

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

At a Hybrid Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held in the Civic Space, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 31 August 2022 at 4.04 p.m.

Present: Provost Douglas McAllister and Councillors James Bollan, Karen Conaghan, Diane Docherty, Craig Edward, Gurpreet Singh Johal, Daniel Lennie, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, James McElhill, Michelle McGinty, June McKay, Lawrence O'Neill, Lauren Oxley, Chris Pollock, Martin Rooney, Hazel Sorrell, Clare Steel and Sophie Traynor.

Attending: Peter Hissett, Chief Executive; Alan Douglas, Manager of Legal Services; Laurence Slavin, Chief Officer – Resources and Section 95 Officer; Victoria Rogers, Chief Officer – People and Technology; Peter Barry, Chief Officer – Housing and Employability; Beth Culshaw, Chief Officer – West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership, Amanda Graham, Chief Officer – Citizen, Culture and Facilities; Laura Mason, Chief Officer – Education; Gail Macfarlane, Chief Officer – Shared Services Roads and Neighbourhood; Gillian McNamara, Regeneration Co-ordinator; Michelle Lynn, Assets Co-ordinator; George Hawthorn, Manager – Democratic and Registration Services and Christine McCaffary, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Ian Dickson, John Millar and Gordon Scanlan.

Provost Douglas McAllister in the Chair

STATEMENT BY CHAIR

The Provost advised that the meeting was being audio streamed and broadcast live to the internet and would be available for playback.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Gurpreet Singh Johal declared a personal interest in Item 16(e) Motion by Councillor David McBride – West Dunbartonshire Council calls for the Immediate Release and Return to the UK of Jagtar Singh Johal, on the Basis of His Continued Arbitrary Detention in India, being related to Mr Johal and advised that he would leave the meeting during consideration of this item of business.

RECORDING OF VOTES

The Council agreed that all votes taken during the meeting would be done by roll call vote to ensure an accurate record.

URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS

MOTION BY COUNCILLOR CLARE STEEL – LET OF CLYDEBANK TOWN HALL TO CLYDEBANK MUSICAL SOCIETY AND THE MUMMERS THEATRE GROUP

The Provost advised that he had received a request from Councillor Steel for the Council to consider an urgent item of business on the let of Clydebank Town Hall to the Clydebank Musical Society and the Mummings Theatre Group.

Councillor Steel relayed the terms of her motion to the Council, and the Provost advised that it would be considered after the final item of business on the agenda.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 22 June 2022 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

OPEN FORUM

The Provost advised that the undernoted Open Forum questions had been received from Ms Susan Dick, Mr Graham Parton and Mr Jim Thomson. He then invited each of them to put their questions to Council:-

(a) Question from Susan Dick – Land at Milton

I own the field at Milton you want for the so-called relief road.

I'm currently being offered cash for my field with no guarantee of a home for my ponies living or dead and no place for my shed, field shelter, trailers or memorial trees.

There are many other solutions available such as:-

1. You are only using half of my field for the road, you could leave me the unused half.
2. You could test properly Sheepfold and guarantee it to me once the road through it is finished.
3. One particular area at Overtoun is in your ownership and control, not leased to anyone and has been used for horses before so it's entirely suitable, you've offered me a lease before of a much further away but unsuitable area so you're not averse to leasing out your own land for

horses – the area I mention is not part of any current lease to anyone and you've owned it since 1939. It has sat empty this whole time except for the 6 months or so that horses were kept there so this is a real possibility for it all to end amicably and swiftly. No lease needs be broken to allow me to have it, it's a win win for everyone. It's a solution I'd happily take subject to some alterations being allowed - safer fencing etc ... nothing you wouldn't allow to some other leaser such as a community garden or similar. My ponies stay there till Sheepfold is ready and if Sheepfold never materialises then I stay on with a permanent lease such as you have given to others nearby.

So my question to you all is - why can't a solution be reached such as the ones I have mentioned?

