

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Leith Central Community Council, held in the McDonald Road Library on Monday 16 December 2013 at 7.00pm

Actions and decisions are ***RED ITALIC UNDERLINED SMALLCAPS***. ***NEM CON*** means that no-one spoke or voted against a decision. URLs added by minutes secretary.

1 Introduction, attendance and apologies

1.1 Attendance

Samuel Barron	LCCC	Bruce Ryan	minutes secretary
Marion Donaldson	LCCC	Liz Ballantyne	resident
Charlotte Encombe	LCCC (secretary)	Jim Scanlon	Leith Links CC
Anne Finlay	LCCC (treasurer)	Keith Hales	Leith Business Association
John Hein	LCCC (chair)	Cllr Deidre Brock	Leith Walk ward (SNP)
Julian Siann	LCCC	PC Craig McMillan	Police Scotland
Irene Sweeney	LCCC	Ella Taylor-Smith	Broughton Spurtle
Harald Tobermann	LCCC (vice-chair)		
Alex Wilson	LCCC		

1.2 Apologies for absence

Pamela Grant	LCCC	Alison Johnston MSP	Scottish Green Party
Loraine Duckworth	Leith Neighbour Partnership	Mark Lazarowicz MSP	Edinburgh North and Leith (Labour)
Cllr Angela Blacklock	Leith Walk ward (Labour)		

2 Minutes of the meeting of 18 November 2013

Adopted without changes (proposed H Tobermann, seconded A Wilson)

3 Matters arising from previous month's minutes

This section doubles as Secretary's report.

3.1 Actions held over from October meeting (see item 3.2 in November minutes)

3.1.1 Shrub Place (item 8.1 in October minutes) – Cllr Brock

Permission for using this site as a temporary store was refused. (J Siann noted there was permission for storage but not for crushing.) Cllr Brock has asked why this decision took so long and will report when she knows more. A resident suggested the delay was to allow tram-work rubble to be processed on this site and a pointless refusal was made now tram-work is finished. However there is no evidence for this. H Tobermann suggested the decision was delayed due to incompetence rather than conspiracy. ***DECISION: NO ACTION***

3.1.2 Brunswick Place (item 10.1 in October minutes) – Cllr Brock

Pre-notification came before Edinburgh Council on 4th December. Formal notification will be handled as appropriate. There will be a public exhibition on 3:30 to 7:30, 17 December.

3.1.3 Piccadilly Place (item 10.3 in October minutes) – Cllr Blacklock

There has been no new application but application for permission to build a hotel here was part of outline planning application for the St James centre. A full application would be needed to take this matter any further. J Siann had attended the relevant presentation. It was based on the now out-of-date 2008 masterplan. (It includes trams on Leith Walk.) Two alternatives were presented. The first was for a U-shaped blocked facing Omnia, the second for an 8-storey building. The details of how a hotel situated on a traffic island would work (e.g. traffic issues) were not presented. J Siann suspects proposals are negotiation positions rather than real proposals and the developers are keeping a toe in the water but not presenting anything on which one could form a judgement.

3.2 Cockburn Association (item 3.7 in November minutes)

- Because Chair has not yet been recognised by the bank as a cheque-signatory, payments can't yet be made. Chair will revisit bank to make sure he is recognised.
- Secretary is arranging for Marion Williams from CA to speak at January or February meeting.

3.3 Leith Walk repairs communication (item 8 in November minutes)

Covered in planning section (item 7 of these minutes)

3.4 Training for new CCllrs

Edinburgh Council CCllrs training session will take place on 18 January in the City Chambers (10:00-12:30).

Secretary has contacted Trevor Davis (former Leith ward councillor and former planning convenor, now professor of planning) about organising a team building session on a Saturday morning, also possibly covering planning matters. J Scanlon asked whether Leith Links CCllrs could also attend. THE SECRETARY WAS ASKED TO ARRANGE THIS SESSION – COST £100 (NEM CON).

3.5 New page on LCCC website

A page containing more details on local democracy issues has been created: <http://leithcentralcc.co.uk/local-democracy>. At the moment it contains articles on the Community Empowerment Bill and the Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy. Cllrs were urged to submit responses.

3.6 CC mass resignations

- Old Town CC has resigned en masse in protest at planning decisions (<http://tinyurl.com/llwqp3k>). A Wilson asked what would happen now. To the best of the minutes secretary's understanding of legislation (<http://tinyurl.com/q7yhktg>) and Edinburgh CC scheme (<http://tinyurl.com/nhn7p9c>), there will be no CC in this area unless/until 20 or more local citizens request one.
- Grangemouth CC resigned en masse in June in reaction to permission to build a giant biomass boiler (<http://tinyurl.com/lyj99g9>)

3.7 Minutes secretary payment

It was proposed to increase the minutes secretary's payment 30 to £50 per month. AGREED NEM CON.

