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Stoneyburn Community Centre – bats

I'm writing to let you know that a protected species of bat has been discovered living within Stoneyburn Community Centre, which as you will know is currently undergoing renovation works.

Bats are a protected species and it's a criminal offence to recklessly disturb a bat roost (nest). West Lothian Council is working with Scottish Natural Heritage and specialists to carry out further tests.

I would like to reassure you that the planned £380,000 Improvement work to the community facility will go ahead as planned, as soon the issue concerning the bats has been resolved. Until then, where possible, the council will continue to utilise alternative accommodation for local groups and customers.

The current position is that specialist experts have been called in and work can only recommence if a special licence is granted by Scottish Natural Heritage. Following an initial bat survey, the contractor was instructed to stop all work at the site as bats are a legally protected species and they cannot be disturbed.

Before work can re-commence the aim is to have further bat surveys carried out before the end of August by an Independent consultant to establish if a Habitats Regulations Licence from Scottish Natural Heritage is required for the proposed works. The surveys require to be sufficiently spaced apart to ensure that they present a clear picture of bat activity over time.

It is estimated that the licensing process will delay the works for 8-10 weeks meaning that the refurbishment works will now be complete around the end of the year.

The delay is disappointing, however bats and their roost are protected under legislation so there is no choice but to stop working at the site until we are advised that it is safe to recommence building work. We will ensure that you are kept up-to-speed with developments and we will work with Scottish Natural Heritage and partners to ensure that the development is completed as quickly as possible.

Although the works will take longer than we would all have hoped for, the redeveloped facility will be fantastic and benefit the community of Stoneyburn for many years to come.

I will provide you with regular updates at each stage of the process until work resumes.

Kind regards

Councillor Cathy Muldoon
Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley Ward