

Linlithgow Planning Forum
Minutes of Meeting held 5th April 2018

1. **Present:** Ron Smith (RS) Convenor (BB, LBT, L&LBCC), John Kelly, (JK) (L&LBCC, LBT), Marilynne MacLaren (MM)(Chair LCT), Máire McCormack (MMcC)(L&LBCC & TL), David Tait (DT) (LBA, WLC), David Timperley (DGT) (LBT), Mike Vickers (MV), (LBT, L&LBCC & LBA)
2. **Apologies:** Fraser Falconer (LCDT, LLBCC), Sue Friel (SF)(Chair TL & L&LBCC), Martin Crook (LLBCC, TMG),
3. **Minutes of the meeting of 2nd February 2018:** Approved.
4. **Matters Arising:**
 - a. **Assets in the common good:** Annet House – not discussed.
 - b. **Lamp Posts at County Buildings:** the refurbishment of the lamps was discussed at the Town Management Group meeting on 21 March. A vote was taken which was 6 to 1 in favour of accepting the lower quote for the refurbishment of the lamps. The Chair has subsequently refused to accept the decision of the Town Management Group. The Civic Trust will write to the Chief Executive of West Lothian Council. The Community Council will take appropriate action. **Action RS/JK**
 - c. **Vennel/Town Centre Charrette:** JK, RS and DGT to measure up on site on Wednesday 11th April and prepare a schedule of accommodation. **Action JK/RS/DGT**
5. **Templars Court – Meeting with McCarthy & Stone on 1st February.** The minutes of 1st February record the discussion with Jonathan Fair, regional managing director of McCarthy and Stone and Campbell Purves, regional planner, The Planning Bureau Ltd. The outcome of the meeting demonstrated McCarthy and Stone's wish to stabilise the neighbouring building and establish a landscaped area. DGT raised concern that the only evidence of the disadvantageous geological position is based on the investigation by McCarthy and Stone. Independent evidence is required to support this conclusion. It was pointed out that McCarthy and Stone have a commitment to the existing residents. It was the view of the meeting that Craig McCorrison should appoint independent consultants to carry out a ground survey and recommend a foundation solution for the consented structure. DT pointed out that McCarthy and Stone must make a planning application as part of their proposed next stage. DT will contact Craig McCorrison and report back to the planning forum. **Action DT**
6. **Victoria Hall.** The current TTRO for the scaffolding & demolition of Victoria Hall which commenced on 29 January expires on 29 April. It is anticipated that an extension will be applied for. Craig McCorrison in his e-mail of 5th February 2018 confirmed that the facade will remain until a building contract has been let; however, making the building safe to protect the public overrides this condition. The question remains whether the building has now been made safe and how many extensions to the TTRO can be applied for? It was agreed to write to Craig McCorrison requesting an update and to raise the

issue at the Local Area Committee. The impact on the Linlithgow conservation area should be explicitly stated. DT will also raise this issue with Craig McCorrison.

Action JK/DT

7. **Meeting with the MSP's:** The meeting with Graham Simpson MSP and Andy Wightman MSP to discuss the Plan for the Future in the context of the new Planning Bill took place on Monday, 19th February. A note of the meeting prepared by the clerk Stephen Imrie was circulated. MV stated that he had attended subsequent meetings at the Parliament and had an e-mail exchange with Andy Wightman. There was concern that the phrase "local place plans" was being used without a clear definition. MV agreed to circulate again his report.

Action MV

A number of points were made regarding local place plans:

- There is no point in a plan which cannot be delivered.
- There was a view that the Plan for the Future was far ahead of current thinking on local place plans reflected in the Planning Bill.
- There is a need to develop a template and structure for discussion which encourages community empowerment.

There is a concern that central and local government are only able to consider a top down approach exemplified by the statement in the notes of the meeting with West Lothian Council officers which stated that one of the officers' challenges is to "manage community expectations". MV stated that some form of pro forma approach was required and questioned whether we had the resources to mentor other communities.

The question of how we feed into the Parliamentary process was also raised and how we reconnect with MSP's and understand the next steps in the context of the Planning Bill. It was agreed that the Planning Forum should write to Graham Simpson and Andy Wightman to request an informal meeting at the Parliament to gain insight of the next steps.

Action JK

8. **Planning List items:**

- a. 0201/FUL/18. Application by McTaggart and Mickel homes Ltd for the construction of 48 houses with access road, parking, landscaping and associated works; land at Edinburgh road Linlithgow. DGT passed to JK the summary of the points being raised by the Civic Trust. JK reported the discussion at Community Council which oppose the development on the grounds of the educational product of the development exceeding the capacity of Linlithgow Academy. JK also raised concerns that West Lothian Council officers, in discussion with developers, were agreeing to a commuted sum for social housing rather than the provision of social housing in Linlithgow. This application is opposed.

Action JK/DGT

9. **Plan for the Future:** RS confirmed that he had received no comments on completed sections to date. JK intimated that there were difficulties in writing the housing section in the light of the housing sites in the local development plan being in opposition to those in the Plan for the Future. Further, the new WLC policy on affordable housing was not to be issued until the local development plan has been approved by ministers which was likely at the end of April. It was agreed to re-circulate the list of authors for the Plan for the Future sections.

Action JK

10. **AOB:** Three items were raised:

- a. There was a brief discussion of the implications of "BID mark 2" which would encompass a reorganised structure and a more ambitious town-based community with business approach. "BID mark 1" has been granted only a one-year extension. DT will forward the formal notice to councils regarding "BID mark 2".

Action DT

- b. MMcC gave a short presentation on the peace garden and described a meeting with Chris Gunstone. The primary issue was the felling of three healthy trees. MMcC made a number of points:
- the local residents enjoy the existing trees.
 - there is general opposition to the felling of healthy trees.
 - the trees are within a conservation area.
 - local residents feel that decisions are being imposed without any consultation.
 - There is concern that the attractiveness of the garden as a wedding photographic venue is superseding its true purpose.

MM replied as follows:

- the three self-seeded woodland trees are being replaced by 10 trees more suitable for a garden.
- The replacement of the trees will allow more light into the garden.
- The garden is designed to be low maintenance and disability friendly.
- The existing sycamore trees attract greenfly such that when the leaves fall, paths become a very slippery.
- A planning application has been submitted by Linlithgow Peace Garden, a new organisation registered as a charity.

Following the agreement on the design, consultation will be undertaken at an exhibition in the library and the Burgh Halls.

- c. MV queried whether the Civic Trust had a publication describing the Linlithgow conservation area and Linlithgow as a conservation town. It was important to make the point that West Lothian Council should be concerned in conserving Linlithgow as a conservation town and that this should be a driver for a question at the Local Area Committee.

11. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be on 3rd May 2018 at 3.30pm at the Partnership Centre. 2018 meetings will be on the following dates:

3 rd May	5 th July	4 th October
7 th June	no August meeting	1 st November
	6 th September	6 th December

Meeting closed at 17.02.

John Kelly,
Secretary,
8th April 2018