



**Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council Meeting
on
Tuesday 23rd January 2018 in the Burgh Halls at 19.00.**

Present: Chair Martin Crook (MC), Pamela Barnes (PB), Sue Friel (SF), John Kelly (JK), CJ Lambe (CJL), Des Martin (DM), Scott Oliver (SO), Katherine Orr (KO), Mukami McCrum (MMcCrum), Ron Smith (RS), Mike Vickers (MV), Fraser Falconer (FF), Councillor Tom Kerr (TK) Councillor Tom Conn (TC), Councillor David Tait (DT), and 4 members of the public.

Apologies: Fiona Low (FL), Maire McCormack (MMcC), Tony Harry (AH), Ian Kelly (IK), Gordon Smith (GS), Paula Ryans Stokes (PRS), Police Scotland – Andrew Murray (AM) and Neill Drummond (ND)

Declarations of interest: No new declarations of interest noted

1. Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council Meeting Tuesday 19th December 2017. The minutes were proposed by SF and seconded by RS and accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

2. Matters arising from December meeting.

Item 6bi	Post Office ramp	JK has taken photos and measurements and sent to DT who will arrange a meeting on site with officers.
Item 6bii	Templars Court	Planning Forum meeting arranged with McCarthy & Stone 1 st Feb. Email sent to Craig McCorriston - awaiting reply
Item 6biii	Vennel & Winchburgh	Email sent to Craig McCorriston - awaiting reply
Item 8	Environment PDSP	DT has forwarded JK email to Karen Marshall – awaiting reply
Item 9	Consultation policy	Email sent to Graham Hope – awaiting reply
Item 10	Housing	Housing report circulated based upon reply from Phyllis McFadyen. Action: Housing Group
Item 11a	Trees at the Cross	Email to Andy Johnson who advises that it is proposed to carry out a limited consultation with residents and businesses that would be directly affected by any trees that were to be replanted. The aim is to carry out the consultation during February and undertake any replanting or slabbing works in March depending on the results on the survey.

3. Reports:

- a. There was no police report.
- b. Planning: JK referred to the written report in the meeting papers and highlighted the following:
 - i. West Port House. 1040/PRE/17 – 2 storey extension. Advised planning application has been made but there are no details on the WLC planning website. Referred to Planning Forum
 - ii. Residential Canal Moorings. 1065/FUL/17 – 4 residential moorings near Preston Road. Concerns over the limited space (no room for a pontoon), electric bollards on the towpath, educational product and no proposals for dealing with soil or grey water waste. Suggested Canal Society be contacted. MV to advise JK of contact. **Action JK & MV**
 - iii. Local Development Plan review. Reply received from minister to be circulated. **Action JK**

- iii. For all other items JK referred members to the written report. An update is being sought from Craig McCorrison on many matters.
- c. Secretary's Report. JK referred to the written report in the meeting papers. It was decided not to participate in the 2018-19 round of bids to the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) Development Fund. As a result of this discussion it was agreed that we should contact Chris Alcorn, Principal Planner, WLC, to request improvement to the cycle/footpath between Bangour Fisheries and Dechmont. PB highlighted the Linlithgow active travel maps. **Action JK**
- d. Treasurer's Report. The written Treasurer's report was presented. JK stated that IK would be seeking bids from groups for their operating costs during the coming financial year. JMK has donated four copies of the Coat of Arms. MC proposed that copies should be framed, one for the Burgh Halls, one for the Provost's office and one for the museum in the Partnership Centre. A proposal to spend £75 for one copy to be framed was made by DM, seconded by SO and unanimously approved. The purchase of a banner from JMK for £25 was proposed by FF, seconded by SF and unanimously approved. RS gave notice that funding may be sought for the reprinting of the perambulation leaflet. Following a brief discussion of the best way to preserve the original Coat of Arms (which is on velum) CJL volunteered to investigate with a conservator its preservation and the best storage solution. **Action CJL**
- e. Chairman's Report. MC to circulate an e-mail asking for members availability for an "away day" evening private meeting on either the 6th or 13th February. **Action MC**
- f. Councillor's report. The opening of the Partnership Centre attracted many appreciative comments.

4. West Lothian Council Budget Discussions: JK introduced the potential closure of the Linlithgow Recycling Centre stating that Linlithgow was one of three recycling centres being considered for closure, the others being Broxburn and Deans. This statement was corrected by TC who confirmed that the closure of Deans had already been agreed and that the site was for sale. TC also stated that the three centres being considered are Linlithgow, Broxburn and Blackburn. This leaves only two recycling centres, Oakbank at Livingston and Whitburn. During a lengthy discussion the following points were made:

