

Minutes of the Leith Harbour and Newhaven Community Council ordinary meeting, at the Custom House, on Tuesday 22 October 2024 at 6:30pm

Actions and decisions are **RED ITALIC UNDERLINED SMALLCAPS**. *Nem con* means that no-one spoke or voted against an item.

Summary of actions and decisions (to be omitted from web-published version)

Item	Actor	Action
5.a row 1	Cllr Nols-McVey	Continue to pressure on behalf of Anchorfield and Constitution St residents
5.a. row 3	Cllr Nols-Mcvey, E Dick	Engage about lack of progress on public realm related to tram construction
5.a. row 4	Cllr Booth	Chase up about unnecessary tram-bell ringing at Port of Leith stop
5.a row 7	D Giles	Provide details of FOWLBB AGM
5.a row 8	E Dick	Pursue remediation of the public realm, especially plants, along the tram route
6.b	Cllr Faccenda	Continue to pressure about box junction on Commercial St
9.c	E Dick	Collate LHNCC's response to the visitor levy consultation
10.c.i	D Giles	Be LHNCC's rep to CCTT
10.d.i	D Giles, D Tharby	Share the latest minutes of the Water of Leith stakeholder group
10.f	Cllr Faccenda	Seek a CEC wreath-layer for the 10 November remembrance service

1 Introductions and apologies

1.a Present

Don Giles	LHNCC	Neil Tulloch	LHNCC	Harald Tobermann	Leith Central CC
Anna Khlibodorova	LHNCC*	Arthur Young	LHNCC	Sam Gallacher	SHBT
Jim Preacher	LHNCC	Bruce Ryan	Minutes secretary	3 residents/visitors	
Jason Ran	LHNCC	Cllr Chas Booth	Leith ward		
Douglas Tharby	LHNCC	Cllr Katrina Faccenda	Leith ward		

* associate member

1.b Apologies for absence

Elaine Dick	LHNCC	Ben Macpherson MSP	Edinburgh Northern and Leith
Cllr Adam Nols-McVey	Leith ward		

2 Presentation by Dr Sam Gallacher, Director of Scottish Heritage Buildings Trust

[Please also see presentation slides](#). Dr Gallacher reported:

- SHBT saves historic buildings. Its most important relationships are with local communities.
- SHBT has been involved with Custom House for 10 years, but it was community efforts that saved it via purchase by [Edinburgh's common good fund](#). The history of this is:
 - In 2022, a feasibility study went to CEC's culture and communities, and a hybrid option was approved. This set the rules for development.
 - SHBT then worked with [Richard Murphy](#) to get the project off the ground.
- SG has been the keeper of the Burrell Collection (Glasgow) and previously at National Trust for Scotland. He started at SHBT in February. He has worked on the building's concept, and hence to attract interest and funding.
- The concept is a 'town square for Leith' that is accessible from all sides, dynamic, and part of the streetscape.
- Hence it would centre on a digital (no objects) museum that tells many Leith's stories via apps, which would enable several exhibitions each day.
- Hence they are looking into creating a community trust, and gathering collaborations and new stories, e.g. from Leith's new (and existing) residents. They can digitise artefacts to help share these stories.
- There would also be a café/catering to help, and building on the lane. (There is a precedent for this in Glasgow.)
- Accessibility is important. The building was built to collect taxes, so is austere. SHBT wishes to reverse this with new entrances, lifts and new studio spaces that are open, so that people feel they are able to join in with things.
- Dock Place is good location for a market, if the public realm is improved.
- Leith has changed and will continue to change, so SHBT wishes to create social integration.
- The building needs better (sustainable) heating, so SHBT wishes to use the Water of Leith for a water source heat pump.
- Timescale: building governance structures would take 12 to 18 months, so the opening would be in ~2029.
- The cost of development would be ~£30m. SHBT is negotiating for funding, e.g. from the transient visitor levy. In any case, the building needs maintenance.
- The business case is likely to recommend free entry for Leith/Edinburgh residents, whose council tax would contribute to the capital costs. There would be some commercial use. It will be important to future-proof the building's finances.
- (in response to a concern about access to digital access for disabled people) The design will build on use of an access panel, and will include (for example) accessible toilets, different ways of accessing exhibits, and quiet spaces.
- (in response to a question about carbon costs of data and loss of craft knowledge) There is of course a cost for keeping old (electronic) data. SHBT is considering solar panels, recycling heat from digital screens, overall energy efficiency. Digital enables quick set-up of exhibitions. People should think of the set-up as cinema not mobile screens, and sociability.
- There was discussion of attracting cruise passengers, festival events etc to Leith.

