



**Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council
on
Tuesday 23rd April 2021 at 19.47, online.**

Present: Chair Des Martin (DM), Fraser Falconer (FF), Graeme Grant (GG), Joyce Hartley (JH), Ian Kelly (IK), John Kelly (JK), Paula Ryans Stokes (PRS), John Ralph (JR), Mike Vickers (MV), Councillor David Tait (DT), Provost Tom Kerr (TK), Councillor Tom Conn (TC) and 10 members of the public.

Apologies: Pamela Barnes (PB), Martin Crook (MC), Liam Fraser (LF), Scott Oliver (SO), Ron Smith (RS,) Margot Watson (MW), Police Scotland - Andrew Murray (AM) and Peter Robertson (PR).

Membership and Declarations of interest: with reference to the item on the agenda, Low Port Centre, DT declared that he is a member of the Asset Transfer Committee and TC declared that he is Chair of the Asset Transfer Review Body.

Welcome DM welcomed all to the meeting.

1. Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council Meeting Tuesday 23rd March 2021. Proposed IK, seconded GG.

2. Matters arising from the March minutes.

- a) Smoke detector replacement – IK queried the disposal of replaced devices. JK stated that an email received from SEPA indicated a misunderstanding of the problem being that although West Lothian Council might be willing to collect redundant smoke detectors, they are prevented by the regulations enforced by SEPA from so doing. This has been explained to SEPA twice. A further email will be sent to the constituency MSP immediately following the election. **Action JK**

3. Low Port Centre JK gave a brief overview of the Community Asset Transfer procedures as they are described in the document “West Lothian Council, Community Asset Transfer Policy, Guidance Notes for Applicants”. TC stated that during the forthcoming marketing process, the Council will exhaust the asset transfer procedure before considering marketing and that the current applicant will be given time to get a bid in.

Heather Begarnie (HB), community development manager for St John’s Church and manager of the New Well, stated that the support received from community organisations and particularly from Scott Hughes of West Lothian Council was much appreciated. HB outlined the agreed timetable commenting that the feasibility study is the next step but that this cannot progress until St John’s Church is assured that a viable option is available with the support of the community. However, it is hoped that the feasibility study will be complete within one month and that an Asset Transfer offer will be made by the end of June. HB was

aware that marketing would happen in June. HB is in close contact with other community groups and welcomed any help.

DT stated that although he was pleased to hear the reassurance from TC he considered that St John's Church should receive something in writing from West Lothian Council to give some sort of certainty that clarifies the conclusion of the report presented to the executive committee. TC stated that there was no need since the conclusion of the report was perfectly clear and that any marketing in June, in tandem with the asset transfer discussions, will not disadvantage the asset management request, the asset transfer request is rated first and no sale or lease option will be considered until the asset transfer process is complete.

FF briefly outlined the LCDT experience of asset transfer experience.

TK confirmed that TC had expressed the law, the community organisation will get priority and if an asset transfer comes through it will be considered first. TC confirmed that the Lochside Garden west of the site was not included in the area of ground of the asset described in the report presented to the executive committee and that this will continue to be used by the primary school.

A member of the public queried West Lothian Council's value for money strategy in the case that an attractive opportunistic bid is made before the asset transfer application is concluded. TC confirmed that asset transfer discussions would continue to take place until they are exhausted. However, it is important that West Lothian Council is convinced by the business case presented in the asset transfer application. In the event that the asset transfer takes place, and the business case fails then the asset will not be returned to West Lothian Council. Once the asset transfer application is received it will be referred to officers to make a report to the asset transfer committee which is comprised of five councillors.

A member of the public queried West Lothian Council's plan for outdoor education for young people in the future. TC confirmed that West Lothian Council will take on these duties, excluding sailing, from other facilities in West Lothian. A further comment was made that the diversity of facilities at Low Port Centre were not replicated elsewhere.

There was a brief discussion between Helen Greg of Lochside playgroup and TC regarding access to the Lochside Garden. TC stated that the best custodian for the keys to the garden gate in the Peel would be Low Port Primary School.

TC confirmed that the green algae bloom problem on Linlithgow Loch severely impacted the water activities and thereby the income to Low Port Centre.

A member of the public queried why Low Port Centre was already being advertised for sale or lease citing the website <https://www.novaloca.com/commercial-property-leisure/to-let/linlithgow/low-port-centre-/201262?search=true> *Note: the advertisement now states sale, lease or asset transfer.*

The chair thanked everyone for their contribution and in view of the time moved on to any other business.

4. AOB & Public Participation Questions:

a) Planning Matters:

- i. 0328/P/21 Planning permission in principle for a 6.29ha residential development, access, open space, landscaping and associated works at Clarendon Farm for 120 units. JK to request an extension of time to comment. **Action JK**
- ii. There has been no movement yet on the proposed Kettilstoun development. Following a query on how this had been allowed bearing in mind the impact on the community it was confirmed that the site was allocated in the Local Development Plan and if allocated the reasons for objection become limited.
- iii. TK advised that the three Linlithgow Ward councillors are members of the Development Management Committee and as such are limited in voicing opinions on planning matters except in committee.

b) Gap sites:

- i. Victoria Hall: a member of the public informed the meeting that the demolition had caused damage to neighbouring buildings and that the foundation solution proposed in the building warrant application could cause further damage. Neighbours have obtained a legal interdict preventing Montréal properties from pursuing the work in the manner proposed. Montréal properties are very slow to respond. Action should be taken to require a proper hoarding to mitigate the unsightly nature of the site.
- ii. Templars Court TC stated that officers have been in touch with McCarthy and Stone regarding the unsightly nature of their site. Contractors should be on site week commencing 3rd May to tidy the site and erected a hoarding or railings. Any permanent work would require a planning application to be made.

c) TTPO: JK advised that any TTPOs would be announced on Facebook.

7. Meeting Close & Next Meeting DM thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting closed at 20.01. The next meeting of the Community Council is to be held on Tuesday, 25th May 2021.

John Kelly, Secretary,
2nd May 2021