

MURIELSTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 16 MAY 2024
held at Williamston Primary School
web: <https://muriestoncommunitycouncil.org.uk>

1. Present:

Chris Dryden, Ian Brown, Janey Cringean, Mark Robbie, Davidson McQuarrie, Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

Apologies: Arthur Marris, Kevin Kerr; Councillor Moira Shemilt; Gillian de Felice

Residents: Carol Bartholomew, Roger Harper, Ken Kirk, Margaret Prior

2. Minutes of the Meeting on 18 April 2024:

Acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting on 18 April 2024 was proposed by Ian Brown and seconded by Davidson McQuarrie. Carried nem con.

3. Matters Arising:

None.

4. Councillors' Reports:

Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

Councillor Fitzpatrick gave his report.

A report from the Accounts Commission states that local authority funding settlement has risen from £12.75bn in 2013 to £13.37bn in 2023. Scottish Government pension payments have risen from £3bn in 2013 to £7bn in 2023.

Ancient hedges in the area are being maintained, including hedges bordering Williamston School.

The NETs and Countryside Service has dealt with 132 incidences of fly tipping last year, up from 111.

New machinery is being introduced for street cleaning.

Police now have four community support officers in Livingston 'J' Division. A Council wildlife officer is attached to the police.

Licence plate numbers are taken of cars speeding beside schools and drivers are then spoken to by the police.

Currently there is a vacancy rate of 25% of nurses at St John's Hospital.

City of Edinburgh Council Early Learning and Childcare is now providing childcare where appropriate across local authority boundaries.

Councillor Fitzpatrick attended an Army Engagement event held at Howden Park Centre yesterday evening.

Councillor Fitzpatrick attended West Lothian Scouts Annual District Parade and church service at St Michael's Parish Church, Linlithgow on 28 April.

The recent decision by the Inner House of the Court of Session to dismiss Millar Homes appeal at Mossend is welcomed. The Council will identify housing requirements over the next ten years in the next Local Development Plan.

A Jobs Fair has been held at West Lothian College today.

Councillor Fitzpatrick was with officers from Woodland Trust when they visited Bellsquarry Wood earlier this month as regards their proposals for future monitoring.

Carol Bartholomew and Margaret Prior attended tonight to ask about plans for restoring the woodland on the west side of Easter Bankton. A sycamore and beech tree had fallen in the storm of 21 January.

Council staff then assessed that other trees were in danger of falling and removed a further 17 trees. The area is now devoid of trees and waterlogged; some stumps are 4 feet high. Councillor Fitzpatrick advised that Craig Sinclair, the Chief Arborist, will be fully assessing the work required during the summer and will arrange replanting during the winter. Carol Bartholomew asked for picket fencing in the area to be removed as it no longer served any purpose and was a safety hazard.

Ian Brown asked if the introduction of the booking system at recycling centres has led to more fly-tipping. There is no evidence to support this.

Janey Cringean outlined concerns about the planned removal of council funding for community centres in 2026 and the impact this will have on operating Murieston Village Hall. Councillor Fitzpatrick advised that this funding cut is necessary to save £1.1 million per annum from the Council budget. Some community centres will need to review their charges and operating costs. Officers from Community Services will be meeting with each community centre management team to explain the options under consideration and give full support as the Council wished to see all facilities continuing.

Councillor Fitzpatrick left the meeting following this item of business.

5. Finances:

Davidson McQuarrie reported.

The bank balance stands at £2,509.94.

At last month's meeting, Arthur Marris presented the summary of the annual accounts covering the accounting period from 1 April 23 to 31 March 24, which was agreed at the meeting.

The annual accounts will be examined by an independent examiner and will be presented at the AGM on 20 June for formal acceptance and sign off.

6. Livingston South Local Area Committee:

Nothing to report.

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

Nothing to report.

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

Janey Cringean reported that work has started on building the public area at the front of the garden. Work should take six weeks to complete.

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

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

Janey Cringean reported.

The Inaugural AGM was held on Saturday 27 April at Murieston Village Hall. The meeting voted on the accounts to date and elected six Trustees for 2024/25.

The community café has now been open on Saturdays at the Village Hall for the past four weeks. It is being run by 13 volunteers and has been well attended each week.

10. Local Place Plan for Murieston

Ian Brown reported.

Murieston Community Development Trust with Murieston Community Council are compiling the final version of the Local Place Plan (LPP) for Murieston. After any final input following consultation with local groups, the LPP will be jointly submitted later this month to feed into the Council's forthcoming Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) which will be a 10 year plan for West Lothian effective from 2026.

11. Community Council Boundaries

Nothing to report.

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

Nothing to report.

13. 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.

14. Planning Applications:

Ian Brown reported.

There are no new significant planning applications affecting Murieston.

Tarbert Drive (ref. 1151/FUL/22)

Signs advertising the new estate have now been taken down.

Installation of Three Tennis Courts and MUGA Pitch at Livingston Cricket Club

The planning application has been granted. A planning condition requires that there should be a formal written agreement with Livingston Cricket Club on the terms of use of the toilet and changing facilities in the clubhouse.

15. Correspondence:

None.

16. Any Other Business:

Janey Cringean outlined details of a meeting on Tuesday with Council officers on the plans to withdraw all funding for Murieston Village Hall in 2026.

The three options shift the cost of operation and asset responsibilities onto Murieston Initiative. The Council will be holding a community asset roadshow next year. Murieston Initiative and Murieston Community Development Trust will assess and explore the options and their financial implications for the Hall going forward.

The Meeting closed at 8.05pm.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 20 June in the Staff Room at Williamston Primary School.