

WLLP AGM MINUTES 30.08.2021

Opening address/Apologies of absence

John Matthews unable to attend (admin)

Introduction from the admins;

Chair – Jason Wilcox

Secretary – Becky Gallagher

Treasurer – Carol Salem

Fundraiser specialist – Jim Allan/John Matthews

IT – Mark Reilly

Minutes previous AGM

Previous AGM minutes agreed. It was acknowledged that due to Covid, this was the first public AGM. Previous meetings had been held at Carol Salem's house and Becky Gallagher's. Constitution explained to members.

Chairs Report

Established by Jason Wilcox in March 2019.

There are approximately 3,000 members at present.

Over £20,000 equipment to date has been distributed to members/sub groups.

WLLP has an established working relationship with WLC/Ranger Service, Sustrans, Keep Scotland Beautiful, Forth Rivers Trust, Woodland Trust and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Due to Covid restrictions limiting group events and increasing the amount of litter and fly tipping, WLLP have seen a surge in sub groups across Scotland but particularly the central belt. WLLP would like to acknowledge and thank these groups – River Almond Action Group, WLLP Education and Awareness Group, Broxburn and Uphall Litter Pickers and The Vennie. There are also several members that have teamed up together in various parts of West Lothian such as Linlithgow and Knightsridge. WLLP have financially supported RAAG and the education group with funds towards water testing kits and a survey membership.

WLLP frequently loans out equipment to charity events, schools and nurseries. Where possible, donations of equipment have also been given to groups such as Beavers, Brownies, primary schools and nurseries.

Secretary's Report

Once WLLP was established as a group, the initial aim was to gather momentum, increase members as well as fundraise to buy equipment and pay for liability insurance. The focus then switched to education, prevention and enforcement as the litter and fly tipping pandemic in West Lothian continued to increase. WLLP has always had a good relationship with WLC who have supported us both financially and assisting with the collection of litter picked by WLLP. In September 2020 the relationship became more formal. Official meetings were set up every 2-3 months to discuss new and ongoing issues. WLLP admin members spend a lot of time making sure our member's voices are heard. We take notes of any questions/issues raised by our members either via Facebook, emails or private messages. Once the meeting is complete, action points are then established.

Throughout this year WLLP has held several meetings with various councilors, MSPs and MPs from across the political parties. WLLP also held a meeting with the council leader, Mr. Fitzpatrick. This was all done in an attempt to highlight the litter and fly tipping issues as well as how to tackle it at local and government level. It was agreed by Mr. Fitzpatrick that a government proposal can be drafted up in an attempt to get the government to educate, prevent and enforce the laws/measures already in place. WLLP is currently awaiting the next stage of this via Tom Conn (Executive councilor for the environment).

WLLP has also recognised that West Lothian has major issues with litter and fly tipping within its many industrial estates. A meeting with the Haulage Association has been organised for this month to try and improve the situation.

Financial Report

A detailed account of the treasurer's report was shown via power point. This included a comprehensive list of incomings and outgoings and our donators. The current bank balance on the date of the meeting is £7277.79. Accounts are visible for any members who wish to see them.

IT Report

WLLP is currently working on a project to create a website. The address will be www.wllp.org. This is not designed to replace WLLP Facebook page but it has been recognised that not all of our members are on social media and that lots of information 'gets lost' on Facebook. WLLP would value any member input. Artwork from Hazel Tait has been added. WLLP are also building an app with the aim of being able to count up member picks/bags and send the information direct to WLC.

Funding

WLLP acknowledged and showed their appreciation of members who have suggested applying for various grants which have been hugely successful. Kay Redmond was mentioned in recognition of the work she has done, she has been pivotal in securing WLLP funding. Thanks were extended to the success of the GoFundMe page. The support of many councillor donations was also praised.

An overview of donations (amount and from whom) were shown via power point. Again these are visible for any members who wish to see them.

Future commitments – The Woodland Trust has pledged a 5 year period of regular donations.

In total so far 2021 has seen £15,953 worth of donations as well as 373 pickers, 410 hoops, 100 high vis vests and 90 pairs of gloves. The council has also funded £16,000 worth of clear bags.

Election of committee

As per clause 32 of the constitution all members of the management committee were asked to resign from office. They were subsequently all reelected by their own wishes. There were no objections from member's attending the meeting. No other member's wished to stand on the management committee.

Any Other Business

Andy Johnston was in attendance of the meeting (NETs, Land and Countryside Service Manager). He kindly stood up at the meeting and gave an introduction to his role. He is responsible for the street cleansing teams and manages an annual budget of £2.5 million and 75 staff members. He gave a personal thank you to WLLP members and acknowledged the huge impact their resources have had on West Lothian. It was highlighted that there has been an increase by 120% over the last two years regarding litter and fly tipping. The increased litter is not always visible due to more efficient picking and fly tipping being lifted within forty eight hours. WLC has recently employed a strategy officer whose primary role will be to get businesses and franchises to sign up to a litter prevention action plan. The officer is Lynn Yuill. WLC are also focusing on education and engagement officers. It is widely recognised that anti-litter messages at primary level are successful but at high school it is an issue. In March 2021 the council report collecting on average 800 bags a week from WLLP. They have had recent funding to increase the NETs teams from two to four. WLC will commit to donating equipment next year if possible. Reminder that WLC are governed by legislation.

Questions asked to Andy;

*Issues in Craigshill highlighted – Almond Housing Association is a problem area. The enforcement team is involved and they do follow up checks but WLC can't lift litter/fly tipping on private land. Zero Waste Scotland is currently trying to make legislation easier for litter/fly tipping that is carried out on private land. Andy to investigate why bags in Craigshill are not getting lifted quickly. There are issues regarding bags being left and wildlife ripping them open on a regular basis. WLC aware there are 'drop off' areas that are used frequently by fly tippers as they know the council will remove it within forty eight hours.

*Does WLC plan to issue more fixed penalty notices? Andy stated that WLC have increased the number of fixed penalty notices issued. Members can report any witnessed litter/fly tipping and submit any evidence they have. A member also suggested that if any Taxis are witnessed littering then their plate number can be reported to the cab inspector. Number of statistics has been requested regarding issued fines/convictions; approximately 70% of the fines given are paid. Those who don't pay are often ignored as it is hard to enforce.

*Does the council enforce the state of private gardens filled with household rubbish? Andy stated yes and encouraged members to report any problem areas.

*Would WLC consider cleaning slip roads overnight? Andy stated no. The slip roads haven't been done in July due to covid causing an issue with staffing levels. WLC have stated that they are keen to make a formal partnership working group with WLLP to tackle issues such as this.

*Have WLC ever considered using bin sensors? Andy made members aware of bin pilot and the upcoming, delayed, bin survey.

*Has the council noticed a reduction in litter when the high schools were closed/kids not allowed outside the grounds? Andy stated yes. Previously a cleansing team was deployed to Whitburn Academy every day but during restrictions that team was able to be redeployed elsewhere.

NB Many questions raised have been discussed previously during WLC/WLLP meetings. Minutes are available to read and are available under the files section on WLLP Facebook page.

Awards

Three of our members attending the meeting were presented with the 'golden picker' award in recognition of their hard work and selfless acts shown over the years. Thank you once again to Kathy Parker, Maggie Mcdermott and Janice Mcdaid.