



**Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council Meeting  
on  
Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018 in the Burgh Halls at 19.30.**

**Present:** Chair Martin Crook (MC), Fraser Falconer (FF), Sue Friel (SF), John Kelly (JK), Maire McCormack (MM) Mukami McCrum (MMcCrum), Des Martin (DM), Paula Ryans Stokes (PRS), Gordon Smith (GS), Ron Smith (RS), Mike Vickers (MV), Councillor David Tait (DT) Councillor Tom Kerr (TK) and 12 members of the public.

**Apologies:** Pamela Barnes (PB), Ian Kelly (IK), Tony Harry (AH), Scott Oliver (SO), Councillor Tom Conn (TC), Police Scotland– Andrew Murray (AM) & Neil Hunter (NH)

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

**1. Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council Meeting Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018.** The minutes were proposed by GS and seconded by MV and accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

**2. Matters arising.**

- |         |                         |  |
|---------|-------------------------|--|
| Item 3a | Peace Garden            | The date of the next meeting of the Peace Garden Committee is Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> November. JK to attend in place of GS. A member of the public suggested that the rose garden be left as it is and that an alternative site for the peace garden be found. MC confirmed that the Community Council has no position and will undertake a consultation including the question of alternative sites. |
| Item 3b | Youth Members           | FF has volunteered to attend Pupil Council meetings once a month. SF has compiled an informative poster to be distributed to the Academy, LYPP and other venues frequented by young people. PB will be asked to contact Alice Ferguson, supply pupil council dates to FF and help to distribute the poster. <b>Action PB/SF/FF</b>   |
| Item 3c | Vennel<br>Redevelopment | The previously circulated Options Appraisal has been sent as a bound document to 12 Local Authority, Central Government and Professional bodies. A further 10 copies have been sent by email to local interested parties. The letters and emails asked recipients to support the Community Council's Participation Request to be a member of West Lothian Council's project team.                      |
| Item 3d | Annet House             | JK confirmed that West Lothian Council took notice of title to Annet House in 2010, confirming that Annet House does now belong to West Lothian Council. On the subject of burdens JK undertook to transcribe the entry in the Registers of Scotland and circulate. <b>Action JK</b>   |

**3. Housing.** JK introduced the housing paper previously circulated by referring to West Lothian's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2019 to 2024. The Council has resources in place to complete the 1000 new

build Council houses programme and has approved a further 250 new council houses to be built over the next five years. Linlithgow's share of the 1000 houses is 7 houses and 8 flats at Mill Road. Linlithgow's share of the 250 houses over the next five years is zero. Whilst there is an anticipation of the 14 affordable houses on the proposed Cala estate at Springfield there is no affordable housing anticipated for the Vennel development. West Lothian Council requires payments in accordance with statutory guidance where land transfer at an agreed sum is not suitable. The SHIP assumes that commuted sum income of £200,000 per annum will be received.

The SHIP was consulted with housing associations and developers but not communities. West Lothian Council assumes only one form of tenancy for its housing being social rented council housing. There are many alternative affordable housing models primarily used by housing associations but also by other councils.

A wide-ranging discussion raised several points and questions summarised as:

- The use of the buyback scheme in which owners can sell their house to the Council and become tenants.
- The sale of land by the Council for private development in Linlithgow should be used for the purchase of other sites for affordable housing.
- What is the real demand for affordable housing and what is the size of the need and where is the evidence of that need?
- Fairness to the community of Linlithgow
- Housing for the transitioning of young people from care.
- Developers need to build and wish to build in Linlithgow therefore the Linlithgow housing model should be different to other areas in West Lothian.
- The land value is key, planning controls could be introduced to ensure a fair proportion of the land value is retained for the benefit of the Linlithgow community
- Whilst Linlithgow is attractive to those commuting to Edinburgh and Glasgow, economic development in the town is highly associated with tourism which is typified by lower paid employment. For the town to be sustainable there must be accommodation for workers in lower paid employment to service the town.
- The lack of Council owned land is often used as the argument for not building affordable homes in Linlithgow. Although the Council owns 15 acres at Kettlistoun this has been reserved for a cycling centre although it was stated that the two are not mutually exclusive and innovative thinking is required.

