

# You said it

## The Voice of Wester Hailes

### Ripped off Medical facts

THE tenants in the refurbished high-rise flats at Hailesland are being royally ripped-off by Scottish Power and the council, by charging heat with rent.

The flats are heated with radiators containing heating bricks that must be fully charged to give continuous heat, but since the council controls the heat with a timer, the tenants only get a maximum of four and a half hours of heat per night in the winter and one and a half the rest of the year. And since the system was based on a full charge of eight and a half hours per night, the heating bricks never get fully charged, and some flats are very cold indeed.

The tenants in Hailesland Park were, up until a couple of months ago, charged £5.50 per week - £286 a year - for heat, but after a meeting with Scottish Power and representatives from the housing department, it was decided that the cost would be lowered to £4.75 per week or £247 a year for a three-apartment. By their own admission they are making money on the heat with rent scheme, but when asked for a credit, they emphatically refused. Since the meeting, the council and Scottish Power have determined that only the flats on the perimeter of the building are cold, so they have decided that the flats on the four corners of the building will have a radiator in the kitchen - they didn't say when. Also since this meeting there are several questions that still have not been answered.

**If Scottish Power raises its rates, will we get two raises?**

**If VAT is added to home fuel, will we have to pay**

### Safe as houses

I WAS thoroughly disheartened to read the Wester Hailes Partnership's Crime report in the last Sentinel. This 'in depth' double page spread quotes a surprising drop in the number of house break-ins since 1989, but fails to mention that this is almost entirely due to the work of an extremely successful project which employs 100% local people. It is no coincidence that Safe As Houses began operation in 1989 and has since secured nearly 4,000 of our homes in Wester Hailes. Obviously the writers of the report did not dig deep enough to discover Safe As Houses (although anyone

twice?

**Why wasn't the wind chill factor taken into consideration when the temperatures for the heat with rent system were set up?**

In order to make maximum profits from the tenants, the council buys wholesale fuel from the power company, but does not pass the savings on to the tenant.

On the other hand the power company benefits from cold flats because this forces the tenants to use the three auxiliary heaters which have been installed in the living-room, kitchen and bathroom, which are NOT part of the heat with rent scheme.

And the scheme was designed for employed people who can afford it and are not at home all day. The majority of tenants in Hailesland Park are not employed people, consequently when an unemployed tenant uses his heat during the day, his heat is gone by 4.00 pm. Considering the time it must have taken to plan this extortionate scheme, I would think that Scottish Power and the council would have saved themselves time (but not money) had they listened to their own propaganda about choice and democracy and had not lied to the tenants about what they were letting themselves in for.

If a tenant wants heat with rent, he should have it, but if a tenant doesn't, he should not be forced into it.

According to the heat with rent brochure, comfort levels are maintained according to the change in the climate - hot or cold. In a pig's ear they are.

**Agnes Miller  
Hailesland Park.**

of the 4,000 householders could have enlightened them) or for that matter to discover Crest security - a community business which not only guards local building sites but also monitors a pilot British Telecoms house alarm scheme in Clovenstone. I would suggest that messrs Berry & Jones (or was it Smith & Jones?!) do their homework before they engage on another such in depth study so that their "heart felt plea for an estate based crime prevention strategy" recognises the on going commitment and dedication of existing successful local initiatives.  
**Lesley Roy.**

IN his letter, which appears to have been inspired more by political dogma than social conscience, A. Thomson of the Calders casts doubts on professional integrity and reveals his ignorance of basic fact.

We seek to redress the balance by correcting many of his inaccuracies and misconceptions. Whinpark Medical Centre was not funded by the taxpayer but by the doctors themselves who invested large amounts of their own time and money to provide a modern, well-equipped facility for the community.

Provision of a pharmacy was considered but permission refused in view of the number of existing pharmacies in the area - all of which are keen to provide a collection and delivery service when necessary.

