

MINUTES

MONDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2016
LEITH COMMUNITY CENTRE (NEW KIRK GATE)

Councillors Present: Angus Hardie, David Igoe, Andrew Mackenzie, Abu Meron (Treasurer), Sally Millar (Secretary), Chrissie Reid, Jacqueline Rogers, Jim Scanlon (Chair), Eileen Simpson, John Tibbitt (Vice -Chair), Michael Traill.

Elected Representatives: Councillor Gordon Munro, Councillor Adam McVey

In attendance: PC Fiona Brown, Sgt. Niven Bull (Leith Community Sgt), Faruk Sikder.

Minute Taker: Kay Goodall.

1. Welcome: Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillor Chas Booth, Stephen Brennan, Deidre Brock MP, Ben Macpherson MSP, Tommy Sheppard MP.

2. Police report

Surgeries

Sgt Bull explained the new structure of community policing for the city, introduced under Operation Rigoletto. There are now 6 dedicated beat officers (for what area? Check) concentrating purely on community issues (not distracted by being on calls or other duties). Local police 'surgeries' are being started again, and City Council Community Safety Officers will attend too when they are available. Sessions began on 17 October and they take place every third Friday, 12.30-1.30, at the Hub (Restalrig Road). PC Brown added that from 15 December, there will also be surgeries at the Tiso café on Commercial Street every third Thursday, 12.30-1.30. More may follow, at locations such as Leith Library.

ACTION: once dates and venues finalised, Michael will advertise these on the CC's website and social media.

John asked whether the community officers were made aware of incidents that had been reported outwith the day shift, such as night-time housebreaking. Sgt Bull said that they were, and explained that the Community Investigation Unit progresses all such investigations and shares heat maps of crime patterns in the area with all the beat officers so that they can provide extra patrols for hotspots and offer advice in the neighbourhood.

Good news stories

Sgt Bull then summarised some recent good local news stories. On a 'Day of Action' at Cables Wynd on 23 November, officers had succeeded in getting back 2 properties that had been used for drug dealing. Prohibited weapons and drugs had been seized, and 3 people arrested. Also in the last month, 2 adult men had been arrested for house-breaking (Brunswick Road); a 12-year-old had been arrested for racially abusing shop staff; and a man had been arrested and held in custody for an attempted murder at Academy Street.

Policing focus during October

PC Brown told the meeting about partnership work with St Mary's Primary and Victoria Primary. There is an ongoing problem with double-parking at drop-off times, and officers had been patrolling alongside traffic wardens in the hope of deterring this.

Street sex work continues to be a problem in areas such as Johns Place and Duncan Place, and still to some extent in Salamander Place / Street.

'Boy racer' driving around Ocean Terminal has been the subject of several complaints from the public. Sgt Bull said that the cars were well-maintained and the drivers were not seeking to cause trouble, but unfortunately their fast driving causes noise. Local officers were tackling this with road stops.

The Spey Lounge on Leith Walk, where most recently a large scale disturbance with violence took place, is now a 'designated premises' and is now required to serve only persons over the age of 25. Local officers are monitoring this with the aim of ensuring it is enforced.

Monthly statistics

Sgt Bull gave a summary of statistics for October for the Leith ward:

Housebreakings, (incl.attempts)	13 (11 dwellings;1 businesspremises;1 other (shed/garage))
Common Assaults	38
Serious assaults	1

Robbery & assaults	2
<i>Road Safety Initiative</i>	
Dangerous driving	2
Drink driving	1
Driving without a licence	5
Driving without insurance	7
Common Thefts	24
Thefts with shoplifting	19
Thefts of motor vehicles	7
Thefts from motor vehicles	9
Attempted thefts from motor vehicles	?
Hate crimes	8, of which 5 were racially aggravated
<i>Dedicated Prostitution Patrols</i>	
Kerb crawling	1 man warned; insufficient evidence to charge
Soliciting	3 street workers given first caution

Michael asked if a written report with full statistics could be made available to the CC (as it has been to other CCs)

ACTION: Michael will write to Inspector Carson requesting this.

