

Deans Park, Livingston



Community Consultation Survey Report



Deans Park, Livingston – Community Consultation Survey Results

SUMMARY

Introduction

A consultation was held from mid-April to early May 2024, in order to gain feedback on what the community thought about Deans Park. This is part of Community Choices, the council's participatory budgeting tool to assist focussed spend as part of the Open Space capital investment programme in parks. Suggestions were also sought from the community for proposals that would enhance the park including the play areas. The survey was conducted on-line. Feedback was sought via a simple questionnaire. Thirteen responses were received by the deadline of 6 May 2024.

What people like about the park

The park's large grass area and openness is liked. This provides good surveillance around the park. It is easily accessible and near to houses. It also provides a good route to reach surrounding areas. Respondents liked the fact that the park has play areas and a football pitch. Some also like the fact it has seating and bins.

What people don't like about the park

Many respondents mentioned that there was not enough play equipment suitable for children of primary school age. It was noted that the current rope roundabout is too worn and no longer spins. The lack of an attractive seating / social area is seen as a negative. The condition of the pitch is not liked. There is no reason to linger or stay for long in the park.

Proposals/Next Steps

A number of proposals have been drawn up from the community feedback about the park. A quote to implement the proposed works will now be sought. External funding for tree planting will also be explored. If costs for the proposed works are within the park and play area budgets a contract for their implementation will be secured.



Introduction

An online consultation was held to gain feedback on the community's likes and dislikes about Deans Park in Livingston with suggestions also sought to enhance the park. This was a combined consultation for the play areas and wider park which are usually undertaken separately. Individual budgets are held for investment in each of these but capital programming aligned and a single consultation was held in this instance. The consultation was available on the council's website from 10 April 2024 until 6 May 2024.

This exercise forms part of the council's Community Choices process. West Lothian Community Choices is West Lothian Council's version of Participatory Budgeting - a democratic process which empowers people and communities to have a greater say in how public money is spent. West Lothian Community Choices empowers everyone from community groups to individual service users to get involved in local decision making via a democratic Participatory Budgeting process. This consultation is being used by Open Space to focus spend as part of the capital investment programme in West Lothian's public parks.

Deans Park is a public park owned and maintained by the Council. The park is nearly 1.2 hectares in size and is located within a residential area of north-western Livingston. It is regarded as a Local Park by the Council and designated as Land Safeguarded for Open Space in the adopted West Lothian Local Development Plan, 2018.

Pedestrian access is available into the park from the north-western and south-eastern corners and also from the western boundary. There is no formal vehicular access for the public. The park is not gated. Vehicle access for authorised inspection and maintenance vehicles is taken from the widest entrance off Glen Road.

The park's northern boundary is formed by Glen Road. Fencing along the rear boundaries of housing in Broomyknowe Drive creates the western boundary. The southern boundary is marked by Livingston United Football Club's northern fence line. The east of the park is open to amenity grassland except for metal railings of an adjacent property located centrally.

A sealed and lit path runs near the southern and western boundaries of the park connecting with pavements on Glen Road, Broomyknowe Drive and the south-eastern corner of the park. A whindust path links to the sealed path near the main park entrance off Glen Road and sweeps east and then again links with the sealed path in the south. A circular path route is therefore created around the park with links off it.

A mix of mature and more recently planted trees are situated along the northern boundary creating a formal edge between the road and whindust path. A mature area of woodland also sits in the south-western corner of the park. More recent plantings of individual trees are found along the southern area of the park. There is a small shrub bed in the north-eastern corner and spring bulb planting in various parts of the amenity grassland.

Separate play areas for different age groups are found off each side of the southern path with a variety of equipment. Football goals are located on the central grass area. Seating and bins are also located off the paths around the park.

Information gathering

An on-line survey was used to gather comments and feedback from local stakeholders. This was posted on the Council's website and available for completion between 10 April 2024 and 6 May 2024. Emails were sent to the local ward members, Livingston United Football Club, Deans Primary School, St. John Ogilvie Primary School and a number of council officers advising of the park survey and encouraging their completion and/or sharing. Carmondean

Community Council was also contacted to promote the survey in the absence of an active community council in Deans. Posters were put up in and around the park which included a link to the survey along with a QR code connecting you directly to the survey.

There were 13 surveys completed by the closing date.

Feedback

Full responses to the survey are available in **Appendix 1**. A summary of answers to each question is as follows:

Overall satisfaction with the park and play area

Just over half of respondents think that the park is good or adequate. The remainder believe it is poor or very poor.

Reasons for visiting the park

The play area is the main reason for visiting the park. Walking the dog is the next reason. Enjoying the scenery, playing informal games and resting and relaxing are also undertaken in Deans Park. A few use the park to picnic in or pass through it as a short cut. Appreciating nature or playing organised sports are also reasons for visiting the park.

