

LEITH LINKS

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

MONDAY 26 MARCH 2018

LEITH COMMUNITY CENTRE, NEW KIRK_GATE

Councillors Present: Stephen Brennan, Adrian Graham, Angus Hardie, Andrew Mackenzie, Sally Millar (Secretary), Chrissie Reid, Jacqueline Rogers, Jim Scanlon (Chair), Eileen Simpson, John Tibbitt (Vice-Chair), Michael Traill.

Elected Representatives: Councillor Chas Booth, Councillor Gordon Munro.

In attendance: PC Fiona Brown, Don Giles (Leith Harbour & Newhaven Community Council), PC Chris Smith, members of the public.

Minute Taker: Kay Goodall.

1. Welcome

Welcome from Chair. Apologies were received from David Igoe, Ben Macpherson MSP, Councillor Adam McVey.

2. Police Report

PC Smith reported. Sgt George Nisbet has taken the place of Sgt Bull. Sally formally minuted LLCC's thanks to Sgt Bull for his greatly valued work and contributions, and wished him well in his new role.

Follow-up from the last meeting

Disorder at the Spey Lounge: As promised last month, local officers are carrying out regular visits to the premises.

Anti-social parking and driving: The abandoned vehicle at Summerfield Gardens has been investigated, officers have contacted City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) to get it moved. Road checks continue at Ocean Terminal and Leith Links; several drivers warned about their driving practices.

Operation Contrition: drugs

There have been four more successful investigations. In one case, officers recovered £17,000 cash and cannabis with a street value of £2000.

Community Alcohol Partnership

Leith and Craigmillar officers are engaging in test purchasing of alcohol to under-18s. They carry out visits to licensed premises, including the Spey Lounge. If sales are witnessed, the owners are given a warning, then the premises are revisited a month later; if they re-offend, then action is taken.

Other investigations

Robberies: There were three solved robberies and arrests, near the Leith Athletic FC building.

Anti-social tenants: Two prolific anti-social tenants have been evicted in the North area. One was evicted on mental health grounds and has been hospitalised. The other has been convicted and will not be rehoused by CEC on release from jail.

Theft of pedal cycles: A plain clothes patrol unit is addressing this. Organised thieves are using bolt cutters and similar tools. The only safe place for bikes is locked indoors.

Easter Community Fun Day at Dalmeny Park on Saturday 31 March, 10.30am-2.30pm

Community officers will be participating in this.

Drop-in Surgeries

These are held at Ocean Terminal on every third Friday of the month and at other locations throughout the month, including Newkirkgate Community Café. Announcements of the dates can be found on the Edinburgh Police North East twitter account @EdinPoINE.

3. Talk by Rory Garriock of Anturas Consulting (re Trams to Newhaven)

Rory did not attend due to a confusion over dates. The public consultation has now been launched and a meeting has taken place in Leith Theatre. The next trams engagement sessions are as follows:

- 3 April 10am-4pm at McDonald Library

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- 12 April 3pm-9pm at Leith Community Centre
- 21 April Noon-5pm at Ocean Terminal.

At each session, it will be possible to see the detailed maps, ask questions, and give feedback online.

4. Adoption of Minutes of last meeting on Monday 26 February 2018

Proposed by Michael Traill; seconded by Stephen Brennan.

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

Outstanding actions

Dry Dock

Edinburgh Leisure has replied to state that they are very keen to hand this back to Edinburgh City Council. Discussions on this are ongoing. Cllr McVey has been liaising with Adrian Wilkinson of the Dry Dock.

ACTION: Cllr Booth and Cllr McVey are continuing to pursue this with the City Council and are aware that time is of the essence.

5. Seafield Sewage: update

Strategic Review

Chair, Eileen and Cllr Booth attended another meeting with the Scottish Government, chaired by Ben Macpherson MSP. The plant will be run by Veolia until 2029 when Scottish Water take it back over. Scottish Water is looking at investment plans for the period of 2021-27 for Edinburgh as a whole, including Seafield. The final report of the Strategic Review will be going live this week with short, medium and long-term solutions to resolve the problem of odours from the plant. Chair noted that the independent consultants had not found any fault with the Code of Practice (COP) that governs Seafield; rather it may be that the odour management plan within the plant is the problem, and that SEPA and CEC have not 'policed' the COP effectively. Scottish Water and Veolia need to be more proactive about monitoring matters that cause smell problems, such as changes in sludge levels to keep them below the levels that could allow the tanks become septic, and lack of rainwater reducing the speed with which sewage is flushed through.

