

**Midlothian Federation of Community Councils.
Annual General Meeting Minutes.
15 December 2021
Zoom**

1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES

Diane Easton (DE)	Bonnyrigg and Lasswade
Ann Stewart-Kmicha (ASK)	Dalkeith (Treasurer)
Andrew Watt (AW)	Dalkeith
Neil Johnston (NJ)	Damhead
Robin Barclay (RB)	Eskbank and Newbattle
Rebecca Lewis (RL)	Eskbank and Newbattle
Christina Harley (CH)	Eskbank and Newbattle
Louise	Gorebridge
Caroline Brown (CB)	Howgate
Pat Kenny (PK)	Loanhead
Robert Hogg (RH)	Mayfield and Easthouses (Chair)
Judy Thomson (JH)	Mayfield and Easthouses
Lorna Crook (LC)	Moorfoot
Andrew Marshall (AM)	Newtongrange
Dougie West (DW)	Poltonhall
Edith Cameron (EC)	Rosewell
Jim Hiddleston (JH)	Roslin / Bilston
Mirabelle Maslin (MM)	Roslin / Bilston
Gordon Brown (GB)	Tynewater
Myrtle Pont (MP)	Tynewater
Mags Elliot (ME)	
Jim Orr (JO)	Tynewater

APOLOGIES

Vicky Milton (Danderhall)

2 IN ATTENDANCE

Paul Johnson	Midlothian Council (Minutes)
Peter Arnsdorf	Midlothian Council - Senior Manager, Planning Sustainable Growth and Investment

3 MINUTES OF 2020 AGM

Approved: Judy Thomson

Seconded: Dougie West

4 CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- i** Robert welcomed those present to the meeting and gave notification of apologies having been submitted.
- ii** Robert expressed his thanks for the dedication and hard work of Federation attendees and members of Midlothian's Community Councils during the past year.
- iii** He highlighted that it had been a tough year during the pandemic for Midlothian's communities and their residents. Community Councillors have been working hard and have played a very important part in supporting communities through the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown.
- iv** He highlighted that some Community Councils have been able to return to face-face meetings, while other were conducting 'hybrid' meetings with some people on Zoom and others meeting in a room.
- v** There was recognition that it has been difficult for some Community Councils to retain membership, however there had been positive examples where membership had been increased.
- vi** He noted that the situation may be deteriorating again with the increase in infections, due to the Omicron strain.
- vii** He noted that many Council officers were (as instructed) working from home and this has made meeting them a little more difficult.
- viii** During the past year, the Federation had maintained its representation on a wide range of groups including Environmental issues, Care for People, Midlothian Traffic Roads and Paths, Planning and Community Planning. This has meant that the Federation has had an increased influence on the planning and delivery of service provision in the County.
- ix** He thanked all of the Federation's representatives for the work they had undertaken during the previous year.
- x** Robert went on to express his appreciation for the support provided by Midlothian Council Officers and in particular, the Communities Lifelong Learning and Employability Team members, to the Federation and local community councils. He highlighted that the support provided (funding, training, liaison with Midlothian Council departments and signposting to relevant third sector organisations) had enabled Community Councils to operate more effectively on behalf of the communities they represent.
- xi** He was pleased to highlight that Annette Lang (Group Services Manager) will be attending the MFCC meeting in January 2022.

5 MFCC TREASURERS REPORT

- i The Treasurer presented the report on MFCC finances, detailing the income and expenditure for the previous financial year.

Opening Balance	£5437.48
Income - Midlothian Small Grant Fund (Year 3).	£1000.00
Itemised Expenditure	
Planning Democracy Workshop	£200.00
Mackay Hannah – Online NPF4 Workshop	£81.00
Newtongrange CC Noticeboard	£570.00
Roslin and Bilston CC Noticeboard	£570.00
Zoom Licenses (2) Annual Fee	£287.76
Edinburgh Airport Noise Board (Secretarial contribution)	£34.43
Mirabelle Maslin (Gift)	£6.99
Total Expenditure	£1750.18
Closing Balance	£4687.30

- ii ASK (Treasurer) noted that a copy of the independently examined, signed accounts would be distributed after the meeting. AW (Dalkeith) noted that it would have helped if the accounts had been circulated before the meeting.
- iii ASK informed those present that MFCC had been unsuccessful in its Midlothian Council Large Grant Application
- iv ASK noted the deadline for submission for Midlothian Council Small Grants has been extended until Wednesday, 5 January, 2022.
- v All Community Councils are entitled to apply to the fund for an administration grant and additionally, can apply for funds to carry out other projects.
- vi PAJ (Midlothian Council) had previously sent out information in November, about the Grant Application process but will resend the information.
- vii ASK advised group members that it will be necessary to change the Federation Banking provider.

