

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

This meeting was held on Thursday 18 November by community councillors online using the Zoom video app.

Meetings at Williamston Primary are not taking place until further notice due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Present:

Chris Dryden, Arthur Marris, Ian Brown, Davidson McQuarrie; Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Councillor Maria MacAulay, Councillor Moira Shemilt

Apologies:

Carol Hallesy, Nick Lansdell; Ken Kirk

Residents: Janey Cringean, Kevin Kerr, John Sharp

2. Minutes of the Meeting on 21 October 2021:

Acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting on 21 October 2021 was proposed by Arthur Marris and seconded by Ian Brown. Carried nem con.

3. Matters Arising:

None.

4. Finances:

Arthur Marris reported.

Current bank balance is £3,287.70.

£534 will be repaid to West Lothian Development Trust as an unspent portion of the £1,200 grant for the relocation of the defibrillator to the station.

5. Janey Cringean of Murieston Community Garden Group:

Janey Cringean updated the meeting on the progress in setting up the Murieston Community Garden Group, following the handover on completion of Phase 1 of the Town Centre Fund project (ref. MUR03).

The Group have agreed their constitution, set up a bank account and website, and are drafting a handbook. 45 volunteers are on Facebook.

Funding sources are being identified and currently more than £1,000 has been obtained.

Work is starting on the public area of the garden. There will be some ground level planting in the front garden. The layout of the front garden is to be finalised.

Climbers will be planted at the middle fence next May.

The raised beds are being marked out and need reshaping as the overall area is smaller than the plan layout. The raised beds will be constructed next summer.

Tree planting is taking place on 27-28th November at the front and back fences.

The base for a shed will be installed over the winter.

More members are needed on the management committee.

6. Councillors' Reports:

Councillor Moira Shemilt

Councillor Shemilt met with Ian Jeffray of MEG and Tracey Smith, Council Countryside Officer to agree a plan to mend the loose section of the Murieston Walk boardwalk. The next meeting is on 30 November.

Councillor Shemilt met with residents on 29 October regarding the outstanding issues at the Wellhead Farm estate, including the SUDS scheme, treebelt and temporary access at the front of the estate.

If run-off from the SUDS scheme enters Murieston Water, this should be reported to SEPA.

Engineers have twice checked water quality in Murieston Water. The recent erosion should be temporary. Safety issues are the responsibility of the builder who should have a risk assessment in place. In due course, pipes and cables will be removed and the SUDS scheme will then be a sustainable, passive system.

The formation of the treebelt and hedging has been affected by people using the frontage as a shortcut onto Murieston Road. The Council Planning Service will ask the developer to install a wire fence to impede this access route.

The planned pedestrian refuge will be built on Murieston Road as a planning condition when 100 houses are occupied; currently 79 houses are occupied.

A tree has been felled at the entrance to Murieston House by Scottish Water. The fence will be fixed. The Scottish Government have a COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Fund from which the Council is distributing £150,000 to each ward. Officers have drawn up a list of spending proposals. Money has to be spent by March. The Community Council may want to suggest some items to be included in the programme.

Two new EV (electric vehicle) charge points have been installed at Morris Square Car Park. The planning application for residential housing on the 15ha site at Brotherton Farm has been rejected by the Planning Committee.

Councillor Maria MacAulay

Councillor MacAulay has had several walk rounds in Murieston to understand issues.

There is a need for yellow lining in Bankton Lane on the approach to Williamston School.

Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

Recent problems with bus timetable operation have been due to driver shortages.

Electronic boards at the bus station have been raised in height.

Free school meals are now being provided for P1 – P4 pupils. Bellsquarry Primary requires extended kitchen / dining facilities by August 2022 to provide for all P1 – P7 pupils.

The new fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) will be published next week.

The national projection formula for calculating housing supply is being challenged by developers.

The Council has written to Tom Arthur MSP, Minister with planning responsibility to introduce without delay the definitive methodology to calculate housing supply, having previously agreed the Council land supply is more than adequate.

The Lizzie Brice power sub-station is at capacity and will require upgrading next year.

West Lothian's Jobs Task Force has created 700 jobs now.

West Lothian's population is now 183,000 with an average age of 41. 77% of adults are economically active.

