

MURIELSTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2018
held at Williamston Primary School at 7 pm
web: <http://murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk>

1. Present:

Chris Dryden, Carol Hallesy, Arthur Marris, Ian Brown, Davidson McQuarrie, David Cooper, Lorna Cooper, Frank Mustard, Ron Skirving; Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

Apologies: Tania Armstrong, Kevin Kerr, Nick Lansdell; Councillor Moira Shemilt

Other attendees: Ken Kirk; Brian Johnstone and Dean Swift from Livingston Village Committee Council; Christine Hay, Frances and Peter Jeppesen from Bellsquarry & Adambrae Community Council; Jane Beggie, Tree & Woodland Officer, West Lothian Council;

Jean Frame, site manager and Nick Porter, assistant site manager with Woodland Trust

2. Minutes of the Meeting on 14 June 2018:

Acceptance of the minutes of the regular meeting on 14 June was proposed by Frank Mustard and seconded by Arthur Marris, subject to minor changes. Carried.

3. Matters Arising:

As the developers of the housing development at Wellhead Farm are financing the new footway at Murieston Road, Council funding for this work has been re-allocated for an upgrade of the path at Newpark Road.

4. Presentation by Woodland Trust re. TPO Planning Application (Ref. 0575/TPO/18):

Jane Beggie from West Lothian Council, and Jean Frame and Nick Porter from Woodland Trust attended the meeting to provide information on the recent planning application to remove 18 trees in Williamston Wood beside Williamston School which is covered by a TPO order.

Jean Frame from Woodland Trust outlined the background to the planning application.

There are 13 community woodlands in Livingston which are managed by the Woodland Trust.

High risk zones, which are so designated being beside schools and paths etc., are surveyed every 1 to 2 years, and, as a result of an inspection, trees suspected of disease have been identified at Williamston Wood.

The Woodland Trust has submitted the TPO application to get consent to fell the diseased trees. The trees are displaying symptoms of black ooze on the lower bark, strongly indicating the presence of phytophthora disease. Samples from five trees were taken and sent to Forest Research at Roslin for analysis. It then takes 4 to 6 weeks for cultures to grow to allow analysis. The cultures have been inconclusive so far. Jean Frame met with Forest Research yesterday at the woodland and more samples were taken for analysis.

There are various forms of phytophthora, which is a serious and usually terminal disease for trees, such as sycamore and beech. Diseased trees need to be felled if presenting a public safety issue. Two trees close to Williamston School are high risk and will need to be felled immediately.

If disease is confirmed, notices will be put up at the woodland asking the public to avoid using the woodland. The Forestry Commission will offer advice on action which should be taken.

Phytophthora can be rapidly spread by birds, animals, as well as on footwear and bike tyres etc. Logs from diseased trees need to remain on site to prevent spread. Phytophthora can use rhododendrons as a host.

Rhododendron ponticum (aka common rhododendron) will generally be removed if funding is available.

Where viable, a 300m quarantine buffer is set when diseased trees are felled. There should be no dog walking in the woodland.

The Forestry Commission may advise the Woodland Trust on what steps should be taken when disease is confirmed. Notices will be put up to advise the public on restrictions etc. The Forestry Commission has a 'Keep it Clean' website which offers advice on avoiding the spread of tree diseases. Jean Frame is preparing a Tree Disease Action Plan.

The Woodland Trust have an app for mobile phones providing tree alerts.

The Woodland Trust has 13 woodland management plans which are reviewed every 5 years. Long term plans cover management for 20, 30 up to 100 years. These will be available to view on the Woodland Trust website.

The Forestry Commission are now providing a framework for an overall town plan, covering a 20 year vision in 5 year blocks. This will include plans for felling and thinning during the lifetime of the town plan. An overall plan for Livingston woodlands is now being produced.

Jean Frame offered to attend and present at a public meeting if the community council wanted to arrange this. Christine Hay noted concern that phytophthora may travel to Bellsquarry Wood. The outlook of the woodland changes if trees have to be removed.

Brian Johnstone noted that hybrid sycamores are currently damaging pavements and roads in Livingston Village.

Arthur Marris said information about the onset of disease and access restrictions in Williamston Wood would be published on the Murieston community website if restrictions are imposed.

5. Finances:

Arthur Marris reported.

The annual administration grant for 2018/2019 has now been received from West Lothian Council.

The 2018/2019 grant is £470, calculated at the rate of £7.50 per 100 of the population for Murieston, which is now 5,850.

The bank balance now stands at £2,277.82.

6. Community Policing:

There were no community police officers present at tonight's meeting.

Monthly crime stats for Livingston South ward have been abstracted from the latest Police update to the Livingston South Local Area Committee :-

May 18

<u>Calls</u>	<u>May 18</u>	<u>May 17</u>	<u>% change</u>	<u>Year to date</u>	<u>2017 to date</u>	<u>% change</u>
Youth	23	26	-12%	40	68	-41%
Anti-Social Behaviour	138	121	14%	247	283	-13%
Hate Crime	2	8	-75%	10	14	-29%
Vandalism	23	22	5%	38	50	-24%
Fire-raising	0	0	-	0	1	-100%
Public Space Assaults	16	16	0%	36	48	-25%

