



# Walking Connects Evaluation Mini-Project Case Studies May 2019

We are Living Streets Scotland, part of the UK Charity for everyday walking. Our mission is to achieve a better walking environment and inspire people to walk more.



**We are Living Streets Scotland, part of the UK Charity for everyday walking. Our mission is to achieve a better walking environment and inspire people to walk more.**



## Walking Connects

Walking Connects is a three-year project delivered by Living Streets through the Big Lottery's Accelerating Ideas Pilot Fund. The project aims to improve the wellbeing of older people by empowering them to act and be involved in decision making about streets, spaces and places for walking. Walking Connects enables older people to remain or become more physically active in the community, to stay socially connected, and to be active in improving the walking environment for everyone.



## Walking Connects: Mini-Project Case Studies

The mini-project case studies capture some of the key processes and learning from Living Streets' work with anchor partners and project participants in the first year of Walking Connects.

Each case study is from a Walking Connects project in a different Scottish community, and describes the processes used, the outcomes and the key learning points.

## Author Credits

**Evaluation:** Moira Tasker

**Walking Connects Project Manager:** Penny Morriss

**Walking Connects Project Coordinator:** Anne Docherty

**Additional Photographs:** Pat Douglass



**Dunrobin Gardens**

**Airdrie**

**North Lanarkshire**



## Context

Dunrobin Gardens is home to 31 residents living in sheltered housing. For many years, the Residents Association sought to improve access to local amenities on foot and for people using mobility scooters, walking aids and wheelchairs.

The housing is in walking distance of local shops and services with a bus stop c. 45 metres away on Glen Road. The Four Isles community centre - hosting a range of activities enjoyed by the residents - is also nearby.

Despite its excellent location, residents found the lack of pedestrian access at the end of the housing complex a significant barrier to accessing the shops, community centre and church. Residents had to use a longer, roundabout route which crossed the car park and hilly green space. Many felt this made walking or using mobility aids to get out and about impossible.

The residents identified several types of journey that people living at Dunrobin Gardens found difficult including walking in the grounds and to local shops, services and the bus stop.

Residents had long identified a solution - a new path and a gate in the fence to give pedestrians direct access and make walking easier. Action, however, was frustrated by:

- Complexity of land ownership – the route for a new path was owned by North Lanarkshire Council. The fence and location for a new gate was owned by Trust Housing Association.
- Who to contact at the council. How to explain the problem and the solution.
- Who would fund it and feelings that their needs weren't important.



## Dunrobin Gardens

## Airdrie

## North Lanarkshire

### Action

In 2018, staff from Living Streets and Trust Housing Association worked with the residents to explore what was preventing them from walking to access the grounds and their neighbourhood and the potential solutions. Progress was dependent on not only bringing residents together but enabling them to explain how the issues - such as the missing path and the longer, hilly access route - was affecting their everyday mobility. Articulating the wider implications for themselves and their neighbours was key to engaging the landowners - North Lanarkshire Council and Trust Housing Association - in finding and funding a solution.



This process identified the wider impacts as:

- Reduced access to shops, services and public transport.
- Reduced day-to-day independence and mobility.
- Feelings of isolation from the surrounding community.
- Feelings of exclusion – their needs weren't important or couldn't be met.

### Stakeholder meeting & partnership agreement

With support from Living Streets, the residents hosted a meeting with Trust Housing Association and North Lanarkshire Council. The two organisations agreed to work in partnership to deliver a new path, funded by the local authority, and a new gate, funded by the housing association.

### Making it happen

A significant complexity was the number of departments and personnel required to plan and deliver the new access route. This included, roads, ground maintenance, assets & lighting and regeneration & infrastructure services at

North Lanarkshire Council and personnel at Trust Housing Association. The Regeneration Manager at North Lanarkshire Council offered to co-ordinate the departments and act as project lead. This was crucial to the success of the project.

