

# LEITH LINKS

## COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES

MONDAY 28 JANUARY 2018  
LEITH COMMUNITY CENTRE (NEWKIRKGATE)

**Councillors Present:** Stephen Brennan, Gail Clapton (Treasurer), Adrian Graham, Angus Hardie, David Igoe, Andrew Mackenzie, Sally Millar (Secretary), Chrissie Reid, Jim Scanlon (Chair), John Tibbitt (Vice-Chair), Michael Traill.

**Elected Representatives:** Councillor Chas Booth, Councillor Gordon Munro.

**In attendance:** PC Mark Barrie, PC Colin Spence, Lisa Clark, Amy Fairbairn, Jim Jarvie, Barbara Kerr, Angus Miller, Laurie Pierce, Roz Currie (Office of Tommy Sheppard MP).

**Minute Taker:** Kay Goodall.

#### 1. Welcome

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Ben Macpherson MSP, Deidre Brock MP, Tommy Sheppard MP and Jac Rogers. The Craigentiny Community Council Councillors are invited to LLCC meetings, but have apologised for being unable to attend as these regularly clash with other meetings they attend.

#### 2. Police Report

##### ***Policing focus during December and January***

PC Colin Spence introduced the newest member of the Leith team, PC Mark Barrie. PC Spence apologised for lack of monthly statistics, and reported on the activities of the local officers over the Christmas period and January.

Operation Contrition is a large scale operation being carried out until mid-March as a response to violence and drugs issues, especially around Cables Wynd, and is tackling known individuals involved with drugs and related crimes of violence. The local officers are encouraging the public to report any intelligence which might assist. There was seizure of a significant amount of crack cocaine and heroin at Portland Street. A search warrant for Cables Wynd House led to, among other things, find of a rifle. Other significant events included an assault and robbery at Great Junction Street, which is being investigated; anti-social behaviour linked to the Genting Casino; and vandalism of the Shaun Woodburn memorial outside Gladstone's pub in Mill Lane.

#### 3. Talk by Rory Garriock, Communications Engagement Manager, City of Edinburgh Council, on the Edinburgh Tram to Newhaven via Leith

Rory Garriock, the Trams Communications Engagement Manager, attended the meeting to introduce himself and to explain the current progress of the proposed extension to the tramline.

**Route** The route remains mostly the same as originally planned. The stop at York Place will be decommissioned and moved to Picardy Place. Three lanes of Leith Walk will be closed for 18 months, to complete the whole Leith Walk phase. One lane will remain open from the city centre down towards Leith. Easter Road and Bonnington Road will be adapted to operate as diversionary routes e.g. buses. Tram will continue down Constitution Street and along Bernard Street, Commercial Street to Newhaven (Asda).

##### ***Timeline***

The outline business case for this was agreed in November 2017 and the City Council is now at Stage Two, tendering for contractors. This time the City Council has been very prescriptive in setting out what it wants.

**Contracts:** The first major contract is the "Swept Path" contract covering the line from Constitution St to Newhaven. The City Council will be responsible for any utilities to be moved, which is likely to include around 1200 pipes, wires and cables. The plan is that it will be dug up just once: the path will move ahead, clearing the way for the construction following immediately behind. It was felt important this time to remove any incentive for delay.

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*Consultation first stage:* This will begin in March 2018 and will run for around six weeks. Events and public meetings will be as accessible as possible, including exhibitions and a tram information point or shop, and the community councils will be visited again. Lane closures will be part of the consultation.

*Consultation second stage:* This will focus on the temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and what the public thinks will work best. It will probably take place in August.

*Review:* Rory and his team will then visit community councils and other local organisations to find out whether it is felt that the consultations were effective.

*Start of works:* This is planned for the second quarter of 2019. The work should take about three years in total, including four months of testing at the end.

*Plans:* The community councils will have an opportunity to see the plans and ask questions at some point in February 2018 before they are made public. The technical lead will attend, to answer questions.

