

LEITH LINKS

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

From Leith Links Community Council (LLCC) on the proposal to use Leith Links as a Fringe venue between July 2019 and August 2019, by Lady Boys of Bangkok / La Clique Cabaret

The views of local residents / community

Because this proposal is unusual in that it proposes a much longer use of the Links than previous applications for events, LLCC decided to put this proposal out to wider public consultation - we provided a link to a 'webform' that was quick and easy for local residents to complete.

In the space of the 5 days the form was available, we received 56 responses from people who live near the Links. This was not a 'referendum', obviously, so the numbers as such are not the important thing – the point is to read the comments to see what residents (Council Tax payers!) think and feel. We have therefore included, below, a representative sample of comments (verbatim, as they appeared on the forms). In addition to these forms, many people commented on the LLCC website and Facebook page but those comments have not been included here.

The very comprehensive set of Comments immediately below is an example of a submission balancing **For & Against** arguments, and including some compelling Recommendations (in bold, below, Page 2). (Most people completed comments only either For or Against, see Pages 3-8)

<p>Comments in support of the proposal</p>	<p>(1) <i>Supporting local businesses: With 600 people per day expected to attend, it is likely that some may wish to make use of local businesses before & after performances to socialise and consume food & drink, this could provide additional income for local businesses which could make them more sustainable.</i></p> <p>(2) <i>Generating investment in Leith Links: The organisers will be charged a fee for use of the links, part of this fee could be invested in improvements or future maintenance of the links.</i></p> <p>(3) <i>City Centre dispersal: As the City Centre area gets increasingly congested with both vehicles and people, there is some logic to try to disperse some large scale events away from the City Centre area, this proposal would contribute to achieving this.</i></p>
<p>Comments in objection to the proposal</p>	<p>(1) <i>Noise: This event is known to be noisy; whilst the applicants say they will monitor decibel levels the nature of the Leith Links is such that any escaping noise could be heard for some distance, which if a brief event could possibly be ignored however, this application is for an extended period. In addition to the performances there could also be rehearsals taking place. In addition to the music/performance noise it is also likely that six hundred people per day entering & exiting the venue will cause some noise & disturbance.</i> (2) <i>Waste management: Six hundred customers travelling to & from the venue could lead to an increase in litter around the site, the proposal contains no information as to how such litter would be dealt with. Although outside of their compound I would argue that any litter from their customers on the links should be their responsibility on the basis that their customers are attending the links specifically to visit their venue.</i></p>

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**Comments
in
objection
to the
proposal
Contd.**

(3) Traffic congestion: The roads around the links are already busy, it is reasonable to consider that a significant number of the six hundred customers per day will access the venue by car or taxi. This could place a significant burden on the local road network immediately surrounding the links. (4) Protecting Leith Links: An event of this scale could cause serious damage to the links, which could take a significant period of time to make right and could make parts of the links unusable for a period of time after the event. The proposal does not contain details of what steps will be taken to minimise any damage to the links or a time commitment for any remedial works being completed. (5) Ensuring Leith Links is open & accessible to all: The links is an important and value green space which should be kept fully open & accessible to the local community and active measures should be taken to preserve it. Most events on the links are small scale events, this event seeks to fence of a large area for commercial gain for an extended period of time, therefore significantly reducing the areas which are freely open & accessible by the community. (6) Impact on public health: The links is an area used by many people every day to socialise, relax, play sport, walk dogs and much more. There are many established health & well being benefits associated with making use of open air green space. I am concerned that so much commercial activity on the links for an extended period of time could lead to the community feeling that they cannot use the space in the same way and therefore change their behaviour & avoid the links.

