

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



**LIVINGSTON SOUTH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE**

**SERVICE UPDATE – NETS, LAND & COUNTRYSIDE**

**REPORT BY HEAD OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES**

**A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise members of the recent activity of the NETs, Land & Countryside Services teams for the period 1 October 2020 – 31 December 2020.

**B. RECOMMENDATION**

The Local Area Committee is asked to:

1. Note the work carried out by service within the local area.
2. Advise of any areas that require further information or investigation.

**C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I Council Values</b>	Focusing on our customers' needs; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
<b>II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	None
<b>III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None
<b>IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	None
<b>V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	Relates to items 9 - We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger & 12 – We value and enjoy our built environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations
<b>VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	In line with available revenue and capital budgets
<b>VII Consideration at PDSP</b>	None
<b>VIII Other consultations</b>	None

## D1 Terms of Report

The report covers the activity for the period 1 October 2020 – 31 December 2020.

## D2 Grounds Maintenance Routine Works

The majority of hedges have been now been cut in the ward; it should also be noted that it has been necessary to reduce the height of some hedges for safety reasons such as they are causing an obstruction, blocking footpaths and/or blocking access for maintenance to neighbouring properties.

In addition, hedges that have grown so tall that it is not safe for Operatives to carry out the task in accordance with our Safe Working Practice have also been reduced in height. Operatives should not use hedge trimmers above shoulder height. With only one visit annually, it is inevitable that some will require to be reduced at some stage

There has also been an increase in public enquiries relating to overgrown hedges and this can be contributed to current service standards whereby hedges are only cut once per year during the winter period.

The council has also received enquiries regarding the protection of berries for bird and wildlife feeding and staff have been instructed only prune hedges with berries when absolutely necessary. It is unlikely that there will be any hedges with berries, most of them will be beech, privet or leylandii.

The annual pruning/tidy up visits to shrub beds has also started, with approximately 90% of the beds in Ladywell completed.

The Neighbourhood Environmental Teams have a number of outstanding enquiries, mainly related to fly tipping.

Progress on all tasks halted just before the new year, with all Grounds Maintenance staff constantly involved in weather emergency works during January.

The most recent Land Audit Management inspection was scored at 60. The target score is 67.

### Grounds Maintenance Enquiries

In total 50 grounds maintenance related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period in 2020.

	2020	2019
Ball Game Enquiries	1	0
Bench or Seat Enquiries	3	0
Bonfire Enquiries	1	4
Burns or Watercourses	0	3
Complaint Grounds Maintenance	2	3
Drainage Flooding Grass Areas	2	1
Enforcement Officer Enquiries	2	1
Fencing Enquiries	3	2
Flower Bed or Bulb Displays	1	0
Grass Area Damaged	2	0
Grass Cutting Enquiries	2	4
Grass Cutting Missed Not Cut	1	0
Grass Left on Paths or Roads	0	2

Ground Ownership Enquiries	1	1
Grounds Property Vandalised	8	2
Hedge Cutting Enquiries	7	7
Manholecover Damaged In Grass	0	1
Public Park Enquiries	2	6
School Grounds Enquiries	0	1
Shrub Bed Enquiries	0	2
Shrub Beds Overhanging Path	9	22
Shrub Beds Not Maintained	0	3
Shrub Vegetation Sight Lines	0	1
Weeds on Paths or Roads	3	3
Total	50	69

### D3 Garden Maintenance Routine Works

The Garden Maintenance Scheme will restart in April.

#### Garden Maintenance Enquiries

There were 12 garden maintenance related enquiry received and dealt with within this reporting period in 2020.

	2020	2019
Garden Maintenance Accident Ins Claim	1	0
Garden Maintenance General Enquiries	3	1
Garden Maintenance Grass Not Cut	5	3
Garden Maintenance Hedge Cutting	0	3
Garden Maintenance Standard of Cut	3	0
Total	12	7

### D4 Cleaner Communities Routine Works

The Street Cleansing Teams have been reduced in size to comply with social distancing guidelines over the period 1 October – 31 December.

During this period staff have continued to empty street litter and dog waste bins on a regular basis and carry out routine works in the area. Also, litter picking footpaths/ open spaces and road verges and dealing with enquiries as they arise. The street orderly has also continued with their duties over the period clearing litter and emptying litter bins in and around the town centre.

