

**MURIELSTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING ON 10 JANUARY 2019**  
**held at Williamston Primary School at 7 pm**  
**web: <http://murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk>**

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**1. Present:**

Chris Dryden, Carol Hallesy, Arthur Marris, Ian Brown, Davidson McQuarrie, David Cooper, Lorna Cooper, Kevin Kerr, Nick Lansdell; Councillor Moira Shemilt

**Apologies:** Frank Mustard; Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

**Residents:** Roger Harper, Ken Kirk, John Sharp

**Carol Hallesy, as Vice-Chair, assumed Chair tonight as Chris Dryden left after the first half of tonight's meeting to attend a prior appointment**

**2. Minutes of the Meeting on 13 December 2018:**

Acceptance of the minutes of the meeting on 13 December was proposed by Kevin Kerr and seconded by Arthur Marris, subject to minor amendment. Carried.

**3. Matters Arising:**

None.

**4. Presentation by Network Rail re. Livingston South Station:**

Representatives from Network Rail have been invited to attend and update the Community Council on the electrification of the Shotts line and comprehensive rebuild of Livingston South station.

A slide presentation was given by Network Rail and CPL / SPL managers :-

Owen Campbell, Network Rail Communications Manager,

Brian Mallon, Network Rail Programme Manager,

Eddie McCue, CPL / SPL Production Manager

The upgrade of the Shotts line involves electrification of 37km of track, 1,000 masts, upgraded signalling, upgrade work at nine stations, with full rebuilds of Breich and Livingston South stations. The overall cost of the electrification scheme will be £160 million. The electrification of the line has been the driver for the complete rebuild of the station, with the structural rebuild being completed during the nine day blockade last Easter. The original timber station was built in 1984. This did not meet the requirements for the upgraded line, for example, the platforms were not wide enough. Livingston South station is the busiest on the Shotts line, with 320,000 passengers a year.

The new platforms are constructed using fibre reinforced plastic and are the first in Scotland using this durable material. An integrated anti-slip coating is incorporated. The platforms have been widened to 3.5m and lengthened to 148m to accommodate six carriage trains. The load-bearing structure uses marine grade galvanised steel which will minimise maintenance.

Lifts are now being installed to meet the required specification for persons of reduced mobility. The lift towers have been erected during weekend blockades. The lifts and machinery will be installed and commissioned soon. As part of the design package, security cameras will be installed at the lifts which will be locked closed after the last train.

A second waiting shelter will be installed on both platforms, with piling starting on 25 January.

Councillor Shemilt asked if there would be seats in the second shelters, rather than the standard perches. The Network Rail representatives said this request would be taken away and considered.

The ticket machine on platform 2 has been reinstated and it will be for ScotRail to decide if there will be ticket machines on both platforms.

Low-maintenance landscaping and facing walls will be completed at the end of the project. A solid fence will be erected at platform level above the underpass. Ian Brown asked that semi-mature trees and shrubs be used when landscaping.

The 29 hour blockades at weekends will continue until March to enable on-going major works. Work on the station is to be completed by 31 March. The work site will then be demobilised by 30 April, using a retreat and reinstate process during April, starting from the station through to the off-site depots.

Test trains will start running in the Spring and the new service timetable will operate from May.

## 5. Finances:

Arthur Marris reported.

The bank account now stands at £2,233.59.

£20 has been paid to Livingston Cricket Club for hosting the litter pick on 28 October.

## 6. Councillors' Reports:

### **Councillor Moira Shemilt**

No report as there has been reduced Council business over the Christmas holidays.

### **Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick**

Councillor Fitzpatrick is away on holiday and has provided a written report for tonight's meeting. The report was outlined by the Secretary at the meeting and is reproduced below.

Have attended a raft of Christmas events including...

- 3 primary school nativities
- 2 roles as Father Christmas
- Cut the ribbon to celebrate the opening of the refurbished Asda Store
- Attended the highly enjoyable Firefly Arts (youth drama group) at Howden Park
- Attended Annual Business Awards for West Lothian
- Two TV interviews over the KAIAM closure. Visited Livingston Station Community Centre, the community involvement in raising cash & kind for the 300+ redundant staff was very moving and overwhelming. Some relief gained by staff receiving their due December salaries.

### **WLC Advice Shop**

Recently awarded the National Standards for Advice Providers levels 1/2/3 covering housing/benefits/housing advice. The first Council is Scotland to achieve this accolade and tribute to the dedication; expertise and commitment of staff that provide this essential assistance to those in most need in our communities.

### **Education**

ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) - Council giving intense input to this initiative. Scientific research has indicated that when children have been exposed to adverse and stressful experiences, it may well have a long lasting impact on their ability to think, interact with others and on their learning as well as their health. The aim of the initiative is to treat and prevent toxic stress. The West Lothian ACE's Hub works on a multi-agency basis including the Crown Office with the purpose of enabling all schools in West Lothian to access the resources and raise awareness of ACE for the benefit of all.

### **Improving Attainment in Mathematics**

Great success at the National Quality and Improvement Awards 2017/18. Have raised attainment in National 5 Mathematics by TEN PERCENTAGE points and in Higher by NINE PERCENTAGE points. Council is building on this practice for the benefit of our young people.

### **Relocation of Cedarbank School, Livingston**

This tired building had has its day. The proposed new purpose built accommodation will be built within the estate of the James Young High School at a cost of £6M to accommodate 90 secondary pupils. Consultation will commence early 2019.

Officers have been asked to carefully examine traffic entrance/exit arrangements including the entrance to Quentin Rise.

### **Active Schools and Community Sport**

Record achievement – 16 West Lothian Schools hold a Gold School Sports Award. More of our pupils, more active, more often than ever before.

