

# Meeting of Leith Central Community Council

Monday, 19 January 2026 at 7pm

at Nelson Hall, McDonald Road Library



## DRAFT Minutes

### Summary of actions

Action	Who
Charlotte Encombe to correct typos in November minutes.	CE
Provide an update on plans to turn the Powderhall railway line into a cycle lane.	JC
Contact Edinburgh City Council to remove graffiti in Pilrig Park.	JW
Share information about Edinburgh Garden Partners on LCCC socials.	SP
Provide an update on LCCC Licencing Policy.	KK
Raise issue of accessibility of footpath through 162 Leith Walk development with council officers.	JC
Add sentences on 'hotelisation' of LCCC area as an addendum to PBSA or short-term let policy - to be agreed.	AE
Send a formal request to councillors to address the issue of the Elm Row Cycle Path in a meeting of the transport committee.	SP

**Attendance:** Charlotte Encombe, Sheila Kennedy, Simon Preston, Luci Holland, Jed Milroy, Alex Kennedy, Kutlu Balci, Jack Kerr, Alan Dudley, Cllr Jack Caldwell, Cllr Susan Rae, Lisa Clark, John Wilkinson, Harald Tobermann, Avril Ewing, Lynsey Crawford, Robert Mhuru, James Dalgleish, Debs Hahn, Mike Birch, Andy Shipley, Westaly Duignan, Rachel Hutton, Alasdair Scott, Catherine Anderson (taking minutes), residents

**Apologies:** Kara Kileen, Cllr Amy McNeese Mechan

#### 1. Welcome, introductions, attendance, apologies

- Catherine Anderson agreed as minute taker.
- Jack Kerr co-opted as member of LCCC with unanimous vote in favour.
- No declarations of interest in any items on the agenda declared.
- It is noted that Kara Kileen has given apologies for the meeting, so agenda point 7a (update on progress towards LCCC Licencing Policy) will be postponed until February's meeting. Otherwise the order of business is agreed.
- Jed Milroy thanked for the musical overture to the meeting.

#### 2. Approval of Minutes of the Ordinary LCCC Meeting ([17 November 2025](#))

- A few typos are noted in the draft of the minutes, members agree to fix these before the minutes are posted.
- CE notes action items have been completed, or are in progress. There are no further comments on the minutes.
- Minutes are agreed, proposed by JM and seconded by AD.

**Action:** CE to correct typos in November minutes.

### 3. Matters Arising from previous minutes (included on agenda below where noted)

No	Actor	Action	Status
1	JW	John Wilkinson to send KK the contact information for the licensing forum	Item 7 below
2	KK	KK to take forward work developing a policy for late night licensing applications and bring to January meeting.	Item 7 below
3	CE	CE to respond with comments on the Leith Place Plan as the main point of contact.	
4	JC	Jack Caldwell to follow up on planning issues at 106 - 162 Leith Walk Edinburgh EH6 5DX (20/05553/FUL)	Item 8 below
5	CE	Simon Preston requested a copy of the September minutes – CE to send to SP	Completed
6	JC	JC to bring a proposal for pavement trees in Trafalgar Street to January LCCC meeting	Item 8 below

### 4. Policing Matters

- a. Members note the local (ward) Police Report Leith Central CCM ([December 2025 & January 2026](#)).
- b. CE introduces police officers Lynsey Crawford and Robert Mhuru. The officers provide an update on policing matters in Leith Central:
  - The police are concentrating on patrols of Leith Walk, both high visibility and plain clothed, and the surrounding area to deter anti-social behaviour. This has led to two people being stopped for being in possession of stolen property, with one in possession of a knife.
  - Proactive road traffic controls have found some drivers driving outwith the terms of their licences, leading to the seizure of vehicles, as well as one driver whose MOT expired in February.
  - With regards to community support, the police have been visiting sheltered accommodation for elderly people to give advice on fraud and home security, and have continued youth engagement work with local youth groups.
  - There have been several notable incidents involving retail crime, after the police received information on shops reselling stolen property. The community team applied for warrants and recovered approximately £5000 worth of stolen goods. Arrests were made and the team hope this will deter the sale of stolen property.
  - Rachel Hutton from Harbour Homes asked for more information on the sheltered housing the police had visited, and RM clarified these were located on Albert Street and Gordon Street.
  - AE requested more information on the retail crimes raised. RM said goods which had been shoplifted from larger outlets were being sold at smaller, independent shops in the area. The licensing team has been made aware of this, but the shops remain open.
  - LC and RM note that their attendance tonight was not scheduled, but PC Callum Clark will attend the meeting in February, with future attendances to be agreed at this next meeting.

### 5. Open Forum (local residents and businesses)<sup>1</sup>

- Lisa Clark (resident) notes the [Leith Chooses](#) voting day will be taking place at the Kirkgate on Saturday, 24 January 2026. LC explains this is a participatory budgeting project, in which people who live or work in Leith can have a say in how a limited amount of council funding is spent in the area. Grants of up to £5000 are offered to local projects through this process. LC encourages those present to attend.
- A resident asked for the latest update on the Powderhall cycle lane.

