lower the cost of the project.

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

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HIBS star Murdo MacLeod helped put a little bit of Wester Hailes down in history recently. The ex-Scotland midfielder was on hand when a time capsule containing artifacts from all walks of Wester Hailes life was buried underground.

The event was held to mark the re-development of The Greenway, the area's main thoroughfare.

The capsule has been buried outside Hailesland Primary School, opposite the health centre, and contains objects as diverse as a piece of the Hailesland blocks and a Sandy Snoozle mug.

Convenor of the Greenway working party, Ernest Neri, said: "The redevelopment of the Greenway and this time capsule both reflect the growing optimism in the area.



The time capsule shows that we are confident of a long term future for Wester Hailes."

Pupils from the WHEC and local groups filled the capsule with items giving a flavour of life in Wester Hailes.

And it could lie in the soil under the revamped Greenway for hundreds of years.

The work taking place on the Greenway involves tree and shrub planting, a brand new lighting system and major alterations to the existing pathways.

The main funders are Scottish Homes, and their east of Scotland boss, Bob Miller officially launched the £685,000 project.

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