

Annual Report 2025-2026 May 2026

Co-Chairs Chairpersons' Report - Abigail Cunningham & Angus Hardie

Firstly, sincere thanks to our team of volunteer Community Councillors who give up their time to support and represent the local community on a wide range of issues. Our elected Ward Councillors try to attend most meetings and we are grateful for their input, keeping us up to date with Council matters, listening to our concerns, and for the follow up work they put in on our behalf, in between. Thanks too to Officers from Community Policing (Leith) who are only occasionally able to attend meetings in person due to pressure of other work, but who submit a summary report, monthly, which we post on LLCC website, [alongside our Minutes](#). Finally, also thanks to our friends at Duncan Place Community Hub, where the Community Council meets.

Throughout 2025-2026, the Community Council has held monthly meetings as usual (except July & December). We have moved back to having mostly live meetings, with an online link for those wishing to participate remotely (sometimes online is easier for both local residents and for Council staff or guest speakers to attend).

Many people do not realise that the Community Council is actually an elected body. The most recent election was held in February/ March 2025, so our current Community Council is technically and administratively a 'new' Community Council - although we were happy to welcome back a number of previously serving Councillors. We were also delighted to welcome three new members (though sadly two have since had to withdraw, one due to ill health and one who moved out of the area).

Since the election, our long-standing Chair Person Jim Scanlon MBE has stepped back from the role of Chair due to family pressures (though happily he continues as a Community Council member). Jim is endlessly loyal, determined and very experienced, and has made a massive contribution to the community over the many years, for which we thank him most sincerely.

We also recently 'lost' another hard-working CC member, ex Treasurer and Vice-Chair Gail Clapton, who moved out of the area. Both were presented with small thank you gifts.

The current Community Council members are:

- Abigail Cunningham (Co-Chair, Parks & Greenspaces)
- Avril Ewing (Living Rent rep)
- Aric Gilinsky (Treasurer and Engagement Officer)
- Angus Hardie (Co-Chair, Seafield Master Plan)
- Barbara Kerr (Leith Festival rep)
- Aimee McInnes
- Andrew Mackenzie (CCTT)
- Sally Millar (Secretary)
- Teresa Perchard (Planning, Bins)
- Jim Scanlon (Seafield Sewage)
- Eileen Simpson (Seafield Sewage)

We are actively trying to recruit new members to the Community Council (they can join or be 'co-opted' in between elections), as keeping up an energetic and enthusiastic membership is the best way to ensure effective representation for local residents and businesses. However, you don't have to be a member to attend meetings. Any local resident is welcome to attend meetings to see what they are like, hear about what's going on and take the chance to raise issues of local concern or interest for discussion. If you think you could give up some time to support your local community, then please contact us to find out more. **Your local community needs YOU!**

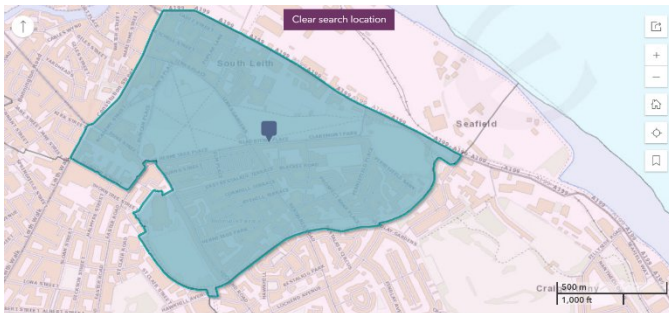
We are also seeking a Minutes Secretary. If anyone with Minuting experience (ideally with local links) fancies this job, which pays an honorarium of £50 per monthly set of Minutes, [please get in touch](#).

Thank you for reading the brief summary below of some of the many things that the Community Council does.

Best Wishes from Angus Hardie & Abigail Cunningham

Report from LLCC Secretary - Sally Millar

In step with the 2025 Community Council elections, City of Edinburgh Council published revised governance documents for Community Councils. [The new Scheme for Community Councils can be viewed on the Council website](#) . The boundaries of Leith Links Community Council have changed very slightly: our southern border now runs along the line of the Restalrig Railway path, bringing the CC boundary into line with the Ward 13 (Leith) boundary. A few streets to the north of the Railway Path previously within our area, are now within Craigenfinny & Meadowbank CC.