- a. DM stated that there are no facts on the operating costs and social value of the recycling centres. Facts must be available before a reasonable judgement can be made. Options should be available, closure is only one option.
- b. SF stated that the recycling centre is intrinsically efficient as people bring and people sort. It is believed that the driver for closure is the financial value of the site.
- c. SO believes that Linlithgow recycling centre is efficient to the point where it is making money.
- d. PB highlighted the very low level of scrutiny undertaken by the Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels as highlighted in the Accounts Commission report.
- e. MV stated that he had attended a number of Council meetings, officers have a lot to do. *Note: The Council meeting at which decisions will be made is 10.00 on Tuesday, 13 February. No papers are available but will become available at <http://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/calendar.asp>*
- f. JK stated that 30% of Linlithgow households had sent an e-mail to Councillors and/or the Community Council objecting to the proposal to close the Linlithgow recycling centre.
- g. TC stated that he was still having discussions with officers, but Scottish government had not yet finalised their budgets.
- h. MMcCrum advised that High St residents only have one grey bin and therefore must use the recycling centre for recycled rubbish.
- i. CJL stated that the scope of for bulky uplifts could be extended.
- j. RS stated that areas in England are specifically asking what residents would like to see in the context of an improving budget situation.
- k. JK advised that the methodology proposed for decision taking in the revenue budget strategy reports presented to the Partnership and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel is mathematically flawed. The method proposes a scoring system against the eight West Lothian priorities which uses ordinal numbers incorrectly.

The second discussion under this heading relates to the potential curtailment of bus subsidies across West Lothian affecting, in Linlithgow, the L1 and the 31 services. MC introduced the discussion by informing the meeting that 531 signatures had been collected online and over 500 collected during two Saturday table events at the Cross and on the buses. A further day on the buses is proposed for 30 January to collect stories from people who are entirely reliant on the bus services for their daily life. During the ensuing discussion the following points were made.

- a. SF stated that the 31 bus is heavily used for people going to appointments at St John's Hospital and that she has been surprised at the level of support for the petition from those who use the 31 bus.
- b. TK stated the bus subsidy is only one part of the total transport subsidy, there is the subsidy for rail travel, and children's travel to school. MK stated that the rail subsidy was a separate argument since the running of the railway is not at risk if West Lothian Council withdraws its subsidy whereas the bus service is most likely to be discontinued if West Lothian Council withdraws its subsidy. TK advised that the qualifying distance for children's subsidised school bus travel will be increased from 2 miles to 3 miles.
- c. PB asked whether community councils on the route of the 31 bus had been contacted. MC advised that all community councils had been contacted but only one reply had been received from Livingston Village Community Council.
- d. A member of the public asked whether the buses will be taken off, re-routed, and/or re-timed. Also, what is the usage of the bus and how many passengers use the concession? Routes changed during the last review and it took a while for passengers to get used to the new service.
- e. It was pointed out that the 31 bus the only service available for people to get to the Sheriff Court in Livingston.
- f. RS asked for more information on the implications of the discontinuation of the two services.
- g. PB stated that buses are the neglected element of the solution to the air quality problem.
- h. CJL made a separate point that the bus stop outside McNicol's has been removed and not replaced.

MC stated that the petition when complete will be delivered to West Lothian Council in accordance with the procedures laid down in the standing orders.

5. Community Council prioritised topics, tasks and groups: JK introduced the topic previously discussed at the November Community Council meeting at which it was decided to reform the groups. After some discussion it was concluded that there should be four groups:

- Planning Forum with membership RS as convener, JK secretary, MC, MV, SF, MM, FF.
- Housing, JK as convenor, MMcCrum, SF, CJL, KO.
- Environment to be confirmed
- Communications SO, PRS, MV.

A number of points were made:

- a. PB suggested that the communications group invite Lorraine McGroarty to a meeting to discuss improving communication with West Lothian Council. MV indicated that currently responses by West Lothian Council are superficial or non-existent when addressing requests for information or points made by the Community Council in consultation and therefore confidence in meaningful communication is currently very low. MV would like to address this topic at the "away day". DT advised the Community Council to use the Local Area Committee. The Community Council should gather information and issues and go along to Local Area Committee meetings.
- b. FF stated that five of the items on the priorities list circulated with the agenda fall within the remit of the environmental group. Also, that this is the year of young people and in our dealings with the various topics we should monitor ourselves in respect of the involvement of young people. There should also be a set of rules governing the work of the groups.
- c. JK suggested that the groups should be task focused such that tasks are set up and completed.

6. AOB.

- a. PB stated that she had met the Academy Pupil Council which is under the supervision of Mrs Dixon, a geography teacher. Young people are interested in being involved in civic organisations and are particularly interested in environmental matters. However, for the Community Council to be more interactive with young people there needs to be a greater emphasis on distributing information through social media.

- b. MV referred to various e-mails in which he advocated the Community Council to be properly funded in a manner similar to Parish Councils in England and District Councils in Norway.
- c. A question from the floor related to the possibility that stone from the Victoria Hall be kept and used for future buildings in the town. It was concluded that it was impractical to ask the demolition contractor to specifically set aside the stone due to the constricted site and logistical problems associated with removing material from the site.
- d. DT had a meeting with Railtrack regarding the pigeon problem at the Preston Road bridge and the problems associated with water leaking from the track down onto the pavement.

7. Next meeting. Tuesday 27th February at 7.00pm in the Burgh Halls.

Meeting closed 21.04

John Kelly
Secretary
2nd February 2018