Councillor McBride provided the following response:-

As you will note from the terms of the report which appears later on the agenda the Council is able to address many of your requirements as indicated in your question. Addressing the three specific points you have raised:

1. The whole of your current field will be required for the duration of the works. Due to the nature of such works the final land take cannot be guaranteed as works may encounter unforeseen conditions and changes to design may be required. Also having considered the likely layout there would appear to be no reasonable means to provide access to the remaining land.
2. The land in question (Sheepfold) will be used as a lay down area for construction work on neighbouring plots of land. On completion of these works and the required reinstatement of the land we will undertake tests which will ascertain the suitability of the land for animal grazing. This would in any event be a requirement of Esso Petroleum Company Limited before they will grant consent for the land to be used for this purpose. The Council will discuss with Ms Dick the vegetation to be reinstated on the land before we commence the seeding process to ensure it is suitable for her ponies.
3. If the recommendations of the report are approved the Council would be able to offer a grazing let for a piece of land within the Dumbarton Common Good at Overtoun which you yourself have recently identified at a cost of £1. Grazing lets would continue to be offered until the reinstatement of Sheepfold. However, no "permanent" lease is possible with Common Good land and your agent will be able to advise you further in this respect.

(b) Question from Graham Parton – Land owned by Susan Dick

I am the partner of Susan Dick and together we run the little pony therapy style business which this Council actually books for events.

We are not stopping your development, we have mentioned already the alternatives to your current course of action. If some promises made had been kept then we would not be in this situation that we are now in.

My question to yourselves is:-

At a meeting last September 2021 some promised information has never been received by our appointed land agent or ourselves, which would help us. Could you explain to us why this information was never received despite several chasers from my agents and indeed a further open forum question in December 2021 in regards to it in which Susan was told to be patient with you?

The missing information is as follows...

1. A list of Council owned land to be given to my agent who would look over it and identify if any was suitable, this land would then be discussed with the parties involved.
2. Three specific areas of land known to be in West Dunbartonshire Council's ownership at the start of this process were to be looked at and then discussed between the agents and myself as to suitability.

Councillor McBride provided the following response:-

1. Plans which were provided by the Council to the Council's agents were considered too broad by the Council's agents and not detailed enough to be put forward for consideration by Ms Dick's agents in the format provided by the Council. Discussions have since taken place between the respective agents on various sites and lack of available sites and it was then suggested by your agents that a searching company was instructed. The Council's agents agreed to this and a fee proposal was awaited from your agents in this regard. The recent proposal from yourself has superseded this and should the report be approved today it would appear to have reached a desirable landing on Sheepfold and Overtoun and an additional new site equating to roughly 2 acres for reburial of your ponies. The remainder of this land would be available for you for any other requirements you may wish to use the site for.
2. Any areas of land owned by the Council were looked at and either proposed or ruled out for either non suitability or were valued in excess of the value of your current landholding. I am not sure what three specific areas of land you refer to in your question but I am aware that discussions have been ongoing for some time in relation to various landholdings within the Council's ownership together with private landholdings, Forestry and Land Scotland and Scottish Canals

Ms Dick asked the following supplementary question on behalf of Mr Parton:-

Councillor McBride mentioned as 2 acres. The map I've been sent shows 0.44 acres, so just under half an acre. Just in case we're not all talking about the same bit – the bit of land in Bowling?

Councillor McBride advised that he would seek clarification and that a response would be sent to Ms Dick within the next 7 days.

(c) Question from Jim Thomson – Sheepfold

In Mr Thomson's absence and with his agreement, Ms Dick asked the following question:-

As you will be aware, Susan Dick is an invaluable asset to all ages throughout the area and WDC has a responsibility to ensure that a replacement site to her current field is both appropriate and safe for her ponies.

What I would like to ask therefore is that you undertake a detailed test of Sheepfold to ensure that it is indeed safe and, if further decontamination is required, that this be undertaken accordingly so she knows she has a home for her ponies.

This is something she has requested to be done for five years now and as WDC owns the land it is unclear why you have not yet done so. So could you please resolve this issue as soon as possible

Councillor McBride provided the following response:-

I would refer you to the answer provided to question one which I believe addresses your question in full.

