

# LEITH LINKS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## MINUTES

MONDAY 27 AUGUST 2018  
LEITH COMMUNITY CENTRE (NEWKIRK GATE)

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

**Member of general public / LH&NCC – 1**

**Minute Taker:** Kay Goodall

### 1. Welcome & Apologies

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that from September onwards, meetings will begin at 6.30pm. Apologies received from Adrian Graham, Cllr. Gordon Munro, Cllr. Chas Booth, and Deirdre Brock MP

### 2. Police Scotland - no officers attended.

### 3. Adoption of Minutes of last meeting on Monday 25 June 2018 and Matters Arising

Proposed: Gail Clapton, Seconded: Michael Traill. Additionally, the non-AGM element of the Minutes of Monday 29 May 2018 were proposed by Gail Clapton and seconded by John Tibbitt.

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

### 4. Campervans and Caravans on the Links – Update by Jim Scanlon

A large number of campervans have been parked along Links Gardens, also several caravans (unconnected to vehicles), trailers and even a couple of horse boxes. This obscures important road signs, makes crossing less safe, and is felt inappropriate on a busy road in a residential area. It also raises further important issues of public health (as no toilets or washing facilities available) and animal welfare (dogs kept in small metal cages, in hot weather). Both LLCC and some local residents complained to Police Scotland and to the Council, without initial success; however an approach by residents to Scottish Government Ministers helped to stimulate Council action.

Some vehicles were in contravention of legal requirements; some vehicles appeared to have been dumped. A group of people were apparently sleeping/ living in their vans on the public street and leaving human faeces on the Links (near the clubhouse and in the Children's Orchard) - photographic evidence provided by resident who is a medical professional, sent to the Health Minister.

The welfare of dogs was investigated by the SSPCA. The Council eventually sent out environmental wardens, and since then some vehicles have been served with 24 hour notices, some removed as abandoned vehicles, and others (including the group mentioned above) moved on.

Local residents have asked LLCC to contact the City Council asking that signage, as is in place at Silverknowes, be put up prohibiting overnight camping.

**ACTION: Chair will continue to put pressure on the City Council to remove vehicles which have had notices placed on them, and follow up to see whether this has happened. Chair will also write in support of the requests made by local residents for signage to prohibit overnight camping.**

### 5. Edinburgh Partnership Review and Consultation on Governance

#### *Edinburgh Partnership Review*

Angus explained that CEC's Edinburgh Partnership Review is separate from the government's review of local governance. It is reviewing community planning in Edinburgh, in the context of CEC's plan to create four community partnerships for the four localities. The consultation is open until 9/9 2018, <https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/bi/edinburgh-partnership-review-and-consultation-of-g/>

In discussion, members were concerned that the proposals do not refer to a role for community councils, nor do they appear to accord with the aims of the Scottish Government's review of local governance. Community Councillors should contribute thoughts about this in the comment sections of the questionnaire, emphasizing the need to provide community councils with a significant role in community participation. This can also be raised at the Neighbourhood Partnership and Localities meetings. These arguments can then be put at the national level in the Consultation on Governance.

**ACTION: John will convene a group to discuss a response to the Review on behalf of LLCC, in addition to responses sent in from LLCC councilors as individuals.**

**ACTION: Sally will try to get this on the agenda for discussion at the Neighbourhood Partnership meeting on Thursday 27 September.**

#### *Consultation on Governance and Community Planning Arrangements: Democracy Matters*

This is an initiative to encourage communities across Scotland to discuss involvement in local decision-making, leading to launch of a draft Local Democracy Bill, to push new powers into communities. COSLA and local authorities are supportive. LLCC will aim to provide a full response to this, possibly working with other community councils, either in the North-East locality, or in Leith, or both. The consultation is open till November, after which there will be regional events and some form of citizen's assembly. It might be useful for LLCC to hold some kind of (public?) event to discuss this locally, perhaps in September?

