**LIVINGSTON VILLAGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**MINUTE of MEETING No 3-18 on 04 OCTOBBER 2019**

**PRESENT**:

MEMBERS: Brian Johnstone - Chair, Dean Swift – Minute Secretary, Catherine Brown, Margaret McQueen. (4)

GUESTS: Brian Ritchie, Alan Strachan, Nelu Balaj, Elizebth Scott, Helen Lamont, Alice Bailey, Richard Lever, Georgie Hume, Morag Carder, Garry Carder, Vera Turnbull, Councillor Moira Shemilt, Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick (part), Councillor Alison Adamson (part) (14)

APOLOGIES:Apologies received from: Jodi Conner

**ITEMS:**

1.0 **MINUTE APPROVAL**

1.1 Minute for 5th September 2019 was approved by Alan Strachan and seconded by Nelu Balaj

2.0 **REPORTS FROM THE CHAIR:**

2.1 WLC proposed cost cuts – The following is a list from the press and will be discussed later (see item 5.10 – 5.13): shorter opening times at libraries, stopping concession travel by rail, removing grit bins, cutting down street cleaning, some school teaching changes, removing some bus routes. Note, these are *proposals* only at this stage.

2.2 Recruitment. The Joint Forum has arranged advertising in Konnect magazine to encourage more participation in Community Councils.

2.3 Town Centre Fund. Livingston Village was awarded a pot of £17,446. This is a total from the 2 wards that we straddle and is for projects qualifying under the criteria for regeneration. As LVCC we failed to generate a suitable business plan. Samples of projects which has been awarded grants are: Almond Valley Heritage Centre - £11,300, Local Centre (where?) £11,340, three milestones in Dedridge - £3500 for each. More approvals will be granted. It was suggested that on the basis of some of the entries perhaps LVCC should have made an application. DS asked MS under which criteria the milestones received a grant. MS to make enquiries. **MS**

2.4 Health – Various points from a report received from the Joint Forum are:

* The new Short Stay Elective Centre at St John’s will cover five specialities; orthopaedics, urology, gynaecology, vascular services and general medicine.
* Paediatrics - full 24/7 delayed again although still managing 24/7 for 4 nights a week.
* Edinburgh Royal has overspill to St John’s, wards 1 and 17.
* New Community Mental Health Team is being organized.
* WLC contributions for adult non-residential care to be reduced.

2.5 Kaims Woodland Sub-Group: Met on 19th September with just three in attendance. There has been little progress with non-co-operative private owner. The minute is available to anyone, contact BJ. Next meeting, hopefully better attended, will be on 17th October.

2.6 Gala Day – The Gala Day committee had its AGM in June and elected Jackie Conway as the chairman. She as asked to be on the Council. It was approved to include her as a co-opted member. BJ has again this year agreed to fund the Christmas tree lighting for the Carol service.

2.7 Joint Forum of West Lothian Community Councils– This is really going well now and tackling problems on various issues. Next meeting is 21st November at 6:30pm.

3.0 **PLANNING REPORT**

3.1 Weekly Planning Lists: Since the June meeting there have been 89 applications, none of which are significant to the LVCC area

3.2 West Lothian Planning Forum - DS gave a short report on the last meeting. Like LVCC, there was discussion on the subject of growth in housing development which seems to ignore the need for health provision, schools and road/transport issues. Other topics discussed were enforcement powers, “planning creep”, section 75 agreements not available on WLC website, the “5 minute presentation” at Council meetings, and other minor issues. The development of “Place Plans”, which was highlighted previously in the LVCC minutes, was discussed and it was agreed to invite various guests to clarify exactly what is expected from the CCs.

3.3 Hunter Road: There has been protracted discussion with WLC Education and the further revised target for detailed planning submission is early November. We will respond in due course.

3.4 Charlesfield and Livingston West (Gavieside): Both applications still show “awaiting decision”.

3.5 Former Ethicon (Johnson & Johnson) Site – Nothing yet submitted to WLC Planning, we await notification of the public consultation. It will require a pre-planning application.

3.6 1 Simpson Parkway – Comments which were submitted were generally supportive of the housing but cautious on infrastructure.

3.7 There was general discussion about common ground maintenance within housing areas, factors, house deeds etc. It was agreed that it can be confusing as to who exactly is responsible for the cost and implementation of grounds maintenance on common ground.

4.0 **POLICE REPORT:** No report available.

5.0 **NEWS AND UPDATES FROM ELECTED COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Moria Shemilt

5.1 Prior to the meeting MS asked BJ about dangerous or obstructive parking in the Kirkton area. BJ described the situation at Meikle Road and Simpson Parkway. MS took note but was not sure what can be done about it. Enforcement is one solution but the Police do not have the resources at the moment.

5.2 Constituents have commented on the appearance of the uncut grass areas, and the higher possibility of ticks being in the grass.

