

# Finance and Resources Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 7 November 2017

## Proposed Community Asset Transfer of former bothy at 26b Gilmerton Dykes Street, Edinburgh

Item number	8.1
Report number	
Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	16 - Liberton/Gilmerton
Council Commitments	

### Executive summary

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The Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park (FBBVP) have applied to purchase the former bothy located at the entrance to Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park, Gilmerton Dykes Street, via Community Asset Transfer.

This report seeks authority to dispose of the property to FBBVP on the terms outlined in the report.

## Proposed Community Asset Transfer of former bothy at 26b Gilmerton Dykes Street, Edinburgh

### 1. Recommendations

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#### 1.1 That Committee:

- 1.1.1 Approves the disposal of the former bothy at 26b Gilmerton Dykes Street to the Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park, on the terms set out in this report and on such other terms and conditions to be agreed by the Executive Director of Resources.

### 2. Background

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- 2.1 The former Bothy at 26 Gilmerton Dykes Street extends to 42.6sqm (459sqft) or thereby, with a site area of 102sqm (1100sqft) or thereby as shown hatched red on the attached plan at Appendix 1. The bothy is in a poor state of repair.
- 2.2 The Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park (FBBVP) is a registered charity and limited company and has requested to purchase the asset through the Community Asset Transfer process in accordance with the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

### 3. Main report

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- 3.1 FBBVP have had informal use of the bothy for the purposes of a meeting point and to store tools. The friends group assist, on a voluntary basis, the Natural Heritage Service, with the upkeep and improvement of the park and surrounding environment.
- 3.2 The Council received a Stage 1 Community Asset Transfer (CAT) application from FBBVP to purchase the bothy. The group's aim is to continue to promote community access to the park through education and events. Their intention is to acquire the bothy and carry out an extensive refurbishment programme. The bothy would remain a community asset to further promote the activities of the group.
- 3.3 In accordance with Council policy on CAT's, a panel committee was formed to assess the viability of the application. The panel consisted of elected members, representatives from the Operational Estates Team, Council Service Area (Place), Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust, and the Community Ownership Support Service.

- 3.4 FBBVP was encouraged to progress to the Stage 2 application which involves submitting a business case, valuation, refurbishment plans, and evidencing thorough community consultation.
- 3.5 A Stage 2 application was received and the proposal assessed in accordance with the CAT policy scoring matrix. The result was rated a 'strong' to a 'very strong' submission. The panel committee reconvened to consider the proposal and it was decided, via a unanimous vote, to recommend the application for approval. The Stage 2 application is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.6 Provisionally agreed terms for the disposal of the property are as follows:
- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Purchaser:  | FBBVP  |
| Price:      | £5,000   |
| Conditions: | The transfer is subject to FBBVP obtaining funding   |
| Fees:       | The purchaser is to meet the Council's reasonable legal and surveyor's cost  |
| Clawback:   | In accordance with the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, in the event of the community body being wound up, the property could transfer to another community body or charity deemed appropriate by the Scottish Ministers and failing this, revert to the Scottish Ministers themselves |
- 3.7 The purchase price reflects a valuation from an RICS Registered Valuer and, whilst it was produced for the applicant, it is suitable as a joint valuation and is considered to reflect an accurate market valuation of the property.

#### **4. Measures of success**

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- 4.1 The disposal will remove the bothy from Council responsibility and the associated liability of holding costs and repairs.
- 4.2 The property will be refurbished and brought back into beneficial economic and community use.

#### **5. Financial impact**

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- 5.1 A capital receipt of £5,000 will be received in financial year 2017/18.
- 5.2 The sale of the bothy would remove a potential financial burden from the Council in terms of repair, maintenance and security.

## **6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact**

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- 6.1 There is a risk that the sale does not complete. This is the same for any offer to purchase. Scrutiny of the bid was carried out by the panel in accordance with the CAT policy.

## **7. Equalities impact**

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- 7.1 A successful refurbishment of the semi derelict property would provide a place for the community to be involved in productive and valued activities like bird watching and gardening and enhance the rights to physical security.
- 7.2 The restoration of the site will encourage the participation, influence, and voice of nearby residents and community users of the park by providing a sheltered centre where the community can partake in learning activities.
- 7.3 The location of the building allows ease of access to the Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park and would encourage walking and healthy activity.

## **8. Sustainability impact**

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- 8.1 The sale of the bothy will increase its resilience to climate change impacts because the refurbished building will be more robust. The existing building is dilapidated and is vulnerable to weather conditions such as high winds and heavy rain. As such, adverse weather could potentially cause significant damage to the building and its surroundings. This could impact negatively on social sustainability through wind/water and damage to the equipment stored inside. The continuation of the building and its services to the park will help to maximise the use and enjoyment of urban greenspace.
- 8.2 The sale of the bothy will help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because the group will use natural resources wisely through improved water efficiency through the introduction of a recycled water tank.
- 8.3 The sale of the bothy will increase carbon emissions because there will be an increase in carbon emissions associated with the refurbishment of the building. This impact will be addressed by minimising materials used for the upkeep of the building.

## **9. Consultation and engagement**

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- 9.1 Consultation was undertaken through the CAT committee panel. The panel consisted of various stakeholders, councillors and community groups, which ensured broad analysis and guidance and eventual recommendation for approval of the application. The panel included elected members, the Edinburgh

Green Belt Trust, the Community Ownership Support Service, Parks and Greenspace and the Council operational estates team's officers.

- 9.2 Extensive local community consultation was undertaken by FBBVP, which is set out in the report in Appendix 3.

## 10. Background reading/external references

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- 10.1 None.

### **Stephen S. Moir**

Executive Director of Resources

Contact: Shaun Crosby, Estates Surveyor

E-mail: [shaun.crosby@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:shaun.crosby@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 469 5228