6 ELECTION OF OFFICIALS AND REPRESENTATIVES

- i Robert offered to stand down from his position as Chairperson of the Federation. Those present acknowledged the dedication and hard work that Robert brings to the role of Chairperson, highlighting the fact that he plays an anchor role within the Federation and that they wished him to stand for re-election.
(See nominations on next page)

Chairperson Robert Hogg
Nominated Andrew Watt
Seconded Robin Barclay

Vice Chairperson Cath McGill
Nominated Andrew Watt
Seconded Robert Hogg

Cath was not present at the meeting so this will be subject to her acceptance of the nomination

Treasurer Anne Stewart Kmicha
Nominated Robert Hogg
Seconded Myrtle Pont

ASK indicated that she would accept the nomination in the interim but wished to step down after a maximum period of 6 months.

EC (Rosewell) requested that ASK circulate information about the duties of the MFCC Treasurer. ASK agreed to do so.

OTHER NOMINATIONS

As noted in the Chairperson's report, members are able to represent the views of the Federation on a range of groups, including:

- Community Planning Working Group
 - Community Planning Board
 - Licensing Forum- (Robert Hogg)
 - Improving Opportunities Midlothian
 - Climate Challenge Board
 - Edinburgh Airport Noise Board (Andrew Watt)
 - Midlothian Traffic Roads and Paths
 - Access Forum
- i Members were asked to consider whether they would be interested in representing the Federation on these groups.
 - ii AW is happy to remain as the contact for EANB but is keen that another member of the Federation act as someone who could attend in his absence.
 - iii There was agreement that a short description of the roles of representatives would be circulated.

7 A.O.C.B.

Midlothian Climate Challenge Board

Rebecca Lewis was introduced to the group. Rebecca is the Chairperson of the Midlothian Climate Challenge Board and a member Eskbank and Newbattle Community Council.

Rebecca highlighted that it will be important to have good communication links between the Board and the Federation of Community Councils.

Rebecca had given a presentation at the Community Planning Day in November, which is now available on the Council's YouTube Channel.

8 DATE OF NEXT AGM

Wednesday 15 November 2022 (Provisional).

9 PRESENTATION BY PETER ARNSDORF, MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL - SENIOR MANAGER, PLANNING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND INVESTMENT

A Guide to the Scottish Planning System

- i In response to a request made by MFCC members, Peter Arnsdorf presented an overview of the Scottish Planning System.
- ii The presentation provided an overview of the Scottish Planning system, including National, Regional, Local planning hierarchy, Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, Draft National Planning Framework 4, Development Plans, Development Management and Enforcement, Key players in the planning system, Opportunities for community engagement throughout planning process and finally, the Introduction of Local Place Plans
- iii A copy of the presentation has been circulated separately
- iv See a brief summary of the presentation below

Why have a Planning System?

- To provide a framework in which decisions can be made regarding future development and the use of land in our towns and countryside.
- To enable us to consider where development should take place and where it should not.
- To regulate the use of land and buildings by granting or refusing planning permission.
- To balance competing demands to make sure that land is used and developed in the public's long-term interests.

Planning System Hierarchy (also see Presentation)

- Planning systems are changing and the 'National Planning Framework 4' is being introduced.
- Consultation on the Framework will continue until March 2022
- Housing targets will now be over a period of 10 years. The current figure for Midlothian is 8050 units over the next 10 years.

Local Development Plans

- Set out the long term vision for where development should and shouldn't happen (e.g. housing and employment land allocations)
- Contain policy for which development proposals are assessed against.
- The current Local Development Plan lasts for a period of 5 years, however the new Local Development Plan (2026) will be for a period of 10 years.

