

**Graham Hope**

Chief Executive West Lothian Council  
West Lothian Civic Centre  
Howden South Road  
Livingston EH54 6FF

3rd April 2019

Dear Graham,

## JOINT FORUM OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS IN WEST LOTHIAN

Thank you for your email following our meeting last week, and we are happy to respond to your request for information to inform the forthcoming report to Council Executive.

The Terms of Reference of the Joint Forum is attached as Appendix 1. This was first adopted at the Inaugural meeting of the Joint Forum in April 2018 and revised slightly to increase representation of Community Councils on the Sub Group at our second conference in December 2018. The Sub Group is in effect the executive of the Joint Forum and now has 11 members from 11 Community Councils. See Appendix 2 for the composition.

We held two formal meetings in 2018 and 20 Community Councils were represented at one or both meetings. The bi-annual Conference is our governing body where any changes to our Terms of Reference must be approved and is open to all Community Councils and to all Community Councillors in West Lothian. The voting, when one is required is one vote for each Community Council.

The Joint Forum has established a Treasurer's account with the Bank of Scotland and a financial report on our funds is attached as Appendix 3. The funds we have in our account came from a transfer of funds from the previous Association of Community Councils. We are requesting funds for two purposes

1. Annual Administration Grant to allow the organisation to function.
2. A Development Fund to facilitate the Forum taking responsibility along with the Council for the encouragement of more volunteer Community Councillors coming forward, for defunct community councils to be revived and for existing Community Councils to enhance their communication tools, improve their operating practices and enhance their equality and diversity make up.

We are suggesting a formula of £100 for every Community Council area in West Lothian to cover both purposes but not averse to separating the fund into two grants. We would as a matter of accountability report annually to the Council on what the development funds were used for and detail the results. The aim is a more active Community Council network, communicating well with its community and reflecting better the community it serves.

The Joint Forum supports the Council's drive to improve the outcomes for the West Lothian community as measured by the national performance framework and is keen to contribute to

---

the implementation and refinement of the Council's strategies and plans in this regard. We aim to improve and enhance the links between the Council and Community Councils and make a bigger and more frequent contribution to that discussion on West Lothian wide issues and local matters. We note the Council's position on the Democratic Review currently being undertaken and are fully behind the stance on tiers of government.

We would see success as being improved performance on indicators following our recognition as a community body and our participation but also the ability of the Council to cite a greater degree of community participation/engagement on all aspects policy formulation, implementation, review and scrutiny in the years to come.

We are keen to play our part on PDSPs in line with the current provisions and Community Planning Partnership Board, our Chair is already a member of the Anti-Poverty Task Force.

Our proposal on the Community Planning Partnership Board is that we be allocated two seats. This is to recognise that communities need a good level of representation and to share the burden and responsibility over two individuals who can be supportive to each other. We are after all community volunteers representing lots of communities and are wary of putting too much responsibility on one person who will be sitting deliberating with mainly professionals who hold responsible positions in their organisations and enjoy the support and resources of their organisations.


Our proposal on Local Area Committees taking into account the advice from the Council is that each Area Committee invites to each meeting three or four members of the appropriate Community Councils to fully participate in the meetings, apart from casting votes which is reserved for local elected members. The appropriate Community Councils would nominate annually the Community Councillors that should be invited. This would be facilitated by the Joint Forum where there were multiple Community Councils involved. The numbers invited would be determined by the number of elected representatives per ward.

These proposals are made in a constructive manner hoping that recognition for the Joint Forum, with involvement in PDSPs, Community Planning Partnership, Local Area Committees and good support and cooperation from the Council will contribute well to West Lothian improving the outcomes for the citizens and our communities. We also hope that Community Councils will be seen as a more positive and worthwhile activity for future volunteers and supporters and the community.

Our development as a Joint Forum continues at our third conference in May and we are delighted you can open the day for us. We shall be concentrating on establishing our new sub forums on single issues covering Health, Police, Planning and Transport and getting them started on their work agendas and again thank you for your offer of support for them.

Yours sincerely,



Pippa Plevin 

Secretary Joint Forum of Community Councils in West Lothian



# JOINT FORUM OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS IN WEST LoTHIAN

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### **Name:**

The name of the group shall be the Joint Forum of Community Councils in West Lothian.

### **Governance:**

The Forum will be operated by Community Councils with support from West Lothian Council.

