

# Notice of Meeting and Agenda



## Petitions Committee

**Venue:** Council Chambers/Hybrid,  
Midlothian House, Dalkeith, EH22 1DN

**Date:** Monday, 31 March 2025

**Time:** 11:00

**Executive Director : Place**

**Contact:**

Clerk Name: Democratic Services  
Clerk Telephone:  
Clerk Email: [democratic.services@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@midlothian.gov.uk)

**Further Information:**

This is a meeting which is open to members of the public.

**Privacy notice: Please note that this meeting may be recorded. The recording may be publicly available following the meeting. If you would like to know how Midlothian Council collects, uses and shares your personal information, please visit our website: [www.midlothian.gov.uk](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk)**

## **1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

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## **2 Order of Business**

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Including notice of new business submitted as urgent for consideration at the end of the meeting.

## **3 Declaration of Interest**

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Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest.

## **4 Minute of Previous Meeting**

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No items for discussion

## **5 Public Reports**

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|------------|--|--------|
| <b>4.1</b> | Terms of Reference and Nomination of Chair– report by Chief Officer Corporate Solutions                      | 3 - 6  |
| <b>4.2</b> | Newtongrange Primary School Playground Upgrade (Ref: 2025/001) – report by Chief Officer Corporate Solutions | 7 - 16 |

## **6 Private Reports**

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No items for discussion

## **7 Date of Next Meeting**

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The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed.

## **Petitions Committee – Terms of Reference and Nomination of Chair**

### **Report by Saty Kaur, Chief Officer Corporate Solutions**

#### **Report for Decision**

#### **1 Recommendations**

The Petitions Committee is recommended to:

- i. Consider the appointment of a Chair; and
- ii. Note its Membership and Terms of Reference

#### **2 Purpose of Report/Executive Summary**

This report sets out the Membership and Terms of Reference of the Petitions Committee and invites the Committee to appoint a Chair.

**Date** Wednesday 19 March 2025

**Report Contact:**

Saty Kaur, Chief Officer Corporate Solutions

[Saty.Kaur@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:Saty.Kaur@midlothian.gov.uk)

### **3 Background/Main Body of Report**

#### Membership

**3.1** Following the Local Government elections in May 2022, at its meeting on 24 May 2022, Council agreed the Petitions Committee membership to be 5 members as stated in the Scheme of Administration. Furthermore, at its meeting on 25 February 2025, a change to the membership was agreed. Therefore, the 5 elected members appointed to the Petitions Committee are:

- Councillor Stephen Curran
- Councillor Debbi McCall
- Councillor Connor McManus
- Councillor Margot Russell
- Councillor Pauline Winchester

**3.2** Members are required to nominate a Chair from the above membership for the Petitions Committee.

#### Terms of Reference

**3.3** The Scheme of Administration sets out the Terms of Reference of the Petitions Committee. The Petitions Committee will be responsible for hearing petitions raised by members of the public (with the exception of Elected Members). Petitions are dealt with in line with the Procedure for Dealing with Petitions.

**3.4** Valid petitions will be heard by the Committee who can take one of the following actions for each petition:

- No action;
- Pass the petition to the relevant Director or other Council Committee to look into, with or without any specific recommendation; or
- If the petition relates to another public organisation, the Petitions Committee can refer it to that organisation with or without any specific recommendation.

**3.5** The Petitions Committee cannot change Council decisions, although the Petitions Committee can request a review of a policy or procedure, as long as in so doing it does not contravene the provisions contained in Standing Order 7.14.

**3.6** The quorum for meetings of the Petitions Committee will be 3 Councillors.

- 3.7** The Minutes of the Petitions Committee will be recorded by the Officer clerking the meeting and submitted to the next ordinary meeting of the Committee for approval. They will also be submitted to the Council both for information and to allow the Council to consider any recommendations contained in them. Meetings of the Petitions Committee will also be audiocast subject to the exemptions contained within the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

#### **4 Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)**

##### **4.1 Resource**

No implications

##### **4.2 Digital**

No implications

##### **4.3 Risk**

In accordance with the Scheme of Administration the Council is required to appoint Members to the various Committees, etc. Failure to do so could impede the discharge of business.

