

LEITH LINKS

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2017 / 2018

**Your elected Community Council
celebrates another very busy year**



Foreward

Welcome to Leith Links Community Council's Annual Report for 2017/18. This has been another exceptionally busy and successful year for the Community Council.

Compared to larger and higher profile nearby areas, our little patch may seem relatively quiet and uneventful. And yet, there is a lot going on! Issues to do with transport, traffic congestion, road safety, air pollution, and parking all affect us greatly, whether they originate here or are a 'knock-on' effect from further up Leith Walk. The Trams to Newhaven proposal raises many serious concerns yet to be explored and addressed in detail, and will clearly have a massive effect on our area – particularly Constitution Street - likely to generate long term upheaval for local residents and businesses. We are committed to protecting our community's interests by participating fully and actively in all consultations.

Over the year, we have submitted comments on a significant number of planning applications (Page 9) and are particularly watchful about proposals for hotel or hostel accommodation and short term rentals. We also support campaigns elsewhere in Leith, fighting developments that threaten the overall sense of 'place' and community.

On top of all our many 'ordinary' activities, LLCC was once again awarded a 'Community Choices' grant from Scottish Government - we are a leader amongst Scottish Community Councils, on Participatory Budgeting (PB). This provided £74,000 (plus admin costs) for local community projects – read about the fantastic Leith Chooses event on Pages 6 & 7.

We would like to thank our three elected Edinburgh City Councillors, who are all regular attenders and who provide valuable advice and support solidly throughout the year. Thanks also to MSP Ben MacPherson for his active support, and to our MPs, and to our local Community Policing Team, in particular Sgt. Niven Bull who has recently moved from Community Policing to another Police Scotland post - we wish him well.

Leith Links Community Council has an informative website, and active Facebook and Twitter accounts, and we invite you to explore these and to 'like/follow', share and link. (See back cover for contact details.) This report will give you a flavour of what the Community Council has been doing for you over the last year. We will continue to support - and if necessary - fight for you during 2018/19. And you will be very welcome if you'd like to come along and get involved.

Jim Scanlon

Chair

Sally Millar

Secretary

Members of Leith Links Community Council

Members of our Community Council were elected in October 2016, but a couple of changes have taken place since then. Current members are pictured below:



Jim Scanlon
Chair



John Tibbitt
Vice Chair



Sally Millar
Secretary



Gail Clapton
Treasurer
LLRA
nominee



Jac Rogers
Chair, Parks &
Green spaces Sub-
Committee



Andrew McKenzie
Chair, Planning &
Licensing Sub-
Committee



Adrian Graham
Coopted 2017



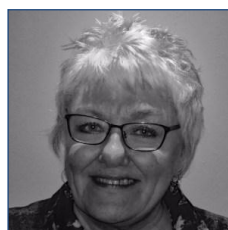
Angus Hardie



Stephen Brennan



David Igoe



Christine Reid



Eileen Simpson



Michael Traill

Our previous Treasurer Abu Meron, elected in 2016, stepped down in the course of 2017 because he moved out of the area – we thank Abu for all his contributions to the work of the CC.

The Community Council still has more 'spaces' available: if you are an established, constituted community group operating primarily within this area, you may be eligible to nominate someone.



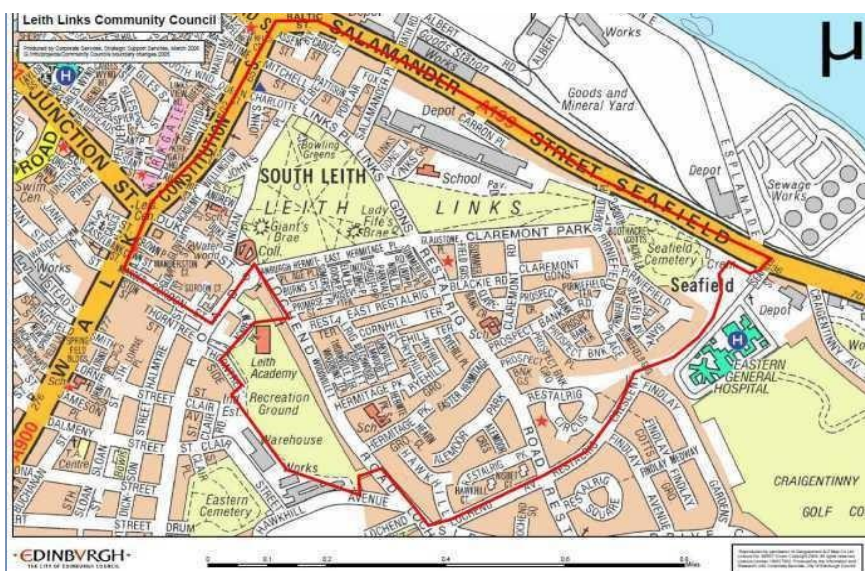
The elected City of Edinburgh Councillors for Leith Ward 13 are important members of the Community Council. From the left: Councillor Gordon Munro (Labour); Jim Scanlon (LLCC Chair); Councillor Adam McVey (SNP); Councillor Chas Booth (Scottish Greens).

