

MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL

12 MAY 2014

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Dear Sir,

I am writing this letter on behalf of my wife and in this matter I completely share her views.

I understand that the General Purposes Committee of the Council will be considering a request from the Loyal Orange Lodge No 52 to hold two marches in Bonnyrigg on 28 June 2014. The Committee is to meet on 20 May 2014 and this request and any letters of objection will be considered then. My wife has some concerns about our identity being disclosed and would prefer if our name and address could be withheld.

I wish to object in the strongest terms to this request, in principle and in relation to some of the detail.

In principle I object to this and any other sectarian organisation being permitted to parade on the public streets and cause disruption, inconvenience and alarm to members of the public. I object to the use of police resources being used when these could be better employed elsewhere. This organisation exists to promote and continue discrimination and malice against the Roman Catholic religion. I might even suggest that it promotes religious aggravated hate and Midlothian Council should not encourage it in any way.

I further object to permission being given for this march to proceed along Park Road. This is a relatively quiet housing road and is not a classified road or a distributor road. As a long-term resident in this street I have memories of previous Orange Order bands stopping deliberately in front of Canon Gallagher's house to bang the drum. At that time he lived in the street but there is no church house now.

Will we be expected to remove our cars from the street to allow this march? Insult to injury or is that the other way round?

The proposal is for the march to proceed along Park Road in the early evening, after the band and its followers have spent the day also marching in Bathgate. By then I suspect much strong drink will have been taken and there will be a risk of some rowdiness and anti-social behaviour.

For the reasons given above I would be grateful if you could bring this letter of objection to the attention of the General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 20 May 2014 so that it may be given due consideration.

On a more general point I have to express some concern and disappointment at the

apparent lack of opportunity for the public to comment on such controversial matters. We only learned of this proposed march through a few lines in the general body of the Midlothian Advertiser. It did not appear in the Public Notices section. When I went to the Council web-site I could find no reference to it, not even under "Consultation and Surveys" and "Law and Licencing". I am surprised that this proposal for a march on public streets would appear not to require advertisement as controversial planning applications do for example. Without public notice procedures there is no formal mechanism for public comment.

I look forward to the decision of the General Purposes Committee on 20 May 2014.

Yours

