

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Leith Central Community Council

Monday, 21 September 2026 at 7pm

at Nelson Hall, McDonald Road Library



Actions	
Action	Owner
Submit LCCC's comments on the 9 Pilrig Street planning application.	CE
Draft a letter to MSPs highlighting the need for better legislation on short-term-let licensing and planning enforcement.	SP, HT, CE
Provide further points for inclusion in the CityPlan 2040 submission.	RH
Follow up separately with John Wilkinson regarding the Ashley Place appeal timetable.	JC
Discuss with colleagues the proposal for an operation to stop speeding bikes on Leith Walk.	JO
Explain publicly the difficulty in securing council attendance at LCCC or other public forums regarding the Broughton Road–St Mark's Park footbridge.	SP
Report back next month on the Broughton Road–St Mark's Park footbridge.	HT
Share the Powderhall petition when available.	SP
Discuss next steps on the London Road proposals.	SP and HT
Connect Scottish Historic Buildings Trust with Newhaven Heritage Group.	JM
Arrange a time to review the new IT system options in future meetings	MP
Circulate the UK Town of Culture 2028 questionnaire.	JM
Consider sharing the UK Town of Culture 2028 questionnaire through the Leith network and social-media channels.	JM and SP
Circulate background information on social-housing allocations.	RH
Add social-housing allocations to the next agenda.	MP
Share information about Leith Chooses on social channels	SP

1. Welcome, introductions, attendance, apologies

- The meeting opened with a musical overture, "Stand by Me".
- Charlotte Endcombe (CE) declared an interest in item 9 Pilrig Street, as the property is opposite her home.
- The order of business was agreed. Members were reminded to wait for the Chair CE to invite them before speaking.

2. Minutes of the Ordinary LCCC Meeting ([17 August 2026](#))— Approved, proposed by Martina Pugliese (MP) and seconded by John Wilkinson (JW).

3. Actions and Matters Arising from previous minutes

	Action	Actor	Status
1	Enquire about further updates on the closure of the bridge to/from St Mark's Path	HT/ AMM	On agenda under 7.Transport&Clean Streets
2	Invite a representative of the council to an LCCC meeting	HT	On agenda
3	Follow up on fixes to tactile pavements in the LCCC area.	JC	On agenda
4	Provide a breakdown of costs for LCCC's website/ document storage/email system and pros and cons of a new system.	MP	See point 4b
5	Contact McDonald Road Library about overhanging trees.	CE	CE wrote to them and had a response from Cllr Amy McNeese-Mechan (local councillor) to say she would try and get these removed.

4. Planning

- a. *Short-term lets*: Members noted that LCCC had objected to approximately 130 recent applications in line with its policy. It was noted that if planning is rejected initially, many go on to appeal these decisions.
- b. 9 Pilrig Street. Members discussed the proposal to convert the former short-term let into a 15-person HMO (Houses in multiple occupation) and agreed to object, citing the need to retain family housing. HT proposed the objection and Alan Dudley (AD) seconded it. **Action**: CE to submit LCCC's comments on the planning application.
- c. Members noted that application 26/03233 for a rooftop telecommunications base station at 139 Leith Walk had been refused.
- d. Members discussed gaps between short-term-let licensing and planning enforcement. Concerns raised via social media included licences being granted while planning applications were pending and then the planning application was withdrawn. There was evidence that the burden for reporting fell to residents, who often had a reluctance to complain where neighbours share a stair, as in order to report full name and address have to be shared. There was limited prosecution capacity, and fines when issued were often too low to deter non-compliance. There was also a challenge that as Edinburgh has different rules to different areas of Scotland, understanding of these issues can be limited. It was suggested that LCCC could act as complainant in selected cases and seek stronger legislation and penalties. **Action**: Simon, Harald and Charlotte to draft a letter to MSPs highlighting the need for better legislation.
- e. *CityPlan 2040*: Harald outlined the development-plan process and LCCC's draft submission. Members discussed proposed limits on purpose built student accommodation and short-term lets. Rachel Hutton flagged the need to consider displacement and other unintended consequences of the LCCC's policy to not allow development of new student accommodation or permitting short term lets, suggesting we look at examples from other cities. MP gave the example of Florence where the opening of new Short Term Lets (SLTs) is, since about a year ago, banned in the city centre, which is very small. STLs are mostly owned by large real estate groups rather than individuals.
This localised ban has simply led to a shift of the problem (high rents for residents, diminished offer of properties) to areas that surround the centre, and this effect is measurable. It is an example of a policy that is too localised and weak to be effective at solving the problem it is meant to solve. Another example of an unintended consequence of such limits was that a local housing association was offering students accommodation as they could be charged higher rent and the association needed the funds.

There was a concern that purpose built student housing would not fit future housing need in the area. Concerns about enforcement were repeated from earlier agenda items and asked to be included by JM, and the importance of stating LCCC's concerns clearly while engaging constructively was emphasised. The submission was supported, subject to acknowledging potential unintended consequences. **Action:** Rachel to provide further points to Harald for inclusion.

f. Other planning matters: No update was available on Ashley Place. **Action:** Jack Caldwell to follow up separately with John Wilkinson regarding the appeal timetable.

5. Policing Matters

- a. PC Jodie Osbourne presented the local police report for August–September 2026 and took questions. Members noted the forthcoming closing ceremony for the Knife Angel. Discussion covered shoplifting, prosecution decisions, plain-clothes policing in Leith, and illegal electric bikes. Police explained that e-bike riders can be prosecuted for road-traffic offences, but e-bikes are generally returned where ownership paperwork is produced unless wider criminality is suspected. Nine people in Leith had been charged in relation to illegal e-bikes; enforcement remained difficult where riders could not safely be stopped or identified.

