

LEITH LINKS

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

MONDAY 31 AUGUST 2020, by Zoom

Councillors Present: Gail Clapton, Abigail Cunningham, Angus Hardie, David Igoe, Andrew Mackenzie, Sally Millar (Secretary), Eileen Simpson.

Elected Representatives: Cllr Adam McVey.

In Attendance: one member of the public.

Minute Taker: Kay Goodall.

1. Welcome, Apologies

Acting Chair (Gail Clapton) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Jim Scanlon (Chair), Cllr Chas Booth, Cllr Gordon Munro.

2. Adoption of Minutes of last meeting on Monday 27 July 2020

Proposed by Angus Hardie; seconded by Abigail Cunningham. Available at <https://leithlinksc.org.uk/>

Matters Arising - Meeting agreed to defer discussion of website matters until Michael Traill is able to be present, but voted thanks to Michael for his recent work on the website, in response to changes requested last month. As decided at the July meeting, sub-committees have submitted short reports (attached below as Appendix 1) to update members on their issues, in order to preserve more meeting time for discussion.

3. Reports from Police Scotland, Elected Representatives as available

A short written report was submitted by PC Kris O'Donnell, on behalf of the North East Community Policing Team covering *Traffic, Prostitution, Bike Theft* and *Anti-Social Behaviour* (See Appendix 2 for full report). Discussion – interesting that while Councillors had said in April May that the Police had public safety concerns contributing to the decision to close Links Gardens (although could not say what they were), Police are now saying there are apparently no public safety concerns in relation to Links Gardens reopening (and say that it might alleviate the problems of high volume of traffic and congestion locally).

4. Transport & Traffic Matters

Local traffic congestion & Links Gardens closure

LLCC is receiving many emails from local residents about severe traffic congestion problems, particularly relating to the redesigned Easter Road junction and to the Links Gardens closure. Residents are divided: many support the closure of Links Gardens for use by pedestrians and cyclists, while others are deeply upset by the traffic congestion, delays and blocked routes that beset our area currently. Recent online petitions have garnered hundreds of signatures. Currently some streets (eg. East Hermitage Place / Vanburgh Place) are actually worse for pedestrians and cyclists, rather than better, due to nose-to-tail queuing traffic. Delays to public transport drives more people back

LEITH LINKS

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

to their cars. LLCC is not anti-cyclist and is not demanding immediate reopening of the road, but just requesting a review, as there was no consultation at the time of the closure. It is clear that the problems are not all caused by the closure of Links Gardens, but by a 'perfect storm' of multiple road closures, roadworks and diversions all over Leith, and also by the new junction at the bottom of Easter road which has never worked well. Re-opening Links Gardens is the one thing that could be relatively easily achieved, and might help somewhat, even just temporarily while the Tramworks are at their most disruptive.

CEC policy is to hope for "traffic evaporation" but it is not clear how this can be achieved.

Motion proposed by Sally Millar, Seconded by Gail Clapton

Due to excessive local traffic congestion, with concomitant air pollution and danger to pedestrians and cyclists, Leith Links Community Council proposes that a review is urgently needed of the closure of Links Gardens and of the working of the redesigned junction at the foot of Easter Road . This should be carried out in the context of all the other nearby road closures and diversions affecting traffic across Leith, and should include full consultation with local residents and businesses.

The motion was passed, unanimously.

Cllr McVey noted that the Links Gardens closure, along with early Covid 19 measures on other roads, will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Transport and Environment Committee.

ACTION: Secretary will forward this motion to CEC, asking formally for review of local travel and congestion problems.

Provision of bus services to Holyrood High School

Direct provision has been removed. The 42 bus is overwhelmed with passengers and does not run at the right times. Staggered school closing times means children miss the bus / have a very long wait. Cllr McVey is aware of the issue. He noted that the 'grace and favour' bus and bus passes had been removed but that additional No. 42 services have been added. It is supposed to run at 7.49 am from Duke Street and 3.31 pm from Holyrood. He suggested Holyrood Parent Council also contact Lothian Buses.

ACTION: Cllr McVey will ask Lothian Buses whether double-decker buses could be used.

ACTION: David Igoe will contact the Parent Council

5. Parks and Green Spaces Matters

Damage to the Links

Some holes - but not all - have been filled, unclear by whom – Council or Leith Athletic?

ACTION: David will email Scott Thomson at CEC again about the remaining holes.

Disused bowling green site

The neglect and deterioration of this site continues to attract anti-social behaviour and to cause

LEITH LINKS

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

concern to local residents. Cllr McVey noted that the building is becoming unsafe (may have to be demolished), and that CEC is very keen for the area to be made productive for the public. Projekt 42 and a possible partner are still in discussion with CEC about possible use. Meeting agreed that this is dragging on and that there might be many other groups with good suggestions about use of the whole bowling green area so it should be opened up to tender. There is a need for a clear statement of the legal constraints, so that discussions can be opened up. In the meanwhile, the area needs maintenance.