In medal awards, West Lothian Schools attained 10% of all medal awards in Scotland. Three times higher than local authority average.

Over 2017/18, our Active Schools Co-ordinators worked with 532 volunteers.

### **Community Safety**

Our Neighbourhood Safety Teams work with partners including Police Scotland on residents' complaints on anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance. The prime approach is of early intervention to prevent further escalation of incidents.

Livingston South Ward – April – September 2018 recorded 223 incidents. Bathgate highest on 310 with Whitburn/Blackburn on 294.

### **Housing**

Total Council housing stock in Livingston South

- Bellsquarry – 5
- Dedridge – 706
- Ladywell – 639
- Howden – 20

Turnover of stock is very low as it has been for some time. For three months July – September, Dedridge 12 Houses and Ladywell 7 houses re-let.

Newly constructed houses at Owen Square, Dedridge/Livingston Football Club near full completion and let. First Council housing built this century in Dedridge.

Homelessness – Currently costing £2M per annum for Hotel B&B. Council has agreed first iteration of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan working with partners; especially RSL's to seek to bring a resolution via intervention, prevention and housing options to stop homelessness happening in the first place.

Private landlord registration enforcement/implementation of Rent Penalty Notices – more robust measures now agreed by Council Executive.

### **Bus Service**

Town Centre Bus Station – the long on-going saga to the electric screens – power has been returned to the McArthur Glen side of the terminal and the information is accurate and functioning. The Centre side remains non-operational. Following further pressure with SEStran/SSUK, an electrician has been contracted to investigate and resolve the power outage. SSUK confirms the electrician will be on site week commencing 7 January 2019.

### **Social Care**

Almost all Councils in Scotland charge for this service, excluding personal care.

Those who receive this care should be eligible for DLA/Personal Independence Payment/Attendance Allowance. These are non means tested benefits (savings are ignored). These payments are not a payment for disability/frailty but are to assist recipients pay for the care that they need.

### **Council Budget**

Due to be set in February. WLC will have to sustain yet again a cut in core revenue budget based on December '18 announcement by Scottish Government. We hope that Parliamentary pressure will result in additional allocation as budget bill has to be considered in Scottish Parliament on 31Jan, 6 Feb and 21 Feb 2019.

Both the Independent Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland have warned Council budgets are at 'cliff edge'.

## **7. Community Policing:**

No report this month.

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

Arthur Marris reported.

It has now been confirmed by the Woodland Trust that Williamston Wood and the wood beside Bankton Glade owned by West Lothian Council have the tree disease called *Phytophthora cambivora*.

Sadly this means a number of beech and sycamore trees need to be felled at both sites, starting in late January (covered by TPO planning application 0575/TPO/18). The Woodland Trust will be doing a leaflet drop to houses in the immediate area.

In their press release, the Woodland Trust point out that illegal flytipping of garden waste, which is very common in Livingston, may have spread the infection responsible for the destruction of trees in the woods. Once present in the soil both these strains of *Phytophthora* can be picked up on people's shoes, bikes, pet's paws and fur, car tyres and wheel arches and spread from one site to another. Staying on paths and away from wet muddy ground can stop contamination.

Once the trees are felled, they will replant native shrub and small tree species that are not susceptible to fungal disease, including willow, hazel and hawthorn.

David Cooper asked if Williamston School would be informed. Davidson McQuarrie noted that Jane Beggie, WLC Tree and Woodland Officer had attended our meeting last September when the Woodland Trust first raised this problem and she should be liaising with the Woodland Trust and the Williamston Primary.

David Cooper reported that Council workers had been recently inspecting pine trees close to the road bridge at Bankton Centre. Evidently this is to ensure the trees do not compromise the bridge structure. Councillor Shemilt said she would check with Council officers.

## **9. Murieston Development Trust (MDT):**

Chris Dryden reported.

On the advice of Rachel Searle-Mbullu of Foundation Scotland, the MDT steering committee is considering applying to the Scottish Government Communities and Renewables Scheme (CARES) for an enablement grant. A CARES enablement grant would provide funding to develop and produce a community action plan which will support research etc. to confirm potential projects and needs within Murieston. Helen Mackie will contact CARES about submitting a project proposal. CARES are holding a workshop in Glasgow shortly.

## **10. Windfarms:**

Nothing to report.

## **11. Communications, including website - [murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk](http://murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk)**

Ron Skirving is standing down as editor of the newsletter and website webmaster as he is unable to

devote sufficient time due to work commitments. Davidson McQuarrie has agreed to take over as webmaster as he is currently an administrator of the website, and will also manage the newsletter, although contributions will be needed from community councillors for the newsletter articles.

**12. Community Garden and Allotments:**

Nothing to report.

**13. Planning Applications:**

Ian Brown reported.

The planning applications by Cruden Homes to build 18 houses on the land behind Tarbert Drive (0927/FUL/18) and by Walker and Bellway Homes to build 280 houses at Wellhead Farm (922/MSD/18) are both on hold waiting for further information from the applicants.

Ian has consulted Planning Aid for Scotland for advice on the circumstances when the Council Planning Officer can ask the developer for further information before adjudication. The advice is this is permissible when supplementary information is needed, but no further submissions from objectors or third parties can be made.

**14. Correspondence:**

None.

**15. Any Other Business:**

Roger Harper noted that the traffic cones are still at the damaged traffic island at Skivo. Councillor Shemilt said she will refer this to the Council Roads Service to action.

Ian Brown advised that the Community Council has been asked if we can host a party of Syrian refugees for an organised trip on the Murieston Trail. It was agreed that Ian will liaise with the organiser.

**The Meeting closed at 8.35pm**

**The next Community Council meeting will be on Thursday 14 February 2019 at 7 pm in the Staff Room at Williamston Primary School.**