



**Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council  
on  
Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2020 at 19.30, online.**

**Present:** Chair Gordon Smith (GS), Martin Crook (MC), Fraser Falconer (FF), Graeme Grant (GG), John Kelly (JK) Des Martin (DM), Maire McCormack (MMcC), Paula Ryans Stokes (PRS), Mike Vickers (MV), Provost Tom Kerr (TK), Councillor Tom Conn (TC), Councillor David Tait (DT), Helen Hassel (HH) LCDT, and three members of the public.

**Apologies** Pamela Barnes (PB), Liam Fraser (LF), Joyce Hartley (JH), Ian Kelly (IK), Scott Oliver (SO), Ron Smith (RS,) Police Scotland - Andrew Murray (AM) and Peter Robertson (PR).

**Welcome** GS welcomed the three members of the public attending the first open public meeting.

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

**1. Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council Meeting Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020.** Proposed by MV and seconded by GS

**2. Matters arising.** There were no matters arising not on the agenda.

**3. Health and Wellbeing.** GG introduced his paper by saying that he is a new member of the Community Council and is feeling his way through the Community Council procedures. His interest is in mental health and support for youngsters in the community. During his studies within the past 2 months GG has a list of about 10 organisations, some Linlithgow specific and some West Lothian that are supportive in various ways. One aspect of his investigations, highlighted during a conversation with Katherine Orr of LYPP, is the lack of coordination and in fact knowledge of relevant organisations and their work.

FF stated that LCDT has a wide membership; Katherine Orr is a board member. LCDT has funding which enables weekly calls to key organisations which has determined that mental health, as an issue, is high on the agenda of relevant organisations working in Linlithgow and also in Bridgend. TK also mentioned the work of LYPP in Bridgend. Specifically important is digital inclusion and exclusion especially the myths about young people being inherently computer savvy. LCDT investigations have determined that computer literacy in young people is the same as the general population. Up-to-date communications are not available in every household. Loneliness affects all sections of the population. LCDT weekly newsletter is an important vehicle for communication. The work undertaken by St Michael's Parish Church bank of volunteers has illustrated that mental health and loneliness should be regarded as work in progress. FF recommended that GG contact PB and encouraged GG to continue with this important aspect of Community Council work. **Action GG**

**4. Safer Streets Initiative.** JK referred to note 1 on the agenda in introducing 3 ideas received by email following the article in the LCDT newsletter.

- a) Edinburgh road extend 20 mph zone from rail bridge to canal bridge
- b) Edinburgh road create permanent segregated cycle path on the north side of road from High Port to beyond the canal bridge with adjustment to traffic lights.
- c) Parking should be permanently forbidden between St Michael's Wynd and the Four Marys. However, do not suspend parking between Lion Well Wynd and New Well Wynd but insert permanent bollards to prevent cars pulling too far forwards as illustrated in the photographs.

In responding to this TC advised that several ideas have been put to Highways to enhance the original plans. The timetable for the proposed works has not been finalised. The primary factor affecting the timetable is the inability of suppliers and contractors to react to the sudden demand for signage and other street hardware made by all Scottish local authorities and facilitated by Scottish Government funding. TC also emphasised the fact that the schemes are not permanent; it is anticipated that the safer streets initiative will have a life of about 18 months before review. Any permanent changes to infrastructure will be subject to consultation and the normal formal processes.

Under the heading of safer streets initiative JK suggested that it seemed contradictory to spend money on facilitating social distancing when at the same time retailers in the High Street were cluttering the pavement with outside seating areas, wheelie bins, A boards, etc. JK illustrated this point with photographs of the current outside seating arrangement at Cafébar 1807 which is contrary to their planning permission. TC suggested that sensitive discussions were required with retailers possibly through the BID. TC also stated that consistency was required since the Footballers and Cricketers Arms had also applied for outside seating areas and Highways had once again specified the residual minimum pavement area that was required. TC undertook to take this matter further. **Action TC**

**5. Town Centre Gap Sites.** GS introduced the topic asking whether there was a planning regulation which required owners to maintain gap sites. TK responded stating that it was difficult for the Council to instruct owners to maintain sites awaiting the completion of a planning permission. Sites at Victoria Hall, Edinburgh road and Templars Court were all mentioned. TK stated that loss of public amenity was difficult to measure/enforce. The Council can instruct if the site were dangerous.

## **6. Standing Reports**

- a) **Chairman's report** GS reported on a meeting held on the afternoon of 25<sup>th</sup> August chaired by Liam Fraser who had invited representatives of St Michael's Parish Church, Rotary, BID and the Community Council to discuss a community event at Christmas time. It was concluded that there would be two strands beginning on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November (Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November is the first Sunday in Advent). Strand 1 is an ongoing shop window display initiative and Strand 2 a number of events including the lighting of the Rotary Tree of Light. It was decided that there would be no indoor events, or event drawing crowds and no parades. It was suggested that Strand 1 could major on the use of the display windows at M&Co. TC suggested that the

Community Council contact Property Services to determine whether M&Co were still the leaseholder for the property.

