

One of the key undertakings of the People's Parish Project was to collect local memories and stories through a survey. This document contains a comprehensive report of the survey responses.

---

## Survey responses

---

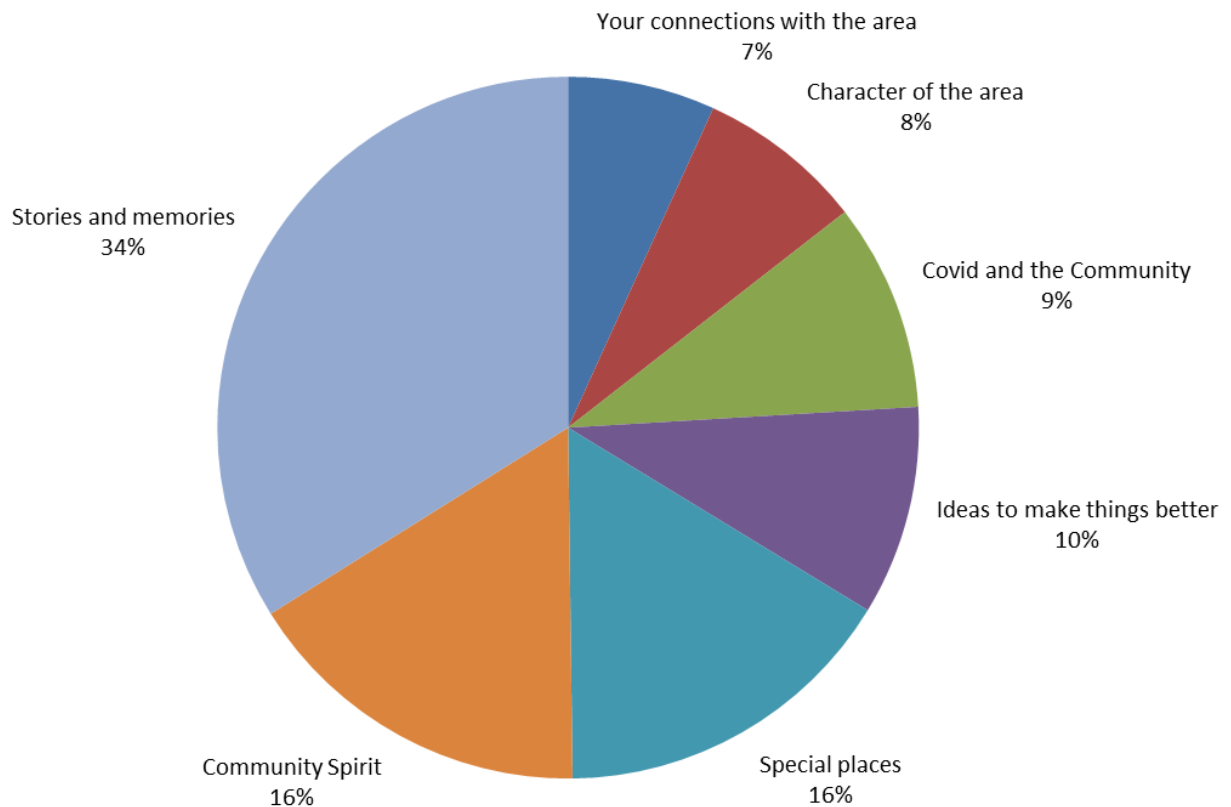
We asked 7 core questions:

- 1: **Connections:** please tell us about your connection with this area. (Please say which area you mean!) Lived, worked, volunteered, how long etc?
- 2: **Character:** how would you describe the area to someone who didn't know it?
- 3: **Community Spirit:** a) What has made you feel part of this community - or not? (e.g. neighbours, local services, places you enjoy going, facilities you use etc.)b) Is there anywhere else you get a sense of community or belonging? (Football, faith, workplace, learning place, etc)
- 4: **Stories, memories and local history:** have you a story or memory to share about life in this area or a local landmark? (We can follow up if you have more!)
- 5: **Special Places:** where round here do you like to go to walk or find company?
- 6: **Covid and the Community:** have you anything to tell us about how the Covid pandemic has changed life in this area, if at all?
- 7: **Ideas to make things better:** What changes do you think might improve life in this area?

This pie chart illustrates the lengths of response in answer to each question. As we might expect, people gave the longest answers when relating "Stories and memories". At the other end of the scale, question 1 typically received only a brief, factual detail; this question was primarily for project records and so is omitted from the further analysis below.

---

## Average number of words in response to each survey question



## Thematic analysis of each question

After familiarising ourselves with the responses, we made a list of interesting themes and used these themes to tag up the responses. We have used these themes to characterize the responses to each question, as presented in the rest of this section.

The table shows the number of respondents whose answer to a given question included a given theme. For each question, the highlighting indicates the most common 3 themes mentioned. For each theme, the bold figure indicates the question in which the theme most commonly came up.

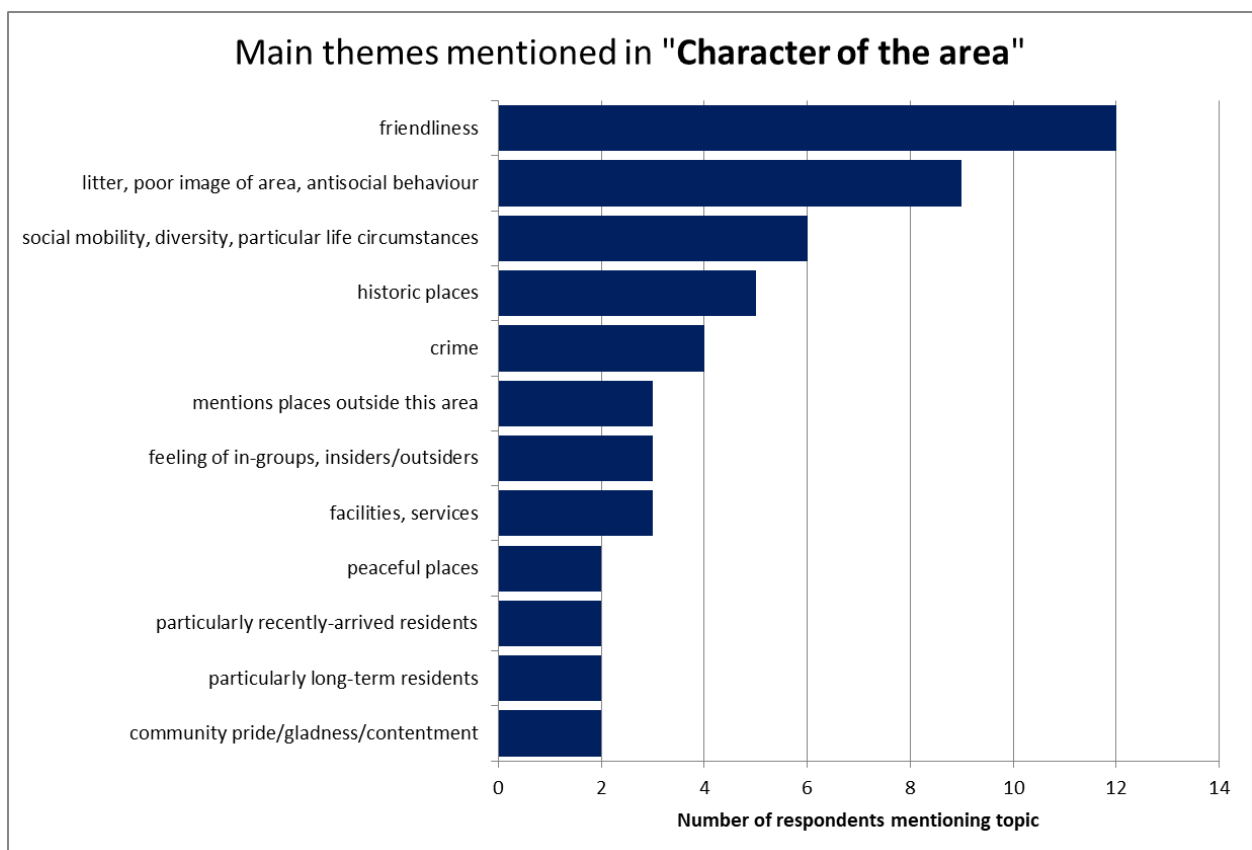
Q2: Character of the area	Q3: Community Spirit	Q4: Stories and memories	Q5: Special places	Q6: Covid and the Community	Q7: Ideas to make things better	Theme tag
2	5	11	27	2	4	Lochend Park
0	5	6	7	3	5	other green public spaces inc. visible private gardens
0	2	2	2	0	0	community gardens, allotments
1	1	3	3	2	2	wildlife
2	0	1	4	1	0	peaceful places
12	18	4	4	11	1	friendliness
8	3	4	2	0	12	litter, poor image of area, antisocial behaviour
3	0	3	1	0	2	crime
3	7	6	1	7	3	experiences of particular social class or life circumstances, social mobility, demographic diversity
2	3	3	1	0	3	feeling of in-groups, insiders/outsideers
1	0	0	0	0	0	moving in to the area
2	4	5	0	0	0	particularly long-term residents
2	1	2	0	0	0	particularly recently-arrived residents
0	2	9	4	2	3	leisure choices, sport/games (informal, teen/adult)
3	10	17	4	2	8	childhood
1	3	3	3	2	2	dogs
0	4	3	2	0	1	football
2	7	1	0	14	2	social isolation
0	0	1	1	0	0	specific well-known individuals who've had positive influence on the area
4	4	15	4	0	0	historic places (before housing development of 1920s)
1	1	1	0	8	0	Covid-19 pandemic/lockdown; historic pandemics/plagues
0	13	8	3	1	1	churches, schools
0	9	11	1	4	4	organized groups & activities
0	1	7	1	0	1	factories & workplaces, local products
1	10	7	4	4	5	shops & leisure venues
3	7	10	4	9	23	facilities, services
0	7	4	5	1	2	The Ripple / Hub / YWCA / earlier incarnations? (same site or organization)
0	0	1	0	0	0	sensory (smells etc)
0	7	11	6	4	2	particularly striking deeper feelings and experiences (pretty subjective, inevitably!)
5	5	5	0	1	3	community pride/gladness/contentment
0	0	1	1	0	0	magical/supernatural
3	5	5	9	1	3	out-of-zone places
0	4	7	1	0	0	names of individuals remembered

In investigating the responses, we also used a few further tags which wouldn't add anything to the analysis below, so you will not see them mentioned again. These were: 'absence of voices from this corpus'; 'good quote!'; 'question about the area'. The tag 'anecdotes, legends (not supernatural)' was also used to highlight individual anecdotes, but isn't used in the question-by-question analysis because it overlaps so much with question 4

Below, for each of questions 2 to 7, you will find a graph showing the themes mentioned. Any theme which was mentioned by at least two respondents is included in the graph. After the graph are some of the actual quotes, including some quotes which specifically relate to the three most-common themes. (These most-common themes are also highlighted in yellow in the table above).

