

Community Garden Brief and Expression of Interest Form

The Opportunity: Community Garden Development at St Margaret's Park

In 2023, Edinburgh Leisure returned several disused bowling green venues to the City of Edinburgh Council, including the one in St Margaret's Park. Following this, the Parks and Openspace Development Team have been exploring opportunities to re-purpose these spaces. Community consultation revealed a strong preference for a garden which includes community growing areas and sensory planting ([more information available here](#)) and we are excited to announce an opportunity for local organisations to lease the disused bowling green for this purpose. This initiative aligns with the Council's ambition to increase community food growing opportunities, alongside aims to enhance community engagement, promote sustainability, and provide a green space for all residents to enjoy.

There are also other features that we aim to introduce into the bowling green in the future using a phased approach. This may include a pétanque court, trim trail, etc. If the tenant is particularly interested in any of these features, or any similar aspects which could improve the park, there is the possibility to fundraise together with the Council to progress these aspects further.

Location

The bowling green is within St Margaret's Park, Corstorphine (outlined in yellow below). The bowling green includes a perimeter, with one side including mature trees. The bowling green is approximately 2800m². St Margaret's Park is a well-used park, featuring a play park, tennis courts, and the Dower House Cafe. It is in close proximity to residential houses, care facilities, local schools, and a scout centre. The park has a strong history, from Roman times to witch trials, which is valued by the community (information here: [History – Improve Corstorphine](#)). St Margaret's Park is Common Good Land and is also protected by Fields in Trust.



Current Status

The re-purposing of the bowling green has been developed to a concept stage, where we know the size and location of the site, and some features which should be included (e.g., accessible paths, seating, community growing, sensory planting). We have some ideas and suggestions regarding the layout of the space, however, there is significant flexibility in the design of this space, and the Council expects to work in partnership with the tenant to agree a final design.

[The concept designs can be viewed on our website.](#)

The leaseholder may choose to only use part of the site if preferable. To activate the space as soon as possible, we appreciate that the tenant may wish to set up a shorter term or meanwhile use of the space more immediately, with plans in place to develop the site fully over time.

Additionally, the existing pavilion on the bowling green is included in the lease and can be used as part of the facility. The pavilion previously served as St Margaret's bowling green clubhouse and has the potential to be a valuable community resource, providing space for storing tools and other communal needs.

The structure is predominantly timber-framed and clad in vertical timber cladding boards, with a rendered masonry element to the rear. It features a monopitch roof that is felted, with timber

fascias and soffits. The building comprises male and female changing accommodation, two individual toilets, an equipment/plant room, and a small admin space. Generally, the structure is in reasonable condition. Internally, the building is wind and watertight, with walls and ceilings that are generally clean and unmarked. The condition of the internal fixtures and fittings is acceptable for the intended purpose. However, the pavilion may require some minor repairs before it is fully operational, depending on the tenant's requirements. For example, the roof should be improved within the next 5 years (estimate of £5,000-£10,000), some repair to the exterior of the building is needed (estimate of £3,000-£5,000), and toilet refurbishments, though not immediately essential, are an estimate of £15,000 upwards. These costs are purely illustrative. Further information regarding the condition survey is available on request.

Notably, the toilets are located inside the pavilion and in the future need to be upgraded to meet operational standards, including the addition of an accessible toilet.

As the consultation with the local community demonstrated a need for accessible public toilets, the Council wishes to consider whether part of the pavilion could be converted for this purpose with access directly from outside without having to enter the main pavilion.

Support Available

A package of support measures from the Council is on offer to help establish the new community garden. This may include the following:

- Although not guaranteed, the Council may be able to allocate a small amount of funding to help the tenant convert the space for community growing. In exceptional circumstances, up to £30,000 or £40,000 may be awarded.
- The Council can use their Procurement Framework to appoint contractors to carry out any work that the successful tenant is not able to carry out themselves, subject to funding.
- The Council's Nursery may be able to help provide advice on planting and cost-effective plants.

- The Council's Parks and Openspace Development Team can provide support such as project management and advice for design and layout of the site, and how to maximise the ecology of the site to improve biodiversity. They are also willing to collaborate with the successful tenant to fund-raise to help deliver the proposed ambitions for this space.

The Role of the Leaseholder

In addition to collaboratively designing the space, we expect the tenant to use the space to deliver the following:

- Food and sensory growing components.
- Community engagement, including activities and programmes to activate the garden space.
- Work with established community groups such as the Friends of St Margaret's Park and sports clubs to establish how the pavilion could be a shared resource to benefit all park users.
- Provide public access; as the space is located in a public park, it is important that members of the public are welcome in the whole or part of the space (subject to opening hours).
- Ensure the garden design and activities are inclusive and accessible to everyone, including those with different abilities.
- Have plans to activate the space in the short term if funding is not immediately available to implement the full proposal.
- To have a flexible approach. We aim for other improvements to be made within the bowling green, such as a trim trail, social seating, pétanque, etc. Depending on funding, we may need to build these in a phased approach, meaning the tenant will need to expect nearby construction and sharing the bowling green with these features.