### **Questions**

Rory then answered questions from councillors and the public, as follows.

*Disability access:* During the three years of work, getting to buses will be a particular problem for all persons with mobility difficulties, which includes many in our ageing population. Even when the tramline is finished, there are concerns. Already the tram has impacted on people with limited mobility as the tram stops are too far apart and the bus stops have been made further apart. Rory responded that the current maximum is 150 metres apart, but that the City Council's Active Travel Team are meeting Living Streets, Spokes and other campaigning groups to discuss what would be most appropriate throughout the route.

*Cycling:* What will cyclists do during the works? This will also be consulted on. Important cycle routes will be temporarily suspended and cyclists will require provision during that time. People present expressed frustration that all the recent expensive work on pavements and cycle routes would be wasted and lost! Rory said that the aim is ultimately to replace these with a segregated route along the whole of the route once all work is completed, which will be better cycle provision than before.

*Knowledge and expertise:* Many mistakes were made in the past and it was asked how these would be avoided this time. Rory responded that Rob Leech has been appointed to manage this as Director of Project Delivery: he has worked on several other tram projects over a period of 25 years. For data protection reasons, the Council was not permitted to retain the data on issues previously raised by the public, but Rory is visiting locally to gather this local information as comprehensively as possible.

*Decision-making:* The Transport & Environment Committee will probably reach its decision in November 2018; the full council will probably decide in December 2018.

Cllr Booth emphasised that people should feel welcome to come and speak to himself or the other councillors about any particular concerns, before then.

### **4. Adoption of Minutes of last meeting on Monday 27 November 2017**

**Proposed by Adrian Graham, Seconded by Sally Millar**

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

### **Outstanding actions**

*Hedge cutting around the Dry Dock & Croft:* This has now been completed, having been delayed by roadworks.

*Management of the Children's Orchard on Leith Links:* A pruning event will take place on Sunday 4 February.

*Martial arts posters flyposted on the bowling green railings and the Dry Dock:* These have been taken down. The problem was partly due to the Dry Dock lacking its own noticeboard.

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**ACTION: The Dry Dock would benefit from a noticeboard: LLCC will try and pursue the possibility of having this installed.**

*The former Skivvies building falling into disrepair:* A letter to the City Council has not yet been sent on behalf of LLCC.

**ACTION: Chair will write to the CEC Environment Manager.**

*Scoo Bikes' application to use the Links:* Chair has spoken to the proposer of the Skoo Bikes venture. The plan is that, in spring, Chair will ask the business owner to offer LLCC an informal demonstration of these, on the Links.

### **5. Seafield Sewage - Update**

Chair gave an introductory explanation of the history of the Seafield smell to the members of the public in attendance. Since the last LLCC meeting in November, Eileen and Sally (jointly with Rob Kirkwood of Leith Links Residents Association (LLRA) and Professor Jackson) have worked on the response to the draft report of the Strategic Review set up by the Environment Minister, Roseanna Cunningham. The next stakeholders meeting has been postponed until 23 March 2018. There is some dispute around the meeting. LLRA is arguing that the meeting should be to discuss the community's response, and examining the wider issues of importance to the local residents, before finalising the report, whereas Scottish Water seem to be saying now, belatedly, that the report was only supposed to be about technical issues and that the final version of the report can be presented at this meeting (which seems to imply that the community's response could be ignored). LLCC supports Rob Kirkwood and LLRA on this. Cllr Munro thinks it is disingenuous to change the remit at this stage. He stressed the need for clarity on which agencies are responsible for which areas (Scottish Water, Veolia, SEPA etc.). Cllr Booth noted that he has separately raised with the City Council the necessity for a dedicated contact number for reporting odour incidents.