With many of our Community Councillors still quite 'new', this year has been about getting to know more about how everything works, and what issues are top priorities for the community. We have established sub-committees - small groups that can focus and lead on particular areas of interest demanding special attention and detailed work. Currently, we have two sub-committees:

- Parks and Green spaces (Page 8)
- Planning and Licensing (Page 9)

Additionally, we have a small team that has been heavily involved over many months as leaders & partners on the Leith Chooses Participatory Budgeting project (Pages 6/7).

We are also adjusting to structural changes within Edinburgh City Council; Leith is now part of the new 'North East Locality' - a much bigger geographical area. (The old Leith Neighbourhood Partnership still survives for the moment, although its longer term future is unclear.)



The area within the red line on this map shows the area covered by the Leith Links Community Council. Because of so many new flats being built, our population is growing all the time!

What we do

Community Councils are set up by statute by the Local Authority and run on a voluntary basis by local residents, acting on behalf of their area. As the most local tier of elected representation, Community Councils play an important role in local democracy. Our only funding is an annual grant of around £700 from the Council to cover running costs (insurance, venues, administration etc.) and community engagement (e.g. leaflet printing).

We care about this community and work to make it a better place through direct action and by acting as a representative voice of the community (to the Council and to other local groups and campaigns). We try to engage with the community in different ways; we collect and provide information, consult you for your views, and pass these on to the relevant bodies, to try and ensure that your voice is 'heard'.

We meet on the last Monday of every month (except July and December) in the Leith Community Centre at 7pm. Meetings are open to the public, and are usually attended by between 12-25 people. At some meetings we have 'guest speakers' who provide valuable information about new developments locally. Recently topics include:

- Teague 'RopeWorks' development (Salamander Place)
- Port of Leith Housing Association (Wellington Place)
- Edinburgh Trams to Newhaven
- Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust – Leith Links playpark
- City Car Club
- #SaveLeithWalk campaign

Other suggestions for speakers are welcome. We also hold sub-committee meetings & sometimes special public events.

Working with other Community Councils and other groups

We attend many meetings to keep abreast of events locally, and to represent the area / community. We send a representative to the meetings of the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils (EACC), covering issues that affect the whole city. We have been working very closely recently with our closest 'sister' Community Councils, Leith Central, and Leith Harbour and Newhaven, on issues of common interest (lately, Trams consultations, and applications for Planning Permission for big new developments that affect the whole community, not just small portions of it.) We also adjoin Craighentinny/ Meadowbank CC (and nearby is Northfield/Willowbrae CC) who are currently campaigning against proposed new developments around Meadowbank.



Leith Chooses Project 2017/2018

Following the great success of last year's participatory budgeting project, Leith Links Community Council was happy to once again be awarded funding from the Scottish Government's Community Choices Fund. This year the project was designed to cover the whole of Leith, not just our small area; £74,000 for community projects (plus admin). We established partnerships with our two sister Community Councils in Leith, and with City of Edinburgh Council (who were due to deliver a revised version of Leith Decides, within the same timeframe, bringing an additional £44,000 (Community Grants Fund) to the table). Community Council volunteers and Council working 'hands-on', together in this innovative partnership had its challenges but was ultimately very rewarding - sharing expertise and bringing much-needed added capacity as well as, perhaps, a new understanding and respect to both sides.



The project launched in November 2017. In spite of the snowy weather, the Voting day in March 2018 was attended by more people than ever before (963 registered to vote in person), and a fabulous community 'buzz' was felt by everybody as we learned about all the very worthwhile proposed projects from the enthusiastic and energetic teams. (It's just sad that there is never quite enough funding for ALL of them to get the funds they clearly all need and deserve). In the subsequent two weeks of online voting, 3000 further votes were received (another record broken!).






Lots more information about this great project is available on www.leithchooses.net (hosted and run by LLCC). See also @leithchooses on Facebook and Twitter



Projects Funded

Sixty seven great community projects applied to Leith Chooses for funding. Grants were divided into three different categories – small, medium and large. The projects that received the most votes from the community were awarded funding, up to a total of £118,000.



