



Leith Harbour and Newhaven Community Council

Final minutes

Tuesday 24th June, 2025

18:30–20:30

Leith Community Centre

Present:

AE	Avril Ewing	CH	Connal Hughes
DG	Don Giles	DT	Douglas Tharby
ED	Elaine Dick (Meeting Chair)	IM	Ian McCormack
JC	Jonathan 'Geo' Camp	JM	Joanne McClelland
KF	Katrina Faccenda (Ward Councillor)	NT	Neil Tulloch
VB	Viktorya Budre	MP1	Member of the public 1
MP2	Member of the public 2	MP3	Member of the public 3
MP4	Member of the public 4	MP5	Member of the public 5
MW	Margaret Wright		

Apologies:

ANM	Adam Nols McVey (Ward Councillor)		
AY	Arthur Young	CB	Chas Booth (Ward Councillor)
DF	David Fenton	IK	Isabel Kane
JR	Jason Ran	MPH	Morgane Perez-Huet

Distribution: Present and apologies

Item		Who
1.	Introductions & Apologies	
1.1	All present introduced themselves.	-
2.	Declaration of interests	
2.1	None raised	-
3	Minutes of 15th April 2025 meeting	
3.1	NT proposed the minutes of the last Council meeting and DG seconded them.	-
3.2	Whether minutes will be posted on the website was discussed. DT noted that there are things that are needed to be done, but that aren't getting are getting around to being done. ED note this has been discussed at the internal meeting on the 16 th of June. CH noted he would put minutes on the website. DT/ED to send on comments.	DT/ED
4.	Matters Arising from previous minutes	
4.1	7a.7 ED noted it was just the affordable homes matter for taking back the historic planning application for the Western Harbour Ponds site.	-
4.2	4.8 DT has carried this out. DT could not confirm when the panel meets. DT to find out and report back to the council.	DT
4.3	DT noted all further matters arising to be covered in the agenda.	Note
5.	Residents' Issues	
5.1	ED confirmed that none were received.	-
5.2	MP3 reported that Scottish Fire and Rescue Services Marionville Fire Station is proposed for closure. He noted that the station is based in Craigentenny, but the engines spend a lot of time in LHNCC area. MP3 reported that the current proposal	-

	<p>is for SFRS to close Marionville and move. MP£ noted that overall footprint in Leith area is to increase in population, and that this is a change we need to recognise. As a result, response times to this area will increase. MP£ noted that SFRS are refusing to give information as to how this would impact areas around the fire station.</p> <p>MP£ reported that SFRS say that Leith won't be losing a firefighting appliance as it will be moved to Newcraghall. However, the Marionville machine is a 'running' machine, always available. That will not be the case if it moves to Newcraighall. MPE noted that five Watch Commanders are at Marionville, but these positions will go if it moves. If it moved, it would be classed as a 'second machine' which means it can be taken out of service which is not the case just now.</p> <p>MP£ reported that over the last two years there has been time when the second machine at McDonald road has been out of service, indicating this may happen if it is moved to Newcraighall.</p> <p>MP£ reported that RAAC concrete at Marionville is noted as the reason for leaving the site, as well as other backlog maintenance issues. MP£ confirmed that some other stations are being rebuilt.</p>	
5.3	<p>KF noted that CEC leader will write to SFRS, and all councillors are aware of what is happening. MP3 noted there has been consultation for some time, but no real engagement with the local community. Not sure if this was done in consultation with Scottish Government. KF suggested writing to the Criminal Justice Committee. KF can send the links for the population density in Leith.</p>	KF
5.4	<p>All noted that Leith one of the most densely populated in Scotland, with the added development at Seafield still to come. MP£ noted that currently if McDonald Road is over-run, then Crew Toll take over, then Tollcross. DT noted there's a strategic plan across the Lothians. NT noted fire attendance at Seafield has not been raised. NT to raise this at the Seafield group.</p>	NT
5.5	<p>JM thanked MP3 for the presentation asked for data on near misses? MP3 not aware of whether this is recorded. JM noted this would make a case. JM noted about consultation with architects, JM asked if someone in this fire station deals with that. Resident noted this is a specific department that they don't get involved with.</p>	-
5.6	<p>DG asked how the coverage in Edinburgh compares with other cities in the UK. CH asked if high density relates to more fires? MP3 wasn't sure, but noted that McDonald road and Tollcross are very busy. KF suggested writing to Ben Macpherson to put in written questions.</p>	-
5.7	<p>KF noted a high incidence of fires in high rises recently. Resident noted this doesn't make sense given the increase in population, increase in eBike fires.</p>	-
5.8	<p>JM to write a draft letter to Ben Macpherson and draft. MP3 confirmed he can act as liaison.</p>	JM
5.9	<p>MW echoed the concern about the design assumptions behind high-rise blocks of flats.</p>	-
5.10	<p>Fire at Cables Wynd House. MP3 noted that the crew of the height appliance couldn't do that because of blockage on the surrounding road.</p>	-

