

MURIESTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 8 MARCH 2018
held at Williamston Primary School at 7 pm
web: <http://murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk>

1. Present:

Arthur Marris, Ian Brown, Davidson McQuarrie, Tania Armstrong, David Cooper, Lorna Cooper, Carol Hallesy, Ron Skirving; Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Councillor Moira Shemilt

Apologies: Chris Dryden, Kevin Kerr, Nick Lansdell, Frank Mustard; Councillor Peter Heggie

Residents: John O'Lone, John Sharp

Arthur Marris acted as Chair at tonight's meeting as Chris Dryden was unable to attend.

2. Minutes of the Meeting on 15 February 2018:

Acceptance of the minutes of the meeting on 15 February was proposed by Carol Hallesy and seconded by Lorna Cooper, subject to minor changes. Carried.

3. Matters Arising:

Tania Armstrong reported that there had been an 8 hour power cut in Murieston valley two weeks ago when the electricity mains cable was damaged when the BT cabinet was moved to Ossian Drive. Councillor Fitzpatrick said he would confirm details.

4. Office-bearer Appointments:

Carol Hallesy was nominated as Vice-Chair. This was seconded by Ian Brown and approved by the community councillors.

There remains a vacancy for Vice Chair as normally two appointments are made for the Community Council.

5. Finances:

Arthur Marris reported.

Finances stand at £1,868.72. £35 has been paid as annual renewal fee to the Information Commissioner's Office.

6. Councillors' Reports:

Councillor Moira Shemilt

Council staff were redeployed to other essential duties during the recent extreme weather. Fifty staff volunteered to help vulnerable members of the community.

The Park Mark scheme has led to a reduction in unsafe parking around schools.

A report from officers on additional measures to improve pedestrian safety at the rail bridge on Murieston Road will be submitted to the Council Executive for consideration.

Council Tax will be increased in April.

Reports were provided by the Police at the Livingston South Local Area Committee (LAC). There have been an improvement in a number of statistical counters such as anti-social behaviour, substance abuse and traffic calls.

Councillor Fitzpatrick noted that hate crimes have been increasing.

Councillor Shemilt offered to forward the Police reports provided to the LAC to the community councillors.

The Secretary confirmed that Police community officers were always invited to the community council meetings. Ian Brown asserted that the attendance of Police community officers at the monthly meetings could resolve issues there and then.

John Sharp noted that there are continuing parking infringements in the streets close to Williamston Primary on school days.

Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

Councillor Fitzpatrick advised that all secondary schools, and 55 of the 67 primaries, opened on Monday following intensive clearing of snow from the school grounds and perimeters. Councillor Fitzpatrick particularly praised the social work and home care staff for their dedication in continuing to visit their clients during the exceptional weather.

Lorna Cooper praised the Council staff for their action to clear the snow from paths and roads over the past week.

A Glasgow drama company is taking a five year lease to operate the Bathgate Regal theatre.

CCTV cameras have been installed in four streets in Dedridge.

The Council has agreed a new biodiversity plan and approved the new Local Development Plan which will be in force until 2022.

The Cabinet Secretary, Shona Robison, MSP has confirmed that NHS Lothian will now reimburse parents who pay excess taxi fares when children are discharged out of hours from the Royal Hospital for Sick Children.

A service by people carrier will be provided up to the early evening.

The master plan for the new housing development at Gavieside has now been published. There is also a very good environmental impact assessment.

SQA exam results are expected to be very good at West Lothian secondary schools again this year.

7. Community Policing:

No monthly report is available.

Chris Dryden will contact Stefanie Cairns and Ryan McCartney who are the new community officers for our area.

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

Arthur Marris reported there had been a volunteer event on 25 February.

9. Murieston Local History Group:

Nothing to report.

10. Windfarms:

Nothing to report.

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

Ron Skirving reported.

Eight new articles have been posted on the website this month.

Google Analytics indicates that there have been some 2,000 views over the past 3 months, with views averaging 2½ minutes duration. The Wellhead Farm petition has had 2,700 views.

There have been 565 views of the Community Council minutes, distributed as 49% on mobile phones, 25% on PC and 24% on tablet.

The monthly newsletter has now over 500 subscribers.

