

MURIESTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 16 APRIL 2026
held at Williamston Primary School
web: <https://muriestoncommunitycouncil.org.uk>

1. Present:

Chris Dryden, Arthur Marris, Ian Brown, Davidson McQuarrie; Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Councillor Moira McKee Shemilt

Apologies: Mark Robbie, Carol Bartholomew, Margaret Prior

Residents: Gillian de Felice, Linda Halliday, Roger Harper, Ken Kirk, Clare O'Lone, John Sharp, Isabel Taggart

2. Declaration of Interests:

As prescribed in the Standing Orders, community councillors should declare to the Secretary any relevant interests applicable to business of the meeting before or at the start of the meeting, or during the course of the meeting in the event that such pertinent business occurs.

No declarations of interest from community councillors were made before or at tonight's meeting.

3. Minutes of the Meetings on 19 March 2026:

Acceptance of the minutes of the meeting on 19 March 2026 was proposed by Ian Brown and seconded by Arthur Marris. Carried nem con.

4. Matters Arising:

None.

5. Matters Arising:

Councillors' Reports:

Councillor Moira Shemilt

Councillor Shemilt gave a verbal report to the meeting.

There is a problem with e-bikes and e-scooters being ridden on paths, which the police are addressing locally. These e-bikes are often technically illegal as they are able to exceed speed restrictions. The police are reminding the public that non-compliant e-bikes and all e-scooters are illegal on public roads, risking seizure, fines, and penalty points.

The service charges for personal safety alarms have increased by around 70% in the past 2 and a half years, which have impacted the Social Services budget.

The planning application by Persimmon Homes to build on the former Ethicon site at Simpson Parkway was turned down. Persimmon Homes asked Councillor Shemilt to call in the application so that it could go before the Development Management Committee for determination. Councillor Shemilt did so, as she was obliged to do, as an elected member, without providing any opinion on the proposal.

Councillor Shemilt has attended consultations with Sky TV on their proposal to erect a 3 storey headquarters office block, demolish four office buildings and provide an energy centre etc. The clear intention is to be as sustainable as possible, with materials from demolished buildings being re-used. Permission for a wind turbine is likely to be sought in the future.

A recent report carried out by the Sunday Times ranked primary schools in Scotland based on data on schools performance in delivering reading, writing, numeracy, listening and talking. Five West Lothian schools, out of 1,197 schools, have been included in top rankings for performance. St Anthony's in Armadale came top with a perfect score of 400. St John Ogilvie, Mid Calder and Linlithgow Bridge also all performed exceptionally.

On Tuesday, the Education PDSP had a fantastic presentation from the young people from West Calder and Winchburgh High Schools, and Ogilvie School Campus about the work being done to promote positive relationships and mental health and wellbeing.

School holidays in summer 2028 will be seven weeks long.

The Scottish Government is introducing a new right to personalised short breaks for unpaid carers through the Care Reform (Scotland) Act 2025. This will require councils to assess whether carers are getting enough breaks and to provide support if they are not.

The Council sometime requires to make external residential placements of children due to complex needs and limited capacity. The budget for external placements for 2025/26 is £10M, with a projected overspend of £797K. Measures are being taken to reduce reliance on external placements, but financial pressures remain significant.

Uptake of vaccinations in West Lothian generally exceeds the national average.

There is no Council permanent site for travellers as the one site was closed 15 years ago due to it not being used. The Council has for several years issued an enforcement notice to quit the same day that travellers arrive on any council land. A short-life working group with broad membership has been set up and a framework is being developed with a view to moving away from enforcement, except where the encampment is seen to be unreasonable. Traveller representation on the working group is being sought, but so far unsuccessfully.

Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

Councillor Fitzpatrick gave a verbal report to the meeting.

Analysis of admission statistics indicate that 40% are self-admitted to A&E at St John's Hospital.

Councillor Fitzpatrick attended West Council's Young Musician of the Year which was held at Deans Community High School. Solo performers from nearly every secondary school in West Lothian competed for the prestigious award, in front of an audience of parents and invited guests. Pianist Yani Chan from West Calder High School has been named West Lothian's Young Musician of the Year 2026. This marks the third year of success for West Calder High School musicians. The standard of performances was brilliant.

New more efficient machinery for fixing potholes will arrive in July. Officers are checking on the durability of yellow marker paint on identified potholes.

A woodland survey has identified 4,500 trees in Murieston, 700 of which are described as senior. The site proposed by Persimmon Homes for housing development on the former Ethicon land in Kirkton is not zoned for housing. Persimmon Homes wrote requesting Councillor Fitzpatrick call up their Kirkton planning application to the Development Management Committee. Councillor Fitzpatrick ignored it and stated a call up could only be triggered by one ward councillor or, in this particular case, by Livingston Village Community Council, and no councillor is obliged to call up an planning application under Council rules.

The Council has retained its Customer Service Excellence Standard, with full compliance.

The number of areas of good practice that the Council holds against the standard have also increased. Staff are being given an extra one day's holiday in recognition.

6. Finances:

Arthur Marris reported.

The bank balance remains at £2,619.46.

The annual accounts for the fiscal year to the end of March 2026 have been prepared and examined.

Arthur gave a summary of the income and expenditure between April 25 and March 26.

The annual accounts for 2025/26 were agreed by community councillors in attendance.

