

Broxburn Community Council
Secretary's Report AGM 25th November 2013.

Its hard to believe that a year has gone by and we have been involved in many of the same matters and of course some new ones. As many have been updated over the year I have put them together and isolated items.

November:

- This saw the confirmation of our address being the Old Town Centre for communication etc. Since then Murray had done a great job of being our personal delivery man – thank you.
- The council agreed to funding the flood prevention work at the back of West Main Street.
- There was another well attended service at the War Memorial both 2012 & 2013.

January:

- We were informed we were getting a new double sided notice board for erection outside the Library and also Strathbrock Partnership Centre. This was erected later in the year.
- We agreed to record all meetings for accuracy of minutes. It was agreed that it could be turned off if requested for good reasons.

February:

- We had a speaker from West Lothian Credit Union which is now located in the Business Gateway shop in Greendykes Road.
- We saw the introduction of the new food bins which are kerb side collected once a week.
- The dates and schedule for the work at the Viaduct on the A89 was sent to us and passed on in the minutes and on our web site.
- Broxburn (Vion) Regeneration Team was set up to deal with the applications for the regeneration money paid by Scottish Government. We did not agree with the balance of the team set up but were over ruled.

March:

- Flood prevention at West Burnside & Galloway Crescent & Pyothall were all under way There was also extensive work scheduled for East Burnside.
- The public art was officially opened outside Loaninghill Cemetery.

April:

- WLC took over the shop in Greendykes Road with regeneration money with the aim of helping to regenerate the area by helping people back to work or expand their business.
- WLACC had a speaker from Rural Connect. They are looking for historical background information on Bathgate. They give training in various matters of Heritage. They had encouraged towns to set up three levels of walks for people.
- Community Council Special Funding Grant is set at £750 maximum. Accounts must be passed prior to an AGM and signed by 2 auditors.

May:

- Winchburgh development sites have unearthed archaeological sites and West of Scotland Archaeological Society (WSAS) are involved. Since then there has been a kite view of the area. It has all been documented and is being covered over again. This has raised many concerns and is being followed up. An ancient Iron age roundel was unearthed but was so damaged by ploughing it was also recorded and recovered.

- We had guest speakers Graham Hope CEO of WLC and John McGinty Leader of the Council to discuss Vion and related issues. This was extensive and also left some unanswered questions which were discussed with the CEO at a later date. Our main concerns were about the lack of information on the contamination, investigation and remediation of the Candleworks site.

June:

- We had two senior officers from planning to discuss concerns regarding the Candleworks site and other planning matters. They left saying they would get answers for us to many issues.
- A sign appeared encouraging people to move to Corstorphine to live. This was on Council land, without permission. The company thought they would move the sign over the fence. This too was not official and has moved.
- We had an introduction from Mary Miller of Winchburgh about the Winchburgh Alliance now changed to West Lothian Alliance which was formed in 1988. It is specially to deal with a) Education, especially dyslexia. b) Environment. C) Heritage.
- Boys were seen trying to strip lead from the Old Town Centre Roof. It has been secured now and we ask anybody who sees such behaviour to contact the police.

August: This was spent going over frequently arising issues and Alice Sinnet updated us on the Business Gateway in Greendykes Road.

September:

- We got our response from the two planning officers and not all questions were answered.
- The Food Bank is in place and being well utilised. People have to be referred by Social worker and they can only get three packs at present. Donations are very welcome, and with this cold weather they may be handling clothing as well.
- Christmas Tree. It was agreed the council were very expensive for the tree, but we have been able to get funding from Cllrs Campbell and Calder through the Disbursement Grant as well as the Gala Day committee and a donation by the Community Council. It was suggested that we get solar lighting but Broxburn Bargain Centre have very generously said they will help with the power.

October:

- We generally revisited some old complaints and updated ourselves on others. The next meeting would not only be our AGM but also the inaugural meeting of the newly elected Community Councillors.

Other items which were ongoing over several months are listed below.

