

# Leith Links Community Council

## MINUTES

Monday 24 April 2023 6:30 pm, online

**LLCC Members Present:** Gail Clapton (Treasurer & Vice Chair), Abigail Cunningham, Amy Fairbairn, Angus Hardie, Andrew Mackenzie, Sally Millar (Secretary), Jim Scanlon, Eileen Simpson

**From Leith Harbour & Newhaven CC** – Douglas Tharby (Chair), Jennifer Marlborough (Secy), Neil Tulloch

**Elected Representatives:** Councillor Chas Booth, Councillor Katrina Faccenda, Councillor Adam McVey

**Minute Taker:** Sally Millar

Members of the public – 35

1. **Welcome and Apologies** – Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillor Adam McVey, Deidre Brock MP, Tommy Sheppard MP, Robert Cormack, Barbara Kerr, Teresa Perchard, Chrissie Reid.

2. **Adoption of Minutes** Adoption of Minutes of March 2023 meeting proposed by Angus Hardie and seconded by Gail Clapton. Available at <https://leithlinksc.org.uk/>

### **3. Guest Speakers: Councillor Scott Arthur, Convenor, Transport & Environment Committee (CEC), and Miles Wilkinson, Senior Project Manager, Active Travel Team.**

Scott Arthur presented the context of the Leith Low Traffic Neighbourhood, i.e. the city-wide policy commitment to reducing carbon emissions, and to sustainability and active travel. The overall aim of the LTN is to make Leith more like the Leith of the past, not dominated by cars, but a space that is easier to move around in safely and comfortably. Better for people and for businesses.

Miles Wilkinson's presentation is attached separately. He gave a very comprehensive overview of the background of the project, the different stages of consultation, and the final designs of the scheme. He clarified that funding for the scheme comes from Scottish Government via Sustrans and other Scottish Government schemes / budgets and not from the City of Edinburgh Council's capital budget (and it could not be used on anything else, eg. on general Council business). Miles encouraged everyone to study the project website and the consultation hub to see the details of feedback. Also suggested everyone should sign up to receive the Leith Connections Project Newsletter.

The hope is that traffic will gradually 'evaporate' in the longer term, although there may be congestion caused by displaced traffic in the short term. In some other cities, there have been objections at first but these have settled down later, in time.

There will be a full monitoring and evaluation process. The eastern part of the scheme (Tolbooth Wynd east to Links Gardens) is part of an experimental traffic regulation order only (ETRO), while other parts of the scheme are already full TRO. So feedback on this area will be very important.

Scott and Miles then answered a number of questions from community councillors and members of the public, eg.

*Consultation responses* – how many responses were there overall (i.e. not just percentages, but actual numbers)? Seems it was about 250 – 300 residents – which actually only represents about 0.02% of the population of Leith Ward (24,620 in 2011, probably more now). And how many of those who responded were drivers? Don't know. Were they truly representative of the local population?

*Boundary Roads* – Most respondents to consultation actually were more concerned about traffic on the boundary roads (Vanburgh Place, Duke Street, Great Junction Street, Salamander / Baltic Street, Bernard Street, Commercial

Street etc.) than they were about traffic on the smaller roads inside the Leith 'triangle'. Surely there will be unacceptable congestion on these due to displaced traffic? And increased air pollution due to vehicles having to make longer roundabout journeys and stand in traffic jams. Scott admitted there might be concerns about the boundary roads.

*Cycle path on Great Junction Street / Henderson Street.* Gordon Carmichael asked about time-scales for this? It is a busy and dangerous junction. Miles is still waiting for decisions on this part of the design.

*Public Realm* – Angus Hardie felt that changes were being made to the public realm without having consulted people about what they'd actually need and like – do these meet known needs / will these really be an improvement?

*Planters?* Initially, there will be an 18 month contract for maintenance of the planters. After that, Earth in Common, Rotary and/or other community groups may take on maintenance of the planters.

*Older and disabled people.* Jennifer Marlborough felt that they will suffer most from having to walk further e.g. to bus stops, and may not be able to park easily or get taxis or lifts to/from their homes. Not enough consideration given to public transport users.

*Local Businesses, Tradespeople and Delivery Drivers.* How many businesses were consulted? Have their situations been adequately catered for? Worry that they will move out / refuse to serve the area.

*Bus Gate on Links Gardens?* This will still be installed, even though there is no bus going to be going through this road at the moment (34 is now staying on the Salamander Place route). There will be no enforcement camera installed at this stage. May be reviewed in future.

*Monitoring* – checks will be made to see if people use Johns Place and Elbe Street as a rat run.

To improve consultation, and community 'ownership' of the scheme, Sally Millar suggested that there should be more ongoing discussion between the project and residents, with regular meetings (like the CCTT for the trams) and the project could use the Community Councils to help share information (because lots of residents still have not really heard of the LTN plans, and feel resentful when they suddenly see routes being blocked off). Cllr Booth said he would want to see a wider group than just the Community Council as he feels the Community Council is negative. Miles said the Community Reference Group that had not met since last summer, would meet again soon.

Chair thanked Scott and Miles for their presentations and for answering questions, and they left the meeting at that point.

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

Chas Booth reported that the bridge at Teuchters Landing is to be refurbished and will re-open. In Planning Committee, 2 more Air BNs have been refused. He was asked why some STL applicants are being approved, and thought there was a 'sliding scale' in terms of the impact on local / neighbour amenity -- this is still a grey area - some will get licensed because they are judged to be in non-residential areas, e.g. in commercial area. But the National Planning Framework 4 does indicate a presumption against all STLs that cause a loss of housing for citizens. Even house shares will have to get a licence.

Cllr Adam McVey said he was working with some 'anchor businesses' locally on issues concerning the CPZ -there have been clusters of 'over-zealous' application of double yellow lines, needing sorting out.

## **8. Parks & Greenspaces**

Events in the park – LLCC has supported application from Leith Rules Golf for their annual golf tournament in early July.

Abi Cunningham reported that while it is great that there have been extra bins put on the Links recently, the residents of Academy Lofts are not happy about the bin placed so close to their wall (at the entrance to the park) that rubbish is 'overflowing' from there into their car park. They are happy with the new cycle rack **Action: ask Teresa to liaise with Parks officer and try to get bin re-located.**

There was discussion about where a few picnic tables should be located – all together, or spread out? They need to be on hard standing as grass cannot be mowed around / amongst them. Reluctance to tarmac an area right in the middle of the park

Artisan coffee van has been seen on the Links a few times, but while it may be popular, it is damaging the grass to have a vehicle towing it on and off the grass each day, and the generator is emitting diesel particulates near to the childrens playpark. LLCC had objected to its application for a licence but that seemed to have got lost, somehow. **Action: LLCC will now object again in the hope of preventing renewal of their licence (which is due to expire soon. Or to explore possible relocation to a more suitable spot, eg on hard standing in the bowling green area.**

There is to be a revamp of the tennis courts on the Links (no details as yet) with funding from the Lawn Tennis Association (driven by Judy Murray?) including introduction of an app for online booking of a court. The aim is to encourage more use of the courts if people can be sure of getting one when they come, instead of having to queue and hang around. This was regarded - cautiously – positively, but it is unclear at present how and by whom the booking system will be administered, and enforced. For example, what would happen if a tennis pro / coach booked up all the booking slots on the courts, keeping out local leisure players?

11. **AOCB –**

12. **Next meeting: Monday 29 May 2023, 6:30pm, after AGM**