

MURIESTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 29 JUNE 2021
held online via Zoom at 7 pm
web: <http://murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk>

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

This meeting was held on Tuesday 29 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:

Arthur Marris, Ian Brown, Davidson McQuarrie, Lorna Cooper; Nick Lansdell; Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Councillor Moira Shemilt

Apologies:

Chris Dryden, Carol Hallesy, Tania Armstrong, Kevin Kerr

Residents: Ken Kirk, John Sharp

Arthur Marris acted as Chair at tonight's online meeting

2. Minutes of the Meeting on 20 May 2021:

Acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting on 20 May 2021 was proposed by Arthur Marris and seconded by Ian Brown. Carried.

3. Matters Arising:

None.

4. Finances:

Arthur Marris reported.

The bank balance is £36,700.72 currently. This includes publicly derived grants which are funded from the Town Centre Capital Grants Fund for two community projects to provide community gardens and community noticeboard (£41,499 grants in total).

5. Councillors' Reports:

Councillor Moira Shemilt

The Council is considering a recent report by Audit Scotland on improving outcomes through educational achievement to address the poverty-related attainment gap exacerbated by Covid-19. There will be a reduction of £700,000 in the Social Care budget, including a cut for overnight support. Seven care homes will have revised management and staff rotas.

Households will have a new green bin by next summer to reduce cross-contamination of recycled waste.

Work on replacing the roof of the Lanthorn is going well.

The Council is running a programme for disadvantaged children during the school holidays.

The River Almond Action Group has met with all the stakeholders present, including Scottish Water, to progress action on the contamination of the river by the discharge of waste water. Angela Constance MSP and Hannah Bardell MP co-chaired. £30 million is to be invested at the seven water treatment plants on the River Almond to improve the water quality to good status by 2027, in line with the Water Framework Directive.

Ian Brown asked whether the application was being approved for a section of the River Almond to become officially designated bathing waters and what action is the Forth Rivers Trust taking to sample current fish stocks. Councillor Shemilt will follow up these points.

Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

The Council Executive considered the report on water quality of River Almond last week.

The water treatment works on the River Almond are over 50 years old. Scottish Government, Scottish Water and SEPA are responsible for maintaining water quality. The Council has passed a motion that the First Minister accelerates the timescale with immediate effect as the current timescale to 2027 to deal with this serious pollution problem is too long.

The Council commissioned a survey on the condition of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) lightweight concrete roof planks in The Lanthorn Centre which has identified significant structural issues.

At the full Council meeting last Tuesday, an allocation of £3.3 million was approved for the

replacement of the roof of the Lanthorn. The Council will write to all other Scottish local authorities to publicise this problem with RAAC roof planks, which affects other public buildings across the UK.

Some 83% of waste due for recycling is re-directed instead to landfill due to cross-contamination. Twin-stream recycling is being introduced next year to prevent this problem. Households will get a new green bin which will be used for metal and plastic waste, with the existing blue bin confined to waste paper.

Two thirds of available social housing is currently being allocated to the homeless. This is a direction of the Scottish Government.

The Council has prepared a draft Gaelic Language Plan to 2024 within the framework of the Gaelic Language Act.

Nelson Park in Armadale has been chosen as West Lothian's site for the Queen's Green Canopy UK-wide tree planting initiative launched to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee next year. The Council will plant trees such as willow and alder on the 1.4ha site.

The Council is currently surveying woodland to identify three ancient trees to be put to the Palace. Some trees have been felled between Birrell Gardens and Bankton Terrace. A TPO is now in place.

The run-off from the SUDS scheme at the new Wellhead Farm estate will drain to the river.

The new Council ecology team is now working with expert groups and local community groups. Applications are being invited for capital projects that support community wealth building in West Lothian under a £4.5 million programme intended to support and advance place-based capital investment.

As a result of Scottish Government Covid-19 funding, leveraged by the Barnett formula, the Council has some additional £8 million to fund a number of programmes. This is being allocated to mitigate child poverty and fuel poverty, voluntary sector support, recruitment of care and care at home staff, 10% reduction in school meal prices for the next two years, and employing three ecologists etc.

