



Sustaining Dunbar

Travel Advice Factsheet 11 - Community Projects

Car use and ownership have increased dramatically in the UK over the last 30 years. Many streets are not designed to accommodate high volumes of traffic, or fast traffic. This in turn means that people feel unsafe walking and cycling so they end up using their cars, which adds to congestion and pollution. Fewer people out and about decrease the sense of community, and there is less opportunity for safe, outdoor play which affects the health and well-being of children.



A number of schemes now exist to encourage communities to make their neighbourhoods safer and to alter the balance between vehicles and other users of the street; pedestrians, cyclists, residents and children. When people think about how their local neighbourhoods can be improved, they often want quite small changes such as even pavements, cleaner streets and safer areas where they can meet, shop, talk and play.

Possible projects for making your local neighbourhood a nicer place to walk, cycle and play in could include:-



Narrowing the Street



Slowing Down the Traffic



Planting



Play Areas

Sustrans - DIY Streets

Sustrans is a UK charity working to enable people to travel by foot, bike or public transport. They work with communities, local authorities and other organisations to enable many more people to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment.



How does a DIY Street project work?

Every street is different but for a project to really work it requires enthusiastic residents who want to improve their street and are willing to put in time and effort to make it happen. The particular characteristics of the street will be a key factor in what is feasible but in almost every street there is at least some potential for change.

Getting the local authority on board at an early stage is crucial as they will need to adopt and maintain the highway after any changes have been made. Project funding should ideally be secured before design work begins. Costs range between £20,000 - £100,000 per street; however, it may be more realistic to aim for more modest changes for less. Community involvement is integral to the project's success; from the outset of a DIY Street project residents are encouraged to get as involved as possible by discussing the issues in their street and possible solutions. One important aim of this intensive resident involvement is to ensure that all residents feel that they have a say in how their street operates and is managed. This will hopefully give them a sense of ownership thus encouraging lasting care and respect of the street.

Pocket Guides

Sustaining Dunbar can give you copies of Sustrans DIY streets pocket guides on the following topics. These will give you some ideas for your projects:-

- 1 - Life in Front Gardens
- 2 - Temporary Art and Children's Games
- 3 - Greenery
- 4 - Narrowing the Road
- 5 - Reduce Sightlines
- 6 - Chicanes
- 7 - Cushions, Humps and Tables
- 8 - Gateways
- 9 - Street Furniture

Details of Running a Project

Sample plan of action for a typical project:

1. Hold a kick-off meeting - find out who is interested, what skills people have.
2. Obtain evidence of need and support for project - collect data such as traffic counts, photos, quotes from residents, accident statistics, and assurance that residents want change and that there is a core group of people willing to run the project.
3. Contact the local Council's highways department and local councillors - you will need their support. Councillors will often be able to make contacts with local council departments.
4. Collect detailed evaluation data, build on data already collected to get ready for a before and after report to your prospective funders.
5. Set up a constituted resident's group - as a focus for activities, contact for council and most importantly, to enable you to apply for community grants. You will need 3 group officials; a chairperson, a treasurer and a secretary, and you will need to write and agree

a simple constitution (example on Sustrans website), and open a bank account for the group, both of these are easy to do.

6. Decide how you will make decisions; you need to involve everyone.
7. Write an action plan - setting down goals and timescales and a method of how to achieve aims.
8. Assess existing street layout; to record the street as it is now; count lampposts, number of houses with drives, street and footpath widths so you can mark all these details on a large scale map (East Lothian Council or Sustaining Dunbar should be able to help you with a suitable map). Collect ideas about new features for your street, remember you need to maintain access for dustbin lorries and emergency services. Do you want to calm traffic speeds, reduce parking, provide bike parking, encourage children's play or have planting/trees/artwork to make the street more attractive?
9. Hold more formal design sessions - draw up layout plan, meet with all residents and your local council to work towards a detailed design.
10. Develop artwork/planting plan/play areas - traditional or less formal, work out costings and apply for funding.
11. Finalise plans - local council may be able to help you with this. You must check that all residents are happy with design before finalising.
12. Construction
13. Celebration - arrange street party and press coverage.
14. Gather up follow-up data for after report; do a little report for funders and council; compare street layout, traffic volumes and speeds, gather resident's views and comments.

Fundraising

Whether your project is large or small, you will need a fundraising campaign. East Lothian Council's funds are very limited, so you will have to investigate other sources of funding, both formal grants and informal local fund raising events. These could include:-

- Sponsored walks, cycles, dog walks, litter picks
- Car boot or table top sales
- Coffee mornings, cake sales, quizzes, raffles

(Contact East Lothian Council to see if you need a permit for your event).



Local Funding

Local businesses may be able to help with raffle prizes or photocopying. Any offer of help should be considered. Businesses may often sponsor your scheme in return for including their logo or providing photo opportunities for publicity in your newsletter or any events. Always send a letter of thanks and remember to keep them up-to-date with your progress.

Grants

Formal applications for funding can be made to bodies such as East Lothian Council, Awards for All, the Co-op Community Fund, the Voluntary Action Fund, all of which have grants available for small community projects. To make these formal applications, you will need to form a constituted residents' group. This can be made up with a minimum of 3 people, a chair, secretary and treasurer. East Lothian Council can provide advice about setting up a constituted residents group, or contact one in your local area for advice.



Other Local Opportunities

Dunbar in Bloom is a local organisation which is looking for planting projects to make Dunbar a more colourful place. Their website is www.dunbarinbloom.org.uk

Useful Websites:-

www.sustrans.org.uk/diystreets - information about their DIY Streets project.

www.20splentyfordunbar.org.uk - information about the local campaign for 20 mph speed limits.

www.liveableneighbourhoods@sustrans.org.uk (for ongoing support and advice).

www.writetothem.com - tells you who represents you at all the various levels of government, and enables you to send an e-mail direct to them. Also gives advice about how to write your letter.

www.livingstreets.org.uk, formerly the Pedestrians' Association, this charity campaigns for more people-friendly streets

Funding:-

www.voluntaryactionfund.org.uk

www.scvo.org.uk

www.co-operative.coop/membership/local-communities/community-fund

www.eastlothian.gov.uk

Other Useful Publications

Sustaining Dunbar Factsheet 8 - 20 mph speed limits.