

Welcome!

Once again we present to our community our Annual Report.

With last year's Annual General Meeting being delayed due to the ongoing global Covid-19 pandemic, our Annual Report this year covers the slightly shorter than usual period from Autumn 2020 to Summer 2021.

Throughout the last year we have kept you all updated with our work by posting information on our website & social media channels, as well as through our monthly public meetings but this Annual Report is an opportunity bring together some of those updates into one easy to access space.

Our Community Council continues to work hard for our local community and we welcome the opportunity to meet with & hear from as many people as possible.

Please do come along to one of our meetings, virtual or in person, over the next year as we are here to represent the views of everyone in our community, not just the those who shout the loudest or come to the most meetings.

Inside this annual report...

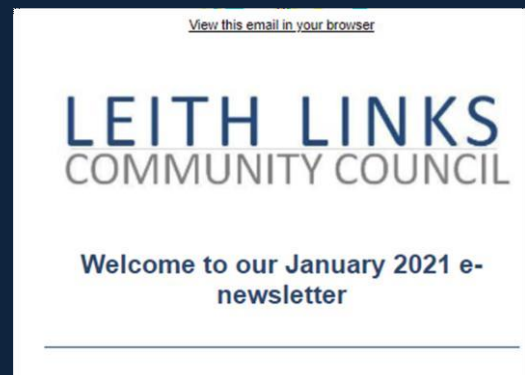
In this year's annual report we have included reports on...

- Chair & Secretary's report
- Travel & Mobility
- Collaboration with other Community Councils
- Our changing membership

- Leith Chooses
- Planning
- Licensing
- Leith Links Plus
- Engagement Officer's report

We'll share our annual report on our website, social media channels and in our quarterly e-newsletter but please do feel share our annual report with your friends, colleague and neighbours if you feel they would be interested.

Sign up to receive our



Around six hundred people have signed up to receive our quarterly e-newsletter straight into their mail.

Sign up today! Each issue contains a link to unsubscribe if you change your mind!

Chairperson & Secretary's Report

The past year has been difficult for us all as we have had to adapt to the changes due to Covid restrictions. Leith Links Community Council last had a face to face meeting in February 2020 but have continued to represent the community successfully, like other organisations by moving to online meetings using Zoom and Teams.

I would like to thank the tech gurus of the Community Council who have organised online connections and promoted our meetings to the public.

We have had very well attended Community Council meetings, consultations and a hustings event for the recent Scottish Parliament elections.

Our attendance figures have exceeded 80 guests and demonstrated that as we start to return to some form of normality in the way we engage with each other we will continue to hold most of our meetings on line. At pre Covid public face to face meetings we might only have seen 10 members of the public coming to join the meeting in the Community Centre.

There's still a need for face to face contact and the Community Council will discuss possibly arranging four meetings a year open to a limited number of the general public in a safe environment. For the moment we can't see this option becoming a reality until later in the year.

We are very lucky to have a great team of Community Councillors who work well together and give up their free time to represent you to the best of their ability on a wide range of issues from parks, greenspaces, travel & mobility, planning issues and the odour issues from Seafield where we had a major breakthrough with short term funding of £10 million to carry out work next year and a promise of massive Scottish Government funding to be invested in a new state of the art sewage works to be built on the same site when the current PPI contract ends in 2030.

Throughout the pandemic we have actually become busier with areas of concern in the community.

Developers have continued to submit plans and hold consultations on line and the City Council rather than slowing down or suspending action has actually moved

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Keep up to date with our work by following us on Twitter where we regularly post community information and updates about our work

ahead with huge changes that will impact on us all, Space for People, Leith Connections, Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, CPZ and don't forget Trams.

On all of these issues and no doubt more we will continue to represent your views and encourage you to respond to consultations.

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Jim Scanlon
MBE
Chairperson



Sally
Millar
Secretary

Travel & Mobility Sub Committee

The Community Council's Travel and Mobility subcommittee monitors transport and traffic matters in our area and includes the interests of pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and drivers, and how residents and businesses are affected.

