

MINUTES

Monday 26 February 2024, 6:30 pm, online

LLCC Members Present: Gail Clapton (Treasurer & Vice Chair), Abigail Cunningham, Amy Fairbairn, Barbara Kerr, Sally Millar (Secretary), Chrissie Reid, Jim Scanlon (Chair),

Councillors: Councillors Chas Booth, Katrina Faccenda

2 members of the public

Minute Taker: Sally Millar

1. **Welcome and Apologies** –Chair welcomed attendees. Apologies were received from Councillor Adam McVey, Deidre Brock MP, Teresa Perchard, Rhona Alcorn. Some people were unable to connect for technical reasons: Eileen Simpson, Allan MacDonald, Police Scotland

2. **Adoption of Minutes** Adoption of Minutes of January 2024 meeting proposed by Gail Clapton and seconded by Abigail Cunningham. Available at <https://leithlinksc.org.uk/>

3. **Police Scotland Report** – Police Report has not been submitted but will follow and be circulated later.

There are still issues affecting residents of Duke Street, see also (4) below. One particular resident has contacted Councillors and the community council as matters on his stair are very bad (drug dealing / taking, drug paraphernalia, human waste etc. He cannot get a secure door system installed because companies need permission from all residents before installing, and some residents / landlords cannot be contacted/will not respond. This case has been taken up by Cllr Katrina Faccenda and by PS Constable Allan MacDonald, hopefully to unblock the stalemate about permissions for installation of a door system.

Future of Leith Police station? No further news on this has been obtained so far.

ACTION: *Chair Jim Scanlon will write to ask Councillors and Police Scotland for a clear statement on this matter to be issued to the Community Council.* (Action carried over from January)

4. **Update from Elected Representatives).**

Councillor Chas Booth – re Council Budget, Scottish Green Party tried to challenge the Scottish Government freeze on council tax, but were outvoted. Licensing Committee has awarded an extra hour of access for children to the Lioness of Leith. Council is processing many applications from STL operators – no applications have been refused, so far., by Licensing. Cllr. Booth is pressing for Licensing and Planning Depts. To talk to each other on this as they seem to be at odds. A consultation is being opened to plan design for refurbishment of the Lindsay Road bridge. SEPA is being pressed for more action on sewage leakage.

Councillor Katrina Faccenda – Is liaising with resident and Police Scotland re problems affecting Duke Street residents. Happy to report that the FLY ‘Summer of Love electronic Music Festival has been refused permission to use the Links in June. Council budget – Labour budget passed will secure money for public toilets in parks including Leith Links. Funding will be available for projects in parks and greenspaces, ‘Scrub Your Street’, and assisted bus services that may benefit some residents in this area. Education cuts will not take place this year. She is unhappy about 7% raise in rents for council house tenants especially considering the very bad state of some of the housing that tenants currently suffer, and she does not agree that it is fair for current tenants to be paying for the new housing that needs to be built. Citadel Youth Centre may benefit from an extra allocation of funding across the third sector. There has been unhappiness about the process of awarding funding - it was flawed (but so was the previous system) and this one was especially criticised for not being transparent. Meanwhile some local fundraising for the Citadel is also taking place. Chair noted that he felt that awarding money to the Jazz and Blues Festival from the Children and Families fund was wrong.

Christmas Tree for Leith, 2024 – Chair has not so far managed to get a response from Davidsons Mains, but will try to pursue the matter there, and with local contacts eg. Leith Rotary.

5. Open Floor

A member of the public raised the issue of rats living in the hedges especially alongside the path by the tennis courts and the Croft, see also below in (6).

6. Parks & Greenspaces – Events in Parks – there will be an open access free of charge music event on Saturday 16th March organised by the Council (11am set up, 12-3 music, take down by 4pm). LLCC initially supported this when it was planned for the bowling green area, but has since been informed that they may change the location, which may require vehicles driving on the grass. Seems very early in the year, weather may not be good – is this a good use of Council funds, since nobody asked for it?

There will be the traditional Gala Day event Saturday 8th June, and a World Orienteering Meet/Event on Friday 12 July.

Public Toilets – These will be installed within a few months. Chair, Vice Chair and Secy had just attended an online meeting about this – council are planning ‘modular toilet blocks’ in 3 parks – Leith Links, Inverleith and the Meadows, and are currently consulting on design and facilities. This is planned to be placed between the tennis courts and the path / cycle route, so that it is easily accessible from the play park area and the park generally. Members noted that (part of) the hedge and fence would have to be removed to allow this access. There is a known issue with rats all along this dense hedge.

ACTION – Cllr Both will take this up with Parks Dept. – hedge has been cut back recently but is only usually cut once a year - is there a plan to deal with the rats?

ACTION - Notes from the Toilets meeting will be circulated and any suggestions on design etc. welcomed.

One member asked if there could be solar panels on the roof – this question will be forwarded to the team.