### Intergenerational Workshop

Residents also identified improvements to the garden as a priority - particularly for people who could not walk beyond the complex. Living Streets organised a workshop with residents and pupils from the neighbouring St Phillip's school. The group agreed to:

- Produce a timetable for what can be done over the winter, e.g. getting rid rubbish and adding dressed stone with weed felt at the perimeter.
- Plan spring planting, including raised beds, vegetables and a polytunnel.
- Investigate new seating and other access improvements to ensure that everyone could be involved. This may include purchasing some adapted tools.

## Dunrobin Gardens

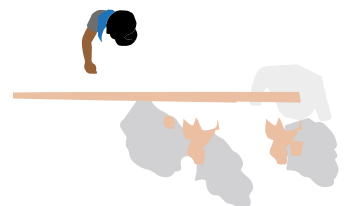
## Airdrie

## North Lanarkshire

### Outcome

On 22 March 2019 the new gate and path was opened by resident Norah Waddell. Attendees included residents, Trust Housing Association, Alex Neil MSP, and Councillors Ian McNeil and Sandy Watson. News of the new path and gate made the local and national press.

The opening ceremony was followed by a party in the hall of Jackson parish church – now easier for residents to access on foot and with mobility aids.



# Dunrobin Gardens Case Study Timeline

## 1

**February - May 2016**

- Living Streets contacts Trust Housing Association
- Residents review ways to increase accessibility and encourage walking
- Needs audit and findings report

## 2

**June - September 2016**

- Trust HA action within the development
- Trust HA review potential for joint project with North Lanarkshire Council to create new path
- Project stalls (not staff resource at Trust HA)

## 3

**2017**

- Living Streets funding bid for Walking Connects project & recruitment OFG project coordinator

## 4

**January - September 2018**

- 4 departments identified at North Lanarkshire Council (NCL)
- Meeting with NCL Regeneration Manager
- Facilitated meeting with residents, Trust HA & NLC
- Partnership agreement between Trust HA and NLC

## 5

**October 2018**

- Funding identified by Trust HA for the new gate
- Meeting with St Phillip's School to discuss pupil support for developing the garden
- Intergenerational workshop
- Funding identified by NLC for the new path

## 6

**December 2018**

- Work begins on the new path and gate

## 7

**January - February 2019**

- Residents, Trust HA and Living Streets project coordinator organise an opening ceremony for the new gate and path. Attendees include Mary, the resident who first suggested a new path and gate 12 years ago, Trust HA, NLC staff and Alex Neil, MSP

## 8

**Friday 22nd March 2019**

- New gate and path opened by resident Norah Waddell



# Dunrobin Gardens

## Airdrie

## North Lanarkshire



### Learning Points

- Residents knew what was needed to encourage walking but didn't know the practical steps:
  - Who to contact.
  - How to explain the problem, the impact and the solution.
  - The 'technical' jargon.
- Before the Walking Connects project, residents believed they couldn't influence local decision making. The process of taking effective action to improve the local walking environment increased individual and group confidence and empowered residents.

"Shows you what we can do. Our views matter and everyone in the community is chuffed about the new lighting. They can walk here now. It's much better"

**Resident, Dunrobin Gardens**

- The time and resources needed to get a result. Before Walking Connects, progress stalled due to lack of staff resource.

"It just wasn't anyone's remit or something we had experience of."

**Staff at Trust Housing Association**

- The workshop to explore improving the garden with pupils from St Phillip's school increased motivation, widened resident engagement, and increased links with the community:

"The intergenerational element of the project has been fantastic"

**Staff at Trust Housing Association**

- The Walking Connects Project Coordinator empowered residents to take action and engaged key personnel at the housing association and local authority to keep the momentum going.

"This project wouldn't have been possible without the work of Living Streets, a great charity that sets out to promote and protect the rights of people walking, all over Scotland."

**Alex Neil MSP**

**Kirkloan**

**Corstorphine**

**Edinburgh**



## Context

Kirk Loan is a development of 23 sheltered flats in the Edinburgh suburb of Corstorphine. The residents are only 60 - 100 meters from a wide range of local shops and services on St John's Road including; a butcher, bakers, a bank, coffee shops, an optician, two chemists, a hairdresser, food outlets and pubs.

The area is well served by public transport with buses every 10 – 15 minutes to and from Edinburgh city centre. The housing is located next door to Corstorphine Parish Church and the local library is adjacent - 40 meters walk from the development.