June 18

<u>Calls</u>	<u>Jun 18</u>	<u>Jun 17</u>	<u>% change</u>	<u>Year to date</u>	<u>2017 to date</u>	<u>% change</u>
Youth	12	24	-50%	52	92	-43%
Anti-Social Behaviour	118	125	-6%	365	408	-11%
Hate Crime	1	2	-50%	11	16	-31%
Vandalism	27	25	8%	65	75	-13%
Fire-raising	3	0	-	3	1	200%
Public Space Assaults	21	19	11%	62	68	-9%

July 18

<u>Calls</u>	<u>Jul 18</u>	<u>Jul 17</u>	<u>% change</u>	<u>Year to date</u>	<u>2017 to date</u>	<u>% change</u>
Youth	23	21	10%	75	113	-34%
Anti-Social Behaviour	164	166	-1%	529	574	-8%
Hate Crime	2	2	0%	13	18	-28%
Vandalism	20	21	-5%	85	96	-11%
Fire-raising	1	6	-83%	4	7	-43%
Public Space Assaults	11	8	38%	73	90	-19%

7. Councillor's Report:

Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick gave a report.

Councillor Peter Johnston was taken ill in the last few days and is a patient in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. The meeting agreed the Secretary would express our best wishes and send a get well card from Murieston Community Council.

Godfrey Fairbairn, who had been a popular German teacher at James Young School, sadly passed away.

Councillor Fitzpatrick attended the annual show of the Livingston and District Horticultural Society at Howden Park Centre on Saturday 1 September.

The new West Calder High School, which cost £32 million, has now opened at the start of the 2018/2019 school term.

West Lothian schools have had record achievements on attainment. James Young School is now number 2 in the county in terms of attainment.

The school clothing grant is now £130 for high school pupils and £115 for primary school pupils.

The SESplan is now nearly completed and will be signed off by Scottish Ministers. It is now accepted by the Scottish Government that the West Lothian housing figures are correct.

Network Rail report that further geological investigation is required before installing the lifts. The stairs are nearly ready.

A public meeting was held last Thursday in Dedridge regarding bus provision, with 140 attending. Both First Bus and Lothian County attended to respond to issues and concerns.

The new footway on Murieston Road has been well received.

Lawrence is pressing via the West Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership for texting to be available for confirming medical appointments, as an appointment letter is not always received.

As a result of budget pressures, charges are now being made for new care at home persons from October. Charges will then be introduced for existing home care clients next April. Charges will be capped at 65% of cost.

Benchmarking establishes West Lothian Council as the top performing local authority in Scotland.

The City Deal, signed recently, is funding new schools and rail station in Winchburgh and a junction on the M9 motorway. A training academy is being set up to provide trades operatives with the right skills for the building trade.

The Council's facilities management and building services are now centralised at new Whitehill Services Centre in Bathgate.

An information and advice session is being held for EU citizens at Livingston FC Stadium on Wednesday 19 September at 6pm. Lawyers will be present to offer advice.

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

Arthur Marris reported.

A bat walk is being held next Tuesday evening at 7pm, starting from Campbridge Pond.

MEG ran the popular novelty dog show at the Gala Day at Livingston Cricket Club on Saturday 1 September. It was agreed we would hold a joint Community Council and MEG litter pick in the autumn.

MEG are looking for more volunteers to assist with their programme of activities.

9. Murieston Development Trust:

Ron Skirving outlined details of the recent meeting held by the trustees.

There is a need to formulate the vision for the Trust and possibly develop a community action plan (which was commissioned by the West Calder and Harburn Development Trust after its formation). This may entail obtaining funding. Ian Brown noted that this initial study for the WC & HDT had cost some £2,000.

Arthur Marris pointed out that community benefits funds may be available soon for Camilty Windfarm as development is planned to start in 2019.

It had been agreed at the meeting that the Trust was advised to set up a charitable bank account to manage their finances.

10. Windfarms:

Nothing to report.

11. Communications, including website - murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk

Ron Skirving reported.

Ron will be sending out the next edition of the community council newsletter shortly; it is currently ready for proof-reading.

Ron advised on arrangements and cost for making the website more secure by hosting as an https: site. The meeting agreed to proceed with purchasing the digital certificate.

There was a discussion on GDPR compliance. The website will be reviewed to confirm observance.

12. Community Garden and Allotments:

Nothing to report.

13. Livingston South Station:

Ian Brown reported.

Ian wrote to Network Rail on 18 May to ask for gaps in the temporary fencing on the platforms to be made safe. Network Rail have confirmed to Councillor Shemilt that the matter will be addressed.

Councillor Fitzpatrick left the meeting at the end of this item of business for the duration of discussion of planning matters, having declared an interest as a member of the Development Control Committee.

14. Planning Applications:

Ian Brown reported.

Only one significant planning application has been made recently: the TPO application regarding felling diseased trees in Williamston Wood made by Woodland Trust (Ref. 0575/TPO/18).

Chris Dryden stated that there had been general appreciation for the new footway on Murieston Road.

15. Gala Day at Livingston Cricket Club:

Kevin Kerr and Davidson McQuarrie had a stall at the Gala Day on Saturday 1st September to publicise Murieston Community Council and the community website. We sold ice cream cones at cost and took the opportunity to hand out business cards promoting the community website.

The annual Guy Fawkes Night firework display at the Cricket Club is cancelled for this November as new legislation now requires personnel to undergo pyrotechnics training.

16. Correspondence:

Chris Dryden reported he has received a letter from the Cyrenians, which will be published on the community website.

17. Any Other Business:

None.

The Meeting closed at 8.50pm

The next Community Council meeting will be on Thursday, 11 October 2018 at 7 pm in the Staff Room at Williamston Primary School.