

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



## **FAULDHOUSE AND THE BREICH VALLEY 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 2022 – 31 March 2022.

#### **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**

<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 January 2022 – 31 March 2022.

**D2 Grounds Maintenance Routine Works**

Shrub bed maintenance was started in mid-December and completed for the end of March. Staff were involved with Winter Maintenance duties and covering at Waste Services over this period.

Summer works including grass cutting and weed control started on Monday 4 April 2022.

Enquiries are being dealt with on a daily basis.

**Grounds Maintenance Enquiries**

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

	2022	2021
Complaint Grounds Maintenance	1	0
Fencing Enquiries	3	1
Grounds Property Vandalised	0	2
Hedge Cutting Enquiries	1	1
Shrub Bed Enquiries	1	0
Shrub Bed Overhanging Path	0	1
Sports Facility Enquiries	1	0
Total	7	5

**D3 Garden Maintenance Routine Works**

Recruitment for Garden Maintenance seasonal staff started in early March, in preparation for the Garden Maintenance Scheme starting in April.

**Garden Maintenance Enquiries**

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

	2022	2021
Garden Maintenance General Enquiries	8	3
Total	8	3

**D4 Cleaner Communities Routine Works**

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/ sweeping of footpaths/ open spaces and road verges and dealing with enquiries as they arise.

Officers continue to work with volunteer's litter picking within the Ward and have assisted with the uplift of bags and debris that they have collected by the NETs team.

The NETs team have also been dealing with fly tipping enquiries and removing fly tipping from Council ground.

## Cleaner Communities Enquiries

In total 84 cleaner communities related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period.

	2022	2021
Complaint Street Cleansing	0	3
Dead Animals	5	3
Dog Bin New Request for Bin	1	5
Dog Bin Overflowing	1	0
Dog Fouled Grass Open Space	0	2
Dog Fouling on Paths Roads	13	30
Fly Posting	0	1
Fly Tipping Dumping	35	66
Glass on Paths or Open Spaces	1	0
Graffiti Racist or Offensive	1	1
Litter Bin Burnt Damaged	2	0
Litter Bin New Request For Bin	1	0
Litter General Enquiries	2	11
Litter Grass Open Space	0	1
Litter Paths Roads Verges	3	10
Needles Syringes Abandoned	0	1
Street Sweeping Enquiries	10	4
Trolleys Abandoned/ Dumped	1	2
Vehicle Abandoned	8	18
Total	84	158

## Fly Tipping Enquiries (January - December)

	2021	2020	2019	2017	2017
Illegal Fly Tipping/Dumping	202	164	155	122	127

## Environmental Community Action

Officers continue to deal with enquiries relating to fly tipping, littering, dog fouling, abandoned vehicles and general enquiries. There have been 35 enquiries in relation to fly tipping for the period compared to 66 for the same period in 2021.

In dealing with abandoned vehicles, Officers have gained compliance from vehicle owners with said vehicles getting removed from public highways or getting taxed in most cases. Where appropriate, requests have been sent to WLC contractors for removal. However, there are instances where vehicle owners are not compliant and result to moving their vehicles between streets. When presented with such tactics from rogue owners, officers have resulted to contacting the DVLA and VOSA for support.

Officers have also had to educate members of the public that their vehicles with a SORN marker needs to be off public roads and kept in a private drive or inside a garage. This is a scenario that has occurred quite frequently of late.

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 was no Fixed Penalty Notice issued in Ward 6 for the period of 1 January 2022 – 31 March 2022 for fly tipping only. For the same period in 2021, there were two Fixed Penalty Notices issued within the Ward for fly tipping only.

### Costs for fly tipping for the period 1 January 2022 – 31 March 2022

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 40% of their time. For 2020 the estimate was 60% 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 January 2022 – 31 March 2022</b>	<b>66.72 tonnes</b>
Cost of disposal including costs for NETs team/vehicles	<b>£43,966.48</b>
Contractor removal of fly tipping	<b>£0.00</b>
Removal of asbestos	<b>£0.00</b>
<b>TOTAL cost for all 9 Wards</b>	<b>£43,966.48</b>

The number of enquiries received between 1 January 2022 – 31 March 2022 for the Ward was 35 out of 485 enquiries for the whole of West Lothian equating to 7.22% of fly tipping enquiries relating to Ward 6.

Percentage wise this would equate to an approximate cost for the Ward of £3,174.38 for disposal of fly tipping between 1 January 2022 and 31 March 2022 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 2021 – 31 March 2021

<b>1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021</b>	<b>82.98 tonnes</b>
Cost of disposal including estimated costs for NETs team/vehicles	<b>£54,681.33</b>
Contractor removal of fly tipping	<b>£0.00</b>
Removal of asbestos	<b>£0.00</b>
<b>TOTAL cost for all 9 Wards</b>	<b>£54,681.33</b>

The number of enquiries received between 1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021 for the Ward was 66 out of 727 enquiries for the whole of West Lothian equating to 9.08% of fly tipping enquiries relating to Ward 6.

