

MURIESTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 18 MARCH 2021
held online via Zoom at 7 pm
web: <http://murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk>

This meeting was held on Thursday 18 March 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:

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

Apologies: David Cooper, Lorna Cooper

Residents: Ken Kirk, John Sharp, Andrew Murray, Allan Watson

2. Minutes of the Meeting on 11 February 2021:

Acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting on 11 February 2021 was proposed by Ian Brown and seconded by Carol Hallesy, subject to minor changes. Carried.

3. Matters Arising:

None.

4. Finances:

Arthur Marris reported.

The current balance is £40,373.52.

West Lothian Council has credited £11,545, awarded under Round 2 of the Town Centre Fund.

The annual fee of £35 has been paid to the Information Commissioner's Office.

£2,150.40 has been paid to David Ogilvie Engineering for the community noticeboard, purchased under the Town Centre Fund project MUR02.

£160.84 has been paid to West Lothian Council for a Section 56 Permit to authorise the installation of the community noticeboard.

£90 has been paid to DBC architecture for architectural drawings for the community garden (Town Centre Fund project MUR03).

£599.99 has been paid to the Defib Store for an external defibrillator cabinet.

At the February meeting, a motion was agreed that the equivalent of Murieston Community Council's annual administrative grant from West Lothian Council be paid to Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland and Planning Democracy, split equally, as our financial contribution for the guidance and support these two charitable organisations provided on behalf of the Community Council and Tarbert Drive residents group in responding to the Tarbert Drive planning appeal (ref. 0927/FUL/18; DPEA case re. PPA-400-2107).

Ian Brown proposed this motion be varied with the funds being rounded up to £500 from £475, and re-distributed as £300.00 to Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland and £200.00 to Planning Democracy. The new motion was seconded by Chris Dryden and carried nem con by the community councillors.

5. Councillors' Reports:

Councillor Maria MacAulay

Councillor Maria MacAulay introduced herself as the newly elected councillor. Maria was elected at the council by-election last Thursday, 11th March and will be one of the two SNP councillors representing the Livingston South council ward.

Councillor Moira Shemilt

Councillor Shemilt has attended an online webinar from Stuart McNiven, Watch Commander and local authority liaison officer of the Fire Service about hate crime and discrimination.

West Lothian has a high incidence of domestic abuse, and Police Sergeant Keith Jack and Dr Christine Goodall on behalf of Medics Against Violence could attend a future online community council meeting to inform us.

Cuts to the NETs team have led to problems of littering. Councillor Shemilt notes we have community litter picks each year and suggests we arrange a community event later in the year with MEG when Covid rules permit.

There have been problems with the East Calder water treatment plant recently with sewage on the

River Almond.

The Murieston Development Trust steering group recently had an online Zoom call with officers from the Development Trust Association of Scotland (DTAS) about the steps to take forward setting up the Trust. The steering group will be following the DTAS advice soon as we move out of Covid lockdown.

Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

Councillor Fitzpatrick advised the passing of Wilma Shearer who had been a founding and key member of the Dedridge Environment Ecology Project (DEEP). DEEP has delivered a nature trail and a large number of improvements to the environment of the Dedridge Burn and Ponds corridor from Williamston Wood through to the River Almond.

The Council has approved a balanced budget and its general reserve of £2 million remains the lowest of any local authority in Scotland. A change to depreciation accounting is under consideration. The budget includes a £1m winter resilience fund.

There have been a few complaints about the vaccination delivery programme.

You should phone the vaccination helpline on 0800 0308013 to arrange an appointment if your vaccination has been missed.

Mitsubishi is creating 300 jobs in Livingston at a new plant to produce ground-source heat pumps. The footpath on Linhouse Trail will now be repaired in May/June.

Allan Watson thanked Councillor Fitzpatrick for arranging the prioritisation of repairs to the Linhouse Trail.

Allan noted there is often traffic on the A71 queueing to enter the Oakbank Community Recycling Centre and asked if opening times can be extended.

Councillor Fitzpatrick will check if two lanes can be created to access the recycling centre as operated previously.

Councillor Shemilt observed that queueing for the Oakbank Recycling Centre had been a regular issue since the recycling centre at Deans had closed.

An engineer's report is being prepared to determine the repair work required on Murieston Road. The proposed design of the pedestrian refuge on Murieston Road adjacent to Murieston Court is now ready. Nick Lansdell noted it fulfilled the pedestrian safety brief.

