

# LEITH LINKS

## COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### ANNUAL REPORT

2018 / 2019

Another busy year for  
Leith Links Community Council



# Welcome to the Annual Report for 2018/19

We work to make this community a better place through direct action and by acting as a representative voice of the community (to the city council and to other local groups and campaigns). We participate fully and actively in all consultations – record numbers this year, it seems – for example on trams, Open Streets, City Transformation, traffic-free zones around schools, short-term rentals, transient visitor levy, and fireworks to name but a few. 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. You’ll read in the pages below a flavour of our issues and activities. Please get in touch if you have any local issues to discuss.

Many thanks to elected Edinburgh City Councillors – Chas Booth, Adam McVey and Gordon Munro – who support the CC solidly throughout the year. Thanks also to MSP Ben MacPherson, and to our local Community Policing Team.

If you are a local resident, do come along and join us at meetings – held in public on the last Monday of every month (except July and December) at the Leith Community Education Centre, New Kirkgate, 6:30-8:30pm. (Check on the website for updates on place, dates or times.)

Please take part in the October 2019 election, see below.

The Community Council will of course continue to work for you during 2019/20.

*Jim Scanlon*

**Chair**

*Sally Millar*

**Secretary**

## Contacts and Links

## Working Together

	<p>Find us online, sign up for email alerts of new posts; <a href="http://www.LeithLinksCC.org.uk">www.LeithLinksCC.org.uk</a></p>	 <p>Leith Links Community Council is part of the City of Edinburgh’s Community Planning Partnership as a member of the new North East Locality Neighbourhood Network, and the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils.</p> <p>We work closely with the other two Leith Community Councils (Central, and Harbour &amp; Newhaven) and have recently instigated and hosted regular meetings with neighbouring CCs within the NE locality: Portobello, Craigentiny &amp; Meadowbank, Northfield &amp; Willowbrae, Craigmillar.</p> <p>We also work with many other groups, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Councils Together on Trams</li> <li>• Leith Chooses</li> <li>• #Save Leith Walk</li> <li>• Edinburgh Bus Users Group (EBUG)</li> </ul>
	<p>Like us on FaceBook, comment, share; /LeithLinksCC 1053 people like our page.</p>	
	<p>Follow us on Twitter, retweet; @LeithLinks_CC We have 710 followers.</p>	
	<p>Email us: <a href="mailto:contact@LeithLinksCC.org.uk">contact@LeithLinksCC.org.uk</a></p>	

# Members of Leith Links Community Council

12 members of our Community Council were elected in October 2016, and changes have taken place since. Current members are pictured below:



Jim Scanlon  
Chair



John Tibbitt  
Vice Chair



Sally Millar  
Secretary



Gail Clapton (co-opted)  
Treasurer/ LLRA Rep.



Angus Hardie



Michael Traill



Andrew Mackenzie  
Planning & Licensing



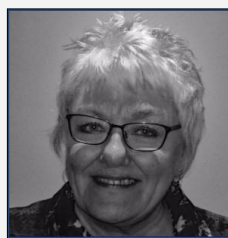
David Igoe  
Parks & Green Spaces



Stephen  
Brennan



Eileen Simpson



Christine Reid

**Jac Rogers** and **Adrian Graham** resigned in the course of the year due to work commitments and health reasons respectively. We thank them sincerely for their hard work for the CC, and wish them well.



In October 2019, all 12 places on the Community Council will be up for election. We are really open to new people coming forward to stand as Community Councillors, to bring fresh perspectives. Especially young people! No special knowledge or experience is needed. Being a Community Councillor is a non-political, and unpaid position. Please get in touch if you are interested.

Please look out for information about the candidates and do please VOTE in the election!

# Planning and Licensing

Commenting on planning applications is a major element of our work. The city council sends out a weekly list of fresh applications and decisions, and we do our best to monitor them. Community Councils are automatically made a statutory consultee on large development applications, and they can request to become a statutory consultee on smaller applications that may have a significant impact on their area. We have done this repeatedly in the past year, notably over a flurry of applications on and just off Constitution Street. We have also commented on a proposed big housing development on Salamander Street. We have attended and advised at early stage 'Proposal of Application' (PAN) events held by developers for further large developments locally, coming up in the future, e.g. Assembly Street.

We engaged actively with the Save Leith Walk campaign sparked by Drum Property's ultimately rejected (but now appealed) application to demolish and develop at Stead's Place/Leith Walk. This is just outside our area, but very large developments of this type affect the whole of Leith, including this area.