GLASGOW CITY REGION CITY DEAL UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive noting the progress with the implementation of the Glasgow City Region, City Deal and seeking approval to accelerate the drawdown of increased design costs required for the delivery of the Full Business Case for the Council's Exxon Infrastructure Project.

After discussion and having heard the Regeneration Co-ordinator in answer to Members' questions, Councillor Rooney seconded by Councillor McGinty moved:-

That the Council agrees:-

- (1) to note the progress of the Glasgow City Region programme;
- (2) to note the progress on the Council's City Deal project for the Exxon site and approve submission of a Project Change Request to the City Region Project

Management Office for accelerated drawdown of £2.99M (subject to minor price revisions) required to deliver the Full Business Case;

- (3) to meet the accelerated drawdown from the agreed capital budget contribution of £9.64M should the Project Change Request be refused by the Project Management Office; and
- (4) to note the revised target date for the submission of the Full Business Case of June 2023

The motion was agreed by the Council.

Councillor Bollan having failed to find a seconder for a proposed amendment asked that his dissent be recorded in respect of this item.

EXXON LAND ACQUISITIONS

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution and Property providing an update on progress made in negotiations with landowners and seeking approval for acquisitions as detailed in the report.

The Council agreed:-

- (1) to the purchase of the area of ground shown in Appendix 1 to these minutes from Arnold Clark Automobiles Limited for the sum of Twenty Thousand Pounds (£20,000) Sterling;
- (2) to dispose of the area of ground shown in Appendix 2 to Arnold Clark Automobiles Limited for the sum of Three Hundred and Sixty Five Thousand Pounds (£365,000) Sterling;
- (3) to the purchase of the area of ground detailed in Appendix 3 from Charles Cleary at a value of Sixty Five Thousand Pounds (£65,000) Sterling.
- (4) to the purchase of the area of ground detailed in Appendix 4 from Chivas Brothers Limited at a value of Twenty Thousand Pounds (£20,000) Sterling together with reasonable accommodation works in respect of safety fencing for the area of land being retained by Chivas Brothers Limited;
- (5) to purchase the area of ground detailed in Appendix 5 to these minutes from Susan Jane Dick on the following terms:-
 1. Land value of Seventy Seven Thousand Four Hundred Pounds (£77,400) Sterling;
 2. Transfer of an area of ground up to 4 acres at the site currently known as Sheepfold, on reinstatement after works, subject to Esso Petroleum Company Limited's approval and subject to ongoing obligations as to use of land. This will be at a value agreed per

acre as at today's date to ensure no detriment to Susan Jane Dick when purchasing at a later date.

3. Granting of a grazing let at a site at Overtoun for a nominal sum of £1 for a term to be defined.
 4. Transfer at nil value an area of ground near Littlemill for reburial of horses;
- (6) to the purchase of the area of ground or part of the area of ground detailed in Appendix 6 to the SSPCA, following conclusion of negotiations with the landowner at a value to be agreed with the District Valuer;
 - (7) to acquire any or all of the sites by Compulsory Purchase Order under Part I of the First Schedule to the Acquisition of Land (Authorisation Procedure) (Scotland) Act 1947 and either the Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 or the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 should there be any delay in acquisition;
 - (8) to delegate authority for the Manager of Legal Services to determine the appropriate approach and formulate any Compulsory Purchase Order for submission to Scottish Ministers for their approval to the Council's subsequent legal acquisition of the land;
 - (9) to authorise the Chief Officer - Supply, Property and Distribution to conclude negotiations; and
 - (10) to authorise the Chief Officer - Regulatory and Regeneration to conclude the transaction on such conditions as considered appropriate.

VENTILATION IN LEARNING ESTABLISHMENTS

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution and Property providing an update on indicative costs in relation to ventilation across our learning estate.

Councillor Steel moved:-

This Council notes the report from the Chief Officer Supply, Distribution and property and thanks all of those who have contributed to this.

