

## MINUTES

MONDAY 31 OCTOBER 2016  
LEITH COMMUNITY CENTRE (NEW KIRKGATE)

**Councillors Present:** Jim Scanlon (outgoing Chair), Steven Brennan, Angus Hardie, David Igoe, Andrew Mackenzie, Abu Meron, Sally Millar (outgoing Secretary), Christine Reid, Jacqueline Rogers, Jim Scanlon, John Tibbitt, Michael Traill.

**In attendance:**

Councillor Chas Booth, Councillor Gordon Munro, Councillor Adam McVey, Ben MacPherson MSP, Adrian Graham, Linda Hutton (outgoing Treasurer), Delwar Hussain, Walter Manclark, Grace Murray-Cavanagh.

*Minute Taker:* Kay Goodall

**Apologies:** Deidre Brock MP

### 1. Community Council Election Results

Councillor Chas Booth, the Returning Officer, announced the CC election results. Leith Links is the only CC to have had more candidates than places available, and hence an election. The following persons were elected to the CC: Steven Brennan, Angus Hardie, David Igoe, Andrew Mackenzie, Abu Meron, Sally Millar, Christine Reid, Jacqueline Rogers, Jim Scanlon, Eileen Simpson, John Tibbitt and Michael Traill.

Congratulations were extended to the successful candidates and commiserations offered to the outgoing councillors, who were thanked for their very substantial contribution over the past year.

**2. Election of Office Bearers and Adoption of Constitution and Standing Orders:** Voting took place for the appointment of office bearers:

Chair: Jim Scanlon, nominated by Michael Traill; seconded by John Tibbitt

Vice-Chair (new post): John Tibbitt, nominated by Michael Traill; seconded by Christine Reid

Secretary: Sally Millar, nominated by Michael Traill; seconded by Andrew Mackenzie

Treasurer: Abu Meron, nominated by John Tibbitt; seconded by David Igoe.

The meeting then adopted the Constitution and Standing Orders available at <https://leithlinkscs.wordpress.com/> and Councillor Booth handed over to Jim Scanlon.

**3. Welcome:** Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions performed. Chair had supplied a small pack of information and papers mainly relating to current and future meetings. New Councillors pointed out that they were surprised not to have received any induction material from the City of Edinburgh.

**Action:** Councillor Chas Booth took note of the new councillors' concerns and undertook to investigate this with CEC and to ensure that all received an induction pack providing more detail of their roles.

**4. Adoption of Minutes of last meeting on Monday 26 September 2016:** Proposed by Michael Traill; seconded by Councillor Chas Booth. Available at <https://leithlinkscs.wordpress.com/> Matters Arising to be taken later, as part of main Agenda.

**5a. Treasurer's report:** Linda as outgoing Treasurer presented the report. The current bank balance as of 26 October is £2445.86. Only two cheques were written last month, both for £37.50, for travel expenses for Adrian Graham and Michael Traill. The funds from Scottish Government (Community Choices award) have not yet arrived, but are due any day.

**5b. Secretary's report:** Sally outlined two issues in particular on which she had been working: the very large planning application for Salamander Place (see item 8, below) and the successful Community Choices Fund application (see item 9, below).

## 7. Leith Decides

The Leith Decides results were due to be announced the following day.

## 8. Planning, Salamander Place Development 16/03356/PPP

Sally explained that the original application was made by Teague at the beginning of July. The developers came and presented information to a well-attended open CC meeting, and the CC had submitted a comment. The developers have recently added to the original application a great deal of additional information, and some amendments to the original plans, so further comments are required. The CC has notified the local community of this through the website and Facebook. The deadline for comments is 4 November, for members of the public. However, the CC has negotiated an extension of the deadline for comments (for itself only, as a statutory consultee), till 21 November. Although it will probably be too late for members of the public who wish to comment as individuals, Sally recommended that the CC invite the developers back to provide further information at an extraordinary open meeting as soon as possible, as the planning proposal is so large and complicated. This would allow CC also to gauge the public's views and be able to reflect and incorporate these within the CC's comments. Ben MacPherson MSP said that he has would attend, he been meeting the developers and building a relationship so that he could liaise with them to express community concerns directly.