The accounts will be examined by two independent examiners and presented formally to the Community Council for approval and sign-off.

7. Livingston South Local Area Committee:

The secretary has not attended a LAC meeting recently.

8. Murieston Environmental Group (MEG) - <https://muriestonenvironmentalgroup.org.uk> :

Gillian de Felice reported.

MEG attends quarterly meetings regarding the West Lothian Bio-Diversity Action Plan.

Gillian has attended meetings with Forth Rivers Trust regarding managing invasive species.

Gillian and other members of MEG have been trained in removing and destroying knotweed, and have been clearing infestations in the area. MEG will be tackling infestations of hogweed soon.

MEG volunteers will be clearing and cleaning the steps on Murieston Trail on Saturday.

MEG proposes to get quotes for surveying and upgrading the paths at Cambridge, and will then apply for a grant for the improvements.

9. Murieston Community Garden (MCG) - <https://murieston-cg.org.uk>:

Isabel Taggart reported.

Isabel circulated the annual accounts for the Garden.

Seeds are being germinated in the new greenhouses and will be planted out soon.

The volunteers will be concentrating on the raised beds at the back of the garden during the summer.

10. Murieston Community Development Trust (MCDT) – SCIO Scottish Charity No. SC052716

<https://murieston-cdt.org.uk> :

Davidson McQuarrie reported.

The 2026 AGM of the Trust held on 23 March at Murieston Village Hall was marginally inquorate and will now be rearranged for Monday 11 May at 7pm on Zoom. This should make it easier for more of the Trust members (127) to attend and participate.

A presentation will outline what the Trust has done over the past year and plans for the forthcoming year, as well as approval of the financial report and the election of trustees.

All current trustees are standing down as required in the Constitution.

Janey Cringean is resigning and Paula Shaw has resigned.

Gillian de Felice, Alex McDonald, Graham MacIver, Davidson McQuarrie, Mark Robbie, John Sharp, Moira Shemilt have nominated for re-election. Graeme McNaughton has nominated for election.

If all nominees are re-/elected, there will be four vacancies to be filled on the Board of Trustees, Further nominations can also be made to elect trustees at the AGM to fill these vacancies.

The weekly community café has now closed following the transfer of operation of the Hall from Murieston Initiative to the Council.

The community cinema will continue and there will be film showings over the summer. An application for a further grant has been made to Generation Arts which, if a grant is provided, will continue to fund regular film presentations through to next Spring.

11. Murieston Village Hall

Davidson McQuarrie reported.

Murieston Initiative has not accepted any of the management options proposed by West Lothian Council and, as of 1 April, handed over the management of the Hall to the Council for operation by council staff.

Letting rates have now changed in line with rates charged in Council premises for community and commercial room lets.

An addendum to the Murieston Community Council and Murieston Community Development Trust joint Local Place Plan (LPP) was prepared which changed the locus of the proposed new community centre from the station to the land at the junction of Murieston East Road and Murieston Road at the rail bridge. This joint addendum was submitted to the Council in order that it will be fed into the new Local Development Plan 2 (LDP 2) being prepared by the Planning Service.

We have since been advised by the Planning Service that we cannot provide an addendum but need to submit and register a new version 2 of our LPP to replace the original version. This will have to go through the same legal validation steps in terms of public consultation, including with neighbouring community councils. Accordingly, the addendum has now been incorporated into a new version 2 of the LPP which has been circulated to stakeholders for comment.

The new version of the LPP will be presented at the Trust's AGM and will be available on the website and on Facebook.

When agreed by stakeholders, version 2 of the LPP will be submitted to the Planning Service to be included with LDP 2.

12. Communications, including website - <https://muriestoncommunitycouncil.org.uk> :

Nothing to report.

13. Local Development Plan 2 (LDP 2):

West Lothian Council's Development Plan Scheme (DPS) 2025 has been approved by elected members. The DPS can be found through the following website link -

<https://westlothian.gov.uk/article/33809/Development-Plan-Scheme-DPS>

The DPS sets out the timetable for preparing the next Local Development Plan for West Lothian and how to get involved in the plan preparation.

A major stage of the plan preparation process was a 'call for ideas' which allows individuals, community bodies, developers etc. to submit ideas, proposals and sites to be considered for inclusion in the LDP 2. This stage has completed but the responses to the 'call for ideas' have not been published yet.

The LDP 2 has now been reviewed and has been rejected twice at the Gate Check stage by the Scottish Government Reporter, which will require further amendment and will mean that it will not be reconsidered before the end of year.

The current status of LDP 2 is available [here](#).

14. Planning Applications:

Ian Brown reported.

There are no new significant planning applications affecting Murieston.

Ian has written to the Council's Chief Executive about several issues regarding the new Tarbert Drive estate, particularly as they affect neighbouring residents.

Ian raised longstanding issues which remained to be resolved concerning boundary fencing, privacy tree screening, delay in replanting trees, felling and replacement of trees, and dealing with drainage issues affecting neighbouring properties.

The Planning Service has replied and advised that is waiting for a drainage survey report from the developer.

15. Correspondence and Publications Received:

None.

16. Any Other Business:

None.

The Meeting closed at 8.15pm.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 21 May in the Staff Room at Williamston Primary School.

*** Disclaimer**

All documents and reports which are provided and referenced in addition to these minutes are not the responsibility of Murieston Community Council and are owned by, and the responsibility of, their authors.