This has been an overwhelmingly busy year—sometimes it feels like Leith is 'under siege' from numerous radical changes to local road systems, all being introduced within the same time frame. Some of these are temporary, and some are intended to be permanent.

These include:

Tramworks -these cover the whole of Leith Walk and Leith, and in our area affect especially Constitution Street. They are accompanied by numerous road closures, road narrowing, car and bus diversions, cycle lane closure, loss of parking etc. The Community Council participates in monthly CCTT meetings with the Tram Team, to keep track of the process, hear about upcoming work phases, and to signal the concerns of local residents to the Tram Team, trying to obtain solutions.

Controlled Parking Zones – Phase 1 is due to be introduced shortly on Leith Walk and Leith. Preliminary consultation was also opened this year on Phase 2, i.e., further controlled parking zones for the Easter Road area, and the area between Lochend Road and Restalrig Road, including the colonies. The Community Council organised a public meeting, with speakers from the Council, to share information and views. Our local community does not appear to be convinced of the need for parking controls here, but the effect of displaced parking from Leith and Leith Walk has yet to be experienced....

Spaces for People - Covid measures resulted in the closure of Links Gardens, which has afforded welcome additional space for safe exercise and leisure, but has also contributed to congestion elsewhere in the area as traffic is displaced. It appears that our community is quite split over this particular issue, with strong feelings on both sides.

Leith Connections – a new cycle lane from the foot of Leith Walk to Ocean Terminal, involving the closure of Sandport Bridge to traffic.

Low Traffic Neighbourhood – closure of many roads in north Leith, to create a safer and more pleasant environment for walkers and cyclists, but also raising many issues about access, loss of parking, displacement of traffic causing congestion on the main roads around the perimeter of the area. The Community Council is directly engaged with the Council on this, and also urging local people to complete the consultation survey (currently live) and to attend the (online) public meetings, to have their say.

The Community Council holds the view that all these different schemes are not separate, as presented, but in practice interlink and impact on each other. The cumulative impact of all of them at once, upon local residents and businesses, will be considerable. We have suggested a slow-down, so that the schemes are properly integrated together and the effect of one can be understood before pressing ahead with another.

Other significant issues in the area are:

- **The traffic light junction at the foot of Easter Road / Duke Street / Lochend Road / Vanburgh Place**, which has never worked well since replacing the roundabout, and which contributes to increasing severe congestion on all of the roads involved, especially Lochend Road and Vanburgh Place / Hermitage Place / Claremont Park, causing safety and air quality issues, and frustration on the part of drivers (and residents and park users!)
- **The loss of bus services to residents who live east of The Shore, and on the north side of the Links.** The 16 that used to run on Constitution Street is gone due to tramworks, and the 12 which was the only bus serving the residents around Elbe Street / Links Place / Mitchell Street, and Salamander Place (an ever-growing population as the Ropeworks development and other new housing developments take shape) has been removed..

/ Travel & Mobility Sub Committee Continued

The job of the Community Council is to make sure that local residents are fully informed of all these proposed schemes, and that they are encouraged to participate in all the consultations, so that their voices are heard. We also engage with the project teams directly, to raise issues of concern and to try to influence designs.

In addition, the Community Council is represented on a city-wide group called the Edinburgh Bus Users Group (EBUG), whose aim is to protect and promote the use of public transport and to look out for Edinburgh's bus passengers and services. A current area of concern is the number of bus stops that have been removed / closed across the city, mainly due to Spaces for People measures.

Collaboration with neighbouring Community Councils

Aside from frequent liaison with our neighbouring Community Councils on a variety of issues which mainly relate to issues of planning concern, there have been two more formal arrangements that LLCC has helped to establish and have continued to participate in throughout the year.

Community Councils Together on Trams (CCTT)

On a monthly basis prior to and since the decision was taken by CEC to proceed with the tram extension to Newhaven, representatives of the four Community Councils directly affected by the project works - Leith Links, Leith Harbour and Newhaven, Leith Central and New Town and Broughton - have met with the Tram Team senior management to monitor progress, raise issues of local concern about the work and the long term impact of the tram project on our communities. This work will continue through to project completion.

