



# OUR OUTDOORS

## Findings from Community Workshops

# Community Workshops

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In early 2018 we developed and delivered three participatory workshops with 36 members of the public to:

- **Explore** how shared outdoor spaces affect our health and wellbeing
- **Understand** elements of a space that make people enjoy being in a space or not
- **Identify** if some elements affect you more than others
- **Hear** what would encourage people to become a citizen scientist



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# Participants

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We recruited participants in partnership with existing community groups to gather a range of views.

Participants were a mix of ages and genders and included those from both affluent areas and areas of deprivation.

We also engaged older adults and people with experiences of poor mental health.



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# What we did and what we found out

Participants took part in five activities during the  
workshops...



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# Activity 1: What are your shared outdoor spaces?

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In pairs participants discussed what shared outdoor spaces they spend time in or pass through.

Across all workshops participants reported spending time in green, blue and grey spaces...

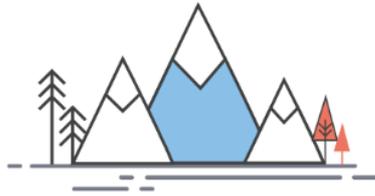


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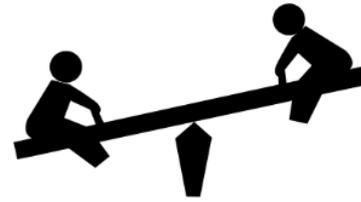


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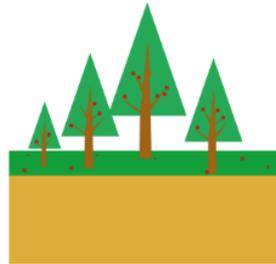
# Green spaces



Hills and mountains



Playparks



Forests and woodland



Community gardens  
and parks

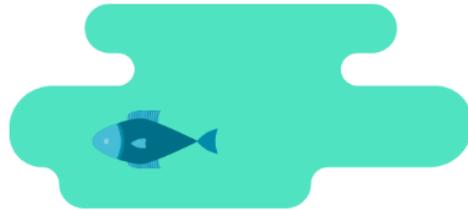


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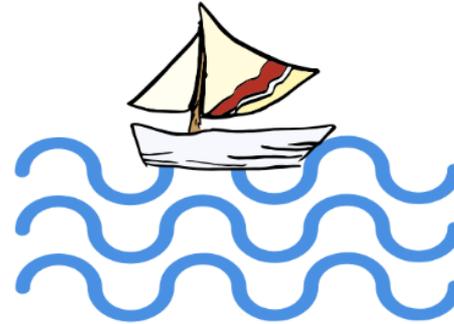


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# Blue spaces



Rivers and estuaries



Seas and coastlines



Beaches and promenades



Canals



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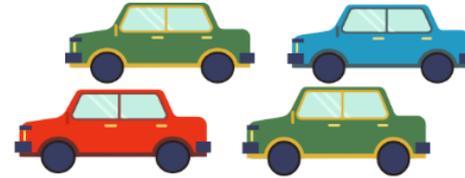


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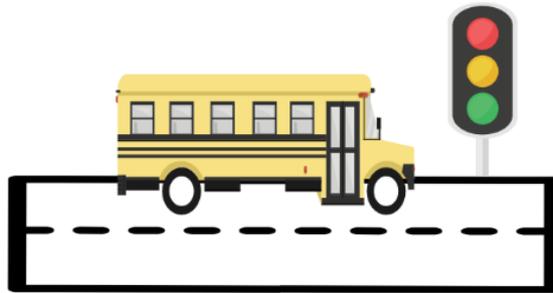
# Grey spaces



Town centre and local streets



Car park



Bus stops and train stations



Cycle paths and skate parks



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# Activity 2: How shared outdoor spaces make me feel

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In small groups participants discussed how they feel when they are in:

- shared outdoor spaces they **enjoy** spending time in and
- shared outdoor spaces that they **avoid** or **don't enjoy** spending time in.

Participants recorded their thoughts on post-its.



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Common words people used to describe **how they feel** when they are in shared outdoor spaces they **enjoy**:



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Common words people used to describe **how they feel** when they are in shared outdoor spaces they **don't enjoy**:

stressed  
irritated  
depressed  
apprehensive  
angry  
frustrated  
unsafe  
annoyed  
frightened  
uncomfortable



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# Activity 3&4: Examining our shared outdoor spaces

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In small groups participants discussed the shared outdoor spaces that they **enjoy** or **don't enjoy** spending time in and **identified** what it is about these spaces that makes them feel this way.

Participants recorded their thoughts on post-its and then collectively grouped these into themes which they chose.

Across all three workshops, the following themes were identified...