**ACTION: LLCC agreed to support Rob Kirkwood in the request to extend the remit of the stakeholders meeting and the timescale of finalising the report. Chair will write to this effect.**

### **6. Parks and Green Spaces Committee - Update**

#### ***Over-12s play equipment***

Andrew and Chair introduced the key issues. Leith Links is regarded as a "premier park" alongside the Meadows and Princes Street Gardens, and City Council investment was intended to bring Leith Links up to their standard. £400,000 was guaranteed several years ago but the funding lapsed and improvements have not yet happened. One particular concern is play equipment for over-12s.

North East Transport and Environment Manager, Darren Ryan, has confirmed that £200,000 is available for upgrading play equipment on Leith Links, through the Neighbourhood Partnership. A consultation on what to buy will take place at an open day in March 2018. The timescale will be 12-18 months and the work is expected to start in 2019. Concern was expressed over whether the money is safely ring-fenced; the City Councillors present confirmed that it is. Concern was also expressed that a single drop-in day event would be insufficient time to allow for full consultation; on the other hand, the primary schools are already carrying out their own consultations (and all are in agreement that the project should be accelerated). Cllr Booth has also asked Darren, and suggested that LLCC also ask, for regular updates.

**ACTION: Andrew or Jac will contact Darren Ryan asking for an update and raising the question of an inclusive consultation.**

#### ***Friends of Leith Links***

Charlotte Encombe, Chair of Leith Central CC, sent LLCC an email on 28 January proposing that the community councils of Leith should jointly apply for funding to Leith Chooses by 31 January, to pay for an expert who would map the smaller, neglected green spaces of Leith and make proposals for their improvement.

Meeting considered whether a full discussion of this was practicable in the short time available, and questioned whether it could be a priority for LLCC given the work needed on Leith Links, which must be the first priority. Concern was also expressed that it might be unethical for this community council to put a bid in for 'its own money'. A vote was taken: LLCC unanimously agreed not to participate.

**ACTION: Sally will notify Charlotte of LLCC's decision.**

**ACTION: Andrew will continue to contact Friends of Parks groups to seek insights on setting up a Friends of Leith Links group.**

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### **7. Planning & Licensing Sub Committee**

#### ***Salamander Street new housing proposal***

Link Group Ltd has organised a drop-in event on Wed 31 January 2018 at St Mary Star of the Sea Church to view the proposal for 199 new homes at Salamander Street / Place to be offered for mid-market rent. There is some confusion as to where exactly this is - Dalton's scrapyard, or part of the Teague site? Chair had received notification of this as a resident, but commented that LLCC are statutory consultees and hence that it is good practice to contact the community council at the pre-application stage. He has tried to contact the project development officer.

**ACTION: Chair will contact the project development officer again, and will ask also if a presentation can be made to LLCC.**

There was discussion about the importance of CEC demanding realistic Section 75 contributions from developers for schools, roads, transport, affordable housing etc. (and not all to go to the tram!)

Consultation on the new Planning Bill ends on Friday

**ACTION: LLCC will put in a submission.**

#### ***Commenting on planning applications***

Edinburgh City Council Planning Dept. has consulted LLCC about the intention to remove the right to comment on planning applications by email (leaving only postal and the 'planning portal' routes) LLCC has replied opposing the idea, and also making some further points about the difficulties CCs have in responding to Planning applications, that we would like to see CEC improve.

#### ***Improving parking in the Leith Central Area***

Leith Central Community Council is currently looking for support to start a process of getting controlled parking in the Leith Walk area. The two control options the City Council uses are Priority Parking Areas (which control parking at peak times of the day) and Controlled Parking Zones in part or all of Leith (which do not guarantee that there will be space). Councillors agreed that parking for residents and their visitors is sometimes difficult, but felt that parking zones further up Leith Walk might just move the problem further down in to the Leith Links area. Chair left it to individuals to respond or not to the current petition currently circulating.

