



# Leith Harbour and Newhaven Community Council

## Final minutes

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2025

18:30–20:30

Leith Community Centre

### Present:

AE	Avril Ewing	CB	Chas Booth (Ward Councillor)
CH	Connal Hughes	DG	Don Giles
DT	Douglas Tharby (Meeting Chair)	IM	Ian McCormack
JM	Joanne McClelland	JR	Jason Ran
MP1	Member of the public 1	MP1	Member of the public 1
MP1	Member of the public 1	MW	Margaret Wright
MF	Mark Fenton White Bridge	SB	Sam Brachin Orbit

### Apologies:

ANM	Adam Nols McVey (Ward Councillor)	AY	Arthur Young
DF	David Fenton	ED	Elaine Dick
IK	Isabel Kane	JC	Jonathan 'Geo' Camp
KF	Katrina Faccenda (Ward Councillor)	MPH	Morgane Perez-Huet
NT	Neil Tulloch	VB	Viktorya Budre

### Distribution: Present and apologies

Item		Who
<b>1.</b>	<b>Introductions &amp; Apologies</b>	
1.1	All present introduced themselves. KF, JC, ED, MPH, NT passed on apologies.	-
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declaration of interests</b>	
2.1	No declarations of interest were noted.	-
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of 26th August 2025 meeting</b>	
3.1	JM proposed the last minutes, JR seconded.	-
<b>4.</b>	<b>Matters Arising from previous minutes</b>	
4.1	DT noted that police reports aren't as timeous as they used to be and that the format of the reports is not down to the police. DT will circulate when it is issued each time.	DT
4.2	DT noted most points from the previous meeting will be covered in the agenda.	-
<b>5.</b>	<b>Ocean Point 1</b>	
5.1	MF presented the proposals for Ocean Point 1, an existing office development near Ocean Terminal. MF explained the history of Ocean Terminal, including the reduction in presence of retail. MF gave a background to Whitebridge. MF explained the background as to the proposal for a hotel in this location, and a focus on keeping expenditure in Leith.	Note
5.2	MF explained that an offer has been put in subject to planning. The project will keep the existing shell, with a deep refurb planned. The proposal is that locals will be able	Note

	to use parts of it. MF highlighted that most guests travel by train and plane/tram.	
5.3	MF noted that the scheme is looking to mimic Port of Leith distillery views. They're looking to embed in a location, and it isn't about exclusivity. MF noted it will have a similar fitout to the Moxy brand. MF noted that they want to add to the community. The proposal has approximately 150 bedrooms. It will counter AirBnBs, given the rates are comparable. The scheme is not going higher than the present building, though they will add services to the basement.	Note
5.4	MF noted that a PAN has been submitted for change of use, and a series of statements have been submitted. MF expects 3 to 5 months to get through Planning.	Note
5.5	IM asked if the artists in residence will be evicted. MF confirmed they will be.	Note
5.6	MF noted that they do different styles within their brands. This one will be similar to the Moxy hotel brand. Relaxed, leisure seating. Kabanas in Liverpool is an example, and one outside St Pancras on Euston Road.	Note
5.7	JM asked what could happen at ground floor to give a more active frontage. MF explained that the focus is on the top floor rather than ground floor. JM suggested something could be found to give activity at ground floor level. CB asked how personal safety will be created for people generally. MF noted there will be reception on the ground floor. CB asked about active frontages to give a feeling of security for people walking by, and creating overlooking the street. MF noted the main team office will be on the ground floor, with the lounge for guests and small canteen.	Note
5.8	JR asked if the plan gets approved, what the timeline would be to build it out. MF replied that if all goes to plan, opening will be within 2027.	Note
5.9	MP2 asked what the other proposals would be for the site. MF thinks the others would knock it down and rebuild for residential, another would turn it into a hotel but doesn't have an operator.	Note
5.10	CH asked what the CC is to do. MF explained that the locals need to use the bar and café, but also whether the CC would feel like it would be a good fit with the community.	Note
5.11	MW asked for other examples of hotels that merge well with the community. MF explained the concept, noting the 'merging' may be too strong a word.	Note
5.12	MW asked where the money comes from. MF noted it is private equity and bank debt, with the ownership sat with Private Equity, which is UK based, and Whitebridge.	Note
5.13	DT asked about the local supply chains. MF explained that the architect is Edinburgh-based.	Note
5.14	CB asked for clarity on the planning proceed. MF noted a full planning application for change of use has been submitted.	Note
5.15	MP asked if MF is the preferred bidder. MF confirmed that are in an exclusivity period.	Note
5.16	DT thanked MF for attending and presenting to the CC.	Note