4 Explore forming a Community Communications Subcommittee

M Donaldson has a background in voluntary work and would like to use these skills to help improve LCCC's profile and connections with citizens. She suggested LCCC gets a cellphone so so that the public can get in touch more easily. Subcommittee would need to decide who would answer calls and how to handle them. Minutes secretary has a spare old iPhone but LCCC would need to buy a SIM/contract. It was also suggested LCC could obtain a low-cost new phone and contract. ACTION: CHAIR TO SOURCE CELLPHONE, COSTING NO MORE THAN £50.

LCCC already has a phone number thanks to the Chair but this is at his home. The only calls to this number have been from the press. This number is not yet on Edinburgh Council's list of CC contacts. ACTION: SECRETARY TO GET ENSURE NUMBER IS ON CC CONTACT LIST.

S Barron asked how the community knows that LCCC exists, whether there are noticeboards and who would put up information.

5 Community Police Officer's report

3 main issues:

- Drinking at Kirkgate shopping centre: there is a continued campaign using bylaw about antisocial drinking
- There is a campaign against housebreakings, using high visibility patrols and plainclothes officers.
- There is a campaign against antisocial behaviour, again using high-visibility patrols but also visits to licensed premises.

On 21 December, there will be a campaign against violence. This will include officers from other areas.

PC McMillan was asked about a local character called Arthur. He was hospitalised but has now been homed.

J Scanlon noted there had been very few responses to the police's priority survey. ACTION: SECRETARY TO FORWARD THIS TO ALL LCCC MEMBERS ETC TO TRY TO OBTAIN BETTER RESPONSE.

6 Friends of Pilrig Park report

- There was a clear-up day on Saturday (14 December), clearing behind toddlers' play area.
- A concern has been raised regarding the impact on biodiversity as a result of clearing the undergrowth.
- FoPP are looking to work with pupils at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce to install bird and/or bat boxes.
- Still no benches.
- Green Flag Quality Assessment of Pilrig Park shows Pilrig Park as 'Good'.
- FoPP has requested £200 to cover public liability insurance and to provide specialist stamp (for creating headed paper). S Barron says FoPP have done great work. ACTION: TREASURER TO MAKE THIS PAYMENT. (SEE ITEM 5 IN NOVEMBER MINUTES.)

7 Planning Subcommittee

7.1 Sites on LCCC's planning subcommittee's register of sites of interest

- 100 Pilrig St: former nursery, currently no planning activity
- Shrub Hill House: highest priority
- Shrub Place: recent application for industrial use rejected
- 18 Tennant St: application for 49 houses. J Siann asked why there was no public consultation/exhibition. H Tobermann noted this was because 50 houses is the minimum number for compulsory consultation/pre-application process.
- 248 Easter Road: former B&Q shop. Lidl have contacted LCCC with a view to consulting LCCC. Their representative could speak to this in early 2014. **ACTION: H TOBERMANN TO ARRANGE THIS (NEM COM).**

An 18-month extension to the 5-year planning permission has been granted. Current owners/developers had asked for 3 years but LCCC had asked for refusal so that the site's price would drop. That would enable other developers to do better things on the site. The extension will run from December, even though Secretary was told of approval of this extension in May 2013. **ACTION: H TOBERMANN TO SUBMIT COMPLAINT AND REQUEST INVESTIGATION OF WHY DEVELOPERS WERE EFFECTIVELY GIVEN EXTRA 6 MONTHS. (NEM COM).**

7.2 Pre-application process

Edinburgh Council has requested comments on the pre-application process. Secretary suggested commenting on the compulsory consultation threshold. H Tobermann suggested that CC interventions at pre-application stage are of limited usefulness: LCCC can only sensibly engage when actual plans and drawings are available.

J Siann noted that Edinburgh Council has to make neighbourhood notifications. If this has not been done, LCCC can complain. JS suspects that Gaelic school hasn't been notified of Tennent St application. Secretary noted that this site has been designated as a brownfield/residential site, so it will be used for housing. LCCC may be able to influence the types of houses built, comment on access problems (an potential issue noted by J Siann). **ACTION: J SIANN TO SUBMIT SUCH COMMENTS (NEM COM).**

ACTION: J SCANLON (LEITH LINKS CC) TO BE CCED WITH PLANNING SUBMISSIONS (NEM CON).

Edinburgh Council is preparing guidance for town centres, formalising guidelines on use-changes etc. (Leith Walk and Tollcross are town centres, while Easter Road is a local shopping centre.). PSC will comment on this guidance when it becomes available.

7.3 Broughton Primary School/154 McDonald Road

Permission for residential flats was refused in November. An appeal now gone to the reporter. J Siann has sent evidence to the reporter but believes from previous experiences that the refusal is likely to be overturned.