#### ***B&Bs for Temporary Homeless - Demonstration outside the Abbot's House hostel***

This property is owned by Cameron Guest House group, who own several local properties in the area and provide temporary housing for people referred to them by the City Council. A group of anti-protestors held a demonstration there on Wednesday 17 January, opposing the use of B&Bs for homeless people, especially for families with young children. LLCC publicised and supported the protest, as there has long been concern about the number of poor quality / poorly managed B&Bs used for temporary homeless people in this area, and the lack of support available for temporary homeless residents. Cllr Booth commented that Edinburgh City Council's homelessness task force has confirmed that B&Bs provide the worst level of support as these provide no access to cooking and washing facilities, and are the most expensive for the Council. The problem is that there are very few properties available for affordable short-term and temporary lets. Benefit sanctions and Universal Credit is causing a huge rise in homelessness. Sally made the point that although CEC is committed to improve matters and build more accommodation in the longer term, in the short term, B & Bs used should at least be inspected regularly and be clean and safe (locks on doors etc.). Cllr Munro added that Edinburgh Tenants Federation (ETF) has carried out visits to similar properties, highly unsuitable for families (one of the B&Bs is beside a drug turnaround facility, causing concern for the families there), The ETF is providing training for tenant-led inspections..

### **8. Leith Chooses project - Update**

Project applications close on 31 January. Based on past experience, it is likely that a flurry of applications will appear just before the deadline, so hopefully there will be enough.

Voting day is 3 March, in the Community Centre. Free refreshments etc. will be available.

*Volunteers for 3 March:* John thanked those who have already volunteered (most of the LLCC councillors), and reiterated the need for as much assistance as possible for that day. Before that, the next stage will be leafletting and putting up posters, for which volunteers will also be needed. Volunteers may also be needed for the week after 3<sup>rd</sup> March, to help people to vote online.

*Online Voting* it has been very difficult working with Edinburgh City Council, particularly regarding the City Council's extra tight requirement for data security. Most major problems have now been resolved,

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but the online voting software is still at a sort of 'experimental' level, as CEC did not invest in continued work with the developers after 2016 Leith Decides event.

## 9. Leith Festival Gala Day, Saturday 9 June 2018

**ACTION:** Michael will contact the other two Community Councils to agree joint representation at a stall, on this day (and sharing the cost).

**ACTION:** Michael will communicate with Mary Moriarty to book the stall and arrange loan of the gazebo, tables etc.

## 10. Open Forum

### **LLCC in the final for the Scottish Police Excellence Awards**

Reflecting last year's PB work, LLCC is on a shortlist of 3 for the Scottish Police Excellence Awards as 'Community Partners of the Year'. Michael and Sally are attending the Awards Ceremony on 30 January 2018.

### **Traffic**

**Picardy Place gyratory** Cllrs Booth and Munro commented that the newly agreed Picardy Place gyratory is 'traffic-led' and may impact badly on all users of Leith Walk.

**Safe Crossing** Local resident Angus Miller raised the possible need for more traffic islands if not crossings as such along the Links, which currently only has pedestrian crossing (at Restalrig Road) along the full length of the Links. Sally advised that it is possible for residents to request a police traffic survey, to establish whether there is a need for this.

### **Tommy Sheppard MP**

Ros Currie, his Chief of Staff, informed the meeting that LLCC meetings unfortunately clash with the timing of other meetings that Tommy Sheppard MP attends, but emphasised that his office welcomes visits and queries from the public.

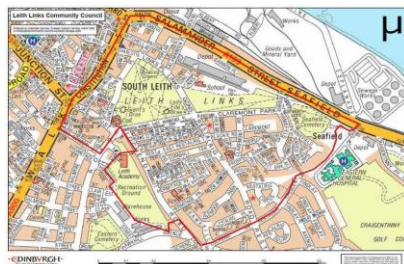
### **City Council budget**

Edinburgh City Council will set their budget on 23 February 2018.

Chair thanked all attendees. Meeting ended at 9pm.

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**Date of Next Public Meeting: 26 February 2018, 7pm. Shore Room, Leith Community Centre, Newkirkgate**



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