12. Community Development Trust (CDT):

The public meeting will be held on Thursday 15 March at 7pm in the new assembly hall in Williamston Primary. Residents are invited to register beforehand on Eventbrite. Details will also be provided on Facebook.

Catherine McWilliam, Membership and Communications Officer of the Development Trusts Association Scotland will be giving the initial OHP presentation. Ron Skirving will present details on setting up the Murieston Development Trust and then there will be Q & As.

Councillors Shemilt and Fitzpatrick gave their apologies due to other diary commitments.

Community councillors are asked to be there at 6.30 to set up and steward.

13. Livingston South Station and Rail Bridge:

Arthur Marris and Ian Brown reported.

Network Rail have now confirmed the main building work at Livingston South station will now start on 29 March for 10 days to 9 April, during which the station, car park, turning circle and underpass will be closed.

There will be limited parking during the preceding week from 20 March as Network Rail will be using the extension car park as a compound for plant equipment. The timescale for this work should be met. Lift towers being erected in the summer.

Buses will operate from the roundabout on Murieston West Road, and will be parked up in the closed area.

Trucks will only access Murieston Valley from 8.30 to 2pm and will have a banksman to manoeuvre across Robin's Lane which will remain open to pedestrians.

There will be drop-in events at Murieston Village Hall during the next two weeks.

Network Rail have been invited to send a representative to the April or May meeting.

14. Community Garden and Allotments:

Ian Brown reported that he has spoken recently with the Williamston Primary Headteacher who confirmed that the school wants to participate, but not have an administrative role.

15. Local Development Plan:

Ian Brown reported.

The LDP has now been approved by the Scottish Government and returned it to West Lothian Council for ratification and implementation.

16. Planning Applications:

Ian Brown reported.

The planning application has now been made for the new building on the vacant site at Murieston Medical Practice in Hamilton Square. Six Category 3 units for office or retail use are proposed and a Category 1 café or restaurant. There will be 20 new parking places behind the new building.

The new housing development at Gavieside will have 25% affordable housing, which will mostly be built near to the hub. A new primary school will form part of the development.

West Lothian will receive £150 million from the City Deal. This will be used mainly to provide infrastructure.

Wellhead Farm Appeal (LIVE/0918/P/15)

The Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) of the Scottish Government has now published the Reporter's decision granting the appeal by the developers.

Ian has written to Angela Constance, MSP expressing on behalf of the community disappointment at the decision. She has advised she has written to Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government and Housing. The site was formerly designated as a part of the single use commercial site of national importance, then re-designated recently for dual use either for commercial or housing development. Councillor Fitzpatrick confirmed it had always been designated as Countryside Belt in the Local Development Plan.

Lawrence Fitzpatrick advised he had again written to Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government and Housing asking for the appeal to be "called in" for decision by the Minister. There is no restriction in statute in the operation of this power. Lawrence observed that the Scottish Government has failed to give guidance on the weighting of evidence.

17. Correspondence:

None.

18. Proposed Footway at Rail Bridge on Murieston Road:

John Sharp presented a suggested option for the proposed footway under the rail bridge and handed out a plan of the bridge and approaches. In his view, it seems that the only option actively considered has been a footway with a single lane road and chicane.

John Sharp said he had no objection to the footway as such, though propose that the road could remain open as now with two lanes. He had objected at the Livingston South Local Area Committee (LAC) which had asked for a report from officers on additional measures to improve pedestrian safety.

Councillor Fitzpatrick noted that Council officers had first proposed the footway in 2011. All details have been passed from the LAC to the Council Executive for their consideration which will include all points and objections which have been raised.

Councillor Fitzpatrick confirmed he will pass the document provided by John Sharp to Council officers tomorrow.

John O'Lone stated the use of a chicane was unnecessary. In his view, the bridge can accommodate the footway and a two lane road.

Arthur Marris said pedestrians do walk under the bridge now. It is the view of the Community Council that a footway is needed, which is the missing link in a pavement traversing Murieston Road.

19. Any Other Business:

None.

The Meeting closed at 8.45pm

The next Community Council meeting will be on Thursday, 12 April 2018 at 7 pm in the Staff Room at Williamston Primary School.