

# PENICUIK PLACEMAKING TRAINING EVENT OCTOBER 2013

## Climate Challenge Fund

### Penicuik Placemaking Training Event Summary of group findings and ideas

*This short paper summarises the ideas generated by participants in the Climate Challenge Fund Community Placemaking training event held in Penicuik Town Hall on 23 October 2013. They demonstrate the kind of information that this initial stage of the placemaking process can generate. In practice, this forms the foundation for further consultation and work with key partners to refine a place vision and to develop deliverable short and long term action plans.*

*It should be remembered that these ideas were generated by a group chiefly made up of people with little knowledge of Penicuik. The participants were from groups all over south east Scotland who came to the event to learn about placemaking. The day was arranged by the Climate Challenge Fund, facilitated by the placemaking team at Greenspace Scotland, and hosted locally by Penicuik Community Development Trust in Penicuik Town Hall. Free places for local individuals and groups were advertised in the Penicuik Town Crier. Bear in mind that this was essentially a training event; a genuine community placemaking session would produce ideas with more detail and the beginnings of a spatial plan showing key actions for the town.*

#### **I. What did people like best about Penicuik Town Centre?**

*All groups commented on the quality of much of the architecture and the impact of the historic urban form.*

- 'nice old buildings'
- 'town hall'
- 'alms houses'
- 'interesting buildings – gateways / entrances / gardens'
- 'the Penycroft Press building'
- 'the monument to Napoleonic war dead'
- 'the well'
- 'hidden gardens down vennels'
- 'back gardens – nooks & crannies'
- 'small, cosy high street'
- 'linear high street'
- 'views up quirky streets'
- 'history – the sense of town centre'

*People also commented favourably on the 'setting' of the town centre and its links to the wider countryside.*

- 'iconic / uniqueness of setting'
- 'views beyond to Pentlands'
- 'access to countryside'
- 'woods around housing estate'

- 'attractive country location – views – trees – countryside – hills – river'
- 'river runs through it'

*Some groups also commented on more modern aspects of the town centre and on the way that the streetscape feels.*

- 'Primary School murals'
- 'mixed paving'
- 'benches'
- 'gathering area'
- 'a lot of light'
- 'space'

*Groups commented on the good access both through and to the town centre*

- 'the town centre is practical – it seems easy to use'
- 'safety'
- 'walkability'
- 'connection'
- 'pedestrian crossings'
- 'good disabled access / push chairs'
- 'safe for walking'
- 'pedestrianised street is a good start'
- 'cycle path eastward (to Dalkeith)'
- 'cycle paths + walks'

*Note, however, that the groups also identified problems with barriers, kerbs and traffic on specific streets – so access is not universally good.*

*Good public transport links were also highlighted.*

*People liked the fact that there was quite a lot of green in the town centre.*

- 'flower beds'
- 'trees – these give a sense of seasons e.g. autumn leaves

- 'gardens down vennels and behind buildings'
- 'old graveyard'

*People commented on the range of positive uses in the town centre and the impact of this on the way that the area feels.*

- 'community involvement through PCAA, PCDT etc.'
- 'shop, cinema, arts centre'
- 'Irish dance academy'
- 'local small business units'
- 'local small enterprises'
- 'opportunities for eating out'
- 'people growing food'
- 'positive High Street – feels looked after – tidy – not much rubbish'

*The groups also highlighted the potential for the town centre to become a busy and vibrant focus for the local community.*

The initial suggestion, therefore, is that any place-making activities in the centre of Penicuik should build upon and enhance these identified strengths for the area:

- historic urban form
- quality of architecture
- setting within the local countryside (especially the quality of views and the 'element of surprise')
- sense of light and space
- good public transport, walking & cycling, access to and through the town centre
- trees and greenspace
- strong sense of community action
- range of town centre uses

## 2. What would people like to be able to do in the town centre?

In line with the access comment in section 1, people felt that there were areas where they wanted to be able to walk more safely – especially at the ends of the High Street where traffic dominates the corners. Equally, they wanted to be able to move around more freely in areas where barriers and rails constrain access (problems with raised kerbs were also mentioned in discussions).

- 'cross the road safely'
- 'pedestrian guard rails etc. make me feel I'm being pushed through space'

The red group (who looked most closely at the river) highlighted a desire for better access to and along the river.

- 'cycle along the river to Edinburgh on cycleways (safe)'
- 'see the river + walk along it / cycle along it'

Many of the activities/functions that people identified relate to spending longer in the area rather than rushing through.

- 'stay longer'
- 'hang around'
- 'meet people, social interaction'

People wanted the opportunity to sit out in the town centre. This included the chance to sit and drink coffee or eat outside.

