

LEITH LINKS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES Monday 29 June 2026, Duncan Place / MS Teams

1. **Present:** Angus Hardie, (Chair) Abigail Cunningham (Minutes), Eileen Simpson, Jim Scanlon, Avril Ewing (Living Rent), Barbara Kerr (Leith Festival), two local residents, Cllr Katrina Faccenda (online till 7pm)
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2. Apologies

Apologies: Aric Gilinsky, Sally Millar, Chas Booth on AL

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.
- Proposed: Barbara Kerr, Seconded: Abigail Cunningham

Matters Arising

Members noted that the Leith Local Place Plan had been completed and submitted to the City of Edinburgh Council. Sally was thanked for the work undertaken in preparing the foreword and coordinating the final document. The Community Council is awaiting confirmation that the Plan has been formally accepted.

4. Leith Festival and Gala Day

Barbara reported that the Festival and Gala Day had been successful overall, with good attendance despite challenging weather conditions.

A formal review meeting will be held within two weeks. Feedback questionnaires are being circulated to traders, performers, volunteers and members of the public. The Community Council agreed to promote completion of the public survey.

Members discussed the effect of strong winds on marquees and agreed that future guidance should include minimum standards for marquees and ballast weights.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the future of the Leith Festival Pageant. Members considered whether it should remain on Tattoo Day or return to Gala Day, noting volunteer pressures associated with both options.

Barbara advised that 2032 will mark the 125th anniversary of the Pageant. She intends to contact previous participants to identify what support would enable them to return, with a view to preparing a funding application covering staffing, costumes, props, workshops and artistic support.

Members discussed declining participation, citing changes in local businesses, increasing pressures on schools and voluntary organisations, and a wider decline in volunteering.

Suggestions included involving Latin American organisations, Ukrainian groups, schools, youth organisations and cadet groups.

Members agreed that rebuilding participation would require a gradual, long-term approach supported by external funding.

5. Police Report

No written Police Scotland report had been received. Chair advised that contact had been made with a newly appointed Community Police Officer and it is hoped regular reports will resume from the August meeting.

6. City of Edinburgh Council Update – Councillor Katrina Faccenda

Councillor Katrina Faccenda reported that the Council was now in recess following the most recent Full Council meeting. She highlighted recent debates on community safety, including motions concerning knife crime following the death of Henry Novak, together with wider discussions on reducing serious violence in the city. She also noted the large anti-racism demonstration held on Leith Walk, which had taken place peacefully and attracted significant public support.

Halmyre Street Temporary Accommodation

Members discussed the Council's recent purchase of the unfinished student accommodation development at Halmyre Street for use as temporary accommodation. Councillor Faccenda explained that the purchase had already been completed and was publicly available through Council papers, although commercial confidentiality meant elected members had not been given full details of the purchase price.

The Community Council expressed concern about the concentration of temporary accommodation within the Leith area and the cumulative impact on local services and the surrounding community. Members questioned whether the development, originally designed as student accommodation, was suitable for its proposed use. The predominance of small studio rooms, with relatively few shared living spaces, was considered less suitable than newer models of accommodation based around clustered units. Councillor Faccenda acknowledged these concerns, noting that the original planning permission pre-dated more recent planning policies encouraging cluster-style accommodation.

Members also raised wider questions about whether purchasing completed or partially completed student accommodation represented good value for the Council and whether similar developments elsewhere in the city might also be considered for temporary accommodation. Councillor Faccenda advised that these decisions were taken corporately and that she did not have access to the detailed financial information. She undertook to seek further information from officers and to report back following a planned visit to the development.

Forth Ports Liaison

Councillor Faccenda reported on a recent meeting with Forth Ports, which had been convened at the request of neighbouring community councils to discuss noise and environmental issues associated with port operations.

Discussions focused on air quality in the Salamander Street area, where monitoring had identified elevated pollution levels that did not appear to be attributable solely to road traffic. Possible contributing factors included demolition works, construction activity and operational activity within the port. Noise from ships berthed in harbour was also discussed, with reference to the use of auxiliary diesel engines while vessels are alongside. Members noted that many European ports require ships to connect to shore power rather than continuing to run onboard generators, although equivalent requirements do not currently apply in the UK.

