**LIVINGSTON VILLAGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**MINUTE of MEEETING No 28 OF 5th JANUARY 2017**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**. Brian Johnstone - Chair, Carole Robertson - Treasurer, Margaret McQueen, Dean Swift.

**GUESTS** Greig McKay Deputy Director of Bus Users Scotland, Councillor Anne MacMillan, Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick (part time – not present for section 6 on planning items), Steve Egan Chair Eliburn CC, Janice Baxter, Richard Lever, Georgie Hume, Vi McGregor, Shona MacKenzie, Alan Strachan, Liz Scott, Helen Lamont, Alice Bailey, John McLean, Jack Kerr, Eric Mitchell.

1. **APOLOGIES** Apologies from Alan Nicholson, Annette Logan.
2. **MINUTE APPROVAL.** The draft minute of meeting 27 on 3rd November 2016 was approved by Margaret McQueen and seconded by Alan Strachan.
3. **MATTERS ARISING** These will be covered in the report from Chair and agenda items
4. **DISCUSSION ON BUS SERVICES** Brian welcomed Greig McKay from Bus Users Scotland (BUS). He had volunteered to speak to us in response to our long letter of concerns over the bus services. Greig said that his group funded by Transport Scotland was now 4 years old and was the representative voice of passengers and one role was to secretly monitor operator performance relative to timekeeping, cleanliness and vehicle suitability. Reports are shared with operators and the Traffic Commissioner who has powers to sanction and fine defaulting operators. Several sanctions/fines have been applied each year. The time keeping target is to get 95% of buses to arrive in the slot of 2 mins early to 5 mins late. Unfortunately bus operators are very restrained by rules, regulations and laws. The mood of the meeting demonstrated a critical need to change the rules etc and to apply a more reasoned interpretation to the laws. A classic here is the law preventing bus services and rail services to meet sensibly by routing buses into stations. Many routes are long and very meandering to cover too many areas making the total journey time too long. Consideration should be given to shorter faster routes between hubs and multiple radial short feeders running to the hubs. Could mean more vehicles but let’s have more small buses on radials.

LRT are often quoted as the only successful and decent bus service and operator. BUS consider this model cannot be copied and would be unworkable out with cities.

BUS has taken on board our written concerns and will copy these to the bus operators. Some additional comments from the meeting were:-

Unreliability Meandering routes Long journey times

Buses seem to be a service to the operators not a service to customers

Brian thanked Greig for his contribution to our bus service discussions but accepting that no easy solution to poor service was likely in the near future.

1. **REPORTS FROM THE CHAIR**

***Health matters.*** Brian attended the quarterly NHS/CC meeting on 7th November. The topics discussed included - The excellent outcome of the secret inspection of St Johns: Capital Investment Programme: Public Accountability: Patient access to WiFi: Increasing the scope for thera-pets; Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan. Next meeting will be on 27th February. We were asked to contribute to the consultation on Health Impact Analysis. We have been offered defibrillators by Primary Care Supplies Ltd. but doubt if we could recommend a safe location for one that would be useful to the public. The primary school was suggested but is a school worthy location?

***Buchanan Gardens – Barratt Housing.*** Work is progressing with ground works. Contractors do not restart until next week so Brian could not get a programme update. The location of the children’s play area and traffic were raised as concerns to one resident. Brian would look at the plans again and relook at the TIA, although these matters would have been available when we made our comments on the planning application submission some time back so it could be too late for material consideration.

***Livingston North LAC ( Local Area Committee)*** Brian attended the December meeting of the Livingston North LAC. The presentation was on the Parkrun – the Saturday 5K run that passes through the big park crosses to the south side and along the public path at the rear of Kaims Grove – a well supported, popular and laudable event. The usual reports on Police matters, Fire and Rescue services, Housing, Advice Shop,, Operational Services, Regeneration were presented.

***Road Safety matters.*** We sent a letter to WLC on 30th October 2016 covering 3 road safety items, the response we received on 7th December was a box ticking inadequate response indicating no actions would be taken. Brian wrote again on 14th December seeking a meeting with Roads department and adding 3 new points – acknowledged butas yet no reply. Dean stated that a roads person from WLC had recently inspected the Kirk Lane junction. (post meeting note - white give way lines have now been added to indicate route priority- This action is contrary to WLC’s comments in their letter.) Brian will take all this up with WLC.

**6** **PLANNING LISTS & PLANNING ITEMS NOT COVERED BY REPORTS FROM THE CHAIR**

***Planning Lists.*** The lists stopped being issued on 18th December. From our last meeting up to then 42 pages containing 116 applications had been lodged with WLC.

***Barratts at Old Cousland Road.*** Revised plans were issued to us and the sole neighbours to the plot. Comments were submitted by the given deadline of 22nd December but no acknowledgement or comment has been received from WLC. Brian has unsuccessfully tried to speak with the case officer bur believes she is still on leave – will try again soon.

