

PRESS RELEASE

GORGIE DALRY GALA **TO BE CANCELLED**

After more than 30 years of success, the famous Gorgie Dalry Gala is now threatened with closure. Unless more funding and helpers come forward the Gala will cease to exist and the people of Gorgie Dalry will lose their biggest and most colourful community event. This annual festival is a vital focal point where people of all ages and all the local businesses come together and have fun. New funding and a fresh input of new ideas and help are urgently needed if this important Gala is to be saved.

Sandra Ramsay, a worried local resident said, "Our Gala Day has been part of our community calendar now for the past 32 years. Funding has been eroded over the years. It used to be a weeklong Festival, reduced now to a one-day event in Murieston Park. I urge local residents to get involved and help save the Gala Day! I'd hate to see it go forever!"

The withdrawal of specific Council funding and steep new charges for things that were previously given at low cost or free of charge, such as operational licences and portable toilets, has had a devastating impact. The Gala has also seen a reduction in business sponsorship due to the recession.

Jim Young, Gala Day Co-ordinator said, "on top of cutting the grant that we used to get, the Council have slapped a rental bill of £300 a day for the hire of portaloos, when they used to provide them to the people of Gorgie Dalry for nothing. We are appealing to the Council for help here as the Gala is for local people and it helps to build up community spirit and citizenship."

Jim is also appealing for local people to help save the stricken Gala. "Our plea, to all sections of the local community is to come forward and work together to ensure the continuation of this worthwhile community event. Unless local people become involved in the planning and organising of the Gala Day, it is therefore in serious threat of closure and would undoubtedly be a massive loss to the community".

David Southern, Managing Director, Heart Of Midlothian Football Club said that Hearts are keen to help out -

"The Gala Day is such an important event in the local calendar that it would be a tremendous loss if it were to close. If the people of Gorgie Dalry are keen to keep the event going, Heart of Midlothian Football Club will do what it can to assist them. As chair of the Heart of Midlothian Education and Community Trust, I have also asked if we can include the Gala in our fundraising efforts over the coming year. The Trust is already committed to supporting Maggie's Centre and local charities and in this way we will make sure that the Gala also benefits"

For further information on how you can help – please contact Jim Young, Gala Day Co-ordinator on 0131 337 3252/0776 558 6744 or gdca@btconnect.com.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

The Gala Day was established in 1980 by a number of local volunteers and representatives from various locally based projects, groups and community organisations meeting on a regular basis, with the aim of providing the local community area with an annual Festival Week to be staged in June of each year. The programme would consist of a mixture of entertainment, drama productions, theatre shows, sport, competitions, displays, exhibitions; inter primary school competitions and inter-pub events. This ensured that the Festival was providing a varied programme, which was suitable for local people of all ages and

backgrounds. The Festival Week itself would commence with a Street Parade and a Gala Day in the local park.

In May 1987 additional funding was secured from the local authority, initially for a one-year period, to employ a part-time Festival Co-ordinator with the remit to expanding the Festival to an all-year –round organisation by staging regular events either on a weekly, monthly or perhaps annual basis, raising additional income to fund the Festival Week. This enabled the Festival to become one of the best-known and recognised community festivals throughout the City of Edinburgh.

The Festival continued to operate as a week-long event until 2000 when it was reduced to a one-day event forming the Gorgie Dalry Gala Day, which continued to provide an action-packed programme of events and attractions for the whole family to enjoy. The Gala Day also provides an excellent platform for local organisations and community groups to participate on the day and advertise their individual programmes to a captive audience.