**Leith Links Community Council**

**MINUTES**

**Monday 27 February 2023 6:30 pm, @ Duncan Place**

**Councillors and Members Present**: Gail Clapton (Treasurer & Vice Chair), Robert Cormack, Abigail Cunningham, Amy Fairbairn, Angus Hardie, David Igoe, Barbara Kerr, Sally Millar (Secretary), Teresa Perchard, Eileen Simpson

**Elected Representatives**: Councillor Chas Booth

**Minute Taker**: Teresa Perchard

Members of the public –3

1. **Welcome and Apologies** – Sally Millar welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Jim Scanlon (Chair); Councillor Katrina Faccenda, Councillor Adam McVey, Deidre Brock MP, Tommy Sheppard MP.

2. **Adoption of Minutes** Adoption of Minutes of January 2023 meeting proposed by Amy Fairbairn and seconded by Teresa Perchard . Available at <https://leithlinkscc.org.uk/>

3. **Guest Speaker: Jim Jarvie from SOS Leith (presentation also circulated, alongside these Minutes)**

Jim Jarvie gave a presentation covering the genesis of SOS Leith to initially campaign to remove the build up of wood and silt in the Water of Leith basin by the Shore. This was occurring because since the creation of the outer sea facing lock to the Docks the basin was no longer tidal and silt built up. In addition there were issues around responsibility for clearing silt. A private company Water of Leith 2000 trust ‘owns’ the basin between Victoria Bridge and Bonnington.

SOS Leith continue to campaign on silt build up issues but is also concerned about the impact that 65 Combined Sewage Outfalls (CSOs) are having on the Water of Leith, particularly in the context of the loss of tidal movement to clear the water in the basin. CSOs result in raw domestic sewage being discharged into watercourses when the drainage system is full, eg in the event of heavy rain (but also in dry weather). The vast amount of new housing locally is putting a huge extra load on the sewage system. Communities in Gullane and Aberlady have similar concerns (outflows into the bird sanctuary). SOS Leith is concerned about Scottish Water – a government owned company – not being transparent about the frequency and nature of discharges and lack of monitoring of evident risks to water users.

SOS Leith works alongside Friends of the Water of Leith Basin (FOWL B) who share similar concerns but approach matters somewhat differently. Discussion following the presentation included whether planning decisions were informed about the capacity of the existing drainage system; who is responsible for silt removal; who should do the monitoring and how. The Group is finding it difficult to land responsibility but continue to call for testing of water quality and information on the incidence of the CSO’s overflowing. They had noticed much debate about this problem in England where the regime for regulating monitoring CSO discharges actually seemed stricter than in Scotland, but little awareness so far in Scotland.

**4. Police Scotland Report**

A report on recent crimes in the Leith Links area had been circulated and was noted. Police officers (PC Lauren Mitchell and Special Constable Emma X?) attended the meeting and reported they had lots of issues recently with traffic around the primary schools and had issued 11 tickets in one day, including discovering someone driving who did not have a licence.

A member asked the Police if they have a view on lighting on Leith Links and whether more lighting would improve safety in the Links after dark. Based on reported incidents, the policed do not think the Links is any less safe than it has been in the past.

The issue of prostitution around the Links was also discussed – the Police do not think this problem is growing (a number of women have actually left the area) and they have good contact with those involved/likely to be involved.

The police will be involved in a community day at Victoria Quay car park on 25 March with other emergency services and encouraged people to attend.

**5. Update from Elected Representatives as available.**

Chas Booth reported that the Council had passed by a majority vote the budget proposed by the Liberal Democrat group, rather than the budget proposed by the Labour group who form the administration. This results in a 5% Council Tax increase and appears to include the possibility of some compulsory redundancies and potential outsourcing and privatisation of Council services. Scottish Green Cllrs had not supported this budget.

The Licensing Board had reviewed the two personal licences relating to the Spey Lounge on Leith Walk – one licence has been surrendered and the review of the other licence has been deferred until the next meeting.

