**LIVINGSTON VILLAGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**MINUTE of MEETING No 35 5th OCYOBER 2017**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**. Brian Johnstone - Chair, Dean Swift. [2] Plus 2 new persons about to become members on 26th October – Jodi Connor (nee MacGregor), Shona Mackenzie. [2]

**GUESTS** Lorna Oldershaw – a Volunteer Co-ordinator for River Forth Fisheries Trust, Councillor Alison Adamson (part time), Councillor Moira Shemilt, PC Alan McMahon, Dave Sherry, Alan Strachan, Vi McGregor, Nelu Balaj, H Waddell, Janet Waddell, James Swinton. [10]

1. **APOLOGIES** Apoloies received from Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Carole Robertson, Margaret McQueen, Catherine Brown, Vera Turnbull, Annette Logan.
2. **MINUTE APPROVAL.** The previous meeting contained a misspelling of the new Minister’s name it should be Dr Nelu Balaj – with this noted change minute no 34 for 7th September 2017 was approved by Alan Strachan and seconded by Vi MacGregor.
3. **MATTERS ARISING** These will be covered in the report from Chair and agenda items.
4. **PRESENTATION** Lorna Oldershaw a volunteer coordinator with the River Forth Fisheries Trust gave a presentation about the Killandean Gateway. She explained that funding amounting to several million had been allocated to a collection of projects under the umbrella of the Almond and Avon river improvement schemes. The biggest was the restoration or creation of fish bypasses to the various weirs on the Almond including the one on our doorstep beside the Heritage Centre. A lot of the work is basic cleaning and clearing of the waterways and their banks. However some of their work is dedicated to educating people about the waterways and their fauna and flora. In particular schools and nurseries are encouraged by mini projects such as “fish in the classroom.” New benches, tree planting tree management, ground and wall repairs are all part of the aspirations. As a Community Council we would be entitled to grant aid for improvement or involvement since the River Almond bisects or area. The project and funds run through to 2020. As ever Volunteers are needed. Perhaps this should be an agenda item in the future. Brian thanked Lorna and hoped this would spread the word and generate involvement
5. **REPORTS FROM THE CHAIR**

***Community Council Elections.*** 8 nominations were duly logged at WLC and since this is below the ceiling number all 8 are elected and become effective members from 26th October 2017 and will serve for 4 years. Members then will be Brian Johnstone, Dean Swift, Angela Moohan, Carole Robertson, Catherine Brown, Jodi Conner, Margaret McQueen and Shona MacKenzie. The meeting on Thursday 2nd November will be the inaugural meeting of the “new” Livingston Village Community Council and will have an agenda set by WLC which will include election of the 5 office bearers – Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Planning Secretary. Brian indicted he would be willing to stand for Chair again - *IF THE MEETING WANTED THIS -* but he pointed out he had been chair now since LVCC was first formed in 2011 and maybe a change was wanted. He also said that for the past year he has had to be Chair, Secretary and Planning secretary but surely with the new team of 8 the load could be better shared. It is essential that the 8 elected members are in attendance on 2nd November.

***Health*** The next joint NHS Lothian /Community Council meeting will be on Monday 27th November. Ian Buchanan who acts on CC and Health Boards had provided a useful help checklist with contacts and Brian issued a copy to all present.

***Update on actions by the Chair since last meeting.*** Brian apologised that time had beaten him and he had not concluded all the actions (14) to his own satisfaction but would continue to deal with any outstanding matters. We submitted 2 representations to the Scottish Government on The Climate Change Bill and the Community Empowerment Common Good Property Consultation. We also submitted to the WLC consultation on The Planning Enforcement Charter. Brian attended the Livingston North LAC on 21st October with reports on Police, Fire & Rescue, Housing, Operational Services, Pensioner Christmas Party support grants, Alcohol Diversionary Activities, Community Regeneration, Unauthorised Encampments by travelling people. Brian reported no progress with tree belt owners – to be followed up. Brian had contacted the factors of Kaims Terrace and some actions should be forthcoming but only in their property – there seems to be some outwith this with no ownership identified. We have agreed to fund the switch-on costs of the Christmas tree lights on December 1st at 6:30. Brian spoke with Barratt re possible donations for this sort of thing or bedding plants. Barratt not very receptive due to higher than expected site costs. The site agent said their contribution to LVCC was to get rid of the Buchanan House eyesore! Brian had still to act on obtaining a new notice board for the phone box and name plaques for the planters.

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

***Weekly Planning Lists.***  Since our last meeting the lists totalled 69 applications. Nothing of concern to the LVCC area or its immediate hinterland.

***Barratts - Cousland Road.***  Although not proceeding to buy the site at present Barratt have now been granted conditional planning approval for 87 houses on this plot. Among the conditions is a time restraint from WLC Education stating “there shall be no residential occupation until August 2020”. So, we will not see any action on site, or indeed who will be the builder, for some time so Brian suggested this be dropped off our agenda.

