

# MINUTES

MONDAY 29 JUNE 2020

6.30pm  
by ZOOM

**Councillors Present:** Gail Clapton (Treasurer), Abigail Cunningham, Angus Hardie, David Igoe, Andrew Mackenzie, Sally Millar (Secretary), Christine Reid, Jim Scanlon (Chair), Michael Traill (Engagement Officer).

**Elected Representatives:** Cllr Chas Booth, Ben Macpherson MSP, Cllr Adam McVey.

**In Attendance:** Two members of the public, one representing Leith Links Residents Association (LLRA).

**Minute Taker:** Kay Goodall

## 1. Welcome, Apologies

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence received from Gordon Munro, Eileen Simpson. Adam and Chas left during the later part of the meeting because of technical issues.

## 2. Adoption of Minutes of last meeting on Monday 25 May 2020

Proposed by Gail; Clapton, Seconded by Abigail Cunningham. Available at <https://leithlinksc.org.uk/>

## 3. Police report

Police Scotland Community team sent a written report (see Appendix 1 below). Councillors confirmed that they had received and read it.

**ACTION: Secretary will try to clarify what prevents Police from attending online meetings.**

## 4. Seafield Sewage Works

### *Report on recent events*

Chair had circulated a brief summary report prior to meeting. There were 320 odour complaints in June - the highest yet. Of these, 40 were eventually attributed to the waste provider NWH next door. Veolia was quick to contact LLCC to report NWH, and SEPA intervened immediately in the case. This is in stark contrast to the usual response to 'ordinary' Seafield smells – and there were 60 complaints about smells of excrement from Seafield on the same day – when nothing is done. Scottish Water gives general apologies after each event, not explaining how the problems will be prevented or tackled in future, and seems to feel this is enough. The Cabinet Secretary has confirmed support but her letter referred to complaints in March and April, and she is not up to date on the high level of complaints in May and June. Ben Macpherson has organised an online stakeholder meeting for 17 July. He says we should feel proud that we secured the new investment for the plant, but we need to see it delivered. He agreed that the current level of complaints reflects an unacceptable situation.

LLRA considers that Veolia's continual poor performance cannot all be blamed on infrastructure and is seeking an independent inquiry into Veolia's management of Seafield. Ben agreed to discuss this with LLRA before 17<sup>th</sup> July. Ben will also ask Scottish Water (who have new personnel) how they plan to hold Veolia to account in performance of the contract. Michael Traill commented that Scottish Water's communication is poor and that although they are a well funded organisation they rely on the (volunteer) Community Council to collect and disseminate information. LLRA representative felt that Scottish Water is very complacent.

**ACTION: Ben will update the Cabinet Secretary. LLCC will also submit a joint response, via Ben, that he will ensure reaches the Cabinet Secretary.**

CEC receives odour complaints but it is not clear if they are logged properly. It is almost exactly a year since LLCC

launched its web-based community complaint system (April 2019) and there have been 674 complaints since then. Ben Macpherson commended LLCC's work – the web form has been extremely useful and the fact that it logs the postcode of complainers means that a geographic 'smell map' can be developed (thanks to Rob Munn) showing how widely the community is affected. Councillor Chas Booth seconded this as the form dropping into the inbox daily very dramatically underlines for Councillors just how bad this very long-standing situation is. He supported the idea of an independent inquiry. Councillor Adam McVey, who lives within the smell area, agreed that Seafield's performance is not good enough. This is a cross party effort, not a party political matter.

## **5. Transport & Traffic Matters**

### ***Creation of sub-committee?***

Sally Millar proposed that LLCC formally establish a sub-committee on Transport & Traffic. This would incorporate the existing CCTT team who attend monthly meetings with the Trams team. The sub committee need not be fixed and permanent but is needed currently as there are so many changes to roads and traffic heavily impacting this area. The meeting approved this.

### ***Spaces For People***

LLCC has been encouraging people via website and social media to send in individual ideas and comments to the EdinburghSpacesforPeople map and Email [spacesforpeople@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:spacesforpeople@edinburgh.gov.uk)

LLCC held an additional Zoom meeting to continue discussion on the closure of Links Gardens and has drawn up a 'Position Paper'. Meeting agreed the final version and that it should be sent to CEC.

