

LEITH LINKS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

MINUTES, Monday 28 September 2026, Duncan Place

1. **Present:** Abigail Cunningham, Aric Gilinsky, Angus Hardie (Chair), Eileen Simpson, Sally Millar (Minutes), Jim Scanlon, Cllr. Katrina Faccenda, two local residents.

Apologies: Avril Ewing (Living Rent), Andrew Mackenzie, Teresa Perchard, Cllr. Chas Booth

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

After some spelling corrections of names were noted, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record. **Proposed: Abigail Cunningham, Seconded: Jim Scanlon**

The Secretary is struggling with Minute writing in addition to all the other tasks, and (since LLCC hasn't had a Minutes Secy for a few years now), needs AI assistance. She can use Zoom (but Council staff are not allowed to join Zoom meetings). However, she does not have access to Teams message recording facilities and advises against increasing monthly Microsoft subscription as the package/subscriptions are complex and LLCC does not use Teams much.

ACTION: Abigail to bring her laptop to record meetings, via Teams, in future, as she has access to the necessary facilities via her employment.

ACTION: Secretary to continue exploring other meeting recording/AI summary apps and costs to try to find possible cost-effective alternatives.

3. **Police Report:** No officer present. Our new Community Policing officer Constable Amy Williamson only works part-time so may find it difficult to attend meetings, but has not replied to a request for a written report. (No contact so far with the other officer, PC Lewis Hardy). **ACTION – Jim Scanlon will email again to ask for report/update. LLCC would be content with a short monthly bulletin (bullet points, a few statistics if possible - don't need the repetitive PowerPoint with pictures etc.). Also try to confirm shift days and availability to attend meetings.**

4. **Update from City Councillors** – Cllr. Booth was not present to bring back the answers he had promised from last month's meeting, re Council responses on problems caused by the Debenhams fire/Princes Street closure /tram fiasco. Referred to October meeting.

Trams - Cllr Katrina Faccenda reported on the recent Council decision to progress a strategic business plan for the **southern section** of the proposed tram extension (City Centre → Bioquarter) and defer/separate the **northern routing** (Granton to City Centre) pending consensus/funding. She was disappointed/ concerned that cutting the northern segment (voted for by Councillors representing the Centre and South of the city), while it may benefit their areas, reduces connectivity for north Edinburgh and disadvantages the densely populated areas in North Edinburgh (built with the promise of mass public transport and now left without infrastructure or even a future plan). It also weakens the case for regional funding which the council was hoping for. Meanwhile, funding remains uncertain and the strategic plan work is very costly. Councillors and community will monitor next funding rounds.

Transient Visitor Levy – Next Housing Committee is tasked with resolving the definition of a “visitor economy worker” in order to move forward with the plan to use some TVL monies to build new housing for such workers. Sensitive topic, which may be challenged by the hospitality industry. Council is planning to distribute some funds via participatory budgeting, ward by ward, but bids for this funding must show spending will be on visitor-related benefits

Roads and Pavements – Residents have contacted Cllr Faccenda about lack of footway on Salamander Street (because of new building development), no dropped kerbs, narrow/unsafe stretches etc., which is dangerous. She is pushing Council to put in place temporary measures (like they did at Greyfriars Bobby). Aric commented on the need for a safe crossing point on that stretch. See also 5, and 9 below. Council apparently uses a **point-scoring matrix** to prioritise repairs – unclear how communities can find out where they are on the list, or ask to get better attention. Residents have been told that their pavements are “not bad enough”. Pavements budgets have not increased in line with roads budgets, causing backlog. **Action: Cllr. Faccenda will send LLCC a**

copy of the 'matrix', which can be shared with residents.

Scottish Government proposal to disband/reorganise Councils (Not just councils but Health Boards, Quangos etc.) CEC will have a position on this by the next full Council meeting in October. COSLA (which represents 32 local authorities) is strongly opposed. Very short timescale for consultation (3 months only). Reorganisation would take years and be very complicated and expensive. CC discussed this. 32 local authorities would be reduced to 10 big, strategic regional bodies (eg for things like transport that cross current local authority boundaries), plus 150+ new community authorities (bigger than current community councils). CC discussed this matter. Angus Hardie is part of 'Building a Local Scotland' campaign and usually greatly in favour of more powers at community level (current local authorities are indeed too big to be 'local'). However he feels that this ScotGov scheme has come out of the blue and although it is made to sound more democratic, it is actually very vague and (especially without funding) could actually bypass local democracy. Cllr. Faccenda thinks it is all about funding models, rather than organisations and how they operate.

5. Local Residents' Concerns & Community News

- 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. Also bad potholes on Seafield Road,

ACTION – Secretary will email Council again re this and try to get a senior officer to come and do a walk-around to see the problems in person.

- Sally Millar informed the meeting that a 'Christmas in Leith' committee has now been set up and the first meeting was held last week with 6 attendees including from LLCC, Leith Festival, Leith Community Centre. Committee had lots of ideas but agreed to prioritise the Kirkgate Christmas tree and lights switch-on event on Thursday 3 December (still to be confirmed by Council). Local Primary Schools will be contacted about singing at the event. A list of further Actions to be shared amongst committee members was drawn up, mainly outreach to local community contacts / networks and businesses. Fundraising status: little/no money available; will explore a possible grant from Leith Community Fund (Forth Ports). A future plan is to lead on preparation of a collective Leith bid for funds for Christmas in Leith, to visitor-levy (TVL) funds(for next year). Next committee meeting 6th October, Persevere Room, Leith Community Centre, 5:30pm.