Councillor Faccenda described the meeting as constructive and advised that Forth Ports had proposed establishing regular quarterly liaison meetings with local community councils. Members welcomed the proposal, observing that the port remained one of the area's largest stakeholders but that opportunities for direct engagement had previously been limited. Discussion also touched on the implications of the Forth Green Freeport and the importance of maintaining regular dialogue as further development proposals come forward.

Parking and Controlled Parking Zones

Councillor Faccenda updated members on enquiries regarding long-term parking around Leith Links, particularly the heavy preponderance of vans, and some vehicles that appear to have been abandoned. Concerns were also raised about larger vehicles parking close to the Links and, in some cases, being used for overnight accommodation.

Following correspondence from Community Council members, Council officers confirmed that enforcement powers remained limited where vehicles were legally parked and could be traced to a registered keeper. Street Enforcement officers had nevertheless been asked to review the area to identify any vehicles that might justify further investigation.

Members were advised that work was continuing on proposals for a new Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) covering the remaining streets around Leith Links. Although the Council had altered aspects of its consultation process, Councillor Faccenda confirmed that public engagement would still take place before any Traffic Regulation Order was progressed. Members discussed the proposed boundaries, particularly around Claremont Park and Hermitage Park, and agreed that further clarification of the published maps would be helpful.

Roads and Public Realm

Members highlighted a number of outstanding maintenance issues, including faded road markings at the junction of Lochend Road and Easter Road, deteriorating road surfaces and poor pavement conditions in several locations.

Councillor Faccenda confirmed that these matters had been referred to the appropriate Council teams for inspection and remedial work.

An update was also provided on the temporary bus stop at Great Junction Street. Members were advised that works to narrow the adjacent cycle lane slightly would allow refuse bins to be relocated, enabling the bus stop to reopen safely. It was anticipated that the works would commence shortly and that Lothian Buses would then bring the stop back into service.

The Chair thanked Councillor Faccenda for her report and for responding to members' questions. Councillor Faccenda then left the meeting before the Community Council moved on to local residents' issues.

7. Local Residents' Issues

The Chair invited members and residents to raise local matters of concern.

Several members highlighted the continuing poor condition of pavements and road surfaces throughout the Community Council area. Particular concern was expressed about sections of Restalrig Road and surrounding streets, where uneven surfaces and deteriorating footways were presenting increasing difficulties for pedestrians, especially older residents and those with mobility impairments.

Members observed that many defects appeared to remain outstanding for extended periods despite previous reports to the Council. It was suggested that temporary repairs often deteriorated quickly, resulting in repeated maintenance rather than permanent solutions.

A wider discussion followed regarding the coordination of Council infrastructure projects. Members considered that road maintenance, cycling infrastructure, parking schemes and public realm improvements were too often delivered independently, leading to disruption and additional costs when recently completed works subsequently required alteration.

The Community Council agreed that greater coordination between Council departments would improve both value for money and the overall quality of completed projects.

Parking remained a significant concern for many residents. Members discussed the likely impact of the proposed Controlled Parking Zone on surrounding streets, recognising both the potential benefits for residents and the possibility of displacement parking into neighbouring areas. It was agreed that continued engagement with residents during the consultation process would be important to ensure local concerns were fully understood before final decisions were taken.

8. Parks and Green Spaces

Members received an update on current projects affecting Leith Links.

It was reported that repairs to the children's play area remained outstanding and that no revised programme for completion had yet been received from Council officers. Members expressed disappointment at the continuing delay and agreed that progress should continue to be monitored.

Leith Links Toilet Block Mural

Abigail reported on public engagement undertaken during Gala Day regarding proposals for a mural on the recently completed toilet building within Leith Links.

Visitors had been invited to indicate their preferred design themes and colour schemes. Feedback had been overwhelmingly positive, with almost unanimous support for introducing public artwork to improve the appearance of the building.

Nature emerged as the most popular theme, with respondents favouring designs featuring local wildlife, wildflowers, pollinating insects and trees. Bright colours were generally preferred over more muted palettes, reflecting the desire to create an attractive and welcoming feature within the park.

