

Monthly Newsletter

DUNBAR AND EAST LINTON AREA PARTNERSHIP

February 2026



Making Life Better

The start of 2026 has been wet and grey. The life of the Area Partnership was brightened up by a visit of the East Lothian Council Chief Executive and Head of Communities who joined the DELAP Business Meeting in January. Much of this newsletter contains details of the positive dialogue that took place at that meeting.

Enjoy!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

- 23 March – DELAP Annual Meeting, Bleachingfield, open to the public, 19:00 to 21:00
- 25 April – Dunbar High Street Histories Day 11:00 to 16:00

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Lochend Woods



Another group of volunteers which is making real progress is the Dunbar Community Woodland Group. Dunbar Community Council (a DELAP member) has commissioned a woodland management survey which has recently been completed. The guidance contained in this report will hopefully enable the Community Woodland Group to take ownership of the whole of the woods. Once again, DELAP's help may be needed to find the funding for any work that needs to be undertaken to put the woods into a manageable condition.

Seawall collapse

It has been a fierce January, and the North Sea takes no prisoners. The sea breached the wall beside Lamer Street, completely undermining the road.

A G Thomson, a Dunbar contractor, sent a team out to work in truly appalling weather conditions and the town can be most grateful to them and the Council officers who were on site. The sea wall has been repaired, and the roadway is being restored.

Sea Defences have always been high on the Area Partnership agenda, and the Partnership continues to promote the idea of a comprehensive solution to this part of Dunbar's defences.

However, the reality is that there is so little money available for sea defences, and East Lothian Council has no shortage of sea defence challenges from Musselburgh eastwards. Gullane dunes, for example, were hugely reshaped during January.



Biodiversity

Three ponds have been created at Hedderwick Plantation, John Muir Country Park. There are nine such ponds in all and the Hedderwick ponds have found no difficulty in filling up with water in the recent rains, just like the Seafield ponds before them.

The wetland habitats have been funded by The Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund allocation, which is administered by NatureScot. The purpose of all the ponds is to create new wetland habitat that will increase biodiversity, but in some cases they also serve as a nature based solution to flooding. Our thanks go to the Countryside Rangers for leading this project for us.



Belhaven Community Garden:

Sustaining Dunbar has formally lodged a Community Asset transfer request with the NHS. Over the years, working with NHS Lothian, Sustaining Dunbar volunteers have transformed the grounds of Belhaven Hospital into:

- A Therapeutic Space—for peace and relaxation, for staff, patients, visitors and local people.
- A Growing Space—for herbs, flowers, fruit and vegetables, for anyone who wants to come together with others in a supportive, sharing environment.
- A Learning Space—for training and sharing practical food growing and regenerative land-care skills, for all ages and abilities.
- A Biodiverse Space -for developing the range and variety of habitats so as to enhance the number and variety of species in the garden and its soil.



It will be wonderful if an arrangement can be found to enable this third sector organisation to continue to develop its ideas in the secure knowledge that it owns the land. DELAP's role is to find all possible ways of supporting this Asset Transfer request.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE VISIT

At our January Business Meeting, we were able to welcome the Chief Executive (Laurence Rockey) and the Head of Communities (Eamon John) of East Lothian Council who attended and participated as our guests.

Following the meeting Laurence Rockey followed up on the points that were raised at the meeting and his feedback will be of great interest to our readers and is included in the articles below. It was a most useful dialogue.



AREA PLAN REVIEW

During 2025, DELAP not only published its Area Plan, but ran workshops and conducted formal reviews of certain parts of the plan.

Some of these sections of the plan were discussed when the Chief Executive visited.



WHAT THE COMMUNITY ASKED THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

We are grateful for the clarification of the following matters.

Education

Equality of opportunity for those attending smaller schools, in this case West Barns.

"This session West Barns Primary School does not have a music specialist. There is no statutory requirement to provide a music specialist as all primary teachers are qualified to teach all curricular areas and plan, teach and assess music as relevant to interdisciplinary learning. The Head Teacher teaches whole school music every week at assembly, using the NYCOS approach. The school also has Mr Farren who teaches a very enthusiastic large cohort of brass players.

The school enriches their curriculum further with shows and performances, which teachers plan, teach, assess and evaluate as part of either discrete or interdisciplinary learning themes. They recently had the P1/2 and P2/3 nativity and had a P1-7 Burns Music Poetry Show for all parents. Shows to come: P7 end of year, and P5/6 and P6s assembly sharing event.