Carol Hallesy noted that the recent Spaces for People Programme had led to reduced speed limits on some roads for no real purpose without the public being consulted. Councillor Shemilt said there had been criticisms of the scheme, although not always rational, and a fuller consultation was appropriate. Councillor Fitzpatrick explained that Spaces for People is a temporary infrastructure programme introduced by the Scottish Government with Sustrans at short notice under Covid legislation. There had only been a short timescale to consult in order to obtain the funding. Feedback has been positive and there have been no requests to remove the 20mph speed zones. If any of the new speed limits are to be made permanent in future, this would require Council approval and full public consultation.

The final barrier for fish migrating up the River Almond will be removed at the Mid Calder weir soon. SEPA is investigating sewage outfall problems on the River Almond at Whitburn and East Calder. The water treatment plant at East Calder has been affected.

Nick Lansdell noted that the sewage system may be struggling now with the addition of the new housing developments in West Lothian.

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

Arthur Marris advised that updates are regularly given on the MEG Facebook page.

We have been advised of some anti-social behaviour and threatening behaviour on the Murieston Trail and particularly around the field beside Campbridge Pond. On 1 March there were some 15 young people smashing bottles and dropping cans and food. Youths were then verbally abusive when challenged about their behaviour. The matter has been reported to the Police.

The 3G pitch at Bankton Mains Park is now being locked out of hours as there has been some recent vandalism.

Williamston Primary is running the Fish in the Classroom project virtually this year. The Forth Rivers Trust hold interactive presentation to the class introducing them to rivers, the issues they face and the wildlife that use them. The class receive a fish tank and brown trout spawn, and then follow the progress of the brown trout as it develops from an egg to a fry. Once the eggs have hatched in the tank, the fish are released into Murieston Water.

7. Murieston Development Trust (MDT) :

Davidson McQuarrie reported.

Following our recent online Zoom calls with Linlithgow Community Development Trust and the Development Trust Association of Scotland (DTAS), the Murieston Development Trust steering group will be following the DTAS advice on setting up the Trust as we move out of Covid lockdown. 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 been delivered and is ready for installation beside the bus stop at the station now.

ScotRail will only provide the power supply required for the defibrillator when it is relocated from Murieston Village Hall to the station at a cost of £695 to the Community Council. Ian had written to the Chief Executive of ScotRail but they decline to fund this despite doing so for other stations. No feedback has been received on co-locating the defibrillator cabinet at the JCDecaux toilet. We have purchased an external defibrillator cabinet which will be stored until a decision is made on its placement. The Secretary has applied for a grant from West Lothian Development Trust to fund this purchase.

Ian Brown proposed a motion that the shortfall of £303.23 can be sourced from the Community Council funds until funding is available from a grant. Nick Lansdell seconded the motion which was carried by the community councillors nem con.

Ian reported that he and Davidson McQuarrie had discussed and agreed with Ross Contractors the scope and cost of the first phase of the community garden. The first phase has had to be scaled down to remain within the available budget. Work on the community garden is expected to start in May.

An online Zoom meeting is being held next Tuesday with some ten residents who are interested in getting involved with the community garden.

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

Community advice concerning Coronavirus is posted on the community website.

<https://murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk/news/assistance-during-coronavirus-crisis-2/>

10. **COVID-19 Issues:**

Kevin Kerr advised that Murieston Medical Practice is currently vaccinating patients over 75 and in the shielding cohort. Takeup for these cohorts has been some 99%. Second jags will start next week. GP practices are only dispensing the AstraZeneca vaccination.

In some cases invitation letters are being received too late for appointments at the large vaccination centres.

11. **Planning Applications:**

Ian Brown reported.

General

Ian said that the new planning bill will not impede developers.

Ian noted that there are a number of planning proposals for major housing developments at Bangour Village, Calderwood and Drumshoreland, with the possibility of applications for further housing behind Murieston.

Councillor Shemilt noted that the housing at Brotherton will stretch to Polbeth.

Wellhead Farm (ref. 0065/FUL/20)

Nothing to report.

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

Nothing to report.

Takeaway at Bankton Mains Park (ref. 0188/FUL/21)

A planning application has been made for a snack takeaway in Bankton Mains Park. This coffee and snack kiosk will be in a container unit, operating 6 days a week. No external utilities are required.

12. **Correspondence:**

Online consultations have been circulated.

13. **Any Other Business:**

Ian Brown enquired whether we could get a report on community policing as used to be provided regularly. Councillor Shemilt said she would forward a copy of the police report provided to the Local Area Committee (LAC).

Councillor MacAulay noted that Inveralmond Community High School part-funds a community support officer.

Ken Kirk said there was a need to reduce speeding on Murieston Road. Councillor Shemilt stated she will request speed monitoring.

Nick Lansdell pointed out that the road had been designed for the national speed limit, so ensuring compliance of the 30 mph speed limit is a challenge with the current measures in place.

The Meeting closed at 8.35pm

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

The next meeting will held *online* in April 2021.