



**Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council
Meeting
on
Tuesday 26th May 2020 at 19.30, online.**

Present: Chair Gordon Smith (GS) for opening of meeting, Pamela Barnes (PB), Martin Crook (MC), Fraser Falconer (FF), Joyce Hartley (JH), Ian Kelly (IK), John Kelly (JK), Mike Vickers (MV), Provost Tom Kerr (TK), Councillor Tom Conn (TC), Councillor David Tait (DT) Graeme Grant (observing)

Apologies Scott Oliver (SO), Liam Fraser (LF), Maire McCormack (MMcC), Des Martin (DM), Paula Ryans Stokes (PRS), Ron Smith (RS,) Police Scotland - Andrew Murray (AM) and Peter Robertson (PR).

Welcome GS welcomed Graeme Grant as an observer to the meeting.

Declarations of interest: No new declarations of interest noted

1. Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council Meeting Tuesday 28th April 2020. The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting proposed FF, seconded IK.

2. Matters arising. All matters arising are included in the agenda.

3. Linlithgow Coronavirus Support Group Report. FF confirmed the receipt by LCDT of £32,000 of government funding to coordinate and support the local community response to the pandemic, particularly for groups supporting older, isolated and infirm people, and families and households in need; and also to support and promote good communication across the whole community with local information. This funding is effective immediately to run over the 3 to 4 month period to the end of September. The funding will support PB as Community Coordinator and will support members of various organisations with volunteer development in respect of new skills to deal with the current situation. LCDT is providing help with statutory services. The MyLinlithgow website is the one stop shop for all information. FF stated that as far as the new normal is concerned we don't yet know what that looks like.

PB stated that the Linlithgow Coronavirus Support Group coordinator is Alan Miller who has taken responsibility for recruiting and training over 100 volunteers. With regard to the phone befriending service 12 people have been trained and are ready to take calls. However, there is a low uptake on the service which needs investigation. One of the biggest problems facing voluntary organisations is the failure of people to ask for help for whatever reason. Different organisations are approaching assistance in different ways, for example the Embroidery club recognised problems amongst its members with IT and is addressing

this problem. There are 17 mask makers in the town mass-producing masks available to the community. Linlithgow Link acknowledges that because many of the normal volunteers are in the vulnerable category themselves there is an increased workload on the reduced number of volunteers able to provide service. Several organisations are working with Linlithgow Link to alleviate this problem.

PB reported contact with Elaine Nisbet at West Lothian Council to coordinate work in progress. There is identified need in disadvantaged and deprived families in parts of the town. FF reported that organisations including Linlithgow Link and Linlithgow First Steps are being assisted in the purchase of food staples and the payment of volunteers' expenses. LYPP provide a service for young people in Linlithgow and Bridgend on Facebook and Instagram giving an opportunity for young people to get reassurance and advice and generally chat. Mental health issues are also addressed.

TC reported that the Linlithgow and District Community Day-care Centre has suspended its operation at Tam Dayell house; however, staff are in contact with clients daily and meals are distributed. Initiatives such as online bingo and dominoes have been tried but many clients are missing the personal contact. The day-care centre has given permission to Linlithgow Link to use its minibus.

West Lothian Council has details of all those who are shielding, and it is in touch with all of its tenants.

4. Linlithgow after Covid 19. The minutes of the April meeting recorded an email exchange on the subject of Linlithgow after Covid 19 with common themes of:

- a) the importance of Internet access for all
- b) tourism before and after social distancing has been discontinued
- c) facilitating homeworking and home studying
- d) the future of High Street retailing.

There was a suggestion of a research project to investigate:

- running a business from home
- working from home during Covid 19 for a small business
- working from home during Covid 19 for a large business.

Further to the April minutes FF stated that LCDT are focused on managing the current situation concluding that we do not know what "after Covid 19" looks like. LCDT does not have the capacity to support a forward-looking research project. West Lothian Council currently holds weekly meetings with frontline services and are currently thinking about recovery, a roadmap and community need in recovery.

MV stated that we need to seek the views of the community as a whole to assess what the new normal might look like. There is a need to investigate the good and the bad points of the current situation. MV proposed that a working group be formed. JK supported the idea of scenario planning for Linlithgow. It was agreed that JK would circulate an email to determine the interest in a scenario planning exercise.

Action JK

TC stated that the Scottish government had launched its document “Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making - Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis”. Scottish government directives will feed down to local authorities and onwards to communities. Communities should focus on what is happening on the ground now; it is too soon for a plan. To assess how businesses react to, for example, a traffic free High Street is premature. The new normal maybe working from home; West Lothian Council Civic Centre can only accommodate a fraction of the number of people currently working there with the constraints of social distancing. How education services are to be provided in the future has yet to be fully discussed.

PB stated that it is appropriate for an exercise in determining the capacity of the town to provide support for itself through improved citizenship and neighbourliness.

DT stated that there is a great danger that the Community Council is taking on too much as illustrated by the next item on the agenda progress reports.

5. Progress Reports. JK introduced the statement of progress as recorded in the notes accompanying the agenda. In summary the actions were recorded as:

- a) Local Place Plans – awaiting further action by Scottish government.
- b) National Planning Framework 4 - awaiting draft planning framework later in 2020.
- c) New parking study –Stantec have added the Community Council to the list of stakeholders and will be in touch.
- d) Vennel development – awaiting West Lothian Council invitation to PDSP.
- e) Templars Court front building – awaiting West Lothian Council invitation to inspect building warrant drawings. With regards to the incident of the detachment of a large section of lead flashing from the building adjacent to the site TK informed the meeting that officers were following up the incident which was being dealt with. DT advised the meeting that he had received an assurance from McCarthy and Stone that work to resolve the problem is underway.
- f) Community Council Review Scheme. JK to circulate comments collated by the Joint Forum with an invitation to add further comments. **Action JK**
- g) M9 junction 3 westbound slips. **Action Planning Forum**
- h) Planning application for 49 houses at Westfield. **Action Planning Forum**
- i) House extension design guidance consultation. **Action Planning Forum**
- j) Springfield land sale. No action required at this point
- k) Spaces for People Survey. Closed.

6. Recycling centre opening and grass cutting. TC confirmed that the recycling centre would be opening shortly. Grass cutting operations are currently focused on football pitches and other areas which would require remediation were the operation not to be carried out. Grass cutting within estates will also be underway shortly. JK commented that the grass within estates is now so long that it will require collecting after cutting.

7. Standing Reports. The Treasurers report was the only standing report to be addressed. IK presented the accounts and summarised the current financial situation. Acceptance of the accounts was agreed, proposed by PB and seconded by MV.

8. AOB

TK informed the meeting that the Deacons Court were currently discussing a virtual Marches day. There is no further news on the Gala Day but it is likely that a crowning ceremony will happen later in the year.

9. There being no other business the meeting closed at 21.00

10. Next Meeting - The next meeting of the Community Council is Tuesday, 23rd June 2020

John Kelly, Secretary,
28th May 2020