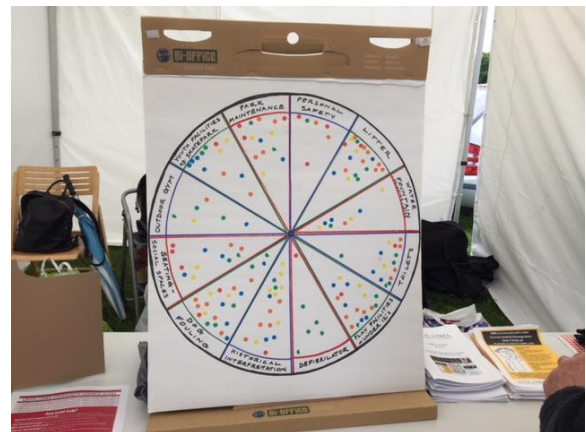
Small Grants (up to £500, but not all projects asked for the full amount)			
Funded by Leith Links CC with Scottish Government Community Choices grant			
Leithers Don't Litter Good Clean Fun – cleaning up playparks	Help Scouts (154 Edinburgh NE Group) go Camping	Family Fun Street Games and Dance – multicultural family fun, get off that screen	Choose Happiness – places for Leithers on course
CLASP Seniors Tea Party – young kids invite local seniors for tea and a chat	Art outside the Police Box – panels for display of local artwork	Leith Fort Residents Community Group – activities to draw people together	See Me Portrait Project Professional quality photos free for families
Cleaning Up Restalrig Road & Railway Path	The Big Brunch – towards a positive shared vision of childcare in Leith	Taobh Na Pairce Primary School - Film making Workshops	
Medium Grants (£500 - £5,000, but not all projects asked for the full amount)			
Funded by City of Edinburgh (Community Projects Fund)			
Hidden Door Festival – involving the local community	All Together Charity Shop – Skills training for people with learning disabilities	Mustard Seed –Soul Food Easter Road	St. Mary's Primary School – Bike shed and scooter rack
Tailor Ed Foundation – supporting families raising a child with autism	Leith Community Cinema – accessible screenings	Leith Late - A Wall is a Screen – community cinema on Leith buildings	Leith FAB Cricket Club – new all-weather artificial pitch
Leith Primary School – Trim Trail	Invisible Cities – Street Barber project	Dr. Bells Family Centre – Summer Programme	Beyond Gender – LGBT+ Creative Writing project (partial grant)
Large Grants (£5,000 - £10,000, but not all projects asked for the full amount)			
Funded by Leith Links CC with Scottish Government Community Choices grant			
Leith DIY Skatepark – extending skateboarding facilities to all	Creative Electric – art & performance for homeless, womens mental health groups & young people	Out of the Blue – 'Meanwhile...in Leith' Hub	
Leith Theatre Trust – Thomas Morton Hall equipment	Projekt 42 – Yoga, Youth Fitness & Summer Boot Camp	SHB / Leith Heritage Group – Leith Heritage Trail (partial grant)	
	The Edinburgh Tool Library – Accessible Leith	Citadel Youth Centre – Citadel Connect	

Parks & Green Spaces

The main aim of the Parks and Green Spaces Sub-Committee is to work towards improving the quality of green spaces within our ward. At our stall at the Leith Festival Gala Day, June 2017, we surveyed the public about their concerns and hoped-for improvements on Leith Links, our largest green space.



The main concerns for those who took part were the ongoing issues of litter and dog fouling. Upgrading of the play park was the most desired new improvement. View the full report at <http://www.leithlinksgcc.org.uk/our-library/>



Happily, following voting at the August 2017 Leith Neighbourhood Partnership, funding is now being provided to upgrade the play park at Leith Links. An Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust consultation is ongoing whereby the public are voting on 3 alternative new designs for the park. We are hopeful that further top-up funds may be found and that the new play facilities will be in place by Summer 2019.



Restalrig Road and Railway Path

We are happy to report a new 'force' for good; the Restalrig Road and Railway Path group – who won small grant funding two years running from the Community Links and Leith Chooses funds – organises litterpicks on this chronically messy street, and cleanups on the much-used green pedestrian/cycle corridor through our area. Community Councillors join these litter picks, and encourage all to join in!



Planning and Licensing

LLCC is a Statutory Consultee on big Planning decisions (and we also comment on smaller applications for Planning Permission). This is major element of our work, and is quite challenging as the process seems designed to bamboozle and exclude non-specialists (and to favour the developers rather than the community). While new homes are obviously needed, we try to represent the existing local community in ensuring that any proposed new developments in our area are acceptable.

In the past year, LLCC has submitted detailed objections on three different large sites / properties on Constitution Street in desperate attempts to protect the quality and unique character of this conservation area (2 wins, one lost following appeal, so far). We have also commented on the big Teague development at Salamander Place. We have participated in 2 site visits, with Council Planning Committee members. Further new big developments are known to be in the pipeline.

We have also commented on licensing applications and on permit applications for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO).

Though not in Leith Links as such, there are some very high profile new developments proposed for other parts of Leith, and Meadowbank, and we are commenting on these too as they will undoubtedly impact upon our local community.

