

# LEITH LINKS

## COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES

MONDAY 27 JANUARY 2020

6.30pm

LEITH COMMUNITY CENTRE (NEWKIRKGATE)

**Community Councillors Present:** Gail Clapton (Treasurer), Angus Hardie, David Igoe, Tangila Islam, Andrew Mackenzie, Sally Millar (Secretary), Eileen Simpson, Jim Scanlon (Chair), Michael Traill (Engagement Officer).

**In Attendance:** Sara Hawkins (Projekt 42), Steven Blacklaw (CEC), Evie Murray (Crops & Pots), Cllr Chas Booth, Cllr Adam McVey, members of the public.

**Minute Taker:** Kay Goodall.

#### 1. Welcome, Apologies

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Cllr Gordon Munro, Chrissie Reid, Abigail Cunningham, PC Lauren Mitchell.

#### 2. Guest, Steven Blacklaw (CEC)

##### *Mural at Academy Lofts*

Steven explained that contractors accrue 'Community Benefit Points' which can be spent in various ways depending on what the local community needs. He had suggested a mural / pavement artwork on the footway beside Academy Lofts. Steven has discussed this with the contractor, it is agreed in principle and now just waiting to hear back how many points / what total value the contractor will release. There is no 'end of year' rush, or deadline. Pavement art requires no planning permission. (A bigger mural on the wall, which the AL Residents are also keen on following up, would require planning permission and listed building consent; Steven offered to try and assist with this.) Scott Thomson (Parks, CEC) had asked for resurfacing of paths. Meeting asked what other community amenities could potentially be provided through this 'community benefit points' scheme.

**ACTION: For information, Steven will send LLCC a full list of possible uses of Community Benefits Points.**

##### *Easter Rd/Duke St / Lochend Rd junction*

Members of public expressed unhappiness at lack of consultation. Steven explained that the tram team gave very short notice, and there was an urgent need to measure and model the effects of the main traffic diversion from the Leith Walk closure to Easter Road and to propose a redesigned junction to accommodate this. CEC continues to monitor traffic flows.

Members of the public expressed their unhappiness with the results. In particular, there were concerns about safety, with a number of 'near misses' due to driver confusion reported, difficulties for pedestrians crossing the new junction, and the timings of the lights, which Steven accepted do need to be changed: this might reduce rat running along streets such as Burns St. which the public reported as an issue. There are also some painted yellow 'keep clear' boxes still to be added which should be helpful. There was strong concern about the widened pavement/narrowed carriageway

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and sharp turn at Academy Lofts, where buses swinging round are regularly mounting the pavement or swinging out and moving too close to other road users. It is very difficult for buses to turn that sharply. Steven explained that the pavement can't be narrowed there because that would extend the length of the pedestrian crossing beyond the legal maximum of 15metres.

Sally thanked Steven for his efforts in consistently listening and providing helpful information to LLCC. Chair asked members of the public to email LLCC with any further suggestions and concerns.

**ACTION: LLCC will write to CEC to ask for a formal review of the junction. Cllr Booth will support the request for review.**

**ACTION: Steven will contact Lothian Buses re drivers managing the Duke St turn.**

**ACTION: Michael will add a report form to the website for reporting near-miss accidents.**

### ***Cycle hire locations***

The Just Eat cycles team are interested in putting a hire location on the wide pavement outside the Academy Lofts opposite the Nautilus, as it is bright there and less susceptible to vandalism.

**ACTION: Steven will feed back to LLCC when Just Eat has reached a decision.**

### **3. Adoption of Minutes of last meeting on 25 November 2019**

Proposed by Gail; seconded by Michael. Available at <https://leithlinksc.org.uk/>

### **4. Parks and Green Spaces Sub Committee**

#### ***Projekt 42 plans (Guest Speaker Sara Hawkins from Projekt 42)***

Sara outlined the work of Projekt 42, which is of great community benefit, and invited members of the community council to visit. She clarified that P42 does not have a permanent 'home' and summarised Projekt 42's aspiration to move into the Bowling Green area, on the Links. With the help of Brodies solicitors, P42 had secured promise of £1 million funding and other loans, to build a new facility in place of the current degraded eyesore, which needs demolition; however such funds could only be used in a community asset transfer scenario. But the Links is common good land. CEC could not permit a community asset transfer of common good land and/or new building on the Links; this could not take place without primary legislation and a huge community consultation about the best use for the land. P42 was disappointed not even to be offered a long lease (which Crops & Pots had got). Projekt 42 has therefore stepped back from the Links meanwhile and is seeking a new site elsewhere. They are in partnership talks with property developers around Leith (and conceivably beyond). However they still hope, in the longer term to develop the bowling green site. Sara felt that all the various stakeholders on the Links (Leith Athletic, P42, Street Soccer, Skatepark etc. etc.) could and should work together collaboratively, and with the community, to make the best possible use of the spaces, for the benefit of the community rather than competing with each other (e.g. with separate one-off applications).