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Other
comments

(1) Precedent: This is a large scale commercial event for an extended period of time. If this proposal is granted could it lead to the business seeking to come here again next year? Or could it lead to other commercial operators seeking to exploit the links? It could prove difficult to turn down future applications of such a scale & nature if this proposal is granted. (2) Consultation: Given the nature & scale of this event I think the Council need to undertake further consultation with the community. (3) Oversight: Should this proposal be given approval I believe that a local representative should be involved in any planning meetings etc and should be able to carry out site inspections during the event with a designated point of contact at both the Council & organisers who could ensure any concerns are adequately addressed. I would suggest the local Community Council be considered a suitable body as the duly elected Community Council for the area. (4) Police Scotland: I would like to see input & opinion from Police Scotland on the proposal. (5) Deliberation: I do not believe that the proposal should be approved by City Of Edinburgh Council until such time as any concerns raised by the community are adequately addressed.

Comments AGAINST the proposed use of the Links as a Fringe venue in August 2019

1. The infrastructure around Leith Links is stretched already. Where will everyone park during August? I also do not want to see Leith Links becoming The Meadows.
2. I am concerned about noise, and would only support the proposal if it can be guaranteed that it won't be heard from surrounding residential properties. My main concern would be associated with the late evening show time.
3. I'm concerned about the noise, potential for increased volumes of litter, and damage to the grass.
4. I am concerned about: the impact on parking in the area; increased traffic; the potential for increased noise levels; additional rubbish; and most importantly, the impact to others –e.g. football teams and school activities - in the area. Schools return for autumn term on 14 August 2019 and after-school clubs etc may be affected. I presume that in addition to shows in the evening there may be rehearsal and sound check during the day.
5. Too much of Edinburgh's green space is given over to tourists and the Festival with little value for residents or businesses. Leith Links is for the residents of Edinburgh/Leith to enjoy. A month-long use of Leith Links with all associated noise, light, and other environmental pollutions is not acceptable. This stresses both local residents and local wildlife. There is no benefit to this proposal other than to the Council and the promoters. One of the biggest concerns when the event was held at the Meadows was the damage caused by the event, littering, the use of barbecues and antisocial behaviour in the park. Leave our green spaces alone!

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6. Bringing festival visitors to Leith is a good thing, for both community and business, and generally I would support it. However, the devil's in the details. How will local resources be improved to cope with it? There are already increasing issues with lack of bins, parking, toilets etc. Exactly where on the Links will the site be, and how big will it be? How will this impact on regular, local users, e.g. dog walkers and families? What other stalls/vans will accompany the event? Will food and drink suppliers come, and will these be from local businesses? Slight aside, but I also think the show itself has had its day. It kind of baffles me that people find cabaret and ladyboys entertaining!
7. One month is too long a period to have shows running on Leith Links. The area is predominantly residential and will have a detrimental impact on quality of life for people living close by. The evening shows are a particular concern with shows running from 8:45 - 10:45 which will be extremely disruptive for families with young children who are living less than 200m from the proposed venue. Parking is a major concern as well, with roads close by already congested at rush hours. A one-off event for 1-2 days is fine but not a whole month.
8. This is a hugely popular event that would bring in a lot of visitors to the area.
9. I object to the proposal as there is no mention about clean up or care for the surrounding area to cover that amount of people coming to the Links on a regular basis during all that time. There needs to be things put in place for litter and parking. The area will also likely be in full shut-down mode due to the tram extension. The council are really poor with litter provision anyway with no bins placed within the Links and unless something is done to address these issues the area will be disgrace.
10. I live right on the Links, and love having such a great space to utilise. Not only will the show ruin the park, by rubbish and large crowds, it will be very disturbing for me with the noise. It will be a great loss not being able to use the park and there will be more anti-social behaviour.
11. The only objection I would say is that it's a pretty rough area and the show is of a certain nature where perhaps the safety of the staff would need to be looked at.
12. My concern is the sheer amount of litter created, the lack of decent parking nearby (and how this will impact on the local residents), and the fact that parts of the Links would be taken out of use for local community purposes.
13. First, the month of August is already a tourist hellscape for a significant portion of the city, and there is no compelling reason to allow the festival to encroach on Leith any more than it already has. Second, and more importantly I think, the Links is a public green space meant for the public good. Do not privatise it, and damage it in the process, for the sake of the festival.
14. This really is an abysmal idea.
15. Leith Links is a great place for myself and other dog walkers and to have this upon us at the Links limits us for walking our dogs. Also another factor would be parking – the area just can't accommodate so much traffic.
16. I am concerned that this event is over a prolonged period of time and is likely to cause a fair amount of damage to the grass as well as disturbance to local residents. With increased traffic flow and parking restrictions. There is a limit to events on the Links and this needs to be protected for long standing ones.

