



## Minutes 8th November 2022

1. **Attendees:** J. Sives (Chair), Cllr D. Logue (from 7.30pm), Cllr V. Smith, S. Campbell, L. Cullen, N. Gwynne, I. Masterton, J. Thomas.

Apologies: Cllr C. John, Cllr D. Doran-Timson, K. McKeown, A. Pinkerton, K. Rees, I. Watt. A standing apology was noted for V. Garrad due to ongoing illness and his likely inability to attend in the near future.

The meeting was held in person at the Kirknewton Village Hall. No hybrid capability for remote participation via Zoom was requested by KCC members unable to attend in person.

2. **Declaration of interest:** None.

3. **Approval of previous meeting's minutes:** No amendments to the draft October minutes as circulated were noted. NG proposed approval. LC seconded. The Minutes were approved.

4. **Actions from previous meeting:** All actions have been addressed and closed. IM reported that a response from Pegasus Consultancy Ltd fully accepted the KCC request for inclusion in the consultancy exercise for the proposed Hatton Mains development.

5. **Councillors' Report: & Questions:**

- 5.1 Cllr VS reported that the biggest single issue is the lack of council and other affordable housing to meet current demand. There are over 14,000 people on WLC's housing waiting list, with many facing a protracted period on the list. Whilst actions are being assessed to address the problem, these are by no means a solution, and there is a crisis with respect to homelessness. JS commented that there are currently only 49 council houses in Kirknewton, and the wait for one to become available is several years, added to which urgent housing cases which arise can actually 'bump' applicants down the list. Cllr VS noted that WLC has spent over £600k in corresponding hotel & B&B costs, which together with the cost of living crisis seriously impact remaining available resources.
- 5.2 Cllr VS reported that Lothian Country Buses has been contacted to raise concerns at the unreliability of the X28 and other services. The response has been that there is a nationwide lack of drivers and that usage remains below pre-Covid levels. JS suggested that if greater reliability meant a less frequent (but guaranteed) service, this would be more acceptable than the current situation which is in fact now creating a risk to people's employment. He advised that Keith Muirhead at WLC has become involved in the discussions with Lothian Country, and has raised the critical complaint that the X28 not infrequently bypasses the Kirknewton loop to recover time and hence minimise any penalty for late arrival at the route terminus. JS intends to invite a director of Lothian Country to the December meeting to hear and respond to concerns. If Lothian Country does not accept the invitation, the matter will be escalated through the appropriate channels. NG added that there are long-standing systematic and structural issues in the provision of bus and train services which prevent effective integrated transport in this country.



- 5.3** Cllr VS reported a request from a local resident to create bus clearways at the bus stops in Main Street. JS expanded on this by noting that another complaint requested the removal of these bus stops, claiming this would reduce congestion. This claim was unanimously dismissed and the general consensus was not supportive of the removal of these bus stops, especially since they are among the most easily accessible and heavily used in the village. Cllr VS was reminded by JS that the implementation of yellow lines at the Smithy Brae and Whitemoss Road choke points remains pending.
- 5.4** Cllr VS reported on various wider activities:
- The (land) Access Forum is in the process of restarting. Going forwards, this will inform policy on recreational land use
  - Recycling is improving. Whilst there remains a long way to go, Cllr VS provided statistics showing a substantial improvement, specifically in the level of wrong material in blue bins, since the green bins were introduced.
  - There is a proposal to bring forward the replacement of school buildings at Craigshill and Riverside since the current buildings are beyond economical repair/refurbishment.
- 5.5** NG noted that there is money allocated to Active Travel which remains unspent. In WLC's case this is largely due to the Active Travel Manager role remaining unfilled following the departure of the previous incumbent. In Edinburgh's case no application for funding had been made. One specific consequence is that progress on the cycle route from Balerno to East Calder via Kirknewton has somewhat stalled. NG requested that the elected representatives follow up on this to capitalise on the significant progress and investment already made.

## **6. Cost of Living:**

- 6.1** JS reported on discussions with Ralph Bell, who oversees the WLC interests in Halls, Community Centres, etc. Most communities are still feeling their way in terms of what 'warm hub' provision can be provided, and when, but cooperation is evolving between the various bodies such as Community Councils, Churches, etc, to maximise the benefit across the communities. To that end, Kirknewton's hub in the Village Hall runs on Wednesdays. There is, however, an inbuilt resistance amongst many inhabitants against relying on 'charity', and it is important to look at a wider picture in terms of what would de-stigmatise the use and encourage people through the door. Image and branding are important: when Carmondean rebranded their 'Soup Kitchen' to 'Drop-In Café', their numbers went from zero to over 30. Various complementary activities may potentially be envisaged, and there is a desire to share experience and lever the success that several of the West Lothian communities have enjoyed. The intention is to review operations across West Lothian on a monthly basis
- 6.2** WLC has prepared an information leaflet which will be circulated to all households. This will advise what warm-hub facilities will be available. IM commented that it was a dense-packed 32-page document which may not be the best vehicle for general consumption. JS agreed, suggesting that a condensed extract targeted at householders. WLC are also proposing a face-to-face roadshow to help reinforce this information.

