

Minutes

MONDAY 27 April 2020, 6:30pm
By Zoom (due to Coronavirus emergency)

Attending: Gail Clapton (Treasurer), Abigail Cunningham, Angus Hardie, David Igoe, Andrew Mackenzie, Sally Millar (Secretary), Jim Scanlon (Chair), Michael Traill (Engagement Officer), Chrissie Reid, Councillor Chas. Booth
Deirdre Brock MP, Visiting Community Councillor from South Queensferry CC.

Minute Taker – Sally Millar

1. Apologies: Councillor Gordon Munro, Councillor Adam McVey

This formal meeting of LLCC was publicized on the LLCC website, and the link made available to anyone who emailed to ask for it. Visiting Community Councillor was interested to learn how including members of the public in a meeting could be best managed. No other members of the public had chosen to attend this meeting.

Engagement Office pointed out that LLCC provides, via website and Social Media, plenty of other opportunities for members of the public to access information and to interact with the CC, which they may prefer to attending meetings.

2. **Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting** (6.04.2020 (March meeting))

Adopted. Proposed: Gail Clapton, Seconded: Michael Traill

Agreed that Secretary will recontact Kay Goodall re her taking up Minuting again, via Zoom.

3. **Planning Matters**

Planning Process: Cllr Chas Booth had enquired on behalf of LLCC re the issue of PANS proceeding without public consultation / engagement with the local community. He had forwarded to LLCC the response, which quoted Scottish Government guidance, stating that there are no provisions in the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 covering the delaying of decision-making in relation to planning, so it goes ahead meanwhile. With respect to controversial applications, CEC is hoping to use ICT to hold the Development Management Sub-committee. Cllr Booth noted that if the Development Management Sub-Committee meets online, the meeting will be webcast so that the public may observe.

It is intended that Neighbour Notification for new planning applications and site notices, will take place by letter. The Chief Planner at the Scottish Government intends to rule that the requirement for holding of public events for Proposal of Application notices (PANs) shall be suspended for the emergency period. Applicants will be expected to replace public with “an alternative, online version so that local people can still be engaged and have an opportunity to have an influence on proposals that affect them.” Scottish Government plans to produce some guidance on expectations and good practice for online engagement

Sally Millar felt these arrangements would cause a real democratic deficit, as many people in local communities do not have access to the technology needed to access online information, or might not find that method of engagement satisfactorily interactive. It is not clear, however what alternatives there may be, other than carefully monitoring the guidance and how it seems to be working, in practice. Michael Traill suggested that the CC ask CEC to provide information about whether a Disability Impact Assessment had been done, on this matter, and what ‘reasonable adjustments’ they may have made.

ACTION: Secretary to write to MSP Ben MacPherson to express concern

ACTION: Secretary to write to request DIA information, from CEC.

Cllr. Booth has raised the matter with Andy Wightman MSP, but he has not yet had time to address it.

Cockburn Association & Civic Forum

Sally Millar proposed that the CC join the Cockburn Association as an ‘organisation’ (£55 pa) which would give us an ‘official’ place on the Civic Forum and access to valuable information & materials. Many other CCs are members.

Angus Hardie seconded. Carried.

ACTION: Secretary will liaise with Treasurer to arrange joining and payment of Cockburn Association.

4. Parks and Greenspaces Matters

There was some discussion about the state of the Links. Most people seem to be observing appropriate social distancing. The Community Croft (Crops in Pots) is delivering some meals to some local people. The Hideout Café is now reopened for takeaway coffee and cakes etc., and talk of Mike English van reopening soon. Businesses do not have to 'ask for permission' but just need to observe all the guidelines properly.

Action: Secretary will write to CEC to find out if watering of the trees in large pots (that came from Leith Walk) is still being maintained. (If not, the tap in the Academy Lofts car park might be used, for locals to water the trees.)

CEC has adopted the John Rattray statue but not the landscaping surrounding it, hence the fencing is still up (for insurance purposes (Georgian Antiques)). Golf Society planned to replant marram grass, but have not been allowed by CEC to access the site due to lockdown.

Events: Secretary has written to Lindsay Grant with request for full information surrounding all applications for events. This does not appear to be a problem (but no applications currently being taken). Secretary is currently revising LLCC Policy on Events on Leith Links, and will circulate draft to members for comments asap. The final version will be sent to Lindsay Grant as answer to his question about; 'what it would take' for the CC to approve an event. It was agreed that 14-16 days is the maximum period LLCC would agree to, for any event on the Links, because of both the safeguarding of the grass, and also the issue of depriving members of the local community access to their park.

ACTION: CC members will feedback comments on Policy Document revisions, Secretary will send to Lindsay Grant

At this point four Community Councillors, and one ex-officio member left the meeting involuntarily, due to a Virgin Media fault (widely reported on national media sources). Initial attempts by those five members to re-join the meeting were unsuccessful but they were able to re-join the meeting around five minutes later. Upon re-joining the meeting it was clear that the meeting had continued during their absence.

A Point of Order was raised, questioning whether it was proper for the meeting to have continued in the circumstances, and asking the Chair to consider how such situations should be addressed in order to ensure Community Councillors actively participating in the meeting are not excluded from the meeting due to temporary technical issues outwith their control. Noting that the Community Council is operating within extraordinary circumstances and that where a significant proportion of elected Community Councillors (nearly half) left unannounced this would be unusual in either a virtual or real world setting, and noting that other areas around accessibility of meetings need to be considered such as ensuring that all Community Councillors are able to access the virtual meetings. It was also suggested that some guidance from Ross Murray be sought.

The chair decided to continue the meeting and to consider possible appropriate procedure /processes.

ACTION: CC will seek advice from Ross Murray of CEC

5. Transport & Traffic

Not discussed by full meeting

6. Seafield Sewage Works

Not discussed by full meeting. Summarised as 'no change' - ongoing complaints and correspondence.

7. Local Democracy, Community Engagement

City Plan 2030– the CC response has now been circulated to Community Councillors, in draft form. All were asked to read it and return comments by Wednesday (29th) morning at the latest, as it has to be in by 30th. LLCC will submit a text document by email and will also complete the consultation survey, using the points made in the full document.

City Mobility Plan – response also required by 30th. There has not been time to study this or to compose a comprehensive response yet. Planning sub-committee will read it and assemble a brief response quickly. Sally Millar had attended a Cockburn Association discussion on this - their feeling is that the 'Plan' is more a list of projects than a truly integrated strategy.

8. Licensing – nothing to report

9. Any Other Business

Cllr Booth informed that glass recycling collections are restarting this week. Garden waste collections still under

discussion. These are very challenging times for City Council as 15-20% of staff are off. Emergency Housing Repairs Dept. is functioning well.

MP Deirdre Brock informed that she and her team are dealing with hundreds of requests for assistance, and CC could direct people in need of help her way. They also have online advice sheets etc. available.

The CC usually has its AGM in May, to present Reports, Accounts and to elect officers. Guidance from CEC allows for postponement of the AGM, due to the current circumstances, and does not allow for online AGMs, so it was agreed to postpone for now. The completion of Annual Accounts and scrutiny of these by accountant will, however, go ahead as normal.

Chair proposed that the CC should continue meeting in this same way throughout the summer, that is, should not have the usual summer break in July. Agreed.

10. Next meeting: 26 May, 6:30 via Zoom