Angus asked if the trend in crimes such as housebreaking and assaults had been upward or downward. Sgt Bull replied that the general trend has been downward: a 3.4% fall in housebreaking in the last 5 years; a fall in serious crimes of violence of 24.9% in the same period; and lower level assaults also down by 4.8% in the last 5 years. (However, these results are for the whole ward, as a breakdown specifically for Leith Links area is not available.)

a. Review of Leith Police Station: Chair thanked Sgt Bull and PC Brown and asked them to update the CC on the rumoured closure of Leith Police Station. Sgt Bull assured the meeting that there is no plan to close it, or to stop having a station in Leith. Articles in the media have been misleading and unhelpful. Edinburgh City Council has been looking into new purpose-built premises to be shared with other services (NHS, CEC), but even if this happens eventually, a policing counter service will continue.

3. Adoption of minutes of last meeting on Monday 31 October 2016: Proposed by Michael Traill; seconded by John Tibbitt. Available at <https://leithlinksc.org.uk/>

4. Matters arising and outstanding actions: At the last meeting, new councillors had asked about induction packs from City Council. Michael announced that these would be available at the forthcoming induction day on 3rd December.

The extraordinary public meeting on 14/11/16 with Teague about the Salamander Place development had been well-attended and successful, and had also been helpful for finalising the LLCC response to the current Planning application.

5. Communications: Sally raised for discussion the topic of communications between community councillors. Email and "Reply All" is at times overused, and may not be the most efficient method, as important information can get 'buried', and missed. Sally proposed basic ground rules, as follows:

- Email subject lines should always begin with LLCC (followed by a specific sub-title), to assist later searching.
- An email should state at the beginning whether it is for information only or for action.
- If the email is for action, it should clearly say who is responsible for coordinating / carrying out the action, and to whom replies should be directed.

Michael suggested that people should avoid using 'Reply All' unless it is necessary.

ACTION: These points were agreed, and will be implemented immediately (although John pointed out that flexibility is always important – no point in having over-strict 'rules' when common sense and need may dictate a different course of action, depending on circumstances). Michael offered to reduce the burden of constant emails by providing a weekly 'digest' summarising everything in a single email (apart from urgent topics). Items could be sent to him by Monday noon each week for a Monday evening email entitled "LLCC: Members' Weekly Bulletin". This offer was approved and gratefully accepted.

ACTION: Michael will implement 'Weekly Bulletin' immediately.

Chair observed that to avoid sending / receiving duplicated information, he could, on request, remove particular councillors from his email circulation lists covering wider topics (e.g. Leith Theatre (but they would stay on LLCC councillors circulation list, obviously)).

ACTION: Councillors will contact Chair individually to request removal from wider email lists, if required.

There was also a discussion about whether the current LLCC website, although well-suited to its core task of providing basic information for the public and councillors, should be updated / replaced by a new site. Chair noted that nonetheless, viewing statistics showed that views had doubled since the previous year and were now at around 8000 a year. Abu had looked at other CC websites – some are good but compared to LLCC, many are very poor. Andrew felt that keeping things simple is best.

ACTION: Michael will start upgrading the website in gradual stages that can be reviewed as matters progress. Councillors to send in their ideas and suggestions to Michael.

6. Planning: Salamander Place development response: The final response produced by Sally on behalf of LLCC was submitted (and is available to view on LLCC website). Edinburgh City Council Planning Committee has arranged a site visit for 2nd December. Sally and John will attend this, from LLCC. Councillor Adam McVey also planned to attend. Jac asked whether comments from the public can be accessed on the portal, but Adam explained that these are not made available until the consideration stage. If the matter goes to a ‘Hearing’ in front of the Committee, LLCC will be asked to attend.

Chair and councillors thanked Sally for her work on the submission.