**ACTION: Sally will submit this paper to the elected ward representatives and to Spaces for People**

Michael Traill raised the issue that LLCC was apparently not invited to consult on the newest changes to street changes in Leith, although they will affect our area. The topic had attracted nearly 1000 views within a week on the LLCC website, indicating a high level of interest. Councillor Adam McVey thought that perhaps community councils are only consulted where the streets fall within their area. Agreed that LLCC wishes to be notified/consulted in future. Meeting discussed whether the misinformed newspaper story about street closures should have been placed on the LLCC website so quickly as it added to confusion. Caution is needed as this is the public face of LLCC. On the other hand, it had come from an apparently legitimate source, and it is important to be open and not to 'censor' information. The meeting will have further discussions about Editorial guidelines for the website at the planned extra LLCC meeting in July.

## **6. Parks and Green Spaces Matters**

### ***Rattray statue site***

Secretary wrote to Leith Rules Golf Society who keep promising action 'soon' (to complete the landscaping and bring down the fences). Jim reported that landscaping company Lessell's cut the grass last week and should soon start work on laying the paving stones. LLCC will keep asking about progress.

### ***Report from sub-committee***

#### ***Friends group***

David reported that to progress this, a list of (17) Links stakeholders has been drawn up and a letter drafted to send out, about formation of a Friends Group. This can go to individuals as well as groups.

*Derelict area at bowling greens* – This is the biggest issue to be addressed, and all agree that action is needed urgently. Because this is inalienable common good land, CEC legal opinion is that there can be no long-term lease or sale, which makes it hard for a community groups to secure external funding to allow them to develop the area.

Ben MacPherson noted that David Duke of Street Soccer and Sarah Hawkins of Projekt 42 had contacted him again, as they are potentially working together on a joint proposal.

**ACTION: Abigail will add Street Soccer to the list of stakeholders.**

Several members expressed concern that, although these two local organisations are highly regarded, it would be unwise to show them favour and to exclude others, who might also have good ideas / plans for the space. CEC should invite proposals openly.

Michael suggested that CEC should be asked to carry out some immediate improvements and to provide a schedule of ongoing works, as it seems the area has just been left to rot.

**ACTION: Councillor Chas Booth will request CEC officers for a clean-up, if needed.**

Andrew suggested that possibly a mini Place Brief exercise for the bowling green area is needed.

### ***Damage to the Links***

*Holes:* nothing further has happened to address these, the damage is increasing.

**ACTION: David will contact the Parks Officer about repair.**

*Lack of public toilets:* temporary mobile toilets could be installed in the space created by closure of Links Gardens. The Links needs permanent public toilets, perhaps in the derelict building at the bowling greens.

*Portable BBQs that damage the grass:* At a recent Cockburn Association talk with New York City Parks Commissioner, it was revealed that NYC has permanent BBQ 'stations' (free for all to use) in its parks but bans use of portable BBQs.

Also common in Australia. Good idea for the Links.

## **7. Planning Matters - Report from sub-committee**

Sally submitted a response to the Halmyre Street site Place Brief consultation. This could be put on the LLCC website.

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

*89 Constitution St:* Change-of-use has been granted, but the planning application for 9 flats to which LLCC had objected, was rejected.

*102 Restalrig Rd:* Change of use application. Comments will be sought via LLCC website, and a response sent from LLCC.

### ***Other parts of Leith: Seafield seafront development site(s) and survey***

Sub-committee members have had two Zoom meetings with Portobello and Craighentiny / Meadowbank CCs. The group plans to notify CEC that it would like an input to Place making for this huge site– hopefully a Master Plan. Meeting approved the joint working and the plan to put out a survey to ask for community support for the joint approach and involvement in Place making. Angus stressed the need for speed as sites are already being sold and developers sniffing around the area.

