

MINUTES

Monday 25 March 2024, 6:30 pm, in-person at Duncan Place

LLCC Members Present: Gail Clapton (Treasurer & Vice Chair), Abigail Cunningham, Amy Fairbairn, Barbara Kerr, Sally Millar (Secretary), Teresa Perchard, Chrissie Reid, Jim Scanlon (Chair), Eileen Simpson

Councillors: Councillors Chas Booth, Katrina Faccenda

3 members of the public

Minute Taker: Sally Millar

1. Welcome and Apologies –Chair welcomed attendees. Apologies were received from Rhona Alcorn, Deidre Brock MP, Angus Hardie, Allan MacDonald Police Scotland, Andrew Mackenzie.

2. Adoption of Minutes Adoption of Minutes of February 2024 meeting proposed by Abigail Cunningham and seconded by Gail Clapton. Available at <https://leithlinksc.org.uk/>

Matters Arising – Minute taker apologised for omitting mention of the re Council organised live music event on the Links 16th March. Post event conclusion Music was good and people attending (not huge numbers) enjoyed, but all agreed that the event was set up with too little consultation and planning locally, too little advance notice, too early in the year, and was inadequately promoted & publicised. With more notice, partnership working could have involved the CC, Leith Festival, and other local groups.

ACTION – Secy will write to Events in Parks & Culture and Communities Committee to make these points and ask for better communication and earlier liaison in future.

3. Police Scotland Report – written Police Report was submitted and circulated before the meeting. The situation in Duke Street is improving overall. Agreement has finally been reached to install a security system in the stair that was particularly badly affected, thanks to the Police going ‘above and beyond’ to sort it out (though not really their remit). Councillor Katrina Faccenda had met with Police to discuss this and other matters. She had also asked the landlord of one of the flats used by the council to house homeless people to buy and install the security system as an act of ‘good faith’ – but they had refused. Police had told her that it is always worthwhile for such matters to be reported to PS. Even if it seems they can’t do much, it gets the matter ‘on their radar’ and they can add it into their routine work patterns, eg. being aware and checking each time they go past etc. Cllr Katrina Faccenda will continue to follow up.

Future of Leith Police station? Chair Jim Scanlon had received a reply from Ben MacPherson MSP quoting a statement from Angela Constance MSP, Minister for Justice and Home Affairs, that consultation on Leith Police Station is not yet open, but it will go live on the Police Scotland engagement hub sometime soon.

ACTION: Secy Sally Millar will give greater prominence to PS monthly reports on the LLCC website, as these are of interest to local people. Members will also try to display on notice boards locally and circulate more amongst local groups.

4. Update from Elected Representatives

Councillor Katrina Faccenda – met recently with Police Scotland to discuss a number of issues. Police had reminded her that ideally people should use CrimeStoppers more to report problems in the area – it is completely anonymous, it greatly helps Police e.g. to track events, see patterns building up, and to allocate resources appropriately.

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/> Tel: 0800 555 111

Forth Ports have come back with a slightly revised plan for Harbour 31 development in the east docks.

She has started speaking to businesses in the Kirkgate about supporting a Christmas tree and decorations next year.

Councillor Chas Booth - reminded people to respond to currently open consultation Pride Bridge at Newhaven (open until 4th April, on Consultation Hub). And the Leith Connections consultation <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cycling->

[walking-projects-1/leith-connections/5](#)

Email your views on the Experimental Traffic Order (eg. on the bus gate on Links Place) to

Edinburgh.Consultation@projectcentre.co.uk

And/ or general views on the low traffic neighbourhood to leithconnections@edinburgh.gov.uk Closes 8 April 2024

Re council's Short Term Let Working Group - better communication between Planning and Licensing is being pursued.

There is also a consultation live on over-provision of alcohol outlets (including off licences, not just pubs). Leith is not currently designated as an area of over-provision (there are 4 in the city centre). Meeting agreed with Barbara Kerr who suggested that overprovision should not just be seen to be about things like number of alcohol related crimes and hospital admissions etc. but also about maintaining a balanced community eg streets that are mixed, with shops, services like PO, bank etc., & other businesses, cafes etc, not just all pubs.

5. Open Floor – No topics raised beyond matters already on the Agenda.

6. Seafield Sewage Works – Eileen Simpson reported on a recent meeting with the operators. They do notify the CC about upcoming works which may cause smells (and report on when these are completed), so in a way are carrying out their brief to engage with the community. But there seems little point in the CC notifying the public every time such notifications come in, as there is actually nothing anyone can do about such works which are presumably essential, operationally. The reporting / complaints system is not working. Operators had received only 2 complaints via the SEPA route. The LLCC website form route was much more effective – when it was working. Question is whether it can be fixed or will need to be abandoned and the community actively redirected to the SEPA complaints system. Sally Millar reported that Chair and she had been trying to get help from the person who created the LLCC website form, but this has not been forthcoming. Suggestions were made about possible other sources of tech support, and SM has a plan in place, but this all takes time, regrettably. This kind of thing is a problem for Community Councils which are not given technical support nor funding to allow them to purchase it. The hope is that the form can and will be fixed. Seafield has already started putting out to tender for the works needed to carry out the £10m (no regrets funding) 'upgrade' which may be carried out by 2026. When asked if the upgrade work would itself cause smells, they said "we hope not".

