

LEITH LINKS

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

MONDAY 25 JANUARY 2021

6.30pm

online, via Microsoft Teams

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

Elected Representatives: Cllr Chas Booth, Cllr Adam McVey, Cllr Gordon Munro.

In attendance: 3 members of the public.

Minute Taker: Kay Goodall.

1. Welcome, Apologies

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received from Deidre Brock MP, Tommy Sheppard MP, Ben MacPherson MSP, Ash Denholm MSP.

2. Adoption of Minutes of last meeting on Monday 30 November 2020

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

3. Reports from Police Scotland and Elected Representatives

Police

PC Elaine McArthur-Kerr introduced herself, having recently joined the community policing team.

Pandemic: the focus is on road safety and anti shoplifting initiatives, bike marking events, working with schools. Housebreaking has not increased. Domestic abuse appears to be on the increase, but no figures available. Bike theft is an ongoing issue.

Beat Hunger Campaign: officers will be liaising with a local foodbank and local chefs as part of a focus on assisting the vulnerable and so, hopefully, reducing crime.

Drug related issues: Elaine is the lead for this and would welcome any questions or contacts. The email for the local Community Policing Team is EdinburghCPTNorthEast@scotland.pnn.police.uk

Elected Representatives

Empty homes: Cllr Booth who is on the Housing Committee, noted that CEC's Empty Homes Officer has made an impact already. This gets people into homes and prevents buildings becoming derelict. CEC regularly uses its power to charge double council tax if an owner is showing no interest in

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returning a property to use. A privately-owned property that has been vacant for 6 months or more can be reported at <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/emptyhomeshelp>. There are separate mechanisms for tackling short term lets: as of April, owners must apply for planning permission for change of use.

Covid in Edinburgh: Cllr McVey noted that positive cases in Edinburgh have been dropping consistently in January. Testing facilities are being rolled out across wards. More children are attending schools and early years education than during the last lockdown, and so many staff are working. There is a need for more accommodation for delivery of services.

For the upcoming Scottish Parliament election, CEC is encouraging postal voting. There will be polling stations but some aspects of voting will be different.

Housing demand: Cllr Munro emphasised that to tackle homelessness, CEC needs to build 10,000 new homes but to do so needs a 63% uplift in financial support from Scottish Government. Edinburgh faces exceptional pressure for homes and there has been a drop in what's available in the private rented sector.

Local democracy: Cllr Munro noted the severe impact resulting from a lack of face-to-face meetings.

4. Parks & Greenspaces matters

Public Spaces Management Plan Consultation

The plan is [here](#) and LLCC's response is [here](#). The consultation was not well designed and does not seem to have been very successful in connecting with citizens. In its response LLCC had stated strongly that it should be mandatory to consult communities before any events can be approved for a community's local park. Further consultation is planned, including with those who travel into the city from outside.

Friends of Leith Links

This is not moving forward quickly as it is difficult to engage with people without being able to meet, during lockdown, also Davide Igoe felt people were tired and stressed. The sub-committee will meet again soon, and the discussion will be advanced by email and social media.

5. Travel & Mobility matters

Spaces for People

The Links Gardens closure, along with all the Spaces for People scheme, will be reviewed to consider making the change permanent: see [item 7.1](#) at Transport & Environment Committee. This area is significantly impacted by the tramworks and problems will increase as the population grows because

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of all the new flats and houses being built. There are concerns about congestion on Hermitage Place, lengthy walks to bus or tram for people with mobility issues, and route clarity for cyclists. There is to be liaison with Leith Primary School on a possible one way system for Duncan Place. Cllr McVey said that ideas for a Low Traffic Neighbourhood covering the whole of Leith were not moving forward quickly. Chair said there must be proper consultation with the local community about road closure and other changes.

Cllr Booth advised that if anyone is commenting, it is important to provide evidence. He was challenged on this – how can we provide evidence as we do not have access to traffic monitoring equipment etc. and the council do not share this information with us? If a road is closed, what ‘evidence’ can we produce of the need to open it? Cllr Booth said even anecdotal individual experiences might be useful.

Gail Clapton stressed the importance of access to public transport, needed by people on the north side of the Links, and the increasing new populations there. Cllr McVey had pressed Lothian Buses about the removal of the No. 12 bus, to no avail. Abigail Cunningham reiterated the fact that there is a cumulative effect on the area of all the various road closures and diversions causing congestion, not necessarily traceable to one single road.

Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ)

The rollout of controlled parking zones is to be phased. Phase 1 will cover Leith Walk and Leith Links to the Shore/ Ocean Terminal and could be implemented in 2022. This has been approved and will go through the TRO process: see [item 7.2](#). Cllr Booth noted that comments on the details are welcome. It was noted that the maps in the draft inaccurately represented some parking bays and will need to be improved. Phase 2 will include the Lochend / Restalrig Road area and a section on Easter Road that borders LLCC and will be put forward in due course.

6. Planning matters

Merith House Hotel

Cllr McVey advised LLCC in December that this is a problem for CEC, given levels of homelessness.

ACTION: Cllr Booth will check the progress of this Change of Use application.

Tower Street/Bath Street

Cllr Booth had opposed this as the ‘Golden Share’ approach is not really ‘affordable’ housing, but unfortunately it did comply with CEC policy and was awarded planning permission. There is a plan to strengthen the policy in future.

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Seafield development

Progress is being made. The Council realises development cannot be piecemeal and is apparently supporting the idea of a masterplan and place brief. Scottish Government may be supportive. However one developer has jumped the gun and submitted a [PAN](#) for tall flats right on the seafront, which will be opposed. The Community Councils will be attending another Sounding Board meeting with developers and council, soon.

7. Community Engagement & Website

A first LLCC 'Newsletter' gone out and has already been widely read. It includes information on Leith Chooses and short term lets, and another will go out in three months' time.

ACTION: Michael will contact members two weeks in advance of the next deadline, for copy.

8. Licensing matters

Short Term Lets Regulation

This is under consideration by MSPs. Councils must have a scheme in place by 2022. Short term lets must be in compliance within a year following that. More detail can be found here: [Licensing Order](#), [Control Area Regulations](#), [BRIA](#) and [Consultation report](#).

9. Open Forum / News & Events in the community / AOCB

Leith Chooses: [Voting](#) opened today. Feedback on the process would be welcome.

Salamander Place: a member of the public commented that the greatly increased traffic is damaging this badly-surfaced road. There is no space for cyclists and it is hard for people with disabilities to cross safely.

ACTION: Cllr Booth will ask traffic officers to carry out a review of traffic in Salamander Place.

Chair thanked all attendees. Meeting ended at 8.20pm.

Date of next public meeting: Monday 1 March 2021, 6:30pm via Microsoft Teams