## **8. Any Other Business**

*Engagement Officer:* Michael Traill circulated a quarterly report, see Appendix 2

*Web security:* Investing in enhancing the site and in adding security for collected data will be added to the agenda for July's meeting.

*Remit of Sub-committees:* Meeting agreed to add to the agenda for the July meeting a discussion of the role, remit and autonomy of sub-committees.

*Plans for AGM:* LLCC will comply with CEC requirements, to get the accounts verified asap but will defer AGM meeting until a face to face meeting is possible.

*Duncan Place:* It is not yet clear whether LLCC can/will return there in the future.

**ACTION: Chair will contact Duncan Place to ask about their opening dates, conditions and costs.**

*Leith Chooses:* the LC Steering Group has successfully worked with funded groups to adapt their projects to meet local needs during the pandemic. The Steering Group is keen to deliver Leith Chooses 2021 and will seek community views on adapted methodologies.

## **9. Date of next meeting: Monday 27 July 2020, 6.30pm, by ZOOM**

## APPENDIX 1

### Police Report for Community Council Meeting

Monday 29th June 2020 at 1830 hours

Community Officers: PC Margo Darling / PC Lauren Mitchell / PC Kris O'Donnell

#### Scrambler bikes:

Police Scotland have received numerous complaints regarding scrambler bikes on the Walkway at the Seafeld Crematorium and Lochend Road / Seafeld area.

Operation Orbit (Police Scotland operation that primarily focuses on anti-social behaviour relating to motorbikes) are now assisting with all high visibility patrols on all Leith walkways and neighbours parks. Operation Orbit consists of specially trained officers deployed on scrambler bikes. The Operation Orbit patrol matrix reflects the calls received by the public and Leith Links and the neighbouring walkways have been added.

We would ask the public to call in and report any dangerous riding on 101. Alternatively calls can be made to Crimestoppers anonymously.

#### Urinating in public:

We have also received complaints regards urinating in and around the side streets of the Links. Call volume in respect of this appears to be linked to the good weather and current closure of all public toilets. We will continue to give passing attention as it will clearly remain a problems until premises reopen and there are toilet facilities available.

Regular patrols of the Links will remain in place, especially during the spells of good weather, and fixed penalty tickets will continue to be issued to any person found urinating in a public place.

#### Prostitution:

We will continue to patrol the Links in regards to prostitution.

Local community officers and Prostitution Liaison Officers found an evident decrease in the visibility of women at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic however this appears to have slightly increased during the month of June with the movement of Covid phases.

We are still committed to routing females out of prostitution however our partner agencies remain a phone service only at this point due to the Covid 19 restrictions, that however does not inhibit us from making referrals where appropriate.

Continued uniformed and plain-clothed patrols will continue to address both a welfare and criminal aspect. Members of the public are still encouraged to contact police regarding any sightings of prostitution so that descriptions and vehicles can be passed to Officers for awareness and passing attention. All information passed is fed through a specialist intelligence system that collates and gathers all prostitution related intelligence.

#### Pedal cycles:

Police Scotland have seen a significant increase in the number of stolen pedal cycles city wide. Community Officers have also become aware of an evident increase in the number.

A newly introduced stolen pedal cycle team has been formed at Leith Police Station focusing on enquiries within the Leith area to detect and deter the increase of this activity. This initiative team are focusing on identifying suspects through thorough CCTV enquires and the execution of numerous warrants to recover stolen goods.

Local community Officers have spent a lot of time educating members of the public on bike security (and safeguarding communal stairways / sheds and lockups).

To date around 25 pedal cycles have been recovered with a number of individuals being reporting the Procurator Fiscal. Please advise friends, family and constituents to take extra care with their pedal cycles and ensuring adequate security procedures are in place.

#### Alcohol and anti-social behaviour:

Officers are working alongside numerous licensed premises establishments to ensure safe measures are in place so that social distance guidance is adhered to following the sale of off-sale alcohol.

Regular patrols are conducted alongside engagement with users in order to prevent large congregations nearby establishments.

This is closely monitored by Police Scotland licensing department who conduct regular checks to maintain good working relations with all establishments.

A physical police presence at “hot spot” bars has reduced anti-social behaviour and dispersed large gatherings within the street.