To further support the school with music this year the Head Teacher sought support from Charlotte McMillan, Development Officer, Community Music. Last term they had story-line music sessions for P1/2 and P2/3, and currently this term we have a 6-week block of singing sessions for P2/3 and P3/4.

The Parent Council have offered to pay for enrichment activities for our children and at the moment they have offered to pay for DrumFun for P5/6 and P6/7. We are looking at this as it needs to go through Evolve/PVG/Compliance new procedures."



WHAT THE COMMUNITY ASKED THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Education

Road safety to West Barns Primary School

"From Road Safety Group Minutes – West Barns is noted in the last 3 sets of minutes we have **from March 25 – Sept 25**. In the March minute it is noted as having been raised previously by Jacquie Bell from Community Council.

- Parking around the school, especially at drop-off, is an issue and speeding on the main road.
- **Travel plan** in place, working document with Park and Stride encouraged.
- Alan Stubbs (Roads Manager) encouraged the Community Council to **report parking violations** when they occur and not to wait for Forum, yellow lines and zig zags around the school are enforceable by Police Scotland.
- Council put forward a proposal to **restrict traffic movement** on school streets during drop off/pick up, this was rejected by Community Council and Parent Council.
- Police have been conducting speed checks on Edinburgh Road.
- Community Council were looking to do a community **speed gun initiative** where they use volunteers to do speed gun sessions on the main road with training from Police Scotland.
- **U194/concrete road to get to the pump track** was raised in June – it was meant to be closed off by Taylor Wimpey housing developer, liability was with developer. Road Services putting pressure on them to resolve.

Education

Availability of music lessons in schools

"There is Brass instruction at West Barns. The instructor currently teaches 30% of the eligible students there. There is no-one on the waiting list at West Barns Primary School."

Education

Waiting lists for autism and ADHD assessments



"The Neurodevelopmental Pathway is a clinical pathway overseen by NHS Lothian, not East Lothian Council. Current EL NHS Waiting List Figures over the last 6 months show an average of 153 weeks/2 years 49 weeks wait to the point of their first assessment appointment.

Within ELC schools all children and young people with neurodevelopmental needs (not on the waiting list, on the waiting list or having completed the pathway process) have their needs responded to through the GIRFEC Child Planning Framework. Their needs would be assessed and appropriate strategies and supports put in place.

Link to GIRFEC site:

<https://sites.google.com/edubuzz.org/girfécineastlothian/child-and-young-persons-planning-framework>."

Education

Foreign Exchange Trips

Off-site residential visits of any kind were halted during the COVID period. These have now been reinstated and there are clear Education guidelines for Head Teachers and school staff to follow when considering such visits.

Any parents/ carers wishing to have an off-site residential visit of any kind considered should discuss this with their Head Teacher in the first instance who can advise on suitability from both curricular and health and safety perspectives.



WHAT THE COMMUNITY ASKED THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Housing

What is the position likely to be moving forward with Housing Capital Budget, and what type of social housing should we expect to see in our Area?

New Build:

Taylor Wimpey are currently building 28-units for the Council at Hallhill, Dunbar. These are programmed with a hand over of 16 units before the end of this financial year, with the remaining 12 units completing early in the 2026/27 financial year.

We have separately negotiated an additional 12 units to be purchased for social rent, and this is currently at legal/missives/Heads of Terms stage. The expected completion date for these units is May 2027.

28-social rented units live on site:

- 6 x 1-bed cottage flats
- 6 x 2-bed cottage flats
- 6 x 2-bed houses
- 6 x 3-bed houses
- 4 x 4-bed houses

Additional 12 units for social rent:

- 4 x 2-bed houses
- 6 x 3-bed houses
- 2 x 4-bed houses

Negotiations are also currently taking place to secure a further 24 2-bed flats for low-cost home ownership. This will not involve any capital expenditure but will provide additional affordable housing units which will be delivered around November 2026.

Planned Maintenance / modernisation programme:

The Housing Asset team operates a structured five-year stock condition survey regime covering all Council housing, including blocks where we have ownership. Two dedicated Stock Condition Surveyors, who are also qualified Domestic Energy Assessors, carry out these surveys.

All data is validated for accuracy before being uploaded into our Asset Management system, which provides a reliable evidence base for reporting against SHQS requirements, identifying any failures, and informing both revenue repairs and capital investment programmes. Below is a summary of improvement works carried out this year and those planned for next year:

This year:

- Roof and rendering works completed at Blocks 10 Ashfield (7 of 8 ELC properties) and 6 Goldenstones (6 of 8 ELC properties).
- Roof coverings completed at 45 properties (mix of half-blocks and houses) within Lammermuir Crescent and Doon Avenue.
- Dunbar Windows & doors:
 - 123 properties completed
 - 15 refusals
 - 25 remaining on the list
- Dunbar LIP: Stone wall repairs at Spott Road.