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17. Leith is a haven during the festival. With less venues it's a place people can come to escape the hordes in town. We already have the circus, Leith Gala and Mela on the Links. This location cannot be allowed to become a year-round entertainment venue. Locals deserve to have an escape from the festival! Noise is always an issue on the Links, and a venue like this will bring crowds and their litter.
18. Although I know this show is a staple of the festival, I object on the following accounts: It will be on far too late, particularly in mid-August when schools go back. Sound travels significantly. When they were pile driving for construction past the Links, it could be heard where I was on Iona Street with the windows shut. Furthermore, I know several children with Additional Support Needs who would not cope with the consistent increase in noise... it is not a quiet show! The area cannot handle the traffic/parking needs at the best of times Easter Road from where you turn off to the Links to London road is the most densely populated bit of Edinburgh and Leith Links is one of only a few green spaces. Maybe the Leith theatre?
19. I know that Edinburgh City Council doesn't listen to the communities in these consultations, but I'm hoping Leithers will!
20. As a Leith resident who lives just off Leith Links I don't think/expect that this will negatively affect me too much. My main concern would be the council/event organiser ensuring that there is sufficient provision/emptying of bins for waste and recycling. The major issue I have in the city centre is the amount of rubbish dropped and spread around the areas which see the most footfall, and the bins around the Links are already barely sufficient for the waste that is produced on a normal weekend. Noise-wise, I have been to other places while shows are going on and it hasn't been too loud outside the venue while a show is taking place. The main noise issue would be attendees leaving the venue after the later show as from the timings it seems they would come out at around 11pm, which is quite late for residents who live around the area and have work early the following day (I am normally in bed at 10/10.30pm most weeknights) so anything that can be done to mitigate this should be considered.
21. The Links are surrounded by so many residential properties. With shows not finishing every night until 10:30/10:45pm, I think the LadyBoys / La Clique will create too much noise for us residents. I can appreciate wanting to bring more of the festival to Leith, which brings more people, but I don't think the Links is the right location
22. The last thing Leith Links needs is encouragement of more drinking and potential litter that would come with LadyBoys/Cirque Berserk being there for a month. The Meadows is larger with residential properties much further away from the show arena. This proposal would not be beneficial to this area.
23. Having until recently lived on Links Gardens I can only imagine the detriment to the life of residents of Leith Links if this were to go ahead. It is a residential area full of families with young children. Despite the measuring of dB there will always be noise and bass travel which will affect residents, particularly with performances so frequent and into the evening when young children are going to bed and people trying to relax. Add to this the already stretched car parking, refuse facilities and general cleanliness of the park it just seems like a truly ridiculous suggestion.
24. Area 9 is unsuitable to be used for a month for the LadyBoys. The area is also used by Leith Athletic Football Club although I note on this map no pitches are shown. Has there been a change in the agreement between the council and LAFC for next year? The Links is fine for short term events like the Gala Day, Mela and even a circus as long as the events take no more than a week which allows the grass time to recover. The LadyBoys moved

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from Meadows to Fountainbridge because of complaints from the community about damage to grass and litter. A month on the Links is too long.