- Routine foot patrols will continue in the links focusing on anti-social behaviour and large crowd gatherings
- Regular patrols of the walkways will continue alongside the assistance of Operation Orbit (as mentioned above)
- Regular plain-clothed and uniformed patrols of the links will continue with a multi-agency approach in safeguarding those involved
- Robust reporting will be continue to be presented to the courts in relation to offenders under the Prostitution Act
- Education and detection of pedal cycle security will continue in order to reduce the number of thefts within the area.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Engagement Officer update (Monday 29 June 2020) Website & social media channels Q1**

The following report is circulated to provide Community Councillors with an update on our website & social media presence.

Our three e-channels are often the only interaction which members of our community have with us, and provide us with a tool which increases our reach beyond those who attend our meetings.

#### **1. Website costs**

Our current website running costs equate to around £112 per annum in terms of hosting costs. We incur additional costs around domain name renewal. So far this year each view of our website has cost us less than £0.01 per view.

It would be desirable to make two additional spends on the website to enhance our web presence;

- 1.1. License for Formidable forms. £80.56 (1 year). This would enhance our current free version which we use for Seafield reports. However, the professional license would increase our capability to both develop the Seafield form/s further and for use elsewhere on the website when gathering views on matters from planning to parks.
- 1.2. SSL. £150 (2 years) This would provide a basic level of security for our website which is important when using it to gather data from our community.

#### **2. Website statistics**

Our website has continued to be popular. For a small Community Council we have very healthy website viewing figures.

Most of our website views are generated following our articles being shared on Facebook or Twitter, either by us or by other people.

- 2.1. Our year to date figure is 23,161 views, compared to 34,956 for the whole of 2019.
- 2.2. The past three months have seen high numbers of views; April – 1,468, May – 3,967 and June – 6,779.
- 2.3. Our busiest day in Q1 was 20 June 2020 with 1,074 views.
- 2.4. Our most view article in Q1 is also our 5<sup>th</sup> most viewed article ever. An article named ‘City of Edinburgh give notice of planned changes to Great Junction Street, Duke Street, Leith Walk and Easter Road as part of Covid-19 response. It got 1,999 views.
- 2.5. In Q1 we published 41 articles on the website; April – 7, May – 13 and June – 21

### 3. Website content

Some work has been done to keep our website up to date over recent weeks. Now out of date information on pages has been removed or updated, some pages have been amalgamated and some new pages have been added.

Our main menu has also been overhauled.

Development work ongoing in this area is;

- 2.6. Categories of article. Reviewing these and their use.
- 2.7. Article tags: Reviewing current tags and their use.
- 2.8. Community Councillor profile pages: Encouraging Community Councillors to provide information about themselves so our community know a bit about who their Community Councillors are.
- 2.9. Homepage layout: Reviewing various magazine layouts rather than the current blog style.
- 2.10. Seafield information: A sub domain has been established [seafield.leithlinksc.org.uk](http://seafield.leithlinksc.org.uk) and a review is needed to see if we need to effectively separate our Seafield articles onto a separate blog, which appears to be part of our main site, so that people can subscribe to our main blog or our Seafield blog.
- 2.11. Guest blog posts: Continuing to explore inviting guest bloggers onto the website.

### 4. Facebook

- a. 1,439 profiles 'like' us.
- b. 1,554 profiles follow us.

### 5. Twitter

- a. 1,016 followers
- b. April 2020;
  - i. 22 tweets made
  - ii. 18.8K impressions
  - iii. 62 mentions
  - iv. 14 new followers
  - v. 263 profile visits

#### 5.3. May 2020;

- 5.3.1. 51 tweets made
- 5.3.2. 49.8K impressions
- 5.3.3. 81 mentions
- 5.3.4. 31 new followers
- 5.3.5. 756 profile visits

#### 5.4. June 2020;

- 5.4.1. 54 tweets made
- 5.4.2. 33.7K impressions
- 5.4.3. 96 mentions
- 5.4.4. 38 new followers
- 5.4.5. 757 profile visits