**ACTION: Sally will liaise with Northfield & Willowbrae CC who are suggesting a meeting of CCs, to take forward idea of discussions and potentially a joint community councils' response.**

**ACTION: Angus will email a proposal for a public event to open up the conversation on this (and perhaps pre-meeting discussions) and will lead on taking the matter forward generally.**

### 6. Parks and Green Spaces Committee – Update by Jac Rogers

#### *Play Park upgrade*

Jac provided an update on this. Darren Ryan and the team had consulted on three designs (261 responses, the highest number ever received for a playpark consultation). The majority were very positive about the designs, but there was no one clear favourite. A new final Playpark Design 4 has therefore been created from the aspects most positively commented on in each design. The next step is to obtain the necessary top-up funding of £140,000.

**ACTION: Jac will ask Ross Woodside whether LLCC can make the new design available to the public on the LLCC website.**

### ***Use of Leith Links for Fringe shows***

After the recent outcry about the corralling-off of West Princes Street Gardens for large commercial music events, the Cockburn Association and others suggested that such events be moved from the city centre to Leith Links. This has received a mixed response, mostly against.

The Ladyboys of Bangkok and La Clique Cabaret have put in a request to CEC Parks Dept. to use the Links as a Fringe venue in 2019. They would be in place for over four weeks, putting on at least two shows a day. They had previously used the Meadows but had had to move from there to a site with hard standing because the Meadows site had been excessively damaged each year and had been left in a bad state for long periods of time. Their current site in Fountainbridge is being developed so will no longer be available to them

In discussion it was agreed that it would be a popular event attracting visitors, involving Leith in the Festival and potentially bringing in income to local businesses. On the other hand, there would be noise from audiences of up to 600 people after the performances finish at 11pm, traffic congestion and parking problems, extensive and long-lasting damage to the grass, and reduced access for local park-users for the whole of August. The area that would be sectioned off for their exclusive use is a substantial area in front of the tennis courts, affecting one of the football pitches used by LAFC, and near the John Rattray statue to be erected soon.

It would also be annexing public space for private profit, without allowing the community, including local interest groups such as businesses, to choose who is (or isn't) invited to put on events. The community might feel that some of the financial benefit from the letting fee should be (seen to be) reinvested directly into the Links, rather than going in to a general 'Parks pot'. There are also concerns about setting a precedent and locking the Links in to a similar scenario for many years to come.

In order to consult more widely, LLCC has provided an online form for local residents to send in comments. There is a short deadline for responding to the proposal.

Meeting resolved that LLCC should respond to the proposal by highlighting both the benefits to and the concerns of the community, as raised by local people via the online form.

**ACTION: LLCC will draft a response to Parks Dept. Chair will also ask how much the City Council makes in a letting fee and how large the bond is.**

### **7. Planning & Licensing Sub Committee – Update by Andrew Mackenzie**

**Trams** Since the last LLCC meeting, a meeting was held with Rory Garriock and Steven Jackson of the Trams Team in July, involving LLCC, LH&N, and Constitution Street Residents Group). This covered the design details of the tram route at (1) Constitution Street and (2) the final 'leg' between Constitution Street and Newhaven. Both of these sections of the route have been seriously under-discussed to date, as Leith Walk seems to have got the main attention. Yet both sections are highly problematic.

Since then, promised feedback from the trams team about Constitution Street, and a further design workshop, have not been delivered. There is concern that difficult issues are not being resolved soon enough and that the timeline seems is slipping, generally.

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The final version of the Manifesto of Community Councils Together on Trams (CCTT) has been issued. LLCC's representatives to this group are Andrew and Angus, with Sally as "reserve. Four representatives of CCTT (Community Councils Together on Trams) met with Councillor Adam McVey to represent the coalition's views. Starting in August, CCTT will meet with the Trams Team on the final Thursday of every month.

### ***Buses***

A new campaign group has been set up recently, the Edinburgh Bus Users Group (EBUG), to give Edinburgh's many thousands of bus users a voice which they have not had before. Meeting took a vote on whether LLCC should be formally represented at the group and it was agreed that Sally should represent the community council.

