



**Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council
on
Tuesday 26th January 2021 at 19.30, online.**

Present: Chair Gordon Smith (GS), Martin Crook (MC), Fraser Falconer (FF), John Kelly (JK), Des Martin (DM), Paula Ryans Stokes (PRS), Mike Vickers (MV), Councillor David Tait (DT), 4 prospective new members, Rafael Facuri (RF), Ky Norton (KN), John Ralph (JR), Margot Watson (MW) and 1 member of the public, Robert Martin (RM).

Apologies Pamela Barnes (PB), Liam Fraser (LF), Joyce Hartley (JH), Graeme Grant (GG), Ian Kelly (IK), Scott Oliver (SO), Ron Smith (RS), Provost Tom Kerr (TK), Councillor Tom Conn (TC), Police Scotland - Andrew Murray (AM) and Peter Robertson (PR).

Welcome GS welcomed all to the meeting. The prospective new members introduced themselves later in the meeting.

Membership and Declarations of interest: JK declared an interest in the item "Springfield trees" being a resident of Springfield.

1. Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council Meeting Tuesday 24th November 2020. Proposed by FF and seconded by MV

2. Matters arising.

a) Vennel redevelopment. For the benefit of the prospective new members JK gave a brief summary of the proposed Vennel redevelopment. JK requested and received Community Council approval to submit the participation request report appended to the agenda. Approval to submit a further participation request was given by the Community Council at the November meeting. JK confirmed that RS, JH, MC and JK would form the participation request team. **Action JK**

As part of the brief summary JK reported a conversation with a representative of Dunedin Canmore, Wheatley Group. FF commented that the interest of Wheatley Group goes well beyond housing and that LCDT would be very keen for them to be involved in any community development. FF will keep JK informed of discussions with West Lothian Council. **Action FF**

b) Smoke detector replacement. At the November meeting JK referred to Scottish Government advice that smoke detectors should be taken to a civic amenity site to be recycled under small mixed WEEE. Councillor Tom Conn confirmed in an email that West Lothian Council will not undertake the recycling of replaced and redundant smoke detectors. JK to go back to Scottish government for advice. **Action JK**

c) Springfield Trees. JK referred to a statement made at the March 2020 Local Area Committee meeting regarding the ownership and responsibility for public landscaped open space in Springfield generally where lack of maintenance is causing some anxiety to residents. Following the statement there has been no further action

by West Lothian Council. DT stated that the issue of the shelter belt trees in the Springfield estate has been a point of some deliberation within West Lothian Council for at least three years. The current position of West Lothian Council is that the trees and open space in the Springfield estate are owned by the “residents in common” and any maintenance work currently carried out by West Lothian Council is being undertaken on an “informal basis”.

- d) Sheriffs Park flooding. DT stated that the email sent to residents by Graeme Struthers, Deputy Chief Executive of West Lothian Council, implied the agreement of all three Councillors to the statements made in the email. This is incorrect. In the opinion of DT understanding the source of the water is of primary importance. The chair invited RM to comment. RM together with his neighbours is experiencing flooding to his property. RM stated that the problem began after heavy rain in August and has continued. RM has purchased a pump rated at 13,500 L per hour which has been running continuously for 10 days following the rain prior to the Community Council meeting. The floodwater is emanating from land adjacent to the Sheriff’s Park properties; the ownership of the land has not been established with certainty. JK stated that his understanding of responsibility in respect of water was, simplistically, that anything coloured blue on an ordnance survey map e.g. tidal water, lochs, rivers and burns is the responsibility of SEPA. Water in pipes, fresh water, drainage and sewerage is the responsibility of Scottish Water. The responsibility of all other surface water from roads, hard surfacing, open space, etc, and its disposal including open water courses rests with the local authority. FF stated that Robin Priestley and Andy Wightman might be useful contacts in determining ownership and responsibility. FF agreed to circulate contact details. **Action FF**
DT stated that he had a meeting with Graeme Struthers on Thursday 28th January and asked for questions to be forwarded to him prior to that meeting.
- e) Participatory Budgeting was discussed at the November meeting, but no action was decided upon. West Lothian Community Choices is West Lothian's version of Participatory Budgeting. West Lothian Council has not notified Community Councils of the budget for participatory budgeting nor of their intended approach. It was decided to ask for details in the first instance through the Joint Forum of Community Councils in West Lothian. **Action JK**

