

MURIESTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 9 MARCH 2017
held at Williamston Primary School at 7 pm
web: <http://murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk>

1. Present:

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

Apologies: Kevin Kerr, Alex Hendry, Nick Lansdell

Residents: Roy Goodwin, Morag Johnstone, Andrew White

2. Minutes of the Meeting on 9 February 2017:

Acceptance of the minutes of the meeting on 9 February was proposed by Frank Mustard and seconded by Ron Skirving. Carried.

3. Matters Arising:

None.

4. Finances:

Ron Skirving reported.

Payments have been made re. the annual fee to the Information Commissioner's Office and reimbursement of expenses to Ian Brown, as Planning Secretary, for attending the recent Planning Aid for Scotland seminar in Edinburgh about the new Planning Bill.

5. Councillor's Report:

Councillor Fitzpatrick gave a report.

Councillor Fitzpatrick explained that signage will be erected to advise on restrictions on parking at the roundabout in Murieston Valley to ensure that secondary access is enforced as required by emergency services. Where traffic obstructions occur, action will be enforced by the Police.

The Sibcas units have been removed from the former health practice site which is now being advertised for sale. The site is zoned for commercial use and some interest has already been shown.

There have been complaints about the state of the path at Linhouse Trail. The farmer, who has been leasing fields in Linhouse, is laying aggregate on the Trail which should restore the path as before.

West Lothian schools have now performed 3rd top out of 32 councils in this year's educational attainment results, only behind East Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire council areas.

The Council is introducing free breakfasts for all primary school children, and for secondary school pupils who are receiving free school meals.

Councillor Fitzpatrick attended the annual Stellar Awards which celebrate educational excellence in West Lothian. Lawrence also attended concerts in the Schools Spring Concert Series at Inveralmond Community High School which celebrates musical excellence in West Lothian schools.

The pavement work at East Murieston Road will cost £100,000.

Potholes are being filled in on the Murieston Trail, which is two-thirds completed.

The digital signage displaying bus arrival information is now operational at the bus station.

Lawrence attended Tam Dalyell's Memorial Service at St. Michael's Parish Church in Linlithgow on 24 February.

Lawrence also attended a Coffee Morning organised by the Boys Brigade for charity work in Kenya.

A public meeting about the proposed changes to the flightpaths for Edinburgh airport is being held at Livingston FC Stadium on Tuesday 14 March.

Chris Dryden raised the issue of the car park at Livingston Cricket Club. McNicholas have a contract to put waste rubble there temporarily until bulk removal and the car park is now difficult to negotiate.

Andrew White asked about the use of the surplus site at Murieston Medical Practice. Councillor Fitzpatrick said the Council is under a legal obligation to sell at the highest price to a commercial bidder.

Arthur Marris noted that litter had been blown about in the recent storm. Some blue bins had blown over and their contents dispersed. It was agreed that another community litter pick would be arranged soon.

6. Paths at West Bankton Place:

Morag Johnstone has attended tonight to speak to the Community Council about an issue with two footpaths connecting into West Bankton Place. One path connects to Murieston West and the other to the main path behind the street. The residents all hold the view that in a small cul-de-sac with 14 houses neither footpath is necessary, as they are rarely used by residents and serve no purpose for neighbouring streets as better, more suitable routes are available.

Up to 30 youths on occasions are entering the cul-de-sac from the two paths and the residents have been experiencing repeated vandalism, for example, broken windows, damage to fences and gardens.

Problems have escalated over the last 12 months. The Safer Neighbourhood Team and the Police have been involved and the residents have met with Inspector Adam Smith. The residents also met earlier this week with the Council Chief Executive, the Roads Manager and Solicitor to request the closure of the two footpaths, although the Council opinion is that the current legislation does not permit these closures. The residents have requested a meeting with the Council Executive Committee to press for closure of the footpaths on the basis that their use has led to anti-social behaviour in their street.

Councillor Fitzpatrick advised that the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 legislates against Rights of Way being blocked. However, Section 68 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 can empower closure when an access is unnecessary.

The Community Council indicated by majority that they support the residents' request to block the two footpaths.

7. Community Policing:

PC Alan James gave a report.

The monthly crime stats for Livingston South ward were outlined.

<u>Calls</u>	<u>Feb 17</u>	<u>Feb 16</u>	<u>% change</u>	<u>Year to date</u>	<u>2016 to date</u>	<u>% change</u>
Youth	24	28	-14%	431	366	18%
Anti-Social Behaviour	99	114	-13%	1556	1364	14%
Hate Crime	5	3	67%	58	32	81%
Vandalism	17	26	-35%	243	225	8%
Fire-raising	0	1	-100%	17	16	6%
Public Space Assaults	13	19	-32%	257	191	35%

Residents are asked to phone 101 when they have an unknown doorstep caller.

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

Nothing to report this month.

9. Broadband Rollout:

Nothing to report.

10. Murieston Local History Group :

Nothing to report.

11. Windfarms:

Nothing to report.

12. Community Website - murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk

Ron Skirving advised he can develop the website further to enable postings by the public. This facility would be an effective method to gauge the views of the community on the formation of a community development trust for Murieston.

13. Community Noticeboard:

Chris Dryden is investigating whether a grant can be sought to fund the noticeboard.

14. Community Development Trust (CDT):

Ian Brown reported.

The executive officers will prepare an article etc. and use Facebook to publicise in the community the case for creating a Murieston Community Development Trust. A leaflet may also be distributed to households.

Ian attended the West Lothian Development Trust AGM recently.

15. Community Garden and Allotments:

Ian Brown reported.

A contractor has been taking soil samples on the proposed site earlier this week.

16. Planning Applications:

Ian Brown reported.

Ian attended a workshop organised by Planning Aid for Scotland and Scottish Mediation about the new Planning Bill which encourages mediation and consultation as part of a more collaborative planning system.

A Reporter has now been appointed to determine the appeal against the Council's decision to refuse the Wellhead Farm planning application (0918/P/15). Ian will ask to be heard as the community council representative, though there is no confirmation yet that there will be a public hearing.

Ian has submitted a Closing Submission to the Reporter re. the appeal against the refusal of the planning application for Murieston Castle (0355/P/15). Our Closing Submission covered impacts on traffic, Livingston South station, Education supply/capacity and infrastructure contribution.

17. Local Development Plan:

Nothing to report.

18. Factoring Services:

Costs have risen by 21% recently for factoring services in local streets.

Chris Dryden confirmed that where a factoring contract is prescribed in the Deeds of Covenant for a property there are two ways to formally leave the scheme. Residents can form their own residents committee and take over factoring for the street, or there is also an option for individuals to opt out in certain circumstances.

19. Correspondence:

None.

20. Any Other Business:

Chris Dryden advised on the plan to upgrade Livingston South station, which was drawn to our attention by the office of Angela Constance, MSP

It is understood the platforms will be extended to facilitate longer trains and lifts will be installed to meet current Health and Safety requirements. Chris will contact Network Rail to ask for a representative to attend a future meeting to explain their upgrade plans.

Tania Armstrong noted that the Woodland Trust has a grant scheme available which may be open to the Community Council to apply for a relevant grant.

The Meeting closed at 8.45 pm

The next Community Council meeting will be on Thursday, 13 April 2017 at 7 pm in the Staff Room at Williamston Primary School