

MURIESTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 14 FEBRUARY 2019
held at Williamston Primary School at 7 pm
web: <http://murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk>

1. Present:

Arthur Marris, Ian Brown, Davidson McQuarrie, Kevin Kerr, Frank Mustard;
Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Councillor Moira Shemilt; PC Paul Corner, PC Ryan McCartney

Apologies: Chris Dryden, Carol Hallesy, David Cooper, Lorna Cooper, Nick Lansdell, Ron Skirving

Residents: Roger Harper, Ian Boyd-Livingston

Arthur Marris assumed Chair tonight as Chris Dryden was unable to attend due to a prior appointment

2. Minutes of the Meeting on 10 January 2019:

Acceptance of the minutes of the meeting on 10 January was proposed by Kevin Kerr and seconded by Ian Brown, subject to a minor amendment. Carried.

3. Matters Arising:

Councillor Shemilt advised that the traffic cones at the damaged traffic island at Skivo were replaced by high visibility (non-reflective) cones as there is no power supply on that section of the road.

Roger Harper asked if these comply with the highway regulations.

Frank Mustard reported that five street lights are not functioning on Murieston Road.

4. Finances:

Arthur Marris reported.

The bank account now stands at £2,163.59.

£70 has been paid to Ian Brown to reimburse the cost of purchasing food to host a party of Syrian refugees for an organised trip on the Murieston Trail.

5. Councillors' Reports:

Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

Councillor Fitzpatrick advised he has attended Burns Suppers at several local schools.

Dignity boxes are now available in West Lothian Food Banks.

Hatch lines are being repainted at schools. These provide the necessary space for buses to turn.

The information screens are now working at the bus station at the Centre.

First Bus has now introduced a new 27 bus service between Murieston and St. Johns Hospital.

The new St. Ninians Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) project is being supported by the Council.

The CWS has not responded so far to the planning advice regarding improved security at the Co-op store.

West Lothian has the lowest percentage of public sector jobs of any Scottish local authority area. The Council with the new Jobs Taskforce is pressing the Scottish Government for more devolved public sector jobs.

Arthur Marris asked about the recent fire on the school bus at the A71 in West Calder. Councillor Fitzpatrick confirmed that the Council is working with the authorities to identify what happened and the cause.

Arthur Marris reported a fallen tree on the path at the south-west corner of the cricket ground.

Councillor Moira Shemilt

At the previous meeting there had been a report of work on trees at the road bridge on Murieston Road. Councillor Shemilt confirmed this was part of a programme of works to clear overhanging branches and vegetation bordering road infrastructure.

At the previous meeting a question on housing rent arrears had been raised. Councillor Shemilt advised that rent arrears stands at £2,698,000 in respect of 5,240 tenants. Many of the arrears in rent are small.

There is an assessment threshold for tenants changing properties, who can qualify for a new tenancy if they have outstanding rent arrears of less than 1 month.

Councillor Fitzpatrick noted that there had been a large increase in rent arrears following the introduction of universal credit in West Lothian.

The Council is installing a new light in Robin's Lane on the approach to the foot bridge.

Councillor Shemilt asked if the Community Council will be replying to the Trust Livingston Management Plan consultation from the Woodland Trust. Both community groups and individuals are encouraged to respond.

6. Community Policing:

PC Paul Corner and PC Ryan McCartney attended tonight and gave their report. PC Corner explained community policing had been restructured last May. There are now four community officers for Livingston. Police Scotland now have a policy that community officers can only attend community council meetings when on duty.

The crime statistics for January are :-

51 calls, which is the second lowest in the area.

There were 5 road traffic accidents; 1 house break-in; 3 suspicious persons calls; 3 domestic incidents; 4 missing persons reported; 1 theft from a shop.

Councillor Shemilt asked about speeding in Murieston Valley. PC Corner noted that the Traffic division is aware and dealing with this.

PC Corner reminded members of the public to phone 101 if they have a suspicious caller at their house.

Councillor Fitzpatrick left the meeting at the end of this item of business.

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

Arthur Marris reported.

The next meeting of MEG will be on Thursday 21st at Livingston Cricket Club.

The Woodland Trust have updated their TPO applications for the felling of diseased trees in Williamson and Bankton Woods. The Council has now started felling the trees, with the workers wearing protective clothing.

Signs have been put up at the woods to warn pedestrians on measures to avoid spreading contamination.

The cause of the spread of the *Phytophthora cambivora* disease may be illegal fly-tipping of garden waste. Councillor Shemilt intimated she will ask about the provision of extra household brown bins, the hygiene of brown bins and whether composting is sufficient to kill the disease and prevent further transmission.

Councillor Shemilt also opined that the reduced opening times at Oakbank Recycling Centre may also be a factor.

8. Murieston Development Trust (MDT):

Ian Brown reported.

The Community Council Executive and members of the Trust steering committee met with Ruth Evans of the Scottish Government Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) recently at the Cricket Club. It was agreed that the Community Council will sponsor an application for a CARES enablement grant for funding to develop and produce a community action plan which will support research etc. to confirm potential projects and needs within Murieston. Helen Mackie has offered to draft the bid proposal form and will get assistance on its completion, where appropriate, from the Community Council.

9. Windfarms:

Nothing to report.

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

Nothing to report.

11. Community Garden and Allotments:

Ian Brown reported.

Volunteers are needed in order to set up a management committee for the proposed allotment site in Murieston Valley.

12. Livingston South Station:

Ian Brown reported.

The lift towers are now erected and work is proceeding on installing the lifts.

The piling and foundations for the additional shelters on the platforms have been completed.

13. Planning Applications:

Ian Brown reported.

None of the current planning applications will be before the next planning committee meeting, and the earliest the applications can be scheduled for hearing will be March.

14. Correspondence:

ASDA have written to outline their funding scheme for community-based projects. It is unlikely that the Community Council would fulfil the awarding criteria.

15. Any Other Business:

Ian Brown reported on the planned walk for Syrian refugees on Murieston Trail. This had been cancelled at short notice, unfortunately after food had been ordered and a room had been booked at Murieston Village Hall.

It was agreed that we will organise a litter pick in the Spring. The proposed Spring Clean will be included in next month's meeting agenda for a decision on the date and arrangements.

The Meeting closed at 8.40pm

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