Despite its location, residents encountered significant barriers to reaching St John's Road on foot:

- The condition of the narrow pavement outside the development.
- Heavy traffic using the one-way street.
- Pavement parking.

The narrow, uneven paving with no dropped kerbs was particularly problematic for people using mobility aids and wheelchairs.

Residents had been reporting the problems to the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) for many years. Issues such as who to contact and who would fund improvements frustrated action.





## Kirkloan

## Corstorphine

## Edinburgh

### Action

In 2016 residents, supported by Living Streets, undertook a street audit. Immediate faults were reported online to the council and a report, with recommendations and an Action Plan, was sent to:

- City of Edinburgh Council.
- Neighbourhood Partnership.
- West Neighbourhood Manager.
- The West Task Force (Transportation, Parks and Cleansing).
- Sainsbury's, a local retailer at the time.

The response appeared limited and action was further delayed by the restructuring of neighbourhood partnerships. In 2017, Trust Housing Association made improvements to access on their land, however, the significant problems with the pavement and parking issues remained. In 2018, Living Streets began work with the residents again and a CEC Roads Technician and a Roads Inspector visited Kirkloan. However, no action followed, and the process stalled again.

### Improving Pavements Workshop

In August 2018, the Walking Connects Project Coordinator supported residents to organise a workshop to:

- Review progress.
- Identify the owners of nearby businesses, land and other organisations.
- Identify the structures and processes for residents to link with to secure improvements.
- Identify key decision makers.

Residents contacted a local councillor and invited her to visit to see the barriers to walking first hand. The councillor also agreed to hold a surgery for constituents at Kirkloan in January 2019.



## Kirkloan

## Corstorphine

## Edinburgh

### Outcome

In March 2019, welcome confirmation was received from Councillor Gloyer that the pedestrian route will be brought up to 'modern standards' in April. This includes resurfacing the pavement linking the housing to St John's Road.

Dropped kerbs will also be installed, enabling wheelchair users to travel on the pavement. A bollard will replace a barrier to increase pedestrian safety and stop vehicles cutting the corner.

Corstorphine Community Council held their April public meeting in Kirkloan. Their traditional meeting place is in the nearby Dowager House but a steep, spiral staircase to the meeting room prevents most residents from attending.



# Kirkloan Case Study Timeline



## 1

### February - 2016

- Living Streets contacts Trust Housing Association
- Residents audit of local streets
- Recommendations & Action Plan submitted to Trust HA & City of Edinburgh Council (CEC)

## 2

### May - December 2016

- Residents report faults online to CEC & contact Neighbourhood Partnership
- Project stalls - no response from CEC & Neighbourhood Partnerships are restructuring

## 3

### 2017

- Trust HA improves access to the site
- Living Streets funding bid for Walking Connects project recruitment of project coordinator

## 4

### January - July 2018

- Project Coordinator meets with residents, Neighbourhood Partnership & CEC
- Owner of 139 - 143 St. John's Road identified
- CEC Roads Technician & Roads Inspector visit site
- Action Plan reviewed with residents

## 5

### August 2018

- Improving Pavements workshop held at Kirkloan
- Several attempts made to engage CEC locality staff

## 6

### January - February 2019

- Councillor Gloyer holds a surgery in Kirkloan
- Corstorphine Community Council agree to hold a meeting at Kirkloan (current meeting place in Dowager House not accessible)

## 7

### March 2019

- Commitment from CEC to resurface the pavement in April 2019 to a 'modern standard'. Dropped kerbs will be installed and a bollard will replace a barrier to stop lorries cutting a corner.

## Kirkloan

## Corstorphine

## Edinburgh

### Learning Points

- Residents knew what was needed to improve access, safety and encourage walking but didn't know:
  - Who is responsible for issues such as pavement parking, parking on red lines and double parking.
  - Who the decision makers are and how to engage them.
  - If the concerns would be taken seriously.
- The improving pavements workshop renewed motivation and widened resident engagement.