The compact mechanical street sweeper has continued to sweep footpaths and kerb edges and we have two HGV sweepers that are used to clean roads and channels during this time.

Resources have been redirected when required during this period to deal with leaf fall.

We continue to have lots of volunteer's litter picking in the Ward and we have assisted with the uplift of bags and debris that have been collected.

Due to Covid-19 and Street Cleansing Staff assisting other Council Services during the pandemic, a tender has been awarded for a contractor to carry out road sweeping of A, B & C roads. This work is due to start at the beginning of February and be completed by the end of March 2021.

## Cleaner Communities Enquiries

In total 263 cleaner communities related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period.

	2020	2019
Complaint Street Cleansing	3	0
Dead Animals	8	4
Dog Fouled Grass/Open Space	2	2
Dog Fouling on Paths/Roads	19	13
Dog No Fouling Sign Request	1	1
Dog Waste Bin New Request	3	0
Dog Waste Bin Overflowing	7	2
Glass on Paths or Open Spaces	4	4
Graffiti Non-Offensive	1	0
Graffiti Racist or Offensive	3	5
Illegal Fly Posting	0	5
Illegal Fly Tipping/Dumping	106	113
Litter Bin Burnt Damaged	4	3
Litter Bin Full Overflowing	3	1
Litter Bin New Request For Bin	2	1
Litter General Enquiries	5	2
Litter on Paths Roads Verges	29	27
Needles Syringes Abandoned	3	3
Street Sweeping Enquiries	18	25
Trolleys Abandoned/Dumped	22	9
Trolleys Dumped in Livingston	6	6
Vehicle Abandoned	14	20
Total	263	246

### Fly Tipping Enquiries (January to December)

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Illegal Fly Tipping/Dumping	429	408	329	322	276

## Environmental Community Action

The Education, Engagement and Enforcement team have continued to deal with enquiries as they are logged following COVID-19 guidance.

Officers continue to deal with enquiries relating to fly tipping, littering, dog fouling, abandoned vehicles and general enquiries. There have been 106 enquiries in relation to fly tipping for the period compared to 113 for the same period in 2019.

In dealing with abandoned vehicles, Officers have gained compliance from vehicle owners with said vehicles getting removed from the streets and where appropriate, requests have been sent to WLC contractors for removal.

Throughout West Lothian, officers continue to engage with volunteering groups, attend regeneration group meetings and render the necessary assistance needed to encourage the exercise they currently perform.

There has been a significant increase in the purchase of litter picking equipment by West Lothian Council as volunteer groups are expanding.

There has been one Fixed Penalty Notice issued in Livingston South for Fly tipping and none for littering or dog fouling for the period of 1 October 2020 – 31 December 2020. In comparison to the similar period in 2019, no Fixed Penalty Notices were issued for fly tipping or dog fouling but one was issued for littering.

#### **Costs for fly tipping for the period 1 October 2020 – 31 December 2020**

Fly tipping is covered by the NETs teams who also carry out other non-routine works for Grounds. We are unable to split costs over specific ward areas or from the other works they carry out, but can give the yearly cost for the NETs teams with an estimate of their time spent on fly tipping which we currently estimate as 80% of their time. For 2019 the estimate was 70% of their time.

Weights for fly tipping brought into the transfer station are provided as a weekly total Monday – Sunday.

#### **Fly tipping costs:**

<b>1 October 2020 – 31 December 2020</b>	72.8 tonne
Cost of disposal including costs for NETs team/vehicles	£47,973.00
Contractor removal of fly tipping	£0.00
Removal of asbestos	£1,385.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£49,358.00</b>

The number of enquiries received between 1 October 2020 – 31 December 2020 for the Ward was 106 out of 545 enquiries for the whole of West Lothian equating to 19.5% of fly tipping enquiries relating to Ward 4.

Percentage wise this would equate to an approximate cost for the Ward of £9,625.00 for disposal of fly tipping between 1 October 2020 and 31 December 2020 including cost for Staff/vehicles. (This does not include the removal of asbestos by the Councils asbestos team).