<b>6.</b>	<b>Police Report</b>	
6.1	DT noted no report had been provided.	Note
<b>7.</b>	<b>Local Place Plan</b>	
7.1	JM noted that survey 2 is live, and that sessions in the Kirkgate and Leith Library have been done, with time in the Polis Box (Leith Walk) on the 28 <sup>th</sup> , and Leith Network, and Leith Business Network, and Leith Chamber of Commerce.	Note
7.2	JM noted the survey has been sent round schools, with a simplified one for primary school children.	Note
7.3	JM noted that the Survey is running until 10 <sup>th</sup> October, then a summary sent to CCs, then the write up. Next meeting in October we will share what we have and look for discussion. JM looking for actions, given the cynicism of many respondents about being listened to.	Note
7.4	MP2 agreed that simplistic actions and being held to account are important.	Note
7.5	DT noted the importance of city councillors attending CC to give voice.	Note
7.6	DT noted the Edinburgh Partnership board is doing work that overlaps with this.	Note
<b>7.</b>	<b>Standing Items and Updates</b>	
<b>7a.</b>	<b>Planning &amp; Licensing</b>	
7a.1	<b>PBSA.</b> DT noted that LCCC request to have a moratorium on PBSA, AE noted council officers said there would be too much risk of challenge by developers. IM noted the clear legal advice was that it would be challenged, and that the council would lose those challenges. IM reported that PBSA would be dealt with under the current system. JM asked if this was because it was included in the 2030 City Plan. IM noted Cllr Aston asked if the plan can be changed, but officers were not clear. IM to look into how we could oppose PBSA in Leith. MW noted the point made about how changes struggle with existing plans. CB noted that the legal advice was accepted, but CEC did agree to set up a strategic group to look at PBSA in context of housing needs. DG asked CB if the Planning Committee is required to approve certain applications. CB explained the difference between Planning & Housing and Planning appeals committee. CB explained how the process works with planning applications, appeals, and materiality.	IM
7a.2	<b>STLs.</b> IM reported that there have been no applications for STLs as such since the last meeting, but there has been an application for CoL for a STL. IM has spoken to people and explained the background that a STL operating for more than 10 years should not be applying for CoL, but, really they should have applied for Planning. CB explained that a judicial review ruled against CEC, which said that the change of use is not retrospective. If an STL has been operating without consent there is no grounds for objection. CB noted that c.95% of STL Planning applications are being refused. IM request the CC read the objection put in previously, and will use the same for CoLs in the future.	All
7a.3	<b>Royal Bank Building Bernard Street.</b> IM noted no update on this one.	Note
7a.4	<b>Seafield Masterplan.</b> DT reported no update from IM.	
<b>7b.</b>	<b>Transport</b>	
7b.1	<b>Leith Connections.</b> DT trying to get Miles Wilkinson to come along to a CC meeting. Several noted that works are progressing slowly. MW noted the chaos of coming out	CB

