

Annual Report June 2024

Chairperson's Report – Jim Scanlon MBE

I would like to begin by thanking our team of volunteer Community Councillors who give up their time to support and represent you, on a wide range of issues.

It can sometimes feel like a thankless task when, as a statutory consultee on Planning Applications, we have to look through large planning applications and then have to make comments within very tight deadlines, which often then seem to be ignored - but it's really important that we continue to try to do our best to represent you, the community.

We comment on planning applications in our area, sometimes for large new housing developments, or smaller 'change of use' applications.

While we accept and welcome the changing face of Leith, broadly speaking, we are concerned that the majority of available brown field sites are being snapped up by developers for profitable 'buy to rent' developments, and student accommodation, and existing properties are being developed to increase the number of hotel and HMO spaces, rather than for building homes for long term residents, and preserving spaces for local businesses that could bring jobs.

We need social housing to ensure that our area can provide truly affordable living for the lower paid, and where people can feel part of a vibrant, mixed and balanced community - rather than our area being occupied largely by a transient population. We note that many local office premises – not to mention local bank branches – are closing, which changes the balance of the area, and potentially reduces choices and jobs for local people.

We continue to insist that as well as flats and houses, the necessary infrastructure to support new residents must be built, to create a real community. While we welcome the 2023 inauguration of the tram in our area, and recognize that it is popular and convenient for

many, it is very far from being the 'be all and end all' of infrastructure. We also need access to local health & dentistry care and education for children (all currently under pressure of excess numbers), preschool/childcare and community facilities, green spaces and recreation opportunities, to make it a safe and pleasant place to live.

During the past year the Community Council has also monitored the progress of the newly introduced Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) and the impact of the Low Traffic Neighbourhood as it 'beds in'.

We recently organised an online survey to find out more details of how local people are affected in their daily lives by the LTN and the CPZ. We had an excellent response and we will publish the full results shortly. Preliminary evidence is of divided views, depending on whether people live inside or on the periphery of the schemes, and - for disabled and elderly people - depending on how mobile they are / whether they need to use a car or not.

We still feel the City Council still has lessons to learn on how to better communicate and engage with local residents, when planning to introduce new measures of this kind.

Throughout the past year, the Community Council has been holding approximately half of our monthly meetings as face-to-face meeting, with the others continuing as online meetings. It seems that online meetings may attract a larger audience of local residents, and are easier for Council staff to attend, as guest speakers, so these will continue. For our face-to-face meetings, we are using facilities at Duncan Place and I would like to thank the staff at Duncan Place for making a room available, and helping our meetings to run smoothly.

As your Chair, I continue to represent the community on the Seafield Waste Water Treatment Works Stakeholder Group, along with fellow Community Councillor, Eileen Simpson.

Scottish Water and Veolia are spending £10 million at the moment on interim measures to prevent or reduce odour emissions but there are still problems and if you smell sewage then please use our '[Seafield Nuisance Odour and Noise Report Form](#)' on the Community Council website. In spite of a recent technical hitch, this system does actually work and alerts all public bodies when there is an issue.

The Community Council, working with the Leith Links Residents Association (LLRA), finally got the Scottish Government to understand the issues, and we have been promised a new sewage plant in 2030 when Scottish Water take over the operation of the plant. The early role played by Rob Kirkwood and LLRA in raising awareness of the Seafield smell problem, and their persistence and proactiveness in campaigning for improvements is legendary, and we now wish them well in their 'retirement' as the LLRA has recently been wound up.

I'm also involved with the Custom House working group to try and establish a museum in the building. The group are making slow but positive progress and recently with the appointment of a new director I feel more positive about the future of the building.

Finally, thank you for reading this summary of some of the many things that the Community Council does.

We need 'new blood' on the Community Council to ensure its future to represent local residents and businesses, and so we are actively trying to recruit new members.



Leith Links Community Council

If you think you can give up some time, to support your local community, then please contact me to find out more.

