

# LEITH LINKS

## COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES

MONDAY 24 August 2017

LEITH COMMUNITY CENTRE (NEW KIRKGATE)

**Community Councillors Present:** Stephen Brennan, Gail Clapton, Angus Hardie, David Igoe, Andrew Mackenzie, Sally Millar (Secretary), Jacqueline Rogers, Jim Scanlon (Chair), John Tibbitt (Vice-Chair), Michael Traill.

**Elected Representatives:** Councillor Chas Booth, Deidre Brock MP, Councillor Gordon Munro.

**In attendance:** Walter Manclark.

**Minute Taker:** Kay Goodall.

#### 1. Welcome & Apologies

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies from Adrian Graham, Ben Macpherson MSP, Eileen Simpson and Councillor Adam McVey.

#### 2. Police Report

No officers were present. Chair announced that Inspector Carson is leaving Leith as a result of promotion. Chair expressed his congratulations and thanks for all the work that Inspector Carson has done to assist LLCC, which has been much appreciated. Deidre Brock MP added that the transfer may be temporary - he may be able to return at a future date.

#### 3. Adoption of Minutes of last meeting on Monday 26 June 2017

Proposed by Sally Millar; seconded by Gail Clapton.

Available at <https://leithlinksc.org.uk/>

#### Matters Arising & Outstanding Actions

*Number of beds available for homeless people in Leith Links properties:* Sally emailed to enquire about this and is awaiting a response.

*Gordon Street and Manderston Street:* Local residents Walter Manclark and Fiona, supported by LLCC Councillors John Tibbitt and Jac Rogers, had a walkabout on Friday 18 August with Council Leader Adam McVey and Darren Ryan, the local transport & environment manager, for in-depth investigation of long-standing problems. Key problems identified concerned bin collections, gully cleaning, continued lack of suitable disabled parking provision, indiscriminate parking on yellow lines, and the abandonment of untaxed cars. There is also difficulty enabling passage for disabled people.

Councillor McVey will look into replacing the problem bins with mobile wheeled bins. There has been a street cleaning staff shortage, currently being addressed with new recruitment. In addition to difficulty managing the workload, this shortage has meant that as people left, 'knowledge transfer' failed i.e. instructions for appropriate practice were not passed on to new staff.

**ACTION: Councillor McVey compiled a long list of actions to carry out. John Tibbitt for LLCC will request a copy of the list so that action on these can be monitored/ followed up.**

*Children's Orchard gates removal:* no information available yet about why these were taken away.

#### 4. Seafield Sewage - update

Since the meeting with Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham, Chair has had two meetings at Pacific Quay, with Ben Macpherson MSP, with Rob Kirkwood of Leith Links Residents Association also in attendance. They met with the Scottish Government to finalise the Terms of Reference for the independent review of Seafield by consultants. The review, led by Professor Philip Longhurst of Cranfield University, will look at all aspects of practice at the site, at the sewage network serving the site, and the team is also speaking with local residents (identified by CEC and Chair) about the effect on their daily lives of the odour nuisance. It is hoped that an interim report will be available in September and a final report produced in time for the stakeholder meeting scheduled for October.

The terms of reference include establishing the possible capital costs of replacing equipment, if necessary, to minimise odour nuisance. (They say the smell cannot be eliminated entirely.) LLCC was told that it is currently a high priority for the Scottish Government to resolve this issue.

#### 5. Parks and Green Spaces Committee

##### *Leith Links*

##### ***Taking forward the results of the Gala Day survey***

Following the Gala survey, David has contacted local groups 'Not On Leith's Watch' (dog poo) and 'Leithers Don't Litter', who were both happy to hear from LLCC, and keen to work together. They provided an update on their work.

Jac met with Scott Thomson, the North East Locality parks development officer, to discuss issues such as grass cutting on the Links, hedge trimming etc. Grass and hedges are now cut less often than in previous years due to budgetary constraints (seemingly grass cutting is not a statutory obligation although most councils do this nevertheless). Leith Athletic FC is now permitted to cut some of their pitches themselves but it is unclear who is taking responsibility for the wider area.

**ACTION: the Sub-Committee will ask the Parks Development Officer to clarify who is responsible for grass cutting across the whole of the Links, and for hedge trimming, and monitor how this is taken forward.**

The City Council is not pursuing Green Flag awards at the moment but would support the creation of a 'Friends of the Links' group, which, they suggest, might also open up new funding streams.

Large events - LLCC should be consulted about all forthcoming events –but it was not, re the forthcoming Mela. Chair has made representation re vehicle parking. All events pay a bond to ensure that the costs are covered of repairing any damage caused. Due to oversight, CEC failed to do for the last event (funfair) but repairs were personally dealt with by Scott Thomson and team.

##### ***Possible upgrade of Leith Links Play Area equipment***

There will be new play equipment for the Links but not immediately: there will be an extensive consultation process first and the City Council will also be seeking matched funding. Other parks have expressed an interest, but sadly can probably not benefit from the equipment being removed from Leith Links, as it is all (e.g. the spider's web) is coming to the end of its useful / safe life.

Requests have been received by the City Council for skatepark and scooter facilities. These are not suited to some parts of the Links because of its clay foundations, though might possibly be sited near Crops and Pots, or a structure similar to the elevated SKELF bike park at Dumbiedykes could be created.