The respondent's name is included after each quote, unless they requested anonymity. We have ensured that at least one quote from every respondent is included.

## Character of the area



- A woman in a shop said to me that this was a bad area, but I find the people are really lovely. I meet hundreds of folk everyday and people are really lovely, really genuine. — Anonymous

- Some people need and want to be heard and often go about it in an intrusive, aggressive way... I think they don't want to show their sadness or loneliness, that would show a bit of their 'underbelly' and things they don't want to face. —Anonymous
- It's a funny place, an almost hidden community. It's got such a strong identity of its own, a little village mentality of caring for your own. Folk come from here, they've lived here for generations, folk have a homing instinct, a bit magnetic, salt of the earth —Ruth Quigley
- It is also family friendly area and the loch is an oasis of calm in the middle of the city — Anonymous
- Its in the middle, not posh but not deprived either —Anonymous
- There's more of a transient nature now due to less social housing and more private rented accommodation. —Anonymous
- It's like a little town within the city. ... Sandwiched in between the hustle and bustle of Leith and the more affluent Craightinny and Duddingston areas. —Anonymous
- Lively, more to it than meets the eye, full of personality —Tristan Green
- People have a really specific idea of where they live, i.e. it's Lochend or Craightinny or they live in the Loanings, or Marionville. It's an interesting odd dynamic! They don't see themselves coming from a collective area, they come from their bit! and identify with the name of the small bit. Absolutely fascinating. You realise it and see its been in front of your face for years. [When we were in power in the council, up to 2006/7] I stopped trying to persuade folk to put one name on it as I was never going to get that. —Ewan Aitken

### Character of the area: Friendliness

- Warm & Welcoming —Anonymous
- ... on the whole there is more people that are hardworking, kind and caring neighbours that care about the area —Laura Jackman
- Born in Loganlea Drive 1946 left 1967. ... When I lived there it was a great place to live. Great neighbours and great community —Anonymous
- A very dog friendly area - I got a dog in May 2021 and by meeting other dog owners I managed to meet quite a few people from the community ... —Anonymous
- Depends on the season of the year but friendly and beautiful specially in Easter time. — Anonymous
- Loads of lovely friendly folk ... —Anonymous

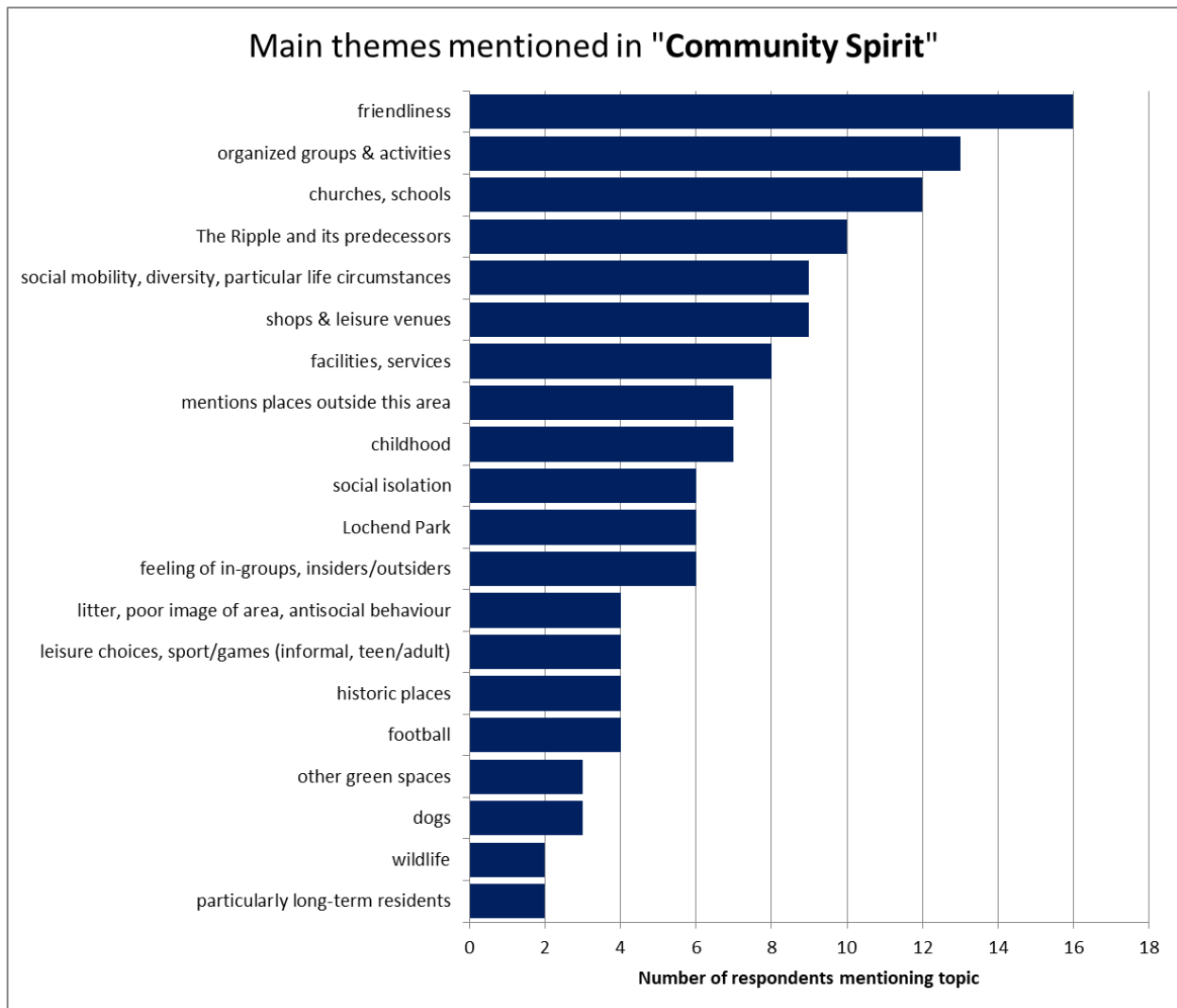
### **Character of the area: Poor image of area**

- ['Describe the character of the area?'] I'd struggle to do that positively. —Anonymous
- The area is badly needing investment. —Anonymous
- Lovely to begin with but like other areas gone downhill —Anonymous
- i moved to this area 2 monts ago ... It seems a bit neglected. I got recommended not to walk alone in some areas —Marta
- Former Council estate with property-ownership increasing, effects of deprivation evident (litter, dog-fouling). —Ailsa Laing
- Can have there problems with young one on there dirt bikes going up and down your roads and doing wheelies —Anonymous
- Lived here all my life, it's always had it's problems. The 80's/90's heroin/glue sniffing. Now coke, alcohol, methodone, thieves. —Anonymous
- Not the most glamorous but loads of 'wee gems' . —Anonymous

### **Character of the area: Pride in one's community**

- ['Describe the character of the area?'] My home. —Anonymous
- It was fine before I left — one of the better places to live in Edinburgh —Fred Legget
- Less of a community than previously. —Anonymous

## Community Spirit



- Restalrig was still a village (surrounded by Edinburgh!) ... My Parents bought "The big House", my father repaired and we restored it to a good degree in those days, with the church being next door there was much going on, the tradition of poo-root or Scatter of coins after a wedding was still alive in those days, as a kid it was obviously one of my favourites. —Robin Smith
- Recently I found a home at the Himalaya cafe in southside, in the Quaker community. —Ruth Quigley
- There is a community here in the Findlays the problem my mum has being the age she is she has seen many people come and go. At one time she knew everybody in the street, now she would know about 3 out of 30 households. —Angus Ross Brown
- The internacional culture of people living around around. You can see people from a lot of nationalities which is really fascinating and inspire. —Anonymous
- moved to the area a few weeks ago ... i dont feel as a part of community just yet —Anonymous
- I think the area has a well knitted community of elder residents but I find this is lacked in the younger people of the community especially by addicts but this is only my opinion

as an recovering addict ... I am part of a church in Easter Road and my faith has helped me feel part of this community and also the staff from carrgomm have made my life in this area easier for me to fit in —Anonymous

### **Community Spirit: Friendliness**

- If I leave my bike unpadlocked someone will tap the door to make sure I haven't forgotten about it. ... I feel it makes everyone more secure knowing that people would check on them too. Modern Lochend is diverse too so the only thing we all have in common is we're 'Lochenders' and of course Hibs. ... I regularly see all the kids from obviously different ethnic backgrounds playing together and bringing the mum's together, again all they have in common is they're neighbours. —Anonymous
- Being an expat I've mainly become friendly with it expats which I'd say is due to the fact that people living here since they were little already have tight circles of long term friends. —Anonymous
- Quite a lot of people now recognize my dog and they ask Is this Maple? when they see him. —Anonymous
- The new play park should be great and I hope the young teens take the time to enjoy it, make friends in it and value it. —Anonymous

### **Community Spirit: Churches, schools**

- ['Where do you get a sense of community or belonging?'] Church, I can be myself. —Anonymous