Reporting smells

It is also important to introduce better communication with residents when problems do occur. CEC offers the chance to report through its general 0131 200 2000 phone line, and both LLCC (Sally) and 'I Love Leith' (Michael) post contact details on Facebook whenever members of the public complain there. Relatively few complaints however are being made to SEPA or the City Council. It was raised once again that, clearly, an easy and effective single contact point for reporting is required. LLCC has been asking for this at meetings for over a year now, and Cllr Booth has also raised this at CEC level, but has been told this would not be reviewed until after the Strategic Review concludes.

Rob Kirkwood of the LL Residents Association has engaged a lawyer who attended the meeting and argued that a proactive approach could be taken; it is not necessary for a representative of the City Council to smell the odour him/herself, CEC should be monitoring all the time, not waiting for incidents to occur and complaints to come in. They should take action as soon as the cause of odour is seen, i.e. septic matter in the tanks.

Chair reported that a burning rubber smell on 11 March had affected the local area widely, and a number of residents complained to the Community Council, who then had to investigate. An explanation was eventually received by LLCC from Veolia / Scottish Water (gas had to be released to allow an urgent repair, for a short period). Seafield should have published this information early on - if people had known this was an emergency repair they would have been aware that it was not serious or likely to recur.

ACTION: LLCC and Michael will post on Facebook reminding readers that the smell season is about to begin and that it is important to report incidents to CEC. April-June often tends to be the worst time of year.

Scottish Government finance will be needed to cover longer term improvement options. Decisions at city level will not be made until December 2019.

The catchment area for Seafield is vast, stretching into East and Midlothian. One possible option is a local treatment plant for Wallyford and possibly other areas; another is dosing sewage with a de-scenting chemical. One of the longer-term options to consider is whether Seafield should be closed.

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Section 75 developer contributions to infrastructure do not include sewage, as national government is responsible for this, through water rates.

ACTION: Chair will email Ben Macpherson MSP to ask whether Scottish Water get a contribution from new builds. This is timely as there is a planning bill going through the Scottish Parliament.

6. Parks and Green Spaces Committee Update

Upgrade of Leith Links Play Park

The consultation has been very limited so far and there has consequently been little public response. CEC officers are under great time pressure, but Leith Links is a premier park and this is a large project – it must be widened and carried out more effectively. Greener Leith carried out a consultation on this, as have others, and these earlier findings should be taken into account. The headteacher of St Mary's Primary School had stated that he had not been approached and would welcome the chance to facilitate a pupil response.

ACTION: Chair will write to Evelyn McMurray (CEC) to voice LLCC's concerns, such as the failure to approach key consultees.

Health and safety of vegetation encroaching on Leith Links paths (raised at February meeting)

Scott Thomson agreed to visit the path in response to an issue raised by a member of the public, albeit stating that, generally, vegetation is inspected annually in July.

Skoo Bikes

LLCC is leaving this matter to CEC as LLCC cannot grant him any licences. The trader has been passed around from department to department and is confused as to where he stands.

7. Planning & Licensing Sub Committee

Andrew is leading on this important and time-consuming work. Sally, Angus and Jim are other members of this sub-committee. Stephen is willing to participate in reading over material.

Current PANs (Pre-Application Notifications)

Baltic Street

Andrew and Chair and Andrew had attended pre-application events. The pre-application viewing is 9 May at Leith Library (no detailed design available for viewing before then). LLCC is not a statutory consultee as it is outwith the area but the development is of interest because the large Timber Yard development beside the Pond Pub is close to the LLCC boundary. LH&N CC will deal with the detail and LLCC will contribute more generally, focusing on infrastructure points -200 houses are proposed, including student housing and some for affordable rent. This will impact on, for instance, schools in the LLCC area. The issue of transience is also relevant as students will not pay council tax.

ACTION: Chair will invite the developer to speak at the LLCC AGM in May.

ACTION: LLCC will liaise with the other community councils re this and other developments as relevant.

