

MURIESTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 16 FEBRUARY 2023
held at Williamston Primary School
web: <http://murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk>

1. Present:

Chris Dryden, Ian Brown, Janey Cringean, Kevin Kerr, Arthur Marris, Davidson McQuarrie, Mark Robbie; Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

Apologies:

Nick Lansdell; Councillor Peter Heggie, Councillor Moira Shemilt; Ken Kirk, Irene Whitelaw, Alison Wright

Residents: Clare O'Lone, John Sharp

2. Minutes of the Meeting on 19 January 2023:

Acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting on 19 January 2023 was proposed by Ian Brown and seconded by Arthur Marris. Carried nem con.

3. Matters Arising:

None.

4. Finances:

Arthur Marris reported.

The current bank balance is £16,170.74. This includes £10,000 received from Energiekontor as a compensatory payment to the community for the routing of the power cabling for the Longhill Burn Windfarm through Murieston. £2,000.13 is due to be transferred by West Lothian Council from the Town Centre Capital Fund 2022-23. £13,428 will be provided to Murieston Community Garden.

5. Councillors' Reports:

Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

Councillor Fitzpatrick was unable to attend the meeting in person and joined via mobile phone for the duration of his report only.

The Scottish Government Reporter has approved the appeal by developers to build 300 houses at Brotherton. The decision was made immediately before the new National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) came into effect. Housing estates will now stretch from Polbeth to Bankton.

The Electoral Reform Commission now recommends that candidates for Scottish Parliament and council elections can stand from age 16.

New UK legislation now requires that voters will need to have acceptable photo ID (passport, photo ID driving licence etc.) to vote in person at UK parliamentary elections.

The new 902 Citylink service will start operating soon from Livingston bus station to Glasgow and to Edinburgh Airport from 7am to 9pm daily.

McGill's have withdrawn the 27 bus service through Dedridge West.

The replacement of Siporex in several primary schools will cost £10m. No funding is being provided by the Scottish Government.

A new primary school will be built in East Calder on the playing field of the current school.

Pupils at Harrysmuir Primary have been carrying out a hedgehog survey to see if there have been any hedgehogs visiting the wider school environment. This proved positive. Other schools may follow suit.

There will be another teachers' strike after the pay offer from the Scottish Government has been rejected.

70 houses are available for social rent at the new Wellhead Farm estate, with 42 houses Council owned stock.

Environmental surveys are conducted every two years, focusing on Legionella. All relevant premises with air conditioning have been checked.

The open nature area at Oakbank has been churned up by quad bikes.

The Council has commissioned a consultancy to assess the impact of decriminalising parking fine

enforcement and to report on the consequences of banning parking on pavements. The Police have reported that there were no significant incidents on Bonfire Night; a positive outcome achieved by the Council, Police Scotland and the West Lothian Youth Action Team. The social welfare budget from the Scottish Government was £1.34m and has been topped up by £1.98m from the Council.

There are now four car charging points at Livingston South station and two at Almondvale Stadium. The parapet on Williamston Bridge over Murieston Water (beside Bankton Court) has been repaired by a stonemason. Williamston Bridge was built in 1647.

Scottish Water will be increasing water bills by 5% this year.

A fish counter has been purchased to monitor fish in the River Almond catchment area.

£18m will be spent over five years on upgrading Council housing in Dedridge.

Ian Brown asked about the trees that are marked for removal on the Murieston Trail. Ian asked if it policy to replace the trees and where would they be planted. Councillor Fitzpatrick said he would get a report and advise.

Councillor Fitzpatrick said all new trees are always quarantined in a garden nursery for three months. Volunteer groups will also be collecting oak nuts in the autumn to conserve the heritage. Ian Brown asked if there were plans to replace trees at Newpark Roundabout which had been felled to enable the passage of the turbine blades for the Longhill Burn Windfarm. Councillor Fitzpatrick will check and respond back.

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

Arthur Marris reported.

Consideration is being given by the Council to removing the boardwalk on Murieston Trail and replacing by a hardcore path. The Council may ask for volunteer assistance for the project. Some of the treated wood from boardwalk may be suitable to be re-used. It is noted that part of the boardwalk is raised which was a consideration when first installed to counter any flooding from Murieston Water and needs to be borne in mind for the replacement path.

7. Murieston Community Development Trust (MCDT):

Davidson McQuarrie reported.

The MCDT steering group has decided to proceed directly with registering the Trust with OSCR as a SCIO.

A draft Constitution is being prepared which sets out the charitable purposes and governance of the Trust. The proposed Constitution will then be legally vetted and submitted to OSCR with our application to become a SCIO. A Business Plan is now being compiled.

The steering group will be meeting regularly now to prepare processes, procedures etc. in advance of the granting of SCIO status.

8. Town Centre Fund:

The Council has awarded an additional £2,000.13 from the Town Centre Capital Fund for the Murieston Community Garden.

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

The Community Council has been asked to join the West Lothian Local Access Forum. It was agreed that the Secretary will sign up the Community Council as a Correspondent Member of the Forum.

10. Livingston South Local Area Committee

Nothing to report.

11. COVID Issues

Vaccinations are now all being done centrally, rather than through medical practices. Advice on getting vaccinations can be viewed at :-

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/covid-19-vaccine/the-vaccines/coronavirus-covid-19-booster-vaccination/>

Phone: 0800 030 8013.

12. Planning Applications:

Ian Brown reported. There are no new planning applications to report.

Tarbert Drive (ref. 1151/FUL/22)

A Remediation Strategy Report by IKM Consulting has now been lodged on the planning portal.

Toxin levels in the airborne dust are monitored as below the level of concern.

Ian will ask the Council to confirm that ERS have checked the presence of Furan.

Border fencing has now been erected 1m from the site boundary.

Residents are unhappy that the road has been covered with dirt but there has been no road washing.

There are also continuing issues with plant being parked on the residential road.

Pedestrian Refuge on Murieston Road

Ian Brown has now had the response to the FOI request for the technical assessment underpinning the decision to position and install the refuge. This has not substantiated the facts leading to the decision on the siting of the refuge. Ian is now asking the Council Chief Solicitor to conduct an internal review.

13. Correspondence:

None.

14. Any Other Business:

None.

The Meeting closed at 8.20pm.

The next meeting will be on 16 March in the Staff Room at Williamston Primary School.