What people like about the park

The play areas and equipment are liked, particularly the separate areas for younger and older children. The closeness of the football goals to the play areas is also liked. The size of the park, the large grass area and its openness are all enjoyed. It is easily accessed and close to park users' homes. There is good surveillance around the park and you can watch children play. It serves as a nice active travel route to nearby shops. The seating and bins on site are also liked.

What people dislike about the park

The play area equipment received a lot of negative feedback: the play area is regarded as "old"; it needs more variety; does not have enough equipment or not enough for primary school aged children. The condition of the football pitch is also disliked with poor drainage and uneven surface noted. The park is not accessible to all. Picnic tables are needed and there is not enough seating. The rubbish is disliked and there is no real destination or reason to remain in the park for long.

Suggestions to visit more often or spend more time in the park

There were a number of suggestions for the play areas and wider park. These are listed below with any relevant comments regarding their potential delivery also included.

- Play Areas - There were suggestions for more or different pieces of play equipment. The top 3 suggestions for additional equipment were (1st) senior swings, (2nd) hardstanding area for sports and (3rd) cableway;
- Picnic tables/more seats- More seating for carers to watch children in the play areas or for families to spend time together was suggested. There is already provision of picnic tables and seats but these could be better situated for supervision of children.
- Pavement markings would add interest and could be used as a tool to engage children in play. This will be considered for adding to existing hard standing.
- All-weather 5/7a-side pitch – The cost of installing an all weather pitch far exceeds the budget available in the current programme. A Local Park (which Deans Park is classed as) is not expected to include a feature like this. For both reasons an all weather pitch will not be considered further in this park.

Deans Park is currently within walking distance of 2 public surfaced ball courts – Deans MUGA near Livingston Station Community Centre and Lenzie Avenue Ball Court. We encourage all interested residents to use these facilities.

- Improved football pitch – The condition of the pitch is not good. It is uneven with areas of ponding water. Although the pitch is not used by a formal team (with no lines marked out for official games) it is used informally for kick-about by the local community. The budget will not, unfortunately, allow for pitch drainage. There is, however, the opportunity to fill in uneven areas and re-seed. In order for these to grow the pitch would need to be out of action for a while. Depending on contractor programming and grass seeding conditions this may overlap with school holidays.
- Biodiversity enhancements – there were a number of suggestions that could enhance the biodiversity of the park including more trees and plants and also relaxing the grass-cutting regime.

The existing trees on site provide shelter from the wind and shade from the sun. They provide habitat for birds, insects and mammals to source food and seek shelter. Trees also mitigate flooding and reduce soil erosion. All of these benefits, to wildlife and humans (known as ecosystem services), multiply with each tree planted whether grown as a single specimen or woodland group.

Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act (2004), all public bodies in Scotland are required to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities. There are different ways of doing this but each has to be considered for its sustainability and this includes how it is maintained and the resources this requires. Due to reducing resources any new assets (including natural ones) should not increase maintenance but, ideally, reduce this requirement. New hedges, for example, need to be cut which would add to the grounds maintenance programme and put additional pressure on resources and would not, therefore, be considered. New (established) trees and bulbs, for example, require little maintenance especially when considered with no or reduced grass cutting where they are planted.

If additional park funding can be obtained from an external source then new trees will be considered for planting. If this is not secured then some new trees may still be possible within the current park budget but in reduced numbers.

Additional bulbs would provide a source of pollen and nectar for insects. Early-flowering Crocus such as *Crocus tommasinianus* is ideal as it provides this before many flowers are available to pollinators. Their colour also enhances a space early in the season when there's not a lot of other interest available.

Mown grass provides an area for walking, playing and resting on but has little biodiversity value. Reducing the area of amenity grassland that is mown eventually introduces new grass and wildflower species. Increased species increases nectar and pollen sources which in turn increases insect life and also provides more foraging opportunities.

There are areas of grass that are currently cut but which appear to have little or no use by park visitors particularly where they are wet, as on the lower slope of the central grass area and between the whindust path and the trees. These are suggested as

areas to be left uncut to enhance biodiversity (coupled with natural drainage channels to improve the whindust path condition (see proposal below).

- Path connection to car park – The car park off Deans South and adjacent grass verges are not considered to be part of the park. It is understood that the car park was previously created in advance of a development which was not then built. This site is allocated for new housing in the current Local Development Plan. It is possible, therefore, that development may still occur on the car park area and any path connection possibly lost with future building. The budget for the park enhancement is limited and spend will, therefore, be focused on the park area.