*[Cllr D. Logue joined the meeting at 7.30pm]*



- 7. KCDT Report:** In SMcK's absence, no KCDT report was presented.
- 8. Village Hall & Pavilion:** In IW's absence, JS provided a brief update:
- 8.1** The Town Centre Fund grant which was approved for the planting of fruit trees at Roosevelt Road and garden works at the Village Hall has still not been received. The delay on WLC's part engenders uncertainty as to what recourse KCC has if works are not able to be undertaken within the prescribed deadline. IM asked if any money had actually been received. JS confirmed that about £7500 had been forthcoming. Cllr DL advised that if the money is committed, it should be secure. JS countered that there has to be something in place to ring-fence the money, ie, contracts or Work-in-Progress, neither of which are possible without actual funds being available
- LC queried if the funds for the fruit trees and the Hall garden refurbishment had been approved. JS confirmed that the fruit trees had been fully approved. He advised that some issues had been raised regarding 'accessible' access to the proposed Hall garden ground. Given the topography of the garden ground, it has been considered impractical to apply overly strict accessibility criteria, and the proposal is deemed legally compliant.
- 8.2** The use of the Pavilion by the Kirknewton football team is proving very successful, despite a recent 'on-pitch lesson'!
- 9. Planning:**
- 9.1** In VG's absence, a watching brief is being maintained with respect to current planning proposals.
- 9.2** IM reiterated his report at item 4 above that a response from Pegasus Consultancy Ltd fully accepted the KCC request for inclusion in the consultancy exercise for the proposed Hatton Mains development.
- 9.3** No further communication has been received with respect to the Park and Ride at Kirknewton Station. The official closure date subsequent to the Reporter's findings is in December
- 10. KCC Vacancy**
- 10.1** F. Lynch tendered his resignation from Kirknewton Community Council by letter, prior to the current meeting. His resignation was accepted, with appreciation of his involvement in the Community Council over many years. As a result, a 14-day notice period is prescribed for any prospective replacements to put themselves forward.
- Given that Kirknewton is one of the very few Community Councils which attracted sufficient interest to require an election in 2021, it has been confirmed with the Community Council Officer at WLC that it would be in order to co-opt the topmost non-elected candidate in that election, should no-one else put themselves forward. It was therefore emphasised to the meeting that should anyone believe that there is an alternative candidate who would wish to be considered for the vacancy, they should advise them to make their position known by 6.45pm 22<sup>nd</sup> November.
- 10.2** In accordance with the foregoing, JS proposed that KCC considers co-opting Sandra Terris, for consideration at the next KCC meeting.



## 11. Bus Service:

**11.1 X28 Bus Service:** See 5.2 above. There was some discussion to bring Cllr DL up to speed.

## 12. Consultations:

**12.1 East Calder Health Centre:** There have been more than 600 responses to the consultation survey. This is a good level of response, which will validate the requirement for response level. JS outlined the current state of play:

- The budget is outwith the WLC limit, so is under Scottish Government control
- Given the past history, we are now in a 'take it or leave it' position – the latter implying a knock-back for more than a decade
- Ideas are being collated based on the feedback, to be presented to KCC in December.
- Issues surrounding transport to the surgery remain to be resolved
- During the rebuild phase only, Kirknewton residents may need to use the Ratho surgery

**12.2 WLC Budget Survey:** There was a discussion on the WLC budget survey. Cllr DL noted that money does not follow population migration. New build in West Lothian to accommodate migration from the West of Scotland accrues no additional funding for services or additional infrastructure.

**12.3 Police Survey:** JS noted that many issues making demands on the Police are deemed drug related. Cllr DL concurred. JT reported that Neighbourhood Watch would be willing to talk to KCC. JS advised that a leaflet on 'Report It' will be circulated. Crimestoppers is the best method to report suspect behaviour.

## 13. AOB

**13.1 Twinning:** NG reported that discussions with Saily-lez-Lannoy are unable to proceed. Their budget for twinning activities is orders of magnitude greater than ours. The concept that Kirknewton could realistically twin with anywhere given our available budget is patently dead in the water.

**13.2 War Memorial:** LC outlined activities relating to the War Memorial.

## 14. Next Meeting

The next meeting is on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 18.45, in-person at the Village Hall. By prior agreement, access to a hybrid meeting can be arranged

The Chair concluded the meeting with thanks to all who had taken part.