Anyone with concerns about the tram project is

encouraged to contact their Community Council who will undertake to raise the issue with the Tram Team and have it resolved at the appropriate CCTT meeting.

Seafield: Connecting Coastal Communities (Seafield: CCC).

For the past year, there has been a shared endeavour involving the four Community Councils of Craigentenny, Portobello, Leith Links and Leith Harbour and Newhaven to consider the future development of the land that abuts all four areas (although actually within the Craigentenny area), is currently occupied by retail units/car showrooms but is likely to be designated for housing within the new City Plan. Seafield: CCC has been negotiating with City of Edinburgh Council to secure their agreement to co-produce a master plan for the site with our communities as partners. The site is a complex one, not just because there are multiple owners but because projected sea level rises in the area are significant and this will have a major bearing on how much of the site should be developed, going forward.

A changing membership

Since our last Annual General Meeting two members of our Community Council have left our body due to moving out of our area.

Tanglia and Rafiqul Islam joined us at the city wide Community Council elections in 2019. We wish Tanglia and Rafiqul the very best of wishes in their new home..

Please join us in welcoming new Community Councillor **Teresa Perchard** who we co-opted onto our body in May 2021. We would like to thank Teresa for coming forward to join us and we all look forward to working with her over coming years.

Contacting us by email...

It's easy to get in touch with us, simply send us an email

- contact@leithlinksc.org.uk.

Leith Chooses 2020 - 2021

£eith Chooses 2020 - 2021 was not to be stopped by a mere pandemic! As soon as lockdown began in March 2020, the organisers of this annual participatory budgeting event that allocates funding to local community groups, started to plan how the next years event might be managed.

For many years, Leith Links Community Council has played a leading and active role in the Steering Group that plans and runs £eith Chooses, a partnership between the Leith Community Councils, the City of Edinburgh Council, and community groups in Leith.

Moving Online

It was clear early on that the usual face to face community voting day, usually involving about a thousand people, just wasn't going to be a feasible, so we turned to an online-only model. The first stage was to evaluate various possible software platforms. The main problem was that Edinburgh City Council's very tight GDPR regulations meant that registering voters' personal data on an external site was a no-no. We therefore collaborated with officers from the Council's Strategy & Insight team who helpfully adapted their own internal system (the Consultation Hub) – although not designed for this purpose, and not ideal - to handle the voting for £eith Chooses.

We held an open 'community meeting' online in November 2020 to keep in touch with the community: to be transparent and accountable for the changes planned, also to outline what remained the same as last year and to share what would be new this year. We also shared ideas that had been raised in the 2020 feedback survey and, most importantly, offered an open forum space for feedback and discussion. We were very touched by how many groups and individuals from the Leith community attended and gave their support and advice. There was agreement that in these difficult times when so many people were struggling, we were right to choose a project theme that addressed the most urgent needs, that is:

In these Covid times-

- Challenging food poverty in Leith And / or
- Reducing isolation/ ensuring connectedness

The funding available for distribution was £46,102, plus £5,000 kindly donated by Trams to Newhaven community benefits fund. 26 eligible applications were received, each bidding for up to £5,000 each.

Throughout January, a gallery of applicants was hosted on the **£eith Chooses** website, so that voters could compare and contrast projects beforehand – this deliberation stage is an important part of the democratic process. Voting online took place during the last week in January 2021 (3 votes per person, plus an optional 'Boost Vote' for ethnic minority projects) and happily all seemed to run very smoothly.

When 'the count' took place, it turned out that over 3,000 people had participated (2896 valid votes were recorded - some had to be discounted because they were from outside Leith), which is an all-time record. Another well-attended online meeting was held to announce the results and make the awards. 12 local community projects received funding. A new element was designed into the voting, to enhance the democratic process. When voters completed their online voting for **£eith Chooses** projects, an electronic link popped up to encourage people to register on the electoral register. This would ensure that they were able to vote in future elections or referendums.