Old Town Centre Garden: We asked Oatridge College to be involved in this project from early in the year. The students have provided 4 sets of plans for the path in, and back garden, utilising recycled materials and low maintenance planting. The Council also had a look at the area and have applied for money to regenerate/upgrade the area. We are encouraged that we can progress this together and we are also hoping to include the property owners who have access to it. It would help to improve the appearance and safety of the area and improve their property as well as making it a cleaner, healthier, environment. This is an on going project.

Buses:

- In November we had a talk from a delegation from Horsburgh Buses who confirmed they found some routes impractical and in their drivers view not suitable as a bus route.
- June saw the announcement of a special visitors bus which has to be pre-booked to take visitors to and from Western General in Edinburgh.
- October saw the return of First Bus representative. Discussion was open and we felt no false promises were made. If there are any complaints we have to get back to them and it will be discussed and dealt with as best they can for the public.
- We have had dialogue with the companies throughout the year and hope to continue to do so. We have to work together to try and find a resolution for the people who depend on buses.

Gala Day was discussed and agreed it is a non political day.

- August we had an excellent Gala Day again which was enjoyed by all and the use of Albyn Park proved to be popular.
- The Gala Day committee arranged a Ball on the 26th October in the Club. Unfortunately this was not well attended and thus did not raise the funds that had been hoped for the next Gala Day. It is hoped that there is more support for the Christmas Pageant.
- The AGM saw a change in committee members again. We wish them luck and hope they get the support of the full community.

BMX Track – we were told they hoped to start in January, but it was delayed because of weather. In March we were told The Broxburn Buccaneers BMX Race Club was formed and is on Facebook. Work had started although behind schedule it was going well with some minor adjustments required. These minor changes will continue to be required over time. The track is being well used and the instruction is appreciated. The adult gym equipment is also being well utilised.

NHS/ St Johns Hospital.

- We were informed of the downsizing, and moving within St John's, of the Burns Unit in November.
- In June Blackburn Community Council had a public meeting with NHS, Action for St John's representatives and MSP's. Very enlightening meeting and it was agreed at it that other Community Council would also hold meetings and that people would attend the Stakeholders meeting. The main subjects discussed were the Children's Ward and also cover at the Accident and Emergency Department.
- In May we were told that there would be staff to cover the summer holidays this year in the Paediatric ward. Problems still remained with recruiting doctors from abroad. The shortage of doctors in A&E at night continued – this is actually more the lack of experience of the doctors, although they would have contact by phone/web cam to a more senior doctor in Edinburgh. It was stated that there were only 2 patients per hour presented at St Johns, but it did not account for the patients taken direct to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. Ambulance crews have raised concern as there are only three in West Lothian at night and if deployed to Edinburgh can be kept there and utilised.
- In July we held a public meeting in Strathbrock Partnership Centre and invited NHS Managers, Action for St John's, and MSP's to attend. NHS Management and MSP's Constance & Hyslop declined the invitation without reason or were on holiday. However it was an excellent meeting well attended by about 60 people. The outcome was we wrote a letter to various people including Alex Salmond, Alex Neal and the papers. We received an acknowledgement from most of them, and the letter was published in the Evening News. We continue to try to get up to date information and negotiate for the rights of the community

where we can. This is an ongoing issue. Whitburn also had a meeting but it was not by the Community Council.

Union Canal: In November we had a constructive meeting/walk with council officers and officer from Water Ways about the tow path and clearing it up.

WLC appear to be reluctant to utilise Community Pay Back for this purpose although other councils do so very successfully. We have continued to liaise with the council and are still hopeful of this becoming a reality although it is now November again!.

In May it was reported that cleaning up had started on the towpath towards Drumshoreland but it seemed to stop as soon as it started. We continue to press forward with this as it is an important avenue through Broxburn.

