



**LINLITHGOW LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE**

**SERVICE UPDATE – NETS, LAND & COUNTRYSIDE**

**REPORT BY HEAD OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES**

**A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise members of the recent activity of the NET's, Land & Countryside Services teams for the period 1 November 2019 – 31 January 2020.

**B. RECOMMENDATION**

The Local Area Committee is asked to:

1. Note the work carried out by the service within the local area.
2. Advise of any areas that require further information or investigation.

**C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I Council Values</b>	Focusing on our customers' needs; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
<b>II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	None
<b>III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None
<b>IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	None
<b>V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	Relates to items 9 - We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger & 12 – We value and enjoy our built environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations
<b>VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	In line with available revenue and capital budgets
<b>VII Consideration at PDSP</b>	None
<b>VIII Other consultations</b>	None

**D1 Terms of Report**

To report on activity for period 1 November 2019 – 31 January 2020.

## D2 Grounds Maintenance Routine Works

Hedge cutting operations were completed during November and December. The annual maintenance visit to shrub beds in the ward is scheduled to start around the first week in March.

As part of the commitment to minimise the use of Glyphosate used, we are now recording the amount used in each ward. 140 litres were applied in the Linlithgow ward during 2019. This includes shrub beds, grass edges, hard landscaped areas and road channels.

The most recent LAMs score for the West area was 50, which remains less than the target of 67. This is likely to be due to the shrub beds not having been cleaned out when the areas were inspected.

### Grounds Maintenance Enquiries

In total 12 grounds maintenance related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period.

	2019/20	2018/19
Bench or Seat Enquiries	1	0
Bonfire Enquiries	1	1
Enforcement Officer Enquiries	1	2
Fencing Enquiries	1	0
Grass Cutting Enquiries	2	1
Hedge Cutting Enquiries	1	1
Neighbourhood Env Teams	0	1
Public Park Enquiries	1	1
Shrub Bed Enquiries	1	1
Shrub Bed Overhanging Path	2	4
Shrub Beds Not Maintained	1	0
Weeds on Paths of Roads	0	1
Total	12	13

## D3 Garden Maintenance Routine Works

The Garden Maintenance Scheme is scheduled to start on the 6<sup>th</sup> April this year.

### Garden Maintenance Enquiries

In total there were one garden maintenance related enquiries received and dealt with during this reporting period.

	2019/20	2018/19
Garden Maintenance General Enquiries	1	0
Total	1	0

#### D4 Cleaner Communities Routine Works

Staff are continuing to deal with enquiries and carry out routine works to empty litter/dog waste bins, lift litter on footpaths, roads and open spaces throughout the ward with the NETs team dealing with fly tipping enquiries.

Over the period of the report resources continue to be directed towards dealing with leaf fall throughout West Lothian.

#### Cleaner Communities Enquiries

In total 59 cleaner communities related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period.

	2019/20	2018/19
Dead Animals	1	5
Dog Fouled Grass Open Space	1	0
Dog Fouling on Paths/Roads	5	7
Graffiti Non Offensive	2	1
Graffiti Racist or Offensive	1	0
Illegal Fly Tipping/Dumping	18	6
Litter Bin Full Overflowing	0	1
Litter Bin New Request for Bin	0	1
Litter General Enquiries	3	4
Litter on Paths Roads Verges	7	5
Needles Syringes Abandoned	0	1
Street Sweeping Enquiries	13	6
Vehicle Abandoned	8	7
Total	59	44

#### Fly Tipping Enquiries (January - December)

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Illegal Fly Tipping/Dumping	80	72	55	76	57

#### Environmental Community Action

Staff are continuing to deal with enquiries and carry out routine works to empty litter/dog waste bins, lift litter on footpaths, roads and open spaces throughout the ward with the NETs team dealing with fly tipping enquiries.

Over the period of the report resources continue to be directed towards dealing with leaf fall throughout West Lothian.

The team consists of one Senior Enforcement Officer and three Education/Engagement Officers. The Senior Enforcement Officers post has been filled as of 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020 by Solomon Ede.

The Cleaner Communities Environmental team have dealt with various environmental enquiries relating to enforcement, education and engagement during the period.

Abandoned/Nuisance vehicle enquiries have been received and where required vehicles have been removed from streets by gaining compliance following negotiation, verbal warnings, warning letters, official notices served, or WLC contractor removal.

Officers dealt with fly tipping reports received across the ward with 18 reports dealt with in this reporting period which is an increase on the comparable period last year.

The total number of fly tipping enquiries for the year for the ward has shown an increase from 2015 with the exception of a slight dip in 2017. The wider picture does show a steady increase over the last five years for fly tipping throughout West Lothian.

The Education Officers supported Community Clean Up events throughout West Lothian by supplying equipment and removal of waste. We are already receiving bookings for 2020 from various groups and schools.

Officers continue to attend local meetings and follow up and report back on any issues raised.

## **D5 Parks and Woodland**

### **Parks and Woodland Enquiries**

In total 13 Parks and Woodland related enquiries were received during this reporting period.

	2019/20	2018/19
Emergency Tree Out of Hours	1	0
Tree Advice or Consultations	0	1
Tree Branches Overhanging	2	5
Tree Conservation Areas	0	1
Tree Dangerous or Unsafe	2	1
Tree Enquiries General	6	1
Tree Felling Work Unauthorised	0	1
Tree Leaves Causing Problems	0	3
Tree Roots Causing Problems	2	0
Total	13	13

### **Springfield Trees – Ownership and Future Maintenance**

Having established that the council doesn't own all the tree belts with the Springfield area, the residents who had made enquiries to the council regarding the removal of trees in areas where it was determined that the trees belonged to "Residents in Common"; were informed that they had the right, with the agreement of neighbours, to have the trees safely pruned or felled at their own expense.

