



**Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council Meeting on  
Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017 in the Burgh Halls at 19.00.**

**Present:** Chair Martin Crook (MC), John Kelly (JK), Fiona Low (FL), Des Martin (DM), Maire McCormack (MM), Scott Oliver (SO), Ron Smith (RS), Paula Ryans Stokes (PRS), Police Scotland – Andrew Murray (AM), Councillor Tom Kerr (TK), Craig Turnbull - Gazette and 12 members of the public.

**Apologies:** Pamela Barnes (PB), Fraser Falconer (FF), Ian Kelly (IK), Mike Vickers (MV), Police Scotland –Neill Drummond (ND), Councillor Tom Conn (TC), Councillor David Tait (DT),

**Declarations of interest:** No new declarations of interest noted

**1. Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council Meeting Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2017.** Proposed by SO as a true record of the meeting, seconded by MC.

**2. Actions from the March & April meetings.** There were no actions still relevant from the March or April meeting.

**3. Future of St Michael's Hospital<sup>1</sup>.** Lesley Malone (LM) and Elma Birrell (EB) of St Michael's Hospital League of Friends gave a presentation outlining their concerns with regards to the continuing operation of St Michael's hospital. They made the following points:

- LM became aware of bed closures during her father's stay in the hospital when two beds were closed without warning. After speaking to Fiona Hyslop MSP and Jim Forrest the beds were reopened. Jim Forrest is West Lothian Council's Depute Chief Executive (Community Health and Care Partnership).
- More recently eight beds have been closed for health and safety reasons.
- Jim Forrest has reassured LM and EB that there are no plans to close St Michael's hospital.
- LM emphasised that St Michael's is a specialist hospital, one of two in West Lothian providing end of life care. There is no hospice in West Lothian.
- LM and EB are concerned that there are only two staff on permanent contracts, the remainder of the staffing is provided by bank nurses on temporary contracts. This means that patients may see a different nurse every day.
- On Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June there were only 19 beds occupied. This begs the question; when there is a demand for palliative care beds why are not all beds filled?
- NHS Lothian has established a Frailty Hub. It is important that St Michael's hospital is part of the Frailty Hub which currently it is not.

At this point the meeting was opened up for discussion and the following points were made:

- St Michael's hospital is the site of a 24/7 ambulance station. The station is in need of maintenance, for example, there has been no heating in the station for several months. Were the ambulance station to close, the nearest ambulance would be at St John's hospital Livingston.

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<sup>1</sup> Note from West Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership website 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

St Michael's hospital is situated in Linlithgow. The hospital's catering, laundry and maintenance is supplied by St John's Hospital. St Michael's is a 30- bedded mix sex unit comprising of bays and single room accommodation. The patients who are admitted are normally over the age of sixty five, however dependent on patient choice, there are people admitted under the age of sixty five. The Hospital does predominantly provide continuing care to patients in the end stages of their illness, both cancer and non-cancer specific. The Hospital offers a facility for patients to be admitted on a regular basis to allow for a review of their condition and any support or investigations can then be carried out during that admission. The local Linlithgow GP practice is responsible for the routine medical day to day needs of the patients, and the consultant visits to review the patients in a more in-depth review process. Other agencies or departments required are referred to and can be arranged to visit the unit. St Michaels is well supported by volunteers and the league of friends who organise activities, trips, entertainment or if required some one to one time with individuals. This is an essential part of the hospital life to enhance the patient experience. St Michael's also has access to the day hospital facility, which shares the same site.

- If the eight beds were closed for health and safety reasons then what action is being taken to mitigate those reasons such that the eight beds can be reopened?
- The view was expressed that there is a preference at St John's to send elderly patients in need of end of life care to the new Tippethill House Hospital (a 60 bed hospital opened in 2001, situated between Armadale and Whitburn). However, the elderly with families who are local would prefer to be at St Michael's.
- There are concerns, demonstrated by the actions taken by NHS Lothian Board with regards to the children's ward at St John's hospital that decisions may be taken at board level without reference to the community. However it was pointed out that the closure of a hospital will require a consultation.
- Of further concern was the moving of the renamed Linlithgow and District Community Day Care Centre to the Partnership Centre that may have a detrimental impact on St Michael's hospital.
- Councillor Harry Cartmill (Bathgate) is the new WLC representative on the NHS Lothian Health Board.