Next Year:

- Roof coverings planned at Boroughdales (14 properties) and Floors Terrace (7 properties).
- Dunbar Windows & doors: currently only 7 addresses on the list (suggest too small to highlight).
- Dunbar, no LIPs identified at this time (Estate inspection may drive these in time)."



WHAT THE COMMUNITY ASKED THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Housing

What is the position likely to be moving forward with Housing Revenue Budget, and will we see the care of our social housing stock improve?

Repairs:

Our Planned Maintenance team continue to carry out reactive repairs within an average of 12.5 days (target 20 days). The team also carry out emergency repairs within an average of 3.83 hours (target 4 hours). Repairs satisfaction is currently sitting at around 86% and is an area the team are focusing on this year to improve further.

Estate inspections are led by local Housing Teams, which provide additional insight into environmental and neighbourhood condition issues. These inspections help identify improvement needs beyond individual properties and blocks, supporting area-based works and contributing to ongoing programme development. It is the intention to increase the frequency of these inspections together with a review of the process and monitoring of any action required to ensure works are carried out and completed.

I can also confirm that we have a local lettings plan for Hallhill. The breakdown of 50% (14) to Transfers and 36% (10) to General Needs is out of line with agreed allocation targets for current year, with a greater number to Transfers, following consideration and analysis of current demand information for transfer and general needs lists for Dunbar.

We will have a lead officer for tenancy sign-ups, who will subsequently be responsible for supporting tenants and ensuring they are meeting their responsibilities."

Active Travel

Are there any plans to...

- ...provide a safe route to the Grammar School from the outlying villages and from West Barns?

"The route currently has footways for the whole way, and a 20mph speed limit. However, I understand that West Barns Community Council and Parent Council are looking at undertaking their own options appraisal."

- ...implement the path network recommended by Sustaining Dunbar to improve the connectivity of the town.

"We need to understand the town's priorities for action, and to work through these in a logical fashion. Only preferred routes exist for now. We would need to work through the various stages of concept design to detailed design to get an idea of the full costs and impacts. Some of the preferred routes may result in politically unacceptable impacts on car parking, for example. However, some of the recommendations are relatively straightforward to implement e.g. drop kerbs."

- ...introduce a Transport Hub?

"We have recently commissioned Ardent Engineers to undertake a feasibility study and community consultation looking at improving access to the station from the high street, and potentially moving the bus stops closer to aid interchange. This study will be complete by end of March."



WHAT THE COMMUNITY ASKED THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Community Buildings

How do you see the Council working with the Communities to keep the social activities intact through the positive use of our community buildings?

"The next phase of the Placemaking project will look at community by community, asset by asset buildings. The council will facilitate and engage with the community on this work as key stakeholders. We understand the range of social activities that take place across these assets are vital to the life within and across our communities – as such we will be working with communities and key stakeholders to consider how best we do that together."

What meaningful change will you bring in that will improve the relationship and respect between community volunteers and the staff and elected officials at East Lothian Council given that in the East Lothian Council Plan 2022 - 2027 there are only two mentions of volunteers and the volunteer contribution.

"The Council recognises the enormous amount of work that volunteers do across our communities that add value and enhance their communities. Council staff engage with and support a range of organisations in this work from community groups, sporting, arts, and horticulture organisations in adding value to the county. The Council will be developing a new Council Plan and Volunteering and the invaluable role that volunteers play in and across communities will feature in that."



Roads

DELAP met with the Roads Team as planned last month and reviewed the considerable achievements of 2025, delivered in a period where finances were scarce. Once again the

Roads Department will produce a list of possible projects that are not currently on the 2026/27 programme. The Are Partnership will be able to select which of these projects should be fed into the plan.

Upcoming works include –

- Improvements to the footpath between Countess Road and Queen's Road Dunbar.
- Completion of the resurfacing of Spott Road, Dunbar between the A1 and Kellie Drive.

2026/2027

GRANTS

The final decision on the level of grant funding allocated to DELAP will not be known until the Budget process has been completed by East Lothian Council.

However, DELAP members will continue to encourage third sector organisations to apply for grant funding for projects that further the aims of the Area Plan.

THANK YOU FOR READING

Please support the Annual Meeting on 23rd March