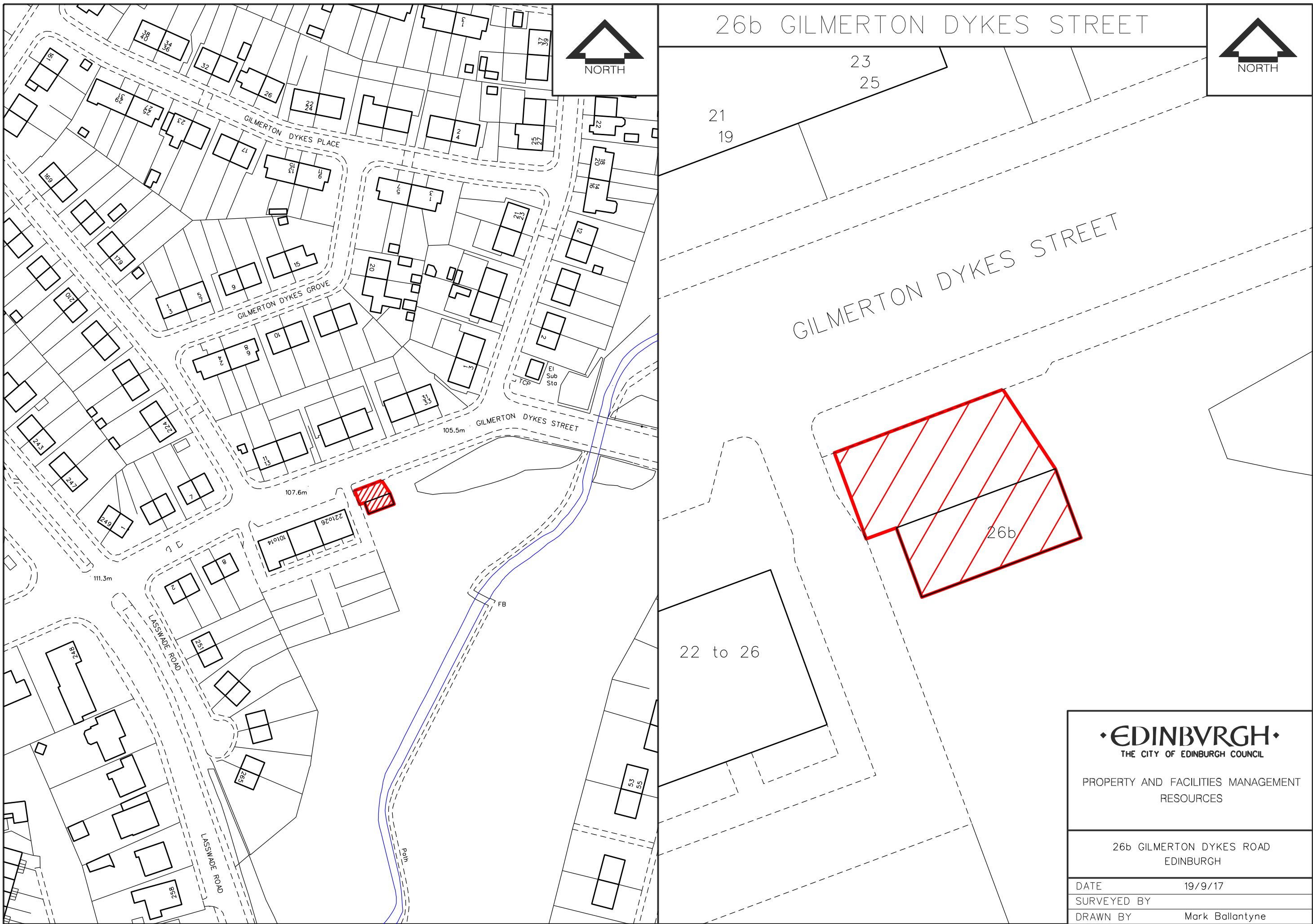
## 11. Appendices

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Appendix 1 – Site Plan

Appendix 2 – Stage 2 Application

Appendix 3 – Community Consultation Report



LOCATION PLAN

PHOTOGRAPHICALLY REDUCED NOT TO SCALE

SITE PLAN

<div>•EDINBURGH•</div> <div>THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL</div> <div>PROPERTY AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT RESOURCES</div>	
26b GILMERTON DYKES ROAD EDINBURGH	
DATE	19/9/17
SURVEYED BY	
DRAWN BY	Mark Ballantyne
SCALE	N.T.S.
NEG. NO.	A3/1835

THIS MAP IS REPRODUCED FROM ORDNANCE SURVEY MATERIAL WITH PERMISSION OF ORDNANCE SURVEY ON BEHALF OF THE CONTROLLER OF HER MAJESTY'S STATIONARY OFFICE CROWN COPYRIGHT. UNAUTHORISED REPRODUCTION INFRINGES CROWN COPYRIGHT LICENCE NUMBER 100023420. CITY OF EDINBURGH 2013 AND MAY LEAD TO PROSECUTION OR CIVIL PROCEEDINGS.

## APPENDIX 2

# APPLICATION FOR THE TRANSFER OF AN ASSET CURRENTLY OWNED BY THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

### Request to the Council

1.

**Are you requesting the transfer of a building as currently owned by the City of Edinburgh Council**

YES

**Are you requesting the transfer of a piece of land as currently owned by the City of Edinburgh Council**

NO

2

**Please identify the building and/or piece of land that is the subject of your request:**

NAME: Gilmerton Bothy

ADDRESS: 29b Gilmerton Dykes Street, Edinburgh

POSTCODE: EH17 8LQ

MAP REFERENCE: (please attach a map indicating the location of the building/land – this is in order that all parties are clear on the nature of the request)

2a

VALUE

**Have you sought an independent financial assessment of the value for the building/land?**

If so please identify the source and the estimated value (Note: because your request concerns a public asset, references to the source(s) and value(s) may be referenced in reports to council committee(s) in reference to your submission:

Source: Allied Scotland chartered surveyors, 22-24 Walker Street, Edinburgh EH3 7HR

Estimated value (£) 5,000

3

**Please detail below the nature of the request to the Council** (please indicate one only in each section):

3a

Total transfer of the building/land identified in 2 above to the organisation as identified in part A below:

YES

Gradual transfer of the building/land identified in 2 above to the organisation as identified in part A below:

NO

3b

Combination of the total transfer of a building and associated land identified in 2 above to the organisation as identified in part A below:

NO

Combination of the gradual transfer of a building and associated land identified in 2 above to the organisation as identified in part A below:

NO

3c

Other arrangements that you wish to propose for the building/land associated with asset transfer (please complete as necessary out with items 3a-b above)

3d

Please confirm below the sum that you are prepared to pay for the building/land that you have identified in item 2 above

£5,000

4

**Please summarise below how you intend to use the Council building/land to and related timescale:**

FBBVP Articles of association state our objects are to;

- (1) The advancement of community development (including the advancement of urban regeneration) within the Community; The maintenance and growth of wildlife and plantlife, including the supporting environment and infrastructure within the boundaries of the local nature reserve; To promote and encourage the enjoyment of the Park by local community and general public and so on.

Gilmerton Bothy will be used as a base to promote these objects. We will do this by first purchasing the Bothy and then carrying out an extensive refurbishment over the following 12 months. Gilmerton Bothy will be a community asset and facility used by the Friends and other schools and green groups, for training and meetings.