In particular, the Council notes the indicative cost of retrospectively installing mechanical ventilation in our learning establishment which total £8,229,329.

It is also noted that our learning establishments use a variety of natural and mechanical ventilation systems and that during the public health emergency, the council opted to employ proactive CO2 monitors, in line with HSE guidance to help manage the risk of infection.

Council recognises that improved ventilation systems are included in new build and refurbished learning establishments and although the urgency of the COVID 19 pandemic may have passed, this Council requests that Educational Services develop a ten year plan to focus on upgrading ventilation in all our learning establishments over time.

The motion was agreed by the Council.

WEST BRIDGEND HALL

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution and Property providing an update on progress with the West Bridgend Hall project following the motion to Council on 22 June 2022.

The Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report; and
- (2) that officers proceed to tender for a new build for West Bridgend Hall whilst continuing to monitor all opportunities to either negate or augment the Council funding already approved within the ten-year capital plan.

REQUEST FOR NOMINATION TO THE SCOTTISH JOINT COUNCIL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (SJC)

A report was submitted by the Manager – Democratic and Registration Services asking Council to consider a request from COSLA for nominations to the Scottish Joint Council for Local Government Employees (SJC).

The Council agreed to nominate Councillor Daniel Lennie to sit on the SJC, and Councillor Michelle McGinty as the substitute nominee.

AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an overview of the Audit Committee's activity during the financial year 2021/22.

The Council noted the contents of the report.

UNAUDITED 2021/22 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing a copy of the unaudited 2021/22 Annual Accounts together with information as to the 2021/22 outturn as set out in the draft accounts.

The Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the unaudited 2021/22 Annual Accounts;
- (2) to note the information provided in relation to the financial performance of the Council's services and capital plan for 2021/22;
- (3) to note the current position regarding the Council's reserves;
- (4) to note that a report on the audited accounts will be submitted to either the Council or Audit Committee by 31 October 2022 for approval; and
- (5) if required to meet the timetable for submission, to delegate authority to the Audit Committee to formally approve the audited accounts by 31 October 2022, prior to submission to the Accounts Commission.

GENERAL SERVICES BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO PERIOD 4

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the General Services revenue budget and the approved capital programme to 31 July 2022.

The Council agreed:-

- (1) to note a current projected annual adverse variance on the revenue account of £0.318m (0.13% of total budget);
- (2) to note that projected expenditure on the capital account was lower than the 2022/23 budget by £14.140m (21.56% of budget), made up of £12.260m (18.69% of budget) of project slippage, and an in-year net underspend of £1.880m;
- (3) the virement as requested at paragraph 4.13 of the report (Appendix 9); and
- (4) the acceleration as requested at paragraph 4.14 of the report (Appendix 10).

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO PERIOD 4

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the financial performance to 31 July 2022 of the HRA revenue and capital budgets.

The Council agreed:-

- (1) to note that the revenue analysis showed a projected annual favourable variance of £0.008m; and
- (2) to note that the net projected annual position in relation to the capital plan was highlighting an in-year adverse variance of £0.319m (0.43%) as detailed in Appendix 4 to the report.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

(a) Motion by Councillor Sophie Traynor – Clydebank Asbestos Group

Councillor Traynor moved:-

Council acknowledges the fantastic contribution made by Clydebank Asbestos Group in the fight for justice for victims and their families.

Council recognises the decade of support, help and advice which the organisation has provided to people with asbestos-related conditions and their families.

Council requests that Provost McAllister holds a civic reception to mark the group's 30th anniversary in October.

Councillor McBride asked if Councillor Traynor would accept the following as an addendum to her motion:-

Council notes that all West Dunbartonshire Council councillors have been invited to the Clydebank Asbestos Group's 30th anniversary event in the Golden Jubilee Conference Hotel on Friday, 14 October. Therefore, rather than duplicate events we should ask the Provost and the Provost's Office to offer civic support and combine both events to mark the 30th anniversary.

Councillor Traynor confirmed her acceptance, and the motion with addendum was then agreed by the Council.

