



**Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council Meeting
on
Tuesday 28th November 2017 in the Burgh Halls at 19.40.**

Present: Chair Martin Crook (MC), Pamela Barnes (PB), Sue Friel (SF), Tony Harry (AH), Ian Kelly (IK), John Kelly (JK), CJ Lambe (CJL), Maire McCormack (MMcC), Des Martin (DM), Scott Oliver (SO), Gordon Smith (GS), Ron Smith (RS), Mike Vickers (MV), Fraser Falconer (FF), Councillor Tom Kerr (TK) Councillor David Tait (DT), and 27 members of the public.

Apologies: Fiona Low (FL), Mukami McCrum (MMcCrum), Police Scotland – Andrew Murray (AM) and Neill Drummond (ND) , Councillor Tom Conn (TC),

Declarations of interest: No new declarations of interest noted

1. Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council Meeting Tuesday 24th October 2017. The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting; proposed SF and seconded CJL.

2. Matters arising from October meeting.

- a. Consultation “Transforming your Council” (TYC). JK introduced the discussion of the L1 and 31 bus services by outlining the progression of the very short consultation which was launched on the afternoon of 16th October and ended on 12th November. The paper copy of TYC was circulated to every residence in Linlithgow as an insert to the Bulletin which arrived with the advertising which accompanied the Friday post on 20th October. The Community Council discussed the contents of TYC at the meeting held on 24th October. The discussion is recorded in the minutes of that meeting. The Community Council organised a programme of Facebook posts highlighting the importance of engaging with the consultation by making reference to 3 topics, the recycling centre, the local bus services and community policing. A member of the public asked why details of the consultation were not in the Black Bitch; the answer being that because the consultation period was so short there was no Black Bitch published during the consultation period.

The local bus services are under threat if West Lothian Council votes through the suggested cuts to bus subsidies as a part of the TYC proposals to close a £73million shortfall between projected Council expenditure and income over the next five years. Members of the public voiced their concern at the potential withdrawal of services making a number of points:

- The bus is a lifeline, it is the only way many elderly people can get to the shops, to the doctors, to St John’s hospital, and to events in the town.
- It is not just important to the elderly and infirm as many people commute using the bus. One resident stated “I catch the 7.13 bus to my work every day, how do I get to work if there is no bus, I do not drive”.
- The bus is a necessary public service. People structure their lives assuming that the bus is going to continue running, it cannot be closed on a whim. More services are required not less, running in the early morning and the late evening.
- If there is no bus then what in the Council’s view is the alternative?

The bus services in Linlithgow were described as being not just quite commercial and therefore needed the subsidy to continue to provide a necessary social service for those who for various reasons are unable to drive. The buses were reported as being busier as people became used to the recent revision to the timetable in September 2016. A quarter to half full bus was becoming the norm.

A number of comments centred on the need for an accurate survey of usage and information regarding the extent of the subsidy. SF suggested an open day where people could drop in with comments and invite representatives from West Lothian Council. Another suggestion was to collect information on the bus itself.

PB briefly outlined the results of the Phase 1 study and consultation report “Delivering a Better Linlithgow Town Bus Service” which is available on the Community Council website. Details of a survey undertaken are in the report. PB stated that the survey results are still valid. A second study for which funding has been obtained, will be undertaken shortly. This will address an assessment of whether the Linlithgow Community can support a town bus service.

Provost Tom Kerr stated that he had received over 900 emails objecting to the possible closure of the Linlithgow recycling centre and several hundred emails objecting to the potential withdrawal of bus services in Linlithgow. He stated that the cuts would impact all communities in West Lothian and reminded everyone that the cuts would impact all subsidies including those concessions for rail travel.

A member of the public asked whether school buses would be affected but the answer to this was not known.

3. Pedal for Scotland: There had been no opportunity to date for the Linlithgow Community to interact with Pedal for Scotland. One officer of West Lothian Council had attended a meeting with Pedal for Scotland following the 2017 event and had presented a very positive report to the Linlithgow Local Area Committee. Problems have only occurred during the past two years because of the total road closure necessitated by the “Wee Jaunt” children’s event. The majority of the problems with the event can be put under the two headings of communication and rider discipline. The administration of the road closure process was discussed. It was stated that the closure at Linlithgow Bridge was for convenience and had nothing to do with the Wee Jaunt. The question was asked “why is the route through Linlithgow every year?” It was decided to request a meeting with “Pedal for Scotland”.

Action MC

4. Topics for Discussion over the next 6 months: The chair invited suggestions of topics which we should be considering over the next six meetings. The following were put forward:

1. Social/Council Housing construction, allocation and administration.
2. The Vennel Redevelopment.
3. The Council budget.
4. The Local Development Plan & the Reporters statement.
5. The Review of the Planning Act
6. Community Energy, solar co-operatives, etc.
7. Communication

5. Invitation to MP, MSP’s, MEP, etc to attend meetings: MV drew the meeting’s attention to the rules governing the membership of Community Councils which states that “Elected members of the local authority and members of the Scottish, United Kingdom and European Parliaments are ex-officio members of relevant community councils, with no voting rights”. He suggested that we should be inviting all our ex-officio members to attend.

Action JK

4. Remembrance Sunday and Advent Fayre. MC summarised the November events and thanked JK, FL and DM for their work in connection with the Remembrance Sunday Parade, Service and subsequent hospitality. The Advent Fayre remained an “orphan” organisation with an active and effective committee. The torchlight procession and switch on of the Christmas Tree lights drew record crowds. Over 900 torches were sold. The poor quality of the torches was highlighted.

Action MC

5. Police Report. There was no police report.

6. Planning Report. There was no time to discuss the written Planning Report which was deferred.

7. Secretary's Report. There was no time to discuss the written Secretary's Report which was deferred.

8. Treasurer's Report. There was no time to discuss the written Financial Report which was deferred.

9. AOB

- MC confirmed the previous suggestion that future community Council meetings should commence at 7pm. This was agreed commencing with the meeting on 17 December.
- PB stated that she had met with the Chair of the Academy Pupil Council. He stated that they are interested in exploring ways of working with the Community Council. PB sought and received CC support to progress this dialogue.

10. Next meeting. Tuesday 19th December at 7.00pm in the Burgh Halls.

Meeting closed 21.08

John Kelly
Secretary
30th November 2017