



**Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council Meeting on  
Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2016 in the Burgh Halls at 7.30pm.**

**Present:** Chair Martin Crook (MC), Pamela Barnes (PB), Ian Kelly (IK), John Kelly (JK), Fraser Falconer (FF), Fiona Low (FL), Marie McCormack (MM), Des Martin (DM), Scott Oliver (SO), Ron Smith (RS), Verena Throp (VT), Mike Vickers (MV), Councillor Tom Kerr (TK) Police Scotland – Andrew Murray (AM), West Lothian Council - Phyllis McFadyen (PM) & Ann Marie Carr (AMC) and 3 members of the public.

**Apologies:** Councillor Tom Conn (TC), Councillor David Tait (DT)

**Declarations of interest:** no new declarations of interest noted.

**(1) Minutes of previous meeting on Tuesday 27th September 2016.** These were approved and proposed by SO and seconded by RS.

**(2) Actions from previous meetings not covered elsewhere on the agenda**

Ref:	Action and By whom	Current status
1602/02	Town Coat of Arms  <b>JK</b>	The Cost of Arms has been received. Arrangements for the formal handing over of the Arms have yet to be made. Item carried forward to November meeting.
1603/01	JK suggested applying for a 'Special Project Grant' for West Lothian Council to support the cost of the survey – Action 1603/001.  <b>MC</b>	Special Project Grant has been submitted to Lorraine McGrorty. <b>October update</b> – no information received as yet therefore keep action option. MC to contact Lorraine McGrorty. Item carried forward to November meeting.
1606/01	JK to investigate whether number plate recognition cameras and information boards breached the planning regulations.  <b>JK</b>	JK has written to Chris Norman and has received a reply which will be circulated. Item closed.

**(3) Spotlight Sessions**

3a. West Lothian Housing Policy. AMC explained the West Lothian housing allocation policy as follows:

- (a) Housing allocation is governed by regulations issued by the Scottish Government and although the local authority does have some autonomy the general principles must adhere to the regulations.
- (b) In 2001 the law changed to include, for example, local connections and housing need. Preference is to be given to groups namely; the homeless, those in overcrowded accommodation, those in poorer accommodation. Anyone can apply for housing if they are over 16.
- (c) In West Lothian the assessment is based on a needs points-based system and groups.
- (d) Rent arrears of less than one month in a 12 month period will not stop an offer of housing. If rent arrears are more than one month's rent then the tenant will be required to pay back the debt through an adjusted rent and will be required to do so for a three month period or more.
- (e) The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 has been introduced which brings in new regulations in relation to housing allocations. West Lothian Council's allocation Policy is reflective of legislation changes which required a consultation process with residents before changes to the policy were made.

- (f) Applicants for council housing are assessed and placed in a group based on their needs. The five groups are:
  - (i) Homeless
  - (ii) People on the West Lothian transfer list
  - (iii) Those who live in unsatisfactory housing for example, have a particular medical need which is not met by their current housing, are overcrowded or under occupying accommodation.
  - (iv) Those who have general needs.
  - (v) Applicants from outwith West Lothian.
- (g) There is legislation covering reasonable preference, for example, those who are under-occupying accommodation i.e. larger than required for their needs.
- (h) The West Lothian system of points allocation goes further than that required by the regulations including for instance preferred area points for a particular area.
- (i) West Lothian has a procedure for suspending offers to applicants, for example if the applicant has a history of antisocial behaviour. Offers may also be suspended to applicants who have refused 2 or 3 offers of housing which meet their needs.
- (j) West Lothian has criteria for preventing offers to those who have become intentionally homeless. Homeless applicants are not given a points award, their priority is by virtue that they are homeless. Homeless applicants are allocated based on date of application. There are 9500 on the housing waiting list.
- (k) West Lothian Council has a transfer led approach when allocating new build. There are approximately 1600 West Lothian Tenants on the transfer list. The availability of new properties is advertised to tenants every quarter through the Tenants News.
- (l) West Lothian has a system of housing support workers who engage with those who are homeless. This system is supported by the social work department. There is scope for the involvement of local community volunteers.
- (m) Young people who are leaving care are transitioned into accommodation. West Lothian has the highest number of homeless people under the age of 25 in Scotland. 46% of homeless people in West Lothian are young people.
- (n) West Lothian Council liaises with other residential social landlords (RSL's) in the maintenance of a common housing register. RSL's in Linlithgow include Westlo Housing Management Ltd, ARK Housing Association (complex needs), Bield Housing and Care (elderly).
- (o) There are options and providers to reflect the changing nature of demand, for example, the higher demand for assisted living.