Our web site www.leithlinksc.org.uk is used to share news and information and also to try and garner views from local residents about a whole range of matters affecting the area. Our monthly meetings are 'advertised' in advance via our email, website, and social media.

From time to time, we also design and print posters / leaflets to be distributed to the public.

We regularly post community information as well as Community Council updates.

Website
www.leithlinksc.org.uk

Follow us on Facebook and
'X' (Twitter)



/LeithLinksCC



@LeithLinks_CC

We value the support of local residents/ members of the public who take the trouble to get in touch and/or attend our meetings. They are a valuable 'window' on matters affecting the local community.

We often have guest speakers at our meetings, for example architects and developers who are submitting planning applications in the area. We welcome a range of other speakers, and have recently requested and hosted input from City of

Edinburgh Council's Licensing Service, from Veolia who run the Seafield sewage site, and from Scottish Historic Buildings Trust, talking about developing the Leith Custom House as a heritage centre. We were very pleased to receive a visit in October 2025 from Gareth Barwell, new Corporate Director of Place at Edinburgh City Council, along with 2 senior colleagues from Planning and from Transport & Environment, who listened to our concerns and answered questions. We work with our neighbouring Community Councils, currently collaborating with Leith Harbour & Newhaven and Leith Central CCs on the development of a Local Place Plan for Leith, which hopefully will act as a 'voice' on planning for Leith as the next City Plan (2040) evolves.

Representatives of Leith Links Community Council regularly attend meetings of the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils (EACC), and the Cockburn Association (Civic Forum) and LLCC continues to work closely with other local projects, such as the annual Leith Chooses participatory budgeting event, successfully run again in January 2026.

On the Links

Summer 2025 as usual saw events on the Links, including 'regulars' such as the Funfair and the Leith Festival Gala Day, and some new events by external organisers. The LLCC is consulted by the Council on all applications for events on the Links. We have a general 'policy' that gives preference to short and local community events, that keep the Links as open and available as possible to the local community.

Sadly the Leith Festival Gala Day in June 2025 - which is usually a great opportunity to meet and chat with local residents and find out their views on a range of topics - was literally a washout, with stormy winds and driving heavy rain. We look forward to better luck this year with the weather!

We regularly partner with Duncan Place in carrying out litterpicks on the Links, generally autumn and spring. Our LLCC 'Bin expert' continues to lobby the council for more/bigger bins inside the park, particularly at each bench, and for bins at every parkside bus stop, which we feel would help to keep the level of litter down. We have also partnered with a local resident who initiated a litterpick on the Restalrig Railway Path, and we are encouraged to see the recent development of a new group, the Edinburgh Trash Club, active in the Leith area.

Sally Millar, Secretary

Planning

A key role of the Community Council is reviewing and commenting on planning applications as a statutory consultee, although it often feels that community views carry less weight than those of developers, who have greater resources and rights of appeal. Despite frustrations with the planning system, LLCC remains committed to representing local residents' interests



Some planning applications are for small alterations to private properties locally, which we generally do not comment on. Other applications involve major developments that could significantly change the character of the area. LLCC is particularly concerned about the growing number of sites being converted into student accommodation, holiday flats, aparthotels, serviced apartments and other forms of short-term rentals, rather than providing long-term housing and employment space for residents. Some are really large developments coming forward as ex-industrial sites are redesignated in the latest City Plan for 'mixed' development, while others are smaller but represent the loss of commercial or light industrial workplaces. Many older properties are being developed to increase the number of hotel and HMO spaces, rather than either for building homes for long term residents, or for preserving spaces for local businesses, that could bring jobs.

The Community Council supports more balanced and genuinely mixed developments, including social and genuinely affordable housing, designs that favour intergenerational living, plus the infrastructure needed to support growing communities, such as schools, childcare, healthcare and community facilities.

LLCC is also involved in planning discussions about the future development of the Seafield-Portobello shoreline area.