5

**Date of Submission to the Council: ADD DATE**



## **PART A – About your organisation**

### **A1.1**

#### **Organisation Name, Location and geographic areas of current operation:**

Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park (FBBVP), south Edinburgh and specifically within the bounds of Burdiehouse Burn local nature reserve.

### **A1.2**

#### **Organisation postal address:**

The Secretary  
Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park  
3 Moredun Park Drive  
Edinburgh EH17 7ER

### **A1.3**

#### **Organisation Contact details for this request:**

**Name:** Bruce Bennet

**E-mail:** bruce.bennet52@gmail.com

**Tel. Number:** 07768 657115

### **A1.4**

**Organisational Governance** – State the type of organisation you are for example, a registered charity or a registered company. If your agency is not a registered charity or company, please state if you have a **Constitution / Statement of Aims / Memorandum and Articles** (relevant documents must be supplied on request)

Registered charity and a registered limited liability company. Documents available on request.

### **A1.5**

**OSCR Registration** Number (if your organisation is a charity registered in the UK and/or Scotland):

SCO40288

### **A1.6**

**Companies House Registration Number** if applicable

SC570236

## **PART B – Your proposal for use of the asset**

In summary, please answer the following questions relating to your proposal (please ensure that you attach your full Business Plans as this will provide further detail)

NOTE: the term 'the asset or asset' means the Council-owned asset which is the focus of your submission

Assessment of the operational and market environment

B1

**Please summarise below any history that your organisation has for; (i) delivering good quality services, (ii) meeting the needs of your community and (ii) enabling sustainable growth of your organisation?**

Answer: FBBVP is a constituted group supporting the Natural Heritage Service (NHS) deliver a high quality park and local nature reserve (LNR) for the benefit of the people of South Edinburgh. Our group has been run on voluntary basis for 10 years by people living within walking distance of the Park. This can be evidenced by NHS officers and the 2016 Green Flag Award. Gilmerton Bothy is designed as a low running cost community asset that is sustainable for the foreseeable future.

B2

**Is there a strong business-fit between the core objectives of your organisation and the proposed use of the asset?**

Answer: A very strong business fit between our core objectives and that of the Park owners Edinburgh Council. FBBVP has been using the NHS Bothy for the last 10 years and it is accepted by all parties that the proposed use is an appropriate development of a declining asset.

B3

**How will your organisation's current operational capacity and financial turnover be affected by taking forward your proposals for the asset?**

Answer: As a volunteer committee and membership organisation our operational capacity will remain unchanged but the numbers of people involved in our core activity will increase. Financially there are very modest planned expenditure (running costs) and another modest increase in income from room rental. We do not envisage building any substantial reserves.

B4

**Please evidence below, the strength of leadership and skills of the Board and staff of your organisation to maximise the prospects of the asset? If the skills are not currently in place, please describe how you intend to address this.**

Answer: We have no staff and no plans to have paid employees for the foreseeable future. We consider we have a strong committee with a broad range of skills, from business to managerial to wild and plantlife specialists. All committee members work on a voluntary basis and live within walking distance of the Park.

B5

**Please detail how you intend to evidence long-term community benefit arising as a result of the proposed asset transfer?**

Answer: More community involvement making FBBVP a stronger local group with increased membership and greater participation in activities and increasing FBBVP's capacity make a

positive impact on Park eg fundraising for park facilities, infrastructure, enhancing Park's biodiversity. We consider it is the role of NHS to evidence long-term community benefit, in particular increased numbers of Park users. However we have the resources to evidence some aspects of community benefit. These are;

1. Groups using Gilmerton Bothy and increased Friends usage (numbers)
2. Annual programme of walks and activity days (attendance count and photographic)
3. Annual spring clean (several sessions and photographic)
4. Capital fundraising for various improvements (signposts, children's forestry play)

B7

**Please summarise below the partners involved in your proposal, describing the current and future strength of partnership work in the context of the submission and if so, is this influencing the operational arrangements for the asset?**

Answer: No influence in operational arrangements. FBBVP works in partnership with;

1. Natural Heritage Service
2. Edinburgh Parks Forum
3. Edinburgh & Lothian Green Belt Trust
4. Duke of Edinburgh Award (schools, scouts and guides)
5. Forest School, Liberton Primary
6. Wild Reekie environmental volunteers

B8

**Please describe the governance arrangements which will oversee the operations of the asset.** If this is to be separate to arrangements for your organisation, please provide further description and include diagrams if necessary. Please also describe how accountability for the asset will be provided for.

Answer: No separate arrangements, governance by the FBBVP committee. Committee background are;

Chairperson: Public relations consultant and senior manager

Secretary: CEO of charity for people with learning disabilities and autism

Treasurer: Business & engineering background

Member: Retired librarian

Member: Educational consultancy and training

Member: Education civil servant

Member: Specialist in fungi and wildlife

Member: Community activist

B9

**Please evidence how you know that your proposals for the use of the asset are supported by and meet the needs of the wider community and City.**

Answer:

Please see attached Community Consultation

B10

**Where applicable, please detail how your proposals for use of the asset will enhance the existing use of the building/land**

Answer: Gilmerton Bothy is in a derelict state, with water leakage and no utility connections. We intend to carry out extensive improvements to bring this asset back into use for the wider community. Please see attached architect and business plans for more details on works.

B11

**Please outline how your proposals take account of the influence of local and city market forces and (i) if so are there plans in place to ensure that your proposals for the use of the asset are competitive in order to sustain the asset, (ii) if not please explain why.**

Answer: There is not a competitive market for environmental voluntary work in this area.

B12

**If suitable, is there marketing and development plan in place for the asset for the next five years? If so, please provide further details in relation to your approach**

Answer: No marketing and development plans are envisaged. We assume that a gradual growth of our social media newsletter, an email and face to face campaign to encourage use of Gilmerton Bothy and our existing programme of walks and activities will be sufficient.

B13

**Please detail evidence of support from the appropriate Neighbourhood Partnership, Councillors and other community leaders and other relevant interests?**

Answer: Stage one of our application process received endorsement from;

Cllr Keith Robson (Chair)	Sarah Burns – South Neighbourhood Manager
Cllr Norma Austin Hart	Jessica Morgado – Senior Natural Heritage Officer
Nicky Donald – Community Ownership Support Service	
Charlie Cumming – Edinburgh Green Belt Trust	

Our recent July 2017 AGM was attended by Councillor Derek Howie, with apologies from Councillor McInnes and Cameron. The main speaker was Gareth Barwell, Head of Places at City of Edinburgh Council.

B14

**Are there any objections to your proposals for the asset that you are aware of? If yes please detail these and how your organizations is dealing with these, if no then please detail how you would handle any concerns should these develop in the future.**

Answer:

Please see attached Community Consultation and the positive local responses.

