

LEITH LINKS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES 30/09/24

Monday 30 September, Meeting in person, at Duncan Place

LLCC Members Present: Gail Clapton (Treasurer & Vice Chair), Abigail Cunningham, Amy Fairbairn, Aric Gilinsky, Barbara Kerr (Leith Festival), Andy Mackenzie, Teresa Perchard, Jim Scanlon (Chair), Eileen Simpson.

Apologies received from: Sarah Barnard, Sally Millar (Secretary), Chrissie Reid, Cllr. Katrina Faccenda, Cllr. Chas Booth, Police Scotland

Elected Representatives: 0 **Police Scotland:** 0 **Members of the Public:** 1

Minute Taker: Gail Clapton, Teresa Perchard

1. Chair's Welcome to attendees

2. Adoption of Minutes of August 2024 meeting

Previous Minutes were adopted with minor amendments – at Section 5 p3 to delete 'St James Church' and replace with 'SACRO' and the date given for the next meeting (this one) should be 30 September, not 30 August.

Matters arising and Actions from minutes of 26/8/2024

- a) Aric Gilinsky advised that St James Church had submitted a planning application for CCTV cameras
- b) Teresa Perchard suggested the LLCC should invite a speaker to explain the Green Free Port and this was agreed and she will follow this up. **Action – Teresa Perchard**
- c) The previously noted action point for the LLCC to write to Cllrs about weeds in pavements and gutters in specific streets was done, but should be further progressed. Discussion again re the weeds on pavements and also now leaves. Blocked drains reporting was mentioned– **Action - Jim Scanlon**

3. Police Scotland Report - no officer present, but report submitted and circulated (available via www.leithlinksc.org.uk/) Discussion was held on viability of written reports and agreed that it is always good to have opportunity to speak directly to the officers as this contact is certainly missed when not available. Members would have particularly welcomed the opportunity to discuss concerns about personal safety in and around the New Kirkgate in light of recent incidents in the area, and to understand what action is being taken by Police Scotland and other agencies.

4. Update from Elected Representatives – none present, no reports.

It was noted that the Council is undertaking a consultation on the Visitor Levy which opened on 23 September and will close on 15 December.

Action – all should complete this consultation

5. Open Floor – Issues raised by Local Residents

a) **Weeds** - As noted under matters arising (above) it was again mentioned that weeds are a problem on pavements/streets in general. There was also a discussion about work to upgrade and repair pavements in the area. It was noted that work was about to commence on pavements on Lochend Road for several months, running into 2025. Members asked if it was possible to find out what other such works were planned for the area and if, for example, Duke Street pavements which are extremely broken will ever be repaired.

Action - The Chair will contact Councillors about this with a view to CCs being given advance notice of works

planning in their area and to also raise whether upgrading of roads could also incorporate work on pavements at the same time to minimise disruption. Action – Jim Scanlon

It was suggested LLCC could promote reporting of blocked drains to the Council as part of winter preparedness action – e.g. to publish link to the reporting page of the Council's website.

b) Seafield Waste Water Treatment Works

Eileen Simpson and Jim Scanlon gave an update on Seafield as they had attended a recent stakeholder meeting – a full report has been circulated by email separately. In general, they were disappointed with Scottish Water's approach to engagement with stakeholders and handling of complaints about odour. For example, Scottish Water (SW) had also lost the minutes of the previous stakeholder meeting. Complaints forwarded from LLCC did not get responses, there was no feedback and no indication of any actions taken when reports are sent. There was also no mention of the funding promised previously to upgrade the WTW. The LLCC had seen a high number of complaints in September. Jim Scanlon expressed disappointment that SW was not doing more in relation to feedback from local residents and relied on the LLCC to report concerns to them. It was suggested LLCC put out a brief report on the engagement with SW for the website.

6. Planning Matters

Teresa Perchard reported that no new substantive planning applications had been received.

