

LEITH LINKS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES Monday 25 August 2025, 6:30pm

Duncan Place

Present: Gail Clapton, Abigail Cunningham, Aric Gilinsky, Angus Hardie, Barara Kerr, Aimee McInnes, Andy Mackenzie, Sally Millar, Teresa Perchard, Jim Scanlon, Eileen Simpson

Elected Members: Councillor Chas Booth, Councillor Katrina Faccenda

Apologies: Andrew Ballantine, Avril Ewing

Police Scotland: 0 **Members of the Public:** 3

Chair: Jim Scanlon **Minute Taker:** Sally Millar

1. **Welcome, and Apologies** received as above.
2. **Adoption of Previous Minutes.** Proposed: Gail Clapton, Seconded: Aric Gilinsky,
3. **Visiting Speaker: Matt Farnham, Veolia Community Engagement and Operational Communications Coordinator.**

Starting points of the discussion were that smells have been increasing lately and the community is asking why is communication so poor, and action does not seem to be taken on the many complaints raised by members of the community? Matt explained that Veolia is not contractually obliged to respond to complaints that come in on the forms from LLCC's website, although they see them. They normally do carry out an investigation however. They only communicate with the Council. Council will send a complaint on to Veolia, (but that may take days) and THEN Veolia will send back a report following their investigation to the Council (Environmental Health) and to Scottish Water and SEPA - but nobody then sends that on to LLCC / the original complainant, so we never receive any feedback on our complaints. Matt agreed that this is unsatisfactory. The complaints process is convoluted, nobody is in charge or takes responsibility, nobody responds to the person making a complaint.

Some members of the community have been told (by Edward White) to phone the Council not use LLCC form, but Matt disagrees and advises use of the form. If we phone the council they will send someone out to evaluate the smell - but this may be many hours or days after the event, so pointless.

ACTION – Cllr. Katrina Faccenda will try asking Council officers to share the Veolia investigation report with LLCC / the community.

Matt agrees that community complaints are justified. (Having said that, with one or two recent complaints, the smell has been found to come from other sources e.g. scrap metal site on Marine Esplanade.) Smells are increasing due to long spells of hot dry weather, slow moving sewage arrives at inlet sites at Seafield already septic, all Veolia can do is to 'dose' with chemicals, which they have done on 61 days since May 2025. £350,000 has been spent on dosing, which has become more or less routine, and they have added an extra new dosing point (at inlet site) – this is 'their money' not taxpayers' money.

Matt was asked about the new money promised by Scottish Government for improvements. He is not personally involved in that project but understands that there will be a planning application submitted soon for new works to be carried out in 2026, 2027. Veolia will hand back the plant to Scottish Water and will not be involved at all after 2029. Some conversations about that are beginning. LLCC needs to press for transparency.

What can be done to improve things now? Suggested that if 'big business' were involved, Veolia and Council might take notice.

ACTION: LLCC to go to speak to new Lidl at Seafield and make them aware of our complaints form and the whole process.

Matt has now committed himself to producing and widely circulating a monthly 'report' and to attending the Community Council every three months.

The speaker Matt Farnham was thanked for his useful presentation.

ACTION: Secy to invite Matt to LLCC meeting end of November 2025

4. Visiting Speaker 2 – Joanne McClelland and Aythan Lewes (architects) re Place Plan for Leith

The Place Plan must be submitted by Community Councils – deadline has now been extended May 2026.

2 Surveys have been created. Survey 1 (info gathering) is now closed (287 respondents, will need more. 30,000 population in wider Leith), and those findings will be used to inform Survey 2, which is just about to be started.

Preliminary results from Survey 1 are on the website, and Survey 2 is about to be posted there too:

www.ealaimpacts.co.uk/leith-place-plan

Responses to Survey 1 have been grouped into 15 topics, and then each topic summarises (a) the challenges and (b) possible actions that could be taken to address the challenges (by CEC, by CCs and by the Community). To get a greater response rate for Survey 2 they need access to the mailing lists held by local community, journalists (Sally offered some contacts). Over the next few weeks, they are also planning some public events.

