

PRESENT:

Diane Easton (DE)	Bonnyrigg and District
Ann Stewart-Kmicha (ASK)	Dalkeith and District
Andrew Watt (AW)	Dalkeith and District
Joanne Gilles (JG)	Damhead and District
Robert Hogg (RH)	Mayfield & Easthouses and District (Chair)
Paul McGrath (PMcG)	Moorfoot & District
Sarah Matthews (SM)	Newtongrange & District
Ken Brown (KB)	Penicuik and District
Jim Hiddleston (JH)	Roslin and Bilston

IN ATTENDANCE

Paul Johnson (PJ)	Midlothian Council - Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability
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Apologies

Gordon Brown	Tynewater and District
Eddie Robertson	Gorebridge and District
Judy Thomson	Mayfield & Easthouses and District (Treasurer)
Robin Barclay	Eskbank and Newbattle
Barbara Mackie	Eskbank and Newbattle

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

RH (Chairperson) welcomed Community Councillors to the meeting.

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES APPROVAL & MATTERS ARISING

ASK highlighted that the word 'Community' should be removed from the name of Midlothian Climate Action Network (page 6 of January Minutes). PJ will update the minutes before posting on the Federation website

Moved: Joanne Gilles

Seconded: Andrew Watt

MATTERS ARISING

i MFCC Bank Account

- A new Bank Account has been opened with the Bank of Scotland.
- Funds have been transferred from the Virgin Banking account which has now been closed.

ii MFCC representative on the Midlothian Climate Action Network

- At the last meeting there was agreement that MFCC would benefit from being represented on the group.
- As of the date of the meeting there had been no one coming
- MFCC members were asked to consider whether they would like to join MCAN as representative of MFCC.

3. LOCAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL UPDATES

Bonnyrigg and District

- i** No update

Dalkeith and District

- i** No update

Damhead

- i** Resilience equipment provided by Midlothian Council has now been distributed to more isolated parts of the community, and wider community informed of their locations.
- ii** A Community Litter Pick is planned for end February (taking advantage of part of Old Pentland Road being closed at that point). We have a particular challenge re how to safely litter pick the A703 bends up to the Hillend triple junction. Very dangerous for pickers, but much needed. Have any other CCs any suggestions, or experience of arranging traffic management solutions?
ASK (Dalkeith) advised that warning triangles are helpful and also informing Police Scotland to raise awareness.
- iii** Following a lot of intensive activity with the community and time drafting, our draft LPP has now been circulated to Councillors and adjoining CCs for comments by 15 March. Ensuring this is written in a way that will inform and influence MLDP2 policies has been particularly challenging.

Danderhall and District

- i No update

Eskbank and Newbattle

- i No update

Gorebridge and District

- i No update

Howgate and District

- i No update

Loanhead

- i No update

Mayfield and Easthouses

- i No update

Moorfoot

- i **Planning matters:**
Donald Wilkins from Breedon gave us a review of their proposed extension to Temple Quarry. The proposal is shortly going to the final planning application stage.
- ii ***Our CC objection to NWH's planning application.***
to have a recycling plant together with quarry reinstatement was submitted. Cllr Douglas Bowen has called in the application to be considered at a full planning meeting.
- iii ***Torfichen Wind Farm:***
Moorfoot CC will be objecting to this planning application and are taking advice from Heriot CC on this.
- iv **'A Right of Way' issue:**
Two residents from Borthwick told us of the blocking of a right of way. Two gates (unlocked) have been erected on the Right of Way, plus signage for both the Gore Way and the walk to Crichton Castle have been interfered with. Planning was not able to become involved. The CC will take the case to the next MTRaP meeting. This situation gives clear evidence of why an Access Officer in Midlothian is essential.

v Local Place Plans:

The CC had sadly come to the conclusion that they would not be able to complete the LPP to the required standard by the deadline. They have prepared the evidence from the public consultation and have been invited to submit this.

