



**Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council  
on  
Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2021, online.**

**Present:** Chair Des Martin (DM), Fraser Falconer (FF), John Kelly (JK), Paula Ryans Stokes (PRS), Councillor Tom Conn (TC), Councillor David Tait (DT), Provost Tom Kerr (TK), and 2 members of the public.

**Apologies:** Pamela Barnes (PB), Martin Crook (MC), Liam Fraser (LF), Graeme Grant (GG), Joyce Hartley (JH), Ian Kelly (IK), John Ralph (JR), Scott Oliver (SO), Ron Smith (RS,) Margot Watson (MW), Mike Vickers (MV).

**Membership and Declarations of interest:** In the context of the Springfield trees JK stated that he was a resident of Springfield.

**Welcome** DM welcomed all to the meeting.

**1. Minutes of Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council Meeting Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021.** Proposed PRS, seconded DM.

**2. Matters arising from the April minutes.**

- a) Smoke detector replacement – TC will follow up discussions with SEPA. **Action TC**
  
- b) Springfield Trees – a paper setting out the position of West Lothian Council about trees, and tree shelter belts in particular, will be presented to the Environment PDSP on 14<sup>th</sup> September. TC stated that the PDSP is not a decision-making body however the position of the council will be stated in the paper to the committee. All information received from residents, relevant documents, queries, and comments have been summarised and collated on the community Council website. <https://llbcc.org.uk/community-matters/springfield-trees/>. Gordon Caldwell of West Lothian Council has been notified by email that relevant information is on the LLBCC website. TC cautioned that the Community Council should not become a conduit for misinformation referring to statements made on social media. DM stated that the Community Council has adopted no position but collated factual information on the website.
  
- c) Low Port Centre – a written report was submitted by Heather Begarnie on 20<sup>th</sup> August. The report stated that the closing date for offers for the Low Port Centre should have been week commencing 9<sup>th</sup> August and St John’s Church were ready to make their offer. However, they have been informed that West Lothian Council have a legal obligation to secure “the best terms reasonably obtainable” and will set a closing date only once they are satisfied that a sufficient level of interest has been

established. West Lothian Council believe there is merit in openly marketing the property for a longer period. The new closing date is likely to be week commencing 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Heather Begarnie acknowledged the support of officers.

TC and TK both emphasised the council's responsibility to ensure a best value future use of the Low Port Centre based upon a robust business case. TC reminded the meeting that any failure of an asset transfer means that the asset is lost, it cannot be reacquired by West Lothian Council. FF stated that West Lothian Council officers will put a value on community benefit for example in the rental by LCDT of the replaced Vennel library building the community value was assessed at three times the current rental. It was agreed that there is an overwhelming wish that Low Port Centre, notwithstanding its ownership, remains a community benefit. JK to phone Heather Begarnie to determine whether there is anything that the Community Council can do at this juncture.

**Action JK**

### **3. Community Council Election.**

JK confirmed that the Community Council election will be held on 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2021. Posters have been put up at Tesco, Sainsbury's, the library, and the town noticeboards. DM, GG, IK & JK manned a table at the Cross on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> August. Posts have been made on Facebook. The LLBCC website contains all the details and a banner on the website leads to the information. Emails have been sent out to prospective candidates giving details of the nomination process.

### **4. Report of the Local Area Committee**

JK highlighted three points from the Linlithgow Ward Local Area Committee held earlier in the day:

- a) David Armstrong from Newton Community Council was present to question officers on their report of traffic concerns in Newton village. Gordon Brown, the Roads Network Manager, West Lothian Council presented the paper and answered questions. Speed and volume data had been collected along with accident statistics. In answer to a question relating to the software used by West Lothian Council for traffic analysis and simulation modelling the answer given by Gordon Brown was that West Lothian Council did not possess such software and he undertook all calculations manually.
- b) PC Andrew Murray has been reassigned to firearms licensing but still based in Linlithgow. Our new community police are Chris Ashley and Peter Robinson.
- c) In response to a paper on High Street gap sites and specifically item D3 former bus depot JK highlighted an inconsistency regarding the statement that no offer has been made by McCarthy and Stone to sell the residual High Street frontage site to West Lothian Council for £1. JK stated that he had emails confirming that the offer would be made and the statement that the offer had been made is on the McCarthy and Stone website. JK outlined the discussion and a proposal that took place 12 months ago at the Planning Forum, reported to the Community Council in August 2020 but never approved. JK asked for approval for the proposal that West Lothian Council buys the site as offered for £1 and transfers the title to the site to a housing association and offers to contribute the £90,000 it received from McCarthy and Stone as a contribution towards affordable housing on the site. This should make the site viable as 7 units for the elderly. This proposal was

unanimously accepted by those attending the meeting; Note *and subsequently accepted by four other members responding by email*. At the Local Area Committee meeting TC suggested that this discussion be continued with officers off-line. TC agreed to arrange the meeting. **Action TC**