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# What people said they enjoyed about shared outdoor spaces



## NATURE

Seeing and hearing birds and wildlife, fresh air



## BEING ACTIVE

Cycling, walking, doing activities they enjoy, playing



## MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Getting away from stress, being alone, relaxing



## SOCIAL INTERACTION

Meet new people, connect with friends, family or community



## SENSORY

Smells, sounds and feel of nature, water and weather



## AMENITIES

Well-looked after spaces that are accessible (e.g. transport, litter disposal)

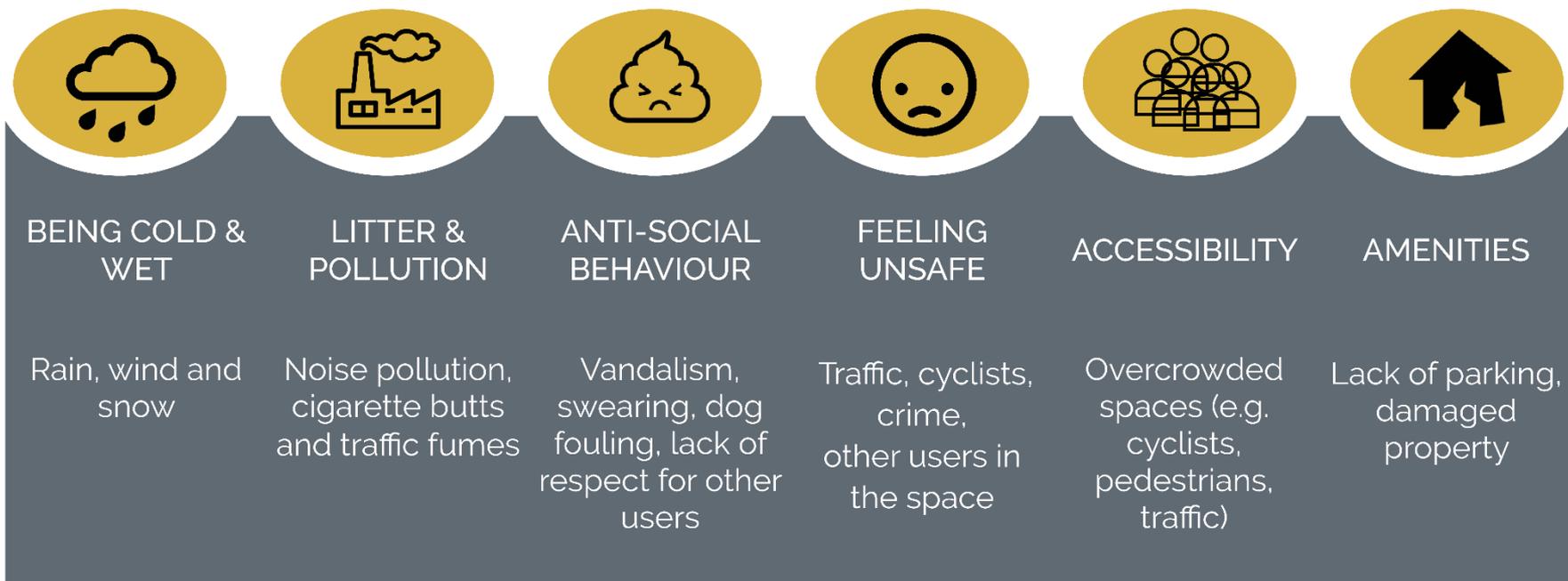


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# What people said they don't enjoy about shared outdoor spaces



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# Activity 5: Being a Citizen Scientist

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We wanted to know how people would like to be involved in the Our Outdoors project.

In small groups participants responded to the following questions about becoming a citizen scientists for Our Outdoors.



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# Q: What activities would you like to be involved in for Our Outdoors?

Participants wanted to be involved in a range of activities, including:

- **Questionnaires:** answering them or helping others to
- **“Spreading the word”** about the project
- **Environmental activities:** that give people a sense of responsibility for an environment (e.g. litter picks)
- **Social activities:** to bring people together
- **Engagement activities:** to help people gain confidence to use and access shared outdoor spaces



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# Q: What would motivate you to be involved in Our Outdoors?

Motivations to become a citizen scientist included:

- **Make a difference** to the environment or community
- Meeting new people
- **Learn new skills** and gain access to training
- Sense of purpose or achievement
- **Interest** in the topic or activities
- Certificate or something to put on CV
- **Taking part** in research
- Incentives being provided e.g. food, free transport, freebies / competitions



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# Q: What might stop you from being involved in Our Outdoors?

Barriers to becoming a citizen scientist included:

- **Cost** (e.g. transport, materials)
- **Access:** if location was far away or hard to access
- **Time:** if they didn't have the time or activities were too time consuming
- **Not feeling valued** or listened to
- **Not having the skills** to take part
- **Lack of interest** in the topic or activity



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# Q: What support might you need to be involved in Our Outdoors?

The support participants said they might need to be involved in Our Outdoors included:

- **Transport**
- **Financial support** (for resources, pay for their time, incentives, other expenses)
- **Training** to develop skills to take part
- **Buddies:** someone to support them to be involved
- **“Open day”** to try activities



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# Next Steps...



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Information gathered from the workshops will be used alongside information from the Science Festival and other public engagement activities to do the following:

- **Draft questionnaire:** The information gathered from public engagement activities is being used to draft a questionnaire to measure people's health and wellbeing in specific shared outdoor spaces.
- **Validating and testing questionnaire:** Once the questionnaire is complete citizen scientists will be engaged to conduct cognitive testing of the questionnaire items. This will inform a final questionnaire.
- **Questionnaire piloting and public engagement activities** will take place in Edinburgh and the Lothians before being rolled out across the UK.



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