**Action: Cllr Jack Caldwell to provide an update on plans to turn the Powderhall railway line into a cycle lane at next LCCC meeting.**

## 6. Parks & Green Spaces

- a. John Wilkinson provides an update from Friends of Pilrig Park (FoPP). JW says information on upcoming litter picks can be found on the park noticeboard. JW notes a large piece of graffiti near the Balfour Street entrance.

**Action: JW to get in touch with the council to remove this graffiti.**

- b. Simon Preston provides an update from the Friends of Montgomery Street Park. SP says there are limited updates from the winter months. There will be a litter pick on the last Sunday of the month and volunteering days every other Saturday. Over winter, some dead hedging and compost areas have been created and the wildflower area has been expanded, but they are waiting for Spring to arrive.
- c. Members welcome Mike Birch (trustee) and Debs Hahn from [Edinburgh Garden Partners](#). MB and DH give a presentation on their work:
  - EGP has existed for nearly fifteen years, with its ethos being to bring together garden owners with someone who does not have space to start a vegetable garden, putting partnership agreements in place.
  - EGP is looking for new volunteers and new garden owners, but in the Leith Central area, they are especially looking to recruit new garden owners.
  - In Edinburgh, waiting lists for allotments sometimes push twelve years, proving there is a high demand for growing space.
  - Older people and people with disabilities who cannot manage their own garden can benefit from having someone using their garden space. These relationships can be mutually beneficial, with volunteers gaining access to growing space, and garden owners connecting with people over a shared interest, and everyone feeling the benefits of building connections with people in their community and intergenerational friendships.
  - It is possible for larger groups of volunteers to clear a space if needed.
  - CE asks if the purpose has to be to start a vegetable garden. DH responds that the aim is not to offer garden maintenance services, and space is generally used to grow produce.
  - CE asks EGP to clarify issues such as access. DH responds that EGP supports partnerships being set up, with a soft contract covering things like access, use of tools, plans for the garden, how produce will be shared etc. Volunteers will have PVGs and training on safeguarding.
  - Robert Muhru (police) asks if EGP takes referrals. DH responds that most garden owners come from referrals, and these are welcomed.
  - DH says EGP is not a paid-for service, but where costs arise, this will be covered in the contract agreement. EGP has some budget if costs are a barrier.

**Action: SP to share information on EGP on LCCC socials.**

- d. No further Parks & Green Spaces matters relevant to the LCCC area are noted.

## 7. Licensing

- a. As previously noted, KK has sent apologies for this meeting and will update on progress towards LCCC Licencing Policy at the next meeting (for reference: [November discussion paper](#)).
  - i. The Edinburgh Licensing Forum has been noted as relevant to LCCC 's emerging Licensing Policy.
- b. Other licensing matters relevant to the LCCC area are noted: an application for Cooper's Rest on Easter Road to operate again as a pub and restaurant, which LCCC does not object to. No other matters were noted.

## 8. Planning

- a. The verbal update on planning issues at 106 - 162 Leith Walk Edinburgh EH6 5DX (also known as the Sandstone building) (20/05553/FUL) was noted: CE states that the development at 162 Leith Walk was due to be completed by the end of 2025, but there has now been some communications showing it will not be completed until 2028.

- b. The [response on behalf of Ben Macpherson MSP](#) regarding impact of PBSAs in Leith, aparthotels, and 162 Leith Walk was noted.

- JC noted that he raised a planning enforcement request over the proportion of buy to lets in the development at 162 Leith Walk.
- JC received a response saying that planning permission had been breached as affordable housing has not been provided.
- JC is in discussions with the council's affordable housing team, who want to see social housing delivered at the site, which is currently scheduled to be completed in the next financial year. If it is not started by June 2026, it will be revisited, but planning enforcement will not be started at this stage.
- Harald Tobermann noted that this seems to be 'gaming' by the developer, as housing was put up on the rest of the site, and it was their obligation to ensure social housing was built.
- JC notes that this is an issue happening in many parts of the country after the affordable housing programme was slashed in various budgets.
- JW noted that the footpath through the site remains inaccessible due to a fence being put around the outside of the site. JC noted that he will raise this issue with planning enforcement.
- Susan Rae (clr) said it would be worth establishing how many developments are in a similar position.
- Rachel Hutton (Harbour Homes Scotland) notes the perspective of a social housing organisation, saying lots of developments have not gone ahead or are on hold, in part due to banks charging higher interest and not being able to get deals from developers they used to get. Housing associations may have had to withdraw because they didn't have the funds they thought they had.
- CE noted the number of new PBSA developments in the area while new social housing is limited.
- JC noted a similar issue at the Powderhall development, which has not yet been started.

