



Minutes of the Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council Meeting

Tuesday June 22nd 2021

Present: Chair Des Martin (DM), Graeme Grant (GG), Paula Ryans Stokes (PRS), Mike Vickers (MV), John Ralph (JR), Councillor Tom Conn (TC), Councillor David Tait (DT), Provost Tom Kerr (TK). There were no members of the public.

Apologies: Fraser Falconer (FF), John Kelly (JK), Joyce Hartley (JH), Ian Kelly (IK), Scott Oliver (SO), Ron Smith (RS), Margot Watson (MW)

Membership and Declarations of interest: No declarations of interest.

Welcome DM welcomed all to the meeting.

Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council Meeting Tuesday 25th May 2021. Proposed GG, seconded MV.

Matters Arising -

Smoke detector replacement – TC advised that he had looked at SEPA guidelines regarding the disposal of existing smoke detectors*. There does not seem to be recognition that recycling centres require a licence in order to take the old detectors. Disposal is normally done at place of purchase. A recent meeting referenced a charity in Fife who take these old alarms for recycling – the radioactive part being then shipped to the US. TC is going to see if this process can be used.

TK pointed out that it is the smoke detectors with the ionisation chamber which cause issue. However, these are also the most effective.

DM asked what the Community Council (CC) could do. TC will be writing to SEPA for clarification regarding the disposal at council sites.

Springfield trees – TC said a report on the matter was to go before the Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel in September.

DT queried if JK had changed the view of the CC? For the CC to become more proactive in light of public feedback as there was an expectation in the community for CC to take action, depending on the outcome of the (previously mentioned) report.

GG said that the CC should represent the views of the community but that this was a complex problem.

TK – If West Lothian Council (WLC) come to a decision then that clarifies the local authority responsibility. The problem lies where WLC have been maintaining grounds where they perhaps should not have been. Ownership can be a mess and complicated. It would be best to wait for WLC to come out with a definite position.

DM clarified that CC supports the community but will wait for this report in September before deciding on the next move. Should there be one person tasked with representing Springfield?

TK- This might be an issue considering the number of different developments that exist within Springfield, having just one person would mean just one view.

DT advised that the CC should be collecting information and keeping tabs on the situation in the interim. CC need to take stock before discussion becomes dispute.

Springfield trees cont'd –

TC suggested that CC should shoot down misinformation going around as to what the actual issue is and separate this from the rumours.

Low Port Centre – Discussions are progressing. DM asked if there was a closing date for the sale? TK thinks not but DT received an email that suggests the closing date is possibly early August. The group in discussions with WLC will be working towards that date.

Templar's Court – TC advised that work was to start on Monday (28th June) and take one week.

DT – McCarthy Stone (MS) had said previously they would do landscaping but this was rejected by the councillors as this would leave a permanent gap and any landscaping should be only temporary.

TC – MS are closing the door. WLC were not offered a “peppercorn sum” to take over the site despite rumours. MS say it is a commercially unviable site but could have sold on to a small developer instead. What chance has a small business to move this forward if MS say it is commercially unviable? If they tidy the site and pass it on to WLC the WLC would have to take liability for the surrounds and the surrounding buildings. They have a moral obligation to resolve corporate vandalism. This is just a cosmetic exercise.

DT advised CC needs to ensure volunteers (of the online Gap Site Action Group) are aware of this and that MS still has overall responsibility to not leave it as a gap site on the high street.

TK - MS still own the neighbouring building.

DT – Questions need asked – was the structural work completed? Is the neighbouring building stable? Are the remedial works satisfactory?

TK – It is not dangerous despite the appearance. The original proposal from MS was rejected due to aesthetics. WLC can take action if a building becomes dangerous.

DT was sceptical of MS company in regards to financial viability.

TC – MS are saying they can't get insurance re damage to other properties.

Reports –

Chair – DM advised that the Joint Forum are looking for members, this is also the case for LLBCC. LCDT, who are also on the lookout for new members, are going to put out some information.

Health – There was no update for the previous month, GG will chase up.

AOB –

MV – There is an article in the Gazette* “Cash bid to improve Linlithgow High Street” regarding the motorway access roads. Were there measurements in place to prove this is the case?

TC – Consultants on a traffic management study (on High Street congestion/parking) suggested improvements such as a second roundabout at West Port and traffic signals at Low Port. CC had commented on previous reports made.

TK – A survey done in the 90s concluded that a junction would reduce High Street traffic. This issue is what has caused a delay with the Cala development at Deanburn – with the extra traffic produced from there. TK queried why this delay in planning had gone on for three cycles of the Development Management Committee. Write to Craig McCorrison.

JR – When Deanburn application was review it stated that a four-way junction would only reduce traffic to current levels assuming an increase due to developments. Referring to Section 75 – funding for traffic infrastructure. WLC has asked for clarification, unsure if this has been resolved. Developments on west side of Linlithgow won't benefit as this was all about reducing traffic to the east.

DT – Most recent research done (by Systra) was in the first half of 2019. This was prior to a large number of applications. The conclusion was not clear on what the outcome would be.

TC referred to a report done by Halcrow Fox; an earlier report completed in 1985 had suggested a Burghmuir Junction for Springfield traffic. An application for this current junction has been sent to the UK government and a decision will be expected in mid-July. TC to forward the executive paper*.

Link to Gazette article

* <https://www.linlithgowgazette.co.uk/news/people/cash-bid-to-improve-linlithgow-high-street-3269655>

Link to Council Executive paper

* <https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=48794>

Link to SEPA End of Life Smoke Detector guidelines

* https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/505349/management_of_end_of_life_smoke_detectors.pdf

Meeting close – next meeting is on Tuesday August 24th.