(b) Motion by Councillor June McKay – Council and Partners' Emergency Response to Dalmuir Fire

Councillor McKay moved:-

This Council notes the fantastic response to the recent fire at Frank Downie House in Dalmuir, a former 32 bed Residential Care Service.

This was a major fire and its close proximity to houses meant that Clydemuir Primary School was opened as an evacuation centre for those asked to leave their homes.

Council staff were on site in minutes including the Neighbourhood Team, Care at Home, Education, Facilities Management, Homelessness, and our resilience staff.

Staff remained on site until the early hours of the morning providing help and reassurance to local residents.

This Council thanks the emergency services and all of our employees for their response, but for the swift actions of emergency services the fire could have devastated the homes and lives of the residents whose properties are in close proximity to the site.

The motion was agreed by the Council.

(c) Motion by Councillor Gurpreet Singh Johal – Standing up for Responsible Tax Conduct

Councillor Johal moved:-

West Dunbartonshire Council notes that:

1. The pressure on organisations to pay the right amount of tax in the right place at the right time has never been stronger.
2. Polling from the Institute for Business Ethics finds that “corporate tax avoidance” has, since 2013, been the clear number one concern of the British public when it comes to business conduct.
3. Almost two-thirds (63%) of the Scottish public agree that the Government and local councils should consider a company’s ethics and how they pay their tax as well as value for money and quality of service provided, when undertaking procurement.
4. Around 15% of public contracts in Scotland have been won by companies with links to tax havens.
5. It has been conservatively estimated that losses from multinational profit-shifting (just one form of tax avoidance) could be costing the UK some £17bn per annum in lost corporation tax revenues.
6. The Fair Tax Mark offers a means for business to demonstrate good tax conduct, and has been secured by wide range of businesses across the UK, including FTSE-listed PLCs, co-operatives, social enterprises and large private businesses.

This Council believes that:

1. Paying tax is often presented as a burden, but it shouldn’t be.
2. Tax enables us to provide services from education, health and social care, to flood defence, roads, policing and defence. It also helps to counter financial inequalities and rebalance distorted economies.
3. As recipients of significant public funding, local authorities should take the lead in the promotion of exemplary tax conduct; be that by ensuring

contractors are paying their proper share of tax, or by refusing to go along with offshore tax dodging when buying land and property.

4. Where substantive stakes are held in private enterprises, then influence should be wielded to ensure that such businesses are exemplars of tax transparency and tax avoidance is shunned - e.g., no use of marketed schemes requiring disclosure under DOTAS regulations (Disclosure Of Tax Avoidance Schemes) or arrangements that might fall foul of the General Anti-Abuse Rule.
5. More action is needed, however, as current law significantly restricts councils' ability to either penalise poor tax conduct or reward good tax conduct, when buying goods or services.
6. UK cities, counties and towns can and should stand up for responsible tax conduct - doing what they can within existing frameworks and pledging to do more given the opportunity, as active supporters of international tax justice.

West Dunbartonshire Council resolves to:

1. Approve the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration subject to officers reviewing the Tax Declaration and bringing forward a report to a future meeting of the Council which sets out a comprehensive understanding of the Declaration and the implications for the Council and its services.
2. Lead by example and demonstrate good practice in our tax conduct, right across our activities.
3. Ensure contractors implement IR35 robustly and pay a fair share of employment taxes.
4. Not use offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property, especially where this leads to reduced payments of stamp duty.
5. Undertake due diligence to ensure that not-for-profit structures are not being used inappropriately as an artificial device to reduce the payment of tax and business rates.
6. Demand clarity on the ultimate beneficial ownership of suppliers and their consolidated profit & loss position.
7. Promote Fair Tax Mark certification to any business in which we have a significant stake and where corporation tax is due.
8. Support Fair Tax Week events in the area, and celebrate the tax contribution made by responsible businesses who say what they pay with pride.

9. Support calls for urgent reform of EU, UK and Scots law to enable local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies.

The motion was agreed by the Council.