GS advised the meeting of the discussions with Liam Fraser on the form of Remembrance Sunday. As previously confirmed there would be no parade and therefore no post-parade hospitality. It was possible for the Remembrance Sunday service to involve wreath layers only. GS will continue discussions with Liam Fraser. It may be possible that the person responsible for the virtual marches video might be willing to do something similar for Remembrance Sunday. A call would go out for photographs and video of previous years.

Finally GS advised that the community noticeboards at the Vennel and Low Port were due to be refurbished by a local joiner who unfortunately is ill and unlikely to be able to complete the contract. LCDT might wish to consider an alternative contractor to complete the works. JK suggested that the top hung glazed front panel should be replaced with 2 side hung doors which would make the access considerably easier.

- b) Secretary's report** JK referred to the written report included with the meeting papers. A resident had been in touch with the secretary requesting a guide to Linlithgow's civic organisations considered to be; the Community Council, the Town Management group, Linlithgow Community Development Trust, and the Burgh Trust comprising the Civic Trust and Burgh Beautiful. JK suggested 2 paragraphs on each form the basis of an article for the Black Bitch.

JK highlighted the work being undertaken in background to this meeting by Helen Hassall. Helen will be employed by LC DT until the end of October and we therefore have Helen's assistance for the September and the October meeting but not thereafter. Therefore, the Community Council needs to consider who will take over Helen's role for the November and subsequent meetings.

There were no further questions on the secretary's written report.

- c) Treasurer's report** in the absence of the treasurer JK confirmed that there had been no expenditure over the previous month.
- d) Police report.** There was no police report.
- e) Planning report.** JK referred to the written report included with the meeting papers highlighting the following:
- b. (Falkirk) P/20/032/FUL 9 houses at Linlithgow Bridge. JK suggested that the Community Council register its concern over the fact that the residents of these houses will consider themselves to be

residents of Linlithgow and add to the current traffic load passing through the High Street. It may well be the case that residents would expect their children to be educated in Linlithgow schools.

c. 0598/LBC/20 and 0597/FUL/20. 8 flats at the former police station. JK reported that in email exchanges there appeared to be support for this project except for a recommendation that the new building should have a pitched roof rather than a flat roof.

d. Kettilstoun - Appeared on Facebook but refers to the decision by the Scottish Government Reporter to add 210 houses at the Cemex quarry at Kettilstoun. A pre-application event took place on 5 June 2014. JK queried whether this event would be repeated. TK agreed to ask Planning. **Action TK**

*Note: TK reported that legislation only requires that a period of at least 12 weeks must elapse between giving the notice and submitting any such application, so currently there is no pre-defined expiry time. There is no requirement for a further pre-application event.*

e. There were no questions on the planning secretary's written report.

f) **Bus group report.** MC is currently liaising with Derek Halden over the production of the final report.

g) **JFCCWL report.** JK referred to the written report. JK referred to the Scottish Government review of the Town Centre Action Plan. Bathgate Community Council is to review its action plan which prompted the question of where is Linlithgow's action plan? TC said that the only Linlithgow action plan he was aware of was the Linlithgow Public Realm study. TK volunteered to enquire of officers whether this study requires updating. **Action TK**

TK suggested that JK find out who initiated the Bathgate plan. **Action JK**

MV informed the meeting that he understood the Scottish Government review to be one inviting individuals to comment on a Scottish Government study undertaken in 2013. JK to investigate. *Post meeting note. MV is correct.*

MV queried progress on the Joint Forum Blueprint (written report included in the papers for the January 2020 meeting but not discussed). JK reported that meeting had been held with Graham Hope. *Note a meeting was also held with COSLA. Progress is slow.*

**7. AOB & Public Participation Questions.** HH confirmed that she had received no written questions. One member of the public stated that her question had been answered by the discussion on the Safer Streets Initiative. Another member of the public raised an issue of the investigation of a footpath at Preston House Gardens which had led to "weeks and months" of disruption. This matter had been dealt with by West Lothian Council. The

Community Council concurred with the decision of West Lothian Council and the matter was closed in July. An exchange took place with DT who confirmed that his offers of a meeting and a site meeting with a resident had been rebuffed and that in his opinion the matter was closed.

**8. Meeting Close & Next Meeting** GS thanked everyone for their attendance especially the members of the public. The meeting closed at 20.50. The next meeting of the Community Council is Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020.

John Kelly, Secretary  
2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020 (corrected)