

## **LINLITHGOW AND LINLITHGOW BRIDGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL AGM Brief Report of the Year 2017 - 18**

2017 -18 could be considered the year of community consultation.

The year began with the discussion prompted by a paper to West Lothian Council Development and Transport Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel which proposed a project for the sale of a number of properties in and around the Vennel which were considered to be surplus to requirements upon the opening of the new Partnership Centre at County buildings. During the remainder of 2017 an extensive programme of community consultation was undertaken including a BBQ for Vennel residents. An exhibition of what the Vennel might look like was held and an extensive on-line and paper-based questionnaire undertaken. A decision on the Vennel is awaited.

The second big consultation began in October 2017. Entitled Transforming Your Council the consultation drew focus from the potential curtailment of the local bus service and the potential closure of the recycling centre drew extensive comment one in three households commented. The cuts to instrumental music also figured highly in the community debate, a debate which continues. On Tuesday, 13 February West Lothian Council made a decision on the budget.

The draft air quality action plan consultation closed on 4 April 2018. A large number of suggestions were made by the Community Council to the action plan group and these were considered but many are assigned to be investigated further in the long term.

Edinburgh airport launched a proposed new flightpath consultation. Some of the proposals would mean that Linlithgow would be regularly overflown. There was considerable opposition across West Lothian and a decision on the proposals has been delayed by the CAA who are awaiting further information from Edinburgh Airport.

In June we were involved in a debate on the future of St Michael's hospital prompted by a concern by St Michael's Hospital League of Friends following the closure of a number of beds and the fact that only two members of staff were on permanent contracts. During the year there has been a reversal of the situation at St Michael's hospital which is now endowed with permanent staff although the number of beds still remains at 22.

A discussion of the future of the West Lothian Association of Community Councils resulted in a proposal from Linlithgow & Linlithgow Bridge Community Council to relaunch the Association in the form of a biannual conference. The inaugural conference will take place on Friday, 27 April in Livingston under the title of the Joint Forum of West Lothian Community Councils.

In August 2017 there were extensive discussions on the proposal to replace the rose garden with a peace garden. In general, the proposal was welcomed as the peace garden could bring new life to the area notwithstanding the fact that a number of trees need to be removed. This debate of course continues with the submission of the planning application.

The September 2017 meeting gave extensive feedback on the Pedal for Scotland event. The feedback was to be given at a meeting on 24th of October but the Community Council was unable to elicit an invitation from the organisers to the feedback meeting.

200 people signed an online petition objecting to the sale of Annet house and this too was raised at the September meeting.

The Remembrance Sunday parade remains the only event run solely by the Community Council and passed off well in November. Community Council support the Advent Fayre but are no longer the prime organisers of the event. The Advent Fayre too was a great success in terms of the number of people attending

Planning of course takes up considerable Community Council time mostly through the Planning Forum. The consultation on the Planning Bill is complete and should be passed by Parliament before the summer recess. The Linlithgow Plan for the Future was applauded as a fine example of a Community Place Plan by the Minister. The Local Development Plan has been reported on and now only awaits ministerial approval which is expected imminently. The Victoria Hall, Templars Court, The Vennel, the Post Office access ramp, Clarendon Farm Development are some of the many projects discussed and reported on.