B15

**In relation to your plans for the asset, is the proposed income dependent upon; (i) a single income source, (ii) a dominant income source or (iii) multiple, but inter-dependent sources of income? Please detail below.**

Answer: Multiple sources of income that are not inter-dependent.

1. Rental income from various green groups, schools and Duke of Edinburgh award
2. Fundraised income from FBBVP events and grant applications
3. Membership fees and donations

B16

**In relation to your plans for the asset, are the sources of income sustainable, i.e.; likely to persist over the next few years, or are short-term, or will there be a need for subsidy from another source for example the parent organisation or public funds?**

Answer: There will be no need for subsidy as our project is low cost and sustainable.

B17

**In relation to your plans for the asset, please evidence any trading and other efforts to generate income.** Please include any anticipation of bidding for public sector grants/contracts or other funding?

Answer: There are no planned trading activities other than generating modest amounts of room rental.

B18

**Please describe below the financial relationship between your organisation and your plans for use of the asset.** Please include details about implications that there may be for your organization and the asset and how you will manage any risks identified.

Answer: FBBVP will appoint three committee members as Directors of a limited liability company who will hold the asset in perpetuity. With suitable insurance we do not envisage any risks for FBBVP.

B19

**Has your organisation ever been investigated on the basis of poor financial management or failure to demonstrate good organisational governance?**

Answer: NO

B20

**Does your organisation currently have operational capital, if yes is this being applied as part of the request, if no, will the proposed asset provide for a financial asset or liability?**

Answer: FBBVP holds a cash reserve of circa £1200 at July 2017 and do not intend to apply any as operational capital. Gilmerton Bothy will be an asset as we anticipate raising funds to cover whole purchase and building works.

B21

**Is the request for asset transfer being made in order to add to an existing property asset portfolio for the purposes of continued trading?**

Answer: NO

B22

**Please indicate with an example where the financial aspects of your proposal has been successfully applied elsewhere?**

Answer: There are no other examples we are aware of.

B23

**Please identify if; (i) your proposals for impacts upon the finances of your organisation and (ii) plans for mitigation if negative issues arise concerning cash-flow, liquidity or financial capacity issues that may impact upon the request?**

Answer: There are no financial impact upon our organisation as if we don't have any funds we won't spend any funds. The only fixed outgoings are calor gas heating and batteries for lighting that if needed, the membership could cover with a modest appeal.

B24

**How do you intend to continue to operate should any income related to the proposed building/land not be generated as planned? Have you plans for alternative forms of income and/or alternative business model should income streams not continue?**

Answer: As previously mentioned we can cover all running costs for the foreseeable future.

B25

**What are your plans for the proposed asset should your organisation incur operational difficulties or cease to trade?**

Answer: The property will be donated to another organisation with similar ethos, probably the Edinburgh Green Belt Trust.

B26

**How have you factored in the impact of the total 'on-costs' for the asset for your organisation, i.e. repair, maintenance, insurance, energy requirements?**

Answer: Yes

B27

**Please summarise below how you have factored in the following in regards to your proposals for use of the asset; market awareness, sales and other income generation opportunities.**

Answer: See income and expenditure spreadsheet attached

**PART C - Sustainability Impacts**

C1

**In considering your proposals it is important that the impacts of proposals for use of the asset on the City's economy, community-wellbeing and environment are identified.**

Please detail below the impacts upon the following:

C2

**Please detail below what you think are the benefits to Edinburgh economy, please outline both positive and negative benefits that you think may occur:**

Answer: Edinburgh's economy is dependent on retaining workers in a pleasant environment that includes opportunities to explore nature. BBVP is one of the premier local nature reserves for South Edinburgh on people's doorstep. Tourism is another major employer in the city and again a well maintained, wildlife rich asset improves the perception of the city, encouraging more tourists. On a more functional sphere, if FBBVP didn't take over Gilmerton Bothy then the Council would have additional demolition costs to find from it's stretched budget and it reinstates a local eye sore. FBBVP can't think of any negative benefits to the economy for this project.

C3

**Please detail below what you think are the benefits to community wellbeing, please outline both positive and negative benefits that you think may occur: for example; what the impacts on the local community will be:**

Answer: The greatest benefit to community wellbeing relates to health, with a green space providing many opportunities for young and old to exercise and enjoy the benefits of fresh air. Isolation and loneliness may be alleviated by those community members who join in our walks and activities. Friends members constant focus on the Park has improved it's safety and our ongoing motorbike campaign an indication of our effectiveness in providing another safe space for the community. More community involvement making FBVVP a stronger local group with increased membership and greater participation in activities and increasing FBVVP's capacity make a positive impact on Park eg fundraising for park facilities, infrastructure, enhancing Park's biodiversity. FBBVP can't think of any negative benefits to community wellbeing.

C4

**Please detail below what you think are the benefits to the City environment – please outline both positive and negative benefits that you think may occur:**

Answer: This is where we can have the greatest impact on South Edinburgh and City of Edinburgh Council's environmental strategy. Our work with Gilmerton Bothy as a base will improve the wild life and plantlife in BBVP local nature reserve. We are working with specialists to build up a base line record of species in the Park. Currently 410 species and going up every year helped by our habitat improvements. For example Buglife, a national charity will carry out some detailed survey work that will increase our count by probably 50 species. FBBVP can't think of any negative environmental impact from our work.

## **PART D – Summary Budget Information**

D1

**If appropriate, please summarise the budget arrangements for the requested building/land:**

See budget attachments spreadsheet

**PART E - Other Issues relating to your request**

Current financial and other support from the City of Edinburgh Council

E1

Please identify below any investment that your organisation currently receives from the Council: NONE

E2

Please identify below any investment that your organisation has attracted from the Council in regards to the proposed transfer of the building/land identified in item 2 above: NONE

E3

Please identify below any investment in kind that your organisation currently receives from the Council in regards to the proposed transfer of the building/land identified in item 2 above:  
NONE

E4

If receiving investment or other financial support as above, is it anticipated that this will continue for the future and be of benefit in regards to your proposals for the building/land?

**Added Social Value**

E4

Please summarise below any additional social added value that your proposals may generate (for example; this may include volunteering, new services, improved trading or other initiatives)

We anticipate increasing the number of volunteers supporting the Park, increase the tasks we can carry out by having a secure wind and waterproof store, provide a venue for other groups with an interest in wildlife/ environment/ green initiatives

For example we are going to be working with schools to develop murals in the underpass sections of the Park, providing an improved environment and a way to engage young people in the Park.