Litter Pick – LLCC has agreed to partner Duncan Place to mount a litter pick on the Links on Saturday 27th April. Request for volunteers to publicise the litter pick, to attend, and to help with marshalling pickers and clearing up afterwards etc. Noted that Restalrig Railway Path also needs a litter pick – could LLCC find some partners to help with that? - maybe after the summer when the leaves die back, if it’s too short notice to organise it before the summer.

Bulbs – LLCC would like to plant new bulbs in order to fill in some ‘gaps’ and also to line paths where there have never been any bulbs before (eg alongside the cycle route past the tennis courts). Members are using video with audio commentary to try and locate the gaps, now, while the flowers are showing. While the West Links are relatively well planted, there are hardly any bulbs on the East Links, except along the edge by the road.

ACTION – Chair will write to Parks now, to request a stock of crocus (and other?) bulbs in time for planting in the autumn. Chair will also write to Allie Hoadley of Thriving Green Spaces to try to find partners to help with planting, and to source bulb planter tools.

In the past, local schools had helped with planting. Barbara suggested that the Community Payback Team could perhaps be enlisted to help with planting.

ACTION – Secy will try to find out how to connect with Community Payback Team

7. Planning

LLCC is preparing an objection to a planning application for 9 Johns Place to connect through to a property at the rear (Johns Lane), and possible demolition of old warehouse. There is a very muddled situation whereby the owners have put in incomplete applications, some that contradict each other, and relate to past or future other applications etc. LLCC feels there may be an element of ‘playing the system’ going on. This plan could increase the number of rooms available from 13 to 45. Council does not seem to take into account the overall, aggregate effect on the neighbourhood of so many properties being turned into hotels / hostels/ B&Bs / HMOs etc.

ACTION- Cllr Katrina Faccenda is following up with Council Planning officers to discuss and perhaps to meet to try and get them to take an overview and to see the effect of individual planning decisions on the neighbourhood as a whole.

McNair Hotel is also doing extensive internal reorganisation and refurbishment to turn into an ApartHotel. LLCC has not so far seen any Change of Use or Planning applications for this.

ACTION – Councillor Chas Booth will check this out and establish the situation re Planning permission for internal works.

Nobles' stained glass windows – research shows that these were removed in 2012 for cleaning and mending / installation of new frames, but under the terms of their Planning permission, the windows were supposed to be replaced. Nobles did not do so, and Planning never enforced the order. Councillor Booth guessed that Planning would not do anything at this late stage, but in fact this is a criminal offence, in a conservation area, has a huge environmental impact.

ACTION – LLCC will try to follow this up

8. Travel, Transport & Mobility

LLCC survey of LTN / CPZ - Barbara reported well over 300 responses to this so far, a good response rate, with most respondents either inside or on the perimeter of the zones in question. The survey will be closed end of February, with collation of results and report writing to take place in March/April.

Leith Connections are running their own consultation, which closes 8th April.

CC noted that recent emergencies (Lindsay Road closure due to building collapse/ prevention works) and multiple roadworks for cabling, Scottish Water, utilities etc. showed how there is a desperate lack of 'resilience' in Leith roads and traffic management – so many roads are closed off now that there is simply nowhere for traffic to go if any main route is closed for any reason. Several of the roadworks, infuriatingly, seem to have nobody working on them, it seems, over several days. Companies need to be incentivised to do repairs quickly and efficiently and/or penalised for not doing so. Councillors were asked what had happened to the idea of getting utility companies to 'rent a lane' and charging them for every day of roadworks? (No answer).

9. Community Council Boundaries consultation, Community Council Elections

The consultation is entering Phase 2, and we have another chance to present our suggestion of moving the LLCC boundary to match the Ward 13 boundary, i.e. along the Restalrig Railway path, rather than including as it does at present a 'sliver' of Ward 12 Craigentenny/Duddingston.

ACTION – Secy will confer with Chair of Craigentenny CC and seek agreement on this, then draft a proposal to this effect for submission to the review.

As a General Election is expected in May 2024, Council is tentatively expecting to run CC elections in September / October 2024. To be confirmed in due course.

10. AOCB

Bins – Teresa Perchard is in correspondence with new (but temporary) Council rep for Bin Hubs and is pursuing the matter of the location of hubs at Mitchell Street, 2 on Links Gardens and one on Elbe Street. These will be considered as part of the ongoing review of Bin Hubs

There will be an EACC meeting on Thursday 29 February, with presentations by Gavin King (Council, re CC governance consultation); Councillor Mandy Watt (re CEC Budget for 2024/25) and councillor Lewis Younie (re financial planning)

Barbara Kerr mentioned that the Leith Forever group had been given copies of a book called 'Auld Claes and Porridge' about growing up in Leith written by a man who is now in New Zealand. If any one wants a copy, just ask her.

10. Next meeting: Monday 25 March 2024, 6:30pm

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