Park proposals

Based on the community suggestions that can be implemented within the park (and likely to be within budget) a number of proposals have been drawn up:

- The worn rope roundabout will be removed and replaced with a set of flat swings. This was the top survey suggestion for play equipment and will help the play area cater to more Primary School aged children;
- Budget permitting, a new hardstanding area with a basketball hoop will be considered;
- An improved area with group seating to encourage extended family and social use of the space;
- Play graphics may be considered subject to budget;
- Limited improvements to football pitch – It is proposed that the uneven areas will be in-filled with soil and then re-seeded, along with other bare areas, to make “light touch” improvements to the pitch surface. This would mean that the football area would be unavailable for play for a length of time.
- New drainage – the park collects and holds water like many sites across West Lothian. During, and after, heavy rainfall the whindust path in the north and west is very wet as water runs over it. This comes off the grassland which slopes down from the play/pitch areas. The budget does not allow for installation of the amount/type of drainage that would be needed to fully improve the grass/pitch area but a “natural” drain is suggested along the south side of the whindust path to catch excess water off the slope. This would take the form of a swale which is a shallow, open channel which catches the water and allows it to slowly drain away. Digging out the channel would produce “spoil”. The spoil would be used to form a low profiled mound which would also reduce any water run-off from the slope over the lower section of the whindust path as well as separating path users from the swale. (Retaining the spoil on site also reduces the cost of the works). The shallow swale area and bund could be seeded with a mix of wildflowers and grasses for biodiversity as well as colour and variety. This area would be left uncut and provide new habitat for insects and small mammals to feed and shelter in.
- Biodiversity enhancements –
 1. New trees – If external funding was secured then new tree planting could be undertaken in the grass area between the mature tree-line and whindust path in the north. This would in-fill the gaps between existing trees parallel to the path edge. Additional trees down the western sealed path would also create a

stronger tree-line and add structure and colour. Species such as Alder, Lime or Birch would be considered to be compatible with the wet site conditions.

2. New bulb planting – Additional bulbs are proposed to the north side of the existing whindust path. Crocus tommasinianus is proposed for colour and enhanced biodiversity.
 3. No mow areas – If new trees were planted on site then the areas around them could be left unmown to further enhance biodiversity. Where the trees are close to a path there would be a mown strip between the path and any unmown areas for visual amenity.
- New park sign – The park sign in the south-eastern corner of the park is in a very poor state and needs to be replaced. The existing sign will be removed and replaced with one to match the existing at the park entrance off Glen Road.

The implementation of any of the above proposals depends on their costs being within budget.

A layout plan showing the above proposals is shown below.