#### **Costs for fly tipping for the period 1 October 2019 – 31 December 2019**

<b>1 October 2019 – 31 December 2019</b>	53.4 tonne
Cost of disposal including estimated costs for NETs team/vehicles	£39,615.00
Contractor removal of fly tipping	£100.00
Removal of asbestos	£313.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£40,028.00</b>

The number of enquiries received between 1 October 2019 – 31 December 2019 for the Ward was 113 out of 490 enquiries for the whole of West Lothian equating to 23.1% of fly tipping enquiries relating to Ward 4.

Percentage wise this would equate to an approximate cost for the ward of £9,174.00 for disposal of fly tipping between 1 October 2019 and 31 December 2019 including cost for Staff/vehicles. (This does not include the removal of asbestos by the Councils asbestos team). The removal of fly tipping by contractor was not within Ward 4.

## D5 Parks and Woodland

### Parks and Woodland Enquiries

In total 39 Parks and Woodland related enquiries were received during this reporting period.

	2020	2019
Tree Advice or Consultations	1	6
Tree Blocking Light	2	2
Tree Branches Overhanging	7	12
Tree Broken/Damaged or Dead	0	2
Tree Dangerous or Unsafe	2	3
Tree Enquiries General	16	9
Tree Felling Work Unauthorised	1	2
Tree Leaves Causing Problems	9	4
Tree Woodland Enquiries	1	0
Total	39	40

	2020	2019
Access Rights Way Core Paths	0	2
Complaint Country Parks/ Trees	1	1
Country Park Forestry or Woods	0	1
Country Park General Enquiries	4	6
Ranger Service General Enquiry	1	6
Total	6	16

### Ranger Service Update

No. Rights Of Way / Core Path / Patrols carried out (hours)	9
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A mix of home working, site visits and park patrols have continued through October to December with a Ranger 'on duty' every day.

Country Parks and green spaces continue to receive very high visitor numbers due to the ongoing pandemic. Pressures on the more sensitive path surfaces/locations continue to prove challenging. There is also noticeable friction between certain user groups e.g cyclists, families, dog walkers.

Snowmelt and additional rainfall led to unprecedented flooding in first week of December.

### Access

Skivo / Jaggy Valley – signage issues resolved. Following up with Planning on behalf of the landowner, in relation to complaints they've received about their land being used for educational purposes.

The Ranger Service liaised with Buildings and Structures regarding signage for the upcoming planned replacement of Murieston Water footbridge on the Murieston Trail. Signage was produced and put up along the affected route. Investigations had to be carried out into the type of closures required under either the Land Reform Scotland Act or the Roads legislation with Legal Services. Roads Services, who are in charge of the project, are keeping the various community groups informed of the delays. We do not have a start date confirmed yet.

## D6 Open Space and Cemeteries

### Ladywell

Falcon Brae Park works are complete.

Heatherbank Park works have begun. These will include a new boardwalk, new windust paths, upgrading the existing path in the north to asphalt, path drainage, signage and two new seats.

### Bellsquarry

Initial community consultations for Bellsquarry Park were carried out in November 2020, through Community Choices. The consultation report is being written up and will be posted online at the end of January 2021, followed by draft park plans.

The Open Space Officer is giving ongoing support and advice to groups with Town Centre Fund projects, including Ladywell Community Garden and Adambrae tree planting.

### Open Space Enquiries

There were eight Open Space enquiries for this reporting period in 2020.

	2020	2019
Childrens Play Enquiries	8	2
Total	8	2

### Cemeteries Routine Works

Routine grass cutting and weed control tasks have been completed. Seasonal maintenance works and lair reinstatement and burial duties are ongoing across the cemetery estates.

### Cemeteries Enquiries

There were 66 Cemeteries enquiries for this reporting period in 2020.

	2020	2019
Cemeteries General Enquiries	10	7
Complaint Cemeteries and Burials	1	3
Lair Enquiries	2	4
Lair Sunken or Uneven	1	0
Memorial/ Headstone Works	19	0
New Interment Booking	27	0
Purchase of Interment Lair	6	0
Total	66	14

(Please note difference in totals due to a configuration in reporting)

## E. CONCLUSION

During this period the Street Cleansing Teams have continued to carry out routine works in the area.

The Open Space Officer is continuing with their ongoing support and advice to groups with Town Centre Fund projects.

**F BACKGROUND REFERENCE**

None

Appendices/Attachments: None

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**11 February 2021**