From the Ground Up: The Leith Model and the Future of Your Party Organising

How Edinburgh activists are building a new kind of left politics through community roots, worker solidarity, and ecosocialist campaigning

Duncan Chapel, January 2026

Something is stirring in Leith. While much of the post-Corbyn left remains trapped in cycles of faction fights and social media outrage, a small group of Your Party activists in Edinburgh's historic port district have been quietly developing an approach to organising that deserves wider attention.

They call it the Leith Model. It's not a grand theory. It's a practical template for building political presence through three interconnected commitments: worker solidarity, community defence, and anti-fascist mobilisation. And it's already generating results that other branches across Scotland might learn from.

The Core Commitments

When Your Party Leith held its founding meeting in late 2025, around twelve committed members agreed on three core areas of action. The list is instructive for what it includes and what it refuses to defer.

Worker solidarity came first. This wasn't abstract commitment to "the working class" but concrete presence on picket lines. When workers at Rockstar Games Edinburgh began organising with the IWGB Game Workers union, facing what the union describes as "Amazon-style" union busting, Leith activists were there. The dispute, which saw 31 workers summarily dismissed in

October 2025 just one week after the union reached the statutory recognition threshold, has become a defining struggle for creative industry unionisation in Scotland. Your Party members have maintained visible solidarity throughout: attending protests outside the Holyrood Road headquarters, joining the march to the Scottish Parliament, and connecting the dispute to wider questions about precarious work in the digital economy.

Community defence meant partnership, not substitution. Leith already has Living Rent, the tenants' union that has won real victories on rent controls and retrofit debt. Rather than competing or duplicating, Your Party activists joined existing campaigns. When Marionville fire station faced closure, they worked alongside Living Rent to oppose it. The principle is clear: we're not here to replace the brilliant work being done by community groups; we're here to amplify it.

Standing against racism required physical presence. When fascists terrorised refugees at a hotel in Falkirk, Leith members travelled to stand on the counter-demonstration. One organiser describes the surreal experience of dancing to Spice Girls while bottles and flares flew. "That was really restorative for me," he told a recent branch meeting. Anti-fascism isn't a position statement; it's showing up.

Mutual Aid as Foundation

Alongside these three commitments, practical solidarity has anchored the branch's community presence. The "Keep Leith Warm" initiative before Christmas 2025 brought together food, clothing, and toys for residents facing hardship. Activists leafleted the Kirkgate, inviting people directly: come along, you're hungry, we'll feed you; you need clothes, they're yours.

One organiser, a former Labour member of nineteen years, reflected: "Never had I done something like that, where I was

going out and saying, hey, come along next week.” The contrast with Labour’s hollowed-out electoralism could not be sharper. Mothers left with arms full of toys. Relationships were built that no canvassing database can capture.

The methodological insight matters. As the Leith Model document puts it: “Digital tools support communication, but face-to-face organising remains the core of community mobilisation.” WhatsApp groups and social media pages are useful for outreach. But lasting momentum came when organisers prioritised street stalls, leafleting, and open meetings.

The Freeport Campaign: Ecosocialism in Practice

The most strategically significant development is the emerging campaign against the Forth Green Freeport. This is where ecosocialist politics meets concrete local struggle.

The Freeport, designated in June 2024, stretches across the Forth estuary: Leith, Burntisland, Rosyth, Grangemouth, Edinburgh Airport. It promises 34,500 jobs and billions in investment. It delivers tax breaks for corporations, regulatory “flexibilities” that weaken planning oversight, and a “green” label that environmental groups call straightforward greenwashing.

Living Rent has already identified the housing angle: thousands of projected jobs without housing means rent increases for existing residents. They’re pushing the Council to direct Visitor Levy revenue toward social housing rather than unaffordable “mid-market rent” schemes.

Your Party Leith is developing a broader campaign: researching potential impacts on communities and labour standards, building a coalition to resist, preparing a conference motion, planning public demonstrations with affected communities. The Freeport connects deregulation, weakened worker protections, and false climate solutions in a single site of struggle. It’s

exactly the kind of material issue that can ground anti-capitalist politics in everyday concerns.

The STUC has a representative on the Freeport Governance Board but warns that without enforceable collective bargaining guarantees, the model risks “a race to the bottom” in labour standards. At Grangemouth, the Petroineos refinery closed in April 2025 with 400 job losses. The promised “low carbon manufacturing hub” won’t arrive until 2040. That’s fifteen years of managed decline dressed as green transition.

An ecosocialist response demands more than opposition. It requires an alternative vision: public ownership of the Forth estuary’s infrastructure, a genuine just transition for fossil fuel workers, democratic control over economic development. Your Party organisers in Leith are beginning to articulate exactly this.