There was support for an operation stopping speeding bikes on Leith Walk to help reduce dangerous cycling. JO said she would discuss idea with colleagues.

- b. Martina relayed a resident's concern that the attacks of 19 June had not appeared in the local police report. Police advised that incidents reported at a higher level would not ordinarily be repeated in community-council reports.
- c. PC Callum Clark is expected to attend the meeting on 16 November.

6. Open Forum (local residents and businesses)

None

7. Transport & Clean Streets

- a. Members noted the [September 2026 Transport & Clean Streets update](#).
- b. Members welcomed the Edinburgh Live article featuring AD and Cllr JC on the accessibility impacts of the new road layout. Alan's report is due to be considered by the next Transport Committee.
- c. *Other transport and clean-streets matters*
 - i. Concerns were raised by a local resident about delays to the number 11 bus. Members noted that wider bus-priority measures would be required to solve this. It was suggested that the local resident write to Lothian Buses about this so that they have a record and can use it to press for improvements longer term.
 - ii. *Broughton Road–St Mark's Park footbridge:* Members of LCCC and Powderhall Estate residents expressed strong concern about the continuing closure, poor communication, lack of a clear engineering assessment or repair plan, and the effects on schoolchildren, commuters, wheelchair users and access to green space. Alternative routes were described as longer, steeper and less safe. Members requested clearer information on risks, repair or replacement options, timescales and funding. Powderhall residents offered to organise a petition, which LCCC agreed to share. **Action:** Simon to explain publicly the difficulty in securing council attendance to LCCC or other public forums. Harald to report back next month. Action: LCCC to share the Powderhall petition when available.
 - iii. *Powderhall Green Corridor:* Members noted that work remained outstanding. Ben Macpherson is expected to attend in November.
 - iv. *London Road:* Simon raised concerns about proposed changes, including the possible closure of the busy Wellington Road bus stop when a less popular stop would remain open. **Action:** Simon and Harald to discuss next steps.

- v. *Illegal bikes*: Members expressed disappointment that seized bikes could be returned, while noting that any legislative change would be a matter for the UK Parliament.

8. Parks, Green Spaces, Heritage

- a. *Custom House*: Scottish Historic Buildings Trust outlined plans for a flexible digital museum and community hub. More than 1,000 items from private archives had been digitised. A pilot exhibition linked to Leith 900 is planned for spring 2027, alongside public consultation. Visitor-levy funding of £100,000 a year for three years had been secured. Existing resident artists are expected to remain until the end of 2029 while longer-term plans are developed. Further information would be available at the Doors Open Day. **Action**: Jed to connect the Trust with Newhaven Heritage Group.
- b. *Friends of Pilrig Park*: Members noted progress with ground works and new lighting, including wildlife-sensitive red lighting to protect bats.
- c. *Friends of Montgomery Street Park*: The Halloween event had been announced, a new raised bed was being built, and the next magazine was in preparation.
- d. No other parks or green spaces matters were raised.

9. Licensing

- a. No new licence applications were reported.
- b. No update was available on an LCCC licensing policy. Members agreed that this item should be closed as the group does not have the capacity to complete this.
- c. No other licensing matters were raised.

10. LCCC Governance

- a. No update was available on the proposed engagement strategy. **Action**: Charlotte to follow up but suggested this action is closed as there is limited capacity of members of LCCC.
- b. *New IT system*: Martina summarised responses from six community councils and the options in the paper. Members thanked her for the research and agreed that modest additional expenditure could be justified if it improved efficiency and resilience. Members also wished to test whether the proposed small providers were sufficiently future-proof and cost-effective. **Action**: Arrange a further meeting to review the options.
- c. *Engagement update on is the Halmyre Street Homeless Accommodation*: Online discussion broadly reflected the meeting. JM reported that representatives at a recent public meeting had been unable to answer a number of questions as they were too junior. There is a general – unconfirmed – concern that residents moving in would be people recently released from prison.
- d. A query was raised about the Stable Block and Out of the Blue's ambition to lease it; no substantive update was available.

11. AOCB (LCCC members)

Festival funding: HT questioned the allocation of £1.2 million from the visitor levy to the Fringe festival and whether the benefits reached the local area and if expansion of this festival was in the best interest of the city.

UK Town of Culture 2028: JM reported that he had joined the Leith Culture Partnership board and that Leith remained in contention. Currently funding of £60k has been allocated and a successful bid could bring £3 million for activity in Leith in 2028. **Action**: Jed to circulate the questionnaire; LCCC to consider sharing it through the Leith network and social-media channels.

Social-housing allocations: RH reported that emergency arrangements restricting allocations to homeless households had ended and that the council was seeking views on a revised policy. She noted the scale of demand and limited turnover, for example there were 43,000 social properties in Edinburgh but 31,000 people on a waiting list waiting for properties which rarely

become available. **Actions:** RH to circulate background information; MP to add the item to the next agenda.

Leith Chooses: Applications close on 12 October. **Action:** Simon to share information.

Future dates: Charlotte had contacted the library proposing 19 October, 16 November and 18 January and was working to confirm later dates.

12. Bulletin

There were no bulletin items.

13. Future Meetings and planned meeting topics/presentations

a. LCCC normally meets on the third Monday of each month. The next meeting is on 19th October at 7pm at McDonald Road Library.

b. No meetings in July or December.