**Submission Checklist**

Please check that you have included the following as part of the accompanying information to your stage 2 submission:



Full Business Plan (including financial plans) for the use of the Council-owned building or land

YES

Most recent Full Year Accounts for your organisation

YES

Articles of Association/ Constitution/Governance Document for your organisation

YES

Supporting material from community members or other interests

Available on request from 4 local Councillors, voluntary groups and Neighbourhood officers.

Have you read the Council Interim Policy on Asset Transfer Policy

YES

Have you read the Guidance for completing the application?

YES

Are you able to prepare public briefing material on your proposal and present at committee

YES

### Signing Off

Please get the following to sign-off your application\*:

Signature

Chairperson of your organisation

NAME: Donald Anderson

DATE:

Senior Director/Committee Member

NAME/POSITION: Karen Sales, Committee member

DATE:

Name of person submitting the application:

NAME/POSITION: Bruce Bennet, Secretary

DATE:

\* Signatories in signing the above assess that the information contained within the application form is accurate at the time of submission. In addition, should their request be successful, conditions of transfer will be the subject of separate legal agreement(s) with the Council.

# Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park – Community Purchase of ‘The Bothy’

## Public Consultation Report

DONALD ANDERSON  
JULY 2017



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# Introduction

‘The Bothy’ is a former council storage facility which has been used as the base for The Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park (the Friends group) for a decade as the base for their activities. The Friends works closely with the City of Edinburgh Council to help look after and improve the park. After a period of steadily growing their support the Friends group is looking to purchase the Bothy, secure the funds to upgrade it and use it as an enhanced permanent base for the group to facilitate a wider and more diverse range of activities that include using the Bothy as a promotional and educational resource.



There is no proposal to change the nature of the use of the Bothy, nor any change to its planning designation. The proposals simply envisage the Bothy being refurbished with enhanced facilities inside. Planning legislation ensures that local communities are appropriately consulted on major developments and some elements of the compulsory consultation process have been followed here where it was thought appropriate. However, because there is no planning issue or application, a significantly scaled down process has been used.



To our knowledge there has never been a single complaint from a member of the public about the activities of the Friends group. There are regular complaints and issues raised about park issues, e.g. litter and motorbiking, but this is to be expected. Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising therefore that the response was generally positive.



# Public Consultation

## Summary

The public consultation on the park focused on four specific aspects. Firstly, the views were sought from the immediate neighbours of the Bothy through a leaflet drop, two drop in sessions were held in the Bothy itself, there was extensive advertising on Facebook and there was a new website established for the Friends group which featured information about the Friends. In addition, the issue was highlighted in the Friends regular newsletter. The consultation was not advertised in the local press - as would be a major planning application, but this was felt to be unnecessary.

### Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park

Public Consultation - Bothy Purchase, Gilmerton Dykes.



Community Purchase of 'The Bothy' Gilmerton Dykes Street  
Public Consultation Drop In Sessions - 15th/21st June

Drop in Sessions - This Thursday,  
15<sup>th</sup> June and next Wednesday



Participation in formal planning consultation varies enormously, but on many 'major' developments only a few people engage in the process. A large response was not expected and this proved to be a realistic assessment of how many people might take part. The report was carried out on a pro-bono basis.



## Consultation

### Leaflet Drop to Local Residents

One of the key elements of any consultation process is to ensure that those most directly associated with the proposals is consulted about them. In this case the Friends group researched the streets around the development to establish how best to undertake this engagement. The Friends then produced and distributed a leaflet (appendix one) to around 150 houses (map, appendix 2) in the immediate vicinity of the Bothy. Copies of the leaflet were also left in the local newsagents which is the nearest shop to the Bothy itself and a popular shopping destination for locals.

The leaflet set out some basic information about the proposals, invited residents to attend the two drop-in sessions and gave the residents contact details in case they had any questions or comments. The residents were those who lived closest to the Bothy in the following streets:



- Gilmerton Dykes Street
- Gilmerton Dykes Crescent
- Gilmerton Dykes Place
- Gilmerton Dykes Grove

## Drop in Sessions – 15<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> June

The sessions were held in the Bothy itself on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of June from 6-8pm on both occasions. The events were advertised through the leaflet drop to local residents and were advertised by paid advert on Facebook. The adverts were targeted on local residents who lived within 1km of the park and covered all of the adjacent neighbourhoods, though it must be stressed that we cannot determine the proportion of local people on Facebook that were reached, however it is expected that a representative sample of locals and neighbourhoods was achieved. The sessions were held in the Bothy and some general background information on the work of the group was made available.

Feedback forms were provided at the sessions in order that residents could leave their views to be recorded as part of the consultation. Only three residents actually attended the sessions, but all of those who attended were positive about the proposals and their feedback forms are attached as appendix three.



The feedback from the consultation sessions was small, but this is perhaps not surprising. One conclusion that can be drawn from these sessions is that there are no local concerns about the activities of the Friends group. Had there been any significant concerns then issues would undoubtedly have been raised at the sessions directly, or it would have been raised through either social media or local elected members. Whilst the turnout was low, it was felt that the drop in sessions were a worthwhile initiative to see if local residents were interested in, or concerned about, the proposals. With hindsight, perhaps one drop in session would have been sufficient.

### Public comments from feedback forms:

#### Comment - Resident, Gilmerton Dykes Place

*'I love the park, it is rich with wildlife and so well looked after by the volunteers. It would be great to have the Bothy renovated and used more to look after the park (and also by other groups if agreed).'*



**Response:** *This is a very positive and supportive comment.*

### **Comment - Resident, Gilmerton Dykes Place**

*'With the larger amount of flora and fauna 450+ species approx? it makes sense for the volunteers to have a central location to meet and store gear.'*

**Response:** *This is a very supportive comment.*

### **Comment - Resident, Gilmerton Dykes Crescent**

*'Think it is brilliant that the Bothy is going to be revamped – long overdue. Hopefully the money can be obtained and (it can be) enjoyed by all the community. Hopefully all resident's views will be listened to and we are listened to regarding cutting grass during the summer season. The park should be enjoyable for all, not just wildlife.'*

*Response: This comment came from a resident who has previously expressed concern about the balance struck in the maintenance of the park between its use as a play area for children and the presence of trees, shrubs and long grass, particularly in relation to the 'Living Landscape' maintenance regime. Their views are not unique and the Friends Group always tries to emphasise the shared use of the park by people and wildlife. For obvious reasons, our newsletters mainly feature pictures of our events and of the wildlife of the park rather than pictures of children playing there (other than at our events). We do know, the park is regularly used by children of all ages as a play area and at times that can bring challenges – some trees get vandalised (as do the play facilities) and trollies regularly appear at 'the Dip' where there is an informal crossing point on the burn.*