Many people do not realise that the Community Council is actually an elected body. Our existing Councillors were elected in 2019 but the Covid pandemic interfered with the normal timescales, and we are now overdue for another election. The organisation of this is in the hands of the City of Edinburgh Council.


Any local resident is welcome to attend meetings to see what they are like, and new members can join in or be coopted at more or less any time, and/or can stand for election formally, probably towards the end of 2024.

Your local community needs YOU!

Best Wishes

Jim Scanlon, MBE, Chair


YOUR COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEEDS YOU!!



- ◆ Want a voice in how your area is developed? 🗣️
- ◆ Want a meaningful volunteering experience?
- ◆ Want to hear about upcoming changes to the area?
- ◆ Want to help look after local greenspaces? 🌿
- ◆ Can you spare a few hours a month?

Then Leith Links Community Council is for you!! 😊


To find out more scan the QR Code:
Or contact us at:
☎️ 0131555 1829
✉️ contact@leithlinkscouncil.org.uk



LEITH LINKS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Leith Links Community Council (LLCC) is a local voluntary body composed of people who care about our community and want to make our area an even better place to live, work, study, volunteer, or visit.

The general purpose of Community Councils is to act as a voice for our local area. We do that by sharing information with local residents and businesses, and by raising matters of concern with our elected City Councillors (Leith Ward 13) or directly with public bodies. We also work to improve our local community by taking part in partnership work and by undertaking our own projects.



Leith Links

Treasurer’s Report - Gail Clapton

The main LLCC account has been examined and officially signed off as accurate by an independent scrutineer, and we are grateful to David Kay for performing this service for the Community Council.

The main Leith Links account balance stood on 31 March 2024 at £13,959.30. The main income during the year was the annual grant from the City of Edinburgh Council, plus the very unusual/one-off donation of £12K from Regular Music (organisers of the Proclaimers concerts), which, as it has not yet been spent, puts our balance unusually high this year. The main outgoings were for Third Party Public Liability insurance, which is obligatory, and for website hosting costs, leaflet printing, and Gala Day expenses. The Leith Chooses expenditure shown here is merely a transaction that will be repaid in full (and will show in next year’s accounts).

| Community Council Account | | | |
|---|------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| LEITH LINKS COMMUNITY COUNCIL | | | |
| INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 | | | |
| LLOYDS TSB TREASURERS ACCOUNT 86403060 | | | |
| INCOME | | EXPENDITURE | |
| Annual Grant from CoE | £737.74 | Insurance | £147.06 |
| Regular Music | £1200.00 | Website Costs | £221.16 |
| LHNCC Gala Day Share | £16.70 | ICO Charge | £35.00 |
| LCC Gala Day Share | £16.70 | Leith Chooses Expenses | £156.00 |
| | | Leith Chooses J Mooney | £77.08 |
| Total Income | £12771.14 | Total Expenditure | £636.30 |
| Bank Balance c/f | £1188.16 | Bank Balance c/f | £13323.00 |
| TOTAL | £13959.30 | TOTAL | £13959.30 |

We also have a ‘project account’ which is used exclusively for Leith Chooses. The Leith Chooses Account continues to stay static, with a balance of £13.16 (same as last year), as it currently has no income or outgoings.

Gail Clapton, Treasurer

Report from Secretary Also currently acting as Engagement Officer Sally Millar

As ever, we have held open monthly meetings throughout the year (apart from July & December), advertised via our email mailing list, website, and our social media accounts.

Our web site www.leithlinksc.org.uk currently has 215 subscribers. We do not have the resources to carry out a full analysis of all the ‘views’ and other interactions, although this an area that may be explored further in the future. We use the site to share news and information about the area and also to try and garner views from local residents about a whole range of matters affecting the area. The website hosts a complaints form which is very frequently used by locals to report unacceptable smells from the Seafield plant, alerting all relevant authorities.

We also this year designed and ran an online survey, via Google Forms (re the LTN and CPZ), which attracted a large response (c. 300).