##### **4.4 Ensuring Equalities (if required a separate IIA must be completed)**

An equalities impact assessment is not required.

##### **4.4 Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)**

See Appendix A

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A – Additional Report Implications**

## APPENDIX A – Report Implications

### A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

Not applicable

### A.2 Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- Holistic Working
- Hub and Spoke
- Modern
- Sustainable
- Transformational
- Preventative
- Asset-based
- Continuous Improvement
- One size fits one
- None of the above

### A.3 Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- One Council Working with you, for you
- Preventative and Sustainable
- Efficient and Modern
- Innovative and Ambitious
- None of the above

### A.4 Delivering Best Value

Not applicable

### A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Not applicable

### A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Not applicable

### A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Not applicable

### A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

Not applicable

## **Newtongrange Primary School Playground Upgrade (Ref: 2025/001)**

**Report by Saty Kaur, Chief Officer Corporate Solutions**

**Report for Decision**

### **1 Recommendations**

The Petitions Committee is recommended to:

- Consider the content of the petition and the information presented to the Petitions Committee in support of the petition from the Lead Petitioner
- Determine what action should be taken from the following options:
  - No action; or
  - Pass the petition to the relevant Director or other Council Committee to look into, with or without any specific recommendation.

### **2 Purpose of Report/Executive Summary**

To present the petition from Newtongrange Primary School Parent Council in respect of a request to upgrade the playground at Newtongrange Primary School for the Petitions Committee's consideration.

**Date** Wednesday 19 March 2025

**Report Contact:**

Saty Kaur, Chief Officer Corporate Solutions

[Saty.Kaur@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:Saty.Kaur@midlothian.gov.uk)

### 3 Background/Main Body of Report

- 3.1 Newtongrange Primary School Parent Council submitted a petition (Appendix B) to Midlothian Council on 6 February 2025. The petition has been deemed valid by the Council's Monitoring Officer as per the Petitions Procedure and is therefore presented to Petitions Committee for consideration.
- 3.2 The petition states *'Newtongrange Primary School Parent Council calls for equality with other Midlothian schools. Our playground urgently needs an upgrade'*. The petition is supported by 463 signatures (as of the time of writing this report) via the online petition platform 'change.org'. The link to the online petition is [Petition · Upgrade the Newtongrange Primary School playground - United Kingdom · Change.org](#)
- 3.3 The petition seeks the following actions (as lifted from the petition):
- We ask for the school railings to be repaired and repainted.
  - We ask for some colourful or creative stencil decoration/ designs on the existing tarmac surface to allow the children to play imaginative games.
  - We would like to see an astro-turf or softer rubber type surface installed in a small section to avoid injuries when the children are playing football on tarmac.
  - We would like to see some larger engaging and inclusive play equipment installed, such as a Trim Trail, surface domes, playhouse, climbing wall, balance obstacles or similar. (A Trim Trail is a children's obstacle course consisting of different pieces of equipment that form a series of active and fun challenges.)
  - We would like to see an outside classroom area created for outdoor learning opportunities.

#### Considerations for the Petitions Committee

- 3.4 In terms of the Petitions Procedure, the Lead Petitioner is invited to make a statement (that lasts no longer than 10 minutes) to support their petition. The Procedure allows for one supporter to speak on behalf of the Lead Petitioner. The Lead Petitioner and/or their supporter should be prepared to answer questions from the Petitions Committee.
- 3.5 As per the Council's Scheme of Administration, the Petitions Committee can:
- Take no action; or
  - Pass the petition to the relevant Director or other Council Committee to look into, with or without any specific recommendation.



#### **4 Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)**

##### **4.1 Resource**

To implement the actions requested in the petition would require financial resource at a figure to be determined.

##### **4.2 Digital**

No implications

##### **4.3 Risk**

Failure to make a decision on the petition puts the Council at risk of not discharging its requirements within its Standing Orders and governance procedures.