£1.3 million is being made available from the Scottish Government COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Fund. £150,000 will be allocated to each of the nine wards. The money must be spent by the end of this fiscal year. The Council officers are preparing a recommended programme of refresh and renewal of the built environment e.g. relining on roads, refreshing roundabouts and street signs etc. The Livingston South Local Area Committee (LAC) will be meeting on Thursday 2 December to decide the programme. One delegate from each of the community councils is entitled to attend and participate.

Councillor Fitzpatrick reported that he had attended a COP26 conference for council leaders.

Chief Superintendent Catriona Paton has been appointed as the new Divisional Commander of Police for Lothians and Scottish Borders Division, following the retirement of Chief Superintendent John McKenzie.

Nelson Park in Armadale is being designated as West Lothian's Queen's Green Canopy.

The Planning Service has written to Scottish Water to request a Hazard and Operability Study (HAZOP) to identify and evaluate issues with the SUDS scheme.

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

Nothing to report.

8. 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-19 lockdown. We are finalising Articles of Association to set up a limited company by guarantee to form the Trust and we intend to run events when the ongoing COVID pandemic permits 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/>

9. Town Centre Fund for 2019/20:

Our projects ref. MUR02 and phase 1 of MUR03 and corresponding funding are now completed.

10. 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/>

11. COVID-19 Issues:

Kevin Kerr reported.

Most over-70s have now received their booster vaccinations. Uptake of this year's flu vaccination has been less. Appointments for the booster jag can be booked online now.

All medical practices are now near capacity. There are approved plans to build an additional 12,500 houses in West Lothian but there are no plans for any new medical practices. The population of Murieston has grown by 13.7% in the last two years. Murieston Medical Practice has now reached its limit for patient registrations.

12. Planning Applications:

Ian Brown reported.

The Council is now holding meetings online via Microsoft Teams, including statutory planning meetings.

Wellhead Farm

Thanks is expressed to our three elected members for their work in handling issues concerning the Wellhead Farm estate.

Councillor Fitzpatrick said the immediate issue with refuse collection at the front of the estate is now resolved. Councillor Shemilt said she will speak to the Recycling and Waste Service re. a long-term solution to accessing the front of the estate.

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

Planning Democracy has asked if we will participate in a video regarding the judicial review process. The site gate on Tarbert Drive is now closed and locked.

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 confirmed the route for the power cabling from the Longhill Burn windfarm to the Lizzie Brice electricity substation, which will be routed down Murieston Valley, Robin's Lane and footpaths through to Bankton Lane, passing Williamston Primary.

Roadworks are ongoing in Murieston Valley and on Murieston West Road.

Chris Dryden reported that three drains have collapsed in Murieston Valley.

Work has started on Murieston East Road at the A71 interchange. Councillor Fitzpatrick reported that Council officers had to intervene as there was a blockage to school traffic entering Bankton Lane. Councillor Fitzpatrick advised that there had been a meeting last week between Energiekontor and the head teacher at Williamston Primary to agree to delay the roadworks on Bankton Lane until the Easter holidays.

Camilty Windfarm (ref. 0320/FUL/21)

Planning consent was granted on 22 September to install six wind turbines, subject to some 30 planning conditions. The power cable infrastructure will be routed via Brucefield and Bellsquarry to the Drumcross Energy Storage Facility at Bathgate, which is a lithium-ion battery energy storage facility.

An exhibition of the proposal is being held online and also a face-to-face exhibition at Harburn Village Hall on 22 November and 7 December.

Two-level Restaurant/Bar and Café/Hot Food Takeaway (ref. 0240/FUL/21)

The planning application for a restaurant / bar and café / hot food takeaway with balcony and terrace beside the Coop store at the Bankton Retail Centre was refused on 21 April by a planning officer under delegated powers. The applicant has now applied for a review of the decision by the Council's Local Review Body.

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

The applicant has appealed to the Reporter regarding the dismissal of the application to fell a beech tree and oak tree on land approved to build one house on Murieston Valley. A site inspection by the Reporter is planned in December.

The three elected members left the meeting at this point in the meeting as the next item concerns a new planning proposal.

West Brucefield (ref. 1135/PAC/21)

There is a new proposal for housing development on a 2.5 ha site at Brucefield Industrial Park. A public exhibition to present the planning proposal will be organised by the developers initially.

13. Correspondence:

None.

14. Any Other Business:

None.

The Meeting closed at 8.45pm

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

The next meeting will be held *online* in early December 2021.