Everybody said how much they missed the buzz of the face-to-face voting event at the community centre, but we were just relieved that it had been possible to run the event at all. The fact that voter numbers were so high was a fantastic bonus and testament to the fact that community spirit is Leith remained undampened by the challenges of this Covid year.

To read about which local community projects successfully won funding in 2020/21, see <http://www.leithchooses.net/> (hosted and run by LLCC). See also @leithchooses FaceBook and Twitter.

Planning Sub Committee

It's been an odd eight months since our last annual report, including a winter that felt longer than usual due to lockdown, and time has seemed to both flash by and stand still at the same time, with much of society and the economy on hold.

Two reliable activity constants throughout this period, however, have been the ongoing construction works of the tram and the old "Ropeworks" housing site to the north of the Links off Salamander Place.

New Housing

LLCC's planning sub-group has ongoing concerns about the proliferation of substantial new housing projects being built or planned along Salamander Street, and elsewhere in north Leith, and how this will affect local transport functionality and amenity.

For example:

1. 9-14 Salamander Place "Ropeworks" – application ref: 20/04907/FUL

We met with Teague Homes online to ask about their altered proposals for Phase 6 of the wider development, behind the allotments, and expressed dismay at their intention to bump up the originally proposed 38 residential units – comprising colonies and townhouses – to 110 units including a massive six-storey block, with the provision of some 40 car parking spaces.

Teague has since revised this proposal, removing one floor from the building, reducing it to five, and knocking the number of units down to 96. But we still lodged an objection to the application on the council's planning portal, as did many others, and it has yet to be determined.

2. 67 Salamander St to 26 Bath Road

Plans are in the pipeline on this 3.4 acre site – just across the border of our CC patch to the north – for a mixed-use development of 285 apartments in buildings ranging

from three to seven storeys, with the provision of approximately 106 car parking spaces.

We met with the site owner's agent, Ryden, and, along with others, expressed concerns about the plans, submitting critical feedback to their online consultation.

A full planning application has not yet been presented.

3. 1 Rennie's Isle – application ref: 21/00877/PAN

Plans are in the pipeline for a huge multi-storey block of flats on this site – just across the border of our CC patch to the north-west.

Along with many others, we expressed reservations about the proposals in response to the developer's Proposal of Application Notice (PAN).

A full planning application has not yet been submitted.

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Temporary Accommodation

LLCC's planning sub-group also has ongoing concerns about the creeping expansion of temporary accommodation in the area – of which, the city council itself acknowledges, the area already has an overprovision.

For instance:

1. 2-3 Hermitage Place – application ref: 20/03011/FUL

The owners of the Merith House Hotel at this address have applied for a "change of use from hotel to mixed use of hotel and HMO [House in Multiple Occupation] and erection of new 2 storey building on land to the rear of the hotel".

Along with numerous other local residents, we objected to this application. So far as we know, no decision has yet been taken on this case.

/ Planning Sub Committee continued

2. 49 Mitchell St – application ref: 21/00880/FUL

This proposed extension – round the back of the old post office/Drake's Dentist at 57 Constitution St – is for an extra 12 rooms linked to the GPO Cafe & Rooms.

We were one of 14 public commenters who lodged an objection to the application on the council's planning portal.

The case is still awaiting assessment.

3. 89 Constitution St – 20/00272/FUL

The proposed change of use from this former solicitors' office to form nine new dwelling flats was initially refused by the council's DMSC (Development Management sub-committee), after we and others had objected to it.

The applicant appealed to the Scottish Government Reporter, who upheld the applicant's appeal, and overturned the council's decision.

Permission has been granted and we await developments.

* * *

Trams to Newhaven

LLCC's planning sub-group continues to have multiple concerns about how and on what timeline the tram construction project – and the separate matter of when it goes live in 2023 (Q2) – will be integrated with the numerous other city council transport initiatives in the area (Controlled Parking Zones, Spaces for People, Leith Connections/Low Traffic Neighbourhood.)