*However, the Friends group believes very strongly in the shared use of the park by people of all ages and wildlife. We do not see a conflict between the two and we will always listen to and seek to support resident's concerns where we can. The fact that the park is an area of countryside that comes so close to people's houses makes the park a fantastic play area for children, and gives them easy opportunities to be and stay active in a way that will hopefully engender a love of open space for life. We are actively seeking support for park 'gym' facilities to be located in the park, for woodland play facilities at Moredun Wood, and are sympathetic to the request for a 'traditional' swing park somewhere in the area. This resident raises an important*

*point that represents the view of others and we will continue to respond positively to such concerns. Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park has south Edinburgh's only skatepark, which was deliberately installed to make the park attractive to children of all ages, and it has excellent play facilities as well. There could be improvements, but the park is unquestionably an excellent resource for encouraging and facilitating active play and that will continue.*

*In terms of the 'Living Landscape' approach to maintenance, we understand the concerns of residents, but we believe the approach works well in relation to Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park. We did support improvements last year in response to concerns, and the council responded positively to those requests. We will continue to review the operation of this initiative in partnership with the council and local residents.*

## Web Site

The Friends created a new website at the start of June to support the public consultation process. This features information about the consultation on the Bothy, and information about the drop in sessions. The website also contained a link for people to feed in their views about the proposals. The website has been publicised in our Newsletter which is circulated to over 250 stakeholders, and in our Facebook and Twitter posts.

The response was actually disappointing in that we had no responses via the email address posted on the web page. Perhaps this is because people find it easier to post on social media platforms like Facebook, rather than make a formal submission. Nevertheless, we do know that the website has seen some traffic as a result of the publicity and through links created in our Newsletter – which we can track.

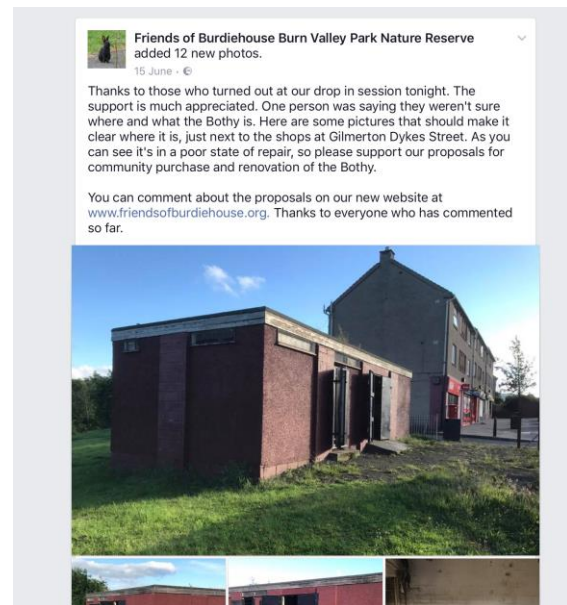
That said, it should be remembered that the lack of a response could simply be either apathy regarding the proposals, or just passive support. What can be said is that had there been significant opposition to the proposals, we would undoubtedly had some feedback via the website, and the response to the website is another indication that there aren't any significant concerns either about the operation of the Friends group, or the purchase of the Bothy.



## Social Media Advertising

The Friends group bought advertising space on Facebook for two adverts, and put up an additional post about the consultation process. The details from these posts is as follows:

- One paid advert was used to publicise the first event and this was targeted at residents who live within a 1km radius of the geographical centre of the park. This post reached 2,350 Facebook users in the area between the 13/15<sup>th</sup> June.
- A second post was published which was not a paid advert and this reached 467 people on Facebook. Unlike paid posts it is not possible to determine what proportion of these were local residents.
- A third advert was purchased that ran after the first event on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June and reached 1,399 local residents with an 1km radius centred on the park.



The adverts did encourage people to respond and directed people to the newly created website with a view to encouraging them to submit their views. Ultimately we didn't get any views submitted via the website, but the opportunity was there for those who chose to use it.

### Facebook Comments and Responses

We analysed the Facebook feedback and comments on the posts. Some of these were frivolous – *'always thought the council used it to skive in'*, but others were more thoughtful.

#### Comment

One resident asked for details of *'what we planned to do with it?'* We replied to this post and the response was liked.

#### Response

*'The plan is to apply for funding to purchase and refurbish it. It needs gutted and it needs a new roof as the current roof leaks. The intention is to use it as a base for the*

*Friends group. By taking out the central wall we can create a bigger space and have a meeting space big enough for our committee meetings and to host events and activities. It can be used as a resource for the Friends and for community groups using the park. There's now a walking group for parents with buggies and that's just the kind of group that could use the Bothy too.*

*With a proper building we can put up displays and potentially have it available as an educational resource as well. The park has been used for Forest Schools by a couple of schools, but were keen to expand that.*

*As a small but active group we've done a lot of work in the park, but we do feel that we can expand that with a proper base for our activities. In addition we'll have a great big sign that will let everyone know where the Friends are based, and where people can go to help. We have lots of plans to grow what we do for the park and for the local community.*

## Comment

Another made a negative comment saying, 'Waste of Good Money'.

**Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park Nature Reserve**  
13 June · 🌐

Public Consultation on the purchase of 'The Bothy' at Gilmerton Dykes Street

As you may be aware from previous posts, the Friends group is planning to purchase and upgrade 'The Bothy' at Gilmerton Dykes Street (next to the shops). The plan is to secure funding to purchase and refurbish the Bothy as a long term based for increasing our work and for the use of... [See more](#)

[friendsofburdiehouse.org](#) [Learn More](#)

John Collins and 27 others · 14 comments · 10 shares

Like · Comment · Share

3,365 people reached > [View results](#)

Organic Reach	Paid Reach	Post Clicks
1,030	2,350	249

## Response

To this we responded, 'Everyone's entitled to their opinion, but it will help look after one of the city's best parks and support our campaigns to stop dog fouling, littering and illegal motor biking. Most people have been very positive about the proposals, but thanks for giving your view.'

We cannot be certain, but this Facebook user's profile picture showed him sitting on a large motorcycle. We have had negative comments regarding our 'Ban the Bikes' campaign which sought to stop illegal and dangerous biking in the park. It may be that the campaign and the comment are related.

## Comment

This appeared to provoke a change of heart and the resident responded, 'Yeah apologies for my comment as I've changed my views. Very good idea as the park needs a new identity and not for silly Anti-Social behaviour from these youths. Thanks very much.'