### **Community Spirit: Childhood**

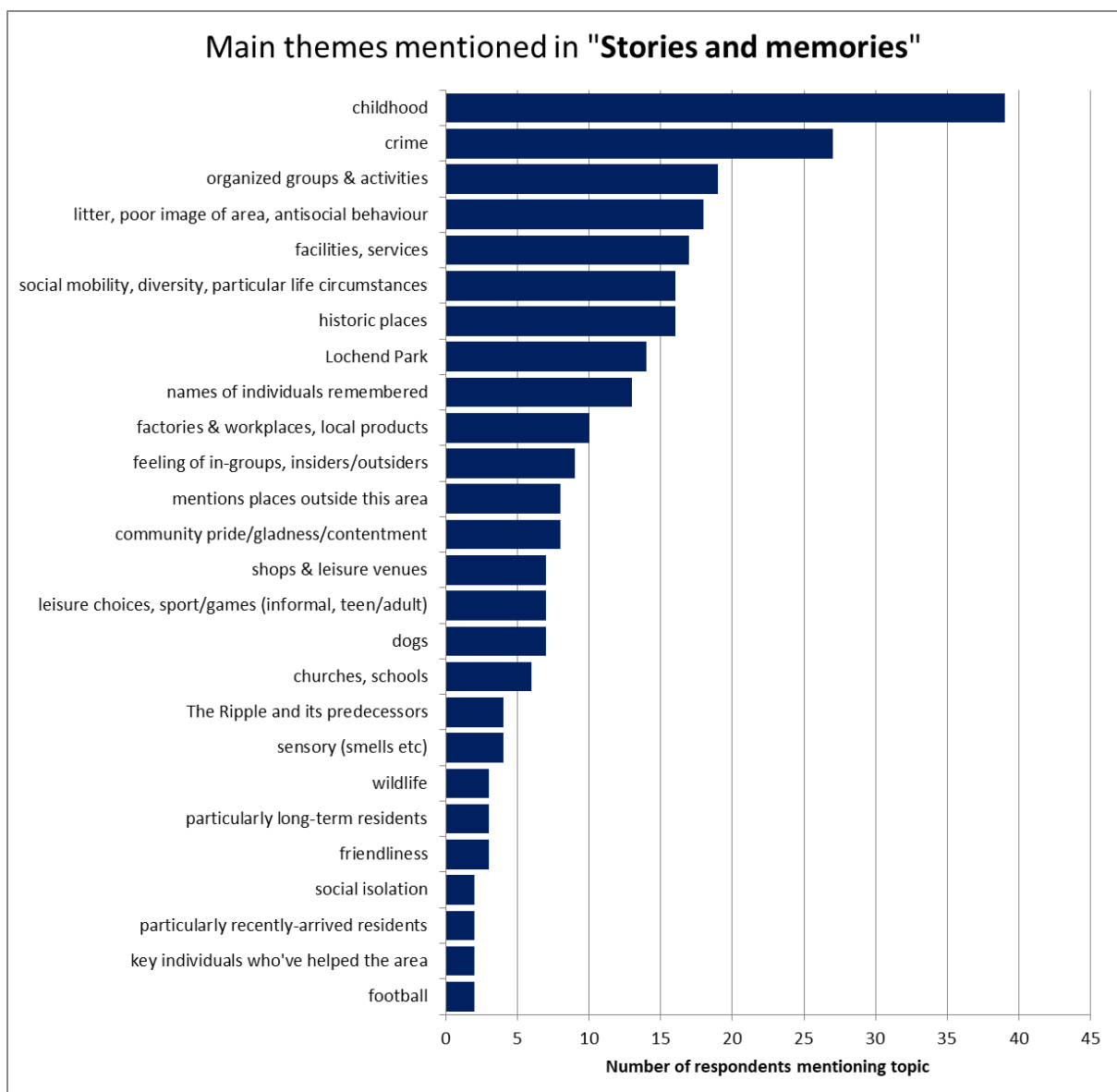
- Knew all the children from school, went to the local Scouts .... scoutmaster was Ken Moyes. Great, great times. —Gordon Smithson
- ['What has made you feel part of this community?'] Neighbours, shops, playing in street, back garden concerts, walking back and forwards to school. —Shelagh Goodall



## Community Spirit: Shops, leisure venues

- There used to be a team of staff at the Co-Op that recognised customers and let on to people. —Anonymous
- I probably feel more at home in Leith as there are more places that you can spend time in there (cafes, pubs, restaurants) —Anonymous

## Stories and memories



- ['Did you feel accepted here with your (same sex)partner?'] Some of the kids found that quite challenging, so the pitchfork chucking, name calling. We treated folk round here with respect and we got that back. We confused people a bit. When my partner was

dying with cancer, people watched gently and quietly. Once you've shown you're not going away...after you've done your time, and you say you are here, you don't get scared away, it is what it is. —Ruth Quigley

- I was out and I feed the foxes when I get back ... I don't see them very often, I waited there for 20 mins and it sensed I was there and it came to the gate but went away, ... When I saw it it made me really happy. ... Loads of squirrels, it's like feeding the 5000 !! —Mags
- Managed to start volunteering and then become manager of the ASC in the YWCA building. Now I have managed to get a degree and a job as a family support lead. —Joanna McCalman
- What about Munro Spun ,that must employed lots of local people. Also Kinloch Anderson's that would have had many workers . —Wendy Smith Moncrieff
- Live here since 59. Family first tenants here from Tollbooth Wynd into Shore Block ... my family Keenan were first to move into Shore Block when built they had 16 kids and 2 bedrooms —Lorna Keenan
- We can look at the past and think it was much better than it is now, but there's always a downside. Folk say 'I remember the houses back in the day', well no, those houses got torn down as they were all decayed and rotten. There's pros and cons to it all, 'oh they were the good old days', but it's about being realistic, looking at and learning from things. —Anonymous

## Stories and memories: Childhood

- Lochend Pavillion ... used to do lunch clubs.. ['Was it fun to be involved?'] There was a lot of peer pressure to be part of that culture, part of the gang, you got swept up in that culture. It was deadly serious. —Anonymous
- I went to Old St Paul's Sunday school and loved it. —Jane Grant Foggo (married name Pearson)
- Felt a sense of pride at carrying the flag on special commemor active days to the church. —Gordon Smithson
- The fish and chip shop selling pokes of chips for 6pence. If I had less money they gave you a poke of batter. Yummo! —Gordon Smithson
- The time I managed as an eleven year old to sneak into the Real Madrid dressing room after a training session at Easter Road in 1963 for autographs. Eventually found and told "Out!" By then manager Jock Stein. Still got the autographs today —Fred Legget
- We played in the gardens but mainly in the streets. Peevers, roller skates, bikes. Tug, hide and seek, rounders and kick the can. —Shelagh Goodall
- When some of our members were wee they said if they turned up early enough to go out with the delivery vans, they earned themselves pocket money and treats from the bakery. —Jane Mather

## Stories and memories: Historic sites

- I started a rumour at Craigentenny castle about it being haunted when I worked there, as it was undergoing a lot of vandalism by young children. So I told folk some kids had disappeared and it was the ghost of "Auld Bob" the janitor. During the war a stray bomb fell on the castle and the janitor got killed. That's how they were able to build the modern part. The vandalism stopped when the rumour took hold though. lol —Anonymous
- ... a fire that damaged the roof [of Lochend House], that the floors fell in and so much work needed done to upgrade the house. They've had archaeologists in, who found coins in the ground and children's toys. —Anonymous
- I discovered the row of yew trees behind Craigentenny Castle. I go and sit there and drink wee drinks. When I was in labour with my child, I went walking there, I love the ancient..... St Triduana's rest where all the pilgrimages came in the 3rd century. —Ruth Quigley
- We have created a St Trid's Group, 8 trained guides who regularly promote the Church Chapel, Village and Churchyard. Liaise with HES and the Scottish Storytelling Centre — Anonymous
- The Queen's Silver Jubilee party at St Margaret's church halls —Anonymous
- We also planted a very special tree in the grounds of Lochend House, folk attending SEASONS and members of staff buried their wishes written on paper and planted a native birch tree donated by the RBGE nursery on top. —Jane Mather
- afterwards if there were scraps staff put them out for the fox family that visited Lochend House. My favourites were the bats flying overhead, we even fixed a bat box in a tree in the wild garden at Lochend House helped by the National Trust Ranger from Newhailes who often worked with our group. —Jane Mather

## Stories and memories: Lochend Park

- We used to go to Lochend Park a lot in the 70s. —Anonymous
- We played out a lot. I remember Lochend Park, we used to climb the rocks as kids and if you looked over it was the big house that was the nursery, (later link up, now a homeless place). I remember falling all the way down from the rocks and hurt my backside. We were out for hours. Our parents gave us pieces n jam. You stayed out till dark. —Vonnie Paul
- Climbing on the rocks at Lochend Park, swinging off the crane at Redpaths - behind Lochend Park and playing in The Sparey (now Lochend Secret Garden) Also playschemes at Lochend Park run by Susan and Marilyn. —Anonymous
- Lochend Park was crucial to the traders in the olden days, the water. ... There was a horse that drowned with its cart in the loch. Rumour had it that it was washed underground by the currents as the Loch apparently is fed by an underground river. So there are currents in the loch and loads of underground streams that run through the neighbourhood via Holyrood Park. —Anonymous

- I remember how in Marionville, one of the women always got a flooded basement. From the underground streams that fed the loch. One woman I knew had had a brother who died in the loch, I knew it wasn't safe. —Margaret Heinsar
- I often include local landmarks in my work as a visual artist, for example the doocot in Lochend Park. —Sasha Saben Callaghan
- I took our trainer at Scottish Wildlife Trust to see Lochend Park and he was blown away by the diversity of wild birds nesting there. —Anonymous
- ... my own journey in Friends of Lochend Park too. —Ailsa Laing
- Oh and just remembered rolling down the hill in Lochend Park as a small child. — Anonymous

### Stories and memories: Organized groups and activities

- I remember community activists like Diane Kelly, Cathy ....., they were volunteers and led organisation activities, held summer programmes for kids that I got involved in. Their playschemes got me involved in working with children and young people. In those days there far less red tape and health and safety rules - but I can't remember anyone getting lost or hurt. ... I also remember a youth club at St Ninians church which Jackamo used to run. ... I worked at the castle years ago, 30 years ago but a long time before that I remember going to the Saturday cinema for young people which was a kids club when I was 8 or 9. ... I worked for Lami Mulvey at Craigentenny Community Health Project. — Anonymous
- Around 20 years ago I introduced Youth Zones to Edinburgh in a youth action research project. That accounts for the strange equipment at the far end of Lochend Park. — Anonymous
- I enjoyed going to the Brownies and church in Dunira (unsure of spelling) House in the village. ... After the Guides we would get a poke of chips for our supper. —Anonymous