The question of the location of Whinpark was largely a factor of availability, affordability and suitability of a site for building. GP fundholding is complex and ill understood but broadly speaking it facilitates the

devolution of the management of Primary Health Care Services and financial control thereof to those best placed to assess the needs of the patients - in other words the General Practitioners. Devolution in this way is surely not a concept entirely alien to most Scots.

At its simplest level it can be likened to prudent housekeeping but the somewhat mischievous suggestion that any savings can be used to line the doctors' pockets is frankly insulting.

Judicious savings are subject to audit and must be used for the benefit of patients. Examples of such benefits could be the purchase of equipment such as ECGs or nebulisers, or the employment of extra staff to provide for projects such as AIDS counselling or visiting the elderly.

A. Thomson is entitled to his somewhat cynical view but before expressing them in a public forum would be wise to check for factual accuracy.

**The Partners of Whinpark Medical Practice.**

### Abuse

HAVING seen the articles about local families really in need of another house it is sickening to think that the 1987 Housing Act can be used to get a family, be it genuine or otherwise, a house on the spot. Granted this was originally for abused women but there are cases where women can move from town to town even with a lover and be seen as a family unit only for their own gain.

This is a loophole which if genuine local residents, who are desperate can't be rehoused it is outrageous that unscrupulous people can use the system for their own ends. Surely Women's Aid could help and any cases referred to the Housing could be more closely vetted and their circumstances investigated before they are given instant accommodation. It makes a double standard and the bogus or intentionally homeless could just as easily discard the house given if it suited them. This is particularly important since the Council is so very short of housing and very low of those who use and abuse the 1987 Act realising they are depriving other people or not caring who suffers!

**A discerning reader.**

### WANTED

**Have you got a kilt, Scottish or American flag, a poncho or a Mexican hat?**

**Neighbourhoods taking part in the forthcoming Carnival need anything with a Scottish, American or Mexican flavour.**

**If you can help please telephone the Rep Council on 442 3202**



### GREEN SPACES

**Over 80 per cent of the Scottish people live in the central belt of Scotland, crammed together within the triangle formed by Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stirling.**

The town is home for most of us and it's the place where all the environmental issues come to the forefront as housing, factories and roads jostle together in their competition for space.

Somewhere in the middle of all this people live and work, but there also has to be room for play and recreation, which means having room for green spaces and wildlife.

So where are the green spaces in and around Wester Hailes. Here's a quick list of places where you can go to get away from it all.

Union Canal - once used for the transport of coal, sandstone, slate and granite for the new town of Edinburgh. The canal is now home to a great variety of plant and animal life.

From the Calders end you can walk as far as Falkirk and, taken from the Hailes Park, the canal

provides a peaceful route right the way into town.

Wester Hailes Wood - now the Westburn flats are down you can see this small area of old pasture woodland much better.

Once you're in the central clearing you can quickly forget how close you are to the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Colinton Dell - whether it's walking the dog, taking the kids out for the day, or going on a nature trail, the Dell has to be the best piece of green open space within walking distance of Wester Hailes.

On Wednesday 23rd June between 6.30-8.30 there will be a guided 'walk on the wildside' through Colinton Dell. Phone Mark on 458 5082 for more details, families welcome.

**Alexey Janes -  
Environmental Ranger  
(458 5043)**

**Do you have a story to tell?  
Call the Sentinel on  
442 4588**

### EDINBURGH RAPE CRISIS CENTRE

SUPPORT & ADVICE FOR WOMEN WHO  
HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY ASSAULTED  
FREE & CONFIDENTIAL SERVICE FOR  
WOMEN RUN BY WOMEN



EDINBURGH RAPE CRISIS GROUP  
P.O. BOX 120,  
HEAD POST OFFICE  
EDINBURGH

### REX LAUNDERETTE Sighthill Shopping Centre

**MONDAY to FRIDAY  
8.30am to 8.30pm**

**Saturday - 8.30am - 6pm**

**Sunday - 9.00am - 6pm**

**SERVICE WASHING AVAILABLE**

**Last wash one hour before closing**