7. Committee Reports/updates:

a. Planning & Licensing Sub-Committee

Sally reiterated that it was important that a group be formed. Angus and Michael suggested discussing this matter again after the forthcoming councillors’ training at the weekend. Michael added that the City Council will also provide further training on policy and procedures, specifically focused on Leith matters, on both Planning, and (separately) Alcohol Licensing.

ACTION: Michael is organising, and will notify councillors of dates when these are fixed. Councillors should reply to confirm their attendance.

b. Parks & Greenspace Sub-Committee

No-one has yet been elected to run this. Michael had emailed all the members before the meeting, suggesting a meeting of those interested in participating (currently Jac, David, Stephen and Michael). After discussion, a date was agreed.

ACTION: 20 February 2017: first meeting of Parks and Greenspace Committee

c. Participatory Budgeting Project (‘Community Links’)

Planning / organisation is progressing. As not all elements of this project have yet been made public, detailed discussion was postponed until after the open meeting.

8. Elected Representatives updates: Councillor Gordon Munro encouraged everyone to attend the switching-on of the Christmas tree lights at New Kirkgate on 1 December at 7pm. Hermitage Park Primary School Choir will be singing and there will be a ‘surprise guest appearance’. Other local schools will also be appearing throughout December.

9. Community Councillors open forum:

Edinburgh Association of Community Councils

Abu and Michael had attended the AGM of the EACC. This organisation, although potentially valuable as a body to negotiate for CCs’ collective interests, seems unfortunately to have been internally divided for some time and there is no sign of this being resolved. Michael suggested that LLCC suspend membership and move to observer status, reviewing the decision later if the situation improves. Other CCs have withdrawn, and only 21 of the 44 CCs had a member present at the AGM. Abu argued for persisting with membership, to be able influence matters positively. Angus pointed out that staying in, even if passively, means keeping voting rights. It was agreed that the decision would be deferred until the February meeting to give the new councillors more time to familiarise themselves with the work of the EACC.

Michael noted that, in the meantime, other CCs in the North East Locality had expressed a potential interest in forming a complementary informal ‘cluster’ group. It could meet perhaps once a quarter to discuss more local issues. A motion was carried to support LLCC facilitating this.

ACTION: Michael will contact the other CCs to see if a meeting (around April 2017?) could be arranged.

Changes to refuse processing, and the role of Seafield

Angus asked about the plans for this as some local residents are concerned about the Seafield / Craighentiny waste site being expanded, with rumours of increased numbers of lorries accessing it, 24 hours, and potentially causing increased traffic congestions, noise, pollution etc. Councillor Adam McVey explained that the Powderhall facility is no longer fit for purpose and will close around 2018. It will not be replaced exactly. Some refuse processing functions will be moving to Seafield/Craighentiny, but not everything that Powderhall currently does. City refuse processing will be divided between East and West Depots, avoiding lengthy transport of waste across the city.

Seafield will not process refuse but will simply act as a 'sorting' station for some refuse on its way ultimately to the new waste processing facility at Millerhill (due to open 2018). Adam said that the number of new vehicles going to Seafield would be small and would not have a noticeable impact on the neighbourhood. Sally observed that even a small number of additional vehicles going to Seafield/Craigenfinny could have a local polluting effect (Salamander Street is already one of the most polluted areas in Scotland in terms of small particulate matter). Adam responded that there is a monitoring station on Salamander Street, so if this happened, it could be detected. The data are reported to the Transport & Environment Committee every six months and are made public.

Action: Sally will try to find out the start date for the additional vehicles and will look into monitoring air quality findings to see if there are changes following that date.

10. Members of the public open forum: Chair reminded those present about Leith Neighbourhood Partnership meeting at 18:30 on Wednesday 30th November. No further issues were raised.

Chair thanked all attendees and closed the meeting. The public meeting was then followed by a private (elected councillors only) meeting on the 'Community Links' project.

Date of Next Public Meeting: 30 January 2017, 7pm. Shore Room, Leith Community Centre, New Kirkgate



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