They were asked what is the status of a Place Plan? Council is aiming to take some elements of PP and build in to next City Plan 2040

The speakers were thanked for attending and for all their valuable work on this.

ACTION: All to complete Survey 2, and circulate as widely as possible amongst friends, family and neighbours, street Whats App etc.

ACTION – Chair will circulate to LLCC mailing list, Sally will ask to access Leith Chooses mailing list

5. Police Scotland Report – No officers present. Brief report has been sent and circulated. It was noted that the report (which covered July & August), contained content duplicated from June's report and seemed very short and bland.

ACTION – Chair will write to ask for officers to come at least quarterly to meetings.

Kirkgate Benches –Councillors think removing these was the wrong decision, and that it was addressed in the wrong way -done by council at police request (via Ben MacPherson MSP's office), did not consult Councillors, did not consider local elderly and disabled people.

It has not solved the problem – the same people are now just sitting on the ground. The shops are complaining especially the pharmacies – don't like people sitting outside.

How to reinstate the benches? Councillors can't instruct officers; it has to be agreed in full council.

ACTION – Chair to write to Margaret Graham Convener Culture & Communities, & copy in 3 councillors ASAP before Council this Thursday, to object to the removal of benches.

ACTION – Chair to write Police re increased drug dealing activity observed both inside Leith Links Park and on the street (Hermitage Place). Members asked how best to report. Advised to use Crime Stoppers (to make sure a record is created) or phone 101. Abi had tried online reporting form – didn't work.

ACTION - Held over from last month - Secretary to contact Police Scotland colleagues to make the point that we support their recent efforts with regard to shoplifting and antisocial behaviour. Also, that we strongly request that Leith continues to have a manned local police station.

6. Update from Elected City Councillors –

Cllr. Katrina Faccenda – Council Edinex has been suspended - there can be no bids for council homes until 2027. The Housing and Homelessness Cttee pushed back against this decision, feeling it is too long a period to wait. The Council is afraid of being sued because too many people are in unsuitable accommodation.

The Council is now making acquisitions i.e. buying buildings (e.g. a student block) for temporary accommodation – this seems a good step forward.

ACTION: Katrina will forward a report on this to LLCC.

ACTION: She suggested it would be good for LLCC to make a deputation to the Housing Cttee re over-provision of hostels & HMOs in this area.

Police at a meeting at The Citadel – how to link up services and projects to prevent young people getting pulled into drug dealing. Police have applied for proceeds of crime money in order to carry out a pilot project.

Public Consultation on using the Roseburn Path for new tram route (Haymarket to Granton) is now open. Two options - Dean Bridge or Roseburn Path. <https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/tram-north-south/>

ACTION – All should complete consultation with their views.

Closure of Marionville Fire Station – there will be a public meeting on 2nd September at Craigentenny Community Centre re The Service Delivery Review that recommends closure of Marionville fire station. Between 2 and 4 and 6-8pm. Survey online also, <https://www.fireScotland.gov.uk/service-delivery-review/>

ACTION – members to complete survey, attend the meeting.

Immediate problem is RAAC concrete in the fire station, service wants to get rid of small local, poor quality fire stations (Musselburgh also due to close). Pattern of fires is changing – fewer house fires, less local industry, more rural needs eg. wildfires and greater flexibility needed. Newcraighall would have one extra appliance and crew to compensate for loss of Musselburgh and Marionville – but that is too far away and would increase response times. This closure is basically a cut in service to communities.

Cllr. Chas Booth - Licensing Board application -Tam o Shanter pub on Great Junction St. withdrew application for 1 am licence, but uses temporary / occasional licences.

Cycle route - Council now saying that the Seafield Road to Hawthornevale cycle route would be safer than the existing cycle path though Leith Links (womens safety survey showed a feeling / perception it was not safe). There is no data or evidence of any attacks there but a 'perception' of possible danger. Cyclists especially women, apparently feel safer on a road, in spite of traffic. The North Edinburgh path network has been downgraded to secondary - the Council is now prioritising on-road cycle routes.