Local Place Plans (See slide 11 of presentation)

- Introduced by Planning (Scotland) Act 2019
- Provides a framework for communities to develop proposals for the development and use of land in the place where they live
- Preparation process yet to be defined, **but what we do know:**
- Duty on planning authorities to publish an invitation to prepare LPP before preparation of LDP
- Community bodies submit Local Place Plans to their local planning authority
- The planning authority will register the Local Place Plans giving them status in the LDP process
- Should the authority choose not to register the plan it must give its reasons to the community body
- Every planning authority must make public a map showing all the land relating to registered Local Place Plans
- Further guidance to be prepared by Scottish Government is expected Jan 2022
- Midlothian Planning Service will engage with community groups on the detail once published

How community members can participate in the planning process

- Consultation and engagement during the preparation of the Local Development Plan
- Opportunity to comment on planning applications
- Elect local Councillors who will sit on the Planning Committee

- Attend pre-application consultation events on major applications and make comment to developers
- Submit general enquiries to the Duty Planner Service

USEFUL INFORMATION

- <https://www.transformingplanning.scot/>
 - [Planning Reform | Transforming Planning](#)
 - [Scotland 2045: Our Fourth National Planning Framework – Draft - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
 - [An overview of Draft NPF4 by the Scottish Government Chief Planner - YouTube](#)
 - [Place Principle: introduction - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
 - [local place plans – PAS](#)
 - [RTPI | The Planning System in Scotland](#)
 - [Planning circular 2/2021 - planning system - promotion and use of mediation: guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
 - [Community empowerment - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- v At the conclusion of the presentation MFCC members were invited to submit questions (see responses below).

The Chairperson (Robert Hogg) thanked Peter for his detailed presentation and the opportunity for new members of Community Councils to be able to learn about national and local planning systems. He asked what lessons had been learned during the pandemic and whether systems have been changed?

PA - Previously systems had been predominately paper based and now is much electronically based. This has been beneficial in many cases but on occasions such as when reviewing plans or drawings then it has not been ideal.

The Planning department have maintained a full service throughout the pandemic; planning is a key component of economic recovery. Still providing advice and support. PA has had to consider the welfare of departmental staff and, in order to reduce potential adverse reactions re planning matters/decisions, a greater number of interactions have been via email rather than on the telephone.

Have operated a full service where possible. Volume of development activity dipped slightly but now has returned to pre pandemic levels. PA also has responsibility for Economic Development and that section has maintained its support to the local business community, supporting them throughout the Covid pandemic.

JT (Mayfield)

Local Development Plan – change from 10 years – is it still valid?

PA – Midlothian Council had previously planned for a longer term rather than just the 5 year period (safeguarded some sites), so had some potential ideas in place to plan for the longer term.

There are some changes happening, greater number of social housing, new learning estate strategy, and greater emphasis on Climate change. The Local Development Plan is robust but there are challenges.

AW (Dalkeith) thanked Peter for his presentation, relating to the proposals for 8050 new housing units over 10 years – what input does Midlothian Council have into these figures?

PA – This has been a centralised government proposal. This has been as result of a formal assessment and research based on anticipated growth in the Midlothian, Edinburgh and South East. The figures reflect this demand. There is recognition that some Midlothian communities have experienced a high demand and pressure to supply housing.

Some of these sites are already identified and have been put aside and will meet this demand (2000 in Shawfair and 1000 in the Hopefield area).

GB (Tynewater) Local Place Planning and response from local communities and lack of available time to complete.

PA – There will be pressure and it is a tight timeline to gather information. Some work has already been undertaken behind the scenes to gather information. There will be support from Midlothian Council. There will be a fine line between providing support for Local Place Plans but not telling Communities how to undertake them. LPP's will be a community based initiative that will be required to be the Community's plan rather than the Council's. Midlothian Councils will assist communities to negotiate the legislation and will be engaging with community based organisations once the guidance has been published.

Guidance for LPP's – the Planning service will be happy to provide guidance and support once the Scottish Government guidance has been published. The Planning service will be supporting local communities, particularly with the legislation. The Planning Service will provide a distinct session on Local Place Plans

EC (Rosewell) Planning Permission – how long is it valid for?

PA – Grant of planning permission lasts for 3 years but can be extended. Government has extended the period due to COVID. Companies have to have made a start on work during that period. The time period is based on when the work has commenced not

when it is completed. PA is available to advise on individual projects if required, peter.arnsdorf@midlothian.gov.uk.