## Comment

Another resident said, *'Good idea I've never seen inside over my 40 years use it and enjoy it.'*

*'All best with your plans, sounds like something that would make a big difference for a modest outlay in today's terms.'*

## Response

*'Thank you very much for your support. Much appreciated.'*

One resident was very negative.

## Comment

*'Better of spending 40k on a proper swing park for our kids with slides and real swings for babys and older children or spend the 40k on sorting out the community centre so the kids can go socialise 👍'*

## Response

The Friends thought this was a perfectly understandable response and the request for swings was not unreasonable, so we said so. This did seem to change the perception of the person making the comment. *'Thanks very much for the comment. There is one of the city's few skateparks and a great play area at the Dip in Burdiehouse. There was a play area at Burdiehouse Street with swings and a slide but this was taken out some time ago. The old community centre is being knocked down in the near future and that site would be suitable for play facilities. We would certainly welcome such a move. We are also looking to see if additional play facilities can be installed in some of the woodland areas.'*

*The proposals to refurbish the Bothy would not come from council sources, so this is not an either, or situation. It is perfectly possible to push for a new play area and support the refurbishment of the Bothy. If you would like to organise a campaign to get a new play area, we would be happy to provide any support and advice we could. The park is a fantastic green space and there's plenty of room for play of all kinds. If you would like to see more, then please do get involved and we will try to support you.'*

What do you plan to do with it?:)

15 June · Like · Reply · Message · 1



**Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park Nature Re...**

The plan is to apply for funding to purchase and refurbish it. It needs gutted and it needs a new roof as the current roof leaks. The intention is to use it as a base for the Friends group. By taking out the central wall we can create a bigger space and have a meeting space big enough for our committee meetings and to host events and activities. It can be used as a resource for the Friends and for community groups using the park. There's now a walking group for parents with buggies and that's just the kind of group that could use the Bothy too.

With a proper building we can put up displays and potentially have it available as an educational resource as well. The park has been used for Forest Schools by a couple of schools, but were keen to expand that.

As a small but active group we've done a lot of work in the park, but we do feel that we can expand that with a proper base for our activities. In addition we'll have a great big sign that will let everyone know where the Friends are based, and where people can go to help. We have lots of plans to grow what we do for the park and for the local community.

*Thanks again for making a comment. In terms of the community centre, we helped out by chairing a recent meeting about its future. There are repairs being carried out in the near future and it's an important community facility that we want to see maintained and improved. Again, there is no conflict between that and the plans for the Bothy.'*

This elicited two more positive comments from the resident, who said,

### **Response**

*'Yeah it will look good.'* 🍷, and *'I will do thanks for the information.'*

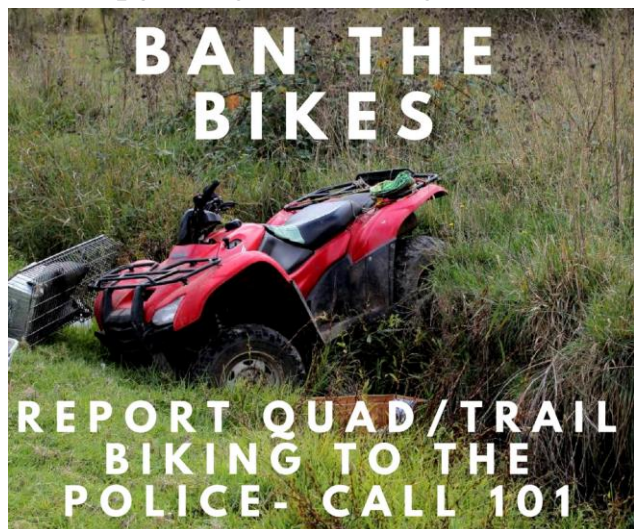
Another person was cynical about the costs of upgrading the building:

### **Comment**

*'40 grand to convert an already built concrete building having a laugh'*

### **Response**

*'This is an initial estimate of the costs purchase and upgrade The Bothy. Hopefully we can do it for less, but apart from the shell, the roof and everything else needs renewed.'*



to

## **Overall Analysis of Facebook Engagement**

Generally, the response was very encouraging. The posts were seen by significant numbers of local residents, there were some very strong comments in support and some comments expressing concerns. On answering the negative points made by residents we were able to change two of the negative views into more positive responses. There were two particularly negative comments, one about the scale the cost estimates for refurbishment, and the other calling it a waste of money. This is not unexpected. The cost estimates are just that and we will see in due course how much is needed to bring the Bothy up to a proper standard. In terms of the resident that called it 'a waste of money', there will always be some people who are negative about any proposal and in terms of the Bothy we have had very few negative comments.

Also, we do suspect that that person's affinity with motorbikes may have coloured

their views of the Friends group. The group has run a yearlong campaign to tackle illegal motorbiking in the park, which included a paid advert that reached 7,489 local residents and generated 92 likes, 48 posts with 42 shares. The response was overwhelmingly positive, but there were a number of very aggressive responses from some bikers and sympathisers.

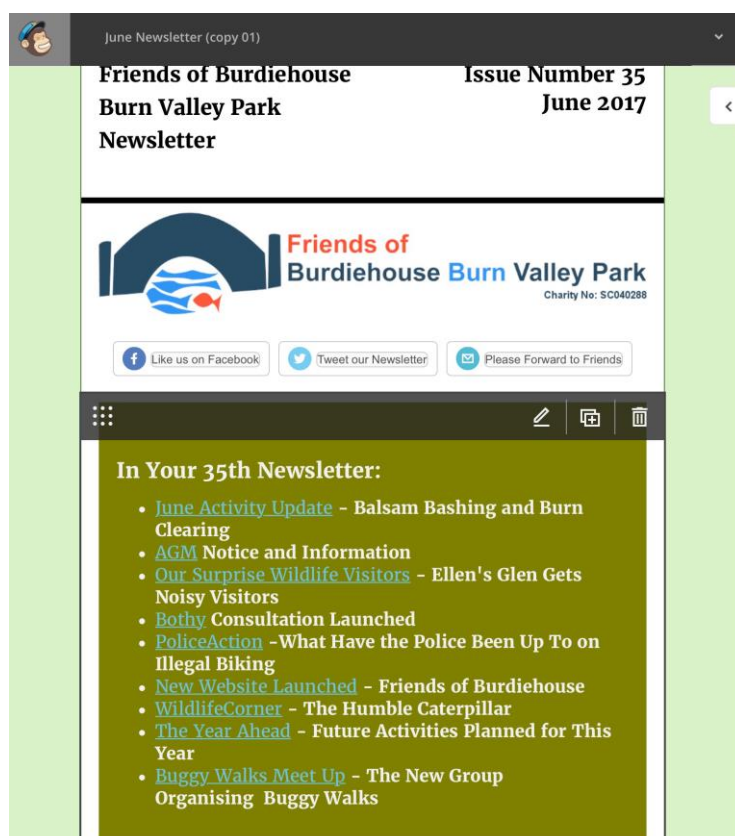
In overall terms, the response to social media advertising was positive for the proposals.