We seek to ensure that proper scrutiny is given to new developments, and that they are in line with design guidelines, housing policies, environmental policies, the Leith Conservation Area and the current local plan. The planning process seems to favour developers over community views. We submitted a paper for consideration by the Scottish Government committee processing the new Planning (Scotland) Bill, arguing that the planning appeals process should be amended to give communities a stronger voice.

In the past year, we have engaged with a number of city council consultations with a planning angle, including the City Plan 2030, the council's Common Good Register, and the Edinburgh Partnership's community planning review. We also responded at length to the Edinburgh Licensing Board's consultation on its Statement of Licensing Policy.

As the Trams to Newhaven extension rolls out – with huge implications for our patch & the wider area, this LLCC Planning and Licensing Sub-Committee anticipates another busy year ahead.



# Parks and Green Spaces

Our Parks & Green Spaces Sub-Committee aims to protect and work towards improving the quality of green spaces in our ward; the main one, of course, is Leith Links itself.

## Children's Play Park

City of Edinburgh Council successfully won 'top-up' funding to add to the allocated grant for a playpark upgrade. LLCC helped to promote a consultation for local people to choose the preferred design and equipment. Work on the site has started, and the new playpark should be in use by August 2019.



## John Rattray Statue

Ground has now been prepared for the statue of John Rattray ('godfather of golf'), at the Links Gardens entrance point. 'Dunes' have been created, with marram grass, meant to simulate what the Links would have been like in the 1700s. The statue will be put in place and officially 'unveiled' in late 2019.

## Litter

We regularly contact the council about overflowing & unemptied bins/ communal recycling bins.



At the 2018 Leith Festival Gala, in amongst talking and listening to folks' issues, we gave away badges, biodegradable dog poo bags, we recycled kids' plastic bottles, and persuaded folk to sign up to keeping their street and/or a bit of the Links litter-free.



The amount of inconsiderate littering and fly-tipping in our area, blighting both our streets and our green spaces, remains a major issue.



Community Councillors have as usual been out on litter picks locally during the year with **Leithers Don't Litter** and with the **Restalrig Road and Railway Path** group. We are most grateful for all that these groups do to look after our area.



## Parklife Project

An intriguing new project, by Edinburgh University, will see a new notice-board erected soon on the Links, with an electronic owl on top of it, which will monitor park users to collect data to help inform future planning.

# Trams to Newhaven

The Community Council itself is neither 'for' nor 'against' the trams. Our job is to try and protect and promote the interests of the local community. We joined an informal alliance of four community councils (Leith Central, Leith Links, Leith Harbour and Newhaven and Broughton and New Town), with links also to local Residents' Associations, in order to create a forum within which we could develop a relationship of trust and mutual understanding with the Tram Team, where the concerns of the communities along the tram route could be aired and if possible resolved, and to ensure that our communities were kept informed of developments as they occurred.

Through discussions at monthly meetings, our focus has been on four key areas: *design, local economy, environmental benefits and state of readiness*. It also became apparent that what the Tram Team calls 'supplementary issues' are actually major issues, crucial to the lives of people living along the route. For example, provision for local businesses, solutions for cycles, the siting of bus stops, agreeing routes for diverted traffic, environmental improvements and others. As a result, all of these issues are also regularly re-examined.

The spirit of discussions has generally been positive, but there are many issues that have not yet been satisfactorily resolved. Top of that list is the impact the tram route is going to have on the lives of those who live on Constitution Street, especially the narrow southern section. This is a very challenging ongoing point of discussion.



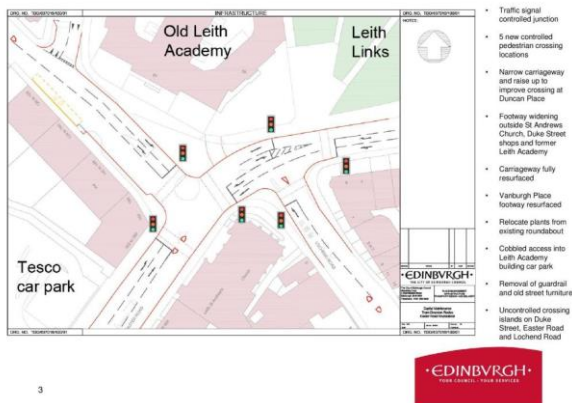
The final decision to proceed has now been taken by the Council, with contractors appointed and work due to start in October, and we will continue to meet with the Tram Team throughout the construction phase so that we can bring to their attention any concerns that you, the community, have, and

hopefully have these resolved. 'Pre-enabling' work is beginning shortly on Constitution Street and yet many issues have not been satisfactorily resolved.

