

MURIESTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 18 JANUARY 2024
held at Williamston Primary School
web: <https://muriestoncommunitycouncil.org.uk>

1. Present:

Arthur Marris, Ian Brown, Davidson McQuarrie, Mark Robbie; Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Councillor Moira Shemilt

Apologies: Chris Dryden, Janey Cringean; Councillor Peter Heggie, Councillor Maria MacAulay; John Sharp,

Residents: Gillian de Felice, Roger Harper, Ken Kirk, Clare O'Lone, Irene Whitelaw

Arthur Marris acted as Chair tonight as Chris Dryden was unable to attend.

There was no monthly meeting in December as the school was not open for the meeting.

2. Minutes of the Meeting on 16 November 2023:

Acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting on 16 November 2023 was proposed by Ian Brown and seconded by Arthur Marris, subject to a minor clarification. Carried nem con.

3. Matters Arising:

None.

4. Finances:

Arthur Marris reported.

The bank account stands at £2,544.94 as reported at the November meeting.

5. Councillors' Reports:

Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

Councillor Fitzpatrick gave his report.

Twelve new pedestrian crossings will be built in West Lothian this year.

Notifications have been sent to properties neighbouring Murieston Road West as part of the planning process to install the toucan pedestrian crossing beside the Bright Horizons nursery in the Spring.

A review of the catchment areas for non-denominational schools is taking place, including Williamston Primary but no new houses are involved.

Some of school swimming pools which have been opened out of hours for non-curricular use will not continue to be available for community use due to budgetary pressures. Swimming pools at James Young High School, Inveralmond Community High School and Deans Community High School are currently open for community use.

The Council's Planning Solicitor has advised that the Development Management Committee should be provided with sufficient evidence on the protection of wildlife species when making relevant planning decisions.

A consultation is taking place on outsourcing of fostering services.

Howden Park Centre is being funded at £20,000 a month by the Council until March. A bidder has been successful and has been appointed to take over the operation of Howden Park Centre from April. Glasgow-based Reconnect Theatres have a contract to run Howden Park Centre until 2035.

Funding is now in place to build the proposed new primary school in Craigshill.

The Scottish Government has implemented a freeze on Council Tax in the fiscal year 2024/25; significantly short of the budgeted 5.8% increase in Council Tax which results in a £1.5million shortfall in the Council budget.

Ian Brown asked if there was anything to report on the application to the Court of Session for a judicial review challenging the decision by the Scottish Ministers to dismiss the housing appeal regarding Mossend which affects the calculation of housing land supply. Councillor Fitzpatrick said there was nothing to report.

Councillor Moira Shemilt

Councillor Shemilt outlined her written report, which covers:-

The confirmed future of Howden Park Centre; review of the booking system for the Community Recycling Centres later this month; closure of West Lothian Leisure swimming pools, including infants pools; Winter Service provision; consultation on the rollout of new pedestrian crossings; Active Healthcare tenancy of the Bank of Scotland building; community benefits lease awarded to Murieston United Football Club; Council's Annual Budget, with a reduction of the Block Grant; new Primary School for Craigshill; West Lothian children do well in literacy and numeracy; Williamston Primary School Education Scotland report; changes in the Labour administration; closure of Bathgate and Falkirk railway routes for several days; short delay in re-opening the Lanthorn Centre.

The full report by Councillor Shemilt is available [here](#)

6. Livingston South Local Area Committee:

Nothing to report.

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

Next meeting will be on 8 February.

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

Ian Brown reported.

A tree has fallen from the station embankment onto the fence. It is unclear whether West Lothian Council or Network Rail have responsibility for this part of the embankment. This is being taken up with the Council.

A planting plan for planting on the embankment besides the stairs will be submitted soon to the ScotRail 'Adopt a Station' programme. Several volunteers have agreed to help with the station greening.

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

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

Davidson McQuarrie reported.

The application made recently by Murieston Initiative to West Lothian Community Choices for £25,000 to fund refurbishment of Murieston Village Hall and landscaping, in which the public voted for their favoured projects, was unsuccessful.

The Trust has successfully applied for and received £500 funding from the Councillors' Local Disbursement Fund.

Plans are progressing on opening a community café at Murieston Village Hall. There are now several volunteers who have offered to help with the running of the café who will be given appropriate training.

Councillor Fitzpatrick left the meeting following this item of business.

10. Local Place Plan for Murieston

Davidson McQuarrie outlined the timetable for producing the Local Place Plan (LPP) for Murieston. Communities have an opportunity to submit their own 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 is working with Murieston Community Council to produce the LPP which we will jointly submit in March to feed into the Council's forthcoming Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) which will be a 10 year plan for West Lothian from 2026.

As a central part of preparing the LPP, we are consulting the community of Murieston about what they consider important and what they would like within Murieston going forward. We have leafleted all households in Murieston to invite every resident (from age 12 onwards) to complete an online survey to express their views -

<https://muriestoncommunitycouncil.org.uk/survey>

Some 127 residents have completed the online survey so far. A paper version of the survey is also available for anyone who cannot access the online survey.

We are also holding three drop-in sessions at Murieston Village Hall on the mornings of Saturday 20 January, Saturday 27 January and Sunday 4 February when members of the Trust will be at the Hall to provide more information and discuss issues with residents.

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

Nothing to report.

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.

There are no new significant planning applications affecting Murieston.

Ian and Davidson McQuarrie attended a training session on Zoom run by the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA). The presentations covered the planning appeals process and, with background material, has given a clearer insight into how appeals are handled and determined.

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. This will be decided by planning officers under delegated powers. No decision has been made yet and Ian Brown will check regularly for the outcome.

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.

The land was never decontaminated by LDC when topsoil was removed throughout Murieston Valley in 1994 as the land was reserved for recreational purposes. It is unclear if the new infrastructure may disturb the contaminated layer of soil. Ian has submitted our concerns in a planning objection as our planning secretary.

Other

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 Rothies Drive. The Planning Service is considering enforcement action.

Ian has confirmed with the Council that work on the traffic island at Skivo Wynd should be completed soon.

14. Correspondence:

None.

15. Any Other Business:

None.

The Meeting closed at 8.15pm.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 15 February in the Staff Room at Williamston Primary School.