- Before Walking Connects, progress stalled due to lack of response from the local authority:

“It felt like we were talking to a brick wall. We were told there was no money to repair the pavement – despite the danger and it being dug up all the time.”

**Resident, Kirkloan**

- The Walking Connects Project Coordinator empowered the residents to keep going and supported them to take effective action.

- The location of public meetings is key. An inaccessible venue excludes people by default. Holding meetings in different locations (such as sheltered housing facilities) gives more people an opportunity to participate and engage.

“Getting to the right person and having a one-to-one conversation makes the difference. You have to show them the problem.”

**Resident, Kirkloan**

“Here we were being listened to. Not everyone wants to do this kind of thing, but everyone had a problem with the pavement and the bad parking. We could take it on for them and people less able to get to the shops”

**Resident, Kirkloan**



## Burnfoot

## Hawick

## Scottish Borders



### Context

Burnfoot is a housing estate in Hawick in the Scottish Borders. Built during the 1950s - 1970s, the homes are now predominantly owned by Scottish Borders Housing Association and Waverley Housing.

In 2016, older residents supported by Living Streets, undertook a review of ways to increase the accessibility of services in Burnfoot and access to the wider Hawick area.

A needs audit was produced. The review highlighted key barriers to getting out and about on foot or by using mobility aids or wheelchairs.

These barriers included:

- A lack of resting places, particularly along several steep pedestrian routes.
- The location of some bus stops and a lack of seating in the bus shelters.
- Awareness raising of older people's needs when using public transport e.g. drivers pro-actively offering the ramp and avoiding gaps between the bus and the pavement when pulling into a stop.

Residents had been reporting some of the issues to Scottish Borders Council and community groups operating in the area for many years. Key barriers to acting were:

- Who to contact.
- How to explain the problem.
- How to co-ordinate action.
- How to fund improvements.



## Burnfoot

## Hawick

## Scottish Borders

### Action

In 2017 and early 2018, the Walking Connects project began to contact groups in Burnfoot with a view to taking practical action to make everyday journeys on foot easier, particularly for older residents.

### Conversations & Workshops

In May 2018, Living Streets organised a multi-disciplinary workshop to formulate an action plan to make getting out and about easier. Attendees included:

- Older people living in Hawick, particularly in the Burnfoot area.
- Carers.
- Managers and decision makers leading community groups and organisations in the area.

The workshop was fully subscribed, and attendees agreed an action plan. This focused on a long-standing barrier to older people walking in the area – the lack of benches and rest areas along pedestrian routes and at bus stops.

Further conversations and workshops with residents identified numerous places in Burnfoot where a bench could enable older people to stay active. Residents thought that a well-placed bench – particularly along steep pedestrian routes such as McLagan Drive - would encourage many to walk. It was also felt that benches would increase the likelihood of social interaction and reduce feelings of isolation.

There were some concerns that new benches could attract anti-social behaviour. Living Streets were able to reassure groups and organisations with evidence from other areas, including liaising with community police officers.



## Burnfoot

## Hawick

## Scottish Borders

### Outcome

Scottish Borders Council agreed to take forward:

- Adding a sign directing pedestrians to the Health Centre via Round Close.
- A review of the traffic signs at the Newcastleton Road/Heart of Hawick junction.
- A review of the ramp to front door of Heart of Hawick.

The Hawick Out & About Group, in partnership with Burnfoot Community Council, has:

- Secured funding for two benches at the garden/ planting area beside Burnfoot Hub.
- Secured funding for 10 benches through the SBC Community Grant Scheme.
- Secured donations towards the seating from local businesses, including Howdens.

The benches will be installed at seven locations to make getting out and about on foot and by public transport easier in Burnfoot. These are:

- Fraser Avenue – beside the bus stop and inside the bus shelter.
- Eildon Road.
- Hillend Drive - Galalaw Rd at the top of the steps.
- McLagan Drive, including one inside the bus shelter.
- Cavers View/Burns Road playing field.