5.3 There have also been complaints about the reduced opening times at re-cycling centres.

5.4 MS is concerned about what appears to be an increase in Homelessness. One example was a person with child given notice to quit from the landlord without other affordable accommodation being available. It was noted that some seemingly empty council houses are awaiting repair and/or are reserved for emergencies.

Councillor Adamson

5.5 AA informed the meeting that Blackburn recycling was not as busy and might be more convenient than Oakbank.

5.6 Airport consultation – the public are encouraged to attend their regular public meeting on the first Wednesday of each month at the Marriott Hotel, Edinburgh.

5.7 The second crematorium, in the Starlaw area of the town, has been rejected by WLC Planning.

5.8 AA repeated BJ’s earlier report about reduced services being proposed by WLC for cost savings. She pointed out that they are still up for discussion.

Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

5.10 Regarding Council budgeting generally, LP stated that COSLA recently indicated that all parties (except SNP) agreed that Council budgets need to be based on last year’s plus 3% plus cost of living to maintain public services at the appropriate level.

5.11 With reference to required cost sayings (also see item 2.1) WLC have looked at all expenditure. However there are various factors to be taken into consideration: an increase in children requiring special education, increase in number of older people requiring care and the costs of high school education rising.

5.12 The point was made that in whilst The Barnett formula provides more money per person in Scotland, in England the Council tax is generally £500 more per person.

5.13 As part of the Council cost-saving, the council will lose 800 people. Some of these will be redundancies, which due to their retraining element, have a financial implication.

5.14 In December the Livingston South train line will be increased from 3 to 6 carriages.

The lift will also be repaired.

5.15 Starting October 21 public swimming will be available at Inveralmond Community High School.

5.16 At St Johns Hospital Paediatrics full 24/7 service delayed again. Generally there appears to be a shortfall of approximately 250 consultants.

5.17 It was noted that domestic waste food is now to be put in the brown bin, as opposed to the small green bins.

5.18 WLC was voted number 1 in Scotland for benchmarking.

5.19 West Lothian Council’s High school exam performance was excellent this year being in the top 3 in Scotland.

6.0 **TREASURER’S REPORT** No report available.

7.0 **WEB & IT MATTERS**

7.1 Prior to the meeting BJ asked MM for advice on using social media to obtain better attendance at our meetings and to attract more Community Councillors:

* MM stated that Facebook and Instagram seemed to be the ones to use. Subjects like the recent concern about grass cutting was worth putting on the Facebook page. There are about 250 followers on Facebook, and 150 on Twitter.
* “Nextdoor” was not seen to be as good as Facebook etc.by the meeting generally, but was good for sales.
* The meeting agreed that the minutes should be put on Facebook.
* MM stated that if anyone had information they wanted on the Council’s Facebook Page to let her know. **ALL**

8.0 **SECRETARIAL MATTERS**

8.1 The LVCC email inbox received over 30 messages since we last met - the most relevant are:-

* + Planning guidance in Conservation areas – comments by 18 October BJ to draft **BJ**
  + Planning guidance on Heritage Cottages – LVCC not to comment.
  + Planning guidance on snack bars – LVCC not to comment.
  + Consultation on Crown Estate Corporate Plan– LVCC not to comment.
  + LVCC have been asked to register to take part in one of the VF day 75 celebrations next May, will discuss at next meeting.
  + Consultations on relocation of Cedarbank School, BJ to circulate draft response. **BJ**
  + Community Council Grants for this year are all gone.
  + Carnegie Trust newsletter for September has arrived.
  + All CCs can now attend their appropriate LACs by right.
  + Planning Guidance documents received; Planning for Nature and Planning for wildlife. BJ to circulate draft response. **BJ**
  + Planning Guidance Developer Obligations: BJ to circulate draft response. **BJ**
  + Meet the author: Mason Cross will be at the Lanthorn 9th October 1pm.
  + Health and Social Care: Drop in sessions at Howden Park on 8th October 2-4pm.

9.0 **AOCB**

9.1 BJ hopes to have responses to all the bus/transport items by next meeting **BJ**

9.2 Livingston North LAC meeting is next Tuesday 8th October.

9.3 Summer bedding plants in the “square” will be removed when they die back**. BJ**

9.4 VT asked why activities for older people and others are being cut back, and warned of unintended consequences such as physical and mental health issues. LF stated that WLC is providing what it is statutorily obliged to. They did not have an obligation to support charities.

9.5 CB reminded the meeting that we should start to think about someone to be the next Chairman. BJ stated that we should also perhaps think about the format of the meetings.

**ALL**

10.0 **NEXT MEETING**

10.1 Next meeting Community Council will be on **Thursday 7th November 2019 at 7:00pm** in the function room of the Livingston Inn.

10.2 Next Kaims Woodlands sub group meeting will be Thursday 17th October 2019 at 7:00pm in the function room of the Livingston Inn.

Dean Swift

07 October 2019