

SW20 – what’s it all about?

This is another article in the series about campaigns in Edinburgh – to offer you a snapshot of what the campaign is all about.

Who are you? – the campaign and those behind it

SW20, South West Edinburgh 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, is a group of local people who came together to discuss how we can make our community better. As residents, parents and professionals from a wide range of backgrounds, we share an interest in wanting to ensure we can live well locally. Most of us have school aged kids, but we want to expand our group.

Rob, Sasha, Dave, Claire, Alex, Rashmi and Paul came together initially because we knew we’d be able to make more of a difference together than individually.

What do you hope to achieve?

Simply: we want to live better locally. We think 20 minute neighbourhoods will help do that.

□A ‘20 minute neighbourhood’ is where residents can access what they need with a short, under 20 minute, journey, by walking, wheeling or scooting. We also want to encourage investment in our local businesses and make small changes to improve our environment.

It’s a key time for the future of our communities, facing up to multiple emergencies from climate breakdown, obesity, pollution and health and wellbeing as we begin to emerge from the pandemic. With CEC focusing on delivering the City Plan

2030, City Mobility Plan and committing to delivery of 20 minute neighbourhoods across Edinburgh there is a real need for our communities to help shape these plans, praise where appropriate and help improve when necessary.

These plans cover a lot of ground and can be hard to digest and understand what they mean in reality for our communities; what that change will look like, how it will benefit us and how we can engage and make our voices heard in a way that is ultimately helpful. SW20 can support and distil important elements from these plans, making it easier for our communities to engage with and help shape the delivery of the solutions.

Why is this important?

Communities who encourage participation of their residents in placemaking and the co-production of solutions and are far more likely to have workable plans which receive support and appropriate resourcing. Make no mistake, change is coming to our communities from the multiple emergencies we face. They will affect our communities, local businesses and local services. The question is whether we meet these challenges proactively and adapt, or react to them out of necessity. The good news is that making these changes will benefit our communities in many different ways, helping people 'live better locally'.

What form does your campaign have? (in other words are you chaining yourselves to railings...?)

We formed in June 2020 as we were dismayed that CEC intended to return Lanark Road to a road design from the 70s with the attendant high speeds, blocked junctions, blocked crossings as well as removing safe options for cycling our children to local nurseries. All in all, a very regressive step. Most of our campaign activities have had to take place virtually, including presenting depositions to the Council. When things

relaxed we held a 'Family Cargo Bike Try Out Day' in Spylaw park with the excellent Colinton Village Enterprises. We work collaboratively with other groups as well, such as BEST Edinburgh. We coordinated a letter to CEC signed by 26 different organisations and businesses calling for the Lanark Road scheme to be 'improved, not removed'. This helped retain it – a good start, but like most of the community we want to see the temporary scheme replaced with better, permanent infrastructure for all road users: not just vehicles.

We also wanted to help people see what that permanent solution might look like. We produced a series of visuals focusing on key elements, upgrading the temporary into permanent design solutions. A key visual was for a fully signalised pedestrian crossing across Lanark Road near Gordon MacDonald's constituency office beside Dovecot Flats. It was a great moment for our communities to see CEC has now approved the installation of that crossing.

As restrictions start to relax again, we'll be moving forward with positive, community based events and initiatives to bring people together, showcase and discuss solutions and to live better locally.

How can people reading this article help?

It's an exciting time for SW20 and we're currently considering the next steps for our group. This will likely be incorporating as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) or other body. You can read more about our next steps on our blog <https://hellosw20.wixsite.com/sw20ed/blog>

We have two requests: firstly, if you wish to get involved, please get in touch. You could become a member, trustee or simply help out! Secondly, we'd like to hear your views on our recently drafted Mission and Aims (below). We're still shaping these so it's a great time to get involved and get your ideas

out there.

Let us know your thoughts hellosw20@gmail.com or via Twitter [@SW20ed](https://twitter.com/SW20ed)

SW20 Mission:

To live better locally and promote 20 minute neighbourhoods in South West Edinburgh.

Aims:

- Create inclusive, resilient & accessible communities with thriving local business and services.
- Enable local people to choose more sustainable ways to access local businesses, transport, public services, schools and green spaces.
- Help reduce the effects of inactivity, air pollution and climate change.
- Increase physical and mental health and wellbeing and a reduction in sedentary lifestyles.
- Inclusion and empowerment of local residents in decision-making.



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