Travel and Mobility

In 2025, LLCC published the results of our survey on the Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) and Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ), which received over 300 responses and revealed mixed and nuanced community views. The press and some politicians like to present it as a kind of 'war' with two sides polarised into 'evil drivers who love cars and hate cyclists' versus 'cyclists who hate all cars and drivers'. This is not only untrue but unnecessarily divisive – many residents can be pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users *and* car drivers at different times / depending on circumstances. While many residents inside the LTN greatly value quieter streets, others living around its boundaries experience negative impacts from increased traffic and parking pressures. Concerns were also raised by elderly and disabled residents, who often rely on visiting carers, and who may need to use cars rather than walking or cycling, and who feel disadvantaged by reduced parking availability and increased costs. Despite these mixed views, the Council voted to make the LTN permanent.

Meanwhile, many local residents continue to report concerns about potholes, badly damaged pavements in numerous places around the area, and the need for safer pedestrian crossings. The

current pain of repairs on Restalrig Road will ease by July - hopefully the end result will go



some way to improving mobility issues.

Looking ahead, the Council is considering changes to the Links Place bus gate to relocate it further down Links Gardens, effectively preventing car access to Salamander Place, so LLCC is preparing to gather local residents' views on that, next. Council is also proposing new Controlled Parking Zones in Lochend and Restalrig, so local residents should stay alert and ready to comment on these proposals when they come forward in the coming year.

LLCC continues to raise concerns about unresolved problems along the tram route. Two Community Council members regularly meet with Edinburgh Trams through the Community Councils Together on Trams (CCTT) group, to press the Council to address ongoing issues and prioritise improvements based on community experience. The Community Council also works the [Edinburgh Bus Users Group \(EBUG\)](#), which campaigns on public transport issues.

Parks and Green Spaces

The Community Council continues to be involved with the Council's Thriving Green Spaces working group who, amongst other things, have been working on the establishment of a much needed block of permanent public toilets on the Links. These were originally supposed to be in place by late 2024, but were delayed until 2025. Shortly after they opened it was discovered that they were not functioning properly and extensive repairs to the drainage system were needed. Having had a delayed start, this has now started and, we are told, should be finished by mid-summer 2026. Temporary chemical toilets have been installed meanwhile.

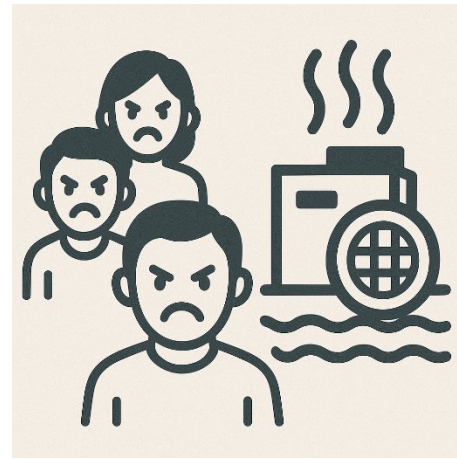
LLCC has been tasked with exploring the possibility of getting a mural painted on the toilet block, in the hope of improving its appearance and discouraging graffiti.

The latest concern is that the much-loved and busy children's play park on the Links is in urgent need of repair and restoration, which the Council seem to be slow in implementing. LLCC is following this up as a priority.

Unfortunately, development of the wider Leith Links Masterplan does not seem to have moved forward much due to the lack of funding. There has been an initial design published for the proposed Leith Links Activity Park: <https://www.thrivinggreenspaces.scot/project/leith-links>



Seafield Sewage



For many years, LLCC — alongside outstanding campaigning by Rob Kirkwood and the now-disbanded Leith Links Residents Association — has fought for better investment in the Seafield Waste Water Treatment Plant to tackle the long-running “Seafield Stench.”

LLCC representatives have worked throughout the past year, as usual, with Scottish Water, Veolia, CEC and SEPA through a stakeholder group to monitor progress, push for accountability and oversee future investment plans.

Despite ongoing problems, particularly during hot dry weather, there are now signs of progress: new underground storage tanks are being built, further Scottish Government investment has been promised, and control of the plant will return into the control of Scottish Water by 2029, raising hopes for improved management and reduced odour emissions in the future.

LLCC has also recently raised concerns about sewage sludge cake from the plant being spread on farmland as fertiliser.

Contacting the Community Council by email...
It's easy to get in touch, simply send an email to contact@leithlinksc.org.uk