

Create aiming to make a difference in Craigmillar

Donald Anderson, former leader of The City of Edinburgh Council, has been appointed as Chair of the Board of Create, a Craigmillar community enterprise.

Mr Anderson immediately rolled up his sleeves, and has already established a new project to improve the area. He has extensive experience in economic development from his time at the council, and in regeneration as the former Chair of the South Edinburgh Social Inclusion Partnership (which helped transform the Liberton/Gilmerton area of the city).

Create is a community business based in Castlebrae Business Centre which it also runs, acting as landlord for the business units in Craigmillar where 50 companies employ 283 employees. The Board of Create invited Donald to become chair as part of a review into the effectiveness of the organisation and with a view to being more active in regenerating Craigmillar.

The immediate focus is on delivering action quickly to help improve the area. A pilot project has been established that focuses on “town centre management” issues, established in partnership with Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust. Create pays for part of the time of staff member, Elly Kinross, to work along with the council and the local community to improve Craigmillar. The project aims to make a visible difference to the town centre within months and is focused initially on Niddrie Mains Road.



Donald Anderson

Weeds cleared

Already council staff have responded positively last week by clearing weeds and cleaning key areas of Middrie Mains Road. A programme of ongoing works is being drawn up that will focus on keeping the area clean and looking better. Future action will also improve public areas and local parkland with clean ups, removing graffiti, bulb and tree planting, and generally improving the appearance of the area. The pilot project has been based on the successful work done by Essential Edinburgh which is the city centre Business Improvement District. Chief Executive, Roddy Smith, has agreed to mentor the project.

Funding is in place for the project to run for three years and a local grants scheme is to be established by Create to help to further improve the wider Craigmillar area.

Mr Anderson said: "The Board at Create deserves credit for recognising that Create was a community enterprise that wasn't

doing any significant community enterprise activity. That's already changed with the creation of the partnership between Create, Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust and the City Council. I've been hugely impressed by the enthusiasm of the cleansing team led by Robert Farquhar, the Waste and Cleansing Manager for the area, and Elly Kinross, who is leading the project on behalf of Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust and Create."

"Our aim is to see a visible difference in Craigmillar in six months, and ultimately to help make Craigmillar one of the best places to live in Scotland. If that seems ambitious, just remember that if you'd asked someone thirty years ago if the place 'Transpotting' was written about could have become one of the best places to live in Britain they'd have laughed in your face, but that's exactly what happened. Craigmillar already has access to 350 acres of some of the best parkland in Scotland. It is ideally located for easy access to one of the best city centres on the planet, is home to Edinburgh's other fabulous castle and is cheek by jowl with the New Royal Infirmary and the Edinburgh Bioquarter. I'm not saying there aren't challenges. I'm just saying it can be done, and we've already had a great start."

Charlie Cumming, Chief Executive, Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust said, "We're all excited to be involved in building on the work the Greenspace Trust has already done in Craigmillar Castle and Little France Parks, and we're grateful to Create for recognising that our skills in improving greenspace can also be applied to help regenerate the community of Craigmillar. I'm confident that the strong partnership that's been established here will make a significant contribution to improving the area."

The project will be underpinned by a strong partnership with The City of Edinburgh Council. That partnership began with a walkabout in Niddrie Mains Road last week, and in less than 24 hours council staff had already cleared a large area of the

town centre of weeds and litter. Council Leader and local councillor, Jane Meagher, said: "I'm really encouraged by the positive difference that Create, and council colleagues are making in Craigmillar. The team has shown what can be achieved in a short space of time by bringing people together from across the community and working hard to ensure our streets and services meet the expectations of local people.

"With 1,250 new homes, alongside new schools, shops and greenspaces, Craigmillar's regeneration is well underway – but we know there's still much to do. We're currently developing plans for new homes, shops and commercial space along what we hope will be a safer, cleaner and brighter Niddrie Mains Road. We're also exploring how we can breathe new life into Jack Kane Centre and Hunter's Hall Park by bringing together education, sports, health, and wider community services.

"It's so important that we continue to do this jointly with local people, and with local organisations such as Create, so that we can build on these improvements and make a lasting difference to the lives of the people of Craigmillar."

Work experience

In addition to the Town Centre Management Pilot Project, Create has already helped 16 pupils from Castlebrae High School secure work experience placements and worked closely with the Community Alliance Trust which represents organisations and the community of Craigmillar. £25,000 in funding has been secured to help support community groups in the area and Create is actively engaged in seeking other ways to help both improve and help the people and community of Craigmillar.

The Community Alliance Trust (CAT) has been active in Craigmillar for 34 years working with the local community to tackle poverty and exclusion helping to improve the lives of local people, as well as representing the community's views.

Susan Carr, Project Manager at CAT said; "I couldn't believe that after speaking to Robert (Farquhar, Cleansing Manager) the night before, the next morning I saw Council workmen tackling exactly what we had discussed. They really did an amazing job and over 70+ people took to Facebook to comment on the improvement. It is not often that the Council gets publicly praised but, on this occasion, they deserved it. Long may it continue."

Following the start of the Town Centre Management Pilot Project a new community organisation called 'Friends of Craigmillar' is being established to both mirror and enhance the work being done by The Friends of Craigmillar Castle Park and the Friends of Little France Park. A major clean up has been organised as the first event of many to increasing voluntary activity and to help clean, improve and look after the area. The clean-up will be held at the start of April with events planned for the 3,4 and 5 April. These will be publicised locally and already have active support from The City of Edinburgh Council.

A review of the project will be conducted in six months.