Stead's Place

Jac reported back from the #SaveLeith Walk meeting about the big proposed Leith Walk / Steads Place / Jane St. development. This was addressed by Ben Macpherson MSP, Cllr Susan Rae and local activist Linda Somerville. Views are mixed: some would like the site not to be developed; others would like a community trust formed to develop it. Comments are sought by the end of April. Drum Property owns the site and are planning to develop it for the University, who may either lease it or buy it from Drum. There is concern that the high rental charges for the Shrubhill properties will have an impact on rental prices throughout Leith. Some of these flats are let short-term outwith university semesters, and even when the residents are postgraduate students who remain throughout the year, they are still exempt from council tax. Andrew has been in contact with Harold Tobermann of Leith Central CC, who feels that this is an opportune time to influence the decision-making.

"Place"

John attended the Edinburgh Local Development Plan meeting and suggested that the community councils could focus on the issue of "place" and the impact of new builds on the character of Leith. These considerations are not however mandatory for developers. There is a forthcoming Place Workshop at Craigentenny Community Centre on 29 March at 10am. This forms part of the North East Locality Local Improvement Plan. Notice given for this meeting was very short and the timing was inappropriate for people who work. Several people including Chair had already written to point this out.

ACTION: Chair will write to request future meeting at a more suitable time and place.

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LLCC were contacted by CEC Planning Manager Nancy Jamieson about removing the opportunity to comment on planning by email. LLCC objected to this, and this was discussed at the CEC Planning meeting, which was seeking to improve the performance of the Planning Dept. The proposal has now been shelved until the Planning portal is upgraded. Cllr Booth and the other representatives of the three opposition parties insisted that the portal be made more user-friendly first.

Cllr Booth noted that at the moment, if an application gets more than six objections it goes to Committee. At the Planning meeting, it was proposed that in future all decisions be referred straight to planning officers, regardless of how many objections from the community are made. A compromise was reached, i.e. that if an application has 20 objections or more, it will be referred to Committee.

Pre-Application Notifications will no longer come to Committee, although this will not make a significant difference in practice as Committee will still review issues such as infrastructure.

Community right of appeal

Edinburgh City Council has spoken out in favour of a community right of appeal (although not a third party right of appeal). It seems unlikely however that the Housing Minister will accept the Edinburgh position.

131 Constitution Street

Permission for a 25-room boutique hotel has been granted on appeal.

Consultation seeking views on the update of The Licensing (Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2007

The Licensing Board has agreed a two-stage process. They are currently considering having a workshop and hearings on what changes should be made. Cllr Booth will keep LLCC informed about developments.

ACTION: Cllr Booth will send LLCC the relevant parts of the Scottish Green Party's response.

8. Leith Chooses - Update

Results

A busy and successful voting event took place on 3rd March despite the severe weather. 963 people registered to vote on the day (including volunteers, organisers and project participants), and around 3,000 voted overall including online, the highest ever engagement level so far. Sally thanked all those who participated. Caroline Lamond (CEC), who herself had managed a large number of enquiries regarding online voting, had sent an appreciative card to LLCC to thank the organisers and volunteers for all their efforts. The results were announced at the Results Night on Wednesday 21 March. Sally is managing payment of the Small and Large grants; CEC is dealing with the Medium grants.

Evaluation and Feedback

A Survey Monkey survey will be going out to all applicants by email. There will also be a face-to-face evaluation meeting probably late April/May. Sally has been encouraging the project applicants to keep posting updates about their activities throughout the year, as a means of informing people and keeping alive community interest, rather than just provide their final reports to organizers at the end of the process.

Cllr Booth asked for it to be formally noted that the immense work and effort of all the volunteers involved was to be highly commended. He observed that the reputation of LLCC has soared as a result of this.

Michael had discussed with a Scottish Government official the matter of a possible evaluation / analysis of the impact of Participatory Budgeting on Leith. This was viewed positively by SG, for possible funding support, and agreed by LLCC as a possible idea for the future, but with less than a week in which to apply funding, it was felt to be too much of a rush and that there was not the capacity to take this on at the moment.

9. Open Forum

Elected Representatives: Cllr Munro reiterated concerns raised at the #SaveLeithWalk meeting. LLCC and the other community councils will be approached to make clear their position on this, Main focus will be particularly on the livability and affordability of Leith, and also objection to the proposal to house 500 students with no provision of parking places.

Chair thanked all attendees. Meeting ended at 9pm.

10. Date of Next Public Meeting:

30 April 2018, 7pm. Shore Room, Leith Community Centre, Newkirkgate