25. We already have serious problems with litter and overflowing bins in the Leith Links area and I have absolutely no faith in the Council managing this with a huge increase in visitors. This is on top of increased noise in a residential area.
26. I object to the proposal because most events held on the Links are over in a few days and whilst bringing a degree of disruption are manageable for local people. The long duration of this proposal with the accompanying noise and inconvenience is not in the interests of those who use the Links or live near them.
27. Having lived near the Meadows when this show was on there, I am aware of the huge noise and large crowds associated with the event. I feel that this festival time show is better suited to the Meadows location at the heart of the hubbub, rather than spreading the impact of the festival further to the outskirts of the city in Leith. I value the availability of Leith Links as a relaxing green space during the festival. Currently the Links is a very family-friendly and safe space but I fear that the demographic for this show (adults mainly) would change this. I have concerns about the impact of parking if this event were to come to Leith Links - at present we do not have a lot of 'residents parking' bays as they are not needed but I fear that this event would have a huge negative impact on local residents in surrounding streets. I have concerns about the impact of footfall at Leith Links and the pressure on already busy transport services, particularly given that there is also huge impact with a number of construction projects in the area and with more planned for Leith Walk, beyond Salamander Street and the potential of trams works too. I fear the associated impact in terms of litter and anti-social behaviour.
28. I feel the Links will be left with lots of rubbish lying around, after each show as this is what happened with the circus in the summer. Also the large tent will take up a large chunk of Leith Links, I walk my dog here and I bring my two wee boys here for a play.
29. If the show is two hours plus interval, and the shows are to occur at 20:45, I object on the basis of noise. I live extremely close to Area 9 of the Links and whenever there's a circus or festival with music, I can hear it in my flat. I believe that the organisers would stay within legal limits but those limits are not, in my opinion, stringent enough. I also don't enjoy walking through the Links every day to see all the vehicles and infrastructure required by circuses etc. It's a green park, not a car park.
30. This is public space and on principle I disagree with it being used for private profit. Too much of this goes on in Edinburgh already. I agree with Links used for community or charity events such as Leith Festival Gala Day, Moonwalk, Mela etc. We do make allowances for Festival time but I feel this proposed period of time is too long. One or two weeks would be OK but four weeks is too long. This is a public space and local people should have full access to it. Four weeks could cause damage to the grass that could be long and difficult to recover from, which would also spoil the Links for use by others. Why should one company / event get to monopolise the Links for such a large chunk of the summer? People using other facilities nearby might be inconvenienced. Other events such as childrens' football, and the Mela could be displaced by such a long booking. (This space is already booked by Leith Athletic for football, which starts up in August. The Mela would be too soon after this event, the Links would not have time to recover.) Leith is the most densely populated area in Scotland with relatively poor green space per head of population, and so we need our green space.
31. This represents a precedent that I find disturbing. As a local resident I would be concerned if the Links were to become a busy venue and have numerous tents put up on it.

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The Links is a widely used public space where locals use it for football and cricket. Although the initial plan is for one tent, this sets a precedent and would allow for more tents/venues to become the norm. There is a debate going on in the more traditional "festival" areas about the volume of visitors that come to these events. I do not want to be fighting for space to use Leith Links during the festival period. The licensing of these events would have to be tightly controlled as we could also see this well used and popular local space being taken over for profit at the cost of local residents. For example during events at the bandstand on Princes Street the park was closed and walls were erected so no one could see the park. I also have concerns about the amount of rubbish that could end up being left on the Links. This again would also have to be controlled. Edinburgh Council planning and licensing has little respect for Leith and I object to our public spaces being used for private companies to make a profit.