The Transport and Environment Committee is considering final decisions on the introduction of the Leith LTN; Leith Connections from Foot of the Walk to Ocean Terminal, although there would need to be a public hearing to consider elements where there may be redetermination of road space to other purposes. He strongly supported the proposals. It was noted the LLCC had objected to the proposed floating bus stops on the route of Leith Connections.

Members raised concerns about the continuous footways across junctions on Leith Walk and suggested there is a need for more signage and information as pedestrians and drivers are unfamiliar and uncertain how to use these features.

Cllr Booth (on behalf of the Cllrs) was asked to help to get information for the Community Council about the roll out of the CPZ in Leith, as work is due to start in early March and no information has been supplied as yet, in spite of promises since before Christmas of a ‘briefing’, and council officers have been refusing to attend CC meeting, since first invited in October 2022. Some residents have received letters but these do not provide useful information. Chas said he would forward information that Councillors had received. He thought that the website information was not yet up to date with details of the CPZ – including street maps – but would be regularly updated going forward. Police Officers said parking restrictions in Leith Links would make it very difficult for shift workers such as themselves, who could use public transport in the day time, but would have no way to get home at 2am if they can’t park near their work.

6. **Open Floor - Input from local Residents**

A member of the public raised the issue of Leith Walk pavements where there is now a cycle lane within the pavement on both sides, with some pavement areas for pedestrians now very narrow indeed. It was also supposed to be unidirectional but cyclists are going both ways on each side of Leith Walk. She considered this was dangerous, especially for anyone who is visually impaired. A member of the CC commented on the poor surface of the cycle lane. Cllr Booth said he was pushing for correction of the worst bits. Hope was expressed that lessons from Leith Walk would be learned, not repeated on the new plans for Great Junction Street.

7. **Transport & Mobility -** No additional issues were raised on this point.

8. **Parks & Greenspaces**

David Igoe reported the sub-group had met recently and had raised a number of issues with the Parks Officer including the tree on Claremont Place that appears to being undermined by a burrow. The group had asked if the Arboretum could have some signage – which had been proposed originally as part of this project - and had raised the question of why the grass around the new trees is yellow. Lyndsey Grant (CEC) had returned to work after an absence and would like to resume discussion of the Masterplan in March.

*Crocus planting* – SM reminded members that any additional bulbs to fill gaps would need to be ordered in June and arrangements made to plant in October / November.

*Public toilets* – A resident had asked the CC to get Council to remove the misleading signs to the public toilets which had been removed in autumn 2022. Cllrs were asked if toilets would be provided in 2023 and if there was any budget commitment around finding an enduring solution in Leith Links.

SM reminded members about the Proclaimers concerts on in the Links 17th/18th June with the venue open from 4pm to 10pm. The CC will be given a tent with 3 trestle tables that could be allocated to different community groups including Leith Festival. The CC will work out a rota of volunteers to attend across the two days.

9. **Planning Issues -** SM reported the planning group recently had to consider a short term let application concerning one of the flats in the Colonies. As part of the new controls over STLs some situations not involving the owner’s main residence need planning permission for’ change of use’ to commercial use and also a licence to operate. It had been decided to object on the grounds that this is a quiet residential area with people living in very close proximity, and that Colonies in general should be regarded as similar to shared stair situations – which the Council seem to have a presumption against giving planning permission for STLs. She asked if the CC would support this as a general policy going forward. Members asked for further information about the policy proposed by the Council before deciding. **TP undertook to circulate a briefing on the new STL regs..**

10. **Seafield Sewage –** ES reported that there continued to be complaints about odour at Seafield. Next stakeholders meeting is 3rd March.

11. **AOCB –** David Igoe advised that this would be his last meeting as he was moving to Bonnyrigg and therefore resign from the Leith Links Community Council. The CC thanked him for his many contributions to the work of the group and wished him well for the future.

12. **Next meeting: Monday 27 March 2023, 6:30pm**