Replication Across Edinburgh

The Leith Model is already spreading. At a recent Edinburgh branch meeting, constituency groups reported back on their emerging plans.

Edinburgh South identified local health campaigns linking lung conditions to air pollution, connecting individual illness to environmental crisis. They mapped their territory honestly: working-class areas in Oxgangs and Liberton/Gilmerton separated by more affluent Morningside. They’re planning stalls at the library, the square, the Aldi: places where people actually gather.

Edinburgh Central drew on members’ experience of Labour canvassing to articulate what they want to avoid: “instrumental and extractive” data harvesting without genuine conversation. They noted that young people have nowhere free to exist, nowhere to hang out without paying. A party that can provide space, literally, builds roots.

Edinburgh Western focused on visibility: mapping festivals and farmers markets, preparing leaflets for community noticeboards, “free advertising” that establishes presence. They’re thinking about how to respond to Reform talking points with positive class politics rather than defensive counter-messaging.

Each constituency is adapting the model to local conditions while maintaining the core commitments. The methodological suggestion from Leith is worth repeating: ask people “what are your key challenges?” rather than “what do you want to change?” The first elicits concrete grievances organisers can act on. The second produces abstract wish-lists.

What Makes This Different?

The Belgian political theorist Anton Jäger has diagnosed our era as one of “hyperpolitics”: extreme politicisation without political consequences. Politics is everywhere; everyone has opinions; social media buzzes with moral urgency. And nothing changes. The old infrastructure of parties, unions, and civic solidarity has been hollowed out.

The Leith Model offers a modest counter-example. It doesn’t promise revolution. It builds relationships. It shows up on picket lines. It feeds people. It connects struggles that might otherwise remain siloed: the Rockstar workers fighting for union recognition, the tenants organising against rent increases, the communities facing a Freeport that promises jobs but delivers deregulation.

The test will come. Local and national elections will reveal whether community organising translates into electoral presence. The full Rockstar tribunal, likely not until 2027 or 2028, will determine whether the union’s legal claims succeed. The Freeport campaign is only beginning.

But something is being built. Not a social media movement that

surges and dissipates. Not an electoral machine that extracts data and disappears between campaigns. A presence. Roots.

How to Get Involved

For Your Party members in Edinburgh, constituency groups are forming now. WhatsApp groups and email lists are being established. The invitation is open.

For activists elsewhere in Scotland, the Leith Model offers a template worth adapting. Map your area: who's already doing good work? Where do people gather? What are the material grievances that could anchor political organising? Partner with existing campaigns rather than duplicating them. Show up on picket lines. Feed people.

The document circulated at the Edinburgh meeting concludes: "This approach offers a tangible blueprint for branch organisation across the four other Westminster constituencies of Edinburgh as well as at ward level."

It could offer a blueprint well beyond Edinburgh. The question is whether we're willing to build it.

Postscript: A Necessary Correction

Since drafting this piece, a comrade with direct knowledge of the Leith branch's activities has offered a sobering corrective. The account deserves honest acknowledgment.

The Rockstar solidarity was a single appearance at an IWGB picket line, uncoordinated with the union, which resulted in organisers asking Your Party to put their banner away. Self-promotion had displaced actual solidarity. The Living Rent "partnership" at Marionville amounted to one petition stall; LR had explicitly asked the branch not to wade in, given their non-partisan stance. We proceeded regardless. And the Freeport campaign remains a discussion group without democratic mandate from the wider branch membership.

The gap between aspiration and execution is the gap between a model and a movement. The Leith document describes an orientation: towards workplace struggle, community defence, anti-fascism, ecosocialist campaigning rooted in material conditions. That orientation remains correct. But turning up uninvited with your banner is not worker solidarity. Ignoring an organisation's request to stay out is not partnership. A WhatsApp group is not a campaign.

The harder lesson: the united front method requires discipline, not enthusiasm. You strengthen existing organisations by actually coordinating with them, by subordinating your party profile to the struggle's needs, by doing the unglamorous work that builds trust over months and years. The impulse to plant flags, to claim credit, to turn every action into recruitment: this is the infantile disorder of a movement still learning to walk.

None of this invalidates the strategic insight. A left party that connects electoral ambitions to community roots, that builds from workplace and neighbourhood struggles rather than parachuting in at election time, that takes ecosocialist campaigning seriously as a material practice: this remains what Your Party Scotland needs. But the Leith Model is, at present, more manifesto than method. The work of translating intention into organisation has barely begun.

DC, 24th January 2026

Duncan Chapel is a member of Your Party in Edinburgh and is the creator of Red Mole Substack. Duncan wishes to thank Richard Parker for his permission to reuse his write-up of the Leith approach