

Social Bite village makes planning application for move

Social Bite has submitted a planning application to move the Edinburgh Village to a new waterfront location in Granton.

The application lays out plans to continue the essential support the charity provides to those experiencing homelessness

Social Bite is the charity which aims to combat homelessness. It has submitted a planning application to relocate its Edinburgh Social Bite Village to a picturesque spot north of West Shore Road on the Granton Waterfront. If approved, the move would take place from early 2025.

The plans for the relocation, made in consultation with charity partner Cyrenians, will ensure that up to 16 residents, at any one time, who have experienced homelessness will continue to enjoy a stable and supported communal way of living with the bonus of extensive views of The Forth Bridges across the water – a sight many former and current villagers have grown fond of.

The new location would bring with it a refresh of the Hub, the communal area for villagers to cook, gather and relax. Additionally, the new location will see the phased introduction of seven new one-bedroom 'Nest Houses' which have been re-designed and improved, following resident feedback.

Social Bite and charity partner Cyrenians, a homelessness prevention organisation which has managed the village since

its inception in 2018, have worked closely to ensure all relocation plans provide a smooth transition for current residents. Feedback from residents has also informed the choice of location.

The new site is less than a mile along the road and has been chosen as a great new location after the resident survey revealed the local amenities and greenspace in the area were important to those living there, allowing them to fulfil their daily tasks such as shopping and going to work, as well proximity to the charming Granton seaside.

The decision to relocate from the current area in Granton has been prompted by the planned end of the current contract for the land, donated by Edinburgh City Council, with the current location forming part of phase one of the Granton Waterfront development plans. The lease-term was originally for four years and later extended by two additional years. The pre-fabricated houses were designed in a way that they can be easily relocated, enabling the charity to make use of a 'meanwhile site,' which would otherwise have been unoccupied. This was a key part of Social Bite's innovative approach.

Josh Littlejohn MBE, founder of Social Bite, said: "The security and happiness of our residents always comes first, so we've worked with those living at the village and the Cyrenians to make sure they feel assured and have a chance to voice what they want and need from any move we make.

"The new site we're entering an application for is a combination of all the best bits from our current position in Granton, with added greenspace, sea views and the introduction of some newly designed Nest Houses to meet our resident's needs. The village is an important part of the North Edinburgh community and will continue to be a vibrant asset to that part of the city. We're hopeful that our planning application is approved, and we can move forward quickly for the sake of the people who we provide accommodation for."

Ewan Aitken, Chief Executive of Cyrenians, said: “Edinburgh is facing an acute shortage of supported housing for people experiencing homelessness. We are absolutely committed to working with the local authority to secure a new site which will allow us to continue to offer relationship-based support that makes a lasting difference to people facing homelessness in Edinburgh.”

The success of the Edinburgh Village serves as a blueprint for other similar projects planned by the charity. Its design offers those living in unsupported temporary accommodations, shelters, or B&Bs, and in need of help to break the cycle of homelessness, a safe and supportive community to be a part of.

At the end of their time at the village, residents are supported in transitioning to permanent accommodation and employment. So far, the Edinburgh Village has helped over 100 residents, many of whom have gone on to secure employment and move into their own permanent homes.

<https://www.social-bite.co.uk/what-we-do/the-edinburgh-social-bite-village/>

