

LEITH LINKS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES Monday 23 February 2026, 6:30pm

Duncan Place

Present: Gail Clapton, Abigail Cunningham, Avril Ewing, Aric Gilinsky, Angus Hardie (Chair), Barbara Kerr, Andy Mackenzie, Sally Millar, Teresa Perchard, Jim Scanlon, Eileen Simpson

Elected Members: Councillor Chas Booth,

Apologies: Councillor Katrina Faccenda

Police Scotland: 1 **Members of the Public:** 4

Chair: Angus Hardie **Minute Taker:** Sally Millar

1. **Welcome and Apologies.** 3 journalism students from Napier, observing, were welcomed, also a new resident of Duke Street.
2. **Adoption of Previous Minutes.** Proposed: Aric Gilinsky, Seconded: Eileen Simpson
Rolling Actions List:
Re Parks and Greenspaces
 - Abigail Cunningham will try to negotiate possible collaboration between two local artists (for mural on public toilets)
 - LLCC will try to do a quick consultation of local people re a theme for the mural. Agreed informally to try to steer towards 'neutral' themes such as nature / wildlife/botanical (rather than local history of culture which can become controversial....).
 - Secy will book a stall at the Leith Festival Gala Day
 - **Re Seafield Sewage Plant**
 - Aric Gilinsky will investigate LLCC website issue re complaints form.
 - Angus Hardie will try to follow up to see if other stakeholders with more resources could help with the IT problem re the complaints form.
3. **Police Scotland Report** – PC John Anderson attended and spoke to his written report (circulated). Police are able to use a drone more often, these days, which helps them survey the area. An uplift in funding has meant that Police have had additional officers available to address retail crime. A radio system has improved communication between businesses in the Kirkgate, security staff, and local police to help crime prevention and increase arrests. But still only doing occasional 'days of action' rather than a permanent / ongoing police presence. The Kirkgate is not necessarily a safer place even if shoplifting is reduced. Plans are under way for increased operations addressing illegal E-bike/E-scooter use. Police officers position themselves strategically on Leith Walk and can stop a number of riders, to check insurance etc. and confiscate some bikes, but can't 'catch' all on bikes if they don't stop.
4. **Guest Speakers** – Matt Farnham of Veolia did not attend. He has since sent a short written update, see Appendix 1 below.
5. **Update from City Councillors**
Cllr. Chas Booth
 - T&E Committee looking at bus journey times and asking officers for data re black spots etc. to help understand these and what could be done to reduce these and increase bus priority.
 - Regulation Committee trying to increase enforcement in the private rental sector (many landlords are not a 'fit and proper person' but power to remove them almost never used). Also still working on

closing the loophole heavily used by STL landlords who withdraw planning applications once they have got their licences.

- Licensing – licensing hours city-wide have been automatically extended for mens football World Cup period mid- June to end July. He had opposed, but had been overruled.
- Council budget – will be set this week. Scottish Greens are focused on the housing revenue Account and hoping to succeed in reducing council rent increases. Rachel Hutton was concerned about the implications of ‘zero budgeting’ for charities.
- Transient Visitor Levy (TVL) - £4million (£2m per year over 2 years) agreed for Leith Links, though unclear if this is for the whole LL Master Plan or just for the Activity Park. There was discussion as to how priority was given to Activity Park with no consultation of local residents. Leith Theatre also to benefit. Leith Custom House awarded small amount from another source, for development costs, but not capital costs from TVL money.
- Discussion about Voi bikes. Local teenagers have been seen vandalising bikes and bikes are often left blocking pavements or filling up cycle racks that ‘ordinary ‘ cyclists need to use. The bikes are heavy which may reduce theft. Police and Council have not received reports of any major problems. Barbara Kerr pointed out that bikes are relatively expensive and need a credit card, so questioned to what extent they are accessible to young people, and asked if Voi was reporting details of bike usage? Cllr Booth is pushing Voi to share data with the Council but currently this information is kept private.

6. **Issues raised by local residents** – no immediate local issues raised. New local resident concerned about lack of opportunities for young people, generally.
7. **Rachel Hutton of Harbour Homes** gave a brief introduction to the Leith Network of charities and organisations, which she facilitates / coordinates. Around 100 organisations are members, meeting quarterly, with about 30 or 40 at each meeting. It is a chance for networking and cooperating. Rachel’s role is to provide information, and the purpose of the organization is to support the charities and be a voice for the third sector in Leith. Sometimes training is organized, e.g. digital, and also accessibility training is coming up. Seeking funding is a major focus - all charities are currently struggling for funds, with many losing staff. The network comprises a wide mix of smaller / larger/ more commercial and small voluntary organisations – all chasing funding, sometimes in competition with each other, sometimes small charities competing with larger
8. **Parks and Greenspaces** – Abigail Cunningham suggested inviting Thriving Greenspaces (Marco Galli, Alex Hoadley) to next meeting to clarify how monies from the Transient Visitor Levy (TVL) would be managed. Teresa Perchard pointed out that there are many unanswered questions both about the allocation of the TVL money in general, and in particular about lack of consultation of local residents, and about the legalities, design, costings, and ongoing governance / maintenance costs of the Leith Links Activity Park. Events in Parks - a proposal for a commercial event, the ‘Leith Food Festival’ has been submitted that would take over and fence off almost the whole of the west Links for several days, and involve large numbers of visitors (parking issues), amplified music all day, alcohol sales, and not involving but competing with local food / hospitality businesses, only a short time before the Gala Day (risk to grass surface). After discussion of the disruption this would cause for local residents it was determined to object.
ACTION: Secy will compose and send in an objection to the Food Festival event
ACTION: Secy will invite Marco Galli and Alex Hoadley to the next meeting as guest speakers
9. **Draft Leith Place Plan** – the first draft has been circulated and comments from LLCC are required, quickly. All CC members have seen the draft and a number of concerns raised. LLCC is being asked to ‘endorse’ the Place Plan drawn up by Joanne (a member of LH&NCC) and Aythan, with the support of LH&NCC (as is LCCC) but it was felt that we could not do so, as it currently stands. There are problems both with the structure of the document (which is also over-long) and with a number of specific content items. There are also several missing points that we would like to see included. Hopefully, the authors will be amenable to considering our concerns; we would like to be able to support it so are hoping that suitable amendments can be

implemented. Teresa Perchard has extracted a list of the primary points and circulated these to all CC members to survey which of them could be agreed by the majority, and which should be discarded or reworked. Cllr. Chas Booth urged the CC to endorse the Leith Place Plan rather than be left without a Plan, or doing its own Plan.

Action: Abigail, Angus, Barbara, Sally Teresa will meet with Joanne and Aythan to discuss, later in the week.

10. **Transport** – discussion deferred due to lack of time.
11. **Planning** – Teresa Perchard had circulated a report. A resident has asked what the plans were for the church building next to St. James, as it seems that the building is being left to deteriorate.
Action: LLCC will try to find out
12. **AOCB** – This is the last meeting at which Gail Clapton (Vice Chair and Treasurer) will be present, as she is moving out of the area and so will no longer be a member of the LLCC. Gail has been an active and valuable member of the CC for many years and will be much missed. She was thanked most sincerely for all her work, and support, and was presented with a leaving gift.
13. **Date of Next Meeting: Monday 30 March 2026, in-person Duncan Place.**

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