	of Lidl car park onto Hendsen Street. CB acknowledged the slow progress, and asked for comments. JM asked for a city-wide plan for traffic flow proposals. CB noted the 'circulation plan' of Our Future Streets. CB to send on.	
7b.2	<b>eBikes.</b> DT noted the speed some go. CH noted the fast ones are illegal. CB recommended a report by the All Party Working Group on unregulated eBikes by Laura Laker <a href="https://appgcw.org/resources/inquiries/unregulated-and-unsafe-the-threat-of-illegal-e-bikes/">https://appgcw.org/resources/inquiries/unregulated-and-unsafe-the-threat-of-illegal-e-bikes/</a> CB explained the difference between what should go on the cycle path and what should go on the road.	Note
7b.3	<b>Ebug.</b> DT notes that the membership is not clear, as LHNCC was via an individual. DT asked for recommendations. All agreed that DT should join as an organisation.	DT
7b.4	<b>CCTT.</b> ED has reported that this month's meeting has been postponed. JR noted that nothing has been done with Discovery Garden, despite reassurance from Michelle McLeod, a manger of Ocean Terminal. DT to seek an answer and find out key stakeholders.	DT
<b>7c.</b>	<b>Environment and greenspace/bluespace</b>	
7c.1	<b>FOWLb.</b> DG reported they are still considering the future of the organisation as they need younger people to take up the officer roles. DG noted that they hold a couple of meetings per year. All to seek people who may be interested. DG to send on a couple of paragraphs on the group to assist.	DG
7c.2	<b>Western Harbour Ponds.</b> MW reported that the swans have been taken away by SSPCA and have been taken to Blackford Pond due to lack of rainfall and standing water. MW noted that the ponds are now desolate, and the surrounding community are suffering. MW noted that this has shown the importance of the green space, and how good it would be if the new housing proposed for the site could respect this.	Note
7c.3	<b>Salamander Street</b> air quality monitoring. MP2 reported that ED is working on a paper regarding this.	Note
<b>7d.</b>	<b>Community</b>	
7d.1	<b>Leith Chooses.</b> JR reported that applications opened on the 13 <sup>th</sup> of August and will close on 22 <sup>nd</sup> of October. The theme is Wellbeing in Leith. DG noted this is a very wide topic. DG note that there is an event in Jan or Feb, and each candidate will have a stall to convince attendees to vote for them, each attendee has 4 votes. JR noted it is one of the longest PB programmes running in Scotland. Applications can be up to £5k. JR asked that all spread the word. JR noted the sessions to help applicants put in submissions. One in Utilita on the 4 <sup>th</sup> of October, and open meetings on 15 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> of October in the Community Centre.	Note
7d.2	<b>Edinburgh Visitor Levy.</b> DT will keep the CC up to date in general terms, but notes that all members have been asked not to pass on information. CC will have to keep an eye on committee updates. CB noted that the legislation is restrictive on what it can be spent on. CB noted that requests should be put to City Councillors.	Note
7d.3	<b>Community Remembrance Sunday.</b> DT noted a small ceremony at 3pm, Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> of November at the Treatment Centre. DT to speak to MPH about attending. CH asked if there should be a vote on whether the CC should attend. DT asked for help organising this year and will send a note out. MW noted the seaman service the Sunday after remembrance Sunday.	DT

7d.4	JM noted that it would be useful for a calendar and stakeholder list. DT to list out the annual calendar and what the CC is involved in.	DT
<b>8.</b>	<b>Councillor/MSP/MP responses and updates</b>	
8.1	CB noted that the benches are back at the Kirkgate. The 3 ward councillors put pressure on officers about the removal. CB noted that they will reassess the process for removing benches. CB and others now speaking with police to deal with antisocial behaviour in the area.	CB
8.2	CB noted that a new city cycle scheme is to launch but does not cover Leith and is too expensive. CB does support it though.	Note
8.3	CB noted the consultations out at present: North/south trams closes on the 7th November. Community Wealth Building closes on 28 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	Note
8.4	CB noted the recent full council meeting, where a motion on ocean health was presented, which greens added to.	Note
8.5	CB noted the transport committee on the 11 <sup>th</sup> of September. £140k funding to do additional work LTN, the majority will be in LLCC, but will be a rush to spend it.	Note
8.6	CB reported that he brought an amendment to tackle delays to active travel projects.	Note
8.7	CB note that he also brought motion to tackle commercial waste zoning, but even on a voluntary basis this was voted down.	Note
8.8	CB reported that the Integrated Joint Board put in motion a safe drug facility, which may come to Leith. There will be a consultation in the new year. JR asked if this will be similar to Glasgow, but CB was not sure.	Note
8.9	JR asked about the structure of the IAJB, and CB gave the background.	Note
8.10	CWB consultation. JM offered to draft a response and AE and IM to feed in and JM to submit. CB to ask for the questions from the Officers for the CC to respond to.	JM
<b>10.</b>	<b>EACC/Accounts</b>	
10.1	DT noted the EACC conference on the 11 <sup>th</sup> of October in the CEC Business Centre, with the title 'Paths for a stronger Community Councils'. Only 2 per council. AE to attend.	AE
<b>11.</b>	<b>Any other business</b>	
11.1	DT noted a meeting is required to look at roles at the next meeting, including Secretary.	DT
11.2	MW asked about minutes on the website. CH is willing to put them up but is awaiting the historic minutes from ED. JM to send on the ones done recently.	JM
11.3	JM noted no response from Ben Macpherson about Marionville Fire Station. CH noted he spoke on it in Parliament recently. SFRS reported that they have a five year plan. CB suggested inviting them to the CC. DT to invite SFRS.	DT
11.2	DT confirmed the date of next meeting as Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> of October. Venue TBC.	Note

**Selected Acronyms used:**

CC – Community Council  
CCTT – Community Councils Trams Together  
CEC – City of Edinburgh Council  
CoL – Certificate of Lawfulness  
EBuG – Edinburgh Bus Users Group  
EVL – edinburgh Visitor Levy  
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.

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