A major area of contention, originally, had been the impact on the nearby allotments, which would lose provision to enable the creation of pathways. There had been around 100 comments on the original proposal, and the developers have been co-operative and have responded with a revised scheme which appears to be more acceptable to the allotment holders. Many other matters remain to be given careful consideration, though, such as the implications of the height of some buildings, the detail of business developments within the development (could some be given to e.g. a GP surgery? since business units in the area are not particularly popular anyway, the number of car parking spaces and the effect on local infrastructure such as transport, schools and medical services. Section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires developers to contribute to the CEC towards costs of delivering new infrastructure. For the Salamander Place development, this is £1 million, but it will not be paid until the completion of the site and sales, therefore years in the future.

Stephen suggested that as well as the public meeting, it would be helpful to have key points of the application summarised in a short post on the CC's Facebook page.

**Action:** Chair will set up a meeting within the next fortnight and advertise it through the CC's social media. The evening of Monday 14 November was proposed, provisionally.

**Action:** Sally will add key details of the application to the CC's Facebook page and other online links.

## 9. Open Floor

(a) Three motions were put to the meeting.

*Motion 1 (in 4 parts) proposed by Michael Traill: to create a Planning and Licensing Sub-Committee and a new position of Planning and Licensing Secretary.* The Planning and Licensing Sub-Committee would consist of the new Planning and Licensing Secretary plus three Councillors. The Secretary would take the lead on all planning matters. Up to three further individuals could be appointed to join the sub-committee (but without voting rights). The Secretary of sub-committee would update the full CC on Planning matters at monthly CC meetings.

Sally, Jim and Michael explained that although Leith Links does not have many contentious planning applications some applications can nonetheless be complex, and response times can be short. It would be helpful to have a core team focused specifically on these matters, rather than the bulk of the work being carried out by Sally as Secretary, as at present. The CC has been successful in the past in having its comments on planning applications taken into account, but Planning is a specialist area and responding can be time consuming, so help with this from new Councillors would be appreciated. Michael stressed that ideally, as well as addressing immediately local applications, it would be important for the CC to regularly review all new applications, including those in neighbouring areas which might have an impact on Leith Links and its infrastructure. Stephen observed that the response period for Licensing applications was particularly short and required expertise. He added that it would be useful if one or more of the sub-committee could be people available during the day to meet officials or investigate concerns.

Stephen has experience in this area, from Stockbridge CC (which had to deal with a lot of complex Planning issues) and would be happy to make an input to such a committee but could not commit to the post of Secretary. Some other new councillors, although potentially interested in joining the sub-committee, were unsure of what would be involved and did not feel themselves to be knowledgeable

enough, so although the **motion to create the sub-committee and post of Planning and Licensing Secretary was passed**, the post of Secretary was not filled at this time.

**Action:** Meanwhile Sally and Jim will take responsibility for providing a submission from the CC as a statutory consultee, on the Salamander Place application urgently, by 21 November.

Newly elected Community Councillors have all been invited to an induction day on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, at CEC, which presumably will provide some useful information on Planning.

**Action:** Hopefully as many as possible new C Councillors will attend this training session.

Michael had proposed previously that a training session from CEC on Licensing matters would be useful.

**Action:** Michael will pursue this, possibly including members of the other Leith CCs.

*Motion 2, proposed by Michael Traill: in the case of vacancies arising on the CC, to co-opt from the list of unelected candidates for the CC election to ensure the number of Community Councillors does not fall below twelve.* Councillor Chas Booth observed that a motion on cooption was not necessary, since the CC already had the right to coopt people as required. This motion might not be constitutional anyway, as a vacancy has to be filled by a person who is available, and is proposed, for cooption at the time the post falls vacant. Abu observed that having an existing list of names was not appropriate as it might deter new people (who had been attending and becoming actively engaged, and as such might be better candidates than those on the list) from putting themselves forward. Linda added that all persons on any such list should be asked before being included. Councillor Adam McVey added that having an 'informal' list of names of potential cooptees might be useful but confirmed Cllr Booth's view that the proposed motion was not competent. **The motion was withdrawn.**

*Motion 3 (in 5 parts), proposed by Michael Traill: to create a Parks and Greenspace sub-committee, and new post of Secretary to the sub-committee. To have the right to appoint further members to join the sub-committee to provide expertise and / or as members of the local community (no voting rights). To engage with park users and respect their opinions. To update the CC at monthly CC meeting.* There have been attempts to bring Leith Links up to premier park status, but it has not yet achieved Green Flag status. In the past, a Leith Links Regeneration Committee met quarterly, but it has apparently fallen by the wayside more recently, and the CEC parks officials are no longer the same individuals as those previously involved, and show little commitment to get anything done. A more proactive approach is needed.