3 Declarations of interests (LHNCC members)

- none

4 Minutes of 24 September meeting

- Accepted as-is (proposed N Tulloch, seconded A Young)

5 Matters arising from last meeting

5.a Actions from June meeting

Item	Actor	Action	Status
4.a row 1	Cllr Nols-McVey	Continue to pressure on behalf of Anchorfield and Constitution St residents	In progress – see 9.a. point 3
4.a row 2	Cllr Nols-McVey	Chase up lack of restoration of Portland Gardens pavement	
4.a.row 3	Cllr Nols-Mcvey, E Dick	Engage about lack of progress on public realm related to tram construction	Held over – E Dick not present
4.a row 5	Cllr Booth	Chase up about unnecessary tram-bell ringing at Port of Leith stop	In progress – no response yet from Edinburgh Trams
4	B Ryan	Ask cllrs to provide written reports for future meetings	Complete – see item 9
4	LHNCC	Raise with cllrs that emails from the LHNCC domain are not always reaching officers	Complete: emails seem to be getting through, even if replies are not being sent. Read-receipts should be requested
9.d	D Giles	Provide details of FOWLB AGM	In progress
9.d	E Dick	Pursue remediation of the public realm, especially plants, along the tram route	Held over – E Dick not present

6 Residents' issues

6.a Newhaven Main Street

- D Tharby: I attended an 'active' meeting arranged by Newhaven Heritage: buildings, grass, cobbles etc need to be fixed.

6.b Box junction at end of Commercial St

- A Young: this has been dug up [and then left].
 - Cllr Faccenda: I have sent numerous emails and WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO. I WILL CHECK IT HAS NOT BEEN FORGOTTEN. (It may have been delayed by other works.

7 Police report

See [report on LHNCC website](#).

- D Tharby: there will be no fireworks in Leith this year, apart from possibly for Diwali.
- Cllr Faccenda: CEC is attempting to use the new, complex legislation. There will be a big commercial event at Ingliston CEC is unlikely to be involved with firework events due to concerns for animal welfare etc.

8 Treasurer's report

- LHNCC has received its annual grant from CEC, so its current bank balance is £1144.05.

9 Councillor/MSP/MP responses from last meeting and reports

9.a Cllr Nols-McVey (via email)

- **Cycleways from Leith Walk to Ocean Terminal:** Works will start soon on the connection from Leith Walk via Henderson St for active travel. There is a large number of concerns on the designs on the commercial street section and I'm following these up with officials. These plans have not yet been approved and there is no funding for the delivery of the scheme beyond the Henderson St section and design works for the connection beyond that. This means it's unlikely Commercial St would actually happen anytime soon.
- **Kids with additional support needs:** Labour have again tried to withdraw support for young people with additional support needs. Again we've managed to fight these off, protecting provision during the recent October and forthcoming February school holidays. An attempt was made to withdraw this support outwith council and committee decisions, it will now be part of the budget process next year and the SNP will vote against any reductions proposed by the Labour/Tory/Lib Dem budget.
- **Anchorfield:** Council position is still to deny any responsibility, with limited help to residents on dealing with the building's issues. Categorical comments that the damage was not caused by the tram construction have proven not to be true – as I said at the time. We will continue to support residents affected.
- **Forth Ports 'Green port':** the latest report wiped off £90m of business rates, meaning the scheme which primarily aims to avoid paying tax on economic activity in the port is worth a total of a FURTHER £90m less to council as previously sold. This isn't a surprise and SNP have campaigned and voted against this scheme.