8 Officers', Councillors' and MP/MSP reports

8.1 Treasurer

No change from November: no income received, no cheques issued because we lack a second signatory. **ACTION: CHAIR TO GET BACK TO THE BANK AND ENSURE THIS IS REMEDIED.**

8.2 Cllr Brock

- Comments on Edinburgh Council 2014-15 draft budget need to be submitted on or before 20 December.
- Neighbourhood Partnership (NP) had a good public meeting, including discussion of Creative Leith. Next public meeting (March or April) will include a presentation on the census. Leith has 26,000 people in an 800-metre radius and hence the highest population density in Scotland. This represents 30% growth since 2001, mainly due to new houses on brownfield sites.
- There was extra funding via the NP grants programme, for shutter art and the Halmyre St mural.
- At a recent meeting of the Cleaner Leith forum it was reported that there is now a cleaner Leith partnership board and manager. It will audit the entire ward's on-street bins. Work is starting on ensuring that waste is presented at certain times. A rolling maintenance program for communal bins is to start soon. A 6 month-trial to deal with trade waste on Leith Walk will start on Jan 6. Collection will only take place during agreed times. Also sensors are to be fitted to some communal bins to identify patterns of use and/or adverse environmental issues. Outcomes will inform further measures. K Hales noted that bins were not being moved when Leith Walk is cleaned and that there is fly-posting on streetlights. Cllr Brock is chasing up action on these subjects.
- Consultation on the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for Leith Walk commenced 29 November (It ends 6 January.) Letters have been delivered to 1900 addresses about the TRO. Comments can be made online.

H Tobermann asked when the 6-month trial would actually start – on 6 Jan or after further consultation? Rubbish lying around detracts from attractiveness and hence economy. Cllr Brock will investigate when new arrangements will start. She noted that on 1st January, tight recycling rules will take effect – these should help minimise rubbish issues. (K Hales noted that business haven't been told about this.)

9 Leith Walk repairs and improvements

There was much anger about the lack of progress here, and about the stakeholder meetings process. Points raised – which are not necessarily the opinion of all of LCCC - were:

- H Tobermann¹ had emailed L Hinds (Edinburgh Council transport convener) on 20 November, requesting
 1. Acceleration of progress of the Leith Walk works. (A report² approved by Edinburgh Council stated 'the majority of the ... works will be carried out in Spring/Summer 2012')
 2. Minuting of stakeholder meetings
 3. Publication before the end of 2013 of an agreed programme for completion of Leith Walk works.

(Responses were (1) no concession, citing contractual and procedural obstacles; (2) notes were taken at most recent meeting but have not yet been distributed; (3) a program was outlined at the last meeting but it is not yet satisfactory because there is still much uncertainty, while dates on this plan show that work may not finish before the end of 2015.) In HT's view, slow progress is damaging Leith's reputation. Acceleration would be possible if Edinburgh Council committed more resources.

- A Wilson¹ stated that the TRO now under consultation precludes introduction of trams at a later date and that there are no specifications for the current drawings. As an engineer, he believes the process is not being done properly. He is disgusted with the current stakeholder process: there is no public knowledge about the design team and his impression is of inexperienced part-timers; obstructive, incompetent officials; overall lack of vision for Leith. AW wishes for obfuscation to be acknowledged – and stopped.
- K Hales¹ stated that he no longer trusts Edinburgh Council, partly due to long delay, partly due to lack of openness. He cited engineers not being told of public input, e.g. from residents' association about lighting at Bernard St/Constitution St junction, ideas for advance traffic lights for cyclists. Such input has not been recorded, let alone shared. KH believes consultation is a sham and that the current plan shows no vision, e.g. ideas for increasing footfall in shops. He stated there are no plans for the section from Pilrig Street upwards, while there are differences between what LH says at meetings and what appears in plans later.
- Secretary suggested that engineers should be invited to stakeholder meetings. She agreed that meetings are currently not very effective. She agreed that there had been some paternalism but believes that officials are not incompetent, just under a lot of pressure. However, specifications should be made public, while a shouting-match will not help progress matters.
- J Siann¹ (also an engineer) concurred that there had been no proper consultation. A problem with the current plans is that pedestrians aren't prioritised at junctions. Also, he suggested that relevant information/specifications do not exist and hence he believes that the stakeholder process is a farce.
- Cllr Brock stated that officials should be given chances to present their side. (KH asked would be appropriate). Phasing of works is needed. She has confidence in officials but there are processes to follow.

ACTION: CHAIR TO SUBMIT COMPLAINT ON BEHALF OF LCCC (TO BE BASED ON H TOBERMANN'S ORIGINAL EMAIL TO LESLEY HINDS)

¹HT and JS represent LCCC while AW and KH represent Leith Business Association at stakeholder meetings

²29 November 2011: Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee (item 18) 3.6

10 Open Forum

Christmas Bin collection will be on Saturday 28 December and Saturday 4 January

Chair handed out leaflets consulting on Edinburgh Council budget. Deadline 20 Dec: <http://tinyurl.com/lnacegk>

11 AOCB

No items

12 Dates of future meetings

20 January 2014, 17 February 2014, 17 March 2014, 28 April 2014, 19 May 2014 (AGM), 16 June 2014