We responded to the TTN Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and concluded:

"We remain unconvinced that the tram project is sufficiently aligned with the rest of CEC's traffic initiatives and the public realm, and we are concerned that this could result in bad outcomes for our communities. And for this reason LLCC hereby **OBJECTS** to this TRO in its current form, hoping that our concerns will be addressed within an acceptable time-frame."

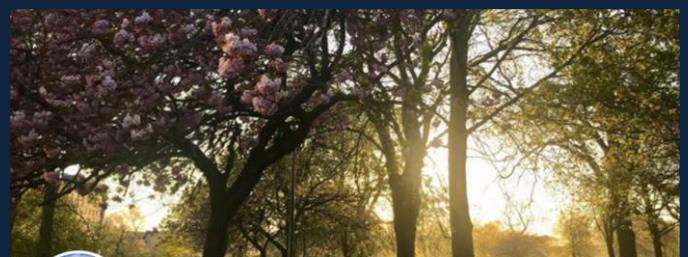
We have set up a dedicated LLCC planning email address and would encourage anyone with planning-related interest or concern to contact us there on planning@leithlinksc.org.uk

Licensing Officers report

Our involvement in Licensing related matters has remained low since our last Annual General Meeting.

We continue to maintain a watching brief on the planned requirement for some types of Short Term Let to required to be licensed but progress on this appears slow, although we are assured work is continuing 'behind the scenes' to make this happen.

Follow us on Facebook



Leith Links Community Council

@LeithLinksCC · Community organisation

Send Message

1,936 people have liked/followed us on our Facebook page.

We regularly post community information as well as Community Council updates.

Engagement Officers Report

Since our last Annual Report we have continued to do as much as we can, keeping in mind that we are volunteers, to engage with our community.

We have continued to make weekly use of our social media streams and ongoing use of our website.

Public meetings have continued via Zoom & Microsoft Teams, both our regular monthly meetings and special meetings on various subjects with our community invited to attend & participate in every single meeting.

Community engagement is something we all take seriously on our Community Council, although I am the nominated Engagement Officer following the role's introduction by the local authority, it would be a backwards step for us to rely on only one Community Councilor to oversee our engagement work.

Website - In 2021 we have had over 16,000 visits already, we continue to publish on our website regularly as a modern & convenient way to update our community with important community information, and provide updates on our work.

Twitter & Facebook - 1967 people currently follow us on Facebook with 1926 people following us on Twitter. Our social media accounts are a really important & easy way for us to quickly communicate with our community, and we do so regularly.

Quarterly E-newsletter - 615 people subscribe to our new quarterly e-newsletter, this is a significant number given that this is a new venture for us. As the world begins to emerge from the liberty restrictions placed upon us due to Covid-19 we will be looking at home we can share printed copies of the e-newsletter around our community.

Virtual meetings - Since our last AGM we have continued to hold regular monthly meetings online using Microsoft Teams and Zoom. We have also held a number of virtual meetings on specific topics which have generated significantly higher turnouts than our traditional in person meetings attracted.

Leith Links Plus

A community conversation on the future of Leith Links

Leith Links Plus

In response to a lack of progress by the City of Edinburgh Council to do anything meaningful with the disused bowling greens & nearby derelict building on Leith Links (next to the tennis courts) we have begun facilitating community dialogue in order to shape a community vision for the site.

Over the past couple of months we have been bringing our community together to discuss short, medium and long term uses for the site, and are in the process of planning a community picnic on the site which will be held on Saturday 17 June 2021. Further details will be posted on our website & social media in due course.



Our virtual public meetings have been well attended with a wide variety of suggested uses being put forward for the site, but the very clear message from our community so far is that the area should remain 'open' to the community, rather than being under the complete control of any one single group or organization..

Our meetings continue, and we continue to liaise with City of Edinburgh Council about the future of the site.

More information can be found on our website at www.leithlinksc.org.uk/leithlinksplus, with further community engagement opportunities advertised as & when they are planned.