# Burnfoot Case Study Timeline

# 1

**2017**

- Living Streets funding bid for Walking Connects project & recruitment of project coordinator

# 2

**January - March 2018**

- Living Streets contacts Waverley Housing and Scottish Borders Housing
- Residents review ways to increase accessibility and encourage walking

# 3

**April - May 2018**

- Needs audit & findings report

# 4

**May 2018**

- Public workshop to find out what makes walking and getting out and about easy and what makes it difficult in Burnfoot and Hawick

# 5

**June - October 2018**

- Action plan agreed to deliver the priorities and opportunities raised at the public workshop
- Council agree to take forward a review of traffic signs at Newcastleton Road, a review of the ramp to the door of Heart of Hawick and a sign directing people walking to the Health centre

# 6

**January - February 2019**

- Living Streets, Hawick Out & About Group, Burnfoot Community Council and Scottish Borders Council work in partnership to secure grant funding and donations from businesses for new public benches

# 7

**March - April 2019**

- Funding secured for 12 benches - to make getting out and about on foot and by public transport easier





## Burnfoot

## Hawick

## Scottish Borders



### Learning Points

- Older residents knew the issues - and had tried to implement their own solutions, such as the garden chairs in the bus stop - but didn't know:
  - Who to contact.
  - How to co-ordinate action.
  - How to 'make the case'.
  - Who would fund improvements (such as new benches).
- Before Walking Connects, progress stalled due to lack of staff resource, a clear plan and co-ordination.

- The Walking Connects Project Coordinator empowered residents and community groups to come together and formulate a clear action plan.
- Persistence was needed to overcome long-standing ways of doing things that was making getting out and about harder – such as removing the public benches during the winter months.

“It was really difficult to know what to do really, it didn't seem to be anyone's job to sort it out.”

**Resident, Burnfoot**

## Key Learning



### Making the Case

The policy context supporting walking at local and national government level is clear. However, this does not appear to translate into streets and pavements that encourage and enable older people to walk. The mini-projects tackled basic infrastructure that was missing or poorly maintained and had been a barrier to older people walking for many years. Linking policy areas and translating policy to action on the ground is a priority.

'Making the case' required technical knowledge and co-ordination that few individuals and groups have. Older residents knew what was stopping them getting out and about and what the solutions were. They didn't know who to contact, how to explain the problem and how to overcome responses such as 'we have no budget for that'. Each project had stalled due to lack of staff resource and knowledge until the Walking Connects project started.

Reducing the physical barriers to walking and using mobility aids requires a clear understanding of the problem and the potential solutions. Bringing people together to formulate a plan – older residents, carers, community groups, health and other professionals – was pivotal to acting. Many decision makers had not made the link between everyday street and pavement infrastructure, enabling walking and reducing social isolation.

### Raising Expectations

At initial meetings, many people expressed a perception that their needs weren't important. This can contribute to decreased confidence and increased isolation. Many participants said they were less of a priority in decision making about the local environment than younger people.

A key talking point at all meetings was that taking action to get better streets and pavements benefits everyone. Participants increasingly talked about improving the local environment for everyone in the community, particularly neighbours who were too ill or too busy to get involved.

At every stage, some people still felt any issue they raised with getting out and about would be dismissed by decision makers as being due to their age rather than, for example, the poorly maintained pavement. Facilitating face-to-face meetings, such as councillor surgeries, and sharing information about the standards streets and pavements should meet, was an important way of raising expectations and empowering action.

## Key Learning

### Taking Action

Many people didn't know who they could contact and/or how to contact them. People were also deterred from acting when contact was suggested via the internet and preferred to have direct phone numbers or postal addresses for councillors, MSPs and MP's and local authorities.

A common concern was not wanting to use, not knowing how to use or not having access to, the internet or email. People also frequently cited the complexity of navigating call handling systems – particularly at their local council – as a barrier to acting.

Awareness of Community Councils, Neighbourhood Partnerships and other community engagement and planning structures was limited. Holding meetings in a wider variety of community locations (such as sheltered housing complexes and accessible buildings) could change this.

Bringing residents together through workshops and group meetings was pivotal to understanding the issues and creating effective action plans. The process also motivated individuals and increased social interaction around a common goal.



info@livingstreets.org.uk  
020 7377 4900  
www.livingstreets.org.uk

**LIVING**

**STREETS**