Recapping on the applications reported to the August meeting:

- a) **18-24 John's Lane** (derelict warehouse proposed to become PBSA) - the decisions on appeals to the Government Reporter on planning and listed building consent had now been issued and both applications were refused. Appeals had been made because the Council had not made decisions within their time limits (non-determination) but Officers had proposed to grant permission. The Reporter physically visited the site (something not done by CEC in the majority of cases). Of note was that the appeals were refused predominantly on the basis of the heritage of the building. From a planning perspective, the Reporter did not object to the proposal for a PBSA development in the location but did not agree with the proposed works to alter the historical features of the building especially the demolition of the wall and the lack of any information on plans to retain and preserve historical features. She was pretty scathing in her response to both the applicant and by implication the Council. This is felt to be a very useful outcome as it could be referenced in future to other applications.
- b) **3 John's Place** – the Reporter's decisions on appeals against refusal to change the use of the building from offices to a hotel, and associated Listed Building Consent – were awaited. [Post Script – the Reporter has allowed the planning application to change the use of the building but refused the Listed Building Consent because of proposals to cover up fireplaces and divide the drawing room which would alter the historical features).

Finally the Council had recently become aware that it was using a number of unlicensed HMOs to house homeless people around the city. There are 30 unlicensed HMOs in Edinburgh some of which are in the LLCC area. Teresa Perchard has undertaken an audit of the known 'guest houses' and 'hotels' that seem to be used by the Council around Leith Links and identified a number which seem to have been in this use as HMOs for some years but have never applied for HMO licences. It is a criminal offence to run unlicensed HMOs and also for the Council not to enforce this – it appears they are facilitating this and are thus potentially complicit. Teresa has reported all those without licences in our area.

Andy Mackenzie provided a brief update on the South Leith Parish Church murals. A new design for one has been selected via ViewArts. No date yet for the installation. Trams will cover the cost but only for a short period, so unclear re funding for future work.

Trams in general were also mentioned as a very long snagging list still exists. Andy suggested another walk through of the parts in our area. The Chair indicated he would like to participate in this too.

7. Parks & Green Spaces – no updates

8. Bins – Teresa Perchard reported on a meeting she attended in September with the Council team, on bin-hubs. Council was seeking feedback on adjusting the current policy on locating bin hubs (eg distances, road crossing etc). Ben MacPherson MSP was briefly in attendance, but none of our ward councillors. There was no clear output from this event and not all of the discussion sessions were completed on the day. There is potential for a change in the current rule of bins not being across roads from housing (which currently prevents bins in Links Gardens and Links Place being moved from outside houses to across road where there are no houses, and this is also possibly good news for Mitchell Street resident if the policy changes. However the Council is very slow and is still just introducing bin hubs to other parts of the city, so new policy changes would likely take a very long time to come into effect in the form of Council staff returning to Leith to re-examine bin hubs where their location is causing a nuisance to residents.

9. Transport & Mobility

Barbara Kerr advised that she and Sally Millar were still working on the survey feedback about Leith Connections. This is the survey on Leith Connections, CPZ etc. Hope to have this finished very soon. The feedback deadline for the public on the ETRO was July. The LLCC would need to feedback to the Council before final decisions are taken. In general survey responses were mixed, although views on the 'bus gate' on Links Place were very strong. Comment was made too about the ground 'mural' at the bottom of John's Place which was intended to be temporary however after only approx. 8 months has severely deteriorated.

Action – to find out when the Council needs any feedback from the LLCC and when final decisions are being taken.

10. AOB

Chair gave feedback on a meeting he and Sally Millar had attended about the Vestas **wind turbine construction** operation. Access to the site would be via Bath Street and around 1000/1200 good jobs should result from this. Local staff recruited to work at the site would be taken to Denmark and linked with a mentor, trained and then return to work here.

Barbara Kerr mentioned that Leith Festival's 'Leith's Got Talent' event is coming up at the end of November, and would appreciate some advertising on this via LLCC web site and socials.

It was agreed that further in-depth discussion would need to be held on the **Proclaimers money**. Barbara had made enquiries with an outdoor art group, and mention was made of possible additional funding from the wind turbine group to progress a possible bandstand option. Community Council elections are now likely to be in February 2025 and this would be good to get this decided before then.

11. Next meeting, Monday 28 October, 6.30pm online via Teams.