EBUG has met twice and produced an introductory statement. It has also held a meeting with two senior executives of Lothian Buses, who are positive about this new group. Lothian Buses stand to lose revenue because of the tram. The Leith routes attract a great many bus users and are very profitable: these help to subsidise other bus routes. Services all across Edinburgh could be affected. Another issue discussed is that the City Council, not Lothian Buses, owns and manages the bus stops. Parked vehicles blocking bus stops on Pilrig Street recently forced buses to be diverted. The Council could not initially take enforcing action as some bus stops were not properly marked. Repainting had to take place before the problem could be resolved. All bus stops should have the necessary signage, but not all do. Sally asked members to take note of whether or not bus stops near them have the necessary yellow 'No Stopping' sign plates, and a broad yellow line painted on the road.

### ***Save Leith Walk***

LLCC previously resolved to support the Save Leith Walk campaign and will therefore send in an objection this week to the 2 separate planning applications (1) to demolish the red sandstone art deco 'New Shops' block building, and (2) to replace it with a large development of student flats, a hotel, a small amount of housing, and new commercial units. Key dates along with a wealth of information are listed on the Save Leith Walk page at <http://saveleithwalk.org/>.

**ACTION: Sally and Planning sub-Committee to draft LLCC response. Individuals are also urged to send in comments.**

A deputation accompanied by a large group of community members attended the City Chambers recently to present a petition of 12,000 signatures. As a quasi judicial body, the City Council Planning Committee could not accept the petition, as that might be seen as prejudicing their impartiality and thus giving the developers grounds on which to overturn committee decisions.

## **7. Seafield Sewage – Update by Jim Scanlon**

### ***Odour reporting form and City Council response***

Chair thanked Michael for producing an online odour reporting tool for use by the community through the LLCC website. It is now much easier to make reports, and the postcode data has enabled Rob Munn (of MSP Ben MacPherson's office) to 'map' where the smell is being detected (a much wider area than recognized by previous 'smell maps' created by City of Edinburgh Council). There have been over 100 complaints over July and August showing that the stink has ruined the summer months of a large area of the community. Rob Kirkwood contacted the City Council to find out how

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many official visits had been made in response to these complaints. The response was that 38 visits were made by environmental officers, and on 25 occasions no odour was detected, despite these having been detected by the scientific officers as well as by members of the community. Rob had then queried this, but received merely the same standard response.

### ***Stakeholder meeting and engineering feasibility study***

Chair and Eileen met with Rob Munn and Chair has been in communication with Ben Macpherson MSP and Rob Kirkwood from the Residents Association. There has been a poor response from Scottish Water. Chair has received notice however that there will be a stakeholder meeting, possibly on 28 September.

An engineering feasibility study is now looking at conversion of the storm tanks and replacement of the primary settlement tanks. This will estimate costs, likely to be over £40 million. Merely covering the tanks may be insufficient now, due to overall deterioration of the plant. There will be an update on this at the next meeting.

### **8. Participatory Budgeting – Update**

#### ***Scottish Government Community Choices Funding***

LLCC applied but was not successful in winning a Community Choices grant in this third year of the scheme. There is a linked 'Support Grant' (£3,000) scheme open to an application from LLCC, but it is not entirely clear what this involves or what LLCC might choose to do with such funding.

**ACTION: Sally will find out more information about the terms of the Support Grant scheme.**

#### ***Leith Decides/Chooses 2018/2019***

There is a mistaken impression in some quarters locally that there will be no more participatory budgeting in Leith. Although LLCC have not got a Community Choices grant this year (either to run separately or to add to the Council's 'pot'), the City Council will definitely proceed with a PB exercise, for distribution of its Community Grants (up to £44K). The first planning meeting takes place this week. Currently Sally sits on the Steering Group, both representing LLCC and in her own right as an invited member.

It has not been decided yet exactly what format will be adopted, and what specific terms and conditions. CEC hopes to continue using the name of Leith Chooses, as this achieved a high public profile last year and reflects the partnership between the community councils, as well as with CEC (rather than reverting to the old name of Leith Decides, reflecting the return to City Council funding and conditions only). After discussions, the meeting voted in favour of this, although stressing that any new changes in the eligibility criteria (eg. no small grants to unconstituted groups) and terms will need to be transparent and carefully explained.

### **9. Any Other Business: Open Forum**

No other points were raised. Chair thanked all attendees. Meeting ended at 9pm.

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**Date of Next Public Meeting: 24 September 2018, 6.30pm. Shore Room, Leith Community Centre, Newkirkgate. PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF START TIME to 6:30**