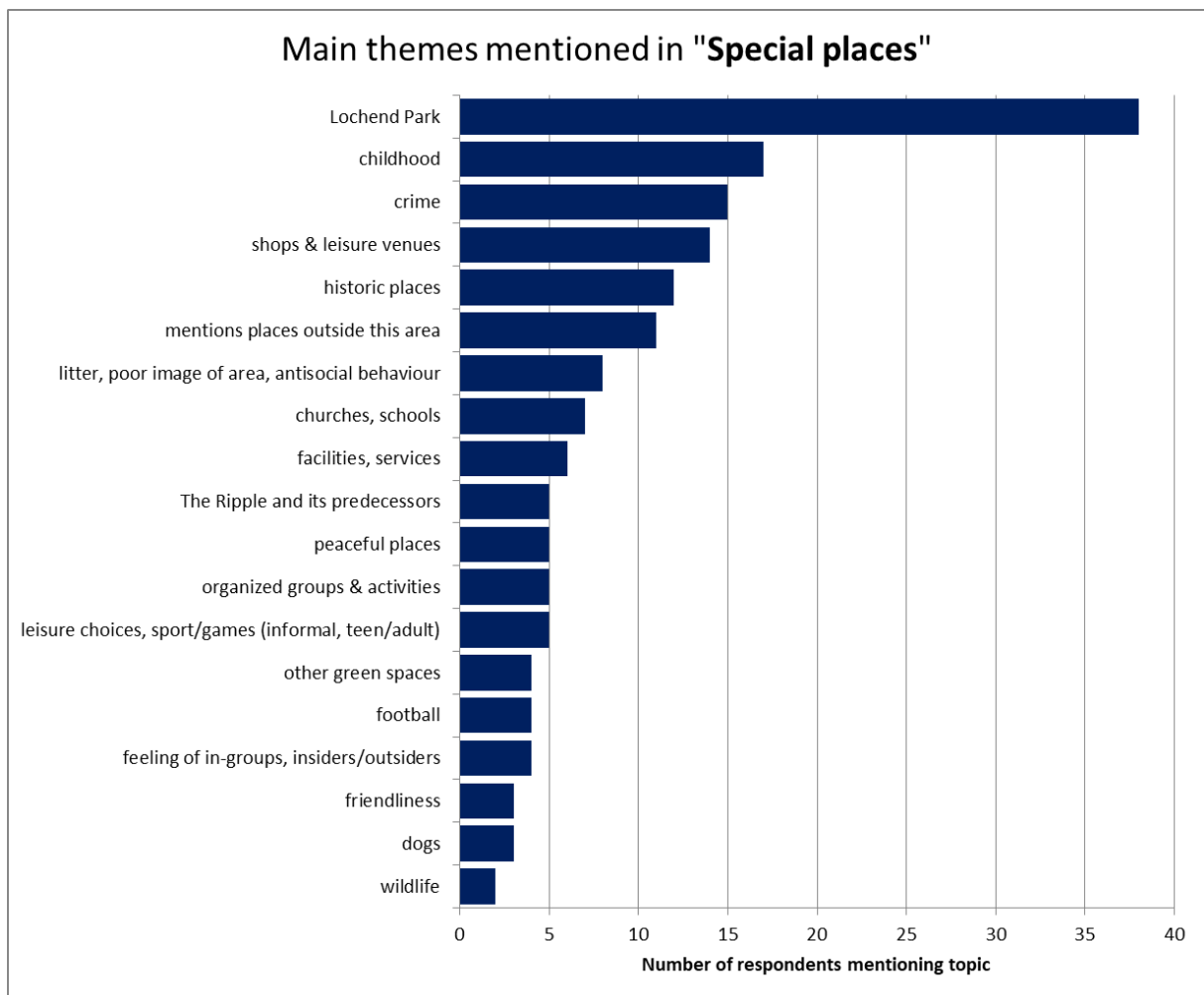
### Stories and memories: Stronger/deeper feeling expressed

- Later, Ewan Aitken was elected and was a active and brilliant councillor, quite inspiring. —Anonymous
- There were these big rottweilers from nearby who thought the Lochend House garden, where Link Up was, was theirs!!! They went for Kim the boss (K Leslie). I saw it from the CCTV and ran to buzz her in really quickly!!!!. Those dogs are going to rip someone apart we thought. Kim had to go to court. —Margaret Heinsar
- My uncle, he was a heroin addict... He was sound, a lovely guy, he was easy going. ... They used to bring stuff they'd chored to order, he used to come to Nisbet court and to Dalry to sell stuff. They'd go everywhere to sell stuff theyd chored. I remember that vividly. I'd come home and I'd have new stuff all sorts. It was seen as ok, no one judged, I remember getting a denim look jacket with red polka dots. ... I remember one winter

they were so out of it, they were crawling on the ground, in the snow looking for mandies they'd dropped. They were out of their faces. ... Once he was going up to court but he said to the adults I was with, don't worry, weve got the judges in our pockets. They all take backhanders to get us off. I remember sitting and thinking "what does that mean?" It always stuck in my head. ... If the powers that be had wanted to stop it hitting the streets, surely that could have been accomplished...

- In general, the the best memories are seeing large groups of dogs just gathering for a play and seeing them play makes me be really present —Anonymous
- ... a project called Good Neighbours which involved SEASONS members visiting the residents of Marionville Court Care home on a monthly basis to share stories and songs, always lovely events. —Jane Mather
- ... I remember when Carr Gomm did an initial consultation about starting a community Garden in Lochend Quadrant, how enthusiastic I felt ... —Jane Mather

## Special places



- The plaque on the South side of the loch in Lochend Park is the best in Edinburgh. ... The combination of elements is surreal and exquisite: ... the reality of being on the spot where the unfortunate soul had lived ... the example of the extreme irrationality that the lawmakers of our own dear country are capable of... the melancholy quality of the place of the loch with the drowning trees —Anonymous
- Lochend Park, Portobello and Arthur's Seat are not too far —Anonymous

### Special places: Lochend Park

- We loved Echo Point, near the side of the football pitches in Lochend Park before they were built. It was at the top of the hill which you could get to by walking along by the where the football pitches are now. My uncle showed us you could call from there, shouting "get the kettle on", over to Dalgety Avenue where he lived, and you could hear an echo coming back. The tree growth has stopped the sound waves bouncing back and so the echo's gone now. For years folk would go there after they were shown it. — Anonymous
- Lochend park. Especially seeing the changing seasons. —Anonymous
- loch, love the herons —Joan Robertson
- Lochend Park, visit it 3 to 4 times a day with my dog Casper, great place to visit, meeting lots of people around the community and enjoying daily discussion on politics, football, tv, community and general daily life issues and oh dogs! —Graeme Fiskien
- Our beloved Lochend Park. —Deborah Mancino
- Lochend park as the sun was rising or before dusk on a spring . or summer evening , or local cafe at the hub —Anonymous
- Lochend Park is my go to place to relax and chill out —Anonymous

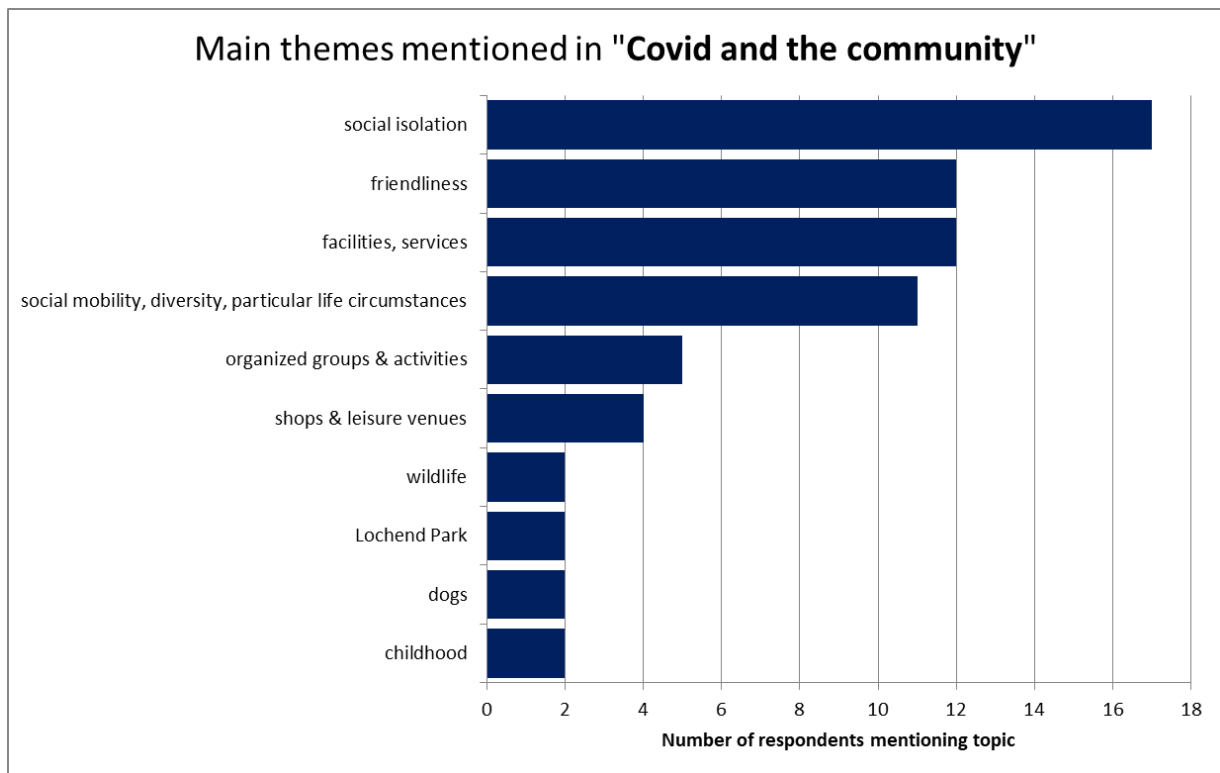
### Special places: Places outside of this area

- There used to be a pigeon swap shop in Leith on the bridge at North Junction Street where folk used to go to buy legally caught, and buy or identify stolen pigeons. ... I remember the butterfly at Easter Rd before it was built - there used to be a bowling club there and I had friends who were members and went there. —Anonymous
- ... Leith Links where I'd meet fellow pupils for a kick about —Fred Legget
- When I stayed at Craigentenny we used to go to Portobello a lot and was never away from Portobello pool, happy days —Anonymous
- Out on the Restalrig bike path to Seafield and Porty. —Deborah Mancino
- ... off on our bikes to Portobello, walk to Arthur's seat —Anonymous

## Special places: Other green spaces

- There's a tiny wee park near where I stay and that feels safe and comfy —Anonymous
- I regularly run in Lochend Park and along Restalrig railway path. —Anonymous
- Always liked the tranquility of the churchyard. Fond memories of pouring out on a Saturday afternoon. —Anonymous
- Love walking in Lochend Park but I am more frequently at the dog park on Sleigh Drive. —Laura Jackman