Newtongrange

- i Have concluded the stage of working on the Local Place Plan which has been submitted.
- ii The process has been useful in that it has raised items that might not be appropriate for the LPP but will provide guidance for the CC's activities in the future.
- iii Met to discuss 'Crawlees Road' developments with Mayfield & Easthouses and Gorebridge Community Councils – was a productive meeting

Penicuik and District

- i Potholes between Tesco and Beeslack High School had been reported through the Council system and been reported as having been repaired. It would appear that this has in fact not been the case.
- ii PJ highlighted that Moira Cuthbert (MC) is the PDCC representative who attends the MTRaP group. PDCC can ask MC to raise items on behalf of PDCC
PJ will add Potholes to the agenda for the MTRaP meeting on 4 March.

Rosewell and District

- i No update

Roslin and Bilston

- i We had a visit from Police Scotland at our January meeting with 2 Officers attending and were asked for our top 5 priorities and produced.
 - Anti-Social Behaviour
 - Congestion near schools
 - Speeding
 - Burglary
 - School Visits

- ii There has been discussion for some time re splitting Roslin & Bilston Community Councils however the consensus was to leave this and revisit in a year after consultation with MDC and locals. Meantime Bilston are holding a 'Make Bilston Better' public meeting to form a subgroup to work on specific projects.
- iii Roslin are forming a Village Development Trust with a steering group formed to drive this forward and build membership. Ultimate aim is to access £350k of Community developers' contributions and find further investment to expand and refurbish the Community Hall.
- iv We have objected to the Midlothian Roundabout sponsorship scheme not in principle but specifically at the Bilston corridor roundabout which currently has 4 large signs relating to the housing developments and does not need any more to distract drivers!
- v Taylor Wimpey have donated £750 to the annual Fun Day/Fete in September. The Men's Shed received £250 from Baynes without even asking!
- vi Significant work has been carried out at the Curling Pond to create a Bird Hide and improve the area for visitors.
- vii Midlothian Climate Fund supported us with funding to plant Fruit Trees at various community spaces including the Medical Surgery and Pharmacy.
- viii A new sport has been introduced to Roslin...Pickleball with a regular group enjoying the game.
- ix We attended a workshop held by MVA on Community Benefits & Gift Aid and intend to sign up to these portals.

Tynewater

- i No update

4. MIDLOTHIAN 2024-2025 BUDGET – COUNCIL LEADER KELLY PARRY (KP)

- i KP highlighted that the meeting papers for the February Meeting, when the budget will be agreed and set, are out for consideration.
- ii The settlement from Scottish and UK governments has only been recently finalised and this had had an impact on preparations for presenting the budget.
- iii In December 2023 it had been forecast that there would be a shortfall of £7.2m.

- iv** Subsequently the Scottish Government has announced funding to support an equivalent of 5% rise in Council Tax. Midlothian had been intending to impose a 3% rise.
- v** Midlothian Council had successfully lobbied for an increase in its budget funding to reflect the significant rise in population growth.
- vi** It is not anticipated that there will be cuts to services in the 2024-2025 financial year.
- vii** Dividends are one-off payments, currently spending £10m more than income.
- viii** Anticipated that there will be a gap in funding of £5m (2025-26), £12m (2026/27) and £20m (2027/28).
- ix** The Council is seeking views about Council Tax charges on second homes.
- x** Increases in financial support for Foster Carers have been agreed.
- xi** Once the budget has been set at the next council meeting, there will be no changes in mid-year to fees or charges or service delivery.
- xii** Midlothian Council will continue to lobby for changes and increases in funding from the Scottish and UK governments
- xiii** KP highlighted that there had been a great deal of cooperation between political parties. The last audit report had also highlighted this.
- xiv** Midlothian Council is working hard to improve income generation. One example is the review of existing developer contributions.
- xvi** AW (Dalkeith) asked how likely are changes in the budget settlement and 'floor' charges likely to be maintained or improved?
KP responded that the current figures will provide a 'baseline' for negotiations in the 2025-2026 financial year. Will need to request greater funding for capital expenditure.
- xvii** AW also asked if figures were available for the amounts saved.
- xviii** RH highlighted the cooperative work between Midlothian communities and the Council.
- xix** ASK noted concern that Capital spend is being suspended, e.g extensions to schools etc.
- xx** ASK also enquired about the transformation of the school week.
KP responded that the consultation is still open, teaching time will not be reduced and the Council will be able to make budgetary savings due to alignment of school start and finishing times.
- xxi** KP – Gorebridge School not a closed conversation – One of the local elected members, Ellen Scott leading a campaign to get one.

