

MURIESTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2021
held online via Zoom at 7 pm
web: <http://murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk>

This meeting was held on Thursday 16 September by community councillors online using the Zoom video app.

Meetings at Williamston Primary have been cancelled by West Lothian Council until further notice due to COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Present:

Carol Hallesy, Arthur Marris, Ian Brown, Davidson McQuarrie, Nick Lansdell; Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Councillor Maria MacAulay, Councillor Moira Shemilt

Apologies:

Chris Dryden, Tania Armstrong, Lorna Cooper, Kevin Kerr

Residents: Ken Kirk, John Sharp

Carol Hallesy assumed Chair at tonight's online meeting

2. Minutes of the Meeting on 29 June 2021:

Acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting on 29 June 2021 was proposed by Arthur Marris and seconded by Ian Brown. Carried nem con.

3. Matters Arising:

None.

4. Finances:

Arthur Marris reported.

The annual administration grant of £473 has been received from West Lothian Council.

A grant of £1,200 has been received from West Lothian Development Trust to fund the transfer of the AED defibrillator from Murieston Village Hall and installation at Livingston South station.

An invoice for £2,878.80 from Ross Contractors to buy 105 wooden sleepers for the Community Garden is pending payment.

Current bank balance is £6,412.50 after recent payments for the Town Centre Fund projects.

5. Councillors' Reports:

Councillor Maria MacAulay

The perimeter fence at the 3g pitch in Bankton Mains Park has been cut open to gain access out of hours. The pitch and goal posts have been damaged due to vandalism.

Councillor Moira Shemilt

Scott Paterson, Head Coach and Vice Chair at Murieston United FC has reported this anti-social behaviour at the 3g pitch to the Council. Council officers have visited the pitch and Hannah Bardell MP also attended. Security of the pitch when not in use is a priority, but fixing the fence and locking the gate overnight present safety issues, given the vandalism to the perimeter fence and gate.

CCTV could be an option. The 3g pitch will be due for upgrading soon.

Parts of the boardwalk on Murieston Trail are unsafe. Councillor Shemilt attended a meeting with Council officers and Ian Jeffray, Vice Chair of MEG to consider a plan for repairs. Repairs are required in three places presently, with replacement of the boardwalk planned in the longer term. A hardcore pathway may be an alternative to the wooden boardwalk.

Arthur Marris and Nick Lansdell confirmed that the boardwalk repairs have been made now.

Murieston Trail is part of the Core Path Network and its ongoing maintenance should have a high priority. One improvement could be providing a bridge across Murieston Water to join the existing path at Cambridge Pond as an alternative to the steps leading up to Murieston Road. Councillor Shemilt said she will canvass ideas and get back to the Council officers.

The new Murieston Community Garden group is in touch with the Ladywell Community Garden group to share ideas.

The King's Church West Lothian, which has been based at the Lanthorn Centre, was considering purchasing the former Bank of Scotland building, but West Lothian Council has exercised its right of pre-emption and has bought the building.

There has been anti-social behaviour in the Centre recently. The Centre management has offered a unit to the NHS and other public agencies.

The Council has launched a consultation on Safety of Women and Girls in Public Spaces and

Places. Gender-based violence has risen by 20% during the COVID-19 lockdown period. No feedback has been received yet from the Forth Rivers Trust regarding water quality designation and fish stocks in River Almond. Councillor Shemilt will follow up. Councillor Shemilt has attended meetings about adopting recommendations of the Feeley Review of Adult Social Care, and the proposal to set up a National Care Service.

Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

The Council is concerned about the future of the Valneva plant at Oakbank business park following the recent Government announcement that the contract for manufacturing COVID-19 vaccines has been cancelled.

The roof at St. Ninian's Primary School was replaced during the school holidays. Windows and toilets will be replaced next year.

The 3g pitches at St. Margaret's Academy and James Young High School have been upgraded. The Construction Plan required for the development at Tarbert Drive has still not been received. The Wellhead Farm SUDS scheme needs to be approved for handover to Scottish Water which will then be their responsibility to maintain.

Free school meals to eligible young people are being provided during holiday periods. The support has continued during school holiday periods in recognition of the ongoing impact the COVID pandemic is having on low income families.

School clothing grants have been increased to £150 for primary school children and £180 for secondary school pupils.

Attendance policies at schools have been reviewed to ensure earliest intervention.

Work has started on the new Cedarbank Special School beside James Young High School.

There will be an extra school holiday on Friday 3 June 2022 to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Three expert ecologists are now recruited to address biodiversity loss in West Lothian. A call will go out for volunteers from across the community to assist.

A new gender-based violence policy has been agreed for council staff.

The work on the boardwalk on Murieston Trail is being carried out by the Council following the report of damage.

The council staff pay increase is currently in negotiation.

The community recycling centres will accept old smoke alarms for safe recycling.

The Centre management has made available a unit which will be used by the Council for youth health and advice and aim to address anti-social behaviour.

The COVID-19 rate in West Lothian is currently 755 per 100,000 population. The average age of hospitalisation is now between 50 - 60. Hospital ICUs are experiencing a high demand. There are no clinics in Scotland for Long-COVID yet, unlike England where they have been in operation for some months.

Young people aged 12 to 15 will be able to get vaccinated at a drop-in clinic at The Pyramids in Bathgate and Broxburn Partnership Centre, starting next week.

It is noteworthy that increased demand on GP practices is not taken into account when deciding planning consent for major housing developments.

The Council has responded to the Scottish Government consultation to restrict the sale of fireworks to the public for 5th November and special events only.

