

MURIESTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 23 JUNE 2022
held online via Zoom at 7 pm
web: <http://murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk>

An Ordinary meeting of Murieston Community Council continued after the 2021/2022 AGM was concluded.

This meeting was held on Thursday 23 June 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 guidelines.

1. Present:

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

Apologies:

Carol Hallesy; Councillor Peter Heggie, Councillor Maria MacAulay

Residents: Janey Cringean, Ken Kirk, Mark Robbie, John Sharp

2. Minutes of the Meeting on 26 May 2022:

Acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting on 26 May 2022 was proposed by Chris Dryden and seconded by Arthur Marris, subject to a minor change. Carried nem con.

3. Matters Arising:

None

4. Finances:

Arthur Marris reported.

Current bank balance is £3,210.84. This includes £650.77 balance from Defibrillator and Community Gardens expenditure.

5. Councillors' Reports:

Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

Councillor Fitzpatrick noted that Brian Johnston, Chair of Livingston Village Community Council has died.

The roadworks on Murieston Road are going ahead now.

Shopping trolleys abandoned in the area are now being recovered.

Council officers are assisting Murieston United Football Club to consider options to replace the 3G pitch at Bankton Mains Park.

Members of the public have raised issues with the water supply. This is a matter for Scottish Water, not the Council.

Primary school children will receive a free commemorative book to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The proposed new National Planning Framework guidance has been delayed and there is no indication of the publication date. Councillor Fitzpatrick has written to the Planning Minister to ask that it is expedited.

The Council ecology team is working with their counterparts in the City of Edinburgh Council.

Locally, they have been installing Swift boxes.

The Council budget will flatline over the next 5 years, though Westminster has voted an increased administrative stipend.

National care service

Councillor Fitzpatrick outlined that he has been re-elected to lead a minority Labour-led administration.

Kevin Kerr asked if Murieston Road will be resurfaced from the bend to Murieston Park. Councillor Fitzpatrick said there is no timeframe for the full resurfacing.

Ken Kirk noted the new proposed bus stop on Murieston Road is on the wrong side of the road for the current bus service. Councillor Fitzpatrick said he will follow up.

Nick Lansdell reported that work has started on one of the two new pedestrian refuges. The connection to the existing path should also be made as part of this work.

Councillor Moira Shemilt

Councillor Shemilt has provided a written report, included below.

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1. West Lothian Council Administration

In the May Local Elections in 2022, the following seats were returned to council.

SNP: 15 seats (+2);
Lab: 12 seats (nc)
Con: 4 seats (-3)
Ind: 1 seat (nc)
LD: 1 seat (+1)

All Executive councillor positions (which accrue a higher remuneration) have been given to Labour and Conservative and Unionist councillors. Depute Provost role has been taken up by a Conservative and Unionist Councillor, from Livingston South.

The decision-making body, the Council Executive, is now made up of:

7 Labour
2 Conservative and Unionist
1 Liberal Democrat
3 SNP

The SNP accrued 37.9% of the total vote share in the May elections.

2. Wellhead Development

Issues to do with the above development are ongoing. The resolution to the bin problem – that is re. complaints being lodged about bins being dragged across the strip of grass that runs alongside Murieston Road and deposited on the pavement – has not been to the advantage of the householder who lives adjacent to the bin collection point.

Persistence by WLC has led to some replanting of the broken trees and a low lying fence bordering the hedge. However, residents asked for a fence similar to that which surrounds the SUDS and there is little hope that jumping over the fence to access Murieston Road will cease.

3. Resurfacing Murieston Road

The re-surfacing which has recently taken place on Murieston Road was undertaken by the developers (Bellway) and part funded by the council. They were working on the area where a new sewer was laid between Murieston Grove and no 27 Murieston Road. A small length of Murieston Drive was also be resurfaced. WLC envisages this being phase 1 of the works to Murieston Road.

It is the council's intention to undertake a second phase of resurfacing to the remainder of the road. Due to the scale of the works this will have to be funded from the capital programme and WLC is not yet able to provide a timescale for this.

4. Murieston Trail

It is some considerable time since Nick Lansdell and Ken Kirk raised the issue of the broken boards on the boardwalk on Murieston Trail. Their raising this led to my meeting with council officers and Ian Jeffray from MEG in June last year. The officer agreed that the board needed fixing and work was carried out. However, we were interested in the longer term aims for the sustainability of the Trail. To this end Arthur Marris and I met with council rangers in February of this year. This meeting led to the decision to use £5000 COVID money to fill in potholes on the core path, and fixing of some drainage problems on the short section of the boardwalk.

In the aftermath of these interventions, WLC recognises that a section of the boardwalk which includes a bridge that crosses the water course has been deemed to be unsafe due to a number of

loose and/or rotten timber boards. Beyond the bridge there is a further section where a large number of the timbers has been inspected and need to be replaced.

Emergency repairs have again been undertaken and WLC staff are now arranging for the longer-term repairs to be undertaken. This will involve replacing and upgrading some sections of the wooden boardwalk. The 60,000 allocated funding will also be used to undertake pot holes repairs and to repair any damage to the whin dust footpath along the trail. It is planned that this work will be carried out in late summer as soon as a contractor is available.

