



# Hutchison Community Greenspace Study

## Interventions Report

Version 1.1 Nov 2019

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This report is part of a series which we have prepared for the Hutchison Community Greenspace Study. Alongside the Interventions Survey, there is a Greenspace Survey, and Community Survey report. We will continue to review and update these reports for the duration of the study.

All of the study reports can be downloaded from the Hutchison Study page on the Edible Estates website - [www.edibleestates.co.uk/neighbourhood/hutchison](http://www.edibleestates.co.uk/neighbourhood/hutchison).

In this report we have sought to present our findings as to directions which the community might choose to go in to improve community greenspace in Hutchison. These are intended as a starting point for discussion and development. We will be starting a series of community meetings in January 2020 to consider these and other ideas.

Our starting point in considering potential interventions was the findings of the community participative exercise held in January 2019 which asked residents what they like, don't like, about greenspace in Hutchison, and what may to improve it. The abridged results are shown below.

### **Top Five Things We Like**

1. Tree lined streets
2. Lots of Greenspaces
3. Wildlife / Birds
4. Sense of Community
5. Fresh air

### **Top Five Things We Don't Like**

1. Dog fouling
2. Litter
3. Lack of benches / picnic tables in greenspaces
4. Not enough biodiversity
5. Seadecking / Tarmacing

### **Top Ten Ideas To Improve Hutchison Greenspace / Public Realm**

1. A Community Garden
2. Opportunities to grow fruit and vegetables.
3. Improvements to greenspace around Cycle Path
4. Area set aside for dog walkers (with high fence and poo bins)
5. Greater biodiversity / wildlife (specific locations highlighted)
6. Community Days (litter picking)
7. Fenced greenspace opened up
8. Community Cafe / Shop
9. Community composting facilities
10. More seating / picnic tables for rest and relaxation



## COMMUNITY GROWING

### Neighbourhood Garden

The creation of a 'community garden' was the most popular of the ideas to improve Hutchison greenspace/public realm at the community event in January 2019. We did not go into detail at that event as to the type of community garden, there is a wide variety of types, and this would need to be discussed and agreed if the project were to be taken forward.

We have taken as a starting point the 'Neighbourhood Gardens' that Edible Estates establish in estates across Edinburgh. This features small individual raised beds (3.6 x 1.2m) for each household, a large shared shed, and a community orchard around the site, ([www.edibleestates.co.uk/project-type/neighbourhood-gardens](http://www.edibleestates.co.uk/project-type/neighbourhood-gardens)).

During the survey, we identified three sites (see plan above) which offer good potential for a community garden, we have selected one of them to indicate what may be possible, (see red circle). However it is important to note that what site may be developed would depend upon what the community would want, particularly the residents which live around the sites.

The illustrations below, give an indication of how the community garden might look and the number of raised beds which could be installed. The garden would be first and foremost for residents of Hutchison. It would provide approx 40 raised beds and a large community shed to support the garden but also other community activities. We will organise a workshop in the new year to narrow down sites and develop the model.





### Other Approaches to Community Growing

Whilst we may start at one site, the community may decide to go on to develop other sites in Hutchison. The plan above outlines all sites which could have potential for community growing projects, including the existing allotment site.

The Neighbourhood Garden model (introduced above), to some extent is like a compressed community allotment project, with each household retaining their mini plot. Another community growing model which has proved successful elsewhere in Edinburgh and further afield, is one in which all participants work together to manage a whole site (or number of sites), and share the produce between them and/or hold regular community meals. At Edible Estates we call this model the 'Home Farm', ([www.edibleestates.co.uk/project-type/home-farm](http://www.edibleestates.co.uk/project-type/home-farm)).

The Home Farm approach could work with a Neighbourhood Garden, the ground at the neighbourhood garden would be managed by the group working together, and the Garden could provide a base of operations for developing and managing other sites.

### Community Meals

Community Meals using home grow produce could be a wonderful way to bring people in the local community together, the meals could be organised on a monthly or more frequent basis. Volunteers would cook the food and put on the events. A venue would need to be secured, perhaps at the Primary School, St Cuthberts or Slateford Green.

Community Growing and Community Meals have been identified as a method to combat social isolation and food poverty/insecurity. It is quite likely that there are some households that live with food insecurity and/or are socially isolated. (more on this in the Governments Dignity: Ending Hunger Together in Scotland report - ([www.gov.scot/publications/dignity-ending-hunger-together-scotland-report-independent-working-group-food/](http://www.gov.scot/publications/dignity-ending-hunger-together-scotland-report-independent-working-group-food/)))

### Benefits of Community Growing

The Scottish Government has asked all Councils to prepare a Community Growing Strategy to explain how they will support residents to grow food locally. It includes an Appendix which lists many of the benefits of community growing which we have included on the Edible Estates website - [www.edibleestates.co.uk/benefits-of-community-growing/](http://www.edibleestates.co.uk/benefits-of-community-growing/)



## Community Orchard

The sites in the illustration below would be well suited to establishing community orchards. The Council would likely be supportive of this as it fits well with the Living Landscape initiative. The planting of fruit trees and bushes can work well with other uses such as parkland, recreational, dog walking etc.

We would certainly want to encourage households to plant trees and bushes in their own gardens and backgreens.

