

LOANHEAD & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
Minutes of ZOOM meeting on 11th May 2021

Present: David Temple, Peter Frame, Ruth Stephenson, Gina Temple, Norrie Scott, Councillors Pauline Winchester and Russell Imrie

1. **Apologies:** Pat Kenny and Paul Mepham
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting:** Peter Frame proposed, Ruth Stephen seconded.
3. **Matters arising**
 - Collapsed culvert in Hunter Avenue – a contractor has been appointed and work will start on 1st June for 4 weeks.
 - Participatory Budget Applications - Russell and Pauline confirmed that the following bids had been successful:
 - Goal posts for football club – already received
 - Improving the path along to Straiton Pond
 - Litter pickers for volunteers in Loanhead
 - Heritage Trail – all 3 councillors support this in principle but have asked for more information. Only capital expenditure can be covered so maps etc. will have to be sourced independently.
 - Gala Day Licences will not be required to be renewed this year as there were no events in 2020.
 - 24 Hawthorn Gardens – Peter Arnsdorf has indicated that it would be unfair to expect the current developer to pay for improving the pavement access to the benefit of residents of the two new larger housing estates, therefore no further action will take place.
 - Ruth acknowledged the support of several Midlothian Council employees from Cleansing and Countryside departments for their assistance with health and safety issues raised by herself and Norrie: Alan Heatly, Lindsay Haddow, James Kinch, Justin Venton and Mark Kenmure.
 - Gala Day garden display – will be discussed further at June meeting.
 - Dog Fouling – Russell reported that officers are patrolling all over Midlothian to try and curb the amount of dog litter. There were no stickers available yet. It was suggested that part of the problem was overflowing bins and that they need to be emptied more regularly.
4. **MTRaP** – no further meetings.
5. **Any other competent business**
 - Gina reported on a productive meeting with Roslin & Bilston CC, Peter Arnsdorf and Russell, a representative from Damhead CC and herself also attended. Peter was provided with a list of questions in advance of the meeting.
 - The next Local Development Plan will be adopted by early 2026 therefore it needs to be ready by early 2024 in order to allow representations and public examination. The National Planning Framework (NPF4) should be ready in draft form by this Autumn and the final version should be ready by autumn 2022.
 - The LDPs will now be reviewed every 10 years (instead of 5 years) and the updated version will be adopted by 2027. The current LDP was adopted in 2017.
 - Local Place Plan guidance will be available from the Scottish Government later this year and we should prepare our LPP by 2024. The 2019 Planning (Scotland) Act removed a tier of planning in terms of decision making, now greater weight is placed on NPF4 and Local Development Plans. NPF4 will supersede the current structure plan.
 - Expansion of house building in Midlothian. Russell explained that a number of current and recent housing developments had been in limbo for a number of years because the infrastructure: drainage, sewerage, broadband provision etc. were not sufficiently developed so they could not go ahead. Developers often start negotiations with Scottish Water at the pre-planning stage.

- Proposed new secondary school. Peter said that the Education Department were currently looking at a couple of sites. A new secondary school is scheduled for August 2024 so the planning process would have to begin in August 2021. There will be pre-planning consultation, then formal public consultations before the planning application is lodged.
 - Beeslack High School Grounds – there are rumours this will be sold off for Housing. Peter responded that this was not the case the whole site could not be used for housing – green space must be preserved. It was suggested that the school building could be utilised as a college for school leavers and adult re-training.
 - Infrastructure projects supported by developer contributions – the LPP should identify the infrastructure required e.g. schools, community facilities, open space provision, play areas etc. The problem for all Councils is that there are no resources to front load infrastructure projects. However, the Scottish Government is actively considering putting the “Infrastructure First” concept through the planning system NPF4 with the possibility of government loans.
 - Straiton – RDCC, Damhead and LDCC have all registered their initial concerns about the developments proposed and have suggested a Master Plan for the area is needed. Peter acknowledged these concerns and confirmed discussions with the landowners will take place over the summer by the Planning Department and then consultation with the elected members. He acknowledged that concerns had been raised with regard to the Straiton/Bush Science Park interface and the importance of there being appropriate links in terms of planning, including wildlife corridors, active travel etc.
 - Joanne Gillies (Damhead) raised concerns that ad hoc planning applications being considered for the area do not have a co-ordinated approach. Peter confirmed that these sites had been allocated in the local place plan for development, and the Council have no control over when applications will be lodged, but they do not look at individual planning applications in isolation and always take into account the bigger picture.
 - Sid Gardner (Roslin) raised the issue of fossil fuels for heating being phased out by 2025/2026 for new builds. Peter confirmed that there will be restrictions placed on the use of gas for heating within the new building regulations. Midlothian’s coal mines may turn out to be a viable source of heat recovery and could be used with a mixture of other sources such as solar and ground/air heat transfer methods. All new Council houses have solar panels fitted. Another possible alternative could be hydrogen.
 - Conservation and ecological friendly techniques will receive greater emphasis in the next LDP. It may start from the Climate Change Perspective and then develop further links into the concept.
- The ‘Slow Down’ sign at the entrance to Loanhead was removed by the developers and should be re-installed. Councillors to check with the Planners as to the status of these.
 - Loanhead Medical Practice Telephone System – currently the practice telephone system cannot cope with the volume of calls. Pauline confirmed this was a matter to be taken up with the individual practice and NHS Lothian.
 - Developer’s contributions: Mainly these are used to upgrade infrastructure, roads, schools etc. Russell confirmed requesting additional medical facilities through developers’ contributions was not a problem, getting doctors to work as GPs is.
 - Historic Environment Scotland would like to have a meeting with community groups to discuss their proposals for Mavisbank House further. Ruth was advised to check the Gala Day Programme for local organisation contacts.
 - Environmental Impact Screening - it is in the developer’s interest to carry out the screening so that it can identify any issues that may arise in the course of the development. Both Straiton West and New Pentland developers have expressed the opinion that this is not necessary for their projects.
 - CCTV – council officers will be meeting with the police and looking into the provision across the County.
 - Memorial Park sun dial – Ruth asked what had happened to this, Peter said it had been stolen, then the replacement was also stolen. It was agreed there was no point in pursuing this further.

- The CC recruitment poster has been placed on our noticeboard, copies were now ready for distribution to local shops etc.

6. Planning

- Following on from the discussion above Gina would raise objections to the Planning Applications discussed last month 21/00220/SCR and 21/00237/SCR for environmental screening being necessary. **[Gina - The Planning Portal would not allow me to make comment, may have been past the deadline.]**
- 21/00338/DPP Aldi store application states this is a brownfield site, as there has not been industrial buildings on this site, it has always been designated as agricultural land.
- 21/00310/DPP no objections to the Lidl plan as this is on an existing retail park.
- 21/003339/DPP EH20 Bar & Restaurant application to use pavement for external seating. It was agreed the pavement was wide enough so the CC would make no objection, but Gina was tasked to ensure local residents within the vicinity had been notified of the planning application so they could raise objections if they wished.