9.b Cllr Faccenda

- I suggest people to read leaflets and online materials about Leith Connections. The work so far is temporary, and is due to be assessed. I support reductions in traffic, especially through-traffic, to support wellbeing. I am concerned about floating bus-stops, bearing in mind such stops on Leith Walk.
- I suggest people respond to the [visitor levy consultation](#) and the [future libraries consultation](#).
 - B Ryan: I suggest people ask for weekend and evening openings so people can access libraries outwith working hours.
- In the future, there may be proposals for a levy on cruise-ship passengers.
- Ocean Terminal public realm around the trams looks scruffy. Work has now started and should be finished in ~10 days.

9.c Cllr Booth

- I attended a Scottish Government stakeholder round-table about cruise ship levies. CEC has Leith, Newhaven and Queensferry, and hence has the third largest port area in Scotland. Scottish Government will consult on a cruise ship levy before the end of 2024. Cruise companies were sceptical but local authority officials were generally in favour. There is a regulatory gap because CEC is likely to set up a visitor levy but this would not extend to cruise ships that effectively are hotels. Also, passengers go straight from the ships to central Edinburgh, thus not supporting Leith's economy.
 - D Tharby: there are drop-ins on the Royal Mile (2 Nov 11-3) and at Waverley Station (7 Nov 3-7)
 - **ACTION: E DICK TO COLLABORATE LHNCC'S RESPONSE TO THE VISITOR LEVY CONSULTATION**
- There was an appeal to DMSC about a plan for 20 flats at 4 industry lane. I was very concerned, so asked for a site visit and refusal due to inappropriate mass. Neither was successful. The application is linked to a car dealership at Ferry Rd.
- Leith Connections has three elements:
 - Cycle lane from the Foot of the Walk. This has permissions and funding. Work should start in November.
 - Commercial St, Bernard St etc. This is not yet funded. I understand that well-designed floating bus stops work well.
 - Low traffic neighbourhood. The 6-month monitoring update seems very positive: vehicle flows and pollution levels have decreased significantly in almost all roads. (Car traffic is 'evaporating' rather than being displaced.) Walking, cycling and peak flows are more mixed. Hence CEC will decide in Feb 2025 (after the 13-month report) whether to make the LTN permanent. Duncan Place needs some work.
 - CEC reports on monitoring at <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cycling-walking-projects-1/leith-connections/7>.
 - A resident: so far the LTN has made a positive difference.
- City Plan 2030 is now back from the Scottish Government. It would bring stronger policies on affordable housing etc. CEC planning is due to vote on acceptance of CP2030 tomorrow, then full council will make a decision on 7 November.

10 Standing items and updates**10.a Planning**

- Cllr Booth: BT has applied to replace traditional phone-boxes with digital advertising structures, some of which would have WIFI boosters. CEC has refused most of these, especially in conservation areas. BT does not need planning permission to remove phone-boxes but does need permission to erect new structures. Reasons for previous refusals are:
 - The proposal does not comply with LDP policy Des 1 Design - Quality and Context as it is likely to have a high impact in visual terms to the detriment of the area.
 - The proposal does not comply with LDP policy Des 5 Development Design - Amenity as it is likely to adversely impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties.
 - The proposals are contrary to the non-statutory guidelines on Adverts and Sponsorship as digital adverts are not supported on street furniture other than on bus shelters in appropriate locations.
 - The proposal does not comply with NPF4 Policy 24 e - Digital infrastructure due to its adverse impact on visual amenity.

