

LEITH LINKS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES, Monday 31 August 2026, Duncan Place / MS Teams

1. **Present:** Abigail Cunningham (Chair), Sally Millar (Minutes), Jim Scanlon, Avril Ewing (Living Rent), Cllr. Chas Booth, one local resident (online).
Constable Amy Williamson (Police Scotland)
Apologies: Aric Gilinsky, Angus Hardie, Eileen Simpson, Teresa Perchard, Cllr. Katrina Faccenda

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record. **Proposed: Sally Millar, Seconded: Jim Scanlon**

3. **Police Report:** Constable Amy Williamson introduced herself as our new Community Policing officer (along with PC Lewis Hardy, currently off sick). She knows the area well, having previously worked here on the Response team, now moved to part-time work with community policing. No written Police Scotland report this month, but she reported verbally and will send a written report in future. Very good results recently on shop-lifting. A bid has been made to Scottish National Retail Crime Force for extra £45,000 to address this issue. Successful actions on drug dealer(s) and confiscation of illegal E-bike(s).
There was discussion of the problem of antisocial daytime drinkers at Sandport Bridge /Shore. This is a new group of locals that is louder and messier than previous groups. The bench will not be removed, other solutions being sought.
The 'Knife Angel', a huge sculpture made of knives handed in, will be erected at the Kirkgate 31 August – 27 September, to raise awareness of knife crime and to commemorate victims There will be an official 'welcome' ceremony at 11am, 1 September, Cllr. Booth and some residents will try to attend. Police Scotland and various other groups will be carrying out workshops, and programs throughout the month to raise awareness especially in schools /with young people. Lisa Petrie, mother of local victim John McNab, is campaigning to promote 'Bleed Kits'.

4. **Update from City Councillors** – Cllr. Booth reported, as requested, on the transport problems caused by the Debenhams fire/ Princes Street closure / tram fiasco. The cause of the fire is still under investigation. A great deal of correspondence from all political groups had gone to Council re additional buses and various other possible measures etc. The number of Voy bikes had been stepped up but still not coping with demand. Council Communications were very poor over the period, leaving citizens frustrated. Residents and businesses in Leith suffered disproportionately. Council has agreed to support / compensate Leith businesses in some way, (but not handing out cash. The Council has paid for shoring the building up and underpinning with a steel structure, and will bill the three building owners for this. Council and tax-payers have taken a huge financial hit. Mechanisms in place to force the developers to pay, maybe by sequestrating their assets? Council is exploring option of compulsory purchase of the building. There were a number of questions from members about whether the Council had robust enough procedures in place to ensure accountability from building owners / developers. There was extended discussion about e.g.
 - Why don't they / Can the Council require developers to have proper insurance and to install sprinkler systems in all unoccupied buildings?
 - How to make public transport more resilient
 - whether a tram depot should have been / could in future be built in Leith as well as at the western end of the tram line.

Cllr. Booth agreed to return with answers to such questions.

Living Streets work to make Edinburgh streets more pedestrian friendly and are campaigning for zebra crossings without belisha beacons (that work well in Europe). Scottish Government says these are not legally enforceable

but the regulations can be changed (Wales has done so), Council is writing to Scottish Government to speed this process up.

Tram extension – Council has resolved to continue feasibility studies on the southern part of the planned route, while pausing exploration of the northern part of the route (Roseburn Path) – though this could be revisited again in future. Cyclists need not lose out as a cycle path could be constructed alongside the tram.

Cllr. Booth also reported that there will be a film about climate change shown in the Leith Links area on 28th September.

5. Local Residents' Concerns –

Very poor state of the pavements locally was yet again noted, especially Restalrig Road (north end), Clarebank Crescent and all alongside the Links at Vanburgh Place / Hermitage Place/ East Hermitage Place. **ACTION – Secretary will email Council again re this and try to get a response / timescale re possible repair.**

6. Parks and Greenspaces -

Thanks were given to Abigail for moving the mural on the public toilets forward so effectively, and to Shona Harding, mural artists for the lovely mural she painted so quickly, and at a discount. Friends of Leith Links – now has a working committee: Abigail Cunningham is Chair, Rob Harbour is Treasurer, Hannah Wilsch is Secretary / PR, trying to build participation.

