

Leith Chooses meetings 23 & 29 April 2025

Present:

23th –Don, Jack, Sally, Abi, Tremaine (online)

29th – Don, Susan, Jack, Sally, Douglas, Abi (online)

Apologies: Bruce, Naomi

1. Action list from earlier weeks

- Bruce to do 'what-if' calculations. How many would have won anyway without the boost vote? *Done and circulated*
- Naomi to seek - and pass on - clarity about which emails are intended for LC steering group. *Ongoing*
- Susan to request briefing on CEC and TVL '3% commitment to PB' from officers. *Ongoing*
- What consultation has been done about PB and CGF? Susan to ascertain, and look for any relevant report. *Not necessary – see below*
- There was a survey last year on CGF – asked panel members. (We didn't get it) ND to circulate the report on this survey (dated August 2024). Report on TVL doesn't specify CGF is the route for PB cash. *Report circulated*

2. Boost Vote Discussion (both weeks)

Thanks to Bruce for calculating on previous years' data which of the boosted groups would have won, without the boost vote?

In summary:

- 2022-2023: 5 out of 5 boosted projects won. Without the boost vote only two would have won.
- 2023-2024: I can't find any record of such calculations, and am not currently able to reconstruct them.
- 2024-2025: 4 out of 5 boosted projects won funding. Without the boost vote, none of them would have won.

This confirms what we thought -the Boost Vote is not only working well, it may be working a bit TOO well...

- the same few groups are starting to win regularly, every year (ELREC, AUGB, Nepal), which all have a wider remit/constituency than just Leith
- Are (these? or all?) boosted groups now **overly** advantaged? Is it just us that thinks this or is it perceived by the public too? (Probably just SG , for now?)

2.1 Boost vote suggestions What changes might be possible? - Discussed

- Can we bring another type of organisation (e.g. those who haven't applied before or haven't won before) into the boost, potentially reweighting boost votes?
- Whatever new process we propose, it must be very simple for voters and for vote-counters (no complicated maths/ percentages etc. One card = One vote)
- It's conceptually simple for the community to understand need to boost ethnic minorities. It's not so simple to understand the 'not applied' or 'not won before' boost.
- Boosting 'Not applied before' groups might be easier to understand. Boosting groups that have applied before but not won (possibly multiple times) could be problematical – community has already shown it does not want to vote for these...?)
- Maybe ask community earlier in the process where they think the gaps are in provision and therefore what boost-categories they'd want?
- Could have a different boost category each year (based on gaps identified by community?) Too complicated?
- Could use a much narrower and more specific theme each year?

2.2 ACTIONS

Agreed to take the suggested Improvement steps that would not make fundamental changes to the overall process

- For 2025-26, Keep the Boost Vote, same as it has been.
- Ensure that Boost Vote groups are properly separated and equidistant from Ballot box on voting Day.
- Badge each project summary in the gallery/voting mechanism with '**new / first time applicant**' or '**won in 2025,2024, 2022**' or similar, to draw voters' attention to the fact that some groups have won often, while others have not.
- Include in guidance notes, application form and correspondence with applicants 'this must be a clearly brand-new project for your organisation' (to try to discourage the 'more of the same' drift that has set in with some groups)
- Explore the use of themes to try to encourage groups to come up with suitable projects

- Involve the local community in a democratic exercise, to set theme(s)

3.0 Themes

For next week – aim to review past themes and try to come up with new ones to add in

Choose a few ‘front runners’ (say 4 or 5) and run a poll to get the local community to ‘vote’ for their favourites, using website, social media, and emails directly to all past applicants and mailing list. Timing - May-July 2025?

This will add an extra dimension of transparency and democracy.

The top favourite (or perhaps 2 favourites) would become the Theme(s) for next process.

We reviewed past themes. During Covid there was a clear steer towards food poverty. We agreed that today we’d be more inclined to focus more on ‘poverty’ generally. Since then, themes have been broader and more ‘open’.

The 5 themes from 2018 that matched up with the Local Improvement Plan from the time were more specific and might well still be relevant.

- Encouraging **neighbourliness and building community spirit** (was applicable for only the small pot)
- Improving quality of **environment**
- Celebrating **culture** and artistic lives
- Making **connections** across Leith
- Creating a **healthier** community.

As Jack points out “This way forward would ultimately keep the main event and process the same as last year, allow us to tick off a ‘You Said We Did’, not create too much extra work (we just need to create an anonymous poll ie through survey monkey or ...similar) and allow us to facilitate appropriate, quantifiable projects. The results may also be of interest to colleagues in Community Engagement?”

4.0 More discussion about the place of Leith Chooses in the current Community Engagement and Empowerment / Community Grant Fund review

- Naomi to clarify which emails re CGF are intended for LC steering group and which are not, to avoid more confusion.
- All steering group members to apply to take part in focus groups, as individuals, though only 1 Rep may be selected, via <https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=U4qSORmdk6fJG2gmE-1KkKMqMF94IPs-LDffBqjppUQUxRNFRMVzI3N1lBTjIHR04yMks2RVVKOS4u&route=shorturl>
- LC Steering Group should write a collective position paper / statement that their Rep can present.

5.0 AOCB

- Andrew Field has again postponed the date on which he will visit the Steering Group. Now set for 4th June (when next CGF report will be available).
- Margaret Graham has been appointed as the new Convenor of the Culture and Communities committee, which ‘oversees’ Community Grant Funding.
- Susan reported that a Labour Councillor has put forward a motion to Council (next week) about PB (with TVL funds) being carried out by Community Councils across the city in future. This is unrealistic. After discussions with Sally, Susan will draft an amendment to the motion, recommending that CCs could work on identifying local priorities, with their local residents, but would not actually distribute funds.
- Douglas Tharby announced that he would be resigning from the LC Steering Group this summer (before the new 2025-2026 Application process starts) but will aim to bring new LH&N CC members to observe the group before then, in the hope that one or more of them might wish to join, to “replace” him. He will continue to help on the Voting Day as a volunteer. He was thanked for all his work so far.
- Donna Hall of Utilita has asked to meet with LC to discuss an idea. Sally will meet her asap for preliminary chat.

6.0 Next Meeting 7th May

- Any outstanding actions
- Finalise the 4 themes for polling and plan poll
- Look at LC Application Form, Compare CGF application form with LC form