# LEITH LINKS

## COMMUNITY COUNCIL

LLCC might like to organise more bulb planting on the Links but needs to know when 'the right time' is to request / order bulbs through the Council (in advance of planting in October / November).

**ACTION: the Sub-Committee will ask the Parks Development Officer when bulbs can be obtained for (2018) planting.**

### ***Pirniefield Bank Play Area***

There have been complaints and a serious health and safety problem caused by dog poo and uncut grass. LLCC contacted Scott Thomson on behalf of residents and the grass has now finally been cut, but the park is now padlocked shut in order for Council to wash and disinfect the equipment, and assess risk of soil contamination. A past difficulty has been that the park is on a boundary between cleansing teams and it had not been clear who was to carry out the work, but the restructuring into NE Locality has now clarified this.

A new larger bin is being installed and will hopefully be emptied regularly. This small park is an important resource and potentially an attractive space, and it is worth trying to think if / how a community effort could tackle the ongoing problems - for example, perhaps, to arrange for poo bags to be made available – and to monitor outcomes.

### **6. Planning and Licensing Sub-Committee**

111-115 Constitution Street, Latto's Garage, has been sold and an application has been put in to build blocks of flats whose architectural design appears wholly unsuitable for this conservation area. LLCC and many others have put in objections, which are now awaiting assessment.

121 Constitution Street has had a planning application in for some time which has now been amended, seeking a change of use to an HMO and/or guest house. Many objections were submitted, including by LLCC, but the application was recommended for approval by planning officials. It has now gone to committee. Councillor Booth had asked for a site visit as a result of LLCC raising concerns. Although the deadline for submitting objections has passed, he suggested that it is still possible to contact members of the City Council Planning Committee to express concern.

Councillor Munro recommended that any representations make reference to the conservation area status of the street, which has A and B listed buildings. The integrity of the street is not currently a material ground for objection, but it is nonetheless worth raising, in the context of the conservation appraisal statement. Residential density is also an issue.

**ACTION: Sally and Andrew will draft a short letter to Planning Committee members, and will attend site visit on Friday 1 September.**

### **7. Participatory Budgeting**

#### ***Leith Decides***

The previous steering group has been retained to provide continuity (Sally represents LLCC) but has been increased to 12 members, and is now Chaired by CEC Councillor Marion Donaldson. The new team had read LLCC's PB report and found it helpful. The next Leith Decides will probably be in February 2018, with a great deal to review and to do before then. There is a commitment from CEC to support but no budget increase. Any views from LLCC on what should be changed, introduced or promoted should be forwarded to Sally as soon as possible. So far it is agreed that only one application per group will be permitted and there is discussion about whether unconstituted groups may apply (possibly if sponsored by a constituted group or Community Council??).

# LEITH LINKS

## COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### **LLCC Bid to Community Choices 2017/18**

The recommendation is before the minister but no announcement has yet been made.

### **8. Open Forum**

#### ***Elected Representatives***

*Constituency work at Westminster:* Deidre Brock outlined her parliamentary work. She speaks for Northern Ireland, also fair work and employment, and environmental protection. She and her team have found that their constituency issues are currently dominated by DWP problems, particularly benefits cap, cuts to independence payments and to support for disabled people.

Also Home Office issues - She was also involved in the recent Book Festival case where the Iranian children's illustrator Ehsan Abdollahi was refused a visitor's visa to participate until protests ensured that the decision was overturned. Applications for residency (many in Leith) are also regularly being turned down by the Home Office unjustifiably. Her team has sometimes been able to get these reversed, but the expense deters many from appealing against decisions.

*Extension of the tram to Newhaven:* Councillor Munro noted that the City Council Transport & Environment Committee is about to discuss the business case for the extension of the tram to Newhaven, before going to full Council on 21 September, seeking authority to begin identifying a potential contractor for the project, with a final decision on whether to go ahead to follow in autumn 2018. Full assessment of the case, using tram enquiry info, new data on usage, local investigations (e.g. foundations of Constitution Street wall) could cost around £2million.

Councillor Booth commented that lessons are also to be learned from previous mistakes such as traffic management, which is better done as a long-term project, but this could mean for instance closing three lanes of Leith Walk for 18 months. The Leith Street works are however expected to be completed by then. He emphasised that a very detailed plan for matters such as refuse collection and appropriate compensation for businesses will be required. Disruption for residents will also need to be considered thoroughly, particularly for those with limited mobility. However, he noted that there is a strong business case for the extension. Nearly all the transport stock is already available. Extending would serve an area of high population density in Leith, and unlock brownfield sites for housing development in Newhaven.

LLCC has to be neutral on whether or not the extension takes place, but will seek regular updates on behalf of the community, about work being undertaken.

#### **Community Councillors**

*Leith Creative Community Conference:* Several LLCC Councillors attended this interesting event. Leith Creative would like as many people as possible to complete their online survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LeithCreative> asap, as they will be writing up their findings' over the next couple of months.

Chair thanked all attendees. Meeting ended at 8.50pm.

**Date of Next Public Meeting: 25 September 2017, 7pm. Shore Room, Leith Community Centre,  
Newkirkgate**