

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



BROXBURN, UPHALL & WINCHBURGH 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 January 2021 – 31 March 2021.

B. RECOMMENDATION

Members are requested to:

1. Note the work carried out to date and future planned work.
2. Advise of any areas that require further investigation or inclusion in future work plans.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	None
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	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
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	In line with available revenue and capital budgets
VII Consideration at PDSP	None
VIII Other consultations	None

D1 Terms of Report

The report covers the activity for the period 1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021.

D2 Grounds Maintenance Routine Works

All hedge work within the ward has now finished for this season.

Annual Shrub Bed pruning and cleaning up maintenance is complete

Grass cutting of open spaces, sport fields and schools started on Monday 12 April 2021.

Enquiries are ongoing and prioritised on a daily basis.

The latest Lands Audit Management (LAMs) score was 58, the target score being 67.

D3 Grounds Maintenance Enquires

In total 23 grounds maintenance related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period in 2021.

	2021	2020
Ball Game Enquiries	1	2
Bench or Seat Enquiries	2	0
Burns or Watercourses	2	0
Drainage Flooding Grass Areas	0	1
Enforcement Officer Enquiries	2	0
Fencing Enquiries	2	1
GalaDay Public Event Enquiries	0	1
Grass Area Damaged	1	0
Grass Cutting Enquiries	1	0
Grass Highway Verges	2	0
Ground Ownership Enquiries	3	0
Grounds Main Accidnt Ins Claim	0	1
Grounds Property Vandalised	0	2
Hedge Cutting Enquiries	3	3
Public Park Enquiries	1	3
Shrub Bed Enquiries	1	0
Shrub Bed Overhanging Path	2	7
Total	23	21

Garden Maintenance Routine Works

The Garden Maintenance Scheme started on Tuesday 6 April 2021.

Garden Maintenance Enquiries

In total there were two garden maintenance related enquiries received and dealt with during this reporting period.

	2021	2020
Garden Maintenance Change of Address	1	0
Garden Maintenance General Enquiries	1	0
Garden Maintenance Grass Not Cut	0	1
Total	2	1

D4 Cleaner Communities Routine Works

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

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 had been awarded for a contractor to carry out road sweeping of A, B & C roads. This work was completed on 28 March 2021.

Cleaner Communities Enquiries

In total 184 cleaner communities related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period in 2021.

	2021	2020
Complaint Street Cleansing	3	1
Dead Animals	6	4
Dog Bin Overflowing	18	4
Dog Bin New Request for Bin	5	1
Dog Fouled Grass Open Space	1	1
Dog Fouling on Paths/Roads	23	22
Dog No Fouling Sign Request	0	1
Fly Posting	1	0
Fly Tipping/Dumping	58	61
Glass on Paths or Open Spaces	1	5
Graffiti Non-Offensive	0	1
Graffiti Racist or Offensive	2	2
Litter Bin Burnt Damaged	0	1
Litter Bin Overflowing	5	0
Litter Bin New Request for Bin	2	0
Litter General Enquiries	12	7
Litter Grass Open Space	1	1
Litter Paths Roads Verges	22	9
Litter Shrub Beds	2	0
Needles Syringes Abandoned	0	1
Roadside Memorials or Tributes	0	1
Street Sweeping Enquiries	7	7
Trolleys Abandoned/ Dumped	1	0
Vehicle Abandoned	14	14
Total	184	144

Fly Tipping Enquiries (January - December)

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Illegal Fly Tipping/Dumping	249	204	144	132	131

Environmental Community Involvement

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. For the period of the report there have been 58 enquiries in relation to fly tipping compared to 61 for the same period in 2020.

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 an increase in the amount of equipment supplied to facilitate litter picking volunteers, which has increased in line with activity.

There was only one Fixed Penalty Notice issued for fly-tipping in Ward 2 for the period of 1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021. For the same period in 2020 there were three Fixed Penalty Notices issued for fly-tipping within the Ward.

Costs for fly tipping for the period 1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021

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 2020 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:

1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021	91.20 tonne
Cost of disposal including costs for NETs team/vehicles	£60,098.04
Contractor removal of fly tipping	£0.00
Removal of asbestos	£0.00
TOTAL	£60,098.04

The number of enquiries received between 1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021 for the Ward was 58 out of 730 enquiries for the whole of West Lothian equating to 7.95% of fly tipping enquiries relating to Ward 2.

Percentage wise this would equate to an approximate cost for the Ward of £4,774.90 for disposal of fly tipping between 1 January 2021 and 31 March 2021 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 January 2020 – 31 March 2020

1 January 2020 – 31 March 2020	52.42 tonne
Cost of disposal including estimated costs for NETs team/vehicles	£34,543.20
Contractor removal of fly tipping	£0.00
Removal of asbestos	£0.00
TOTAL	£34,543.20

The number of enquiries received between 1 January 2020 – 31 March 2020 for the Ward was 61 out of 504 enquiries for the whole of West Lothian equating to 12.1% of fly tipping enquiries relating to Ward 2.