(d) Motion by Councillor Chris Pollock – Dumbarton Football Club 150th Anniversary

Councillor Pollock moved:-

Council commemorates and celebrates the 150th anniversary of Dumbarton Football Club.

West Dunbartonshire Council recognises that Dumbarton FC is the fourth oldest professional football club in Scotland. The club has won two top league titles, four lower league triumphs, the Scottish Cup and numerous promotions.

Council commends the clubs place within our community with successful initiatives over the years such as the “More choices, more chances programme” as well as more recent outreaches across the community.

Council asks the Provost to host a civic reception honouring the club and wishes Dumbarton Football Club every success for the next 150 years.

The motion was agreed by the Council.

Note:- Councillor Johal left the meeting at this point, having previously declared an interest in the following item of business.

(e) Motion by Councillor David McBride - West Dunbartonshire Council calls for the Immediate Release and Return to the UK of Jagtar Singh Johal, on the Basis of His Continued Arbitrary Detention in India

Councillor McBride moved:-

This Council notes that:-

- Jagtar Singh Johal is a British national arbitrarily detained in India since 2017, facing the death penalty as a result of politically motivated charges based on a confession extracted under torture. He is a Sikh activist from Dumbarton who sought to draw attention to human rights abuses against India’s Sikh population, including in a blog post calling for accountability for historic anti-Sikh pogroms.
- The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has found that under international law, Jagtar’s detention is clearly arbitrary. They found that

Jagtar's detention lacks any legal basis and that his fair trial rights have been gravely violated, with him remaining in detention "apparently with no evidence". The UN body called for him to be immediately released.

- Prime Minister Boris Johnson has recognized that Jagtar is arbitrarily detained. It is UK Government policy to call for the release of arbitrarily detained UK nationals overseas, but the Government has yet to do so in Jagtar's case.
- Jagtar is at serious risk of a death sentence. At least two of the charges against Jagtar carry the death penalty as a maximum punishment. The risk of Jagtar being sentenced to death is very high given the politicized nature of his case and the current political climate. Earlier this year, an Indian court sentenced 38 people to death in a single case.[2]

Given the above this Council agrees to:-

1. Call on the Foreign Secretary to advocate for the release of Jagtar Singh Johal and his return to the UK;
2. Request that the Council's Chief Executive write to the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) regarding Jagtar's case; and
3. Request that copies of this motion be distributed to all councils in Scotland asking them to consider supporting for their consideration.

Council acknowledges cross-party support for Jagtar Singh Johal and also thanks Martin Docherty-Hughes MP for his continuing support, using his offices to support the campaign in Parliament and the Foreign Commonwealth Office.

Since the motion was submitted Members may be aware of media reports of the UK Intelligence Agencies MI5 and MI6 providing a tip-off that led to the detention and torture of Jagtar Singh Johal.

A legal case has been launched by Jagtar, supported by the groups Reprieve and Redress. Both organisations are calling for his immediate release and for the Government to disclose what role they played in providing this information.

The motion was agreed by the Council.

Note:- Councillor Johal returned to the meeting at this point and the Provost, on behalf of all Elected Members, expressed full support for Mr Johal's release.

(f) Motion by Councillor Ian Dickson - £1,000 for Every Household

In Councillor Dickson's absence Councillor McColl, seconded by Councillor McElhill moved:-

Labour in West Dunbartonshire campaigned on a manifesto pledge to put £1,000 in the pocket of every West Dunbartonshire resident, with Scottish Labour Leader Anas Sarwar telling the BBC on April 7th, that Labour led Councils would be focused on such "bold policies to protect household budgets."

Council notes that having an overall majority gives Labour the mandate and ability to implement their election pledges as they see fit.

Council therefore calls on officers to work with the Administration to bring forward proposals for the Council to play our part in putting the promised £1,000 into every West Dunbartonshire citizen's pocket.

As an amendment Councillor McGinty, seconded by Councillor Rooney moved:-

Council thanks Councillor Dickson for his motion recognising that the best way to help West Dunbartonshire Citizens is to ensure we get Labour politicians elected at all government levels, Local Government, Scottish Parliament and at Westminster.