Cllr. was asked when the traffic mess on Great Junction Street and Henderson Street would be sorted out – unknown.

E-bikes will be rolled out start of September. Bikes will be restricted to specific bays, mainly town centre only, at first. Costs of vandalism will be down to the company, not council, not police.

7. **Issues raised by Local Residents** – No response from Council on report of badly cracked and dangerous pavements on Clarebank Crescent. Local residents have asked for double yellow lines to be painted on the corners at the bottom of Claremont Road where people (suspected commuters, and often works vans) have taken to regularly parking very irresponsibly, making it dangerous to enter and exit to/from Claremont Park.

8. **Seafield Sewage Plant – Next Steps:** Eileen Simpson has spoken to MSP Ben MacPherson, who offered to write to Scottish Government and Scottish Water (SW), and to ask questions in Holyrood. He is just about to send off a letter and arrange a meeting soon, after Parliament recess. Hoping to meet with Cabinet Secretary and someone from Scottish Water. (LLCC could be involved in that meeting?)

After that meeting, the protest postcards should be delivered to CEO of SW. 500 cards printed, many have already been signed, LLCC members are still getting more signed by neighbours.

ACTION: Chair Jim Scanlon still has piles of cards in the entry hall at his house. CC members to pick up cards there, and return them to the red 'postbox' there once signed.

ACTION: Chair Jim Scanlon will organize a Leith Market stall asap (see also para 11).

ACTION: Ask allotment holders and Leith Community Growers to sign – who has the contact?

Planning: Teresa Perchard had prepared some notes on current planning applications - a relatively quiet period overall.

Angus, Jim & Teresa had a meeting with Harbour Homes re Wellington Place derelict site and their failure to build. They didn't have the funding in place, and do not currently have a development team in place for managing new developments in next 5 years. They will keep in touch with LLCC. LLCC will put a note in their newsletter re community councils.

Many new applications are now for 'serviced apartments' or 'ApartHotels' - this is a loophole that lets developers build what are essentially short term lets. E.g. Queen Charlotte Street motor bike shop - 6 flats on ground floor.

Assembly Street (former Riva Pizza restaurant) - ApartHotel approved in June 2025.

Restalrig Road - change of use from flats to STLs

LLCC objects to these applications - community wants permanent homes, not STLs

Application from East Restalrig Ter. is cause for concern - applying to create parking space and EV charging point in front garden of house. Council should have a presumption against (loss of green space) but several other home owners seem to have done this already, and if permission is granted everyone will do it due to the threat of CPZ for the street

10. Parks and Greenspaces - Public toilets graffitied almost immediately after they opened. Marco Galli responded with "The anti-graffiti coating was applied one day before the graffiti appeared. We think the "artists" used a stronger spray paint and we are exploring with our Graffiti team to identify the best way to remove it and repaint the affected area. This is currently dealt by the Council's Graffiti team"

Has the CCTV been installed yet - check. Need to clarify how to get access to disabled toilet, and spread the word. Signs in the park to the toilets?

Leith Franklin cricket club is running social / music events for Leith Depot - noise might impact new properties at the back

11. Travel & Mobility: Secy Sally Millar has written to ask Gareth Barwell to attend an LLCC meeting, to discuss the 'big picture' of plans for our area ensuring that all the different agencies are coordinating with each other and collectively thinking through long term consequences. He was not able to attend in August or September.

ACTION- Secy to pursue to get meeting with Gareth Barwell, for October or beyond

Traffic and bus services on Great Junction Street and the Henderson Street area are still chaotic due to cycle lane construction.

ACTION: LLCC to inform local community about proposed changes to bus gate (i.e. moving it to Links Gardens and thus effectively removing the through route from Restalrig Road, Hermitage Place & Claremont Park down Salamander Place) and asking them to contact their local Councillors by email to express their views on this.

Councillors take more notice of personal emails than petitions, surveys etc.

ACTION - use Leith Market stall, Community Centre, Duncan Place and Libraries to spread information.

12. AOCB:

13. Date of Next Meeting: Monday 29 September, in-person Duncan Place.