



**Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council meeting  
on  
Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018 in the Burgh Halls at 19.50.**

**Present:** Chair Des Martin (DM), Pamela Barnes (PB), Sue Friel (SF), Ian Kelly (IK), John Kelly (JK), CJ Lambe (CJL), Maire McCormack (MM), Katherine Orr (KO), Paula Ryans Stokes (PRS), Gordon Smith (GS), Ron Smith (RS), Mike Vickers (MV), Provost Tom Kerr (TK), Councillor David Tait (DT), Derek Halden (DH) and 5 members of the public.

**Apologies:** Martin Crook (MC), Councillor Tom Conn (TC), Fraser Falconer (FF), Scott Oliver (SO), Mukami McCrum (MMcCrum), Police Scotland– Andrew Murray (AM) & Neill Drummond (ND).

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

- 1. Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council meeting 27<sup>th</sup> March 2018.** The minutes were proposed by MV and seconded by RS and accepted as a true record of the meeting.
- 2. Matters arising.** Deferred until the May meeting.
- 3. Linlithgow Bus Services.** PB introduced the work of the bus group and the recent report compiled by Derek Halden. 2016 marked the first threat to the subsidised bus services and led to a campaign to find a compromise solution. The 2018 budgetary proposals for the reduction or abolition of all West Lothian Council bus subsidies highlighted the threat to the L1 and 31 services again. Currently there is one more year of funding. It was decided to ask Derek Halden to complete the Phase 2 study. PB proposed that we set up a travel subgroup which was agreed. **Action PB**

Following PB's introduction DH gave a summary of the phase 2 study and the current situation. DH stated:

- In 2016 bus patronage was not going up as fast as costs and this combined with a reduction in subsidy, due to pressure on budgets, resulted in a reduced L1 bus service. At that time the L1 was very nearly commercial and its sustainable future could have been secured. The L1 subsidy is currently £7000 per month
- The bus survey undertaken in 2016 concluded that without investment decline would continue.
- Linlithgow could have an electric bus service with resident's support.
- In 2016 the council consolidated routes and reduced the hours of the service resulting in a reduction in the number of paying public. The early morning and evening connection with commuter trains has been abandoned.
- Although the general trend is for the reduction in bus usage in some places patronage is growing, Edinburgh being a good example.
- Currently the L1 service is heavily reliant on concessionary passengers who represent the highest proportion of passengers.
- It is recommended that the Linlithgow community do not take on the 31 bus as this is expensive costing £40,000 per month. There can be no financial argument for the retention of the 31 bus however its social demand is particularly high especially for journeys to St John's hospital.
- There is an argument for a dedicated bus from Linlithgow and Bridgend to St John's hospital and Livingston Centre with a very much shorter journey time than that currently experienced.
- Turning to the L1 bus, demand is there, and funding is available for electric buses the question is who is going to raise the funds. It is recommended that we return to a half hourly service running over an extended period of the day connecting with commuter trains and providing after school transport. It

is recommended that the Community Council take the lead and sets up an organisation which contracts with a bus provider.

- If we do this now then we are in a good position if the 31 should be discontinued to extend regular services to Livingston.

In discussion PB stated that we are looking for support to set up a working subgroup. DM stated that we should endorse the proposal for a community run L1 service and we need to link with other support groups such as Transition Linlithgow and boost numbers in the bus group. SF stated that we need to get younger people included in the bus group. PB stated that she will report back on subsequent meetings. DM thanked DH for his time and effort and this was endorsed by MV.

**4. Instrumental music.** TK gave a summary of the Education Executive meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> April which considered the report to withdraw funding for strings and percussion tuition. There was a motion from the Chair to go to consultation to consider four choices. TK's proposed amendment was rejected. Only those pupils receiving tuition and parents of those pupils will be consulted and no other party will be able to contribute to the consultation. The aim is then to report back to the Education Executive on 29<sup>th</sup> May outlining the proposed reductions in service. Charges or savings or a combination of both must result in a reduction in cost of £493,000. TK referred to 2 paragraphs in the paper on how to make savings without chalk and talk services. TK stated that the consultation will include very young people. TK reiterated that in the context of the Transforming Your Council consultation there were more people in his surgery on this issue than any other.