***Housing at Former Kirkton Business Centre.*** Stalemate as before. Again Brian will try to contact planner for an update for the next meeting.

***Propose Housing at Hunters Road by Persimmon.*** An early PAN (Proposal of Application Notice ) has been lodged for major housing on the site of the former Thus/Cable & Wireless/Vodaphone site in Hunters road. This starts a 12 week consultation process but no date for the consultation exhibition has been released yet. Brian has established contact with the WLC case officer Steve McLaren and Persimmon’s Development Planner, David Jinks and will keep in regular contact with each as the PAN progresses to a later planning application. Meantime the existing site owners Gamlin Ltd have instructed Central Demolition to clear the site and demolition started yesterday.

**6 POLICE REPORT**

PC John Mclean reported little of concern in the village area but youth calls in Livingston North was on the increase. In 3 months there were 54 calls from the village area from which 7 crimes were reported which is low compared to other areas. There were several calls about a stranger wandering the village which could have concerned some residents. It turns out he was a homeless person from Edinburgh who spoke with several people and did not act in any menacing way and he has subsequently moved on.

**7 NEWS & UPDATES FROM ELECTED COUNCILLORS**

Anne Macmillan raised the following points

1. 6 new paediatric consultants have been appointed across NHS Lothian and the first starts in February.
2. The staff at St Johns are to be congratulated for achieving an exemplary inspection report with no requirements or improvement recommendations subsequent to an unannounced inspection by the Healthcare Environment Inspectorate. This standard of report is a first in NHS Lothian so we add our compliments to the dedication of all staff at our local Hospital. When approached to print a press release on this the local paper – The Courier – said it was not noteworthy enough. The Courier attitude seems to be if it is not sensational or bad doom and gloom news then we don’t want to know. Organisations are given too much press space for criticism and bad news and no space for congratulations for meritorious success. A bad mark for the media – yet again!!
3. A&E are coping well with increased presentation numbers

Councillor Fitzpatrick raised the following items

1. There is to be a constituency boundary rearrangement to reduce the number of members. Pentland and West Lothian will be amalgamated in some way.
2. The LDP in final form is now with Government Recorder.
3. The education budget is to be centralised. This central collection will receive all the additional West Lothian community charges for bands E to H and reallocate as Scottish Government think fit Again centralisation going over the heads of local knowledge, local wishes and local government - cannot be a good thing!

**8 TREASURERS REPORT** Carole reported current balance is still £364.73 but was concerned that no recent bank statement had been received. (post meeting note – by coincidence a new statement arrived on the Friday after our meeting. Brian reminded Carole that our annual statement would be needed for approval at our next meeting -the AGM on 2nd February.

**9** **WEB & IT MATTERS** Margaret reported Facebook and Twitter were showing about 127 hits, the web was now updated. Margaret asked Anne for a copy of the St Johns press release to add to our web and reminded everyone to submit any news items or intimations about forthcoming events**.**  The LVCC web address is repeated here as ***www.livingstonvillagecommunitycouncil.org.uk***

**10** **SECRETARIAL MATTERS** Since the last meeting in November the LVCC email in box had received 24 relevant messages and a host of social media items. Brian’s own e mail took 51 incoming messages relating to LVCC and he sent out 68. Excluding items raised above the relevant incoming messages contained the following topics:-

3 Airport Consultations on master plan, airspace and noise – we did not contribute to any.

 Empowerment teaching for excellence – ran out without comment from us.

 Invitation to a Parliamentary reception om affordable housing – did not attend

 Consultation on Quiet Roads – closed without comment from us.

 Planning Consultation on noise – closed without comment from us

 Use of libraries questionnaire – not relevant to us

 Update reports from River Forth Fisheries Trust and the Almond Barriers projects

**11**  **AOCB**

Our next meeting on 2nd February 2017 will be in 2 parts. A short **Annual General Meeting** first followed by our normal formatted meeting. Brian will raise a matter relative to our **office bearers** Brian, Carole and Alan. It is normal for these to stand down each AGM and be replaced or re-elected for the subsequent year. However in October 2017 the full 4 yearly CC elections are due for all CCs in West Lothian the whole team of Brian, Carole, Alan, Margaret Catherine and Dean have to stand down and seek re-election through the WLC form filling exercise along with any newcomers (up to 12). So Brian will propose, and seek AGM meeting approval, that the current office bearers remain in post from AGM to the October election.

**12 NEXT MEETING** Our next meeting will be on **Thursday 2nd February 2017 at 7:00 pm** in the function room of Livingston Inn and will be in 2 parts with AGM first follows by a normal Community Council meeting

*Brian D Johnstone*

*12/01/17*