

**MURIESTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING ON 16 NOVEMBER 2023**  
**held at Williamston Primary School**  
**web: <https://muriestoncommunitycouncil.org.uk>**

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**1. Present:**

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

**Apologies:** Kevin Kerr; John Sharp, Irene Whitelaw

**Residents:** Roger Harper, Ken Kirk, Clare O'Lone

**2. Minutes of the Meeting on 19 October 2023:**

Acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting on 19 October 2023 was proposed by Chris Dryden and seconded by Arthur Marris, subject to clarifications. Carried nem con.

**3. Matters Arising:**

It was confirmed that Murieston Community Council will only pay £10 for its domain name per annum.

It was confirmed that the signage on the traffic island beside Skivo Wynd has been damaged. Ian Brown said that there is a work order to make repairs by the end of November.

Discussion on facilitating a Christmas tree at the station are made on the basis that this cannot proceed unless funding becomes available.

**4. Finances:**

Arthur Marris reported.

The bank account stands at £2,544.94. £443.33 has been spent to purchase three banners for the newly formed Murieston Community Development Trust.

Final funding of £3,670.46 has been transferred to Murieston Community Garden, completing the funding from the Town Centre Capital Fund 2022/23 and closing out this revenue head in our accounts.

**5. Councillors' Reports:**

**Councillor Moira Shemilt**

Councillor Shemilt outlined her written report, which covers the commemoration of Remembrance Day; Education services and strategy; St Ninian's Primary School; Broxburn Academy school debating team; the re-opening of The Lanthorn in February 2024; Housing and Homelessness; closure of West Lothian Leisure operated swimming pools; Recycling Centres and Bin Collections; Age Friendly Communities; Livingston South Community Sports Hub / Murieston Tennis and Sports; West Lothian Producers Market; fire-related vandalism; Winter vaccines; 101 Youth Project at The Centre.

Councillor Shemilt has provided the full report [here](#)

Ian Brown asked when the new booking arrangements for the Community Recycling Centres will be reviewed.

**Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick**

Currently 67,000 have had the Covid-19 booster and Flu vaccinations this autumn in West Lothian. As part of the Council's Winter Services programme, all street grit bins have been replenished with rock salt.

House building is slowing. Developers built 100 fewer houses in the last 12 months. Pressure remains on schools and GP practices following the Reporters' decisions to grant housing developers' appeals. Unite and GMB Unions have accepted the national pay offer of 5.5% for local government staff. Unison is balloting members. The pay award will be backdated to April and will be paid with November salaries.

Councillor Fitzpatrick attended Remembrance services at Livingston Old Kirk and three other churches on Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday.

Signage left following the work of BT Openreach has been removed by council staff.

Bubbles leisure complex has been sold to the highest bidder as required by law and best value rules and will mean demolition and redevelopment.

The Dedridge Primary School Community Wing is to be renamed the Neil Anderson Community Wing to commemorate the highly respected former teacher, Depute Head and Acting Headteacher who died recently.

An Early Learning and Childcare Plan has been published after consultation with parents and carers. West Lothian is the second local authority in educational attainment in Scotland, notably in wellbeing and inclusion and personal confidence benchmarks.

A new scheme in schools to address physical threatening behaviour is being rolled out.

Bus services will be altered during the festive period. Check the Lothian Country website regarding the X27 and X28 services.

McGill's will withdraw their services from 2 December. Lothian Country will be providing several replacement bus services. A further meeting with the Cabinet Secretary will be held soon to seek to ensure ongoing provision of bus services in West Lothian.

The unemployment rate in West Lothian is 2.9%, lower than the Scottish average, and there are job vacancies across the county.

A job fair was held recently. Business links are being strengthened, including with universities.

The Scottish Government has announced a freeze of Council Tax next year. Councillor Fitzpatrick noted that this was contrary to an arrangement between the Scottish Government and COSLA. The Scottish Government has intimated it will compensate the reduction in grant settlement.

The new local government budget will be announced by the Scottish Government on the week before Christmas.

The City of Edinburgh Council has declared a housing emergency.

Anti-poverty services are now required for 20% of the population experiencing financial hardship, affecting 24% of children. In West Lothian there are 6,162 claimants of Universal Credit. This is an increase of 130%.