The residents were also informed that the council would continue to maintain the trees and areas of open space on land owned by "Residents in Common" on an informal basis provided there were no fundamental changes to land use or significant felling without the council's permission.

Subsequently, a number of residents arranged for trees impacting on their own properties to be felled and removed, including a large area of felling. The trees were removed without the council's permission and without residents communicating with their wider neighbours. This has resulted in the council receiving further enquiries from other residents seeking clarification on the future maintenance responsibilities for the tree belts and areas of public open space.

The council is currently considering whether a Tree Protection Order is required to protect the interest of important trees in the future. A comprehensive survey of the tree belts is currently being undertaken by officers to determine the requirement for Tree Protection Orders.

On conclusion of the survey a public meeting will be arranged with local residents to discuss the options for the future maintenance of the trees and areas of public open space on land owned by the "Residents in Common".

### **Beebraigs Woodland Management**

Replanting of felled and windblown areas continues with assistance from various volunteer groups including the West Lothian 50+ group to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the group and others of their network including the Armadale Youth Choir and a team from Oracle organised by Transition Linlithgow.

### **Tree and Woodland**

At present we are in the process of putting together a contract to enable a project for street tree replacement and enhancement within Linlithgow. The project is being financed through the Village Improvement Fund. This project is being led by members of Burgh Beautiful and with the assistance of our Procurement Services colleagues we should have a consultant in place to advise/facilitate in the near future.

### **Ranger Service Update**

No. Rights Of Way / Core Path / Patrols carried out (hours)	25
No. Access Enquiries	1
No. Volunteer hours	135

The Ranger Service has been carrying out detailed condition surveys on all claimed rights of way throughout West Lothian, including routes between Torphichen and Linlithgow (LW163 LW164 LW166), and one near Beebraigs Country Park (LW127).

Ranger Service also surveyed the condition of LW165, a right of way northwest of Cockleroy Hill, LW172-175, that run from Kingscavil to Beebraigs Country Park and 187 on the outskirts of Winchburgh.

A recce was undertaken from Linlithgow along the Union Canal and River Avon Heritage Trail, planning the route for a free guided walk in July. This will be one of several district-wide ranger-led public walks this year in order to engage people with the outdoors and celebrate the Year of Coasts & Waters 2020.

Beebraigs Orange, the 6.8km waymarked route around the park, was patrolled, identifying maintenance issues and missing waymarkers, cutting back encroaching spruce and beech from the forest paths, and undertaking public engagement along the way.

Beebraigs Green was also patrolled clearing a couple of small trees that had come down over the path, cutting back encroaching bramble and carrying out maintenance on gate hinges.

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Beebraigs are hosting the first round of the Scottish Cycling Mountain Bike Cross Country Race (SXC). The Ranger Service are working with the mountain bike volunteers to make sure the trails are robust enough to withstand 300 mountain bikers racing on it. The volunteers were out for three sessions in January.

Lothian Conservation Volunteers carried out fantastic work upgrading an extremely muddy section of the purple waymarked route in Beebraigs Country Park.

An enquiry was received about the lack of blue/green algae signage around the Loch. A Ranger checked and all signs are still up and visible at all entrances to the lochside areas.

## **D6 Open Space and Cemeteries**

### **Open Space Routine Works**

Lady Park Footpath, Linlithgow Loch. Property Services will submit a report to Council Executive in February 2020 seeking approval for a statutory acquisition of the land required. If successful an application will subsequently be made to Scottish Government.

Water Yett, Linlithgow Loch. Four trees lost in 2018 to storm damage have been replaced.

Rosemount Park, Linlithgow. Eight trees lost over the years to storm damage have been replaced. The trees and locations have been selected in discussion with Burgh Beautiful. The council will continue to work with Burgh Beautiful to make Rosemount Park a representative tree collection, and arboretum.

### **Open Space Enquiries**

There were no Open Space enquiries for this reporting period in 2019/20.

	2019/20	2018/19
Childrens Play Enquiries	0	1
Total	0	1

### **Cemeteries Routine Works**

Routine grass cutting and weed control tasks have been completed. Winter maintenance works and lair reinstatement and burial duties are ongoing across the cemetery estates.

## **Cemeteries Enquires**

There were 11 Cemeteries enquiries for this reporting period in 2019/20.

	2019/20	2018/19
Cemeteries General Enquiries	5	4
Complaint Cemeteries & Burials	2	0
Family History Searches	1	0
Lair Enquiries	3	1
Lair Sunken or Uneven	0	1
War Memorial Enquiries	0	1
Total	11	7

## **E CONCLUSION**

The Garden Maintenance Scheme is scheduled to start on the 6<sup>th</sup> April.

The Cleaner Communities Environmental team have dealt with various environmental enquiries relating to enforcement, education and engagement during the period.

Water Yett, Linlithgow Loch. Four trees lost in 2018 to storm damage have been replaced.

## **F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

Open Space Strategy

Capital Programme

Appendices/Attachments : none

Appendices/Attachments: None

Contact Person: Andy Johnston, NETs, Land and Countryside Manager, 01506 284623  
andy.johnston@westlothian.gov.uk

**Jim Jack**

**Head of Operational Services**

**10 March 2020**