# Conclusions

The public consultation carried out by the Friends group reached those most affected by the use of the Bothy, and the same people will be affected by any increase in activity as a result of community purchase. The level of active engagement was quite low, but this level of engagement can actually occur in major development projects from time to time as well. Because there is no major physical change to the building and no change of designated planning use, perhaps the proposals were seen as benign by local residents – it would be impossible to say definitively. However, what can be said is that there is currently no significant body of opinion in the local area that is negative either about the Friends Group, or the proposals to take ownership of the Bothy.



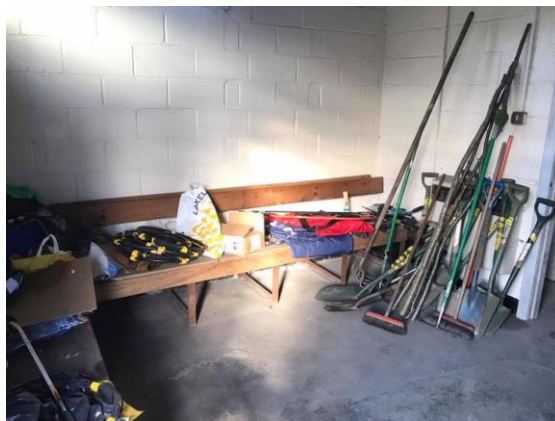
The drop in sessions were not well attended and this is perhaps another indication that the proposals have not sparked any particular controversy, though it is encouraging that those who attended the session were strongly supportive of the Friends group whilst not being members of it. Indeed, a couple of them expressed interest in getting involved after hearing more about the group.

The social media consultation was useful in terms of getting information through to a good cross section of the residents around the park in terms of age, economic status and in terms of park and non-park users. This was perhaps the most useful element of the consultation process.

It allowed people to easily ask and have responses to the proposals from the comfort of their own homes. Whilst a couple of people were unreservedly negative, there were some who were initially negative and became more positive once their concerns were addressed, and of course there were others who were strongly positive.

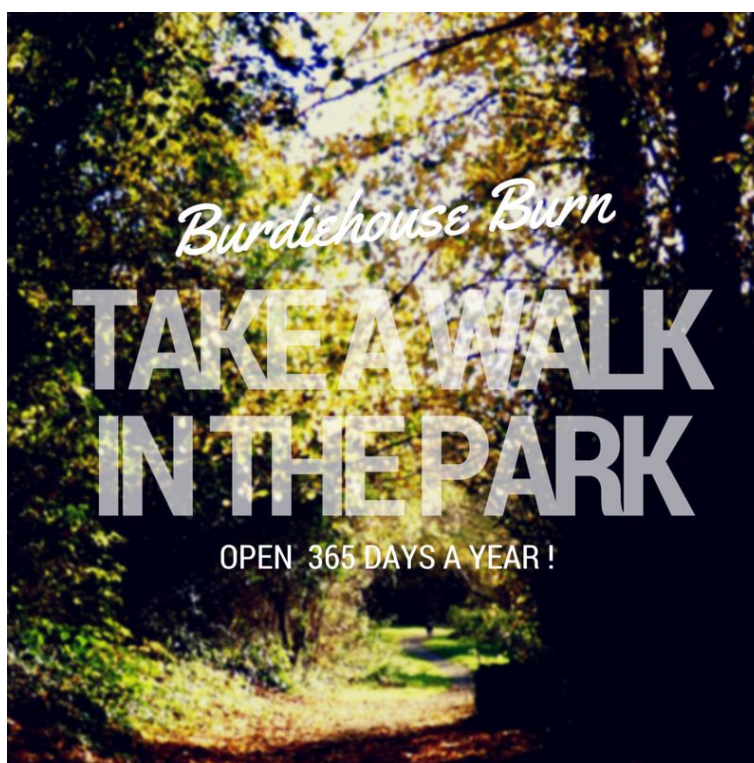
The public consultation did not actively seek the views of the community council at this stage. The Community Council has been one of our strongest local supporters and is a member of our Facebook group as well as a regular distributor of our Newsletter and social media posts. We are contacting the Community Council with a view to seeking its views before a decision is taken by the council as we believe they will be supportive of the principle, but interested in the details about the proposals.

The Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park is a small, but very active local environmental group and it is clear that it has some very strong local support and recognition, and also a small body of people who are either negative (perhaps on the basis of the 'Ban the Bikes' campaign) or simply cynical about this type of activity.



There is nothing to indicate any significant concerns about, never mind any opposition to the proposals for the Friends to acquire the Bothy, or their proposals to increase their activities in the park. On the contrary, it would appear that the group does have some very enthusiastic supporters who believe that the group's work should continue, should be supported and who are happy to support its purchase of the Bothy.

Donald Anderson, July, 2017



## Appendix

### Local Leaflet



### Community Purchase of 'The Bothy' Gilmerton Dykes Street Public Consultation Drop In Sessions - 15th/21st June

**Drop in Sessions - This Thursday,  
15<sup>th</sup> June and next Wednesday  
the 21<sup>st</sup> June, 6pm to 8pm**

The Friends of Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park is proposing to purchase 'The Bothy' at Gilmerton Dykes Street (beside the shops). The purchase from the council is being done under Scottish community purchase powers. As part of that process we are consulting neighbours and community groups in the area. Key elements of the proposals are:

- ✓ Securing the Bothy as a base for the Friends group and for community use
- ✓ Securing funds to refurbish the Bothy which has fallen into disrepair
- ✓ Doing more work to improve the park

#### **Come and Hear All About it**

This week and next we will have someone at the Bothy to explain the proposals and answer any questions you may have. This is one of the best parks in Edinburgh and our aim is to make it even better. Come along and give us your views. If you have any questions email us at [donaldcanderson@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:donaldcanderson@hotmail.co.uk).



*Find out more about the Friends Group at our website at [www.friendsofburdiehouse.org](http://www.friendsofburdiehouse.org). See the work we do.*



*We're on Facebook too and on Twitter @FBbvp. We will be consulting widely on Twitter*

Thank you very much for coming to this drop in session. Please put your comments on this sheet and they will be used to help inform this consultation exercise. If you have any additional questions, please get in touch by emailing [donald.anderson@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:donald.anderson@hotmail.co.uk).

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My Comments – feel free to use the back of the sheet too

[illegible]