Invitations:

- Asked to respond to Police questionnaire on their strategic planning.
- We were advised and asked to comment on the proposed changes to Disabled Bays.
- August we were asked to join the Brox Burn Walking group to help clean and rejuvenate the burn. This would be of special interest and encouragement to groups looking at wildflowers, wildlife, angling, environment and maintenance etc.
- We were invited by the Police to an event called ‘Sticky Stuff’ in Glasgow in September but unfortunately nobody attended.
- Our contribution was asked for re the Community Engagement Consultation which we duly responded to.
- Our input was asked for by the Scottish Government on the Licensing of Sexual Entertainment Venues which we duly did.
- Meeting with Police Inspector: Due to the new strategy there are inevitably cut backs and one of them is closing front desks that are not utilised by the public but do tie a constable there for a whole shift. She is strongly in favour of Community Policing and intends that this continues. She is also keen for them to be able to attend the Community Council meetings as they have been proved very valuable. We were assured that the bicycles would still be utilised within this area. Due to the loss of the one Traffic Warden it should be noted that Police can book persons violating the parking laws. We suggested that the hours for Loading outside Semi Chem are excessive as they are the only people who use it for that purpose, and it could free up some parking spaces, which we all agreed are much needed in Broxburn. Certainly at present we are continuing to get a Police report once a month. We were also asked to encourage reporting incidents to the police as single incident may not have a great response but if the same incident or person is reported then something would most definitely be done.

Development applications:

1. March we had **Andrew Bennie** to tell us about the proposed development on either side of Greendykes Road including behind Albyn Industrial Estate and Cottages. The area has to be investigated for ground stability and contamination. The public consultation was cancelled without notice as they wanted to await the results of the investigations. To our knowledge still do not have them, but are considering submitting a smaller application for the road, housing and school at Greendykes Road end.

2. **Tesco:** In April we were told the Section 75 had been signed although full permission not yet given. They have six months to investigate the contamination on the full site. We also registered our concern with WLC about Flood Prevention work having been carried out at the Pyothall site at the culvert where bollards and a pathway were installed. We at the Community Council are shocked that the information on the investigation and results of contamination are being hidden within a Land Agreement at Property Services. This concern was taken to the Chief Executive who informed us that he would look into it, but we have not had any response to date. Minor changes were also noted had been introduced to the Section 75. We are not sure if the investigation has yet started.
3. **Old School:** The approval for the design of the Old Peoples Complex was passed and the developer had it ascertained which buildings were secure and which have to be demolished. The Lodge was one building which was acknowledged as not needing to be demolished but economically could be. Scottish Heritage could not help as it would be a home and not a communal area for the elderly residents/townpeople. Some of the stone has been saved and will be reused but there was also much of it wasted and new materials have to be introduced. . The works is currently out to tender and we should have more information very soon.
4. The application for **250 houses at Wyndford Avenue/Kirkhill** is being investigated for ground stability. We await further information.
5. **Masonic Lodge:** An application for a Polish Deli was granted conditional planning by the Development Manager. There was no mention made of our objection or request for the premises to be examined by Building Standards or Environmental Health regarding the crack, which appears to be widening, from the upstairs lintel and sill down the wall to the downstairs window. There is also no mention of a structural wall being removed downstairs.
6. **The Public Toilets** behind the Buchan Arms (in the Lane) were given permission to change to a salon by the Development Officer.
7. **Diageo.** Applied for increase storage of Ethanol. We were not sent the HSE report as promised despite being a consultee. Permission was granted by the Planning Manager provided it is kept securely inside. The barrels which were stored outside have been removed.
8. Change of use from Club to 3 Flats at **12-14 West Burnside** was granted following flood prevention work and the heightening of the floors inside.
9. **Daltons:** Applied to increase both the tonnage and the hours of work at their site. Both applications have been withdrawn. The shredder machine is still to be commissioned.
10. **Shanks:** Applied to the Traffic Commissioner for an Operators License for 40+ lorries in Greendykes Road. We have not managed to get a response from them to find out what is happening although permission was granted.
11. **William Tracey Group:** have just applied for a variation to a condition to permit them to take in putrescible, asbestos and electrical and electronic equipment, and also another to increase their hours to 24/7. SEPA will be consulted regarding this and also Environmental Health. We are asking for a site visit and an extension to time for response.
12. **Station Road,** behind 33 there was an application for 3 houses which was refused.
13. **Station Road 9.** An application for flats was submitted. The applicant was advised he would have to get a full flood assessment report.

Training courses:

- We have had Planning Training sessions roughly quarterly throughout the year.
- License training has been promised this year.
- Courses by WLC were given re committee members jobs.
- A new course has just been offered about how a CC functions.

That is the resume for 2013. Thank you for listening.