## Covid and the Community



- Lockdown showed me that the noise here affects me profoundly and I so deeply need some quiet. —Anonymous
- Like the animals found it a happy time, the air was cleaner —Anonymous
- I missed my friends. —Anonymous
- A forgotten area is even more so —Tristan Green
- It made it even quieter, which was lovely —Anonymous

## Covid and the Community: Social isolation

- Cause of my health, I only went out shopping late at night. Avoided folk but I haven't been out an about much. ... There's lots of men like me,,,, brought up with 'stop greeting or I'll give you something to greet about'. Any sign of emotions used to be seen as a sign of weakness round here... —Anonymous
- Not able to have neighbours in for coffee etc. —Anonymous
- It wasn't a problem for me as I don't go out much anyway, I stay in and play guitar and do games on the pc. I get anxiety and regular medication. ... I had to go more breathing exercises and try not to get overwhelmed. —Anonymous
- The aftermath has cause people began to retreat in their self's . —Anonymous
- Isolation has affected mental health of the people and they realise it. —Anonymous
- Isolation of young and old has meant friendships have changed or gone and support networks have been impacted. Neighbours openly talking about lonlieness, depression, increased health needs etc. —Anonymous
- If anything, covid made it harder to chat to your neighbours as we weren't allowed to travel in the lift with other families. You also couldn't see people smile as they walked passed you which I think took away from the small human behaviours that make you feel seen and included as a person in general. —Laura Jackman
- This was such a hard time for the community with covid but I think it's hard enough faith with people's mental health but we went round the community and spoke to people when they were setting out in the gardens —Anonymous
- For myself personally working from home for over 2yrs I have met a lot more people through taking walks during the day. —Graeme Fisken
- There was a 'safe distance' Street Party in the Grove last summer but my mum didn't feel safe to attend, so she is no clearer who her neighbours are, although we did take part in the clap for the NHS every Thursday. My mum more or less stayed in her house and garden for two years. —Angus Ross Brown
- A ten minute chat could be invaluable to someone who was shielding from Covid. — Anonymous
- I found it difficult to visit people —Anonymous
- My Mum lives alone and her neighbours helping out with shopping —Anonymous

## Covid and the Community: Friendliness

- I'm on social media, with friends all over the world with good few friends I've never met but known them for years, so it was just my normal world but on overdose... it didn't bother me. —Anonymous
- I think people are friendlier, maybe because lockdown has made us appreciate the fun of meeting others. —Sasha Saben Callaghan
- its been quiet and people were eager to come out and mingle. —Anonymous

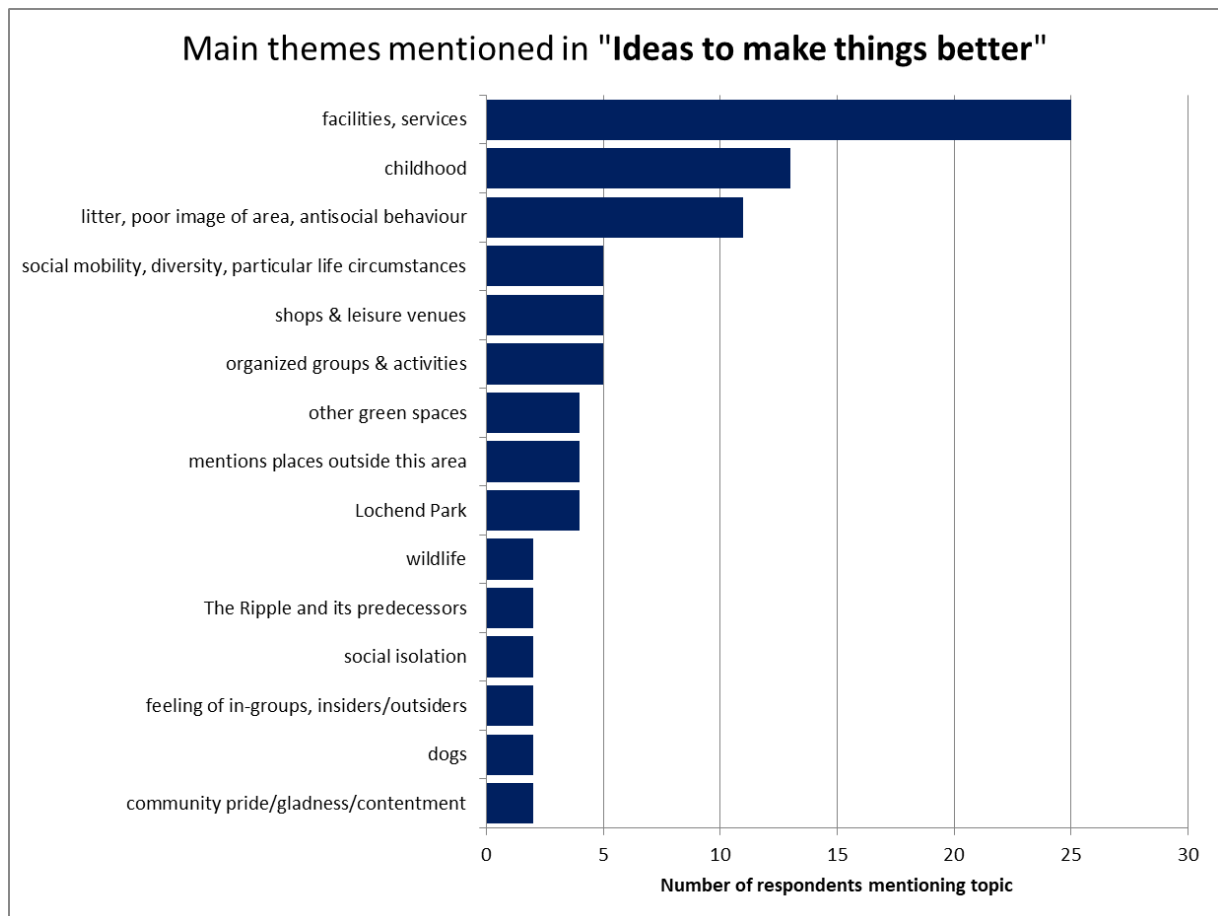


- The pandemic solidified the community spirit with younger neighbours getting shopping for the more vulnerable and so many people getting the word out to get in touch if you need anything and really highlighting the ANYTHING part. —Anonymous
- spent more time in park meeting old friends that were doing same —Lorna Keenan

### **Covid and the Community: Services, facilities**

- I belong to a womens group and received food parcels from them over lockdown and made plenty soup with the veg in them —Anonymous
- Link up womens support centre closed down during the pandemic. ... I know link up helped hundreds and hundreds of women with their mental health for 30 years locally. —Margaret Heinsar
- There often wasn't chemist at the shop so I couldn't get my medication, so that was a problem. —Anonymous
- I walked a lot and joined the library when I could —Anonymous
- A lot of already isolated people became more isolated, but local projects have done so much to reach out —Jane Mather

## Ideas to make things better



- A place that's important is for teenagers, ... They need a place to be to feel safe. To just be —Anonymous
- I want to see the graffiti gone. The area wasn't like that before. It was difficult to get a house in the area. —Anonymous
- Reintroduce the store vans, the milk van, fish van and rag and bone, if only as an experiment, also the mobile Library. —Angus Ross Brown
- For this area to have as much attention as Morningside and Stockbridge from Edinburgh Council —Tristan Green
- More flowers on the green areas —Anonymous

## Ideas to make things better: Services, facilities

- Community work is getting sliced up like salami. Community facilities are at the heart of and the basis of the community and there's not so many now. —Anonymous
- Give the Sleigh Drive roundabout some character with a statue commemorating multi cultural communities. ... Help people to make the most of their outdoor space and get

some pride into keeping gardens nice with a prize garden scheme and some help to buy trees shrubs and perennials. —Anonymous

- There are issues with substance misuse in the area and more targeted approaches and services would really help. —Jane Mather

### **Ideas to make things better: Poor image of the area**

- Above all, address the littering, fly tipping and dog shit. —Anonymous
- The businesses that back onto the bike path (near Hibs) cleaning up after themselves as some of the crap there is clearly being blown in from their premises. —Anonymous
- More action taken against drug dealers and clean up the dog shit on the pavements! —Fred Legget
- I think it would be nice to have more small shops and cafes or nice places to go. It is very residential and to get anything like little shops you have to go to portobello. —Laura Jackman
- More bins and more frequent emptying of bins and enforcement of dog fouling laws. —Deborah Mancino

### **Ideas to make things better: Childhood**

- When I grew up here families all lived in the same neighbourhoods ie your aunties and uncles lived in the neighbourhood too and others didn't move far. —Anonymous
- I think we need more things for children to do, more parks, more play parks. ... Kids have nothing to do anymore. ... ive got nephews, they stay indoors all the time playing games. ... Its not good for them, socially —Anonymous
- Making cross generational activities possible. ... A sense of belonging can come from a sense of ownership over the immediate environment and give a vested interest in continuing with it. Kids are a great place to start such things. —Anonymous
- I would like to see more children's playparks and things for kids to do in terms of youth groups, the Ripple is great but there isn't as much for teenagers anymore. —Laura Jackman
- Lochend Park desperately needs new features for older children like a skatepark and upgraded play equipment for the younger kids. —Deborah Mancino
- I think more play areas for the younger kids. —Anonymous
- The football club is great, but it would be good to see more activities that non-sporty young folk could enjoy. —Jane Mather

## Stories

**This section showcases the remaining stories which were not included above. We have tried to include all the comments where the respondent moved into a narrative style to share a memory or anecdote.**

For a short time someone went around spraying pink circles around dog turds and one person tied a plastic container of poo bags to a fence for people to take. It didn't really work but I totally admired that tiny piece of activism, hope and determination. —Anonymous

Lots of young women worked in Munrospun factory across road from school. They were always lovely to us kids. I recall waiting with my pal for the factory bell to ring so we could walk home up Smokey Brae with them. When one was getting married it was always a great event watching the hen party. —Anonymous

I went to St Ninians (and attended church Father Fusco, Father Fallon). When I was in p7 we persuaded Father Falln to let us have a girls football team. He persuaded school to let us use the gym hall and we started a youth club. ... When I was 12-14 I went to discos in the YWCA hut in Lochend. Satvmnight was for under 15's and Sunday for over 15's . We changed the date on our membership cards so we could go to both! Can't hear "Alright Now" by Free or "Spirit in the Sky" or "Please" .... —Anonymous