- sit outside comfortably – benches away from traffic
- 'sit on the grass'
- 'street café culture – sit outside'
- 'sit outside and have a coffee'
- 'eat outside'

All groups identified a desire to shop for local food and other produce – this could link with the food growing interest generated by the Lost Garden.

- 'street stalls'
- 'farmers market on a Saturday'
- 'buy local produce'
- 'craft fair etc.'
- 'shop for local food'

This extends to having a variety of shops in the town centre as well.

- 'have good wide ranging shopping'
- 'variety / shops'

The potential for street events (formal and informal) was highlighted:

- 'link the street to local community events'
- 'festivals'
- 'music/busking'
- 'events, fairs, music'
- 'see street performances'

Other potential activities which were identified were:

- play – the possibility of incorporating street games and other forms of play was discussed
- borrow / exchange books (linked to the existing community action and social enterprises)

The importance of interpretation and information was stressed – this relates both to the history of the area and to what is going on locally now.

- 'I'd like to know where I'm going and what's going on'
- 'I'd like to be able to find the historic monuments!'
- 'find out about local history'
- 'signs as you enter the town'
- 'link walkways with local history'
- 'produce a Penicuik booklet?'

Discussions within the groups highlighted the importance of encouraging people to live in the town centre.

Initial suggestion from this feedback is that placemaking activities should focus on:

- creating spaces that work as places
- creating and supporting greater use of the town centre (local businesses, markets, events etc. – using the High Street etc. as a venue in wider events)
- creating 'on-street' areas where people can sit, meet and congregate
- reducing the sense of traffic dominance (or pedestrian restriction)
- enhancing links to the wider countryside
- providing information and interpretation

## 3. What short term/low cost improvements would people like to see?

Creating greater use of the town centre

- clean up the area and put in bins where needed
- make better use of public space (farmers' market etc.) – see note below on car park area
- link the market to the work at the Lost Garden
- involve local people (especially young people) in street art, drama, sculpture, storytelling, cycle racing etc.
- interactive street art/artists and street performers

- add colour and curves to the area
- paint the street floor to highlight different uses.
- paint the road to encourage pedestrian priority
- introduce street games
- put in more seating / benches / shelter
- turn the old Co-op building into pop-up shop space for local artists, entrepreneurs
- could it house a temporary local museum?
- generally, use pop up shops (for community engagement) and to revitalise businesses – involve local schools

#### Greening the town centre

- ‘more plant life – it is too sterile and bricky at the moment’
- plant more areas – led by town’s people
- more trees of right species to give shade, biodiversity benefits, seasonal interest and fruit
- use greening to soften the angular lines of some areas
- use planting to increase shade and shelter for key public buildings
- remove prickly bushes and plant more interesting things into the raised beds
- use existing spaces and new spaces (on gap sites for example) to create community growing spaces linked to the Lost Garden
- create planters around the existing trees
- introduce water features

#### Reducing car dominance

- remove the small area of parking from the High Street to create a new public space – put in seats, planting, street games etc. and use the space for a regular market
- extend the 20 mph limit area
- ensure that there are safe crossing points on High Street and Bridge Street

#### Improving access

- remove unnecessary street furniture and other street clutter
- remove conspicuous pedestrian guard rails, repaint crossings, provide drop kerbs at key crossing points
- broaden pavements where this is possible (this can be a temporary measure using planters etc.)
- identify and promote key cycle routes
- link up cycle paths and routes where this is possible without high levels of expenditure

#### Interpretation

- create ‘entrances’ to Penicuik Town Centre
- shop sign improvements
- introduce signs / interpretation boards (local history, local routes and destinations, local events)
- Signage + graphics to ‘advertise’ the PCDT’s work

- In the graveyard, install a history board; trail; biodiversity – plants flowers etc.; more paths
- make the most of twinning connections with L’Isle Sur le Sorgue

## **4. What longer term improvements would people like to see?**

#### Creating greater use of the town centre

- bring greater diversity back to the High Street - relet shops - introduce incentives for local businesses and social enterprises - encourage specialist shops – local, quality, fair trade, traceability
- consider ‘branding’ Penicuik - Book Town | Craft town | Growing town??
- create a community centre
- redevelop the old garage & shop next door or knock down & turn into community space.
- create a child friendly town centre with play opportunities
- create more residential property in the town centre - encourage local buying etc.
- review pub closing times in the town centre

#### Greening the town centre

- create more greenspaces – both as places to sit and as green infrastructure providing shade and water management
- ensure that trees and spaces are maintained properly
- make the car parks and streetscapes more permeable to reduce/slow water runoff
- replace railings etc. with growing things

