

AGM Report 2018-19

Whereas 2017 – 18 was the year of consultation, 2018 – 19 was the year when the Community Council focused on several topics in part prompted by the outcomes of West Lothian Council's budgetary constraints. In April 2018 the bus group (Linlithgow Community Transport Group) was set up following the very detailed presentation on the current situation of the L1 bus given by Derek Halden. Following a well-attended public meeting the bus group went on to secure up to £27,000 of funding for a multimodal transport appraisal research study which developed into three distinct projects which continue into the current year.

The impact of the West Lothian consultation "Transforming your Council" began with a lengthy discussion of the provision of teaching of instrumental music in schools. A consultation was held only with those parents of pupils receiving tuition. In December it was reported that three options had been considered by West Lothian Council for the future teaching of instrumental music and it had been decided that in-house delivery would be continued but parents (with some exceptions) would be required to pay.

A presentation was made by Alice Ferguson who spoke about her role as MSYP and her focus on trying to get the Universal Rights of the Child enshrined in Scots law. The involvement of young people in the Community Council continues to be difficult.

The continuing debate over the proposed Vennel development was consolidated into several actions. The need for a project was identified at the Development and Transport Policy and Development Scrutiny Panel on 3 April 2017. The Community Council had undertaken a comprehensive public survey consultation and exhibition during the latter part of 2017. A Freedom of Information request was made to West Lothian Council to obtain the document detailing the structural condition of the Cross flats and this was obtained. An option appraisal document was produced by the Planning Forum.

A planning application for a Peace Garden was discussed at several meetings during the year. The Community Council has a representative on the Peace Garden committee.

In September a lengthy discussion took place on the use of glyphosate as chemical weed killer. At the conclusion of the discussion it was decided to adopt the Burgh Beautiful position statement as the Community Council position. Additionally, it was agreed that West Lothian Council operatives should be trained in the proper application of glyphosate and wear appropriate protective clothing. It was also recommended that West Lothian Council should advise communities when spraying is to occur with attention paid to spraying in and near children's play areas.

Following a presentation at the West Lothian Community Council's joint Forum event it was decided to make 2 participation requests under Part Three of the Community Empowerment Act 2015. Request 1 to be represented at the Local Area Committee was unsuccessful. However, such representation is being considered by West Lothian Council Executive after a discussion with the Joint Forum. Request 2 to be represented in discussions on the Vennel redevelopment was approved.

In October discussion began on social housing in Linlithgow prompted by West Lothian's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2019 - 24 which gives details of a further 250 houses to be constructed in West Lothian. No additional council housing is planned for Linlithgow. The debate on social housing in Linlithgow continues with a meeting planned for 25 April 2019.

A discussion of recycling and waste was prompted by a paper presented to the Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on 20 October 2018. The panel recommended a significant reduction in the opening hours of the Linlithgow recycling centre. It was noted that West Lothian Council executive decided to accept and sign the National Charter of household recycling thereby entitling them to a government grant of £1.6 million.

The Planning Forum continues its work in considering a steady stream of planning applications.