6. City Plan 2024 – Call for Ideas

Members agreed that LLCC should submit a response but felt this could be short and should consist mainly of reinforcing support for all the points made in the joint Leith Place Plan. **Action – Secretary will send this in, including the Leith Links CC 'Front Page of the Place Plan.** Abigail had attended recent 'pop-up' re the Place Plan, in the Kirkgate, run by LH&NCC, felt that LLCC's' work on the Place Plan was under-recognised.

7. Parks and Greenspaces -

- Recent damage to the public toilets (and thus the new mural) has been reported. Alex Hoadley has passed this up to 'Facilities' - no response yet. **ACTION: Abigail will pursue for information about the repair process and timeline, also liaise with Marco when he returns from holiday to clarify the process for dealing with problems, and ensuring contract with mural artist Shona reflects the plans re maintenance.**
- A Friends of Leith Links (FoLL) committee has now been formed and is working to open a bank account. Next Steps: to recruit more members via in-person outreach (felt to be more effective than email); continue recruitment outreach; and follow up on council promises (storage unit / parking / maintenance visits). **ACTION: Abigail will draft some copy for LLCC website, to raise public awareness.**
- Operational issues: storage, and potential noticeboard usage were discussed; local noticeboards exist at several entrances and could be used for publicity, maybe could ask for a new one for the FOLL use.

8. **Planning** – There is a new application in concerning the old motorbike showroom on the corner of Queen Charlotte Street, seeking to change of use to short-term letting/self-catering use; ACTION: LLCC intends to object and will cite the local Place Plan.
- Discussion of Council's intention to reduce use of 'unsuitable' HMOs / Halmyre Street Temporary Homeless Accommodation – The large new Halmyre Street block will not 'empty' the unsuitable HMOs in the Leith Links

area (though some tenants may be taken from these). Tenants are to be selected case-by-case, reducing pressure on B&Bs, HMOs etc. city wide and are supposedly to be 'low risk' / low support needs' individuals.. Concerns remain about the very large concentration of single people (probably mostly men), and the scale and effectiveness of support services.

Guardian journalist who consulted with LLCC has also been in touch with Cllr Katrina Faccenda, but no article yet; he is planning something wider than Leith Links / Edinburgh.

9. **Roads, Transport, Mobility** – Multiple long-standing pavement defects, see 4 and 5 above.
Parking/CPZ update: Discussed. CPZ/parking work is progressing in Bonnington and Easter Rd,. areas, our area is next. Will require local CC and resident engagement. It is 'occupancy rates' (i.e. of existing parking spaces) that drive CPZ rollout (example: Easter Road ~85% occupancy, whereas East Hermitage area ~59–62%). **Action: Secretary to request more occupancy data for streets in LL area.** This data would help to inform local views. Parking officers are keen to hear local views as early as possible in the process, pre formal-consultation stage. For example, are the currently drawn boundaries right? 'Priority Parking' could be considered as it has not been ruled out as we were once told (recently instigated in Craiglockhart). Possibly invite a parking officer to an online LLCC meeting in future months, once we have a clearer idea of local community views.

10. **Seafeld Sewage Plant** – Members Jim Scanlon and Eileen Simpson attended event (11th September) when CEO of Scottish Water officially 'opened' the improvement works funded by the extra investment (although these have in fact already started, albeit late), followed by Stakeholders Meeting (long delayed). Next Stakeholders meeting will be Spring 2027? **Action: Secy to write to Matt Fareham to request the promised regular newsletter / update.**

Wastewater spill

During heavy rain there was localized flooding and a wastewater (sewage) spill on to Marina Esplanade; a quick clean-up was undertaken. The Stakeholder meeting reported that such incidents were linked to extreme rainfall.

ACTION: Eileen to draft a formal letter to Scottish Water expressing concern about the spill, to request that they publish a clear public statement explaining the incident, asking for investigation results, and an evaluation of resilience. ACTION: Eileen will also draft a short piece to go on the LLCC website (Aric) to raise public awareness of the incident making plain that "wastewater" included sewage.

A 2nd point to be raised in letter could be a question about timelines for investment. The handover from contractor Veolia to Scottish Water is scheduled for 2029. Major investment (originally promised for the end of 2020s) now seems to have been pushed back to the middle of the next investment cycle. i.e. the mid-2030s.

Concerns about sludge/sludge cake use on farmland - Sludge/sludge cake use on farmland remains contested (international concerns noted, e.g., Netherlands restrictions). Seafeld claimed they had sent samples for testing to Cambridge Uni and results came back indicating "minimal" concerns about contaminants. **ACTION: Community Council could request copies of these external test reports.**

11. AOCB

- Proposal was accepted to make a small donation (suggested £100) to Duncan Place in recognition of their support re use of meeting room.
- Discussed possible invitations for speakers at next meeting. Secy will follow up with Nina Ballantine from St. Andrews Community buy-out group. Possibly invite online input from Parking Officer to another future meeting once some further details, timing and boundaries of upcoming CPZ are clarified.
- Community Council agreed to write a letter of appreciation/support for Cllr Katrina Faccenda who is being blocked from selection as candidate for 2027 council elections, to send to relevant Labour party officer; a draft will be prepared for review and submission within the appeal timescale (7 days).

12. Next Meeting – Monday 26 October 2026, in-person at Duncan Place