Any one else remember the ice cream shop/factory on Marionville Drive (?) Just up from fire station where the newer houses are now. Think there was may be a bingo hall there too. Can remember visiting my Gran on a Sunday and being given a Pyrex bowl and some money and being sent round to get ice cream for pudding. This would be late 60s,early 70s. —Anonymous

I moved back in with my gran when she was getting frailer, and became her Carer and I ended up buying the house. Its brought a lot of joy and security but it's also been an albatross around my neck. —Anonymous

At one point the area was the murder capital of Europe, according to statistics - maybe about 15 years ago! This included the murder of the Chinese takeaway worker, but it was mostly based around relationship based violence e.g. domestic, inter-family member violence. There wasn't that much that involved folk who didn't know each other. —Anonymous

The area used to be quite violent a few years ago when I was a teenager. There was loads of territoriality when I was a teenager (in the 70s?).... This involved YLS (Young Lochend Shamrock) YLT (Young Leith Team), Young Piershill something, (can't remember their last name). There were pitched battles amongst young people, fights got set up at school, outside discos, like the YWCA, or the Ydub as we called it. Often it was an organised fight between 2 supposed hard men. I've seen this coming in waves, there's some glorification of it all. It's often folk who've been traumatised or parents not paying attention to them....Drinking Micky Finns, a mix of all the bevvy they've taken from home. —Anonymous

The Pail is what we called the doocot in Lochend Park that served the big house. It looked like Oor Wullie's pail turned upside down – hence the name. I did look into local history during a college course and wrote some of it up but my college tutor got it printed up under his own name, didn't give me it back said something about it getting sent away to get the qualification I was going for. So, I never got the document back! —Anonymous

Lochend park was crucial to the traders in the olden days, the water. There was a horse that drowned with its cart in the loch. Rumour had it that it was washed underground by the currents as the Loch apparently is fed by an underground river. So there are currents in the loch and loads of underground streams that run through the neighbourhood via Holyrood Park. One of the streams use to run into St Triduanas church in Restalrig which used to be the site of Pilgrimages many years ago. There was a stream under my house and also one under the church at the roundabout in the middle of Restalrig Road and Sleigh Drive. When the church by the roundabout got knocked down, the buildings behind it, when they were knocked down it all filled with water. When they build houses where the church used to be the Ripple project used one of them as a church office —Anonymous

Its not well known but the Craigentenny Marbles are rumoured to house the grave of a man who was a hermaphrodite and was afraid of his body be exhumed. —Anonymous

I'm really interested in food, food sovereignty, and food poverty. .... In the wartime here, "Dig for Britain" was key, food gardens were everywhere/ folk had a history of growing food in this area and pigeons, and it'd be great if local folk learned a lot of the skills which are lost instead of relying on supermarkets. Seed exchanges and tattie growing was really common in wartimes and afterwards (still is in allotments). —Anonymous

The parkie was a wee perv. He used to offer you a penny if you'd touch his willie. He never done it to me but to ma pal ... The parkie's hut was opposite the kids playground now, that funny wee hexagon building, he used that for his stuff. —Vonnie Paul

Dunbars juice factory, I remember up the back o the park, by the railways where there were kennels. We used to hang about there. The laddies would climb over the wall and steal the juice and we'd all sit in the park and drink it. I remember the discos at the Y. I was in love with my brothers pal. They played that song by Nilson..... I can't live if living is 'Without you' —Vonnie Paul

I loved going to Link Up women's support centre. I loved the, see the amount of things I learned there, like felting. I went a bought the stuff but I didn't like doing it on my own at home.

Margaret there was lovely. I loved that it was women only. I'm more comfortable with women and could open up more. I prefer women's company. Everyone I met there was lovely.

I wonder how my life would have turned out without it! I was a mess and depressed and I saw a poster in a community centre about it.

Whenever I go past the big house, I think of it. It was a time in my life when I couldn't see much for me. It gave me a lot mair confidence.

I stopped going due to mobility problems. Link Up helped you make friends. I often think of the women who were there. —Vonnie Paul

When I first moved to the area I was looking after my mother. So coming from a 7th floor flat to have a low door and a garden was my sanctuary when she was at the day centre. I didn't have much of a social like when I was looking after my mum. When mum died I went back to work, and now im retired.

—Anonymous

There's something about Craigentenny, its foundations are in the trees they've planted here. At the end of my street there's a green that used to have a wee bridge and a wee park. It sounded beautiful all the folk in the area were so proud of it. When I moved in ... They knocked down a lot of houses in Craigmillar and moved a lot of those people in here, so a lot of the older population moved out... because they couldn't handle the change in the status quo —Ruth Quigley

My kids grew up here. It's got it fair share of troubles, kids threw a pitchfork into my garden, smoked in my shed and stole things. But it's a really earthy community. ... [I remember] The wee boy who stayed at the back. He was very angry and had this crazy spirit and ran in the back gardens, broke a hole in the shed roof and hurled a pitchfork at our garden. ... I met the kid who threw a pitchfork at me years later. He's a painter and decorator now but he needed input back then, needed help. ... And now it's a new generation doing stuff. I've still got scratches on my window from him. Troubled souls would come to me, then turn on me. —Ruth Quigley

When I lived with my grandparents, my grandad worked at Sunblest bakery. He used to bring home wee tiny mini loaf shaped, wholemeal Hovis loaves they baked in mini tins. They must have sold them, they were yon size with the word Hovis engraved in the bread. They lived at the back of Sunblest in nisbet court and lived in 11 Restalrig square before that. They'd be over a 100 if they were alive now. —Anonymous

I went to craigentenny as a bairn, my grandad went on to do nightshifts and my nana didn't want to be alone over night in a ground floor house. I lived with her for 3 years in that one bedroomed flat. Slept in same room, I spent every weekend at my nanas . ... We sometimes walked from our house in gorgie with a big silver cross pram with all the bairns and id be 4.

I remember when they (grandparents) moved into the new flats at Nisbet court in the 70s, 71 or there abouts. 8/6 nisbet court. They were well kept then, really well kept. My nana used to wrap up her rubbish in newspaper, tie it with a string before putting it down the communal rubbish shute on the landing and they took turn passing a card round about washing the stair . The place was spotless. You'd wash the inside landing and the shute cupboard, and the first flight down would get washed. I remember helping her clean the stairs for years. The wee card got passed on religiously. You had your turn and then passed it on.

My nana referred to all her neighbours by their surname, think it was a tradition she'd grown up with, there was Cochrane, Scott, she only referred to them. She didn't say 'Mrs' Cochrane, she said 'Cochrane's coming along'. There was a Sandra and Ross.

There was a woman who lived with her son Toby who killed himself by throwing himself out of the window, as a young adult from the 8th floor. I don't know much about it. I remember him as someone a couple of years older than me, who didn't come on the landing to play or go outside. They kept themselves to selves.

My grandparents stayed there till she died in 1990. —Anonymous

Lockdown, folk kept to themselves pretty much. We used Lochend Park over lockdown, we used to meet 'accidentally'!!! We came to the park much more than normal. We'd meet half way between our houses which was this park. We'd bring a packed lunch, in separate tubs so we weren't mixing. My dad came for a walk too. —Mags

I researched a lot of history a while back.

There was one Cauldron for boiling clothes there in the lochend park, a stone kiln at Loganlea for those who could pay to separate their stuff from the 'common folk' and another over leith links way, Different social classes used different ones.the upper classes boiled their clothes in a different area from the lower classes.

On leith links west side, folk who died in plagues were buried in their own blankets. There was an evergreen shrub with fragrant golden yellow flowers that got burnt in infected houses. Plagues were frequent in past, often from incoming cargo and crews at leith docks. In the 15th and 16th centuries, there were various breakouts, in 1544 and 47 and a more serious breakout in 1645

—Anonymous

Theres a cat that lies in the street, sooky. Not afraid of the traffic, it's a friendly wee thing, just runs up to see you, on to the road. A neighbour was going out to buy treats for it as we were speaking with her. Neighbours put water out for the cat.

There were a lot of feral cats around Restalrig circus, it was famous for them, from a woman I knew said that 15 years ago, that folk used to throw kittens out of car windows.

We see badgers too, at the back of 7, there's one that's a big big one on the road, this one didn't have a stripe. I didn't get a photo, you lose the moment if you do.

—Anonymous

It's hard to find out more about the history of my house, my street but its not easy. ...

We got our house surveyed, They told me my house was a prefab but when I got it they didn't say it was but if it had been it would have been dearer to insure. Man next door said we got our meter moved and it was so difficult cause these houses are solid concrete. You can see the wee houses there are prefabs that have been bricked. We got a survey done again and they didn't say it was a prefab this time. —Anonymous

## Longer responses

Jane Mather and Ewan Aitken gave particularly long and evocative contributions so these are provided more fully below. We have edited them lightly for readability.

### Jane Mather

I used to work in Lochend house/ formerly Lochend Castle from 2006-2014 and continue to work in the area. I remember a curious visitor coming along one night to SEASONS (mental health service) group session and saying "I've heard you have a fireplace large enough to roast an Ox" there was such a fireplace, but in the very old part of the building, I stood in it once. This was the only part of the original castle to survive being burned down by the sixteenth century Lord Provost in retaliation for the Logan family's involvement in the Gowrie conspiracy to assassinate James VI & I. A former colleague once told me she believed she was followed round the building by the ghost of a little girl, though I never experienced any supernatural phenomena.

I also recall talking to a taxi driver who grew up in the area and said him and his friends used to fix up a rope swing over the loch in the park and play Tarzan swinging over the swamp as they called it and that they called the Doocot "Oor Wullie's pail".

Myself and members of SEASONS regularly walked round the loch in the park and fed the swans, ducks, coots and moorhens, they told me there was once a bakery where the new houses are on the Easter road side of the park. When some of our members were wee they said if they turned up early enough to go out with the delivery vans, they earned themselves pocket money and treats from the bakery.

We had a poetry walk round the park with Ryan Van Winkle around 2010 where we connected with the trees growing there and many members were struck by a Robert Frost poem about swinging on young saplings as it resonated with their own experiences in Lochend Park. We also planted a very special tree in the grounds of Lochend House, folk attending SEASONS and members of staff buried their wishes written on paper and planted a native birch tree donated by the RBGE nursery on top. Our wishing tree, as we called it grew strong.

