

LEITH LINKS

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

MONDAY 31 JANUARY 2022
6.30pm
online, via Microsoft Teams

Councillors and Members Present: Gail Clapton (Treasurer & Vice Chair), Abigail Cunningham, Angus Hardie, David Igoe, Andrew Mackenzie, Sally Millar (Secretary), Teresa Perchard, Jim Scanlon (Chair), Eileen Simpson, Michael Traill (Engagement Officer).

Elected Representatives: Councillor Chas Booth, Councillor Adam McVey, Councillor Gordon Munro

In attendance: PC Allan MacDonald, Police Scotland, Erica Manfroi, Waste & Recycling at City of Edinburgh Council, 4 members of the public.

Minute Taker: Sally Millar (Kay Goodall has resigned due to ill health)

1. Welcome, Apologies

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Deidre Brock MP, Robert Cormack (Leith Rotary), Chrissie Reid.

2. Adoption of Minutes of last meeting on Monday 25 October 2021

Item 7 - Eileen Simpson made a correction that it was the **western** (not eastern) end of Portobello beach (nearest Seafield) that was most polluted.

Minutes Proposed by Gail Clapton; seconded by Michael Traill. Available at <https://leithlinksc.org.uk/>
Matters Arising – Responses from the Community Council had gone in to CEC for (1) Consultation on Events on Parks; (2) Licensing application for Police Box at Restalrig Road edge of the Links; (3) City Plan 2030; (4) PAN consultation for new development on the big Halmyre Street site.

3. Guest Appearance

Tracy Griffen of Griffen Fitness (Leith) opened the meeting with a 5 minute 'Chair Fitness' workout, reminding people of the importance of keeping moving even when busy with online meetings.

4. Report from Police Scotland

A written summary report was circulated before the meeting and a link to this is included below (Appendix 1). The CC was delighted to see a live police officer for the first time in two years, and to welcome PC Allan MacDonald, a new Community Police Officer for our area. Members found it helpful to see 'numbers' e.g. re calls received by the Police, but would also welcome indications as to whether those numbers were 'normal', 'high; or 'low; for the period / topic. It was noted that his report covered

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NL 27 of which only half is in our area. We would also like to have information from NL 28 which is wholly within our area (but this is the area of a different officer). Street prostitutes are still operating in the area of Duncan Place / Johns Place. Police do try to charge men buying sex services, which is an offence, but prefer to try and help women out of sex work, if possible., and signpost them to sources of help (usually for addictions). Police have been educating citizens about 'selfish parking' outside all the area's Primary Schools. They cannot enforce, since parking was decriminalized, unless cars are parked on pavement, white zig zags, or in the flashing light 'School' area. Council enforcers are responsible for other aspects of parking.

ACTION: Members of the Community Council will feed back, via the Chair, about what format they would like to see the Police report in. Chair will pass views on to Police.

5. Roll out of new Bin Hubs programme

Teresa Perchard carried out an extensive and very detailed 'audit' of the state of bins in our area, and presented these, with photos, in a PowerPoint (a link to this is provided below as Appendix 2) which highlighted a high degree of confusion, inconsistencies, incomplete installation, some puzzling locations, safety concerns, a lack of consultation with residents and a complete lack of communication from the Council about what is happening. There are some hubs appearing that are not on the plans. Is there a Master Plan / Map / List and can we see it please? Questions included -

- When will bin hubs in our area be in a finished state?
- Are the Council's improved waste collection frequencies ready for 'day 1' after many bins have been removed ?
- What will happen to on-pavement dumpsters, eg the Elbe Street & also other locations?
- Communal bins on the edge of Leith Links –broken glass on the ground in an area where dogs are walked and children play. Will these be moved? Whose bins are they?
- Monitoring of impact? How? When? Safety Audit?

Council Official Erica Manfroi agreed that matters are currently far from satisfactory. She explained that rolling out of the bin hubs had been delayed due to lack of supply (of new bins) and delivery problems (lack of drivers), and urgent priorities on Leith Walk area due to roadworks etc.. However the rollout here should be taking place in February / March and is expected to take 3-4 weeks. Residents will receive leaflets and there will be stickers and posters and street signage explaining the new system. Hubs should be delineated by painted lines and bins fit within chrome hoops which will keep them corralled tidily. Hubs will normally contain 2 black general waste bins, 2 green mixed

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recycling bins, 1 purple topped glass recycling bin, and 1 food waste bin See <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/bins-recycling/communal-bin-review/2> and - we are told - will be emptied more frequently than at present, so they do not overflow.

CC Members pointed out that these hubs attract fly tipping and that penalties for this are not enforced. Also there are businesses that illegally use residents' communal bins instead of commercial waste disposal. Vandalism and graffiti take place. Erica agreed that there were no effective tools for enforcing in these cases. Problems should be reported asap. Information will be made available about Council bulky uplift service. There is no service for recycling of soft plastic (but Tesco in Duke Street is doing this).