Council notes that Labour politicians campaigned on practical measures to help local residents with the cost of living crisis.

- At the Statutory Council meeting we set up a cross party cost of Living Working Group;
- At the June Council we committed additional funding to help with this including:
 - £250,000 contribution to a household energy fund
 - £52,000 food supplement for foodbanks (£1,000 per week)
 - Summer activities for pupils including swim, gym and sports camps
 - £25,000 to Antonine Sports Centre to support their sports and leisure activities for local people.
- In September a cost of living conference has been organised to take place in Clydebank Town Hall.
- The community Clean initiative to remove bulk waste and to clean up open spaces including grass cutting is still to come.
- The Cost of Living Fund also includes a £1m capital fund and a process has been agreed for this.
- There are a lot of initiatives within the HSCP budget which will also provide much needed help to local residents, including unpaid carers and welfare advice officers.

The Council is going through its Strategic Planning Process and Labour priorities will be reflected in the final plan.

Unfortunately, the previous SNP Administration squandered the Council's free reserves and had left a £13.8m budget gap.

Labour Councillors will continue to bring forward proposals to help local residents with the cost of living crisis.

On a roll call vote being taken 11 Members voted for the amendment, namely Provost McAllister and Councillors Edward, Johal, Lennie, McBride, McGinty, McKay, O'Neill, Rooney, Sorrell and Steel and 8 Members voted for the motion, namely Councillors Bollan, Conaghan, Docherty, McColl, McElhill, Oxley, Pollock and Traynor. The amendment was declared carried.

(g) Motion from Councillor Jonathan McColl – Levenhowe / Ballagan Burn Flood Prevention

Councillor McColl moved:-

Council thanks officers for working with local Lomond Ward members and Levenhowe residents during the previous term around flood prevention in the area.

Council notes that a budget allocation was made in the 2022/23 budget to deliver flood prevention works on Ballagan Burn identified by officers and communicated to local members and residents.

Council asks officers to provide an update to the next IRED Committee on the proposed works and at the same time to produce a summary briefing that can be emailed to Levenhowe residents to bring them up to date.

The motion was agreed by the Council.

(h) Motion by Councillor Karen Conaghan – Suicide Rate in West Dunbartonshire

Councillor Conaghan moved:-

Council is concerned that in West Dunbartonshire deaths by suicide continue on an upwards trend. We are all too aware of the link between social deprivation and mental ill health. The global pandemic of the COVID 19 virus and now the subsequent cost of living crisis have only added to the levels of depression and anxiety felt by many in our communities. We all have a part to play in helping prevent suicides and therefore Council requests a report be brought to the next Council meeting outlining what we already do in terms of suicide prevention work and what more could be done.

The motion was agreed by the Council.

URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS
**MOTION BY COUNCILLOR CLARE STEEL – LET OF CLYDEBANK TOWN HALL
TO CLYDEBANK MUSICAL SOCIETY AND THE MUMMERS THEATRE GROUP**

Councillor Steel moved:-

Council notes that Clydebank Musical Society (CMS) and the Mummers Theatre Group intend to return to Clydebank Town Hall with shows in October and November of this year respectively.

Both groups are local, charitable organisations and are struggling to meet the costs involved in hiring the Town Hall for their planned 2022 shows.

Both groups suffered significant financial losses during the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

Both groups are making their own efforts to fundraise to meet all of the costs associated with putting on such shows.

In recognition of these difficulties and the current cost of living crisis affecting all of our residents, Council agrees to waive all Clydebank Town Hall charges associated with their upcoming shows in October and November 2022.

Clydebank Town Hall will be provided to them without cost on a one-off basis.

Thereafter, Council requests that officers prepare a report to come back to Council to allow Elected Members to consider a review of all hire costs associated with Clydebank Town Hall events and what level of charitable discount or reduction is appropriate.

The motion was agreed by the Council.

The meeting closed at 6.25 p.m.