10.b Licensing**10.b.i Review of short-term lets**

- Cllr Booth: CEC maintains a [register of applications for STL licences](#). There can be enforcement for both licensing and planning and planning for STLs. There are three types of STL license: home-let, home-share, secondary letting.

10.c Transport**10.c.i Community Councils Together on Trams and Edinburgh Bus Users Group updates**

H Tobermann reported on behalf of both CCTT and EBUG:

- **Community Councils Together on Trams**
 - CCTT is a coalition of the CCs along the 'trams to Newhaven' route. It has been engaging with TTN since before construction started, and is of the firm opinion that the project is not yet finished.
 - Public realm remains damaged, and there are problems with signalling (which almost led to drivers striking). There are safety issues. There is a big financial issue (maybe £20m) due to outstanding issues which should be fixed or paid for by the contractor. However, there are only two people left on the TTN team, so it will be very difficult to hold the contractor too account. Even if CEC fixes the issues itself, this will lead to a major accounting exercise.
 - The defect log is not public but may be published in a forthcoming report to CEC.
 - This project's road safety audit should have been published in November 2023 but several FOI requests were needed to obtain it. **CEC and the contractors do not intend to fix most of the issues found in the RSA.**
 - CCTT will continue to liaise with TTN and CEC's new transport convenor. He has already tackled the bus-tracker issue.
 - Planters along the route are **mostly to be removed**.
 - Because of these issues, CCTT will continue to function, mostly via email. **DECISION: D GILES TO BE LHNCC'S REP TO CCTT.**
- **Edinburgh Bus Users Group**
 - LHNCC could become an associate member of EBUG. **(ACTION: H TOBERMANN TO SEND THE RELEVANT LINK.)**

- Leith St was closed during construction of the St James Centre, leading to significant bus diversions. This now might recur during complete refurbishment near the Omni Centre. LCCC wishes to build a coalition of relevant CCs to oppose closure of (bus) lanes, then pressure Cllr Day so he can intervene in time. This is more than simply a planning issue.

10.d Environment

10.d.i Water of Leith Basins update

- D Giles: about 2 years ago Ben Macpherson MSP set up a stakeholder group and hence obtained promises of progress on siltation. (Forth Ports, Water of Leith 2000 and Bluefield international are the main owners of WoL. Scottish Water is also involved. There is also strong representation of nearby businesses.)
 - SW is also responsible for the Coalhill CSO that regularly discharges into WoL but is not monitored. The group is encouraging the Water of Leith Conservation Trust to be involved in management in this area.
 - **ACTION: G GILES TO SHARE, VIA D THARBY, THE LATEST MINUTES OF THE STAKEHOLDER GROUP.**

10.d.ii Parks

- D Tharby: there is 'thriving green spaces' funding. This would apply to Tolbooth, Mill Lane Park etc in LHNCC's area.
 - J Preacher: what about Discovery Gardens?
 - D Tharby: this looks poor. Ocean Terminal appears to be determined to get it sorted.
 - J Ran: there appear to be legal issues about this, so OT is considering suing Trams to Newhaven.

10.e Community

10.e.i Edinburgh Partnership Board, Transformation and Improvement Program (TIP)

- D Tharby: this is in progress but some consultations are not receiving good response rates.

10.e.ii Leith Chooses

- No discussion

10.f Key diary dates ahead of next meeting

- Sunday 10th November (3pm), Remembrance Service, Leith Community Treatment Centre
 - D Tharby is organising this. Other LHNCC representatives are sought.
 - **ACTION: Cllr FACCENDA TO SEEK A CEC WREATH-LAYER.**
- Sunday 17th November, Remembrance Service for Seamen, Memorial at Malmaison
 - D Tharby will lay LHNCC's wreath.

11 Any other business

- A resident: the cobbles on the Shore and hence the road-markings are very poor.
 - D Tharby/Cllr Faccenda: LHNCC is aware of this but cobble-remediation work is in the queue behind similar work at Lawnmarket, which is taking a long time.

12 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 26th November 2024 at Custom House