Whilst both fruit trees and bushes benefit (in terms of health and quality/quantity of produce) from annual pruning, this should not be seen as an additional maintenance burden upon the Council, ideally the local community and/or individuals will take on the task, but if this were to slip over the years the plants will get on fine. The pruning of fruit trees in particular is a skill that needs to be acquired over time, we can arrange for training as part of the project, but there is also a wealth of information online.

The fruit can either be picked as part of a community activity, or individuals can help themselves.

### Fruit Nursery

If planting in large quantities, the cost can add up an apple tree can cost £15-20, a currant bush about £3.50. It may be an attractive idea to establish a fruit nursery at a site in Hutchison to bring on trees and bushes to be planted in the estate.

Tree fruit can be attractive to local children as 'ammo' in games, this can see fruit picked long before they are ready and lost, in its extreme, this activity can also result in damage to the tree. Some urban orchard projects have used fruit bushes instead of trees as the fruit is small and numerous, and damage less likely.

### Forest Garden

Edible Estates use the Forest Garden model, first developed by Robert Hart ([www.agroforestry.co.uk/about-agroforestry/forest-gardening/](http://www.agroforestry.co.uk/about-agroforestry/forest-gardening/)), as the basis for the community orchards it installs around its Neighbourhood Gardens. A Forest Garden is a designed agronomic system based on trees, shrubs and perennial plants. These are mixed in such a way as to mimic the structure of a natural forest – the most stable and sustainable type of ecosystem in this climate.



### Growing in Gardens & Backgreens

As described above, the 1920's tenements of Hutchison have a very generous back greens which have good aspect due to the wide spacing of the low tenements. We'd recommend that a community food growing project should encourage and support households to turn over some of the ground to growing. This could be supported from a Neighbourhood Community Garden which could provide training and resources.

Whilst the backgreens are intended as drying greens, there is ample room to install growing areas. We would recommend using timber raised beds to help define the growing areas, but this is not strictly necessary.



## **IMPROVING COMMUNITY GREENSPACE**

### **Nature Information Boards**

We like the idea of creating nature information boards to distribute throughout Hutchison which would teach folk and/or raise awareness about the trees and wildlife which can be found there. This could nudge folk towards taking more interest and care in the local environment.

### **Wildflower Planting**

The Council would be supportive of the planting of further wildflower areas around Hutchison to provide relatively low maintenance biodiversity and colour over a wide season. A simpler method still is to reduce the mowing of greenspace to allow it to grow, this can be seen in parklands across Edinburgh.

### **Don't and Do Signs**

There are several signs which proclaim 'No Dogs', 'No Dog Fouling', we didn't see any 'No Ball Games' signs. Would it be possible to erect some positive signs, 'Relax Here', 'Play Here'.

### **Litter Bins**

Litter was identified as a problem, particularly around Hutchison Crossway. We have not investigated whether this is due to a lack of litter bins.

### **Seating & Picnic Tables**

The community survey suggests that the installation of picnic tables and benches would be welcomed, several of the spaces indicated in the plan above would certainly benefit from them.



## Seadecking

Two small corner sites in Hutchison have been recently renovated by Council contractors with funds from the Neighbourhood Environment Partnership. The sites were previously grassed. They have been tarmacked with a gravel impregnated resin surface called 'Seadecking' and new bow top fencing has been installed. The capital cost for the two sites was approximately £40,000.

This has provoked what could be termed as a Marmite response from residents, some liking the change, others hating it. Comments from the resident site survey included :-

"Too tarmac at the moment." ,

"Ugly space. Could do with flower pots. Could put on ground or hang off fences? Good amount of seating, but not inviting. Lets put a mural on the wall." ,

'Nice for seating and enjoying the peace. Flower beds unattended.'



## RECREATION & PLAY

### Natural Play

The importance of access to quality outdoor play opportunities was underlined by the near unanimous support in the door to door survey, and accompanying comments. Hutchison does have the one play area, and Saughton Park is a short walk away, so whilst improvement to the play equipment couldn't be ruled out, it is unlikely that the Council would prioritise capital spending in the area. However, there may be interest in delivering 'natural play' workshops which would facilitate free, loose parts play. This would depend upon availability of budget to meet the costs of play workers.

### Family friendly Cafe / Hub

There was interest in a family cafe/hub. Hutchison had its own community centre until recently. There may be mileage in developing ideas for a mini-centre/pavilion in the grounds of the school. This would be a sizeable project in itself.

### Mini Parks

There are two sites in particular, the circle on Hutchison Place and Hutchison Gardens (circled) which have potential to be improved in terms of amenity.

#### Hutchison Circle

We have provided an illustration below of how Hutchison Circle could be improved by: removing the fences in the middle of the green space, adding new gates, creating a new path around the perimeter,



planting wildflower meadow (shown in pink) and adding some benches and picnic tables. It could be possible to erect a marquee during the warmer months to hold community events in the space. Funnily enough one of the quotes from the resident survey was, "Used to be nicer when there some seats in the roundabout for folk to sit on."



## SCHOOLS

We have not as yet discussed the community greenspace study with St Cuthbert's Primary School, or any of the other schools in the local area. We would certainly wish to involve local children in any community greenspace project and partnering with local schools would be a positive step.

Edible Estates are delivering 'School Farm' projects on the grounds of two primary schools in Wester Hailes ([www.edibleestates.co.uk/project-type/school-farm/](http://www.edibleestates.co.uk/project-type/school-farm/)), a similar project could be developed with St Cuthberts if there was interest.

Once a strategy has been agreed as to what projects the community wish to lead on, we can approach the school/s to encourage participation.