**Action: JC to raise issue of accessibility of footpath through 162 Leith Walk development.**

- c. The [short-term let applications](#) that have been objected to in line with LCCC's policy were noted.
- CE notes that she has objected to the majority of short-term let applications coming into the area.
  - CE notes that there is a list online, updated every month, of these applications and there are lots of new applications coming in.

- d. CE opened the floor to other planning matters relevant to LCCC area:

- CE noted that she had objected to a planning application for a PBSA to become a hotel over the summer, and has not yet heard any updates on its progress.
- SR noted several issues with PBSAs being built in the area, including that they don't pay the same council tax as other properties.
- HT notes that multiple PBSAs are used as hotel accommodation in the summer months.
- CE noted the rise of 'hotelisation' in the LCCC area, including 'aparthotels', which cause similar issues to PBSAs. CE asked if this should be addressed in LCCC policy on housing in the area.
- It was agreed that the issue of aparthotels should be incorporated into LCCC policy.
- JW noted that an application that had received many objections, and was rejected, has now been improved and will go to council soon. HT noted that this example highlights how important this lobbying is.

**Action: Avril Ewing to add a few sentences on 'hotelisation' of LCCC area as an addendum to PBSA or short-term let policy - to be agreed.**

## 9. Transport & Clean Streets

- a. HT provided an update on LCCC Transport & Clean Streets ([January 2026](#)):
- HT highlighted the ongoing work to address damage caused by the tram construction between Picardy Place and Newhaven, and noted the council dashboard which has been created to keep track of these following community lobbying.

- In terms of new tram proposals, HT stated that it is important the council considers the impact on existing public transport when constructing a new tram line, including over the bridges, which will impact the connectivity of the LCCC area. HT noted the council had received many comments already about this.
  - HT noted the closure of St Mark's Path, which was closed in November and then opened for Christmas and remains open. A long-term solution for it to remain open during development in the area is in progress.
  - HT noted that new traffic regulation orders are coming into place city-wide to give parking permits for healthcare and care workers.
  - CE noted that it is important to confirm whether these new permits will be free. JC understands they will be.
- b. SP provided an update on [progress](#) (or lack thereof) on “Elm Row Cycle Path: Incomplete Works and Continuing Safety Risk” and [Elm Row Proposals](#) by WELM Association:
- SP noted that the new cycle route has been opened, but the old route also remains open, with road markings still visible, which is causing confusion. There was some indication this would be fixed before Christmas but still hasn't happened.
  - HT urged councillors present to move this issue forward.
  - JW stated that this is a health and safety issue and the current state of the cycle lanes is dangerous.
  - JC stated that councillors can't directly instruct officers to carry out such work, but will raise the issue in a meeting he has scheduled.
  - CE notes that there has not been any response from politicians she has reached out to.
  - SP noted that LCCC may need a new policy regarding issues around cycle lane development in the area.

**Action: SP to send a formal request to councillors to address the issue of the Elm Row Cycle Path in a meeting of the transport committee.**

- c. JC noted that a good discussion was had at the last meeting about the proposal for pavement trees in Trafalgar Street. There are no further updates.
- d. CE opened the floor to any other Transport & Clean Streets matters relevant to the LCCC area. SK noted an issue that had been raised by a local resident about wanting additional support to keep the Crawford Bridge clean.

## 10. LCCC Governance

- a. The monthly report on LCCC's on- and offline engagement was provided by SP and is available to read here [\[add link\]](#).
- b. New member Jack Kerr agreed to get involved in writing the monthly Agenda with the help of HT with a view to eventually be appointed as Vice Chair.
- b. CE states that members should get in touch if they have skills they want to offer LCCC and/or would like to acquire skills, such as becoming knowledgeable about planning/transport/etc in order to be able to provide an informed opinion on behalf of LCCC.
- d. No further updates were provided on access and accountability for various online platforms operated by LCCC
- e. The [free online training](#) from Planning Aid Scotland was noted, and every new member was encouraged to take part.
- f. CE opened the floor to other LCCC governance issues. SK noted she is changing her personal email address and will pass this onto relevant members.

## 11. AOCB (LCCC members)

CE asked RH to update on her attendance at LCCC meetings:

- RH works for Harbour Homes, previously Port of Leith Housing Association.
- RH is attending LCCC meetings as well as Central and Newhaven meetings to get an idea of what is happening in the area and establish a connection with community councils, as Harbour Homes doesn't have a lot of interaction with the community beyond its tenants.
- RH noted that Harbour Homes has paused development for the time being.

Members noted that Pilrig Church is currently closed for worship services.

## 12. Bulletin

CE noted that members do not currently have the link so this cannot be actioned.

## 13. Future Meetings and planned meeting topics/presentations

- a. Members noted that meetings are always the third Monday of the month, and the next meeting will be February 16, followed by March 16, April 20, May 18 (AGM), June 15 (policies review).

### *Appendix*

- City of Edinburgh Council Scheme for Community Councils ([March 2025](#)) - our "constitution"
- (interactive) [map of LCCC area](#)