7. Planning –

Housing of temporary homeless people in the Leith Links Area – Members (Angus, Sally, Teresa) had met with a journalist interested to report on the situation in the Leith Links area, which has an over-supply (compared to the rest of the city) of large HMOS housing people experiencing temporary homelessness. Teresa had prepared a briefing paper providing background information and figures. The Community Council is not opposed to the provision of homeless accommodation locally, but is concerned by the ever-expanding number of guest houses and 'hotels' and very large HMOS (many of which were operating unlicensed, and then were given licences although failing to meet the Scottish Government standards for HMOs, and are, in short, still deemed 'unsatisfactory'), and the fact that these are very lucrative for private landlords, while continuously draining Council finances. This is bad for the tenants, bad for the local area, and bad for the Council.

Halmyre Street Temporary Accommodation –

Sally Millar and Jim Scanlon had attended a recent Council meeting locally re Council's recent purchase of the student accommodation development at Halmyre Street for use as temporary accommodation. This had been very badly handled and local residents are angry about the lack of information and consultation with local community. Council staff provided information about the facilities that will be provided to the incoming tenants (who might well be there for up to 3 years or more, although it's labelled as 'temporary'). Locals are concerned about the very large number of new tenants moving in (230) and worried that the proposed staffing will not be adequate to monitor and manage residents properly. Council stressed that tenants will be selected as low risk / low support needs and will not all move in at once, but staggered. Support needs will be met by outside providers (currently out to tender). Council proposes to follow the same model as that so far successfully employed in a similar unit on Lasswade Road. Cllrs Jack Caldwell and Susan Rae propose to visit and liaise with residents in the nearby Sheltered Housing complex, who are particularly concerned. Council provided email contact links:

tas.expansion@edinburgh.gov.uk, demi-mackay@edinburgh.gov.uk

8. Roads, Transport, Mobility – Issues of concern discussed included: forthcoming Phase 2 CPZ plans. Consultation re Easter Road area plans has just opened (to be followed by adjustments then a TRO (which will be the time for formal objections or support from local residents). The next areas coming up will be 'West Leith' (Lochend area) and 'East Leith' (Restalrig area), probably opening up to early consultation around February 2027. Sally Millar had attended the consultation event and gained some useful information about the process, which is based on 'occupancy rates' of the available parking spaces, as surveyed by the Council last year (but is based on averages – some streets will be much higher than some others. An FOI would be needed to learn exact rates for each actual street). The Easter Road area scored 68%-85% occupancy, which is high, hence the Council intention to probably proceed. West Leith scored 59%-62% (medium). Numerous parking spaces are inevitably lost in the CPZ process, due to new No Parking markings on corners etc. previously used. Priority Parking (which can be useful to get rid of commuter parking) is a possible option - it has been implemented recently in another part of Edinburgh, not 'phased out' as we had previously been told by Council. Parking Team is keen to hear from residents earlier rather than later in the process.

ACTION: Secy to try to arrange for member of the Parking Team to attend an LLCC meeting (online) within the next three months, to the process for residents. Agreed that LLCC will probably need to run a survey to find views of local residents - who are expected to be divided on this issue.

Another concern is about the number of parked camper vans all along the edge of the Links. This is worse in the summer and Festival period (tourists/visitors). Several seem to have people living in them, which is not legal. There are also many works vans parking there very regularly if not 'permanently'. This means that local residents cannot find parking anywhere near their homes. Avril Ewing raised the issue that if people who are homeless are living in vans long term, they should still count as 'local residents'

9. Seafield Sewage Plant – Members Jim Scanlon and Eileen Simpson due to attend the upcoming event (11th September) when CEO of Scottish Water will officially 'open' the improvement works funded by the extra investment (although these have in fact already started, albeit late), followed by Stakeholders Meeting (long delayed).

10. Recruiting new members –no time to discuss this. Concern that one of our new members (joined 2025) seems to have dropped out of the LLCC – to be followed up.

11. AOCB -0

12. Next Meeting – Monday 28 September 2026, in-person at Duncan Place