#### Reducing car dominance

- the car parks for B+M and Lidl create an ‘out of town’ appearance in the town centre; these car parks need to be redesigned to reduce their impact – turning over some space to people rather than cars;

#### improving appearance/screening; increasing permeability etc.

- redesign the town centre to improve the pedestrian and cyclist experience;
- giving pedestrians priority; (this might include)
- diverting through traffic away from centre;
- reducing speed limits
- and/or restricting lorry access

#### Improving access

- developing and signposting clearer routes through the Town Centre
- creating better cycling and walking connections with planting to create green corridors to and through the town

#### Interpretation

- promote local history through a heritage centre and trails

## 5. What climate change actions did people identify?

Mitigation: Mitigation is the reduction of the causes of climate change. This chiefly, therefore, relates to reducing carbon emissions and capturing/storing carbon. In urban areas, there is only limited opportunity for carbon storage (other than ensuring that soils and greenspaces are retained). This means the focus will be on:

- Reducing the use of cars and other motor vehicles
- Making the local area attractive (with diverse uses) to encourage people to shop/spend leisure time locally – ‘Making Local the Place to Go’
- ‘make local attractive’

Encouraging cycling and walking through improvements to the layout and design of streets and through local promotion and cycle/walking friendly initiatives

- ‘reduce traffic / encourage walking + cycling’
- ‘encourage cycling’
- ‘make it more walkable’
- ‘more walking & safe cycling routes’
- ‘slower traffic’
- ‘events along the (cycle) track to encourage use’
- ‘traffic calming measures (barriers and narrow passes) make cycling more dangerous!’

Reducing food miles Increasing the amount of locally grown produce in shops and used by local restaurants etc. will reduce the carbon emissions ‘hidden’ in the food used in Penicuik

- ‘increase local sourcing’
- ‘connect local produce growing the consumers’
- ‘more community growing + better links with local producers’
- ‘local food markets’
- ‘farmers market (like nearby villages)’
- ‘incentives for local businesses’
- ‘local food guide’
- ‘local food week – restaurants / cafes involved’
- ‘more local shops’
- ‘publicity and involve local people + organisations in using local produce events’
- ‘satellite gardens & beds in the town centre (for Lost Garden and other community growing projects)’
- ‘food growing – allotments – other spaces’

Reducing carbon emissions from energy use in the town centre: This relates to the energy efficiency of lighting and buildings and the potential for using renewables etc. It is also important to note that water

use by homes and businesses has a carbon costs relating to the treatment and distribution of water.

- ‘shifting to the use of LED lighting’
- ‘PV panels – community buildings and street lights’
- ‘develop a community energy project – awareness, efficiency, generation (electricity from river)’
- ‘reduce water use’
- ‘alternative energies’
- ‘Energy Shop needs to buck up its ideas – sort its windows. – displays better’

Education has an important role to play in mitigation – encouraging people to change their own behaviours and activities.

Other forms of mitigation: ‘greater use of local and natural materials’ – this may reduce the energy costs of work in the Town Centre when compared to concrete or imported stone for example.

Adaptation: Adaptation is the process of coping with, and where possible deriving benefits from, the effects of climate change. In a Scottish urban setting, this combines a range of activities to cope with an increase in intensity of rainfall events and associated flooding and actions to adapt to increased temperatures across the year.

Water management: Coping with the risk of flash flooding in future requires action to slow the rate at which rainfall reaches the drains. This includes increasing the permeability of surfaces in streets and town centres, slowing flow rates from building roofs and using vegetation to slow the rate at which the rain reaches the surface below.

- ‘permeable surfaces – for example, greening the car park’
- ‘encourage the use of green roofs and green walls’
- ‘more trees, more planted areas in the town centre’
- ‘planting rain gardens to take water from the street’
- ‘could the existing tree pits be redesigned to take water flow from the surrounding area?’

Coping with temperature rises: The predicted temperature rises will be felt most acutely in urban areas where hard and light surfaces can focus and intensify heat. This may lead to an increase in the use of air conditioning to cool buildings (which will add to carbon emissions). Action is required, therefore, to minimise this ‘urban heat island’ effect by creating shade and shelter for buildings. An increase in shade and the presence of vegetation will also reduce the heat for people using the streets and town centres and support a more ‘outdoor lifestyle’

- ‘more trees – shade/shelter’
- ‘planting in town centre – plants/vegetation/greenery’

Temperature increases will also have an impact on wildlife. Creating ‘green network’ connections through urban areas will help wildlife to adapt

- ‘more biodiversity’

## Climate Challenge Fund ideas

*People were asked to identify potential CCF projects from their evaluation of the Town Centre. Not all of these project ideas will be fundable by CCF but they are included to give a fuller flavour of the discussions.*

