

MURIESTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2017
held at Williamston Primary School at 7 pm
web: <http://murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk>

1. Present:

Kevin Kerr, Ian Brown, Davidson McQuarrie, Tania Armstrong, David Cooper, Lorna Cooper, Carol Hallesy, Frank Mustard; Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Councillor Moira Shemilt; PC Alan Hodge

Apologies: Chris Dryden, Arthur Marris, Ron Skirving, Alex Hendry, Nick Lansdell; Councillor Peter Heggie; PC Alan James

Residents: Peter Cormack, Roger Harper, Zohreen and Alan O'Sullivan

Kevin Kerr, Vice Chair deputised as Chair of the meeting tonight as Chris Dryden was unable to attend.

2. Minutes of the Meeting on 15 June 2017:

Acceptance of the minutes of the regular meeting on 15 June was proposed by David Cooper and seconded by Frank Mustard, subject to a minor change. Carried.

3. Matters Arising:

None.

4. Finances:

The bank balance now stands at £1,536.18 as of June 2017.

5. Community Policing:

PC Alan Hodge outlined the crime stats for the Livingston South ward. There have been 79 calls.

A theft took place at the Nursing Home in August.

A pick pocket has been operating at Livingston South station.

There has been a theft from a car in Bankton Park West.

A conservatory window was smashed in at Bankton Brae.

A dog on dog attack has been referred to the Council's dog warden.

Some bins awaiting street collection are still being removed by youths and set alight.

A quad bike has been ridden on footpaths around Murieston Road.

Protective tubes have been removed from tree saplings in Bellsquarry Wood.

6. Road Bridge at Murieston Road:

Local resident Peter Cormack has attended tonight's meeting to express his concerns about the pedestrian pavement being built leading from the junction of Murieston Road under the rail bridge.

Mr. Cormack asserted that the narrowing of the roadway at the bridge to accommodate the new pathway may be hazardous as visibility is poor due to the treeline at the bend on the approach along Murieston Road. The plans do not provide for traffic calming on the 30mph road and there are no signs before the bend, warning of the road narrowing to single direction at the bridge. The existing pavement is not particularly safe at present. The proposed retaining wall could damage the tree roots, although the Council arborist has visited today and indicates this will not occur.

Councillor Fitzpatrick explained the new pathway had been under consideration for over six years. There had been complaints from women about using surrounding woodland footpaths in dark evenings. The new footpath and road alterations will meet all standards, and the road will have appropriate warning signage. Council officers are in discussion with residents.

Ian Brown advised that the Community Council had previously agreed on the need for pedestrian access under the bridge on Murieston Road as a measure to improve community safety.

Councillor Shemilt asked for a report to go before the Livingston South Local Area Committee (LAC).

Councillor Fitzpatrick explained the purpose of the LAC. The LAC currently meets during the day and meeting arrangements are being reviewed with a view to encouraging participation by the community. Peter Cormack was invited to attend the next LAC.

7. Councillor's Report:

Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick gave a report.

The Local Police Plan is being reviewed.

The West Lothian education exam results are excellent this year. Educational attainment has improved from 17th position in 2013 to 3rd in 2017 for the 32 local authority areas. Higher results are much improved.

The Council has been shortlisted for a COSLA educational attainment award.

The Council has also been shortlisted from a group of 250 organisations for a quality assurance award.

The rail bridge will be closed for 3 months and is scheduled to re-open on 26 December. There will be work at weekends which may affect rail services. The Murieston no. 9 bus service cannot reverse safely, and will not be in operation during this period, so pensioners are advised to use the Council's Dial-a-Bus service.

Councillor Fitzpatrick attended the official opening by the Queen of the Queensferry Crossing bridge on Monday 4 September as a representative of West Lothian Council. Pupils from Bankton Primary School sang a song which they had composed for the occasion and presented a posy to the Queen.

Superfast broadband should now be delivered to the Skivo area by March 2018.

The Council needs to make budget savings of £65 million in the next 5 years.

The Council has submitted a bid for funds from the £150 million City Deal. This would involve funding projects in the Winchburgh CDA.

A review of the housing allocation criteria is underway.

Councillor Fitzpatrick and local MSPs have met with the NHS Lothians Trust on three occasions regarding the closure of the paediatrics ward at St. John's Hospital.

Frank Mustard noted that the post box on Murieston Road has been sealed, presumably for the duration of the bridge closure.

Roger Harper asked about whether external cladding on Council-owned buildings has been checked for flammability. Lawrence confirmed that all buildings with such cladding have been checked for fire safety and cleared as safe.

Lawrence Fitzpatrick left the meeting at the end of this business.

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

Davidson McQuarrie reported that the fun dog show organised by MEG at the Livingston Cricket Club Gala Day on 2 September had been a success. The anticipated problem with arranging judging due to members of MEG being away on holiday had been addressed, and judges were organised.

9. Murieston Local History Group :

Nothing to report.

10. Windfarms:

Nothing to report.

11. Community Council Website - murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk

The latest edition of the community council newsletter was emailed out last month to 400 residents.

12. Community Development Trust:

Davidson McQuarrie outlined the case for the formation of a Community Development Trust (CDT) for Murieston and proposal to arrange a public meeting to confirm support in the community.

We had a stall at the Livingston Cricket Club Gala Day on Saturday 2 September and handed out our newsletter publicising our activities and the proposal for a Murieston CDT.

Ian Brown explained that Murieston is within the perimeter to qualify for community benefit funds from Pates Hill, Peary Law, Harburnhead and Camilty wind farms.

13. Community Garden and Allotments:

Nothing to report.

14. Edinburgh Airport Flight Paths Consultation:

Nothing to report.

15. Livingston South Station:

Ian Brown reported that Murieston Road at the rail bridge will be closed for 3 months until the end of the year for work on the bridge as part of the line electrification upgrade.

16. Local Development Plan:

Ian Brown reported.

The LDP has now been completed by West Lothian Council and referred to the Reporter who will hold a hearing in December. We have submitted three objections regarding the Oakbank link road, zoning of Easter Murieston and determination of white space.

17. Planning Applications:

Ian Brown reported.

The appeal regarding the proposed Murieston Castle housing development (0355/P/15) has now been rejected by the Scottish Minister on recommendation of the Reporter.

The Reporter has not ruled yet on the appeal against the refusal of planning consent for housing development at Wellhead Farm (LIVE/0918/P/15). The Reporter has lettered the participants about the Murieston Castle decision to comment on whether any issues are considered relevant. Chris Dryden and Ian Brown had represented the Community Council at the public hearing held by the Reporter on 7 to 9 June of the appeal. Issues raised include educational capacity, infrastructure and rail services, and erosion of Livingston's countryside belt.

There has been a problem receiving planning weekly lists by email following the introduction of a new planning IT system. Councillor Shemilt said she will check with Craig McCorriston to confirm that mailing issues are resolved.

Ian attended an Open Day recently at Polbeth about the potential development of Gavieside which has capacity in the Local Plan for 1,900 houses. There is now a link to the re-developed West Calder rail station which may influence plans for housing development.

A planning application has been made for a fast food facility beside the Co-op car park.

18. Four-Yearly Community Council Election in October 2017:

The Community Council Scheme provides that community councils must be elected every four years. West Lothian Council has advised that the election of the new community council will take place in October. The closing date for the nomination of community councillors is today.

19. Correspondence:

None.

20. Any Other Business:

None.

The Meeting closed at 8.45pm

The next Community Council meeting will be on Thursday, 12 October 2017 at 7 pm in the Staff Room at Williamston Primary School