##### **4.4 Ensuring Equalities (if required a separate IIA must be completed)**

Implementation of actions may require an Integrated Impact Assessment.

##### **4.4 Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)**

See Appendix A

#### **Appendices**

**Appendix A – Additional Report Implications**

**Appendix B – Petition - Newtongrange Primary School Playground (Ref: 2025/001) – Redacted**

## APPENDIX A – Report Implications

### A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

Not applicable

### A.2 Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- Holistic Working
- Hub and Spoke
- Modern
- Sustainable
- Transformational
- Preventative
- Asset-based
- Continuous Improvement
- One size fits one
- None of the above

### A.3 Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- One Council Working with you, for you
- Preventative and Sustainable
- Efficient and Modern
- Innovative and Ambitious
- None of the above

### A.4 Delivering Best Value

Not applicable

### A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

The petition has been submitted by members of the community.

### A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Not applicable

### A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Not applicable

### A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

Not applicable

## MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL – FORM TO BE USED TO LODGE A PETITION

Before completing this form you should read Midlothian Council’s “Procedures for Dealing with Petitions” which can be found on the Council’s website. Copies can also be obtained by telephoning Democratic Services on 0131 270 7500.

The completed form should be delivered:-

- by email to [petitions@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:petitions@midlothian.gov.uk); or
- by mail or by hand to Democratic Services, Resources Directorate, Midlothian Council, Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith, EH22 1DN.

If you require any further information or advice, please contact Democratic Services by telephoning 0131 270 7500.

<b>Details of Principal Petitioner</b>	
Please enter the name of person raising the petition. Please include a contact address to which correspondence may be sent and a contact telephone number. Only the principal petitioner’s name and no other details will be made public.	
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Newtongrange Primary School Parent Council</b>
<b>Address:</b>	% Ben Miller
	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]
<b>Tel No:</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>e-mail:</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Petition Statement</b>	
Please state clearly in the box below the purpose of your petition and what action you wish Midlothian Council to take.	
<b>(Important – Please note that petitions will be <u>rejected</u> and returned to the Principal Petitioner in cases where the wording contained within the Petition Statement box below differs from that on any accompanying petition signature sheets.)</b>	

This petition was launched on Change.org in late 2023 and gathered over 450 signatures from the community during the school year 2023/2024. The full petition with photos is available at: <https://www.change.org/p/upgrade-the-newtongrange-primary-school-playground>

**Newtongrange Primary School Parent Council calls for equality with other Midlothian schools.**

**Our playground urgently needs an upgrade.**

Our school is a great community with wonderful teachers and support staff, however, the facilities available do not match the staff's passion and dedication. ***Our children deserve a better place to play and learn in.***

In 2025 Newtongrange Primary School will be 100 years old and in that time the playground has deteriorated and no longer meets the standards and needs of a modern school.

The playground is essentially a hard tarmac surface and is not stimulating, engaging, fun or inclusive for the approximately 450 children and staff who use the playground every school day, and our popular After School Club who use it all year round.

The playground railings create a hazard for our children with rusty fragments and flaking paint. There is a large disparity between the Newtongrange playground and many other Midlothian Primary School playgrounds. While ours lacks basic facilities like shelter or play equipment many others feature engaging spaces and accessible play zones to enhance learning experiences. ***Newtongrange Primary School is the ONLY playground in a Midlothian school without any formal play structures.*** We believe all Midlothian school children should have equality in education facility provision and are asking for this to be rectified.

Overall, despite the best efforts of the school staff, the site looks very tired and neglected. Whilst Midlothian Council has recognised the need to refurbish the school as a whole, it makes no mention of the playground and no timescale has yet been offered for this.

The Parent Council would love to see some of the following improvements to bring our school up to the same standards as other local schools;

- We ask for the school railings to be repaired and repainted.
- We ask for some colourful or creative stencil decoration/ designs on the existing tarmac surface to allow the children to play imaginative games.
- We would like to see an astro-turf or softer rubber type surface installed in a small section to avoid injuries when the children are playing football on tarmac.
- We would like to see some larger engaging and inclusive play equipment installed, such as a Trim Trail, surface domes, play house, climbing wall, balance obstacles or similar. (A Trim Trail is a children's obstacle course consisting of different pieces of equipment that form a series of active and fun challenges.)
- We would like to see an outside classroom area created for outdoor learning opportunities.