ACTION: David Igoe to contact Parks Dept. to ask for area to be cleared up.

ACTION: Secretary to contact CEC to ask for clear statement on legal situation.

Friends of Leith Links

LLCC will contact the wide group of stakeholders before the next LLCC meeting, to try and open up discussion and move forward.

6. Seafield Sewage Works

Communication is still an issue. Scottish Water emails LLCC to warn about work taking place, but LLCC carries the burden of the work of sharing this info with the public.

7. Planning Matters

Ropeworks development

The developers will attend the first part of the September LLCC meeting to provide an update on their plans (the site already has planning permission in principle).

Stead's Place PAN (<https://bit.ly/3bRw4ki>)

The Planning subcommittee met with Drum Property online on 18th August, to discuss the revised plans. The new proposals seem to be a significant improvement on the previous ones. For example, the sandstone buildings will be retained, and there will be no student accommodation, and no hotel – all housing in the new buildings. For example, they said:

- 25% SOCIAL (not 'affordable') housing, they are already talking to 2 Housing associations
- 75% will be private renting through a rental operator who ties rents to local levels to ensure local affordability ('real rents for real people').
- They are very aware of policy and community need for 2 and three bed flats not just 1 bed flats.
- They hope/plan to keep Leith Depot. Other businesses can apply- rents will be higher as refurbishment will cost, but hopefully still affordable for local community businesses/ charities.
- Refurbishment can't start immediately but won't be left to the very end either.
- Heights - red sandstone is 2 storeys, existing housing in Steads Place is 4/5 storeys, their highest point will be 6 storeys. The highest will be at the back of the site (going up from 4 at the front).
- Car parking - none (council policy) except a few disabled access spaces will be required.

Ideally they want to submit application within 2020, get permission within 6 months, start building summer 2021 and finish by summer 2022.

Seafield development site

Seafield: Connecting Coastal Communities coalition of 4 local community councils is now meeting

LEITH LINKS

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

regularly with CEC, and also held a meeting with MPs, MSPs, & Councillors who were supportive, seeking to get agreement for a Master Plan for development of the area. Council is proposing a (less effective?) 'Sounding Board' approach. Comprehensive place-making work will require funding, so this is being explored.

8. Licensing

Application from Crops and Pots

Crops in Pots / Leith Community Croft have applied for a Traders Licence for the market on the croft (which has already been running for a few weeks). Meeting noted that permission should be sought in advance /at the appropriate time (rather than retrospectively), but agreed that LLCC has no objection to the Sunday market.

Occasional icecream van on Leith Links

Cllr McVey had emailed Parks Dept. and Licensing, who are investigating.

9. Community Engagement & Local Democracy

Firm guidance from CEC (based on Scottish Government Guidelines) is that face-to-face meetings are not yet appropriate. Community Councils are now permitted to have AGMs online. Meeting agreed to hold the 2020 AGM at the October LLCC meeting.

A paper from EACC is available on the LLCC website <http://www.leithlinksc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CC-practice-under-COVID-19.pdf>

It includes a suggestion that an online element should continue even after face-to-face meetings resume, to increase the accessibility of meetings, to the public. However there are technical and financial barriers put in the way of online communication.

A motion was proposed by Sally Millar, Seconded by Angus Hardie.

Leith Links Community Council believes that in order to achieve a bare minimum of local democracy, Community Councils and members of the community must be able to communicate easily online with elected Councillors and with council officials, and vice versa. But currently Councillors and staff are not allowed to use Zoom, which is the easiest and most widely used platform, while Community Councils can encounter difficulties with MS Teams, since members do not all share the same kind of hardware, OS and software versions etc. We request that CEC immediately support our Community Council by removing barriers and facilitating online communication, including if necessary funding licences, technical support and/or training, as appropriate for our needs.

The motion was carried.

ACTION: Secretary will forward the motion to CEC, asking for support with online communication.

10. AOCB Leith Community Education Centre

This remains closed for the moment except for some crisis and community resilience services.

11. LLCC AGM will take place on 26 October 2020, online.

Date of Next Public Meeting: Monday 28 September 2020, 6.30pm, by ZOOM

*

LEITH LINKS

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

APPENDIX 1

Short Reports from Sub-Committees, August 2020

Planning

- No new planning applications of any note within our ward this past month.
- 89 Constitution St EH6 7AS. LLCC had objected to a revised application (20/00272/FUL) to convert the existing offices at this site into nine new dwelling flats, and the council's Development Management Sub-committee refused to grant it permission (03/06/20). On 30 July, the applicant lodged an appeal against this decision – PPA-230-2314 – and it will now be determined by the Scottish government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA). Watch this space.
- Stead's Place. We held a Zoom meeting with Drum Properties to hear of their revised plans for the Steads Place site, on 18/08/20. An outline of their plans is on their website <https://steads-place.com/> Through questions and discussion, we learned more details.
- Seafield: Connecting Coastal Communities held a Zoom meeting on 13/07/2020 with a range of local MPs, MSPs and Councillors. There is widespread commitment to supporting the idea of a coordinated 'Master Planning approach to the development on the site, rather than 'piecemeal' development. Also a second meeting was held between S: CCC and City of Edinburgh Council and a number of discussions between the 4 Community Councils.