Members noted that funding of approximately **£3,000** had been secured for the project. Part of the allocation would be retained to provide for future maintenance and repairs should the mural become damaged or subject to graffiti.

Local artist **Shona Harding** remains the preferred artist for the commission, subject to final agreement with project partners.

A site meeting involving representatives from the Thriving Green Spaces project, the artist and interested Community Council members would be arranged to finalise the design and programme for delivery.

Members welcomed the strong public support demonstrated during the consultation and agreed that the project would make a positive contribution to the appearance of the park.

9. Roads, Transport and Mobility

Members reviewed several transport-related matters affecting the area.

Discussion focused on recently completed cycling infrastructure, particularly works on Great Junction Street and routes connecting to Ocean Terminal.

Views remained mixed. Some members considered that the improvements on Leith Walk had demonstrated the long-term benefits of segregated cycling infrastructure and believed that similar approaches should continue elsewhere in the city.

Others questioned whether aspects of the Great Junction Street scheme had been fully integrated with bus operations and pedestrian movement. Particular concern was expressed regarding drainage issues, the layout of some junctions and the interaction between cyclists, buses and pedestrians.

Members agreed that future transport projects should place greater emphasis on integrating cycling infrastructure with bus services, pedestrian accessibility and wider public realm improvements rather than considering each element in isolation.

No formal decisions were required, although members agreed that these observations should continue to inform future consultations on transport proposals affecting the area.

10. Planning

Members noted the planning applications that had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

No additional planning matters were raised and no objections or representations were proposed.

11. Seafeld Waste Water Treatment Works

Members received an update regarding ongoing engagement with Scottish Water and other stakeholders concerning the Seafeld Waste Water Treatment Works.

It was noted that no formal stakeholders' meeting had taken place since September 2025. Members agreed that an early meeting should be requested to allow current issues to be discussed and to receive updates on the ongoing investment programme.

The Community Council welcomed recent Scottish Government investment intended to improve odour management at the treatment works and noted that responsibility for operating the facility had now transferred from the former Private Finance Initiative arrangements to direct Scottish Water management.

Members considered that this presented an opportunity to improve engagement with local communities and to address longstanding operational concerns more effectively.

Discussion also extended to the wider issue of sewage sludge disposal on agricultural land.

Members referred to increasing national concern regarding contaminants including PFAS ("forever chemicals"), microplastics and pharmaceutical residues. It was acknowledged that these issues extended well beyond Seafeld itself but nevertheless formed part of a wider debate regarding wastewater treatment and environmental protection.

While recognising that these matters fell largely within the responsibilities of national regulators and government agencies, members agreed that they should remain on the agenda for future stakeholder discussions as additional information becomes available.

The Chair concluded that maintaining regular dialogue with Scottish Water remained important both in relation to local operational matters and wider environmental issues.

12. Community Council Membership and Recruitment

Members reviewed ongoing efforts to recruit additional Community Councillors.

It was agreed that recruitment should continue to be promoted throughout the area using printed leaflets, community noticeboards, local businesses and community venues.

Members identified several additional locations where publicity could be displayed and agreed to assist with distribution over the coming weeks.

The Chair emphasised that maintaining an active and representative Community Council depended upon attracting new members from across the community.

Members agreed that recruitment should remain a standing priority during the coming year.

13. Any Other Competent Business

No additional items of business were raised.

Members were reminded that, in accordance with the usual meeting schedule, there would be **no meeting during July**.

The next ordinary meeting of the Community Council would therefore take place in **August 2026**.

Actions Agreed

Action	Lead
Promote completion of the Leith Festival public feedback survey.	All Members
Contact new Community Police Officer regarding attendance at future meetings.	Jim Scanlon
Seek further information regarding Halmyre Street temporary accommodation proposals.	Cllr Katrina Faccenda
Continue liaison with Forth Ports through proposed quarterly meetings.	Chair / Councillors
Progress the Leith Links toilet block mural project.	Abi Cunningham/FOLL
Request an early Seafield stakeholders' meeting with Scottish Water.	Co-Chair A Hardie
Continue Community Council recruitment campaign and leaflet distribution.	All Members