

MINUTES

MONDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2017
LEITH COMMUNITY CENTRE (NEWKIRKGATE)

Councillors Present: Stephen Brennan, Gail Clapton, Angus Hardie, Andrew Mackenzie, Jacqueline Rogers, Jim Scanlon (Chair), Eileen Simpson, John Tibbitt (Vice-Chair), Michael Traill.

Elected Representatives: Councillor Chas Booth, Councillor Gordon Munro, Councillor Adam McVey.

In attendance: Don Giles, Adrian Graham, Sam Moran, PC Colin Spence, Douglas Tharby.

Minute Taker: Kay Goodall.

1. Welcome

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Deidre Brock MP, David Igoe, Ben Macpherson MSP, Sally Millar (Secretary), Tommy Sheppard MP.

2. Police Report

PC Colin Spence, community officer for the Leith Walk ward, attended on behalf of the local officers. He apologised for the local team being unable to provide statistics, and instead gave a summary of the policing focus over September.

Rough sleepers: officers have been tackling this in a variety of areas, from within tenements e.g. in McDonald Road, to tents on the Links.

Vehicles left in public spaces: Campervans, static caravans and unhitched trailers are also being used or left for long periods around the Links and other parts of the ward. Some are being used as a living space. PC Spence will clarify whether any aspect of this might be unlawful, and will ask the local officers to report back. Meanwhile, the owners of the abandoned vehicles at Salamander Court have been contacted.

Prostitution: this continues to be a priority for officers, particularly as the longer nights return. Numerous drivers have been warned and their details recorded.

Operation Pumpkin: increased patrolling will take place for safety reasons around Halloween and Fireworks Night.

CAP (Community Alcohol Partnership) patrols continue..

Anti-social behaviour: one problem resident has been moved out of Leith, and a driver in the Bonnington Road area was traced and has been disqualified following neighbour reports.

Cycle patrols: All the Community officers are fully cycle-trained and get out in parks and on walkways as much as possible, although weather will reduce this in winter.

Robbery: an elderly woman was robbed at the Kirkgate: investigation is ongoing.

3. Adoption of Minutes of last meeting on Monday 24 August 2017 and Matters Arising

It was agreed that Councillor McVey's attendance had been omitted in the Minutes of the last meeting, and should be added. The minutes were otherwise adopted as an accurate record. Proposed by Gail Clapton; seconded by Michael Traill.

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

Outstanding actions

Emails sent to the Parks Officer about obtaining bulbs (for next year) and grass cutting: he is on holiday till 2 October.

4. Seafield Sewage

There will be a meeting with the Scottish Government at Victoria Quay on Friday 29 September to summarise what work has been carried out by the consultants so far.

Councillor McVey observed that the meetings are notionally facilitated by Scottish Water, and although they include SEPA, Veolia and the sewage plant operator, they currently do not – but should perhaps - involve some senior politicians, such as the Transport & Environment Convener of the City Council. The group format therefore perhaps lacks someone to take decisions forward. Councillor Munro noted that a significant obstacle is the shared responsibility for the running of the plant, and agreed that it would be useful to address this issue.

ACTION: Chair will contact Rob Kirkwood of LLRA to discuss this.

Chair wished to minute his thanks to Rob Kirkwood and the Residents Association for their immense work over many years to reach this stage of having an independent report carried out.

5. Parks and Green Spaces Committee

Mela feedback

It was noted that it was good to see the Mela back after last year's absence, and it had gone well although there had been some conflict over where exactly to site the event. There had been a negative impact as regards the extent of litter the day after, and damage caused to grass by a truck collecting equipment. Councillor McVey added the cost of making good the damage would be met from the Mela's bond.

Notification of forthcoming major events

There has been difficulty getting consultation or even advance notification of events from the Parks Department, partly because of changes in staffing. The Moscow State Circus for instance has applied to come to Leith Links in June 2018, but the Community Council was not notified even though organisational discussions had begun. LLCC is very supportive of events on the Links, but it would be good to get a commitment from the Parks Officer to provide notification of all forthcoming events, as LLCC, based on long experience, is able to offer insights about risks and likely problems.

The City Council has a policy about use of the Edinburgh parks: major events are spread across the city so that grass can recover, and the Council has a planning system and pricing structure with higher prices for commercial events.

There have been mistakes made (e.g. double bookings of events such as St. Mary's football and Cricket match) and there is still some confusion over e.g. grass cutting arrangements, so further clarification needs to be sought.

