

West Princes Street Gardens – Drop-in session this Wednesday

There is a drop in session this week relating to the [council consultation](#) on the development of West Princes Street Gardens. It will be held at Assembly Rooms on Wednesday 18 July from 2.00pm to 7.00pm and is open to any member of the public to attend.



Design proposal © why

The council has had to ask the public for their views following a slight hiccup in the process by which the garden and in particular the Ross Bandstand, will be redeveloped. It became clear that fundraising proved difficult while arrangements for running the new building were unclear. The reason that it had become necessary to replace the Ross Bandstand in the first place was lack of funding from the public purse.

The Ross Development Trust has now completed the refurbishment of the beautiful Ross Fountain at a cost of around £2 million, and that was officially opened to the public last week. The trust also paid for the work carried out to the Gardener's Cottage in Princes Street Gardens where the trust now has its office on a temporary basis until the development is complete.

The council still hopes to proceed by setting up an [arms length external organisation](#) or ALEO to run the development as a sustainable enterprise. Councillors could not decide in March 2018 and when they delayed taking the decision until May they still could not quite make up their minds.

This meant that the council decided to open up the discussion

over what is in the Culture Convener's words 'one of our greatest assets' and allow the public to make their views known. It is agreed that the gardens will be developed in a joint initiative between the council and the Ross Development Trust, but the council feel it important to set out what work is planned, how it will be paid for and whether there is public support for the proposal.



Councillor Wilson during an interview last year on the Festival Wheel

Councillor Donald Wilson, Culture and Communities Convener for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "Sitting in the heart of the city, between the Old and New Towns under Edinburgh Castle, West Princes Gardens are a central part of civic life in the city. The gardens are an important public asset for all of Edinburgh to experience and it will remain in public ownership and under Council control, available for everybody to enjoy.

"If approved the ALE0 would be established to ensure this remains the case, while allowing the flexibility for the Ross Development Trust and other important stakeholders to raise the required investment for the future pavilion and other key areas of infrastructure. I want to know how these plans sit

with the citizens of Edinburgh, what they see as priorities for them and their Gardens and we want people to play a part in this vision.

“Since the Gardens are so central to daily Edinburgh life – it’s where we relax, play, eat and enjoy incredible live events – I’m sure many people will want to have their say and join us on this journey towards revitalising the area.”



David Ellis Managing Director of Ross Development Trust beside the restored Ross Fountain

David Ellis, Managing Director of The Ross Development Trust, said: “This consultation period allows us a great opportunity to provide people with more detailed information about our work in West Princes St Gardens. Receiving feedback from the public will be extremely beneficial to the project as we continue to move forward.”

You can find further details of the consultation and how to have your say [here](#).