

# LEITH LINKS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## MINUTES

**Monday 31 October 2022**

**6:30 pm, online via MS Teams**

**Councillors and Members Present:** Gail Clapton (Treasurer & Vice Chair), Abigail Cunningham, Amy Fairbairn, David Igoe, Sally Millar (Secretary), Teresa Perchard, Jim Scanlon (Chair)

**Elected Representatives:** Councillor Katrina Faccenda

**Minute Taker:** Sally Millar

**Members of the public** –6 (including 2 from Living Rent)

### **1. Welcome, Apologies**

Gail Clapton welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillor Chas Booth, Robert Cormack (Leith Rotary), Andrew Mackenzie, Christine Reid, Eileen Simpson.

### **2. Adoption of Minutes**

Minutes to be amended to show Amy Fairbairn was present at 26<sup>th</sup> September meeting.

Adoption proposed by Teresa Perchard and seconded by David Igoe. Available at <https://leithlinksc.org.uk/>

**3. Police Report** – No report received. Will be circulated if and when one appears.

### **4. Travel and Mobility**

*Controlled Parking Zone, Leith* – No speaker from City of Edinburgh Council. Secretary has emailed three times to request a speaker, and enlisted support from Cllr. Faccenda and McVey, but no response from Council. Secretary asked for the view of the meeting, and it was agreed that this level of communication / community engagement is unacceptably poor.

**ACTION: Secretary will request a speaker for November meeting. Secretary will write to Head of Community Empowerment to complain and request a better system of communication with Council officers.**

*TramWorks* – Andrew Mackenzie and other CC members will do a walkaround our area with Robert Armstrong of the Tram Team on 11 November to identify items that need sorting out. Teresa Perchard has already made a list of issues for pedestrians, mostly unacceptable loss of pavement space, and accessibility issues, which will be added to as more items are identified.

*Local Bus routes* – No further correspondence with Lothian Buses this month. There continues to be a stream of negative comments and complaints about the new bus routes, particularly the lack of access for residents to Great Junction Street and Ferry Road, and reduced level of service (1 x 25 mins). The LB App is not fit for purpose as it is not updated to show route changes. This makes people less likely to use public transport and more likely to use the car. Nobody seems happy with Lothian Buses services in general at present, but it is recognised that they are under enormous strain due to driver shortages etc. plus the traffic situation on Leith Walk / Leith Street is so appalling that

nobody (including bus drivers themselves, quite often), can be sure if / when / and where they will find the bus they want, what route it will take, and if / when it will arrive at destination! Cllr Faccenda feels Leith has been disproportionately impacted and has raised this at Transport & Environment Committee.

*Lighting* –The serious street lighting black out problem at the top of Salamander Place took a worryingly long time to resolve, due to technical issues, and communication with the community over it was very poor, but has finally been successfully resolved. Chair Jim Scanlon thanked Cllr. Faccenda for her invaluable help with this matter. Again, poor communication from council officers contributed to the frustration experienced.

*Living Rent 'Light Up Leith Links' Campaign* – 2 members of Living Rent Leith reported on the campaign action they launched on Sunday 30 October, to consult local park users and raise awareness of the need for better lighting on the Links, which currently some people feel are unsafe, especially in winter. They garnered much support and are collecting signatures on a petition. They are trying to make contact with Council committees. They have created a map showing all the existing lights. Some paths are completely unlit. They have ideas about different kinds of lighting.

Community Council members felt that some pavements and paths also have uneven surfaces that are dangerous in poor light, especially for cyclists. CC has already written to Parks Dept. to ask for trees to be trimmed so that they don't block out lights, which Forestry Dept. will do (when?) However it was pointed out that it is unlikely that the every single path and all of the Links will ever be fully lit, as light pollution is an issue for the environment and for wildlife.

LLCC can use its social media to support the campaign.

## **5. Bins and Street Cleanliness**

Teresa Perchard and Cllr Faccenda had done a 'walkaround' of bin hubs in the area. Teresa had sent a written submission to the committee. Some action was taken to clear up the mess on Burns Street.

The Council is currently running a consultation to get feedback from residents about the new bin hubs, via [Changeworks](#) (not Council Consultation Hub, why?), but the questionnaire does not leave scope to get hubs moved from unsuitable locations.

Teresa made the point that what is needed is more bins inside the park, specifically, one beside each bench. Litter picking work (such as undertaken by the CC last week) demonstrates clearly that benches are litter hot spots.

**ACTION: Teresa will ask Erica Manfroi of Communal Bin Hub Review , Waste &Cleansing Dept. and Sally will ask Scott Thomson Parks Dept. in order to identify who exactly responsible for bins inside parks.**

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

Secretary had received reply from Scott Thomson of Parks Dept. to say that (1) He will ask Forestry division to evaluate the trees as regards blocking the lights, and to undertake any necessary work, and (2) we can't have bulbs to plant at this point, but we should request these next spring as the Council orders bulbs in June.

The path between the RopeWorks and the Links, beside the cricket club is still not lit, but obviously there is going to be a light mounted on the pole there. Signage is needed to warn cyclists on the Links path about the new junction, and to warn pedestrians on the new path to look out for cyclists who may be travelling fast.

**ACTION: Secretary to write to developers and Council about this.**

A litter pick on the Links was held on 22 October, jointly with Duncan Place which has now become a litter 'Hub' with a stock of equipment for loan. A very wet day, but 14 people participated (most through the CC) and a good job was done. Duncan Place are proposing a quarterly litterpick on this basis, so next one in early 2023.

## **7. Planning**

Oddly, Cameron House Guest House Group who own the old Post Office on Constitution Street are apparently not going ahead with development due to an argument about £55K to be paid towards Tram.

Work has started on construction of 10 additional bedrooms at Merith House Hotel, apparently replacing an earlier plan to build an HMO unit with small rooms.

Discussion followed about over-provision of accommodation for temporary homeless people in the Leith Links area, the Council had committed some years ago not to increase this, but continually does so – because of ever-increasing demand. Policy has been reversed and there is no longer any restriction on the % of hotel accommodation to residential. However Policy HOU 8 is still in place<sup>1</sup> (Local Plan) and could perhaps be used to object to planning applications for temporary hotel / hostel accommodation.

**ACTION: Councillor Katrina Faccenda will write to Planning Convenor to draw attention to this Policy and to recommend its use with regard to Leith Links.**

## **8. Seafield Sewage**

Nothing new to add at this point.

## **9. Updates from Elected Representatives**

*The Kirkgate* - Cllr Katrina Faccenda reported that she has met with various representatives (business owners, police, Health & Social Care) to try to work towards some sort of Action Plan for improving the Kirkgate. It is getting even worse than it was before the tramworks. Local people have reported that it is difficult to do their shopping there due to the level of anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Katrina Faccenda has spoken to Regular Music and linking with Parks & the Licensing Depts. Re the proposed concert events in the Links in 2023. She clarified that the proposal of £1 community benefit per ticket would be on top of the fee paid to the Council, and in addition to the Reinstatement Bond.

## **10. Open Floor**

Since Lothian Buses Comms Director suggested this communication route, local Leith resident Don Crichton has written to the local Councillors about dissatisfaction with the bus services locally, copied to LLCC.

## **11. No AOCB**

**12. Date of next public meeting: Monday 28 November 2022, 6:30pm online.**

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<sup>1</sup> **Policy Hou 8 - Inappropriate Uses in Residential Areas** *The intention of the policy is firstly, to preclude the introduction or intensification of non-residential uses incompatible with predominantly residential areas and secondly, to prevent any further deterioration in living conditions in more mixed use areas which nevertheless have important residential functions.*