**6. Livingston South Local Area Committee:**

Nothing to report.

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

Nothing to report.

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

Janey Cringean reported.

The final funding of £3,670.46 from the funding provided by the Town Centre Capital Fund 2022/23 has been transferred from the Community Council.

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

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

Janey Cringean reported.

The public launch of the Trust was held on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October in Murieston Village Hall. The launch was well attended with some forty attending including elected politicians and representatives of local businesses and community groups, as well as residents.

Currently 35 residents have joined the Trust as members. You can register as a member on the website.

The Trust's application for community wealth building funding from the place-based investment programme was unsuccessful. Feedback indicate we need to develop our strategy on community ownership.

An application has been made by Murieston Initiative to West Lothian Community Choices for £25,000 to fund refurbishment of Murieston Village Hall and landscaping at the back of the Hall. Community Choices is a participatory budgeting scheme and involves the public voting for their favoured projects. Voting is currently open and the public is invited to vote for three of the nominated projects to secure funds.

The Trust has now applied for funding from the annual disbursement funds of our four elected members in Livingston South ward.

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**Councillor Fitzpatrick left the meeting following this item of business.**

**10. Local Place Plan for Murieston**

Ian Brown explained that West Lothian Council is preparing the next Local Development Plan (LDP2) which will be a 10 year plan from 2026. Communities have an opportunity to submit their own Local Place Plan (LPP) containing the community's proposals for the development and use of land in their area, and feed into the planning system with ideas and proposals.

Murieston Community Development Trust has already started work on preparing an LPP for Murieston. It was agreed that Murieston Community Council will work with the Trust to jointly produce the LPP for Murieston.

Ian outlined the timetable for producing the LPP which should be submitted to the Council by the end of March 2024. We will be consulting the community soon for their input to the LPP.

One issue which will be addressed is the continuing use of Murieston Village Hall as the primary community hub.

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

Janey Cringean reported.

The new website will cost £102 a year. This comprises £10 for each of the three domains and £72 for the web hosting. It is agreed that Murieston Community Council will only pay £10 for its domain name per annum and Murieston Community Development Trust will pay £72 annually for web hosting of the three domains.

**12. 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.

**13. Planning Applications:**

Ian Brown reported.

**Tarbert Drive (ref. 1151/FUL/22)**

A complaint has been made about the proliferation of signs advertising the new housing estate which have been placed on the grass verges in Murieston Valley and Tarbert Drive. Adverts for housing sales require planning consent. This has now been requested by the developer retrospectively. The Council is waiting for more information before a decision is made.

Issues remain about breaches of planning conditions regarding the extent of weekend working and noise intrusion.

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

Livingston South Community Sport and Wellbeing Hub has applied for planning permission to build a sports complex of three tennis courts and a MUGA pitch at Livingston Cricket Club. Comments are required by 23 November. Ian noted that the floodlights may be intrusive for neighbours depending on how late they are used at night. Also, the land was never decontaminated as it was reserved for recreational purposes and it is unclear if the new infrastructure may disturb the contaminated layer of soil. Ian will submit our concerns in a planning objection as our planning secretary.

**Other**

Two planning applications may be made for housing developments in Charlesfield Lane in Livingston Village. [Note: Both of these planning applications relate to areas outwith Murieston and are reported for the purposes of information only]

Ian noted that the judicial review challenge by Homes for Scotland may have an outcome affecting the housing quota that has to be fulfilled in West Lothian.

A complaint has been made about the log cabin which has been erected on the site of the house being built on Murieston Valley opposite Rothes Drive.

**14. Correspondence:**

None.

**15. Any Other Business:**

The Secretary had asked East Calder and District Community Council if enforcement action had been taken against the housing developer / contractor on the delay in removing the temporary traffic restrictions on the A71 at Wilkieston, which have lasted over 10 months. The Chair has responded that the developers never engaged with the community council or residents. Despite raising this with elected members and at the Local Area Committee, little or no improvements or enforcement actions have occurred.

**The Meeting closed at 8.25pm.**

**The next meeting will be on Thursday 21 December in the Staff Room at Williamston Primary School.**