1,583 currently follow us on ‘X’ (Twitter) and our Facebook page shows 2.9K followers (a significant increase since we last counted (1,975 in 2022). The Community Council is not funded adequately to allow for paid-for activities such as ‘boosting’ posts on social media.

From time to time, we also design and print leaflets to be distributed at public events e.g. Gala Day, and sometimes delivered through residents’ doors locally, and posters to be displayed in local cafes etc.

**Follow us on Facebook and
‘X’ (Twitter)**

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



/LeithLinksCC



@LeithLinks_CC

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

We try to provide 'hybrid' facilities, at our in-person meetings, but this is very limited as LLCC does not receive funding for /have access to the specialised equipment needed to do this properly.

In the course of the year, we have hosted various speakers at our meetings, mainly from City of Edinburgh Council (e.g. re Bin Hubs, Controlled Parking Zone, Leith Connections and Low Traffic Neighbourhood).

We welcome the small number of interested members of the public who attend our meetings each month – a very valuable 'window' on matters affecting the local community. Our three Ward Councillors try to attend most meetings and we are very grateful to them for their input and for the follow up work they put in on our behalf, in between times.

We are happy that members of Police Scotland's Community Policing team have been able to attend some meetings in person, and send very well-presented summary reports. We said goodbye to PC Lauren Munro recently, thanked her for her good work in Leith and wished her well in her new post in Craigmillar.

We continue to be involved with the development of the Leith Links Masterplan, including the proposed 'Activity Park', both so far still lacking the funding to make it all happen. We are also included in the working group on the establishment of permanent public toilets on the Links, now apparently delayed until late 2024.

Some members of the Community Council continue to meet with representatives of Edinburgh Trams, overseeing the many bits and pieces along the tram route that still need to be 'sorted out', and some participate in the 'Sounding Board' concerned with future development along the Seafield-Portobello shoreline strip.

The Community Council also works closely with the Edinburgh Bus Users Group (EBUG), and the annual Leith Chooses participatory budgeting event, which was successfully held in-person again this January, as well as online. Representatives of LLCC attend meetings run by the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils (EACC), and by

the Cockburn Association (Civic Forum) – to name but a few. We are developing closer links with Living Rent (Leith).

We had a very busy day at the Leith Festival Gala Day in June 2023. As usual the three 'Leith Community Councils' stall provided leaflets and general information for local people who stopped to chat, ask questions and share their views. We provide activities for kids and also encourage Leithers to express their opinions on key issues affecting our area. In 2023, we asked for views on the Low Traffic Neighbourhood and the new Controlled Parking Zone, and afterwards we collated these views into a report which was sent to the relevant Council departments.

Summer 2023 also brought the excitement of The Proclaimers concerts on the Links. The Community Council was delighted to work closely



with the organisers of the event, and the feedback was extremely positive from all sides – ticket holders who attended the tented event, Leithers who enjoyed the concert outdoors on the wider Links, local residents who were happy with the early finish each night and the extremely swift and efficient clean up and take-down of the site. The organisers, Regular Music, made a generous donation to the Community Council, which will be spent on enhancing the Links, for the benefit of the community, once various potential schemes have been costed up and consulted on.

We partnered with Duncan Place in carrying out two litterpicks on the Links, autumn 2023 (very wet!!) and spring 2024. It is satisfying to see the Links looking pristine after these efforts but very disheartening to see them strewn with litter again soon afterwards, as soon as the sun comes out and people bring their barbeques and picnics.

The LLCC 'Bin expert' continues to lobby the council for more/bigger bins inside the park and bins at every bus stop around the park. Also, ongoing communications with the Council Bin Hub team have been held, to try and get some hubs relocated to be less intrusive for residents - sadly with no luck so far.

Robert Cormack, representing Leith Rotary as an Associate member, has now stepped down. We thank him for his work with the CC.

Sally Millar, Secretary