### Buildings

- ‘establishing a building maintenance cooperative focused on energy and climate change
- improving windows’
- ‘energy audits – with a view to doing something about it’.
- ‘solar panel water heating’
- ‘rediscover traditional heating/insulation eg slates and stacks’
- ‘create a walk through community greenhouse in pedestrian precinct’
- ‘energy efficient community café’
- ‘community bike café repair shop’
- ‘create a community energy project to bring individual households together, solar energy, hydro, insulation’
- ‘old Co-op building – pop up shop – local food- make energy efficient’

### Spaces

- ‘making spaces attractive – so people don’t drive elsewhere’
- ‘integrated bicycle lanes – remove dominance of car’
- ‘make pedestrian friendly’
- ‘break up sealed soil to combat flooding’
- ‘pull up your slabs – get growing’
- ‘planting – something edible in every house/garden
- ‘fruit trees – use fruit for jam etc
- ‘more shelter
- ‘spaces – grow more to eat ; and more habitat networks’.
- ‘tree planting – carbon sinks – shade / shelter noise barrier – biodiversity’
- ‘nitrogen fixing plants – air pollution’

### Walking + cycling

- ‘integrated bicycle lanes – remove dominance of car’
- ‘safer walking routes / cycling routes’
- ‘bike share’
- ‘rickshaw fleet’
- ‘take home trolleys / shopping barrows’
- ‘clear footpaths in winter – prioritise pavements and cycle routes’
- ‘better signed pedestrian walkways’

### Activities

- ‘recycling’
- ‘co-operative support for growing’

- ‘distribution of food – hub’
- ‘seed swop / seed bank’
- ‘nature trails and organised nature walks’

### Education

- ‘community arts – climate change related – promoting local travel’
- ‘mentors with community gardens’
- ‘work with schools/eco schools - save water, save heat, save electricity’
- ‘education / awareness raising – schools and local groups’
- ‘local papers’
- ‘work with local churches’

## 6. Local partnerships and talent?

*People were also asked to identify any local partnerships which could take part in placemaking and the process of improvement (either from local knowledge or from previous experience elsewhere).*

### Community

- all organisations active in Penicuik as seen in the “Town Crier”
- Penicuik Community Development Trust
- Community council
- Community groups/tenants groups
- The other communities / towns / villages along the North Esk – work together to develop a green network?
- Youth Groups
- Schools
- Churches

### Business

- Local businesses – including shops, pubs, cafes, restaurants
- Business organisations – rotary
- Farmer’s market

### Interest groups

- Arts trust
- Arts Centre
- Community arts groups/local artists
- Street performers
- Cycling, walking organisations
- Environmental organisations

### Individuals

- Young website designers
- Local councillors, MSPs, MPs

### Other

- Midlothian Council
- Queen Margaret University

These notes of the Penicuik Placemaking workshop in Penicuik Town Hall 2013  
are available at <http://www.lostgarden.co.uk/ccf/placemaking>



**THE LOST GARDEN OF PENICUIK**



**PENICUIK**  
COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
**TRUST**

**LINKS TO INFORMATION FOLLOWING UP THIS PENICUIK PLACEMAKING EVENT  
WHICH WAS ORGANISED BY THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE FUND TO SUPPORT THE  
LOST GARDEN OF PENICUIK AND PENICUIK COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST**

CLIMATE CHALLENGE FUND

<http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/sustainability-climate-change/climate-challenge-fund/>

COMMUNITY PLACEMAKING AT GREENSPACE SCOTLAND

<http://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/community-placemaking-.aspx>

THE LOST GARDEN OF PENICUIK 2015 CLOSING REPORT ON ITS CLIMATE CHALLENGE FUNDING

<http://www.lostgarden.co.uk/ccf/closingreport>

PENICUIK COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST LTD SOCIAL ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR 2013

*incorporating Penicuik Cinema, Penicuik Open House, Pen-y-Coe Press Printers & shop, The Lost Garden of Penicuik*

<http://www.kosmoid.net/penicuik/trust>

IMPRESSIONS OF VOLUNTEER TOURISM IN PENICUIK 2014-15

<http://www.lostgarden.co.uk/ccf/volunteertourism>

PENICUIK COMMUNITY ALLIANCE STOREHOUSE PROJECT BEGINS

<http://www.penicom.net/background>

SHORT HISTORY OF PENICUIK FOR VISITORS, CITIZENS AND SCHOOLS

*for circulation by Penicuik First in 2015*

<http://www.kosmoid.net/penicuik/historyatdisplay>

PENICUIK STOREHOUSE FACEBOOK GROUP

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/424104601131441/photos/>