7. Planning

The revised Harbour 31 development proposal is slightly smaller scale than originally proposed.

Teresa Perchard was thanked for her extensive work on Planning matters, recently. This is difficult and time consuming work, and the CC has limited capacity to address - her input is much appreciated.

9 Johns Place is proposed to turn from a 13 bed HMO to a 45 bedroom HMO (by means of an extension / walkway link out the back to buildings behind). LLCC has objected, mainly on Heritage grounds – this building is part of the fine Georgian terrace and in Conservation Area. Although this may not be a 'material' objection in Planning terms, there is a also a major concern that the area continues to be increasingly dominated by large HMOs providing accommodation for homeless people at Council expense – profitable for the owner, but often a very poor standard of accommodation and service for the residents, and arguably a poor use of council funding, long term. Another example is the Merith Hotel on Hermitage Place, which has recently doubled the number of its rooms.

The McNair Hotel on Links Gardens now has Planning permission for internal changes, to turn into an 'ApartHotel'.

Teresa pointed out that they may be exceeding what the permission allows - she has seen original doors thrown out in skips etc. – she would like Council Planning officer to visit the site.

ACTION – Teresa will email Cllr Booth about trying to activate Planning Enforcement.

LLCC has objected to a planning application to demolish old warehouse on Johns Lane (same owner as 9 Johns Place, and many other sites locally), to build purpose built student accommodation (PBSA). This would be small scale, but when aggregated with other nearby PBSA developments proposed (Constitution Street, Salamander Place, Manderston Street) adds up to a very substantial new influx of student accommodation in the area.

The meeting noted that amongst all of this new development, there are NO applications that would provide homes for people and families in / joining the local community.

Sally Millar proposed that the LLCC (ideally in conjunction with the other Leith CCS and other local bodies) should resurrect the idea of creating a Local Place Plan, as this is the only way (as per National Planning Framework 4) that communities can have any kind of say over how they want their local area to develop - given that communities have no right to appeal against Planning decisions (though developers do have such a right). A Place Plan could be difficult and expensive to achieve but the meeting agreed it was worth exploring, and to plan a public meeting on the subject for possibly? 1st May?

ACTION – To invite speakers. Cllr Katrina Faccenda to contact Council officer, Barbara Kerr to contact PAS, Sally Millar to contact Planning Democracy.

8. Community Council Elections, Community Council Governance Scheme & Boundary Review

Unclear when CC elections will be held (because of UK election date uncertainty), but they are due for 2024. Chair asked all members to let him know who is intending to stand again for LLCC. Gail Clapton announced that after many years, she is planning to stand down, this means LLCC will need a new Deputy Chair and Treasurer. Meeting discussed how to stimulate interest in the CC and how to attract new members. Possibility of leafletting, and use of QR codes on posters etc. was discussed. CC does not have the capacity to hand deliver leaflets to the whole area but there might be targeted delivery to 'new' local residents eg in the RopeWorks.

CCs have been invited to meet Council re the consultation on boundaries and governance but all the meetings offered are in day time working hours. Not helpful.

9. Travel, Transport & Mobility

LLCC survey of LTN / CPZ has now closed and analysis of the results is beginning. Barbara reported a good response rate (nearly 400). The Leith Connections consultation on ETROs is still open (til 8th April) but it is not a survey as such, respondents have to email in.

There is concern about the terrible state of the pavement alongside the Links (Vanburgh & Hermitage Place, Claremont Park) which are reduced to a narrow strip due to encroaching grass and mud, are often badly flooded, bumpy with tree roots et.

ACTION – Teresa Perchard, Abi Cunningham and Sally Millar will prepare a letter on this to go to Councillors, Leith Connections and relevant Council Departments (unclear who is responsible for these pavements – it is not just Parks) asking for action.

10. Parks & Greenspaces

Events in Parks There will be the traditional Gala Day event Saturday 8th June, and a World Orienteering Meet/Event on Friday 12 July.

Chair has contacted Parks and Thriving Green Spaces about bulbs for planning this year. Positive responses, but

ACTION – this needs followed up by Chair, with a firm commitment, timeline, scoping for volunteers for planting etc.

OUTSTANDING ACTION – Secy will try to find out how to connect with Community Payback Team

Public Toilets – These should be installed within a few months.

OUTSTANDING ACTION – Cllr Both to take up with Parks Dept. the issue of the hedge round the bowling green area, and rats problem.

Litter Pick – LLCC is partnering Duncan Place to mount a litter pick on the Links on Saturday 27th April, 10-12. This will be publicised over the coming weeks. It would be good to get enough people to address the whole of the Links including the East Links as these often get ignored in favour of the west Links.

10. AOCB

Next meeting: Monday 29 April 2024, 6:30pm