**LIVINGSTON VILLAGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**MINUTE of MEETING No 30 2nd MARCH 2017**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**. Brian Johnstone - Chair, Catherine Brown.[2]

**GUESTS** Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick (part time), Councillor Anne MacMillan, PC Alan James, PC Alan Hodge, Gordon Pennykid, Vera Turnbull, Eric Mitchell, Alan Strachan, Georgie Hume, Richard Lever. [10]

1. **APOLOGIES** Apologies had been received from Dean Swift, Margaret McQueen, Carole Robertson, Vi MacGregor, Annette Logan. With so many of the members apologising there is not enough members present to form a quorum. Brian decided to proceed with a meeting and have the minutes ratified by all members attending the subsequent meeting
2. **MINUTE APPROVAL.** The draft minute of meeting 29 held on 2nd February 2017 was approved subsequent to changing the glaring error of wrong minute number and date in the heading. It did read as meeting 28 of 5th January 2017 and should have read meeting 29 of 2nd February 2017. Interestingly enough none of the attendees had spotted the error! Alan Strachan proposed the corrected minute and was seconded by Eric Mitchell.
3. **MATTERS ARISING** These will be covered in the report from Chair and agenda items
4. **REPORTS FROM THE CHAIR**

***Health matters.*** Brian had attended the joint NHS/CC meeting on Monday 27th February 2017. Only 10 of the eligible 41 West Lothian Community Councils attended – a poor percentage but the meeting time of 17:15 is probably too early for any working members. The main item was Finance with an 8 page paper filled with 6 tables of figures – not easily digested but summarised as Forecast Expenditure exceeding Income by about £51m. So cuts are expected. The children’s facilities are all open and it is intended that this continues so further recruitment is ongoing. Many attending CC members raised the dire situation with car parking. The only measure NHS is trying is number plate recognition to determine staff and park & ride car owners with a view to shaming them out of the long term parking habit. Since the car park is private the success of this is suspect from the point of enforcement. On the topic of building a large multi storey car park NHS dismisses this with the statement – “there is no funding for this and unlikely to be any in the future”.

***Buchanan Gardens – Barratt Housing.*** Work is progressing and the shell of the first house has appeared . Brian spoke with the sales office who indicated an entry date of June 2017.

***Road Safety matters.*** A further reply was received in early February but it still does not adequately answer all our points so Brian will meet with WLC in the next couple of weeks and report in more detail at next meeting .(post meeting note – date arranged as 16/03/17)

***HMRC office closures and job losses.*** It is planned that the tax offices near Pure Gym and at Pyramids Bathgate are to close. Brian attended a drop- in session on this and learnt that a campaign has been mounted to try and change the decision and retain the 1200 jobs here in West Lothian with the associated financial benefit locally. Brian asked the meeting if we as LVCC should write in support of the campaign. The meeting said yes we should support this.

***Unconventional oil and gas*** ***extraction in particular Fracking.*** Brian outlined the drilling and high pressure chemical and water injection technique for releasing underground gas as another source of fuel energy. At the moment the Scottish Government has a ban on this via a moratorium. There is a strong lobby to try and get a permanent ban for this technique on the grounds of possible contamination ,earth tremors and health issues. Brian gave his view (from his earliest career as an engineer in the mining industry) that the technique had risks and that he would personally support a ban on its use. Brian asked the meeting if support for the ban was an issue for LVCC to support. The meeting in general felt they did not have enough understanding to support an LVCC statement. So it was left to individuals to register their own views to the Scottish Government.

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

***Weekly Planning Lists.***  Since our last meeting the lists contained 70 applications. Nothing of note to concern the LVCC area - but of interest an application has been lodged to divide the empty B&Q premises into 3 distinct retail units. From this we guess that there have been no takers of size to take over the entire premises.

***Barratts at Old Cousland Road.*** The latest information Brian had from Barratt is that they no longer have any interest in the site – as yet there has been no confirmation that the planning application has been withdrawn. Watch this space for any update on the future of the site.