SEASONS held two evening events in the gardens of Lochend House as part of the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival, the Enchanted Garden. the first, and Magical memory lane, for both events the grounds were lit with beautiful lighting and members created papier mache sculptures a giant snail and a mushroom, a band came along and lots of folk living in the area enjoyed an evening out. Giant puppets, storytelling and refreshments all featured.

The second event followed a fire in the roof of the building which saw the community projects there homeless, and we couldn't access the indoor space for safety reasons, nonetheless the grounds were lit with colour changing lights and fiery torches illuminated the drive. Beltane Fire Society drummers came too. Unfortunately we forgot to tell the fire brigade about the event and a concerned resident called an engine. We were welcomed into Lochend Neighbourhood



Centre following the fire. It was a lifeline and our members were familiar with the place in part because of a project called Good Neighbours which involved SEASONS members visiting the residents of Marionville Court Care home on a monthly basis to share stories and songs, always lovely events. Betty a regular attendee at these sessions told me Lochend Secret garden used to be her playpark when she was a wee lass. One time as a spin off from our Good Neighbour sessions we planted 250 hedgerow trees in Marionville court garden and Betty and some of the residents came out to watch and share a cuppa.

We miss the wildlife at Lochend House Gardens though. We often cooked at SEASONS sessions and afterwards if there were scraps staff put them out for the fox family that visited Lochend House. My favourites were the bats flying overhead, we even fixed a bat box in a tree in the wild garden at Lochend House helped by the National Trust Ranger from Newhailes who often worked with our group.

The garden at Lochend House was always special to members of the group and I remember when Carr Gomm did an initial consultation about starting a community Garden in Lochend Quadrant how enthusiastic I felt, Ali who founded Grassroots remedies was involved in the early days before the amazing garden committee took over and it became the Secret Garden. SEASONS has grown and cooked lots of vegetables there over the years. The Secret Garden has gone from strength to strength. So many people in the area love it and look out for it and it has been a marvellous resource during the heights of covid, a place where people could be in a peaceful green space in safety. Now as we leave the isolation of the pandemic behind it is an amazing space to gently reconnect. It is always welcoming and with my storyteller hat on I have shared many stories there, with family audiences and the garden committee laying on refreshments it has often featured as a venue in the Scottish International Storytelling Festival Programme.

The orchard behind [The Bunch of Roses pub] was a place that kids used to go for chorying apples. It had about 12 trees; once we'd jumped the fence and the pub opened and he set his dog on us. One boy was up a tree and got stuck there.

I was at the edge of this but the crew I hung about with then got involved in more serious stuff. A pile of folk stole wood for a bonfire, we all scarpered and one guy got left behind and the security guard set his Alsation dog on him. We went back for him and the dug had him by the arm. That's when we discovered that the dug we'd been running from for years had no teeth!!!!

Some folk we knew broke into another pub and the police shouted we've got you surrounded. They worked out they might as well sit tight and make the most of it, and held out by shouting "We've got a gun" so they came out at 8 am pished, to the riot squad. —Anonymous

## Ewan Aitken

**This section consists of comments by Ewan Aitken during two walks around the area with Joan Robertson and Deb Mullen. Ewan has been the local church minister, city councillor and Ripple chair. Many of the comments relate to specific places as well as Ewan's memories as a local leader. Some comments have been edited and re-ordered.**

### Next to Smokey Brae

They used to bring the coal down from the railway there and take it round to houses on a horse and cart. That's where the right of way is, and it's a conservation area. So when that finally is all developed eventually, near Register House, the pathway will come down that tunnel. ... There was a pathway down from Clockmill Lane Tunnel, the old pilgrims' path: it will come out that tunnel. ...

### Corner shop on Restalrig Road South / Restalrig Avenue

This first shop in 'the Village' used to be Ali and Ash's shop. He must have been in his 70s and they were so involved in the community. One day someone stole his till. Ali hung on and they hit him hard. The community found out and they found the guys that did it within 3 hours. They said Ash and Ali are 'our guys' .... It was one of those moments like in The Bill on TV!!! people were so annoyed at what they'd done to Ali.

### Old, yellow cottage built into the graveyard wall

This cottage used to be the School. It's a 17<sup>th</sup> century building, which later became the schoolmaster's, then the minister's vestry. When I came here it was the Model Railway Society's and it was falling into disrepair. I did a deal with the National Trust under the Little Houses project to solve the problem. We sold it to them and they did it up appropriately, stripped it back and did lath and plaster work, etc. It has to be maintained under this project. The problem for the church had been it had to insure it, as it's part of the graveyard wall. The wall is A-listed, the church is B-listed, so it's now a home. I'm quite chuffed about that! ... During the renovations, the builders found a bottle of labelled "Kemp's Corner" whisky. I don't know what happened to it!!

### No. 44

This used to be a shop, a hairdresser's, when I came here; it's now a home.

### Traffic-calming features

When I came here, the traffic used to race down here as a rat run, so I did some work in the early 2000s. There was a fund, 'Urban Villages' – Restalrig used to be a village in its own right. We got a bunch of people together to do things, a team, they slowed traffic down, made it one-way through the village. These were the first cobble stones to be laid in Edinburgh in 50 years. It cost a lot.

### Ground plaques

We got the school kids in Craigentenny and St Ninian's involved, to design these ground plaques with the symbols, and they had a competition to design it. Looking under the half-moon metal seats: That's the symbol for Leith, and Edinburgh's coat of arms, their school badges. This was around 2002 when we re-opened it all.

### McLaren Halls

The McLaren Halls, on the right [i.e. east] side of the village, used to be a row of cottages, and they kept the facade of the cottages [when constructing the halls. There's great pictures of the village inside the church. McLaren was a builder and member of the congregation (the church was then known as "Old Restalrig"). He bought the land and did up two houses round the back, and with the money he made from that, he made the cottages into the church halls; so there's an extension round the back. He was an elder in the church.

### Deanery

Next was the Deanery. There were deans and two singing boys who were paid in coal and ham!! This is now Viewpoint housing. It's maybe 16<sup>th</sup> century. In the 60s the church added to the height [of the old wall].

You used to be able to see where the stocks were – where folk who'd committed misdemeanours were tied up to punish them – but they've fallen down. There used to be an entrance to the graveyard here.

### Chapel

I discovered this was the king's chapel (King James III). It's the only hexagon-shaped chapel in Scotland. .... The idea of the hexagon is that it's close to the biblical 'perfect number' of 7. It used to be two storeys high.

It's fascinating that the walls are still standing.  
The rest of the village is largely Victorian.

### No. 66

This house was St Triduana's doctor's surgery.

### Brooklyn House

I understand there was someone who went to America, made money and came back and built this as an edifice to their wealth. It's a wacky house. The guy that's the scout leader had in-laws who lived here in Brooklyn House.

### Brooklyn Cottage

Brooklyn cottage (across the lane from Brooklyn House) is the oldest house in the village. It has a basement and the kitchens there. I knew Mrs Curran who lives there.

### Restalrig Road South, between Loaning Road and Kemp's Corner

There were two factories around here. What's now the Polish deli shop on the right was a butcher when I came here. There was a big problem with the bins, so he had to close down.

### Kemp's Corner

Charlie Kemp was an Orcadian who ran the corner shop; a legendary man, who did everything at his shop, including pluck geese. He was great for the community. He hired local people. He knew that you build a shop on relationships – and he built relationships! People loved him! He was so famous that by the 1950s, the bus timetable had “Kemp's Corner” as a stop. His great nephew is still in Orkney, and built my in-laws' house.

We did a lot of work around here at Kemp's Corner. Interestingly some of the reasons for the work was problems with residents getting annoyed with what the children were doing.

If you talked with the kids though, the reasons they congregated there, near Kemp's Corner was it was where they felt safe!! [They felt] it was neutral territory.

We got the traffic to slow down, as they [i.e. traffic] used to hammer down here. We got CCTV put in, and interestingly, the kids stayed, as the CCTV made them feel even safer. I couldn't persuade the residents that the reason they gather in big groups isn't to make others feel unsafe, but that *they* feel unsafe!!!! An interesting dynamic.

### Posties Club

Along there in Restalrig Drive, that used to be the Posties Club, used for socialising, dances, etc. It was going to go bust, we did a deal with a housing association to get a new building plus flats. Unfortunately, people go out less to socialise in clubs like they did in the past, so eventually it had to close. Now it's run by Jehovah's Witnesses. It was a sign of change, that communities created by industries (or in this case a profession) are not as cohesive as they once were.

### The big redbrick building

This building was Munrospun, the forerunner of Kinloch Anderson. When I was a minister here, people talked of older family members working in Munrospun, or the ropery or pipemakers down in Leith. That's the thing about how ... large numbers [of people] working in the same place builds community; it builds that sense of belonging. Industry doesn't work like that now. It wasn't just where you worked, it gave you community.

They made a mistake with the street numbering and it caused chaos for over 15 years. Ambulances couldn't find the right house. We had to fix it and renumber houses. [For that] we had to have a public meeting – my first as local councillor!

### Ochre building on the other corner

Here, the Action group gives accommodation for people with lifetime conditions. It used to be a tenement. This means that folk live in the community, and have a front door. It was set up by four women in the 1970s: mothers of children with lifetime conditions. They included Joan Griffiths, who's now a councillor... Joan is now convenor of education. She grew up here. The women met in the church hall and talked about there being no facilities for their children as they grew up, so they looked for solutions.

### St Ninian's Church and Marionville House

I used to know the minister at St Ninian's, we got on fine. They used to run a youth club in the basement. They sold Marionville House, but it was [previously] the priest's house.

### Green space by Kemp's Corner

The triangle of grass land here opposite Kemp's Corner, with cherry trees, etc. .... We used to get a Christmas tree for here every year, and have a 'switching on the lights' ceremony, with a local person as the 'celebrity'. St Ninian's and Craigentenny schools did a joint choir. Two to three thousand people used to come out to watch it. This went on until lockdown [in 2020 pandemic]. The secret was not to get a grant for the tree (as that needs to be applied for anew every year), but to get it just in a budget line in the council, so it just gets bought every year by the council.

*[Joan Robertson: In our local research, people talk about this man, 'Ewan Aitken', who was a great councillor and brought lots of money into the area. They say you should find him and interview him, he was a good councillor – and I quietly smile. You are not forgotten!!!!]*

You do your bit and you move on. I'm not a fan of folk doing 30 or 40 years in the council. You can get jaded.