The pavilion is expected to serve as a resource for the garden, providing community storage for tools and materials, and a space for hosting activities and gatherings. This multifunctional use

will enhance the overall utility of the garden, fostering a stronger sense of community involvement and stewardship. Ideally, the pavilion can be adapted to also provide a publicly accessible toilet facility (to be managed by the Council).

Power and services

The garden space will be self-contained. Storage space and water access can be organised via the pavilion. If necessary, any utilities required should be arranged independently by the leasing organisation.

Terms

The space is offered for an annual lease starting from February/March 2025, with the option for a lease term of up to five years. It may also be possible to extend this in the future, and specific requirements can be discussed to accommodate the tenant's needs.

The tenant must obtain all necessary consent from relevant authorities. The unit's appearance must be approved by the City of Edinburgh Council (Parks and Greenspace) and in keeping with the surrounding area.

The tenant must have the following insurance:

- Employer's liability insurance (minimum of £5 Million) - if applicable
- Public liability insurance (minimum of £5 Million)

Timeline for Expressions of Interest

- **EOI Announcement:** 1st week of December 2024
- **Submission Period:** 1st week of December – 12th January (6 weeks)
- **Evaluation & Selection:** Mid-January 2024 – February 2025
- **Lease development begins:** February 2025

Council officers are available the week of December 16th to answer questions and organise site visits.

Expression of Interest

**Please submit a document with the following details to
thrivinggreenspaces@edinburgh.gov.uk**

Group or organisation name:

Lead Contact person's name:

Telephone:

Email:

Key EOI Criteria - please answer each question

1. About your organisation (no more than 300 words per answer)

If you are putting in this Expression of Interest as a partnership, please provide this information for all partners.

- a) Background information about your organisation, including information about your general audience.
- b) What kind of model does your organisation have (e.g., social enterprise, CIC)?
- c) How do you sustain your organisation financially?

2. Your proposals for the space (no more than 300 words per answer)

- a) What is your vision and ambition for this space?
- b) Outline your proposals for this space including how it be used and what it is likely to include, e.g. planting beds, raised planters, polytunnels, covered outdoor area, green compost bins, etc. If you have any ideas at this stage for its layout, please append a plan, even if it's just a rough illustration, to help us understand your vision.

3. Community Engagement: (no more than 300 words per answer)

- a) Please outline your plan to engage local residents and encourage community participation.
 - b) Provide details of what kinds of activities you would run, and what wellbeing benefits these could deliver.
 - c) What would your target audiences/groups be?
 - d) Outline any partner organisations or groups you expect to work with to deliver activities.
4. **Pavilion Development Experience and utilisation (no more than 300 words per answer)**
- a) What experience do you have in developing community spaces or facilities?
 - b) Have you previously worked on projects that required planning, detailed design, and construction of community assets?
 - c) How do you envision refurbishing and utilising the pavilion as a community asset? (e.g., community shed, event space, storage for gardening tools)
 - d) What facilities or features would you require to operate effectively within the pavilion?
 - e) Please describe the community programmes or services you would like to offer through the pavilion.
5. **Investment proposals (no more than 300 words per answer)**
- a) Provide the amount of capital funding (if any) you are proposing to invest into this garden and pavilion.
 - b) Provide details of any match funding from external sources or agencies.
 - c) Provide details of how you expect to provide human resources to set up this project and to run it afterwards, including details of any expected paid staff posts and in-kind staff and volunteer contributions.
 - d) Assess the operational costs of the pavilion, considering how efficiently it can run and the pricing structure you would need to adopt for any services.

6. **Wider benefits (no more than 300 words per answer): please share how your project could offer:**
- a) Environmental benefits
 - b) Education and Skills Development
 - c) Inclusivity
 - d) Volunteer Opportunities
 - e) Health and Wellbeing benefits
7. **Relevant experience in managing and operating a community garden (or similar) and/or social enterprises (no more than 300 words per answer)**
- a) Have you undertaken any similar projects before?
 - b) Detail the proposed staffing structure and assessment of risks to delivery of services.
 - c) Detail your social enterprise model (e.g. co-operative, charity, joint partnership) and its legal form (e.g. unincorporated association, CIC, CIO).
 - d) Any further details you would like considered in the EOI.

Deadline for Submissions: Sunday 12 January at midnight. Please email completed applications to thrivinggreenspaces@edinburgh.gov.uk