3. Gap sites.

Burgh Beautiful has noted increasing dissatisfaction with the state of the High Street gap sites namely the site at Templars Court and the Victoria Hall site. It is suggested that pressure be brought to bear for the construction of substantial hoardings as these sites are likely to remain vacant for some time. GS stated that this would be discussed at the Town Management Group on 27 January. GS volunteered to report back the conclusion of the discussion. **Action GS**

4. Winter Clearing.

DT stated that the current arrangements for winter clearing had been the subject of some criticism and was the subject of a full West Lothian Council debate earlier in the day (26 January). The debate concluded with an agreement that council officers would be given two weeks to resolve a more flexible plan for winter clearing which would be more closely aligned to the prevailing weather conditions. A two-week exercise would allow an improved approach for the remainder of the current winter

and a more agile approach to winter clearing next winter. KN stated that residents could do more in clearing roads and pavements but this would require more grit bins regularly filled. KN stated that a more formalised self-help approach was required.

5. Standing Reports

- a) Bus Group MC stated that the train funding project has now been pushed out to April 2021 which would give time for Derek Halden to complete the closing report. MC will contact Derek Halden. **Action MC**
FF stated that Linlithgow should be volunteered as a demonstrator town on how public transport should operate in the aftermath of Covid 19 and the almost certain change in the requirement for local transport. During the ensuing debate the topics discussed included electric buses, the responsibility of West Lothian Council, a more flexible approach to local transport in terms of the types of vehicles used, the rollout of free bus passes to all under 19, the proportion of the bus pass fare to be paid to the bus operator and coordination with active travel. JK observed that MC was now alone as the bus group following the resignation of members recently. It was agreed to keep this item on the agenda.
- b) Chairman's report GS reported the disbursement of the town centre fund as £34,000 to the Peace Garden largely to facilitate disabled access and £6000 for CCTV cameras in the high Street.
- c) Secretary's report JK referred to the written report, basically a long list of TTRO's, included with the meeting papers on which there were no questions.
- d) Treasurer's report in the absence of the treasurer out there was no treasurer's report.
- e) Police report. There was no police report. GS advised that he had written to Chief Inspector Alan Williams but had received no response. Although the report to the Local Area Committee is helpful there were no Linlithgow statistics. GS will continue to press for a police report. **Action GS**
- f) Health. Although GG was unable to attend the meeting his written report was well received. FF reported LCDT additional funding towards a Covid 19 recovery project. It was noted that it is difficult to get ward by ward data. It was suggested that an enquiry be made through the Joint Forum to determine the availability of ward-based data. DT volunteered to ask any questions that related to social policy to the appropriate West Lothian Council body.
- g) Planning report JK referred to his written report highlighting the following:
 - (i) 1101/PAC/20 Proposal of application notice from Gladman Developments Ltd for a 9.55ha residential development Clarendon Farm Manse Road. JK "attended" an online consultation event resulting in a lengthy phone call with Lynsey Fraser, Strategic Planning director. The points made were guided by the last Reporter's rejection of the Gladman appeal.
 - (ii) 1132/FUL/20 The Westfield development of 652 houses will make a significant impact on Linlithgow Academy – Letter of objection sent.
 - (iii) 1195/FUL/20 Chalmers Hall car park to horticultural business. PRS stated that the car park at Chalmers Hall was well used by the community (when the gate was open). Although currently shut the hall is well used by various groups including an after-school club. Parking on Main Street can be disruptive to traffic.

- h) Joint Forum of Community Councils in West Lothian. JK in referring to his written report stated that there were no actions on the Community Council. There were no questions or discussion.

7. AOB & Public Participation Questions.

- a) GS reported an email received from Simon Scott seeking feedback on proposals for the refurbishment of the Dovecot Park children's play area.
- b) JK reported a conversation with Colin Duff of SKS Scotland. A subsequent email from Colin Duff described a project as follows:.. *In December 2020 St Michael's Parish Church commissioned SKS Scotland CIC to prepare a business plan to support the renewal of the Church and Cross House. The church has numerous potentially costly demands for maintenance and repair, and additionally has aspirations to redevelop the church and cross house building to better serve the needs of the congregation and wider community. SKS Scotland have been commissioned to explore the level and nature of need in Linlithgow, and to clarify how the church and cross house can help to meet that need. This shall be achieved through a review of published data on Linlithgow and through dialogue with community organisations, statutory service providers and other stakeholders.*

It was agreed to invite Colin Duff to the February meeting by which time the situation regarding community use of the old library should be clearer.

8. Meeting Close & Next Meeting GS thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting closed at 21.00. The next meeting of the Community Council is Tuesday, 23rd February 2021.

John Kelly, Secretary,
29th January 2021