Newtongrange Parent Council is calling for an urgent plan to transform the playground facilities and to improve safety, accessibility, outdoor learning and play opportunities.

### Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the Petition

Before a petition is submitted, you may have already raised the issue in question with the relevant Council department or other agency and it would be helpful if you could briefly outline what measures if any you have taken. This could include, for example, details of any individuals or organisations approached. Please limit any information to no more than 4 sides of A4 paper.

The Parent Council has successfully launched a Crowdfunding page which has raised over £700 towards improvements to our playground but more significant investment by Midlothian Council is needed to make a real difference.

We thank Cllr Kelly Drummond for contributing some of her own Environment Funds in 2023 towards some new play items and benches, which have made an immediate positive improvement.

We also thank the Council for the recent work to resurface the tarmac and provide some ground stencils. However, serious investment in the provisions and surroundings by the Council is needed.

We have also engaged with Cllr Ellen Scott to discuss our concerns and a possible solution of bringing more of the park into use as part of the playground.

The suggestion mooted was to install a new small fence/barrier/railing at the park side of the playground. The fence would create a new border to encapsulate a small section of grass that is currently underutilised in the children's park near the entrance to the Newtongrange Primary School nursery. By adding this accessible section of the park, it would provide direct access from the playground to a softer grass surface for children to play on. It would also be an ideal area to install a trim track as there would be no concrete. Key to this solution is that by having a 'double fence' the area would remain accessible to the general public outwith the children's playtimes while still maintaining security for the school.



We have spoken to a representative of the Newtongrange Community Council and had a meeting to walk around the area. The meeting was positive and NCC stated they would have no objections to us exploring this as an option.

The School Premises Regulations provides the statutory requirements and best practice standards for councils to provide a variety of surfaces in the design of new and existing playgrounds. Design guidance highlights that external pupil space ratios should ideally include a mixture of hard, soft and covered / sheltered

areas. In addition to the type of surfaces we note that children should also have a minimum amount of space (m squared) per 100 pupils. We question whether Newtongrange Primary School meets these guidelines. We would ask the council to look at their responsibilities in terms of type of surface provision and space per pupil. We put forward that having safe and managed access to the park may help resolve both of these issues.

**In conclusion, Newtongrange Primary School Parent Council submits this petition to upgrade the provisions in the playground at Newtongrange Primary School, along with a proposal for suggested solutions. We look forward to a response from Midlothian Council in due course.**

### **Presenting your Petition**

As the principal petitioner you will be invited to appear before the Council's Petitions Committee to speak in support of the petition and also to answer any questions which members of the Committee may wish to put to you and assist them in reaching their decision.

You may be accompanied by one supporter who may speak on your behalf.

### **Signature of Principal Petitioner**

When satisfied that the petition meets all the criteria outlined in the Procedures for Dealing with Petitions, the Principal Petitioner should sign and date the form in the box below.

All other signatures gathered should be appended to the form.

**(Important – Please remember that petitions will be rejected and returned to the Principal Petitioner in cases where the wording contained within the Petition Statement box above differs from that on any accompanying petition signature sheets.)**

<b>Signature</b> Ben Miller <b>Date</b> 6th Feb 2025	
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(Please type your name if sending by e-mail)

### **Name in block capitals**

BEN MILLER
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(Please type your name if sending by e-mail)

### **Appended Information**

Please ensure that the following items are appended to this form:-

- Other signatories to the petition (if any)
- Copies of relevant correspondence
- Any additional information for consideration

**Submission**

Please submit this form and attachments, by mail or in person, to:-

Democratic Services  
Resources Directorate  
Midlothian Council  
Midlothian House  
Buccleuch Street  
Dalkeith  
EH22 1DN

or by email to [petitions@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:petitions@midlothian.gov.uk)