And of course, the Trams to Newhaven! Amongst all the other concerns about the current plans – which seem to be engineer-led, and geared to tourists and commuters, rather than to local residents - we are deeply concerned about the effect on Constitution Street, and the traffic and parking congestion that will come to the Links area as a knock-on...

Leith Links is Growing – what about the infrastructure?

Our local population is growing as more and more housing goes up around the area on brownfield sites. A major concern that LLCC always emphasises in comments on Planning Applications is the effect that large new residential developments will have on local infrastructure (schools, roads, transport, doctors' surgeries, dentists, access to green space, drains, sewage etc.). Is enough provision being made for this as these huge new developments go forward? How transparent are these arrangements? Do we see the needed development to local infrastructure?

Seafield Smell

Our community is still regularly affected by unacceptable odour nuisance from the Seafield Waste Water Treatment plant (sewage works). LLCC attends quarterly Stakeholders' meetings and campaigns for improvement. Following public outcry about extreme odour incidents in May 2017, Roseanna Cunningham, Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, realised she had underestimated the problem and called for a Strategic Review of Seafield Treatment facility. Over the year LLCC has worked alongside Leith Links Residents Association (LLRA) to submit information to this review. It is now complete, and recommends a number of measures, including:

Short term (1-2 years) - such as chemical dosing at key locations outside the area

Medium term (2-7 years) - such as converting/ covering storm tanks, and streamlining the sludge-handling system.

Long term (7-20 years) - possible intermediate treatment plants at e.g. Wallyford and the coastal towns. OR Redevelopment of the whole plant to create a new state-of-the-art facility, either at Seafield or elsewhere.

What we have learned

- The area served by Seafield is huge, including Penicuik, Wallyford, Prestonpans and farther afield. The plant also takes industrial waste.
- The population in all areas served by Seafield is growing along with new house-building.
- The plant at Seafield is out-of-date, even admitted by those in charge to be in some ways unfit for purpose.
- 'Extreme weather events' that are frequently blamed for odour problems (too hot, too dry, too wet, too windy...) are increasingly 'normal' due to climate change – meaning continuing smells around Leith Links.

We believe that 'managing' smells has failed and we need aim towards a totally new facility, fit for the future of a growing capital city.

Reporting

In the meantime, LLCC is working with LLRA, MSP Ben MacPherson and our elected Ward 13 Councillors, pressing hard for better communication, a more community-friendly reporting process, and for a commitment to dealing with odour risks before emissions reach the wider community. We also expect faster reaction times and better 'policing' from the City Council and SEPA on reported incidents so that necessary action can be taken by the plant operators, Veolia, on behalf of Scottish Water. Expert technical and legal advice suggests that this should be quite feasible.

Meanwhile in Leith Links...

We appreciate the support of our elected representatives, but so far remain unconvinced that adequate progress is being achieved.

Scottish Water has recently discontinued funding of the independent technical advisor, and Council staffing cuts mean that there is now only part-time working by Environmental Wardens who are supposed to investigate complaints about odour nuisance.

But we urge you to keep reporting any smell. It is very frustrating to report the smell and then – often - nothing happens.

But please do it anyway, so that the incidents are at least recorded and those in charge can't claim that there isn't a problem.

To report smells, use the numbers below. Leith Links Community Council is also developing a web form to make reporting easier, but this is still in the testing phase. Watch the website for progress on this.

SMELLS around Leith Links!
from the Seafeld Sewage plant
DON'T GIVE UP
PLEASE ALWAYS COMPLAIN!



Smell sewage?
Phone:
0131-469-5641 (office hours)
0131-200-2000 (24 hours)
Email:
Just to register a complaint:
publichealth@edinburgh.gov.uk
Give your location, date and time, and a description of the smell and how strong it is.

Smell 'burning rubber'?
That needs reporting as pollution to SEPA.
Phone:
0800-80-70-60 (24 hours)

And - watch this space - Leith Links Residents Assoc. will be circulating an update on a simpler 'single point of contact' for complaints as soon as this has been established.

LEITH LINKS
COMMUNITY COUNCIL

 www.leithlinksc.org.uk
 [@LeithLinks_CC](https://twitter.com/LeithLinks_CC)
 [/LeithlinksCC](https://www.facebook.com/LeithlinksCC)

MEET US, CONTACT US

Come along to a meeting – the last Monday of every month, except July and December, in the Shore Room, Leith Community Education Centre, New Kirkgate, 7 – 9pm. Check the website for any updates on dates and times.

- Find us online, sign up for email alerts of new posts;
- Like us on Facebook, comment, share;
- Follow us on Twitter and retweet;
- Look out for our occasional leaflets & posters, distributed across the area.

	www.LeithLinksCC.org.uk
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	contact@LeithLinksCC.org.uk