There has been a 20% increase in domestic abuse incidents during Covid-19 lockdown. There is currently a shortage of social workers.

Safer Neighbourhood Teams have been responding to a surge of bad behaviour in some villages. The COP26 Climate Change Conference at Glasgow in November will impact local policing.

An allocation has been made to fund the staff pay increase, which will be a national settlement.

Ken Kirk asked about the SUDS scheme on the Wellhead Farm estate. A mechanical digger was working there last week. Nick Lansdell said there were now pumps at both ends of the scheme.

Arthur Marris asked whether the stone chips on the station platform embankments would be replaced with shrubbery which had been planted on the embankments before the rebuild of the station. John Sharp noted that the slope of the embankments was too steep for stone chips.

It was agreed that the Secretary will write to ScotRail to request that they replant the embankments with shrubbery.

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

Arthur Marris reported.

There was a recent event to pick up litter at Cambridge Pond.

Nutrient has been building up in the Pond and Graeme Hedger, Council team leader for flood risk management has arranged the unblocking of the outlet 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 Community Development Trust (MCDT) steering group is following the DTAS advice on setting up the Trust as we move out of Covid lockdown. We are drafting Articles of Association to set up a limited company to form the Trust and we will soon be running events 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/>

8. Town Centre Fund for 2019/20:

Ian Brown reported.

The community noticeboard (project MUR02) has now been installed beside the bus stop at the station. This project is now completed. We will need to decide guidelines on what should be posted on the noticeboard concerning the community council and Murieston community generally.

The first phase of the community gardens (project MUR03) beside the station has been completed.

The outer wooden fence and inner steel security fence have been erected, with path and drainage groundwork laid. A community group is now being formed to start work on creating the cultivated garden.

Two benches have been installed in the community meadow on the Murieston Trail.

The two projects funded by the Town Centre Funds are essentially completed.

There is no current update on the council-run project to design and site the map of Livingston at the station carpark (project MUR01).

9. 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/>

10. Livingston South Station:

Davidson McQuarrie reported.

We have been unsuccessful in asking ScotRail to bear the cost of relocating the defibrillator to the station and providing the power supply.

Thanks to the Council, arrangements have been made by Janet Rutherford of Property Services to install the defibrillator beside the ground level lift at the front of the station. Consumables need to be replaced first, then the defibrillator will be registered with the Scottish Ambulance Service on the national The Circuit database. In a medical emergency, ring 999 and supply postcode and What 3 Words location, then the emergency centre operator will give the code to open the cabinet datalock.

11. Community Council Election:

Davidson McQuarrie reported.

Elections are held every 4 years for community councils. Residents of Murieston are welcome to become community councillors and influence decisions that really matter for our area.

The election will be held this autumn and details on how to apply to join Murieston Community Council are explained at www.westlothian.gov.uk/communitycouncils.

Councillor Fitzpatrick left the meeting at the end of this item of business as he is a member of the Development Management Committee.

12. Planning Applications:

Ian Brown reported.

The Council is now holding meetings online via Cisco Webex, including statutory planning meetings.

Wellhead Farm

A substantial number of houses are now built so planning conditions should now be enforced.

The pedestrian refuge on Murieston Road beside Bankton Court should be built when the first 100 houses are occupied.

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

We are still awaiting the Construction Plan. Our concerns also include the need for a risk assessment of the SUDS scheme.

Snack Kiosk at Bankton Mains Park (ref. 0498/FUL/21)

The earlier planning application for a snack takeaway within Bankton Mains Park was withdrawn and then superseded by a proposal to site the kiosk in the car park. This has now been granted for a temporary period of two years.

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

There is no update so far on the routing of the power cabling from the Longhill Burn windfarm to the Lizzie Brice substation.

Camilty Windfarm (ref. 0320/FUL/21)

The planning application made in March to install 6 wind turbines is now with the Development Management Committee for their decision.

13. Correspondence:

None.

14. Any Other Business:

Ken Kirk noted that parts of the wooden boardwalk on Murieston Trail need repairs.

The Meeting closed at 8.55pm

The next Community Council meeting will held *online* in September after the summer break.