6.	Police Report	
6.1	Nothing submitted. ED noted one was circulated in May. ED to ask to get Police to attend in person.	ED
7.	Standing Items and Updates	
7a.	Planning & Licensing	
7a.1	RBS Building on Bernard Street. ED noted LLCC got in touch as they had concerns, and have suggested LHNCC become statutory consultee, which has been granted. ED to go back to LLCC, and to speak to IM to coordinate monitoring. The proposal is for it to be converted to serviced apartments. AE interested as well. Deadline of the 27 th of June. IM to lead, with discussion by email. ED to request and extension for comments.	IM ED
7a.2	<p>Western Harbour – plot A1. ED noted LHNCC had voted to object, and the application was withdrawn, but has now come back. ED has circulated the proposal to seek consensus on what LHNCC’s response will be this time. DT suggests adding text to what was put in originally. MP1 doesn’t see what has improved since the last planning application.</p> <p>MW noted that she lives nearby.</p> <p>ED noted destruction of biodiversity of the ponds, but notes that the affordable homes target has now been met.</p> <p>MP1 noted the loss of biodiversity due to the proposals. MP1 noted the developer states the trees are invasive and low value, but that this is not the case. ED agrees. MP1 noted that there are other spaces nearby available, such as Plot 1B, which is open grassland.</p> <p>MP1 noted the carparking challenge of the site, that it has gone from 104 to 154 yet car parking is already an issue. ED reported that there are 409 objections so far, 3 in favour. Resident 2 to send on some of their survey responses.</p> <p>ED noted that we need houses, but also quality green space. CEC is trying to create quality green space elsewhere in the city. ED asked KF if there is anything they can do. KF noted the focus on community-centred decision-making in CEC Planning. KF suggests keeping up pressure, and when it comes to committee that deputations are made, and base the objections on valid reasons.</p> <p>A vote was held and all were in favour of objecting.</p> <p>ED happy to update the objection and circulate.</p> <p>KF noted that the CC will get an email as a statutory consultee. KF noted this will automatically go to committee for several reasons. KF noted it may go straight to Scottish Government. KF agreed that this should be part of the Local Place Plan submission.</p> <p>MP3 noted the implication of NPF4, but that the developer locked it in Planning in Principle.</p> <p>JM asked about the feeling locally about the rest of the peninsula being developed for housing. MP3 noted that the additional construction puts Plot A1 under even greater pressure. MP3 noted previous masterplans recommended wetlands, and</p>	ED