***Preplanning consultation on proposed housing at Hunters Road by Persimmon.*** This PAN notice was lodged at WLC in December 2016 and since then on a monthly basis Brian has pursued Persimmon to progress on proposed site plan, date and venue for the public consultation etc etc. Persimmon slowed right down saying negotiations between the site owner and Persimmon are continuing. Since last December we have seen the buildings demolished; various site surveys – not instructed by Persimmon; occupation – albeit thankfully for a short time - by travelling people; fire on site set by persons unknown to an abandoned caravan left on site. A resident furnished Brian with the name and address of the land registered owner and Brian wrote to them on 24th September – as yet no reply but this will be chased assiduously.

**7. POLICE REPORT** The crime stats weretabled. All reportable types of crime except vandalism show an increase on last month. PC Alan McMahon ran through these and was ready for the debate on the large invasion of youths in the park areas. The biggest of these clocked 40 to 50 members. It would appear the “partying “youths move round and these were probably displaced from Eliburn Park. Although actual crime is low they do cause disquiet and concern as well as leaving debris, broken glass and fire remnants. Alan said he and colleagues would be paying particular attention over the next weekend. The police and various Council youth project people are trying to engage with the youth of West Lothian and seek to make parents more responsible. During discussion lighting the park was tabled as a deterrent but cost and size would seem to rule this out. The youth gatherings now appear to be part of life but the do change venues as mood swings and new places to bother become the “in Place” for a while. There seems to be no answer. *Some residents from Kirkfield East/West whose houses back onto Cousland Road expressed concerns over speeding vehicles on Cousland Road*. *This road has a 40mph speed limit. However speeding well in excess of 40 is often observed. The road is substantially straight and has very few junctions and generally a light volume of traffic. It is a prime east/west artery with a significant industrial estate at its eastern end. The excess speeds noted cause considerable noise to residents particularly from goods vehicles and particularly at night. The problem is easily defined but the solution is harder to find. Traffic calming speed bumps are not practical. Night time speed cameras are rare. PC McMahon acknowledged awareness of the speeding and will restate the offence of speeding to the Police traffic section. Alan did say that because accidents and traffic incidents on this route are very low the road did not warrant fixed speed cameras or indeed special attention, however he would raise the matter to other police departments and road safety staff. The only other recourse could be to environmental section of WLC in terms of excessive noise as a public nuisance – this would require a prolonged noise monitoring survey.*

**8. NEWS & UPDATES FROM ELECTED COUNCILLORS** This was the first LVCC attended by Moira Shemilt a new SNP Councillor for Livingston South so she gave a potted biography of herself and continued with comment on steep learning curve for her. She did not have anything specific to report relative to the LVCC patch but did remark about the urgent need for lots of housing which brought the usual comments from the meeting about housing may be increasing but that infrastructure lagged sadly behind in terms of traffic, education capacity and medical support. Alison Adamson echoed the housing needs and explained the lack of meaningful progress and problems with the Deans area housing. Alison also had no report specific to LVCC.

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

**10** **WEB & IT MATTERS** Margaret could not make the meeting so no report.

**At this point, time was running short and some residents indicated a wish to go so Brian stopped the agenda here. The notes that follow were not aired or discussed at the meeting but are included here for information and subsequent actions in the future.**

**11** **SECRETARIAL MATTERS** Since the last meeting the LVCC email in box received 17 relevant messages. Brian’s own e mail took 41 incoming messages relating to LVCC and he sent out 42. The salient incomers were as below – if any reader wants more detail contact Brian

A benefit conference for West Lothian Women’s Aid in Linlithgow on 24/11/17

Scottish Government Grants for Making Places close on 13/10/17

A Drive Smarter session at the stadium - demo of electric cars for the future – has passed

Tesco “bags” grant of funds. We could apply.

Ribbon of Poppies. We can get poppy seeds cheap to create a memorial

Invitation to take part in consultations on Bus services (closes 05/12/17) and Bus concession tickets (closes17/11/17) – Brian recommends we should participate in these and will have on agenda for next meeting.

Napier University have issued a report on an earlier consultation we were party to.

Runway maintenance means flight path diversions during all the weekends in October so you may notice different plane noises.

**12**  **AOCB**

Scottish MP Neil Findlay has asked to attend one of our meetings so he will come along to our November meeting after our office bearer selection.

The press has been full of the ban on fracking recently – We did submit a lengthy representation supporting a ban so we were one of the many who fought and won against this controversial technique.

Drains being blocked by leaves is back with us. WLC should be aware and particularly vigilant at pedestrian underpasses.

**12 NEXT MEETING** Our next meeting will be the inaugural meeting of the “new” LVCC and is **Thursday 2nd November at 7:00 pm** in the function room of Livingston Inn. Brian asked for a good turnout for this and for the guest speaker – Neil Findlay

*Brian D Johnstone 09/10/17 - with additions to para 7 on 20/10/17*