Transport and Traffic

- Email sent to all Leith and Leith Walk councillors and members of the Transport and Environment Committee to ask for a review of the closure of Links Gardens, prompted by the congestion caused by displaced traffic from there and all the many other closed roads in Leith. No reply.
- Email correspondence with CEC's Steven Blacklaw to ask about possible improvements to the junction at Easter road, which is not working well – long traffic tailbacks. He got the timing of the traffic lights changed to longer, so more vehicles can get round into Duke Street each time. This still needs to be evaluated.
- CCTT meeting on 30/07/2020 Minutes will go on our web site shortly. (This link is to LCCC site [Community Councils Together on Trams/Trams Team meeting, 30 July 2020](#) We remind CC members that any queries regarding the trams project could be lodged with AH and/or AM for raising with the tram team at these meetings which typically take place on the last Thursday of the month. Next meeting due on 27/08.

Seafield Sewage Works

Stakeholders Meeting

An online meeting was Chaired by Ben Macpherson with representatives from Scottish Water, Veolia, MPs, SEPA, LLRA, COEC and LLCC. LLCC and LLRA were given time to explain how bad the recent stench has been for local residents especially during lockdown when people were effectively trapped in their homes. We gave them figures of reports and comments made. The responses from the public bodies was really acceptance of what Veolia told them and COEC and SEPA confirmed that no action had been required against the operator. Veolia's community engagement contact said that she'd offered to come to my house but that was to do with the gas smell created by NWH who are situated on an area beside Seafield. I made the point that she was the first person to contact me from Veolia and only to confirm they had reported NWH for their smell. She made no apology for the smell of sewage. Veolia gave us the usual power point pointing out their green credentials and community work. The next meeting which is scheduled for Autumn will be the important one because Scottish Water will tell us how the 'no regrets' funding will be used at the plant.

*

LEITH LINKS

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

APPENDIX 2

Police Report, August 2020

Leith Links Community Council Meeting

Monday 31st August 2020 – 1830 hours

Police Scotland Representatives:

PC O'Donnell – Leith Community Officer (NL27/NL28)

PC Mitchell - Leith Community Officer (NL27/NL28)

PC Darling - Leith Community Officer (Ocean Terminal community officer)

Traffic problems

Police Scotland are aware of the ongoing problems that are being caused by the prolific amount of road works within the Leith area at present.

We are aware that a high volume of traffic and congestion within the surrounding Links area has been caused by the current road closure at Links Garden. There are no highlighted concerns from Police Scotland in relation to public safety for this road re-opening. From a Police Scotland point of view we have no objections to this road re-opening and resuming to normal traffic. This will hopefully alleviate a lot of traffic that is amounting along Vanbrugh Place and Hermitage Place due to the new traffic light system on Duke Street.

Schools are now open around the Links and Officers have been visible when possible during the morning drop off and afternoon collection to reinforce the parking enforcement area (St. Marys mainly). No issues have been detected to date and no tickets have been issued (police issue) for violations (as far as I am aware) since the schools have re-opened.

Prostitution

There is still a problem within the local area for prostitution however Police Scotland are now working closely with other agencies that were previously furloughed who offer support to those involved in street prostitution. This is will hopefully show a decrease in the number of street workers once recovery programs get back up and running. Routine uniformed patrols will continue and a current operation is in place which takes places every weekend (Friday through to Sunday) tackling both the problems arising from street workers and the service users. This operation is specifically utilising unmarked police vehicles and plain-clothed Officers so please be assured we are out tackling and assessing the problem although we may not be as visible and in uniform.

Bike Theft

Operation Curator continues within the Leith area of Edinburgh focusing specifically on bike theft and the reset of the stolen property.

Leith Community Officers will continue to attend the Leith Market on Saturdays where specialised bike marking is being completed.

Anti-social behaviour

Police Scotland noticed an increase in the number of incidents being raised within the Links regarding congregations of youths following the easing of lockdown rules.

Officers will continue to monitor the Links on foot and patrol vehicle and all large groups will be dispersed accordingly.

The re-opening of schools has played a pivotal role in the reductions of anti-social behaviour within public places and we have since seen a reduction in such reported incidents.

Officers will continue to patrol parks and public places in the evenings and on weekends.

Again please be re-assured that our Officers are out there and at times may be utilising unmarked vehicles and plain-clothes.

We look forward to attending in person as and when we can and I apologise for our lack of ability to join in on the zoom call.

Kris O'Donnell, PC 5601E

North-East Community Policing Team, Leith Police Station, 29-35 Queen Charlotte Street

Edinburgh EH6 7EY Tel: 101