

MINUTES/ AGM

MONDAY 27th June 2022

6.30pm

online, via Microsoft Teams

Councillors and Members Present: Jim Scanlon (Chair), Gail Clapton (Treasurer & Vice Chair), Abigail Cunningham, Angus Hardie, David Igoe, Andrew Mackenzie, Sally Millar (Secretary), Eileen Simpson, Christine Reid, Barbara Kerr, Teresa Perchard,

Elected Representatives: Councillor Chas Booth

Members of the Public/ Local Residents: 2

Minute Taker: Mary Gordon

1. Welcome, Apologies

Chair Jim Scanlon welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Robert Cormack, Deidre Brock MP, Ben MacPherson MSP, Cllr Adam McVey, Cllr. Katrina Faccenda (all Ward 13), Cllr. Ian Whyte, Cllr. Joan Griffiths, Cllr. Danny Aston (all Ward 14)

Adoption of Minutes

<https://leithlinksc.org.uk/> Proposed by Abi Cunningham and seconded by Eileen Simpson

Police Report – received in written format and circulated to all members. No PS present at meeting.

2. Guest Speakers from Scottish Water and Veolia, to talk about Seafield Sewage Plant.

Presentation by Tracy Byeford and Ian McMenemy from Veolia and Catherine Henderson from Scottish Water. Presentation Slides to be sent to LLCC.

Background

Seafield is owned by Scottish Water but operated under PFI by Veolia until 2029. It is the largest sewage site in Scotland processing effluent from 850,000 customers both householders and businesses. They currently recycle 99% of waste (but cannot recycle wet wipes, condoms etc.). 90% of the power to run the plant is generated on site thus saving 4559 tonnes of Co2 per year. The remaining sludge is converted into fertiliser using Thermal Hydrolysis.

Odour issues

Between 2018-2020 there was an average of 400 complaints a year but this has dropped to 74 in 2021 and 68 so far in 2022. Every complaint is investigated. Currently there is an issue with dry spells as the sewers solidify then when it rain, the waste arrives at Seafield very malodorous. This year the Thermal

Hydrolysis plant needed maintenance which is an issue for odours. They try to not schedule work during the summer.

Seafield Sludge Improvement Project is a £10 million investment by Scottish Water.

The aim is to make the sewage move quicker, more covered tanks, extract and treat air – all work to be done 2022-2025 and with minimal disruption to community. Also a commitment to promote local business and amenities to any work contractors coming in.

Post 2030, a new facility will be built at Seafield. This will be incorporated into Edinburgh Growth / Development planning.

Communicating with locals

Currently they distribute a Seafield newsletter to households, and send out digitally, they also hold (roughly) quarterly 'Stakeholder' meetings with Community Councillors, MSP, MPs, other stakeholders and regulators. They participated in Leith Gala Day which was highly successful and in Doors Open Days. Feedback is useful as it helps them track issues.

Questions - Jim Scanlon asked the possibility of doing flushing in the system when the sewage is lying in pipes due to lack of rainwater. Unfortunately the network is too large to do this but it can be done in a limited way at junctions.

Eileen Simpson said she was happy that communication with locals had been improved recently but the smell has been terrible (already 68 complaints only half way through the year. Apparently there is 30-50% less rain this year which is making the sewage more concentrated and hence more malodorous when it arrives at Seafield. Veolia emphasised that they are trying to be proactive. They need feedback and info from public. Teresa Perchard suggested a local monitoring group, Veolia agreed that an 'early warning nose' would be useful. Community Council suggested that the first complaints forms from regular early local reporters in smell 'hotspots' (such as Eileen Simpson) could act as such.

A question was asked about how the complaints went to Veolia. Complaints come to Veolia from the regulators City of Edinburgh Council, SEPA and Scottish Water. Jim said that 60 of those complaints came via the Community Council reporting form. The complaints are investigated and outcomes sent back to the regulator. Eileen Simpson asked if the explanation of the odours to the regulators could be promulgated more widely.

A member of the public asked how quickly the complaints arrived at Veolia. Complaints via online form go automatically to Scottish Water, City of Edinburgh Council and SEPA in half an hour during the week but next working day at the weekend. The Seafield newsletter has the numbers to report odours by the phone.

Chair thanked the Veolia Team for their very interesting presentation.

3. Presentation by Una Richards, Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT) about Customs House Leith

The building was designed in 1810 by Robert Reid until 2014 used as a store by the Museum of Scotland. Locals were very keen for it not to be sold for unsuitable development, and in 2014 it was acquired by the City Council via the Common Good Fund. SHBT was given a 5 year lease from 2015 (extended due to Covid). It is currently managed on a 'meantime use' basis, and used as a creative hub.

£4 million is needed for conservation and basic fabric repairs, before any further new development could be undertaken at further extra cost.