- xxii Working hard to get more Developer Contributions – renegotiating deals previously agreed.
- xxiii RH thanked KP for her attendance at the meeting and for the information provided. He highlighted that MFCC members acknowledged that Elected Members had a challenging task when making decisions and agreeing on a balanced budget.

5. Elected Member's Environmental Fund Expenditure

Those present had a wide ranging discussion about the expenditure of Elected Members 'environmental funds'.

The discussion focussed on a lack of public information about:

- How do local community members and groups get information about the availability of the funds?
- On what criteria do elected members make their decision to allocate funding?
- Is there any evaluation of the expenditure?
- What records kept about the expenditure of the funds?
- What are the reporting procedures for allocation of funding?

Action: MFCC to write to David Gladwin (Chief Financial Officer & Section 95 Officer) to request information about the expenditure of 'Environmental Funds'.

6. COMMUNITY COUNCIL FUNDING, 2024 – 2025

- i PJ (Midlothian Council) highlighted the availability of funding for Community Councils.
- ii The deadline for applications is 15 March.
- iii PJ will send out reminders about the deadline.

7. MAINSTREAM PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

- i RH noted that he will write to Chief Executive, Grace Vickers, to ascertain who the lead officer with responsibility for Mainstream Participatory Budgeting.

8. COMMUNITY COUNCIL TRAINING EVENT

- i PJ (Midlothian Council) highlighted that he had circulated the results of the training survey to MFCC members.

9 COMMUNITY COUNCIL INSURANCE (2024-2025) INVOICES

- i** Community Councils have been sent Insurance documents by Zurich Municipal.
- ii** Invoices should be sent to PJ (Midlothian Council) in order that he can arrange payment
- iii** Current policies will expire on 31 March 2024.
- iv** At the date of the meeting 10 invoices remained outstanding.
- v** PJ had sent a reminder on 16 February. He will send a further reminder after the meeting.

10. EDINBURGH AIRPORT NOISE BOARD

- i** AW (Dalkeith) circulated a report to MFCC members on 21 February.

11. CARE FOR PEOPLE MEETING.

- i** No meeting since November 2023

12. COMMUNITY PLANNING

- i** The Community Planning day will be held on 19 September 2024 in Newbattle Abbey.
- ii** Elected members will be attending the event.

13. PLANNING

- i** RH encouraged members to monitor the Planning Portal
- ii** [Weekly List \(midlothian.gov.uk\)](https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/weekly-list)

14. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- i** ASK highlighted proposals for a flood prevention scheme in Musselburgh which may have an impact on the River Esk in Midlothian. The outline design of the Scheme will be presented to a meeting of East Lothian Council on 23rd January.

15. INFRASTRUCTURE

- i** AW noted that there are proposals for a 'Drone Corridor' between Newcastle to Edinburgh.
- ii** The proposal is that the 'corridor' follows the route of the road at the moment.

16. MIDLOTHIAN TRAFFIC ROADS & PATHS (NEXT MEETING, 4 March 2024)

- i PJ (Midlothian Council) will send out the Minutes to MFCC members once completed.

17. A.O.C.B.

i Midlothian Communities Climate Action Network (MCAN)

- Will holding 4 roadshow events.
- Website: <https://midlothianclimateaction.org.uk>

iii Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) on Buses

- RH noted the move to the use of single decker buses has seen a reduction in the number of incidents of ASB.
- ASK noted concern about young people being demonised. Not all incidents of ASB involve young people.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

20 March 2024, 7:00 – 9.00 pm (Zoom)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81794445494?pwd=Z2xXRFZXNkYrZWRsb0JKMU9nbUNnUT09>

Meeting ID: 817 9444 5494

Passcode: 705181