ACTION: Jac and Chair will arrange a meeting with Scott Thomson, the City Council parks development officer for the area.

6. Planning & Licensing Sub Committee

121 Constitution St: conversion from a restaurant within a listed building

Sally (on behalf of LLCC) and Andrew submitted written objections to the City Council Planning Committee, and Sally, Andrew, local resident Sam Moran and Councillors Booth and Munro all attended a CEC site visit to consider the intended conversion and to take the chance to try to interact with Planning Committee members. (Applications can be approved or rejected by officials without further debate, but the Planning Committee can instead decide to have a presentation on it and call for more information, or can go on a site visit or have a hearing, as in this case.) The hearing is coming up for Planning Committee hearing and decision on 27 September. There are three applications: for planning consent for a Guest House, for an HMO, and listed building consent).

This is despite several problems, such as that there are no parking facilities or provision for refuse or for affordable or social housing. In addition to formal objections, it is possible to send further comments on the published papers before the meeting on Wednesday, and these (with an overview all the applications for that part of the street, and of the legality of the applications for the planned conversion) have gone in from Sam and Sally.

It was noted that licensing of HMOs is not planning matter so is not regarded as relevant to these applications, but if planning permission is granted for a guest house, then an application for change of use and application for an HMO licence could be raised later. It appears that moving from one to the other would be easier than moving directly from a restaurant to an HMO.

The applicant can appeal against a refusal of their application and would have their costs covered by the Council if they succeeded, but if it is approved then there is no right of public appeal by the community against that decision, although it might be possible to raise evidence of maladministration with the Ombudsman.

7. Community Choices Fund 2017/18

LLCC has been successful in its bid and now has a formal offer of a grant of £82,200 from Scottish Government. LLCC proposes to work in partnership with Leith Central CC and Leith Harbour & Newhaven CC (agreed) and potentially others in the area, e.g. Leith Creative.

A project management structure being set up: a core executive group and a project treasurer is in place (managing a second LLCC bank account), A resource /advisory group is also needed to take on the many tasks involved and to provide advice, ideas and expertise.

The aim is a joint process & event, with Leith Decides, but there are areas of difficulty to overcome. LLCC is discussing how to overcome these, with the Council and new Leith Decides team. The

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requirements imposed by Edinburgh City Council on £eith Decides are more restrictive, for example £eith Decides community funds cannot be given to unconstituted groups and individuals. A new project name is needed that is similar to £eith Decides but that at the same time also differentiates and indicates this is a new project in some ways different from previously.

Website, social media and promotion strategies also need to be planned and implemented.

The first stage is selecting a small number of themes for the programme by the end of October and then a vote and completing priorities by mid-November. There are many overlapping local priorities that have been identified in Leith in recent years and could be addressed. It was also felt that it would be helpful if these had a positive feel which promoted Leith as a place with its own distinct identity and cultural heritage, while linking back to fundamental social policy issues requiring attention.

Stage 2 will be the public announcement of themes on 15 November, with proposals to be received by late January and the public vote event on 3 March.

ACTION: Angus will add the names of those who volunteer to help with the project to a Basecamp forum (or similar) for sharing information.

ACTION: Chair and John will attend Leith H&N CC's meeting on Tuesday 26 September to discuss plans.

ACTION: John, Angus and the other core group members will then meet regularly to discuss next steps.

8. Open Forum

Treasurer

There is £2082 in the LLCC account, as the annual Edinburgh City Council grant for 2017 has recently been received. Abu has resigned as Treasurer because he has moved house and is no longer resident in the LLCC area. Gail volunteered to take over as Treasurer. Gail is a community representative rather than an elected member of LLCC but it is lawful for her to take up the office. Meeting approved her appointment.

Community Councillor vacancy

Abu's move means that a vacancy for a Community Councillor has therefore come up on LLCC and it was agreed that the candidates who had stood for election be approached in order of votes achieved until a replacement is found.

ACTION: Approach other candidates in turn (Michael Traill)

Community buyouts

Michael proposed that the Community Councils prepare themselves for possible future community buyouts perhaps by organising a training meeting. It was agreed that this would be worthwhile.

ACTION: Michael will organise training sessions for the North East Locality.

Participation requests

A request can be made under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to take part in improving public services. An applicant can register an interest as regards any public service, asking the City Council to register them as a participant and be involved in the process. It was suggested that the management of the Links would be a very suitable test case.

ACTION: tbd?

Chair thanked all attendees. Meeting ended at 8.45pm.

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



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