***Housing at former Kirkton Business Centre.*** The section 75 completion has now lapsed so the application is likely to be referred to the Development Management Committee – probably on the April agenda.

***Preplanning consultation on proposed housing at Hunters Road by Persimmon.*** The demolition works are complete and the site cleared. Brian via e mails got a statement from Persimmon to the effect that they were waiting on this site clear stage before activating the consultation and organising a public exhibition event. A bit vague. We would prefer to have some confirmations of timescales and the proposal details for consideration. The WLC case officer is like minded to progress the flow of information. Brian will keep in touch with all parties so watch this space.

***Invitations to participate in planning consultations.*** As LVCC we are asked to comment on the Scottish Government’s reforms to the Planning System and West Lothian’s Planning Guidance on residential development and also green networks. All 3 are due for submission in first few days of April. The meeting suggested that Brian composes draft submissions on each and circulates these to members and the general e mail list for alterations and additions before submission.

**6 POLICE REPORT**

PCs Alan James and Alan Hodge stood in for our usual pair. They are the community police for Livingston South and are “related” to us since our patch crosses the ward boundary. The given stats for our area were broadly similar to the same time last year so no significant changes. The number of police calls was up from 7 calls with no reported crimes to 24 with 13 crimes reported. The higher figures are mainly due to thefts from cars. However the offender was caught, charged and is serving custodial sentence. The Officers wished to record grateful thanks to the local community whose diligent observations and help were instrumental in the apprehension of the culprit.

**7 NEWS & UPDATES FROM ELECTED COUNCILLORS**

Anne Macmillan spoke about the Deans Health Centre where the NHS has had to take over following the resignation of all 5 Doctors from the practice. The rest of the staff remain and NHS doctors have taken over and everyone expects there will be business as usual although there will be a new appointment system. (post meeting note – this was front page article in the Courier on 09/03/03)

Councillor Fitzpatrick gave a brief statement that the education results were in and that these were excellent. In 2012 West Lothian was placed 19th in Scotland and was now placed 4th. A significant achievement.

**8 TREASURERS REPORT** Carole could not make the meeting so no report.

**9** **WEB & IT MATTERS** Margaret also could not make the meeting so no report

**10** **SECRETARIAL MATTERS** Since the last meeting the LVCC email in box had received 17 relevant messages and a host of social media items. Brian’s own e mail took 28 incoming messages relating to LVCC and he sent out 31. The following topics were among the received items to our in-box

*West Lothian Womens Aid* This was first raised at last meeting and we now have posters for our boards and a report to read. After discussion the meeting agreed that we should take up the offer of a guest speaker. (post meeting note – Jo Kilcoyne of WLWA will attend our meeting on Th 6th April 2017)

*Tree charter.* A new charter for trees will launch on 6th November 2017created from guiding principles gleaned for all sorts of tree stories and their importance and value. Anyone wanting more information should contact Brian.

*Cyrenians* This Bathgate based organisation exists to assist people excluded from family, home, work or community and has subgroups including OPAL for helping older people to stay independent, active, connected and to increase wellbeing. After discussion the meeting agreed that we should take up the offer of a guest speaker. (post meeting note – Lorna Bryson or Richard Fish will attend our meeting on Th 4th May 2017)

**11**  **AOCB**

The Local Area Committee Meetings (LACs) are due for Livi South on Friday 3rd March for which Brian tendered his apologies to Lawrence and Thursday 17th March for Livi North which Brian will be able to attend.

Gordon Pennykid raised the perilous state of the Village Gala Day Committee since he was now the only one active member and if more support was not forthcoming soon then there could be no Gala on the given date 10th June 2017.

Richard Lever again raised the deplorable amount of litter generated adjacent to the food van serving the schools. The police and chair both agreed to write to the schools

**12 NEXT MEETING** Our next meeting is **Thursday 6th April 2017at 7:00 pm** in the function room of Livingston Inn

*Brian D Johnstone*

*14/03/17*