32. I don't support the use of the Links for the month of August by the Lady Boys (or any other festival show). As a local resident with no green space with our property, we regularly use the park to sit and relax. I wouldn't want to suffer the noise and disruption that would be caused by the large number of festival goers congregating on the Links to attend this show, which I understand has many shows all through the day and night. I feel we would also suffer additional noise with the increased use of the bus stops that are right outside our flat.
33. Noise, litter, parking, traffic, unpleasant view
34. There would be noise, litter, and damage to the Links, though hopefully there would be controls on all these issues.
35. Leith Links is a community space, and I feel that this usage is not in keeping with that goal. The show is definitely adult-orientated, and this would bring it into conflict with the wide range of users of the park.
36. I feel that this will be a major disruption and inconvenience to the local population, monopolising a large part of a public space which is really well used by a variety of local groups and individuals. I am also fearful that this show might bring large and potentially noisy crowds into a predominantly residential area, with attendant issues relating to litter, anti-social behaviour etc. If this was proposed for a few days, then it might be acceptable but the whole month of August is excessive, especially as vast tracts of the city are already given over to the festivals during this time.
37. I object to the proposal.

Comments FOR the proposed use of the Links as a Fringe venue (in August 2019)

1. The Links has been used for various events in the past, and I don't see any reason why it wouldn't be the same now, providing traffic, parking etc. concerns are addressed. If the issue is to do with the nature of the show, I think that really it's the 21st century and we could all perhaps be a bit more relaxed now, couldn't we?
2. It could bring custom to our local pubs and shops. The Ladyboys show is also a good chance to show how Leith embraces LGBT culture.
3. Yes, as others have said, this will bring money to Leith shops, bars & restaurants.
4. I support the proposal

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5. This is a hugely popular event that would bring in a lot of visitors to the area.
6. I support a few large events on Leith Links. It will be good for local businesses and as long as it remains only a few a year, this will not be a huge impact on residents. The Ladyboys show will bring a lot of people and I support it. I do feel that the cricket must not be disturbed so would change my opinion on this if it meant cricket being stooped during August. I live on Claremont Park and my windows overlook the Links.
7. This would be a huge opportunity to show what Leith has to offer - missed opportunity if it's rejected.
8. The proposal may benefit local businesses in relation to the sale of food and drinks prior to and after shows.
9. I believe that this is a good location..... I fully support the arts and believe that this show boosts our city's economy. It's a shame they moved from the Meadows... but i would urge you stop moving the show otherwise people may stop attending, after all it brings our city money.
10. I think this is a great idea. Bringing a well established Festival act to Leith. With Leith Theatre being used this year too it makes sense to bring more big acts into Leith. The Lady Boys are brilliant and I for one would love to see them in Leith. If it doesn't work out then fair enough, but certainly no harm in trying.
11. Great for the local economy. Opens up opportunity for other Leith businesses to become venues with the influx of festival goers.
12. It is a great idea to bring performances down to Leith, since the area should play a more vital role during the festival. The area will become more attractive for tourists and will enhance its gentrification.
13. I think spreading festival events outside the city centre is a positive step. Having the extremely popular and successful Ladyboys of Bangkok show in the Links will encourage more visitors to spend time in Leith and be good for local business, and encourage other local places to host shows as well, bringing the economical benefits across the city.
14. Great for Leith to have more high profile events during the Festival. I'm sure it will be of benefit to local businesses too.
15. I think it's a great idea. Both living are working near the Links I think this will bring in a lot of business to all local businesses; shops, restaurants, bars and hotels. It will help Leith be more included in the festival. The lady boys show is over early enough at night to not disturb local residents.
16. Love the idea of more events here generally but ideally family-friendly ones and not during the festival In August it's already a complete nightmare trying to carry on a normal local residents life in town. Please don't bring the festival madness down here too!
17. Good income into the local businesses - restaurants, bars, shops
18. Local Leith businesses would benefit from increased footfall over August should this go ahead, with a substantial financial gain for them. It would also benefit Edinburgh as a whole by widening the geographic focus of Festival activities, which are disproportionately centred in the south side and centre of Edinburgh. Likely objections such as noise and damage to

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the ground have been successfully dealt with by the company in question on other sensitive sites like the Meadows.

19. I am all for this as I think it will bring people to Leith and give the local businesses a good boost and I would assume that any more the council charges them at least some of it will be used to improve the links. But would definitely need to put stuff in place to ensure the links is not destroyed by the event such as plenty rubbish bins and toilets.