

MURIESTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING ON 8 NOVEMBER 2018
held at Williamston Primary School at 7 pm
web: <http://murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk>

1. Present:

Carol Hallesy, Chris Dryden, Ian Brown, Ron Skirving, Davidson McQuarrie, David Cooper, Lorna Cooper, Kevin Kerr, Frank Mustard; Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Councillor Moira Shemilt; Sgt. Alan McMahon

Apologies: Arthur Marris, Tania Armstrong, Nick Lansdell

Residents: Peter Robertson

Carol Hallesy, as Vice-Chair, assumed Chair tonight as Chris Dryden was attending a prior appointment for the first half of tonight's meeting

2. Minutes of the Meeting on 11 October 2018:

Acceptance of the minutes of the meeting on 11 October was proposed by Frank Mustard and seconded by David Cooper. Carried.

3. Matters Arising:

None.

4. Finances:

There has been some limited expenditure to cover expenses for the recent litter pick.

5. Councillors' Reports:

Councillor Moira Shemilt:

Councillor Shemilt gave a report.

Councillor Shemilt attended the remembrance service earlier today.

St. John's Hospital will be providing a new elective surgery service in 2020 which will cover short stays up to 24 hours.

A constituent has complained that they were unable to use the Co-op carpark as it was been used as an overspill from the station carpark. Councillor Shemilt advised she has had a meeting with Council transport staff to review options for increasing parking capacity at the station, but no money is available in the capital budget for this.

A mature beech tree at Rothes Drive on Murieston Trail needs to be felled as it is infested with honey fungus.

Councillor Shemilt attended a COSLA conference last week on the topic of women in politics. Only 29% of councillors and 35% of MSPs are women. The target is to reach a balance of 50% of political representation by women in national and local politics.

Councillor Shemilt has contacted Network Rail on the need for more shelters on the station platforms. Network Rail confirm more shelters will be installed further down the platforms as part of the upgrade.

Frank Mustard referred to a lighting unit at Dedridge library which had fallen down and left lying for about two months. There is also some broken fencing. Councillor Shemilt said she would follow up.

Councillor Peter Johnston is continuing to make a steady recovery, with no date set for a return to council duties.

Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick:

Councillor Fitzpatrick gave a report.

Councillor Fitzpatrick had been unable to attend the recent litter pick as he had been dealing with an issue regarding teachers pay.

The official opening of the new West Calder High School took place today. Gordon Brown opened the school in his capacity as the United Nations Special Envoy on Global Education.

The Council has signed the John Muir Way Concordat.

Councillor Fitzpatrick attended Neil Hoggs Foundation which is linked to West Lothian College. The Foundation works on a covenant basis with the armed services.

Councillor Fitzpatrick has also attended :- Event for the Armed Services Reserves, West Lothian Garden Awards, S4 pupils forum, and AGM for the Carers of West Lothian.

A new cycle map covering cycle routes in West Lothian is available, costing £6.75.

A new strategic planning policy for the countryside is being adopted.

The Paediatrics Unit at St. John's Hospital will not be providing an overnight service for the foreseeable future. There is an arrangement for parents of sick children to be reimbursed taxi fares when they have to travel outwith the hours the Unit operates.

6. Community Policing:

Sergeant Alan McMahon, who covers community policing in Livingston North Ward, has attended tonight to provide an update on local policing.

There were 45 calls in October, including 4 crimes in Murieston, and the recent break-in at the Co-op store.

Peter Robertson noted that learner drivers are frequently using Murieston Valley as part of their route.

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

Nothing to report.

8. Litter Pick

Lorna Cooper reported on the litter pick held jointly with MEG on Sunday 28 October.

Lorna expressed thanks on behalf of the Community Council to the Co-op for again providing tea, coffee and biscuits for refreshments after the litter pick, Arthur Marris from MEG for making arrangements and publicising the event on Facebook, and to Jenny Anderson for hosting the event at Livingston Cricket Club.

Some twenty volunteers had attended, which was a smaller number than usual. The litter pick had been arranged at relatively short notice and no posters had been put up to publicise it.

