

MURIELSTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2025
held at Williamston Primary School
web: <https://muriestoncommunitycouncil.org.uk>

1. Present:

Arthur Marris, Ian Brown, Carol Bartholomew, Janey Cringean, Margaret Prior, Davidson McQuarrie; Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Councillor Moira Shemilt

Apologies: Chris Dryden, Mark Robbie; Gillian de Felice

Residents: Roger Harper, Ken Kirk, John Sharp, Irene Whitelaw

Arthur Marris acted as Chair tonight as Chris Dryden was unavailable.

2. Minutes of the Meeting on 19 June 2025:

Acceptance of the minutes of the AGM and regular meeting on 19 June 2025 was proposed by Ian Brown and seconded by Arthur Marris. Carried nem con.

3. Matters Arising:

None.**Councillors' Reports:**

Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

Councillor Fitzpatrick gave his report.

The travellers in the illegal encampment at Bankton Mains Park without permission were evicted yesterday evening. The eviction required a sheriff's notice of eviction and the assistance of the police. There have been 20 illegal occupations of Council land and 8 on private land this year. The Council has spent £60,000 cleaning up these sites afterwards.

Councillor Fitzpatrick attended the 80th anniversary of Victory over Japan (VJ Day 80) commemorations at the Civic Centre and at the Old Kirk in Livingston Village.

Councillor Fitzpatrick attended the Killandean Allotments Open Day recently and the Dog's Trust centre at West Calder which is investing £12m on a new build.

Councillor Fitzpatrick has met with the Housing Secretary about the issues with RAAC in housing in West Lothian.

The teachers union want a reduction in classroom hours from 21.5 to 20 hours a week. This would cost £9M a year in West Lothian and require employment of an extra 132 teachers.

The education network has now been fully restored after the major cyber attack earlier in the year and is now designed to be more robust.

Incidences of measles have been reported elsewhere in the country but none has occurred in West Lothian.

Speed reduction measures, "20's Plenty" suggested by the Scottish Government, may become compulsory in residential streets.

A twinning delegation from Grapevine, Texas are here currently.

Councillor Fitzpatrick has met with the housing manager of Sight Scotland concerning their decision to serve tenants at the Linburn estate in Wilkieston notice to move by January 2026.

Greg Welsh has been appointed the Council's new Depute Chief Executive with Education responsibility.

West Lothian Schools Pipe Band were crowned World Champions in their grade at the World Pipe Band Championship in Glasgow. They were awarded the top trophy in the Novice A section for the first time, after being runners-up for the last four years.

Discussions are taking place with builders to install hollow nesting boxes, *swift bricks*, into the walls of new builds which provide safe nesting sites for endangered swifts and other cavity-nesting birds.

Councillor Fitzpatrick left the meeting as he has to attend an online COSLA meeting.

Councillor Moira McKee Shemilt

Councillor Shemilt gave a brief report.

The main issue of concern is the Council's review of the management of community centres. Few management teams have intimated they will adopt any of the three options offered by the Council. The SNP group has tabled a motion to have the matter debated by Full Council on Tuesday 23rd September.

4. Finances:

Arthur Marris reported.

The bank balance is £2,700.44. The annual administration grant for 2025/26 from West Lothian Council is £442 and has been transferred into our new bank account.

The main expenditure is £640 paid to St John Scotland to replace the obsolete defibrillator at Livingston South station.

The old bank account was closed last month.

5. Livingston South Local Area Committee:

Nothing to report.

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

Gillian de Felice has provided a short written report as she is unable to attend tonight.

MEG has been quite quiet over the summer due to holidays, illness, lack of volunteers etc! We did a clear up at Campbridge Pond as it was very overgrown up there! We also hosted the fun dog show at the Cricket Club family day on Saturday 6th September which was a success.

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

Janey Cringean reported.

The two greenhouses have now been built, although the build has taken much longer than indicated by the manufacturer.

The website has experienced a serious scamming attack which has cost a loss of about £150.

The National Lottery have awarded a grant of £250 for the plots in the front public garden.

8. Murieston Community Development Trust (MCDT) – SCIO Scottish Charity No. SC052716 <https://murieston-cdt.org.uk> :

Janey Cringean reported.

The Trust is considering the feasibility of building a new community centre to replace Murieston Village Hall. The area behind the station has drawbacks and alternative sites are being considered. The programme of monthly film screenings for the community cinema continue.

The screening of the film *Bridget Jones – Mad about the Boy* on 17th August was well attended.

The next film night will be this Sunday at 7pm and will present three short films shown at the West Lothian Film Festival. The organiser of the Festival and director of one of the films will be attending and will be talking about the films and explaining what they are doing within the film industry in Scotland.

9. Murieston Village Hall

Janey Cringean reported.

A public meeting is being held at the Hall on Monday 22nd September at 7pm to present and discuss the options for the future of Murieston Village Hall. There are three options offered by West Lothian Council to community centres. The options do not address the need to spend £200,000 over the next six years on scheduled maintenance and remediation of the Hall, which is now some 40 years old. Murieston Initiative is proposing an alternative option which should be financially beneficial to Murieston Initiative and the Council.

Janey Cringean said it was important that all elected members should have a say on the future of community centres and proposed a motion for the Secretary to write to the four elected members of the Livingston South ward to ask that they support the motion of the SNP group to put the issue of the review of the community centres before the Full Council on Tuesday 23rd September. The motion was seconded by Margaret Prior and agreed by the Community Council. The Secretary will send an email to the four elected members to ask that they support the motion of the SNP group.

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

Nothing to report.

11. Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2):

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.

The next stage of the plan preparation process is a 'call for ideas' which allows individuals, community bodies, developers etc. to submit ideas, proposals and sites to be considered for inclusion in LDP2. The deadline for responses was 30th May.

Nothing further to report.

12. Planning Applications:

Ian Brown reported.

There are no new significant planning applications affecting Murieston.

Ian has asked the Planning Service if planning permission is required to position a Christmas tree in the central oval at the station. Advice is that planning permission may not be required and, accordingly, Ian will instead request a 'letter of comfort' in order to proceed.

Carol Bartholomew and Margaret Prior met with Craig Sinclair and Jane Begg from the Tree & Woodland Team and have agreed action on restoring the woodland at Easter Bankton. Margaret Prior will copy correspondence to Councillor Shemilt who will press for an early response.

13. Correspondence and Publications Received:

As circulated..

14. Four-Yearly Community Council Election

The four yearly Community Council Scheme provides for the establishment of a new Community Council in October. Existing community councillors have been invited to stand again for nomination.

West Lothian Council is also advertising for residents in Murieston to nominate themselves. The community council can be formed of up to 18 community councillors and, should the number of valid nominations exceed 18, there will be an election run by the Council.

The Council will be sending advice and an agenda for the inaugural meeting of the new community council, which will be held on Thursday 16 October.

Janey Cringean has intimated she will not be seeking nomination to the new community council.

Arthur Marris as acting Chair placed on record our thanks to Janey Cringean for her participation and contribution to Murieston Community Council over the four years' term.

15. Any Other Business:

None.

The Meeting closed at 8.50pm.

The next meeting will be the Inaugural Meeting of the newly constituted Murieston Community Council on Thursday 16 October 25 in the Staff Room at Williamston Primary School.