MP (Tynewater) Local Place Plans – Tynewater is being affected by developments in other areas

There would appear to be a gap between housing provision and the provision of social and recreational facilities and provision.

PA – LPP's - could be one plan created across a rural community, could be a dispersed community. NPF4 emphasises the value of the protection of green spaces. Shifts the balance to valuing these spaces much more and may offer protection to keep them when housing development is being considered

PK (Loanhead) Planning department appears to be on the side of developers where decisions are concerned. What is the provision of social housing in the planned 8050 housing units?

PA – Planning department is trying to maintain balance between housing development, creation of new jobs and social provision. Do not intend to come down on one side or the other. Currently the provision of affordable housing is 25% but this figure may increase in the next LDP, but will not go down.

CH (Eskbank and Newbattle) Concerned about the volume of work involved in creating Local Place Plans and meeting the deadlines.

PA – Recognises that there will be a heavy burden on communities. Requirements involved in the work and creation of LPP's will be clearer once the guidance has been published. There will be support from Planning and CLLE. There may be also some slippage in the timescales. Communities will be able to learn from each other and this may aid the process.

ASK (Dalkeith) How will young people be engaged in the planning process? Conservation Area Management Appraisal. Local Government Housing review. Town Centre Signage

PA – will need to adapt communication processes, meet young people in schools, and use social media. Will need to go out and engage young people proactively.

Do take on aboard the Conservation Area Management Appraisal – for grant funding and influence new developments.

Signage – Some don't need consent and not regulated by the Council. Can have express consent for 5 years and this has to be renewed. If there are concerns then get in touch with Peter and he will ask one of the Planning Officers to investigate. Local Government Housing Planning. Similar to NPF4 so response will be made at the end of March

JT (Mayfield) Infrastructure – what impact can the Planning service have on this?

PA – Midlothian Council is able to control some aspects but there are others that are not under its control. For example Midlothian Council can undertake consultations with health providers but cannot insist that they recruit more staff or offer greater provision in areas of development.

AW (Dalkeith) raised the issue of Elected members not contributing to discussions about planning in Community Council meetings.

PA – Elected members are able to have a conversations about planning matters but cannot pre judge applications, not offer any points of view or get involved in any debates or express an opinion either way. They do have a role to play in planning matters and can make enquiries and ask questions in order to obtain information.

In Midlothian all members are members of the Planning Committee but this could change if a new Administration wished to do so in the future.

JO (Pathhead) Zones for housing for next 5 - 10 years

PA - MLDP sets out these zones in MAP and text format. They are available on the Council website. MFCC members can contact Peter by email to obtain further information if they are interested in one particular location.

DW (Poltonhall) Observed that the Scottish Government Reporter often overrides decisions made by Midlothian Council.

PA - NPF4 may assist with this and will protect against what local communities may consider to be spurious appeal decisions. NPF4 also takes into account issues other than Housing and Development. Under NPF4 there will be more protection for 'green' and 'social concerns', 'health and social well-being'. Midlothian has the highest level of Developer Contributions per unit in Scotland.

Climate Change Policy

Midlothian has a new climate change strategy ([Climate Change Strategy | Midlothian's Climate Change Strategy 2020](#)) – sets out the ambitions of the Council, e.g. Passivhaus standard for its own new housing. There are also a range of other initiatives such EV charging points, Bio diversity enhancement, flood mitigation etc.

Council has a commitment to be zero carbon by 2030. Focus of all Council activities will encompass issues of climate change

Infrastructure

Not all the responsibility of Midlothian Council. Other organisations have a responsibility. Can get resources to fund local infrastructure but Government or other National bodies have responsibilities and or resources. System can be market driven e.g. will provide resources if there is a market for them e.g. growth in population. Also a need to retain local skills and businesses – provision of housing and transport for existing communities will be very important.

Sewage provision – is part of the Planning process. Midlothian Council do consult with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and there is a lot of discussion and interaction between Midlothian Council and SEPA to obtain the best outcomes.

Bus services – Midlothian Council works in partnership with Lothian Buses and provides grants to support buses services where feasible.

Appreciation by MFCC members

On behalf of the all of those present, thanked Peter for his presentation and taking the time to answer further questions posed by those present. He also thanked the MFCC members present for their responses to the input.