#### **5. St Michaels Hospital**

JK reported an email exchange with Yvonne Lawton head of strategic planning and performance at West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership. Yvonne referred to a press release put out by Alison White chief officer of the West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership referring to staff pressures caused by higher levels of general sickness and staff self isolating. Patients who are currently receiving care in St Michael's Hospital have been transferred to another ward in Tippethill House Hospital; patients' families are being kept fully informed. Yvonne stated that an update on the current situation is expected to be provided at the next meeting of the West Lothian Integration Joint Board on 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2021. TK reported that this is a temporary move due to staffing shortages and expected to last 2 to 3 months. TC stated that he had also spoken to Alison White and stressed that Tippethill is not easily accessible from Linlithgow. Friends of St Michael's have a meeting with Alison White in early September.

#### **6. LLBCC Website and Zoom**

The Zoom subscription is due for renewal on 31 August. It was unanimously agreed to renew the subscription. The chair suggested that a discussion of the future structure of the website be taken off-line on a date to be agreed.

#### **7. Linlithgow High St and Public Realm**

A consultation on the update to the Linlithgow High Street and Public Realm document has commenced and will end on 24 September. JK has informed One Linlithgow. All details can be found at <https://llbcc.org.uk/community-matters/public-realm-design-guide/> . It was agreed that this matter be referred to the Planning Forum.

#### **8. Standing Reports.**

Chair - DM had no further matters to report that had not been covered by the agenda.

Secretary - JK referred to the written report, circulated prior to the meeting, giving several road closure notices, a notice from NHS Lothian pharmacy practices committee seeking members, and the matter of the High Port flowerbed. In respect of the latter, it was agreed to contact Burgh Beautiful and it was agreed that an appropriate donation could be paid.

Planning - A decision on planning application 0801/FUL/20 for the Deanburn development by Cala has been approved. 0328/P/21 the previously circulated objection letter in respect of the Clarendon farm planning application has been sent. The planning appeal for the proposed Wilcoxholm development 0340/P/19 has been heard and the appeal dismissed by DPEA. The matter has been forwarded to the Court of Session for final resolution.

Other reports - there were no other standing reports.

## 9. AOB & Public Participation Questions:

RS brought to the meetings attention the changes to the Scotrail timetable which is available for consultation. The consultation is open from 20 August to 1 October 2021, to seek opinions on the proposed timetables. The ScotRail website, <https://www.scotrail.co.uk/fit-for-the-future> has more information and includes a link to a survey where customers and communities can give their views. All are encouraged to refer to Ron's email of 23 August.

Public participation comments from the two members of the public had been taken by the chair during the meeting.

**10. Meeting Close & Next Meeting** DM thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting closed at 20.56. The next meeting of the Community Council is to be held on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021 in the Burgh Halls. Note that this is the last meeting of the current Community Council. Elections take place on 14<sup>th</sup> October and the inaugural meeting of the new Community Council will take place on 26<sup>th</sup> October.

John Kelly, Secretary,  
27<sup>th</sup> August 2021

### For information: Dates of future meetings

<u>2021</u>	<u>2022*</u>	<u>2022*</u>	<u>2022*</u>
28th September	25 <sup>th</sup> January	24 <sup>th</sup> May	27 <sup>th</sup> September
26th October	22 <sup>nd</sup> February	28 <sup>th</sup> June	25 <sup>th</sup> October
23rd November*	22 <sup>nd</sup> March	No meeting in July	22 <sup>nd</sup> November
14th December**	26 <sup>th</sup> April - AGM	23 <sup>rd</sup> August	20 <sup>th</sup> December**

\* Meeting dates will be confirmed at inaugural CC meeting.

\*\* Meeting date reserved but meeting may not be held if insufficient business