Councillors present underlined that there are several legal regimes governing building in the park, but they are not saying a flat No to discussions/ wider consultations.

Evie Murray of Crops in Pots (CiP) noted that the Crops in Pots' current planning application (for the old tennis pavilion), if it is successful, is still only one hurdle overcome. The site is still also common good land and is governed by the Confirmation Act 1991, which covers renovation and the provision

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of public conveniences and bandstands, all of these would have to be tackled before CiP could renovate/develop the pavilion. They have a 25 year lease; the building will always belong to the Common Good.

Chair thanked Sara for coming to speak and update everyone on their activities and plans. Contact and information exchange will be maintained. LLCC is supportive of the work of Projekt 42 in the community.

Evie offered to send the CC Planning sub-committee further information that would help it to form its response to the current CiP planning application.

### ***Friends of Leith Links – next steps***

The sub-committee is planning to hold a public meeting to set up a Friends of Leith /Links group, after first researching and also making contact with/meeting with Edinburgh Greenspaces Forum (13<sup>th</sup> February) and representatives from other Friends groups eg Pilrig Park, Figgate Park. The idea would be to attract engagement from a number of stakeholders, ultimately, not just to have LLCC running the group.

### ***Feedback on proposed events in the park***

Via the website, LLCC had consulted locally about several applications to hold events on Leith Links (Tom Kerridge's food event, Gung Ho, and the Ladyboys of Bangkok & La Clique cabaret). LLCC then conveyed to CEC the view that, overall, local residents were opposed. All three applications have since been rejected by CEC and located elsewhere. Lindsay Grant, the Parks Programmes Manager, will come to speak to LLCC in March.

## **5. Planning Sub-committee**

### ***Current planning applications in our area***

LLCC had put in a response objecting to the Latto's Garage/Johns Lane planning application. The sub-committee also met with the Port of Leith Housing Association and with the general manager of the K&S Mir Group to discuss developments in the area.

### ***Sundial, Baltic Street / Constitution Street - planning application***

Application for planning permission will be submitted soon. Sundial has changed the design slightly, partly on the basis of good suggestions made by LLCC and LH&N CC. It is an excellent design for a difficult renovation and Sundial has a good record, but the majority of the site is proposed student housing, which although higher-quality than student blocks elsewhere, detracts from the proposal. The amount of affordable housing proposed is very small. The commercial spaces could provide a few local jobs.

## **6. Licensing Sub-committee**

LLCC will respond to the Wetherspoon's proposal by 31 January deadline. It seems a constructive proposal for a currently derelict area. Noise beyond 10pm may be a concern, though.

## **7. Transport & Traffic**

### ***Tramworks update, and Constitution St***

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The work on Leith Walk and on Melrose Drive is expected to start in March.

The Constitution St. Burns statue has been removed. Residents are being consulted on whether they have any vulnerable cellars or underground spaces.

### **8. Local Democracy, Community Engagement**

#### ***Feedback from EACC***

The first consultation for Edinburgh's City Plan 2030 opens on 31 January and is open for 8 weeks. CEC seeks input specifically on whether high-density housing should be expanded in areas such as Leith and Gorgie that already have amenities, or whether more housing should go to the greenbelt. There may be greater use of compulsory purchase orders to obtain land for housing.

### **9. Seafield Sewage Works**

Chair and Eileen attended another Seafield meeting last week. Announcement was made of an investment of £10million for the plant, by Scottish Water 'to help improve operational resilience and mitigate potential odours at the facility and support the city's growing population'. A meeting in April will set out more details of the plans. Starting point is improvement of sludge storage, starting 2021. Veolia's contract ends in 2029 and Seafield will return to public ownership, operated by Scottish Water. A new sewage works will then be built on the site. The Scottish Government will cover costs thought to be c £100 million. Ben Macpherson, constituency MSP and Chair of the Seafield Stakeholder Group said: *"I very much welcome this £10 million of major investment by Scottish Water to upgrade the Seafield Waste Water Treatment Works and minimise odour issues in the area... "I pay tribute to all of the Stakeholder Group for helping to secure this investment, and particularly the local Community Council and Residents' Association who, along with others including myself, have campaigned for improvements over several years...."Following the recent independent review of the site and surrounding networks, I'm pleased that Scottish Water is implementing the recommendations and that our Stakeholder Group has made a positive impact..."This investment should make a meaningful difference towards addressing the odour issues that occur in Leith, and improve the performance of the Seafield Waste Water Treatment Works for the benefit of Edinburgh as a whole."*

### **10. Any Other Business - Open Forum**

Leith Chooses Voting Day is on 1 February. Volunteer Briefings are on 28 and 30 January.

On 5 February, from 6pm, there will be a Neighbourhood Network drop-in for local people to give views on how funding can be spent.

**11. Date of Next Public Meeting: Monday 24 February 2020, 6.30pm. Shore Room, Leith Community Centre, Newkirkgate.**