### **Aims of the Forum:**

- To share knowledge and experience on subjects of common interest.
- To formulate questions for the Council's Policy, Development and Scrutiny Panels (PDSPs) and to influence community planning decisions.

### **Membership of Forum:**

- Membership of the Forum shall be open to every Community Council across West Lothian.
- Each Community Council will only have one vote at meetings of the Forum, regardless of the number of members per Community Council in attendance.

### **Meetings of the Forum:**

- The Forum shall hold one Annual General Meeting before one of its two ordinary meetings/events per year. Ordinary meetings/events will take place on dates set by the Forum.
- Special meetings/events can be called at any time on the instruction of the Chair or at the request of at least 5 operational Community Councils in West Lothian. The local authority's liaison officer for Community Councils will also have discretion to call a special meeting of the Forum.
- Special meetings will be held within 14 days of receipt of the request by the Forum.
- Meetings will be quorate when at least 5 Community Councils are represented. Multiple members from one Community Council will not count towards the quorum.

### **Office Bearers:**

At every AGM, the Forum shall elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. The Forum can co-opt representatives to fill any vacancies which arise between the AGM. Wherever possible, the office bearers should be made up of different Community Councils.

### **Sub-Group:**

The Forum will appoint a sub-group comprising the 4 office bearers and up to seven additional members. The sub-group should comprise members from different Community Councils.

Sub-group members may be invited to represent the views of Community Councils on council and partner agencies committees/panels.

Comments from Community Councils will be sought through the Joint Forum page on the Knowledge Hub given the tight timescales between agenda papers being available and meetings taking place.

The sub-group will provide regular feedback on business arising from these meetings which is of interest to Community Councils.

**Records of Meetings:**

Notes of meetings of the Forum will be produced and circulated to all Community Councils in West Lothian by the council's liaison officer for Community Councils.

**Control of Finance:**

- An annual grant set by West Lothian Council will be used to fund and advance the work of the Forum to support Community Councils across West Lothian.
- There shall be three signatories appointed from the office bearers of the Forum. Every cheque will require to be authorised by two of the three signatories. Authorised signatories must not be cohabitants.
- The Treasurer shall keep proper records of the finances and prepare a statement of accounts for the previous financial year that shall be independently examined by a qualified accountant or two examiners appointed by the Forum. Auditors cannot be a member of a West Lothian Community Council nor have any connection to any member of a West Lothian Community Council.
- The financial year of the Forum will operate from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March the succeeding year.
- Examined accounts will be approved at the AGM and submitted to the local authority in claim of an annual grant.

**Changing the Terms of Reference:**

- Any proposal by a Community Council member to change the Terms of Reference must be considered at a quorate meeting of the Forum.
- If the proposal is supported by the majority of Community Councils in attendance at the meeting, the amendment shall become effective with immediate effect.

**Dissolution:**

- Dissolution may occur on a voluntary basis and by resolution of the majority of members in attendance that are entitled to vote at the meeting where the proposal is considered.
- Funds and property of the Forum will be held in trust by West Lothian Council.

Approved at the second meeting of the Joint Forum of West Lothian Community Councils held in West Lothian Civic Centre, Livingston on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

Chair .....

Secretary .....



## Joint Forum of Community Councils in West Lothian

### **Executive Committee Office-bearers and Members**

Stacey King, Chair (Stoneyburn Community Council)

John Sives, Vice-Chair (Kirknewton Community Council )

Pippa Plevin, Secretary (Uphall Community Council)

Donald Stavert, Treasurer (Bathgate Community Council)

John Kelly (Linlithgow & Linlithgow Bridge Community Council

Ian Buchanan (Craigshill Community Council)

David Philip (East Calder & District Community Council)

David Cleghorn (Dedridge Community Council

Anne Walch (Addiewell Community Council)

Sharon Gibson (Pumpherston Community Council)

Allison Gilchrist (Whitburn Community Council) **resigned vacancy to be filled at next conference**

Note:

The Committee will be meeting in different towns around West Lothian over the year

The Committee meets on every third Thursday of the Month

All Community Councillors can attend Executive Meetings as Observers



## Joint Forum of Community Councils in West Lothian

Report Date: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019

### Financial Report

The account stand as follows:



**Balance at 14<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

**£ Nil**

### Expenditure

Nil

### Income

15/02 Cheque from previous association

£2110.06

**Balance at 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

**£2,110.06**

**Donald Stavert**

**JFCCWL Treasurer      14<sup>th</sup> March 2019**