It was agreed that the next litter pick would be held in the Spring and the date would be decided well in advance.

Carol Hallesy expressed thanks on behalf of the Community Council to Lorna Cooper for organising the litter pick.

9. Murieston Development Trust (MDT):

Following the update from Helen Mackie at the last meeting, the Community Council executive will be meeting with members of the MDT steering committee next Thursday at Livingston Cricket Club to consider options for establishing the Trust. .

10. Windfarms:

Ian Brown reported.

EDF Energy Renewables intend to start constructing the Camilty Windfarm soon.

It is estimated that community benefits of £154,000 will be available annually for communities in this part of West Lothian, starting in 2019 – 2020.

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

Ron Skirving reported.

There are now 500 subscribers to the newsletter. Two emails have been sent to publicise the litter pick.

Ron said he would be standing down as editor of the newsletter and website webmaster as he is unable to devote sufficient time due to other commitments.

12. Community Garden and Allotments:

Nothing to report.

13. Livingston South Station:

Ian Brown reported.

Network Rail advise that the overhead cabling is now completed and the line will be electrified shortly. Work on erecting the twin lift tower bases should start over the next three weekends.

Peter Robertson asked what provision is made for landscaping and making good afterwards. Ian Brown confirmed that the Council Property Services will be responsible for landscaping areas adjacent to the station. Ian has written to Property Services to request semi-mature trees are planted. A trial bed has been planted.

Lorna Cooper asked when the stairs could be used as they appear complete. Network Rail have not advised a date yet.

We have asked for a representative from Network Rail to attend one of our meetings but this has not been confirmed yet.

14. Planning Applications:

Ian Brown reported.

Ian has submitted a letter of objection regarding the planning application to build 12 lodges and 4 bedroom annexe at Bankton House Hotel (Ref. 0955/FUL/18). Eighteen objections have been lodged to date. The Planning Service has asked for a flooding risk assessment, in line with SEPA guidance.

A Matters Specified in Conditions application has been submitted on behalf of Walker and Bellway Homes to build 280 houses at Wellhead Farm, including roads, parking, SUDS, landscaping and associated works (922/MS/18). This has now attracted 148 objections. SEPA have objected concerning the proposals for SUDS drainage etc. A Section 75 agreement for planning gain is being

negotiated with the Council. The full Council will determine the planning application. The planning application by Cruden Homes to build 18 houses on the land behind Tarbert Drive (0927/FUL/18) has attracted 81 objections. The application will go before the full Council for decision.

A meeting has been arranged at the suggestion of the Community Council to review security at the Co-op store following recent break-ins. The meeting attended by the Co-op area manager, managers from the Co-operative Group, councillors and a Council planner agreed a possible technical solution which they will progress.

15. Correspondence:

None.

16. Any Other Business:

Ian Brown reported that the timetable information terminals at the bus station were not working. They have been out of order for an unacceptable period of months.

David Cooper asked if there has been any feedback from the Woodland Trust re. their planning application to fell diseased trees in Williamston Wood (0575/TPO/18). The Secretary confirmed there has been no feedback so far, but we had been advised originally at the September meeting that it would take up to 6 weeks for Forest Research to complete analysis of samples.

Frank Mustard reported that barriers have been left at the bend of Murieston Road after the recent work to fell trees. Councillor Shemilt agreed to follow up.

Peter Robertson raised an issue about maintenance charges imposed by Scottish Greenbelt for the maintenance of shared ground in Murieston Valley. Monthly charges have been increasing regularly. Peter asked if the Community Council can identify the original planning application by Bett Homes to check if the grounds maintenance agreement with Scottish Greenbelt was part of the original planning application. There is a legal requirement for 60 – 70% of residents engaging with the factoring agreement to opt out before it can be cancelled. Peter has also written to Angela Constance, MSP for advice.

The Meeting closed at 8.50pm

The next Community Council meeting will be on Thursday 13 December 2018 at 7 pm in the Staff Room at Williamston Primary School.