At this point Sharon Gunn of the Rock Trust gave a presentation of the work of the Trust which was formed in 1991 by a group of churches to meet the needs of young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Trust own 15 units which are used to transition young people between the ages of 16 and 21 into accommodation. There are young people on the waiting list. Young people become homeless either when they leave care or due to a breakdown within families.

Many referrals come from West Lothian Council's housing needs officers. Homelessness is critically assessed by West Lothian Council officers. The Rock trust did own property in Linlithgow but found that required support services and bus services were inadequate. The Trust's main focus is therefore on Livingston and Bathgate. The Trust has introduced a new service entitled "Nightstop" which has the aim of reducing the risk of the cycle of homelessness. It relies on host families in the community accommodating vulnerable but low risk young people. The homeless cycle is one where young people continuously move from bed-and-breakfast to hostel to bed-and-breakfast and so on. Those who provide "Nightstop" services will receive training and support. Those you referred to "Nightstop" have been risk assessed. Young people benefit from peer mentoring i.e. those people who have been through the system and can stand as a role model for young people.

A further discussion raised the following points:

- Young people are leaving Linlithgow for more affordable areas in the Falkirk housing area principally Bo'ness, Falkirk and Polmont. The absence of affordable housing is leading to an ageing population in Linlithgow. Those moving into new housing in Linlithgow tend to be older people in higher paid employment.
- There is a disconnect between need and the policies of West Lothian Council in Linlithgow. The current policies are socially destabilising.
- Scrapping of housing benefit for the under 25 is has had a significant impact.

- More could be done by providing "tiny homes" where young people transition into a small home with shared facilities but it remains a home that they can call their own and there is no insistence that they move on. More integration is required between policy and housing models.

At the end of this discussion TK stated that the issues raised were ones of strategic planning and housing allocation. If the Community Council wish to take this further, they need to speak to Officers with different responsibilities within the Council. It was decided to draft questions relating to strategic policy and allocation policy and arrange a meeting with appropriate Council officers. **Action JK**

#### 4. Reports:

- a. **Chairman:** MC had no issues to raise
- b. **Secretary:** JK introduced the written report:
  - (i) The next West Lothian Community Councils Joint Forum will be 12pm to 4pm on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December at Livingston Civic Centre. This is an opportunity to meet members of other Community Councils. All members of the Community Council are invited.
  - (ii) Several TTROs were listed.
- c. **Planning:** JK reported on the following:
  - (i) Several applications have been received for illuminated shop signs in the High St. The West Lothian Council Supplementary Planning Guidance for shopfronts and advertisements in Linlithgow High St forbids illuminated signs. JK queried why the applications were accepted. TK advised that there was nothing to prevent an application being made. It was agreed to oppose the applications. **Action JK**
  - (ii) An application for planning permission in principle for a new house at West Port Cottage has been lodged. West Lothian Council guidance states that "an application for planning permission in principle will not normally be appropriate in a conservation area". It was agreed that the application be opposed pending more detail. **Action JK**
- d. **Treasurer:** IK previously circulated the accounts. There was no verbal report; IK not being in attendance. There were no questions on the treasurer's report.
- e. **Police:** There was no police report

**5. Democracy Matters.** MV presented the draft Community Council response to the Democracy Matters consultation. After discussion it was agreed to reword response 1e. MV to circulate the proposed wording. With this amendment it was agreed to submit the response. **Action MV**  
 MM stated that it was depressing that so many decisions taken by West Lothian Council were taken purely along political lines and referred the meeting to MSP Andy Wightman's Bill entitled "The Fundamental Rights of the Local State" which proposes to incorporate the European Charter of Local Self Government into law in Scotland.

**6. Participation Requests.** A progress report deferred until the next meeting. **Action JK**

**7. AOB and questions from the floor.** There was no further business

**8. Next meeting.** Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30pm in the Burgh Halls.

Meeting closed 21.07

John Kelly  
 Secretary  
 27<sup>th</sup> October 2018