There followed a number of questions including assistance by community groups in Linlithgow and the issues of antisocial behaviour previously recorded in the minutes of the LLBCC August meeting - extract below:

*The problem of drug dealing and antisocial behaviour at the Vennel flats prompted a lengthy discussion of a wide-ranging number of problems graphically described by two of the residents. DT invited TC and TK to join with him in a meeting with West Lothian Council housing department and the police in order to explicitly discover the nature of the problems and the cause. It was decided to raise the issue of housing policy at September's Community Council meeting.*

Antisocial behaviour was described as a breach of the tenancy agreement. Antisocial behaviour when reported will be referred to the safer neighbourhood team. Tenants engaging in antisocial behaviour will receive three warnings which could be over a number of months. After three warnings all information has to be submitted to the court for appropriate action which may result in an interim or full antisocial behaviour order being granted. If a full anti-social behaviour warning is issued the tenant will be moved to a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy. If the antisocial behaviour continues then there will be an application to the Court to grant an eviction order. The Court will need to satisfy itself that the Council has provided all necessary support to enable the antisocial tenant to reform. An eviction under these circumstances will be followed by a sensitive let.

3c. West Lothian Council use of Glyphosate. This is marketed under the trade name Roundup. MM raised the issue of the continuing use of glyphosate by West Lothian Council and reported that other local authorities have made towns pesticide free. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), a branch of WHO classified Glyphosate as a probable carcinogen in 2015. MM made a "freedom of information" request in May

2016 to ask how much is used and a petition was subsequently launched which currently has 250 signatories. There is anecdotal evidence of unprotected spraying. As Glyphosate has been found to inhibit anaerobic nitrogen fixation in soil there is the possibility that more nitrogen than previously is being leached into Linlithgow Loch. The Linlithgow Loch Management Group is recording pollutants in the Loch. The licence for glyphosate has been extended by the European Commission for 18 months until the European Agency for Chemical Products has given its opinion (expected 2017). At the LLBCC meeting in September TC stated that a report is to be considered by the Environmental PDSP on 1<sup>st</sup> November. TK agreed to follow up this item with WLC officers. Note: Reply received 27/10/16.

*We have been aware of the issues surrounding Glyphosate for a while now, and have reduced the amount used over the past year. We have continued to use it, based on information provided by the Amenity Forum, who are a non-profit making, independent body. For reference, I have attached a copy of their written statement on the re-licencing of the chemical, which was issued in June this year.*

*A number of steps have been taken to reduce usage, these include; piloting the use of alternative approved chemicals and ensuring staff only spot treated areas. These resulted in a 35% reduction in the annual use of Glyphosate. In addition to this we have continued with trials of hot water treatments as an alternative. However, our experience to date is that this methodology is very labour intensive and less effective.*

*We intend reviewing this position should the advice from the amenity forum change, after the findings from the World Health Agency are known.*

*The current product in use is Barclay Gallup and protection measures are dictated by the product label, mainly in relation to Operative's PPE. This is basically the use of gloves, coveralls and rubber boots when applying the chemical.*

#### **(4) Working Group Updates**

- **Planning** – JK referred to the previously circulated planning report and highlighted the following points:
  - Weekly Planning List - The Victoria Hall planning application is to be decided on 28th September. There are 3 objectors speaking.
  - Wilcoxholm: Proposal of application notice for residential development with access, associated Infrastructure works; landscaping and open space (0558/PAC/16). The Planning Forum supports this development in principle provided that the infrastructure improvements described in the Plan for the Future are included as part of the development.
  - Edinburgh airport flightpath consultation: In January Edinburgh airport will come forward with proposals for "lines on the map" which will be put out to the public as the next stage of the airspace change consultation programme. No report has been received of the consultation just completed. The CAA has indicated that they have no power over the decision by Edinburgh Airport to use the GOSAM flightpath (over Linlithgow) as the principle flightpath for jet aircraft departures. This is a change from the previously used TALLA flightpath. Edinburgh Airport could be in contravention of the guidelines for flightpath change but this can only be decided by the Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP Secretary of State for Transport. The issue of the definition of change is fundamental.

**(5) Police Scotland Update** – AM gave a brief summary of police activity over the past month. Of particular concern were:

- (a) The insecurity of the Victoria Hall site. TK to seek advice from building control.
- (b) There have been two house break-ins; at the house in Strawberry Bank thieves had cut glass from a window. The other break-in was at Dovecot Park. The police are issuing leaflets "keep your homes secure". There are simple practical measures such as no wheelie bins under windows. Thieves are travelling in from outside. Car thieves tend to focus on high-value cars stolen to order. Thieves will take advantage of readily accessible car keys, e.g. left on a hall

table behind an unlocked door. There are a number of fraudulent bank notes in circulation, a problem which is likely to get worse as Christmas approaches.

**(6) Treasurer's Report** - IK reported that changes to cheque signatories was progressing slowly. There are a number of payments to be made.

**(7) Any Other Business and questions from the floor** - the following points were raised.

- JK reported that he had been informed that the Rugby Club was double booked for Remembrance Sunday - 13<sup>th</sup> November and therefore it had been necessary to find another venue for the post-parade hospitality. This will take place at St Ninians Criagmailen church hall. Changes will be required to the Temporary Traffic Order. AM stated that he would help with this. JK stated that the cost of the Remembrance Sunday parade would be approximately £400, the amount budgeted for.
- MC confirmed that Verena Throp has resigned from the Community Council. Verena was thanked for her contribution to the Community Council over the years particularly for her work in raising awareness of eating disorders and other addiction issues.

Meeting closed at 9.17 pm.

John Kelly  
28<sup>th</sup> October 2016