- MM stated that the Children and Young People's Commissioner had written to West Lothian Council to inform them of their duties about consultation with children and young people in decisions affecting them. The letter had been referred to in detail in the meeting. She also noted the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 which places a duty on public bodies to report on the steps it has taken in that period to secure better or further effect of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Given that children's rights were being impacted, she said that an assessment needs to be undertaken. There is a potential discrimination against girls and those who play stringed instruments. MM called for a CRIA assessment.
- SF stated that the performance element is far more important in examinations than the "chalk and talk" element. The natural ability to play will relate to a particular instrument. No-one has addressed this discrimination element.
- PB stated that if there are no strings then there can be no orchestra and queried whether the Joint Forum of West Lothian Community Councils could address this problem.
- MV stated that the existing solution favours schools in towns to the south. TK confirmed that a reduction in strings and percussion tuition is geographically unfair in the context of the schools that offer this tuition.
- PB stated that a consultation was needed but DM stated that the consultation as configured is flawed. MV stated that the consultation is favourable to one solution and needs to be widened to reflect the views of the local community. KO stated that the consultation needs to be presented in a way which is acceptable to young people who may need help in understanding the implications. IK stated that the consultation should be open to everyone. It discriminates against parents of children who are not yet at school yet includes children and parents of children who are school leavers. SF stated that the consultation should reflect the strong views of those who are involved. TK stated that senior officers were working on the consultation now so to influence the process the Community Council must act now. DM reiterated that the consultation must be proper and fair. The question was raised concerning the person to be contacted in respect of the consultation and Elaine Cook's name was mentioned. It was agreed that the Community Council needs to have input.
- PB asked whether the charging idea was the same proposal as had been put forward by parents. TK stated that allowing for free tuition for the 15% who receive free school meals and taking account of the 20% likely to cease instrumental tuition if required to pay a fee then a payment of £354 per annum would recover the total shortfall.
- The next Education Executive is 29<sup>th</sup> of May.
- A member of the public stated that the Community Council should engage with Parent Councils who comprise the focus group. Another member of the public said that this was a consultation with three

possible outcomes, save part and pay nothing, kill it or pay for it which was logically nonsense as the answer could be predicted now.

- PB stated that all community councils should gather together to support the campaign.
- TK said that the motion has been approved and therefore we must move forward from that point. The officers have been instructed to compile the consultation based upon the decision of the Education Executive. The Community Council must therefore contact the 1587 who have been enfranchised.
- DM is suggested that we contact Gordon Struth and Alice Ferguson.
- PB suggested we make a formal complaint of the process.
- Action – JK to write to Elaine Cook, Gordon Struth and Alice Ferguson.

**5. Peace garden** The planning application 0292/FUL/18 was referred to. A member of the public suggested that there should be an environmental assessment. SF joined with the same member of the public stating that this should be a consultation issue and raised the question of whether there would be times when it would not be possible to gain admittance to the garden. MM reiterated the argument for the retention of the three trees one of which was in the property of Historic Environment Scotland who will not sanction the removal of the tree. RS pointed out that none of the trees are within the application area. TK repeated a previous consideration stating that the removal of the trees would permit sunlight into the garden. At the time of the Burgh Halls renovation 70 roses were planted into new soil and 50 died for whatever reason.

DM clarified that no decision has yet been made and the Community Council response is not required until after the next Community Council meeting. TK will contact the chair and ensure that the issues raised will be discussed.

**Action TK**

RS pointed out that there are positive suggestions in the objections which need to be abstracted, consolidated and recorded. RS also confirmed that Burgh Beautiful are not involved and do not have a view although individual members have expressed a view. However, in projects of this type funding depends on community support which must be demonstrated.

**6. Questions from the floor.** A member of the public queried the item in the previous Community Council minutes relating to the refurbishment of lamps at the Partnership Centre. The situation was explained by RS. A further question related to the Christmas lights some of which were still on at the Vennel. TK explained that the lights on the trees have remained on at the request of the BID until the start of British Summer Time. The cost of running the lights for the extended period was estimated to be £17.50.

**7.** MM proposed a vote of thanks to the chair which was endorsed.

The meeting closed at 21.15

John Kelly  
Secretary  
30<sup>th</sup> April 2018