Specific Local concerns

Urgent concern was raised about the proposed hub outside 12-13 Links Gardens which will take up half the width of what is already a very narrow road and a pinch point because of access to St. Mary's School. The current location at the semi circular turning point is satisfactory. Can this new location be paused, pending review? Erica said she would look into this.

The proposed site on Links Place is being moved along from outside the tenements to outside 5-6 Links Place, for no apparent reason.

Teresa asked what 'room for manoeuvre' there will be to negotiate relocation of a hub, if local residents experience problems with the bin hub locations they have had imposed upon them without consultation? The answer appears to be 'very little' unless the location chosen by CEC raises road safety concerns. Residents and the CC should follow up with Erica in such cases.

Erica was thanked for her attendance.

ACTION – Teresa will forward all her information to Erica, and /Teresa and Jim will continue communication and follow up with Council about various issues in our area.

Any local residents with queries or problems regarding bins should contact the CC (contact@leithlinksc.org.uk) and these will be passed on to Teresa who will link with Erica.

6.Parks and Greenspaces – update

Master Plan for Leith Links

Sally Millar reported from a meeting held in December of the Working Group, at which members were shown, and talked through the first draft by Steven Sixsmith (landscape architect) of possible improvements to the Links. These plans, illustrated by visuals showing examples from elsewhere,

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were very positive and inspiring and showed that Steven had really listened to what people were saying, and had lots of good ideas.

Councillor Chas Booth agreed the meeting and the plans seem very positive. The big question is how this can be funded? Improvements affecting nature and the environment may be funded through a grant from the Nature Restoration Fund, but there is no known source of funding for other ideas

ACTION: Chair Jim Scanlon will attend the 'Wider Community Reference Group' meeting on 2nd February when the draft plan will be shown to a large group of Leith Links stakeholders. David Igoe and/ or Sally Millar will attend the next Working Group meeting in February, as matters progress.

Arboretum Chair has written to Ross Woodside of ELGT pointing out that LLCC still has concerns about the ongoing maintenance of the planned arboretum, and the need for clearer and more accountable governance. No answer.

ACTION: To try to get answers, Chair will write to Stephen Cuthill (CEC Parks & Greenspaces) specifically about governance and future maintenance of arboretum. Councillor Chas. Booth will also follow up re future maintenance issues.

Public Toilets - Will there or won't there be public toilets on the Links again spring / summer 2022?

ACTION: Councillor Adam McVey will check the decisions / plans on this issue from recent committee discussions, and will feed back.

ACTION: Chair Jim Scanlon will follow up to see what happened about the Edinburgh University people who had claimed to be doing a survey of park users, recently.

7. Other Updates

Licensing – LLCC had written in support of licence for Tipico traders at the Police Box on Leith Links.

Planning – LLCC had submitted an objection to the revised plans for new development of tiny flats at Johns Lane / Constitution Street (Latto Garage site). The designs are better than they were originally but still unacceptable as the units are so small. This is clearly more like temporary accommodation than permanent residential letting. The DMSC had voted the plans through however as they did not breach any CEC planning policy. Andrew Mackenzie expressed frustration that the Planning Dept. seems to 'wave through' revised applications like this, with no requirement for the developers to consult or pay attention to the views of the community on the new designs.

LLCC had also submitted an objection to an application from the same applicant (Cameron Guest House Group / K& S Mir / Akbar) for 'more rooms' at the proposed 'boutique hotel' at 130 Constitution

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Street. Again, this looks much more like poky and overcrowded accommodation for homeless people than a 'boutique hotel'.

Discussion followed about overprovision of temporary homeless accommodation in the area, and the fact that although CEC recognises the issue of over provision and is not 'guaranteed' to adopt new accommodation such as the above units for homeless accommodation, this applicant may presumably be hoping that the Council will be forced to break its own rules and will adopt it, due to homelessness emergency. The tendering process generally takes place every year (or occasionally more frequently i.e. mid year, in emergencies).

It was noted that a similar planning application for the Merith House Hotel on the other side of the Links had recently succeeded, even though the extra rooms are tiny and have poor access to cooking and social facilities. Unlike some other cities, Edinburgh does not have 'minimum standards' in terms of square footage of floor space for such accommodation, although Councillor McVey pointed out that there are minimum standards in terms of access to facilities such as fridge, cooker etc.

8. Update from Elected Representatives

9. Open Floor

10. AOCB

Hustings – Michael Traill suggested that LLCC should run an online hustings for candidates in the Council Elections in May 2022. Agreed in principle. This could be scheduled for mid / end April.

Face to face meetings – It was agreed that LLCC may go back to having some face to face meetings this year, perhaps the AGM and quarterly, with the rest remaining online.

ACTION – Chair will contact Duncan Place to enquire about use of a room there, and costings, as it is on our patch (Community Centre, still closed, is not).

Date of next public meeting: Monday 28 February 2022, 6:30pm, online

APPENDIX 1

Link here to [report from POLICE SCOTLAND, January 2022](#)

APPENDIX 2

Link here to [Bin Hub Audit, January 2022, by Teresa Perchard of LLCC](#)