**Livingston Village Community Council**

**Report from the chair at AGM on Thursday 1st February 2018**

**Brian D Johnstone**

Well good evening everyone and welcome to this -- the 7th AGM of the Livingston Village Community Council.

 I will give you a quick review of what our community council got up to over the past 12 months.

 A wee bit of background first. We are a relatively young council and uniquely straddle 2 electoral wards so have 8 elected councillors to call on. We have within our area a good spread of houses, a primary school, acres of parkland, a share of the Almond River and diverse spread of industrial premises so our chats and activities can have very varied content.

This CC represents a population of around 2,700residents – small in comparison to Murieston at 5,800 or the largest in West Lothian Bathgate at nearly 21,000

As required by the Community Council Rules your elected Community Councillors all stood down in September and the statutory election was held. The result of which saw 8 residents becoming Community Councillors for the next 4 years. 5 of this team are old faces re-elected – myself, Catherine Brown, Margaret McQueen, Carole Robertson and Dean Swift, they were joined by new faces Jodi Conner, Angela Moohan, Shona Mackenzie. The team has grown and I look forward to greater participation by others taking some of the load off me. Already Minutes are now handled by Dean and he is also our planning secretary and so the work is starting to be shared more.

Our meetings this year have been reasonably attended - an average attendance of just over 13 per meeting compared to 15 for last year and 11 for the previous year. Looking back since the last AGM I noted attendances as 20, 12, 14, 10, 11, 17, 14, 16, but only 6 last month. A healthy attendance but more participation is vital our survival. After all we are a statutory body with rights to be consulted on any topic and able by rite to table our views at any forum or to any authority.

We hosted 4 guest speakers during this session.

First Jo Kilgoyne from West Lothian Womens’ Aid in April followed in May by Richard Fish from the Cyrenians OPAL project. In September Lorna Oldershaw from The River Forth team talked to us about the Killandean Gateway project. And in November one of our MSPs Neil Findlay addressed us.

On planning - we do assiduously monitor every planning application that is published in the weekly WLC list and are always hot on the trail of any remotely affecting our area or our area infrastructure as well as neighbouring areas.

 Currently we are watching detailing for the nursing home after a few recent roof changes which should start construction this yea. Also the small housing estate on the former Kirkton Business centre site behind the Inn’s car park. We keep an eye on Barratts 90 or so housing plans for the site off Old Cousland Road. We are still waiting for details to emerge for the possible housing on the former Thus site in Hunter Road – this one has been rumbling along since December 2016 with inadequate detailing for us to make any formal representation.

On the theme of representations we had a busy year lodging 6 submissions to Scottish Government on Scottish Planning Review, the 20 mph Bill, Climate Change, Unconventional gas and oil exploration -ie Fracking, Community Empowerment on Common Goods Property and finally Bus passes. We submitted to 3 WLC consultations – on Housing Policy, Green Networks and the Planning Enforcement Charter. In addition we voiced our views on The HMRC office closure and the Policing Consultation

Looking after The Village Square was continued with the summer bedding plants in our planters which have had signs added giving their ownership also signs on our phone box - which will soon have a proper notice board added to it. Circulating on the table are some photographs of the planters with summer plants also their spring time bulbs – just to show you the results of our efforts. I wish to put on record here our thanks to our volunteer planters – Dean and Shona.

On the green theme we have tried to take a stance on tree management and pressurise residents and land owners to act properly to maintain the woodland strips. Uncooperative land owners is not helping the cause and generates a strong frustration in me

We established a close link with our neighbouring Community Council in Eliburn and regularly exchange minutes, ideas and common problems. *(With tonight’s attendance by representatives of Dean CC probably more joined up thinking could emerge. OR We had invited the team from Deans CC but they have not turned up)*

We have own web site and started to participate in the social networks thanks to Margaret.

We maintain contact with local elected councillors regularly - some do take a keen interest in us but some do not bother at all – in fact some I have never even met.

We also keep in touch with the police - community policing is most welcome and seems to be getting results – but as with all services is at risk of the cost cutting exercises. Usually at least one of the officers attends our meetings.

We often have representatives at the Local Area Committee for both North and South wards – these are every 2 months, and also the quarterly NHS/CC meetings.

We maintained interest in the multiple projects associated with the Rivers Almond and Avon and their tributaries.

It is fair to say again that we get more invitations to meetings and to participate in events and consultations than we can cope with or on subjects of little or no concern to our residents.

I will close with an appeal for more to become community council members and for all of you to speak about us and get the message around of our activities and actions. Apathy is easy if there are no problems on your own doorstep but if we are to succeed we need help.

A very big thank you to the rest of the elected team – both our new members and the returning stalwarts from our previous team.

 Carole Catherine Margaret Dean Angela Jodi Shona– thanks to you all

And thanks to everybody else here present

Brian D Johnstone

Chair Livingston Village Community Council 01/02/18