

Extract from Executive Summary of Nourishing Leith Strategic Plan

The Change We Want to Make – Why We Are Doing This

Our vision is to draw together the opportunities presented by the land and the assets upon it to help achieve several important outcomes for the people of Leith. With integrated initiatives working across the community-controlled two-acre open site, and the refurbished building a vital nexus at the heart of these synergistic projects, we shall be able to contribute significantly to the following:



1. Leith will become a more cohesive, co-operative and resilient community, and less one of disparate, unconnected individuals. Bringing people together in various ways, we shall combat isolation and loneliness.
2. The health and broader wellbeing of the people of Leith, especially those who are most disengaged and disadvantaged, will be improved.
3. The community and the individuals within it will be more skilled, and the attainment gap will be reduced for local people of all ages.

As well as helping achieve community outcomes, taking control of the assets will allow the project to become financially sustainable by generating income from events, retail, a café and training, while ensuring services are affordable to all.

Background and Vision

Leith Community Crops in Pots (LCCiP) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, set up to promote healthy, inclusive and environmentally sustainable food production and consumption in Leith. The organisation's mission is: 'To encourage and support the people and organisations of Leith to grow food vegetables, and flowers for bees, in urban spaces, in order to improve health and wellbeing, community cohesion and environment.' To achieve this vision of social, economic and environmental sustainability, we are empowering the people of Leith to take control of their environment, the land and assets that matter to them, including the built environment.

We have a strong track record, having managed a two-acre site on common good land at the north-western corner of Leith Links (Leith Community Croft) with and for the local community. We aim to consolidate this and expand what we can offer to the community by developing a small pavilion on the site (previously used by Leith Athletic FC but originally a tennis pavilion). This building is in a poor state of repair. Led by the community, we have developed plans for saving it and giving it a new lease of life, as the heart of several integrated social and environmentally beneficial projects. The mutually beneficial relationship of the building and its Croft location is central to our plans and the sustainability of the site.

The addition of a small building and the facilities it will provide to our outdoor, land-based project is crucial as it will create space for us to offer events, run a café, deliver courses/workshops and launch a small farm shop.

These initiatives will both impact positively on local people who are in need (gently drawing them into a healthy environment where many enjoyable and inspiring activities will be available), and generate income to sustain us beyond kick-start investment. We aim to continue our transformative work in densely populated Leith, so we are keen that this project be sustainable in the broadest sense. It is unusual in that it combines green space and land development (an 'urban croft'), with a building which, though unlisted, has local historical interest.

Importantly, we see the integrated project as a ground-breaking model for other urban crofts, as has been recognised by the Scottish Crofting Federation, and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (contributing to our core costs) is also very enthusiastic about this aspect of our work. While we are acting locally, we are also thinking globally.

The Organisation

Mission Statement: The organisation's purpose is to encourage and support the people and organisations of Leith to grow food vegetables, and flowers for bees, in urban spaces, in order to improve health and wellbeing, community cohesion and the environment.

The organisation has a significant track record in offering grass-roots services both from this site and throughout the community, principally within local primary schools but also in the local nursery and secondary school.

The Need We Identified and Our Target Beneficiaries

Pockets of Leith (according to SIMD measures backed up by primary research we undertook) are areas of high multiple deprivation. Whilst we envisage that *everyone* who lives here will benefit from the development of our pioneering urban croft, in particular our focus will be to ensure positive outcomes for the community's most disadvantaged and disengaged individuals.

We are concerned about the following issues, amongst others:

- There is a high proportion of ethnic minorities, including refugees, in the area, so we will encourage integration and understanding across these cultures throughout our projects.
- Nature Deficit Disorder – there is little green space in Leith and children suffer if they grow up isolated from the natural world.
- Isolation and loneliness is a problem amongst older people across the UK, especially those on a low income. We will be proactive in reaching out to this age group.
- Food poverty, poor diet and low educational achievement will be a clear focus for our initiatives.
- Drugs and addiction – this is a big issue in the Leith area, which is why we are developing a partnership with Dry Dock to help us provide opportunities for their service users and others.

An estimated minimum of 500 individuals and 20 voluntary or community groups will be positively impacted by this investment in its initial phases.

Though we are particularly keen to improve the lives of those most disadvantaged and disengaged, our asset-based, place-based approach (and the fact that we wish to create a more resilient and integrated community, avoiding stigmatisation through clumsy targeting) mean that we shall engage with everyone who has skills and something to give.