Percentage wise this would equate to an approximate cost for the ward of £4,965.06 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). The removal of fly tipping by contractor was not within Ward 6.

## D5 Parks and Woodland

In total 18 Parks and Woodland related enquiries were inspected during this reporting period.

	2022	2021
Tree Advice or Consultations	2	3
Tree Branches Overhanging	3	2
Tree Broken Damaged or Dead	4	0
Tree Dangerous or Unsafe	2	3
Tree Enquiries General	7	5
Total	18	13

	2022	2021
Access Rights Way Core Paths	1	4
Ranger Service General Enquiry	0	1
Total	1	5

### Ranger Service Update

No. Access Enquiries	2
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The first volunteer sessions of the new district-wide Volunteer Ranger Service were held in January. Rather than being concentrated in any one location or Country Park, the group are moving around the various Parks & Woodland holdings in West Lothian.

Officers attended the West Lothian Cycle Forum, and updated attendees on access issues/projects. The forum is thinking about holding an outdoor event to promote cycling this summer.

The Ranger Service have designed and produced an interpretative 'tick trail' in collaboration with the Lyme Resource Centre. Officers will be installing a trail at each of the Country Parks to raise awareness of ticks and Lyme Disease in West Lothian. It is hoped to have this in place by April.

Ben is leaving the Ranger Service at the end of April, which means the service will be down to three rangers. NatureScot are however re-running their Better Places grant in 2022, so will be applying for extra seasonal rangers / maintenance operatives this summer.

### Access

The service received an enquiry saying that the footbridge over Breich Water, between Stoneyburn and Addiewell, was in disrepair. This was passed over to Structures, who are getting an emergency repair done.

In regards to the ongoing access enquiry at Burngrange Court / Young Street in West Calder, and following guidance received from Legal Services - the service does not consider the cut-through to be a public right of way. This issue had been open since last summer, and officers have now responded to all the original enquiries.

The Ranger Service continue to review all West Lothian planning applications for access implications, and submit comments to Planning Services.

Parks and Woodland have been recruiting for the position of Access Ranger. Their priority will be getting the Local Access Forum back up and running, but it is also hoped that they will take some of the access workload pressures off the Ranger Service.

## Ecology and Biodiversity

Ecology and Biodiversity Officers have published a work plan outlining the core elements the role covers (see attached appendix 1).

A “wee forest” has been installed in the grounds of Parkhead Primary School. A wee forest is a tennis court-sized, densely planted and fast growing, native species rich woodland in urban Scotland. This combines the specific Tiny Forest planting method with long term citizen science. This project was delivered as part of a larger government scheme (NatureScot) through partnership with Local Authorities and local delivery partners. Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust are the local delivery partner for the West Lothian wee forest sites.

Additionally, officers have been further engaging with the Fauldhouse Community Development Trust and are helping support the formation of a community group and will be assisting in reviewing forthcoming plans.

## Open Space and Cemeteries

### Open Space Works

Eastfield Road Park, Fauldhouse. Landscaping is due to be completed in Spring/Summer 2022. Weather and subcontractor availability have regularly delayed large scale landscaping.

Carol Campbell commenced as an Open Space Officer on 24 January 2022.

### D6 Open Space Enquiries

There were one open space related enquiries received and dealt with during this reporting period.

	2022	2021
Childrens Play Enquiries	1	2
Total	1	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 77 cemeteries related enquiries received and dealt with during this reporting period.

	2022	2021
Cemeteries General Enquiries	6	12
Cemetery Property Vandalised	2	0
Lair Enquiries	3	3
Lair Sunken or Uneven	0	1
Memorial/ Headstone Works	29	17
New Interment Booking	25	18
Purchase of Interment Lair	12	4
Total	77	55

## **E CONCLUSION**

Officers continue to deal with enquiries relating to fly tipping, littering, dog fouling, abandoned vehicles and general enquiries.

The Open Space Capital Programme is progressing as scheduled.

## **F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

Open Space Strategy

Capital Programme

Appendices/Attachments: One

Appendix 1 - Ecology & Biodiversity Officers Work Plan

Contact Person: Pat McArdle, Whitehill Service Centre, Bathgate 01506 284616,

[Pat.McArdle@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:Pat.McArdle@westlothian.gov.uk)

**Jim Jack**  
**Head of Operational Services**  
**14 June 2022**