Percentage wise this would equate to an approximate cost for the ward of £4,180.82 for disposal of fly tipping between 1 January 2020 and 31 March 2020 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 2.

D5 Parks and Woodland

Trees and Woodland Enquiries

In total there were 13 Trees and Woodland related enquiries were received during this reporting period.

	2021	2020
Tree Advice or Consultations	0	1
Tree Affecting Public Utility	0	1
Tree Branches Overhanging	2	2
Tree Broken Damaged or Dead	0	4
Tree Dangerous or Unsafe	1	2
Tree Enquiries General	8	7
Tree Leaves Causing Problems	0	1
Tree Roots Causing Problems	2	0
Total	13	18

	2021	2020
Access Rights Way Core Paths	4	2
Country Park General Enquiries	0	1
Total	4	3

Ranger Service Update

No. Rights Of Way / Core Path / Patrols carried out (hours)	8.5
No. Access Enquiries	4

The Ranger Service met with some school representatives from the Skills Centre and Connolly School to advise on how to better integrate outdoor education into their day-to-day learning.

Draft educational posters encouraging responsible access in West Lothian to help avoid conflict with land management operations have been completed in partnership with local landowners/residents.

West Lothian Planning Portal monitored weekly to identify applications that have an access or biodiversity impact. A number of planning applications have been commented on regarding access and biodiversity, including windfarm applications, housing developments at East Calder, Clappertonhall and Pumpherston and development at Seafield.

The Parks & Woodland team had a meeting with Police Scotland's Rural Crime and Community Liaison Officers to look at closer working relationship and how we can work together to solve some of the anti-social and criminal issues affecting the country parks and wider countryside.

The Ranger Service has been getting the first tentative enquiries from schools with regards to the resumption of outdoor education sessions. Given the current surge in access work/enquiries and the doubling of visitor numbers to Parks & Woodlands sites since Covid, (especially the country parks), we don't expect to be able to offer such visits this side of the summer holidays.

Access

Site Statements for Broxburn and Uphall Community Woodlands have been produced by the Ranger Service.

Drumshoreland Railway Path has been upgraded through the Shale Trail project. Local users very appreciative, although concerned about damage being caused by trail bikes who are now reported to using the site extensively.

Path work started on 15 March on Core Path WL42 - Broxburn Community Woodlands. Lots of compliments from residents and users. Ongoing problem with off road bikes - this has been discussed with Police Scotland's Rural Crime Liaison Officer.

We received an enquiry regarding concerns over access to ROW 140 from Corecut to Winchburgh Main Street, which have been investigated. Enquiries also received from the Winchburgh area regarding 'no cycling' signs, Right of Way LW41 and damage to a path/kerbstone.

Almondell & Calderwood Country Park

Heavy snow in January led to ice packed paths and driveways (as across West Lothian). Alternative gritting was arranged to allow woodland management works to continue. The Visitor Centre and toilets remained closed due to Covid19 restrictions, and reopened on 26 April.

Almondell Historic Wall Project had to be temporarily postponed due to weather but restarted in April for continued rebuilding and pointing work.

Friends of Almondell volunteers are now working in pairs on essential projects in accordance with Covid19 guidelines. Projects include cutting back paths to allow for social distancing and clearing vegetation from ponds for child safety – importance for mental health recognised and efforts much appreciated. Garden Toilets are now available for the public to use.

D6 Open Space and Cemeteries

Kirkhill, Broxburn – Green Action Trust has drawn up new plans for Wyndford Park (based on previous feedback from the community). These will be shared and consulted on this Spring/Summer.

The Community Woodland Path (north and east of the Kirkhill housing) has mostly been resurfaced with whindust. The sloping section east of the WLC housing development is to be tarred and will be carried out this coming financial year.

KGV Playing Fields, Uphall - Draft plans have been prepared based on feedback from the first consultation (see www.westlothian.gov.uk/parkinfo for report). These are currently being voted on.

Craigton Park, Winchburgh - Draft plans have been prepared based on feedback from the first consultation (see www.westlothian.gov.uk/parkinfo for report). These are currently being voted on.

The Open Space Officer continues to support community groups on their Town Centre Fund projects.

Open Space Enquiries

There were four open space related enquiries received and dealt with during this reporting period in 2021.

	2021	2020
Children Play Enquiries	3	1
Glass or Litter in Play Areas	1	0
Total	4	1

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

In total 95 cemeteries related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period in 2021.

	2021	2020
Bench Donations	1	0
Cemeteries General Enquiries	9	6
Cemetery Property Vandalised	0	1
Lair Enquiries	10	6
Memorial/ Headstone Works	24	0
New Interment Booking	31	14
Purchase of Interment Lair	20	10
Total	95	37

E. Conclusion

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

The Open Space Officer continues to support community groups on their Town Centre Fund projects.

F. Background Reference

Open Space Strategy

Capital Programme

Appendices/Attachments: none

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