A new sub-committee could meet with parks officials to create a management plan for local greenspaces - negotiate regeneration arrangements for Leith Links and advocate for other green spaces such as the Restalrig Railway Path. Leith Links would greatly benefit from facilities like 'fitness trails' and such as the outdoor exercise equipment at Silverknowes and by the canal at Fountainbridge, and a proposal for this would be supported by Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust. Jacqueline stressed the need for significant improvement to the childrens play areas.

This would be a good time to form this sub-committee, as new financing may soon be available with Leith Links now falling into the new South East locality. Attention to parks and greenspace is a matter of great interest and could be a good way to engage the local community and attract further fresh ideas.

**The motion was carried.**

A number of Community Councillors expressed a particular interest in taking an active part in this sub-committee, and shared various ideas they'd like to see developed: Michael Traill, Jacqueline Rogers, David Igoe, Stephen Brennan.

It was agreed that appointment of a Parks and Greenspaces sub-committee Secretary could be deferred for a short time. However, it is hoped that Councillors will volunteer their services and move this matter forward as soon as possible.

David commented that there are many local groups who could be involved in discussions about the park. Councillor Gordon Munro added that they could be encouraged to be registered as members of the CC as local interest groups. Councillor Chas Booth explained to the meeting that representatives of up to six groups can be nominated to a place on the CC, even after the election, assuming they are appropriately constituted, in line with CEC guidelines.

### **(b) Community Choices Fund Grant**

Sally and Michael provided some background information to this exciting new initiative. The CC has been successful in its application and has been awarded a grant of £20,869 from the Scottish Government Community Choices Fund (The Fund provided for £1.5 million of funding to local

authorities and community organisations to deliver a participatory budgeting process. £750,000 of that was available to Community Councils. Leith Links is the only single community council to have succeeded in winning this funding (a multi-council group in Moray also received an award)). The overall aim of the fund is to give communities (particularly in deprived areas) the opportunity to vote on how money is spent in their area.

Timescales for the project are very short so the CC has started to plan and organise the project in spite of the election period. At the September CC meeting a sub-committee was set up to manage the project (consisting of all/any members of the CC who wish to attend and be involved) so that matters can be progressed quickly and not be restricted to monthly public meetings. The project was named 'Community Links'. Michael Traill was voted to be the designated Project Coordinator with responsibility for leading the Community Links sub-committee.

The CC proposes to offer a hyper-local grants scheme for very small-scale projects that can improve people's quality of life. There will be a public launch on 12 December and applications are to be submitted by the end of February 2017. There will then be a social and public voting event in March 2017. All the funding must be allocated to projects by 21 March 2017, although not all projects have to be completed by then.

Because there is now, effectively, a new Community Council, it is vital to confirm that there is a mandate to progress with this project (other wise the money will have to be handed back to Scottish Government).

**The meeting agreed to accept the grant and take the scheme forward,**

So far, the bulk of the work has been carried out by Michael, Sally and Adrian Graham. Although the basic project structure is now in place, there is much still to be done as the launch date approaches - and this will be a fun project, and a great way to engage with the local community - so an appeal was made for new councillors to join the team and share the project tasks more efficiently.

Some of the new Community Councillors asked for more information about the project and about participatory budgeting which was a new idea for some.

**Action:** Sally and Michael will circulate information on the project and on participatory budgeting. They will consult on a date for a project meeting/ information session for new councillors and will circulate this by this by email.

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Chair then thanked all attendees. Meeting ended at 9.10pm.

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**Date of Next Public Meeting: 28 November 2016, 7pm. Shore Room, Leith Community Centre, New Kirkgate**



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