The Council is preparing to house 60 Afghan refugees.

Beecraigs Country Park hosted the West Lothian Partnership Against Rural Crime information day last weekend. The Partnership comprises key organisations collectively working together to tackle rural crime, fly tipping, anti-social behaviour etc. within West Lothian's rural communities.

Council arborists have identified ancient trees in the county and are referring details of 17 trees to Buckingham Palace for consideration as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative to identify 70 Ancient Trees to celebrate Her Majesty's 70 years of service.

The proposal to replace the adult care system with a National Care Service has significant implications for council staff as some 1,000 in-house posts could be lost. There are also concerns about the lack of budgetary and scrutiny control of a national system.

A man has been charged by the Police after three deliberate fires were started on 30 July, including one at the Lizzie Brice power substation.

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

Nothing to report.

7. **Murieston Development Trust (MDT)** :

Davidson McQuarrie reported.

The Murieston Community Development Trust (MCDT) steering group is following the Development Trust Association of Scotland (DTAS) advice on setting up the Trust as we move out of Covid lockdown. We are drafting Articles of Association to set up a limited company to form the Trust and we expect to be running events soon to publicise what we are doing and invite residents to participate in the newly formed Trust.

Meanwhile we want to give everyone the opportunity on digital media to read the Community Action Plan and background information, and give some initial feedback.

<https://murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk/news/consultation-community-action-plan-for-murieston/>

8. Town Centre Fund for 2019/20:

Ian Brown reported.

The community noticeboard (project MUR02) has now been installed beside the bus stop at the station and is being used. This project is now completed. We will need to decide guidelines on what should be posted on the noticeboard concerning the community council and Murieston community generally.

The first phase of the community gardens (project MUR03) beside Murieston Village Hall has been completed. The outer wooden fence and inner steel security fence have been erected, with path and drainage groundwork laid. A community group is now being formed to start work on creating and cultivating the community garden. 105 wooden sleepers have been purchased to be used as raised bed containers.

Ian has applied to the Woodland Trust for 105 saplings from their Wild Harvest Pack, which will be delivered in November. These will be planted in the forest garden on the Murieston Trail. We will plant fruit trees there in due course.

Two benches have been installed in the community meadow on the Murieston Trail. Wildflower seeds will be sown later this month.

The two projects funded by the Town Centre Funds are essentially completed.

An initial mockup of the proposed map of Livingston at the station carpark (project MUR01) has been circulated and we have made our comments.

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

Community advice concerning Coronavirus continues to be posted on the community website.

<https://murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk/news/assistance-during-coronavirus-crisis/>

10. Livingston South Station:

Davidson McQuarrie reported.

The defibrillator is now installed and operational in the cabinet beside the ground level lift at the front of the station.

Consumables have been replaced and the defibrillator has been registered with the Scottish Ambulance Service on the national The Circuit database.

In a medical emergency, ring 999 and supply postcode and What 3 Words location, then the emergency centre operator will give the code to open the cabinet datalock.

11. Community Council Election:

Davidson McQuarrie reported.

Elections are held every 4 years for community councils. The inaugural meeting of the newly constituted Murieston Community Council will be held online on Thursday 21 October.

Physical meetings will be held as soon as the Covid situation allows but the Williamston School staffroom is not amenable for public meetings while Covid is prevalent. Hybrid Zoom meetings could be held in due course but this would need access to the school's guest wi-fi and broadband.

Councillor Fitzpatrick left the meeting at the end of this item of business as he is a member of the Development Management Committee.

12. Planning Applications:

Ian Brown reported.

The Council is now holding meetings online via Cisco Webex, including statutory planning meetings.

Wellhead Farm

A substantial number of houses are now built so planning conditions should be enforced. The SUDS scheme is a real hazard and the planting of the tree screen on Murieston Road is overdue. There is no reason for the temporary access route to continue and it should have been removed last October. Ian asked our elected members to follow up the enforcement of the planning conditions with the

Planning Service.

We are also consulting Planning Democracy on the fulfilment of enforcement orders.

Tarbert Drive (ref. 0927/FUL/18; DPEA case re. PPA-400-2107)

We are still awaiting the Construction Plan. Our concerns also include the need for a risk assessment of the SUDS scheme.

Longhill Burn Windfarm (ref. 0359/FUL/19)

Energiekontor has proposed a new route for the power cable from the Longhill Burn windfarm to the Lizzie Brice electricity substation, to be routed down Murieston Valley, Robin's Lane and footpaths through to Bankton Lane.

Camilty Windfarm (ref. 0320/FUL/21)

The planning application made in March to install 6 wind turbines will go before the Development Management Committee on 22 September for their decision.

TPO on Murieston Valley (ref. 0313/TPO/21)

An application to fell a beech tree and oak tree on land approved to build one house on Murieston Valley has been dismissed as tree management would be a more appropriate way of prolonging the life of these attractive mature trees. In the decision refusing consent, it was stated that the overall impression is that it is highly likely that the reason the trees are proposed for removal is to facilitate further development.

Installation of surface water drainage system at new unit in Bankton Centre (ref. 0897/FUL/21)

This application has been made to install a drainage system to discharge only rain water from the new unit's roof into Murieston Water.

13. Correspondence:

None.

14. Any Other Business:

None.

The Meeting closed at 8.55pm

Community Council meetings will be held monthly online until we can resume public meetings at Williamston Primary.

The next meeting will be the inaugural meeting of the new Murieston Community Council which be held *online* on 21 October 2021.