	<p>lower density.</p> <p>MW noted exhaustion with claims of consultation, but there's never any discussion about forming community.</p> <p>JM noted a specific conversation to be had about this area in the LPP process.</p>	
7a.3	<p>Seafield Masterplan. NT noted that nothing is happening, the next meeting is in August to give council offers more time to consider responses to the statutory consultation.</p>	NT
7b.	Transport	
7b.1	<p>Leith Connections. JC noted that Sandport bridge is open for walking. IM had reported signage as being messy at last meeting, and after this it was attended to. VB has a form for reporting these types of issues and will circulate the link.</p>	VB
7b.2	<p>Trams (and CCTT). ED noted a meeting coming up to track snags, and it is being worked through. DT noted some 'tap' machines don't work, but noted this wasn't part of the CCTT.</p> <p>JC asked if old diversion signage is on it, ED confirmed it is.</p>	-
7c.	Environment and greenspace/bluespace	
7c.1	<p>Water of Leith Basins and the Shore. DG reported that Ben Macpherson is arranging meetings. At these meetings the issue of silt is raised, but the owners don't do anything.</p> <p>ED reported the meeting on the 20th of May. ED attended with JM and MPH. It covered the proposed development of basin 2. JM noted a focus on the barges proposal, with a long-standing planning condition, which highlighted that there is no policing of old planning consents</p> <p>JM reported the presentation from Scottish Water and their work throughout the water of Leith river course. JM noted concerns from SW about climate change, and request for urban drainage, permeable surfaces etc.</p> <p>JC noted the environmental committee meeting tomorrow and agenda item for quality of water of the water of Leith. JC noted the work of SOS Leith in monitoring water quality.</p> <p>JM noted another meeting was to be arranged, possibly September. This topic will contribute to the LPP.</p>	-
7c.2	<p>SEPA consultation – EPAS. JC reported that he and MPH have drafted a response to the consultation for input, which he will circulate.</p>	JC
7d.	Heritage	
7d.1	<p>Custom House. ED noted this is to be added to the next agenda.</p>	ED
7e.	Community	
7e.1	<p>Leith Gala Day. DT noted the bad weather. MW noted that there were some people there. MW noted concern over residents being unaware of everything that's going on in the CC area.</p>	-
7e.2	<p>Edinburg Festival Fringe. MPH gave apologies and passed a note on that she will</p>	-

	update on this next time. JM noted there is a draft engagement plan that will be circulated.	
7e.3	DT asked if Google Groups had been set up. ED noted it had, but that IK is not included in them yet.	-
8.	Councillor/MSP/MP responses and updates	
8.1	KF reported that there was a full council meeting last week. It covered the previous council leader investigation. KF happy to answer questions on this topic.	-
8.2	KF reported that a motion was passed on moratorium on PBSA.	-
8.3	KF reported on the finance and resources approving funds for tour de France without consulting councillors. KF outlined the background to the decision-making. Finance and resources committee agreed to spend the money, but legacy still to be agreed.	-
8.4	KF noted that the area in front of Linksvie House is in poor condition, and KF is working on tidying it up.	-
8.5	KF reported that planning consent lodged for retrofit of Cables Wynd. KF and CB are in touch with locals after the fire. Work to connect residents with the fire brigade to make sure the evacuation plan is understood.	-
8.6	KF reported that CEC was non-compliant with housing people in emergency accommodation, and that the Index has been suspended to stop people applying for housing as it is all being used for emergency cases. AE noted the number of vacant properties. KF noted void properties being reduced, but some voids always will be needed for some reasons. KF noted that people can write to local councillors about vacant CEC properties. JM asked about non-CEC vacant homes, KF noted a workshop this week regarding this is being planned.	-
8.7	Leith Connections. KF noted that existing below ground pipes at Sandport Place were not what was expected, leading to delays. VB asked about the trees that were removed. ED noted that they were dying due to the collars. KF to check where more trees are to be planted and report back.	KF
8.8	Tram reinstatements, green space works. ED noted that we keep being told its being done. KF suggested keep pushing. ED to speak with KF. ED noted significant greenspace issues along the tramline.	ED
8.9	JM noted Leith Primary School challenge getting play equipment for the playground. JM to update KF if nothing happens after the next meeting.	JM
9.	Local Place Plan	
9.1	JM noted the list of consultees has been created, and looking for volunteers to hand out leaflets. JM to speak to others off-line.	JM
10.	Internal meeting	
10.1	DT noted that it was a good meeting and that all duties have been confirmed. ED to send out a written record. VB to send on transcription.	VB
11.	Any other business	
11.1	Previous council accounts to be sent around to be signed off.	DT

11.2	Programme for EACC online meeting to be circulated.	DT
11.3	The problem fishermen at Rennie's Isle noted by JC.	-
11.4	DT noted that the CC will not meet in July, though an online session could be held if any councillors would like. The next in person meeting will be on the 26 th of August 2025.	All

Selected Acronyms used:

CC – Community Council
CEC – City of Edinburgh Council
FoWLB – friends of Water of Leith Basin
HMO – House of Multiple Occupation
LHNCC – Leith Harbour and Newhaven Community Council
LLCC – Leith Links Community Council
LCCC – Leith Central Community Council
LPP – Local Place Plan
PBSA – Purpose Built Student Accommodation
SHBT – Scottish Historic Buildings Trust
SG – Scottish Government
STL – Short Term Lets
SW – Scottish Water.