### Lochend Secret Garden (behind Lochend Quadrant)

The Secret Garden started up as Carr Gomm workers who ran this new facility. They wanted to integrate the residents there into the community, and wanted an activity that brings people together: gardening. They wanted something that would help the whole community and not be focussed just on the Carr Gomm residents.

I got them cash from the local development committee, against some opposition to set it up, in a patch that also had had a bit of trouble – and it's still going great! I love that!!!

It is a lovely way of working that comes from trying to find a solutions to a problem: 'how can we use the land better?'

### Behind Scotmid, where the tower blocks are

Along here was Restalrig House, which was knocked down in the 60s or 70s to build the tower blocks, called Lochend House and Restalrig House. The two tenants associations at the tower blocks started doing up the grounds, and then won prizes from Keep Scotland Beautiful. Most flats there are now owned. The ancient wall around the grounds began to be unsafe, but there was mixed ownership of the flats, so we and the council had a nightmare trying to sort out financing fixing it. Many flats had been sold under different contracts: some owned a bit of the wall, some didn't. I managed to reduce the cost to folk by linking in the council, as it was the factor for the flats.

### North-east corner at roundabout on Sleigh Drive / Restalrig Road

At the edge of Sleigh Drive, at the corner there was a church, Lochend Church. It amalgamated with St Margaret's just before I came here. They knocked it down as they only needed one church, and it allowed them to do something else with the land. The church has an office in the new flats, and a flat above it. That was where we founded the Ripple Project.

Fleming Hall was named after the daughter of Alexander Fleming, and Fleming is the name of the road to the new houses, on the old Eastern General [Hospital] site, with a new road in to the new estate through the Findlays. The daughter of Alexander Fleming was in the church.

Someone had to have their house knocked down to make the road into the estate, and they were given a new home.

### Lochend Boxing Club

Lochend Boxing Club down Sleigh Drive (in the wee cabin) was opened by the Scouts and used as storage.

One of the most important ethical challenges I ever had as a politician was over that. This was in the mid-2000s. A guy called Terry McCormack came to see me one day: a local guy, worked on the bins, had boxed for Scotland. He said 'I'd like to set up a boxing club for the kids of the area. I'll run it voluntarily, get mates to help. Can you help me get premises? I'm told you're the guy who can get stuff done.'

I'm thinking, 'Nice compliment, but I don't like boxing. It's legalised violence.' I decided to support it though, as community was more important.

It took me 18 months to get the hut. Now he's got a world class boxer, Josh Taylor, and men and women's fitness clubs. It's absolutely amazing. It's probably the best decision I made as a politician. I often talk about that when I talk of the personal conflicts in being a politician.

We had a public meeting. Of course, the same people who said 'I want stuff for the kids' said 'but I don't want it beside *me*!' It's the challenge of change.

I said 'It'd be better folk hear it from you, Terry. Folk said what is it you want to do.'

Terry said 'I want to be a good neighbour. We'll have parking spaces for the parents and make sure the kids don't disturb the neighbours.'

That one sentence made the room go quiet. It was good for me to shut up, as a politician.

Terry wasn't a political animal, so I did the politics of getting the hit and he made the rest of it happen; now it's a fully-fledged business.

### Housing

Lochend council houses were the earliest council houses in Scotland, started in 1925 under the Wheatley Housing Act. Wheatley was a Labour politician; his nephew was an MP for this area. ... It intrigues me that housing built 100 years ago now, is in better nick than stuff built more recently! There were about 4000 council houses when I came into this area. When I stood down in 2012, there were only 800 left. Thanks to Thatcher's policies. An absolute scandal!!!

These houses in Sleigh Drive were built using a Dutch method of pouring concrete into a frame. The floors were stuck in when it was still wet, they let it dry, then remove the frame. It works fine, until you have a fire: it can build up heat and pressure, and in one case the whole wall collapsed. An old guy fell asleep with a fag in hand. He died. Luckily no one else was home. It showed the weakness of this type of build. Campbell and Macrae built about 2000 council houses. It was extraordinary what they achieved!

### The Ripple

The principle of the Ripple project was that we used buildings already in existence; and put energy into *doing Things*, not raising funding for *buildings*. We ran in church halls; the old Lochend House on the hill, which was great then; the old YWCA, which was falling to bits.

I'm still on the board of the Ripple, which started in 1996. In 1995, the congregation said that we want to look outwards, not inwards. The best thing I knew was to get the community to do it for themselves. We already had a lunch club and an after-school club, and had created an advice place. We knew we needed a thing that could help people do things, and church structures are no use for community development. We had to create an entity to let work happen.

One of the elders, Jack Morrison, came up with the name 'Ripple' on an away day in Biggar. He said 'you just act and the ripples come out', and we all said, 'yes, that's it!!!'

It's only for this community: a local organisation. I'm really proud of that.

It was in Lochend House in the late 1990s for a couple of years, called 'The Information Place', with rights information, etc. We had 3 rooms. This was before I was a councillor; David Begg helped us get it.

In the mid-2000s, the YWCA did a deal with Port Of Leith Housing, the Y[WCA] said it was going to go bust. I got a call [about it] when I was on Brighton beach. So we got everyone together, and I negotiated a way so that Ripple could take it over on behalf of the community, as it was very important to show it wasn't just one organisation taking over. We saved it for the community.

### Restalrig Road South, near the Ripple

I met a woman when I worked in South Leith church, she remembered going to Restalrig church when all of this was a farm. It was still a working farm till the 1920s.

I tried to get traffic calming measures here on the main part of the road. It didn't work here, but I did get the crossing points put in.

### Housing blocks

Hawkhill Court and Nisbet Court can be challenging at times. These are all council flats still. A few bought their flats but couldn't afford repairs, and it halted them for everyone, so we negotiated and bought back the flats. It's daft selling council flats, especially in tower blocks. It turns homes into commodities, which is immoral.

When the Kirkgate got knocked down, people got housed here, to get houses with indoor toilets in the 1920s and 30s. It was radical then to get an indoor toilet!!

### Alemoor housing

The new houses in Alemoor area used to be Leith Academy's playing fields. There was a bit of land that hadn't been built on and there was trouble there – fires, etc. So we did a deal with Albany housing. The council built a business case to put people with lifetime conditions into a building that was built there, so the trouble stopped.

### Hawkhill

The Hawkhill fields were Leith Academy's playing fields. They got sold to a private developer, and more land was given at the back of the new Leith Academy down Easter Road. It had been 'common good land', which shouldn't be sold. Hawkhill was common good land too. That means the council holds gifts but they shouldn't be sold. That's why there was a rammy about Portobello Secondary School; but the land was used for the good of the community.

Hawkhill was where King James III brought his hawks to hunt.

James Tytler, the first balloonist, crash-landed in Restalrig. He was the editor of the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

### Lochend Apartments

The Sunblest bakery used to be on this site. In those days, when there was a new road, the local councillor had to agree the new name for the road. I don't know much Hebrew, but I know that 'Bethlehem' means 'House of Bread'. I'm quite chuffed about this, but it's quite bizarre in a way that councillors used to have the final say on street names in their area! So that's why it has that name: Bethlehem Way. It's an echo of its past.

### Lochend Butterfly Way

When the Developers were going to build new flats, they had to pay a significant sum in developer contributions and build a percentage as social housing. It ended up a good job. We got new railings for the park, and had lots of tree work done, and traffic lights.

Hibs had bid for it, but bid low without planning permission. They felt they'd been promised the land. They were going to put in 25% social housing.

Another developer took us to court. It was a weird thing that we won a court case against the developers but we didn't really win. The judge said it had to be proportionate: you had to take into account how many council houses there were in the area. The developer then said the amount of social housing needed was reduced to zero, as at that point there were lots of council houses in the area. They still built some, even though they didn't have to. There are two blocks of housing association houses.

That was a snapshot in time though. We used to have 4000 council homes – now we've only got 800. If we were doing now, it would be a different beast. Frustrating!!!

### Lochend Loch

The loch was a source of water in Leith.

It has currents – it's dangerous. In 1949 a wee boy called John French drowned in the loch. His sister used to live around Lochend Square and talked of him.

They tried to drain the loch but couldn't. It proved impossible to drain in the 70s, so that's why there's trees in the centre.

In 1998 another wee boy drowned.

It's contradictory. One view is that it has underground rivers or streams, but it's too stagnant. The other is that it's a massive puddle that keeps filling up. I think it's both. No one knows.

### Lochend House

This was the manse for Lochend Church, before I was the minister of it. I was grateful it wasn't the manse when I was minister.

... Let's be clear. This is not a 'homeless hostel'. That would suggest that the people staying there get some kind of benefit from it. ... It's shocking ... We spend £24 million on temporary accommodation each year as we don't have the social housing ... the average time in homeless accommodation is 24 months. There are over 800 people in B&Bs.

### Lochend Park sports facilities

Down here below, there were tennis fields here and a bowling green but they got ripped up when it was the Commonwealth Games in 1986. As the ripple, in the 1990's, we asked young people where they felt safe, and they said 'in the park'. They designed two hangout places to sit,



which are still there, and a basketball stand. That's what they wanted, and a principle of community development is you give people what they say they want.

The area used to be like the wild west. The land where the 5-a-sides are now was used as a car park for Hibs matches, where the Neighbourhood Centre had been. We were desperate for an older people's centre. The one that had been privatized then went bust, so we brought it back into the council. We did a deal so that Marionville Care Home got built to a very high standard, and Lochend Neighbourhood Centre is a day centre as part of it. It's been made in smaller sections so it feels more homely. The deal was that they'd build this pitch for Lochend Football Club, and it's really popular.

#### Marionville roundabout

This was designed from money we helped them get, from a small high street fund. We got local people involved and made it easier to park.

Some women came to see me when I was a councillor and said 'we want to do something for the community'. So the last shop at the Marionville roundabout, where the chippie is, was opened as the neighbourhood centre, the food co-op, money advice. And it was great. It was just two women saying 'we're fed up with all this, let's do something about it'. Ann Larkin was one of them.

#### Craigentenny Golf Course

The golf course at Craigentenny is one of the oldest in Scotland. It started with people who played on Leith Links in the times of King Charles, and then they moved. Some went to the Braids, some went to East Lothian and started the Merchant Co. Edinburgh Council banned golf on the Links, the home of golf!! so they came to Craigentenny and constituted themselves in 1890. It was dug up for crops during the war, and then replaced again.