Thank you to Ken and Nick, who first raised the boardwalk issues with the Community Council.

5. Current Murieston Constituent Issues

- Maintenance of Bankton Mains Park. Complaints about the area which runs from the rear of Williamston Primary to Bellsquarry Woods, stating that it is by far the worst that it has ever looked in 30 years. That the area from Williamston Primary towards the underpass appears to have been forgotten about, according to constituents.
- The condition of the steps from Bankton Drive to Bankton Mains. Rain water does not run off the steps in winter and when it is icy, these steps are apparently a death trap.
- Accessibility for wheelchair and mobility scooter users; barrier directly opposite Robin's Lane on Murieston West Road. This barrier precludes access to the lane that runs between East and West Bankton Place to wheelchair and mobility scooter users.
- Strip of woodland that runs along Murieston Water at the rear of Skivo Wynd. Privately owned and has been used for recreational purposes. Fire pit and benches installed. Local groups such as scouts been able to use the site. Since lockdown, the site has been subjected to anti-social behaviour. Owners forced to remove benches and firepit. Local residents' bins have been stolen and set on fire. Owner, has been collecting smashed bottles, cans, used condoms, drug paraphernalia, axes and clearing up fires.

The issue isn't a council one as private land. I have been in contact with Police Scotland and the Youth Action Project about the issues raised.

6. Car Park Changes to Williamston Primary

For some considerable time, the traffic situation around Williamston school has become increasingly untenable, with the safety of children becoming an increasing concern. Staff have been finding it difficult to access the school and leaving area due to the volume of parents and carers using the drop off area. From August 2022, the Parent Council, in conjunction with council officers, have issued a new directive for parking to parents of children at the school. Parents and carers will no longer be able to use the car park to drop off children. Apart from between 8.00 and 8.30 in the morning for breakfast club. Parents are being encouraged to park cars at Bankton Mains Pavilion, the shopping area car park or the train station car park and walk their children to school.

7. Blue and Green Bins

Due to several factors, WLC has been having difficulty with the roll out of the new green bins. I have received many complaints about this and so, seemingly, has the council. There are several staff on long term absence, too much work and not enough staff.

The issues I have received have been:

- Blue bin collections cancelled during the jubilee weekend and, therefore, not due to be collected until 1 July
- Council collecting green bins along with brown bins before blue ones
- Not everyone has received a green bin
- Point of the green bin was to ensure better recycling of uncontaminated materials but the cancellation of the blue bin meant that people were using the green bin as their blue bin was full

- There have been so many complaints that elected members have been asked to direct constituents to make a complaint through the council portal.

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

Arthur Marris reported.

A small garden has now been created at the Livingston Cricket Club by Scouts and Beavers.

Councillor Fitzpatrick left at this point of the meeting to attend to other business.

7. Murieston Community Development Trust (MCDT):

Davidson McQuarrie reported.

The MCDT steering group met on 2 June to review plans for setting up and promoting the Trust, as Covid may be receding. The steering group will be setting up a new Facebook page and publicising the Trust at the Cricket Club's Gala and Family Day on Saturday 3 September.

The Community Action Plan can be viewed at :-

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

8. Town Centre Fund:

Davidson McQuarrie reported.

On 14 June, Livingston South LAC approved £9155 for Murieston Community Garden Phase 2 (Sensory Garden & Storage Facilities). This is the maximum allocation available for Murieston in the current round of the Town Centre Capital Fund 2022-23.

9. Murieston Community Garden (MCG):

Dr. Janey Cringean, President of Murieston Community Garden association updated the meeting. With the grant from the latest round of the Town Centre Capital Fund, the gardening group will start phase 2 of their plan for a sensory garden and storage facilities at the community garden beside the station. Subject to funds, the group will be creating a sensory garden with pergola, erecting a shed, creating raised beds, making a paved area for the public social area at the front, laying paths. They also intend purchasing a flat pack shipping container.

The MCG group has to date created two raised beds, planted 420 saplings and bushes, planted wildflower seeds, potatoes and strawberries, erected climbing frames and built compost bins. They have promoted the MCG via a new website, programme plan, social media and have garnered £2,000 in grants.

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

Community advice is posted on the community website.

11. Livingston South Local Area Committee

Davidson McQuarrie reported above on the LAC held on 14 June re. the Town Centre Fund.

12. COVID Issues

Kevin Kerr noted there is another spike in COVID cases. Staff at Murieston Medical Practice have also been affected.

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 advised there are no new planning applications and gave an update on ongoing planning matters.

Tarbert Drive

A fresh planning application has been made by a new developer for 18 houses on the site. The design and footprints of the houses have changed. The Planning Service has asked Fairhurst to review the Remediation Strategy produced earlier for the previous planning application.

In due course, the application will go to the Development Committee for decision.

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

The new turbines and blades will be transported through Livingston for construction at Longhill Burn. Roundabouts are being modified where necessary to accommodate the exceptionally long loads. The cable pulling through the newly built conduits will take place in July.

14. Correspondence:

None.

15. Any Other Business:

Nick Lansdell noted that there is a need for a larger litter bin at the bus stop on Murieston Road. Councillor Shemilt agreed to raise this with Council officers.

The Meeting closed at 8.40 pm

The next meeting will be in September.