

Leith & Broughton businesses aim to give shoppers the edge

Contributed article

New campaign aims to combat the decline of Edinburgh's local shops.

The initiative, announced last June which aims to help revive Edinburgh's high streets and reward local shopping, is now being piloted in Leith and Broughton.

Local Edge is a new series of free apps which encourage both shoppers and businesses to work together to support the local economy.

With research from the New Economics Foundation finding that more than twice as much money stays in the local community when people shop at local businesses instead of larger chains; the Local Edge apps – which have been developed by Greener Leith and the Broughton Spurtle and funded by a grant of £44,750 from NESTA – help users save money by collecting virtual stamps every time they make a purchase in a participating shop. When they have enough qualifying stamps, they can access a range of unique offers being promoted by local stores.

The project has also been designed so both businesses and shoppers can control their local news agenda by posting updates to the apps' newsfeeds about what's going on nearby.

“Our apps aim to get shoppers closer to the independent businesses in their neighbourhood and reward them for helping to keep their high streets alive,” said Charlotte Encombe, chair of Greener Leith.

“We're currently in the process of signing up local businesses

– and from there we’ll be encouraging people to sign up for the free smartphone app, and start saving on purchases they make.

“And not only that, we’re actively encouraging citizen journalism, so if they know of local news that might be of interest to others, then they can post it to our newsfeed. It’s a truly local service for shoppers – with the aim of increasing footfall in both Leith and Broughton and helping local shops and services prosper.”

If the initial roll out of the project, which is supported by NESTA, is a success, it’s hoped Local Edge apps can be extended to other areas of the city in the near future.

Charlotte Encombe concluded: “With experts predicting sweeping changes across our high streets in the next few years, it’s important that we encourage people to support local businesses – which is essential to safeguarding jobs and improving local areas.

“These two apps will get shoppers closer to independent businesses, offer them an incentive to buy locally, and keep them up to date with everything that’s going on in the area – whether that be news, events or in-store offers,” she said.

Submitted by [Natasha Lobley](#)

