

MURIESTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 19 OCTOBER 2023
held at Williamston Primary School
web: <https://muriestoncommunitycouncil.org.uk>

1. Present:

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

Apologies: Kevin Kerr, Nick Lansdell; Councillor Moira Shemilt

Residents: Roger Harper, Ken Kirk, Irene Whitelaw

2. Minutes of the Meeting on 21 September 2023:

Acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting on 21 September 2023 was proposed by Janey Cringean and seconded by Chris Dryden. Carried nem con.

3. Matters Arising:

None.

4. Councillors' Reports:

Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

Councillor Fitzpatrick will have to leave the meeting after making his report to attend an emergency COSLA meeting via Zoom.

McGill's are withdrawing all of their bus services from 2 December. Lothian Country have agreed to provide replacement services following a meeting between Councillor Fitzpatrick, the Cabinet Minister and Lothian Country officials. Another meeting with the Cabinet Minister will take place next week to request more funding for subsidised travel. 43,000 journeys by bus were made each week in West Lothian during September.

The route of the SD Travel no. 9 Murieston Circular has changed. The service passes Murieston Medical Practice and operates hourly only to 7pm.

West Lothian Council has no control over the operation of commercial bus services. The Traffic Commissioner has powers and can take up complaints on bus operation. An alternative to standard bus services is the Dial-a-Bus service which can be pre-booked by phone.

<https://www.hcltransport.org.uk/dial-a-bus>

The GMB and Unite Unions have accepted a national pay offer of 5.5% for council staff. Unison have not accepted an offer and their members will be striking, but not in West Lothian.

Craft workers in the Unite Union will be on strike for 3 days next week. Alternative cover will be provided.

The Scottish Government has just announced that there will be a freeze of Council Tax next year. Councillor Fitzpatrick noted that this was contrary to an arrangement between the Scottish Government and COSLA.

West Lothian Council is now 2nd in the annual Scottish Local Authority Benchmarking Framework assessment of the 32 local education authorities.

Sinclair Academy has now opened at Winchburgh. It is the third and final school built as part of the Winchburgh Schools Campus project; the largest ever investment in education in West Lothian at more than £60 million.

The Council has asked the Scottish Government for £53m to reimburse the cost of replacing RAAC in public buildings.

The Council has applied for funding for a new primary school and nursery to replace Craigshill Riverside Primary. The Scottish Government decision is long awaited.

Swimming sessions for the public are now available at James Young School from 6.30 to 7.30 am, on Mondays to Thursdays.

The Council has won a COSLA Excellence award for achieving better outcomes for the most vulnerable with the Upstreaming Prevention of Youth Homelessness programme.

Preparations are in hand for the Winter Service provision. Rocksalt is now available at the station.

The analogue to digital telephony switchover in the area is in progress.

The café at the Civic Centre is again accepting cash payments due to popular demand.

The Scottish Owl Centre at Polkemmet Country Park, Whitburn has been named 'Best Day Out' in Scotland at the recent Hospitality Awards.

Councillor Fitzpatrick has attended the West Lothian Scouts AGM at Torphichen recently and handed out prizes at Livingston Cricket Club. A young member of the Cricket Club is the junior captain for the Scotland Team.

The Scottish Government has now introduced a compulsory training scheme on planning for elected members.

Councillor Fitzpatrick left the meeting following this item of business.

5. Finances:

The bank account stands at £6,658.73.

It has been agreed that the Community Council will pay for the purchase of three banners for Murieston Community Development Trust which will be displayed to publicise the launch of the Trust on 28 October. Cost is £443.33.

Two invoices from Murieston Community Garden will be forwarded.

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 Levenseat Trust have awarded a grant of £26,000. Some match funding will be required by the end of 2024.

The Community Garden has been accepted as a participating charity on the Co-op's Local Community Fund scheme next year.

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

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

Janey Cringean reported.

Murieston Community Development Trust has been awarded a grant of £2,000 by West Lothian Development Trust under the Small Grants Scheme for community engagement, which will be used primarily to finance setting up a pop-up community café.

MCDT has applied unsuccessfully for Community Wealth Building funding under the Placed Based Investment Programme for 2023/24. At the request of the Trust, useful feedback has been given by council officers on the reasons the application was unsuccessful, which will inform the completion of future applications for funding.

The public launch of the Trust will be held on Saturday 28th October from 2 to 4pm in Murieston Village Hall. Invitations have been sent out to local businesses, elected politicians, community groups and residents who have expressed an interest in furthering the aims of the Trust.

The AGM of Murieston Initiative, who manage Murieston Village Hall, is on 25 November.

10. Town Centre Fund:

Nothing to report.

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

Janey Cringean reported.

Data and content have been migrated across to the new website which is now operational -

<http://muriestoncommunitycouncil.org.uk>

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.

The former website will be switched off soon.

The Secretary has notified the Joint Forum of Community Councils in West Lothian, Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian and Lorraine McGrorty, Community Council Liaison Officer of the new website address.

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 to report this month.

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.

Proposed Housing Development at Brucefield / Polbeth

Cruden Homes are proposing a residential development at Brucefield Park West.

Cruden Homes have held a pre-application public consultation event for this proposed development at Polbeth Community Hub on 14 September and will hold a second event on Thursday 26 October, between 4pm and 7pm.

Consultation on the next West Lothian Local Development Plan

An informal 'drop-in' event was hosted by the Council's Development Planning and Environment team on Monday 2 October at the Civic Centre as part of the initial engagement with local communities on the forthcoming West Lothian Local Development Plan, LDP 2. The Council will call for Ideas / Expressions of Interest in Q1/Q2 2024, following which developers will submit their proposals for housing etc.

Other

Ian has a provisional estimate of £1,800 from the Council to install a power line from a lighting column to the centre circle at the station car park. This would facilitate lighting on a Christmas tree in the centre circle. Other costs to be considered are purchasing a semi-mature Korean Fir tree at £800 and a steel bench at £2,000. Ian has a meeting with Ross Contractors to obtain a quote for the erection of a suitable tree. A financial assessment for providing these facilities may then be prepared but no proposal will proceed unless and until funds are available for this purpose.

Planning Democracy are holding an open day on Thursday 2 November.

14. Correspondence:

None.

15. Any Other Business:

The Secretary contacted East Calder and District Community Council to enquire 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 some 10 months. No response has been received to date.

The signage on the traffic island beside Skivo Wynd has been damaged.

The Meeting closed at 8.15pm.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 16 November in the Staff Room at Williamston Primary School.