After research and consultation, several options were put forward but that preferred by SHBT is 4/4a: "Community Creative Heritage Hub" "Power to the People". See <https://www.shbt.org.uk/our-buildings/custom-house/> p78 This would open up the ends of the building - demolishing some later additions - in order to get ground access without stairs to make building accessible. The building / complex (including Custom House Lane) would aim to provide 'mixed-use community and creative hub allowing the accessible display of heritage artefacts relating to the history of Leith' including Currently the cost for this would be £15 million, and taking into account funds that could be obtained from a variety of sources, through SHBT's fund-raising, there is still a deficit of about £5.9 m It could be done in two phases Custom House first then Custom Lane, but SHBC would prefer to do both together (depending on the funding climate). needs to be sustainable in the long term. The plan is to have a summer of consultations with locals. Then the proposals have to go to CEC Culture and Communities Committee on 16th Aug then after to Finance & Resources some time in Oct/Dec (tbc) Dialogue is to be started with planners / Historic Environment Scotland. The hope is to start work 2025 and open in 2028.

Teresa Perchard brought up the museum element of Custom House. It was agreed ten years ago that there would be a museum space for the Leith museum collections. Una Richards said they haven't got commitment from the Council to pay for a museum as such, but they are trying to design the space so it will be adaptable. Jim Scanlon said he would try and get a list of the items in the Broughton Store relating to the Leith Collections to get an idea of what museum content there could be. Member of the public said that consultations on Custom House must not only be done online as that excludes a lot of people. Angus Hardie asked if the building had been bought out of Common Good Fund - who would run the facility? Una said that only the building purchase was under Common Good and it was envisioned that SHBT would run it but another organisation could take over after the repairs/conversion. Cllr Chas Booth suggested a community owned wind turbine on the site. Chair thanked Una for the very interesting presentation.

4. Planning

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Angus Hardie explained the background: a consortium of community councils is concerned about piecemeal planning in the Seafield area and have been campaigning for a community led Master Plan for the area, in partnership with council officials and in alignment with the City Plan. A 'Memorandum of Understanding' has been drawn up and needs to be signed by all participating parties. This is not a legally binding document but is essential as dealing with commercially sensitive information. The meeting voted to accept and have LLCC 'sign' the MOU. Portobello and Leith Harbour & Newhaven CCs have already signed.

Harbour 31

Jim Scanlon and Jennifer Marlborough from Leith Harbour and Newhaven Community Council attended the Forth Ports meeting in Ocean Terminal. Same architects as ten years ago. Same dull designs. The latest development site is past the Pond (now Bullfinch) pub, opposite the new Film Studio. They were shown a flat plan, no idea of heights or what it will look like. 800 homes with studio spaces on the ground floor. This is due to flooding risk. Again nothing about infrastructure locally.

Teresa Perchard asked if there had been any mention of the Green Ports proposal? Apparently not.

5. Live Consultations

ETRO = Spaces for People online consultation being done by the council.

Leith Links Masterplan - David Igoe reported 366 responses as of date of meeting, with an 80% positive response rate.

Leith Connections Phase 3 - east/west cycle path from Seafield to Lindsay Road

CPZ - Controlled Parking Zone - Jim Scanlon reported the plans are not clear and there seems to be some discrepancies.

Parks & Greenspaces - David Igoe reported that a Mela run by the charity MILAN (not the 'official' Edinburgh Mela team) is scheduled to take place on the Links on 21st Aug 2022 – no publicity available about it, as yet. Gala Day went well.

The Croft is on schedule to finish building works in November 2022

There are concerns about the Arboretum, uncut grass is impeding access, watering, and there are also some damaged tree cages.

Trees in pots at the Academy Lofts end of the park seem to be struggling for water.

6. Report back from Elected Representatives

Cllr. Chas Booth reported that he wrote to Lothian Buses (LB) about the withdrawal of the 22 and other bus issues. It got too difficult to get a meeting date with a large group so in the end he and Cllr. Katrina Faccenda met with LB. LB reports that there has been a drop off in the use of the 22 due to the tram works. They will look at reinstating the 22 when the tramworks finish. There is hope of a service for the north of the Links but again the tramworks need to finish before a service can start. Chas has also been enquiring about the Rainbow Bridge demolition (in LH& N CC) as it's a vital route for pedestrians.

7. AOCB

David Igoe asked about going back to meeting face to face in August. Sally Millar was not keen due to rising numbers of Covid cases. Jim Scanlon was hoping for a hybrid approach - he pointed out that the Community Council has had much better online attendance than when meetings were in the community centre. The meetings would still need to be broadcast. He will enquire about using the Community Centre as their WiFi has been improved. There will be no meeting in July but monitoring of planning applications and other core business will continue behind the scenes. Teresa said that she was delighted to be appointed lead on Bins and will do a walk-around soon. Jim will follow up on Arboretum issues and see about a face-to-face meeting in September at the Community Centre.

Date of next public meeting: Monday 29 August 2022, 6:30pm

Note NO MEETING IN JULY