It was decided that the following action be taken:

- Contact NHS Lothian Board to seek explicit clarification that St Michael's hospital is not destined for closure in the foreseeable future. Further that the staffing situation will be regularised and that the health and safety reasons for the closure of 8 beds will be rectified. Finally, that hard FM maintenance work to the hospital and the ambulance station is expedited.
- A copy to Jim Forrest.

**Action Martin Crook**

**4. Police Report.** AM reported that the Marches had taken place smoothly. There has been some concern with the antisocial use of vehicles in the Linlithgow area in and around the High Street, Falkirk Road, Aldi's car park, Sainsbury's car park and at Mill Road industrial estate. Eight antisocial behaviour tickets have been issued to drivers and one vehicle was seized. There have been continued problems with the use of off-road bikes on the shale bings resulting in a letter drop in Philipstoun. One person has been arrested in connection with the serious assault in the Crown and is awaiting trial.

**5. Chairman's Report.** MC sought the Community Council's approval for two items of expenditure:

- £30 for the sponsorship of the 50th anniversary edition of the Black Bitch magazine.
- Approval for planting expenses incurred by Nick Davis in connection with the planting of the Community Council bed near the station.

Both items of expenditure were unanimously approved.

**6. Secretary's Report.** JK made reference to the secretary's report previously circulated and highlighted the following:

- JK sought the approval of the Community Council for the proposal that JK will assess the relevance to Linlithgow of incoming communication and for those relevant pieces of information seek members comments and/or ask for advice on whether an item should be carried forward to a meeting for discussion. In this way it is proposed to reduce the number of items coming forward for discussion at a Community Council meeting. There was unanimous approval for this approach.
- On the items for discussion this month it was decided to:
  - Approve the idea of cooperating with Lorraine McGrorty in setting up a meeting of the West Lothian Association of Community Councils in the form of a conference. **Action JK**
  - undertake a survey of Linlithgow's defibrillators and their location. **Action CJL**
  - note the road closure from Linlithgow to Dechmont 3<sup>rd</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> July.

**7. Proposed Vennel development:** JK gave a brief introduction to the project based upon the three documents produced for the Development and Transport Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel. The documents describe the aim of the project as being to investigate the potential for generating a capital receipt or a new revenue stream for a number of properties in and around the Vennel which will be surplus to requirements upon the opening of the new Partnership Centre at County buildings. It is proposed by West Lothian Council to undertake an 8 week public consultation on the proposals and the design guidance. The consultation was officially launched on 22 June and will close on 24 August. A request has been made that the closing date extended to 8

September 2017. JK also highlighted the questions listed in the Planning Report previously circulated. It was agreed that these should be sent to Craig McCorrison. **Action JK**

MC proposed a discussion under the headings in the agenda, the first being how do we consult with the community, what is our community engagement plan. During discussion the following were suggested:

- Articles/letters in the Gazette and perhaps letter in the Scotsman
- A Saturday table in the Cross with leaflets and people to discuss.
- Involvement of residents of the Vennel.
- Targeting interest groups.
- Leafleting.
- Social media.
- Door knocking.
- Brass band, tent and barbecue on the grass next to the loch.
- Survey monkey survey of residents.
- Paper-based survey of residents.
- Table in the library.
- A discussion with the BID and local retailers/businesses - what would they like to see in the development?

A number of concerns were articulated namely:

- To what extent are the existing flats likely to be incorporated into the development?
- What exactly does the council propose for the development?
- When is the structural survey of the flats to be undertaken?
- Is this a fishing exercise on the part of West Lothian Council to determine the willingness of developers to develop the site?
- Is West Lothian Council looking to maintain control of the development process?

Finally opportunities were discussed:

- Whether a community asset transfer should be considered.
- The control of the development process.

It was decided to call a Community Council meeting on 4 July 2017 to discuss the above. Note: this meeting will take place at 7:30pm in the education room of the Burgh Halls.

## **8 AOB**

There was no other urgent business to discuss and no further questions from the floor.

Meeting closed 21.00

John Kelly  
Secretary  
28<sup>th</sup> June 2017