Meanwhile, other parts of the Leith Links area will be directly affected very soon as road re-surfacing is due to start (June 2019), and the roundabout at the foot of Easter Road is scheduled for removal, to be replaced by a traffic lights junction –

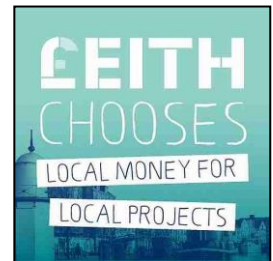
ready for rerouted traffic (including buses) when tram works start on Leith Walk.

Keep abreast of local tram linked developments at [www.leithlinksc.org.uk](http://www.leithlinksc.org.uk)



# £EITH CHOOSES 2018 / 2019

**A Joint Project with the Three Leith Community Councils, and City of Edinburgh Council.**



Last year's participatory budgeting project included a large injection of money that Leith Links Community Council was awarded from Scottish Government's Community Choices Fund. This year, we only won a £3,000 'Support Costs' grant, while City of Edinburgh provided £44,000 (from the Community Grants Fund for Leith) for community projects. Our commitment, for the Support Grant, was to try to remove barriers, and to enhance participation and community engagement, with regard especially to ethnic minority groups within Leith (who often lose out to bigger and longer established groups that can command more votes). We commissioned a local graphic designer to create a new design for all £eith Chooses posters and leaflets (our 'branding') to reflect and emphasise the diversity of Leith. We also produced posters and leaflets translated into a range of the many languages spoken in Leith.

The £eith Chooses process launched in November 2018, with a main focus on 'Addressing Poverty and Inequalities'.

29 valid project applications were received; 8 on the theme of 'Food', and 21 on the theme 'Supporting Vulnerable People'.



The grand Voting Day event was 23 February, 2019. There was no online voting this year, so coming along to vote in person was vital.

There was a piper, face-painting, a free crèche, a 'kids' vote', and delicious free food and drink. A grand community day out!



A record-breaking 1,267 people came in to vote (plus another 200-odd from project groups and volunteers). The buzz was epic!

All the projects were fantastic and worthy of funding, although sadly they cannot all win.... Our innovative 'Boost Vote' scheme worked well, supporting minority ethnic projects to get 'over the line'.



To read more, and find out which local community projects successfully won funding, see [www.leithchooses.net](http://www.leithchooses.net) (hosted and run by LLCC). See also @leithchooses FaceBook and Twitter.

# Seafield Sewage Smells

Our community is STILL regularly affected by unacceptable odour nuisance from the Seafield Waste Water Treatment plant (sewage works). In spite of the recent Strategic Review commissioned by Roseanna Cunningham, Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, and promised improvements, it seems like things have got worse, not better! There have been literally hundreds of smell complaints since this time last year, with a major peak occurring since March 2019, on an almost daily basis.



Scottish Water continues to send out, from time to time, warnings of forthcoming odours, and explanations of causes of odours. But the odours don't stop, so such communications are just frustrating.

It seems clear that whatever the various causes and triggers, often exacerbated by weather conditions (and, arguably, poor work planning by the plant operators), Veolia and Scottish Water are quite unable to control the odours. And the City of Edinburgh Council is unable or unwilling to take legal enforcement steps. Is the plant at Seafield out-of-date, and unfit for purpose?

To add insult to injury, there has been of late a noise nuisance – a continuous high-pitched whine that keeps people awake at night. This is due to technical faults with compressors on the Primary Settlement Tanks, which hopefully will be replaced soon.

LLCC continues to campaign for improvement, alongside Leith Links Residents Association. Local Councillors and our local MSP Ben MacPherson are behind the community and are pressing for new investment.

## Please keep reporting / complaining!

Leith Links Community Council has created a new website-based form that allows people to more easily report nuisance smells, and/or noises. These complaints go direct to Scottish Water and Veolia (who run the plant), and to the Council and to our MSP and Councillors, so nobody can claim that there

**Experiencing a nasty smell  
and / or disturbed by noise from  
Seafield Waste Water Treatment Plant?**

[REPORT IT HERE](#)

One web form sent to City of Edinburgh Council (including local Councillors), Scottish Water, Veolia, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government.

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isn't a problem. The form allows us to count/record complaints and to 'map' where the smells are experienced (a wider area than previously admitted). (Otherwise, phone 0131 608 1100 (then press 5, then 4) in work hours, or 0131 200 2000 out of hours (then press 1). Or email [publichealth@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:publichealth@edinburgh.gov.uk)