

**LOANHEAD & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of ZOOM meeting 11 August 2020**

**Present:** Pat Kenny, Peter Frame, Norrie Scott, David Temple, Kelly Parry and Gina Temple.

1. **Apologies:** Daya Feldwick, Ruth Stephen, John Thomson and Paul Mepham.
2. **Minutes of previous meeting** – approved Pat Kenny, seconded Peter Frame.
3. **Matters Rising:**
  - **Stone Snake.** As noted in previous minutes, Midlothian Council had agreed in principle that the snake could be made into a structure and placed in the Memorial Park, subject to their approval of design, placement and no or very low maintenance. Therefore it should now be up to the Community to take this forward, perhaps through the schools.
  - **Resilience Group.** Gina had forwarded the email about the meeting to discuss Resilience Groups to Loanhead Parish Church, the Manager of the Link and Alan McLaren – she asked if any other groups should be included – Loanhead Miners. Pat Kenny, David Temple and Norrie Scott were interested in taking part.
  - **River Esk Improvement Group.** David Temple gave a brief summary of the 2.5 hour meeting. There were presentations by Forth Rivers Trust, Scottish Water and SEPA. He was surprised to hear that SEPA had not been working during the lockdown. There are no salmon/otters on the South Esk. Manganese and iron oxide is seeping from the mineworkings into the River. The spokesperson from Lothian Health Board said the current level was not harmful to humans, but it is killing off the bacteria and algae that are necessary to keep the river clean. Scottish Water check the river on a 2 weekly basis, and clean up right away if a problem is identified. The largest problem is raw sewage which is released into the river at high rainfall, in particular sanitary products, cotton buds etc. A campaign to educate children in schools about the problems will be undertaken and it is hoped that they will take the message home and educate the wider family about the damage this is causing. The next meeting is not planned for another 3 months.
4. **Planning.** All planning applications were noted and 20/00447/DPP to convert the former Loanhead Police Station into short term accommodation for homeless people was discussed in detail. Councillor Parry confirmed that objections to planning applications can only be made on the basis of the location, structure and fabric of the building – **not on its intended use.** Midlothian Council already has 2 other similar type of accommodations, one in Penicuik and another in Rosewell. The aim is to reduce the use of Bed & Breakfast Accommodation and to give longer support perhaps up to 8 weeks before a permanent tenancy can be arranged. The alternative is people sleeping in shop doorways or on the benches in the Park. She has categorical assurance from Midlothian Council that this facility will not be used for sex offenders as speculated on local facebook pages. It is to house people from our own communities off the streets. Councillor Kelly assured the meeting that this facility will be run by the Council, and not a “for profit private landlord”. Norrie cited the horrendous experience neighbours had with the Inveravon House when it was run as a homeless shelter, Kelly assured the meeting that as this will be run by the Council, and not a “private landlord” stricter practices would be adhered to and the Council do not envisage similar problems.
5. **Any other competent business.**
  - As the meeting time was about to end, Gina asked if anyone had any comments about any of the other planning applications or correspondence to email her.
  - David asked Kelly Parry if there was any update on the parking on Fountain Place – not so far.
  - The Gala Committee would like to purchase the garages attached to the old Police Station for storage space for furniture and fittings for the gala days. Pat Kenny to discuss with Kelly Parry.