

MURIESTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 13 NOVEMBER 2014
held at Williamston Primary School at 7 pm
web: <http://www.muriestoncommunity.com>

1. Present:

Arthur Marris, Kim Vance, Chris Dryden, Ron Skirving, Davidson McQuarrie, Ian Brown, David Cooper, Lorna Cooper, Carol Hallesy, June Keddie, Nick Lansdell, Frank Mustard; Councillor John Muir; PC Alan James

Apologies: Tania Armstrong, Alex Hendry, Matthew Hallesy; Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick; Superintendent Kevin Kerr

Guests: Mrs. Simone Gupta and Mrs. Katie Parsons of Moriston Drive Residents Association

2. Minutes of the Meeting on 9 October 2014:

Acceptance of the minutes of the meeting on 9 October was proposed by Ian Brown and seconded by Ron Skirving. Carried.

3. Matters Arising:

A minor change was agreed and will be made for publication.

4. Planning Consent to build one house in Murieston Valley beside Moriston Drive (0264/FUL/14):

A planning application has been made to build one house in Murieston Valley beside Moriston Drive (0264/FUL/14). The land in question is covered by a TPO. The Council Planning Service had refused planning permission but the application was referred to the planning committee by Councillor Johnston in support of the application.

At the subsequent Development Management Committee meeting it was pointed out by the Development Management Manager that four persons who had purportedly submitted letters in support of the application had no knowledge of submitting these letters. Councillors Borrowman, Boyle, McCarra and Muir on the Development Management Committee then voted in favour against three votes against to approve the application and grant planning permission.

The residents of Moriston Drive and Murieston Community Council have agreed that there was material concern about the circumstances and determination of this planning application and have separately written letters of complaint to the Chief Executive of West Lothian Council. The Chief Executive's response intimated the Council would not act on any of the material questions raised in the letters of complaint. The Police also investigated the planning application and determination, and have now decided to close their investigation. We are awaiting results of the investigation.

The meeting spent 45 minutes discussing with Councillor John Muir the circumstances surrounding the decision to grant planning consent. Various questions were put to Councillor Muir by the residents of Moriston Drive and members of the Community Council. Councillor Muir stated that the reason he had decided to vote in favour of the planning application was on humanitarian grounds. Councillor Muir also asserted that he had not read the planning application papers beforehand so as to approach the Development Management Committee meeting with an open mind. Councillor Muir also questioned whether the Community Council would have objected to the planning application had they known the personal circumstances behind the application. The Community Council's Planning Secretary indicated that all the information was open to the public on West Lothian Council's planning website and that the Community Council would not have changed their view on the application. The Development Manager's report Para 4.6 clearly states that the applicant had cited a member of the family has personal health reasons for the construction of the house.

The residents of Moriston Drive expressed their frustration that this house had been granted permission on land which West Lothian Council had openly admitted should have been zoned in the previous Local Development Plan as land safeguarded for open space but had been omitted inadvertently by a printing error. As a result, the residents of Moriston Drive have had to endure persistent planning applications due to this administrative mistake which the Council had indicated they were intending to redress in the forthcoming Local Development Plan.

5. Finances:

Ron Skirving reported that the cheque for £1,100 had been sent to our planning consultant, Malcolm Inkster for his work on preparing the basis of our submission on the Main Issues Report. We have received £275 from Bellsquarry CC as their share of the consultancy fee. We have been asked to complete forms again for the online banking account. The resolution made at last month's community council meeting is still effective.

6. Community Policing:

PC Alan James reported.

Anti-Social Behaviour calls are 89 to October (last year, 56 for this period).

Youth Disorder calls are 69 to October (last year, 23 for this period).

There have been few calls re. under-age drinking.

There has been recent car crime in the Bankton area. Householders are reminded to lock and remove all possessions from cars which are not garaged.

7. Councillor's Report:

Councillor John Muir stated that the Council is undertaking a public consultation, Delivering Better Outcomes on identifying savings in budget of £30 million over the next three years. Savings are likely to be made in all departments.

Councillor Muir has asked for information on local and community policing. Chief Superintendent Imery has promised to deliver more community policing. West Lothian Council currently funds a number of community police officers.

8. Murieston Environmental Group (MEG) - <http://meg.btck.co.uk> :

Kim Vance reported.

The Livingston South Blue Green Network has been recently been given an environmental award.

As a result of funding for the Blue Green Network, there will be a seven week programme of work starting soon to repair ditches and paths on Murieston Trail and the concrete staircase beside the 'bandstand'.

9. Windfarms:

Nothing to report.

10. Community Website - www.muriestoncommunity.com :

Copies of minutes for all meetings and the current agenda are being posted there. A new website for community matters is being launched by Ron Skirving shortly. We already have a policy for adding and managing content on the website which the secretary will circulate.

11. Community Allotments:

Ian Brown reported to the meeting.

Funding is still being sought to pay for soil testing of the meadow land beside Murieston House.

12. Single Outcome Agreement:

Ron Skirving has asked for feedback from community councillors on issues and experiences they, family and friends have.

13. Local Development Plan:

Arthur Marris reported.

Our planning consultant, Malcolm Inkster provided his draft response which formed the basis of our paper submission made on 17 October to the consultation on the Main Issues Report (MIR) for the Local Development Plan. Ian Brown explained Malcolm Inkster's approach in formulating the draft response. Arthur also made his own response to the MIR online. This submission website proved not to be user-friendly and it would be difficult to complete and submit a response without a measure of computer skills. We will be inviting the residents of Murieston to complete a questionnaire to express their views on the planning proposals for south Livingston. There will be both a doorstep and online version of the questionnaire.

14. Planning Applications:

Ian Brown reported. No significant change since the last meeting.

15. Correspondence:

Spokes cycling magazine was circulated.

16. Any Other Business:

David Cooper reported there are now problems with cars parking at the entrance to Bankton Wood on

school days. Parents are now parking on the road to Bankton House several times a day while taking or returning children from Williamston Primary. Davidson McQuarrie related similar problems in Lancashire where affected streets were redesignated as no parking zones on the grounds there was insufficient width for emergency vehicle access. Ian Brown agreed to write to the Council Chief Executive to raise our concerns and request a Road Safety Audit.

Kim Vance voiced complaints many residents in Murieston have with broadband bandwidth and mobile phone reception. Davidson McQuarrie said BT had plans working with the Council to substantially upgrade broadband capacity in 2016 or 2017.

Frank Mustard suggested that the community councillors hold a Christmas dinner at personal expense. Details will be agreed at the December meeting.

The Meeting closed at 8.50 pm

The next Community Council meeting will be on Thursday, 11 December 2014 at 7 pm in the Staff Room at Williamston Primary School