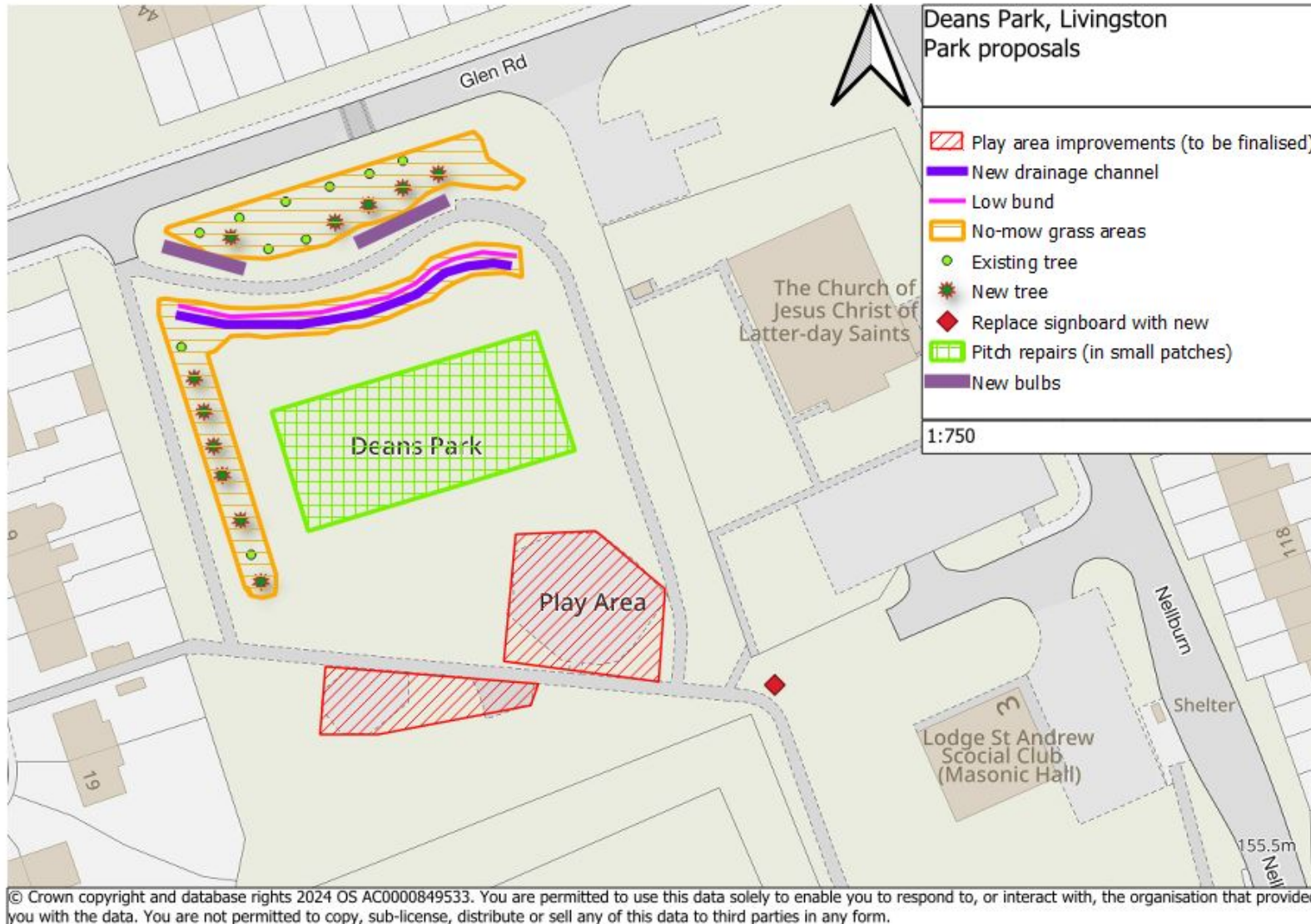
Next Steps

This report will be made available on the Council's webpage at <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/parkinfo> under **Reports**.

The proposals above will be finalised and quotes then sought for their implementation. If these are within the available park and play area budgets then it is hoped that implementation can be completed by the end of March 2025.

External funding will be sought for the trees and, if secured, planted in the next available planting season.

Park proposals plan



Appendix 1 – Survey responses

2. Q2 - If not on list above, please give the town name, and the park or play area name

[.xls](#) [.csv](#)

Number of participants: 3

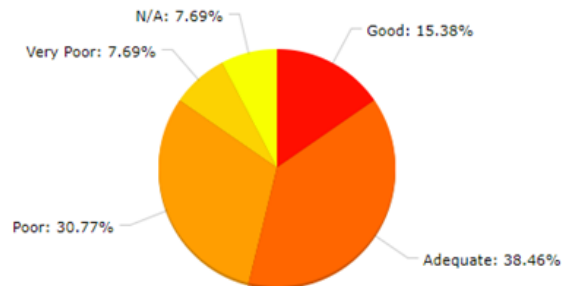
- Livingston no play park north of Deans North Rd and thousands of houses
- N/A
- Deans Park

3. Q3 - Overall satisfaction with the park or play area

[.png](#) [.pdf](#) [.xls](#) [.csv](#)

Number of participants: 13

- (0.0%): Excellent
- 2 (15.4%): Good
- 5 (38.5%): Adequate
- 4 (30.8%): Poor
- 1 (7.7%): Very Poor
- 1 (7.7%): N/A

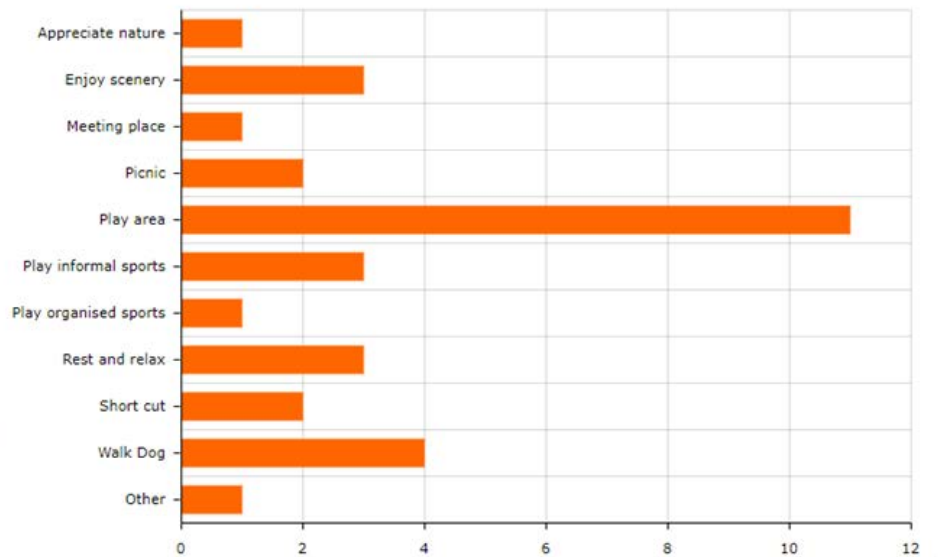


4. Q4 - Why do you visit the park (tick all that apply)?

[.png](#) [.pdf](#) [.xls](#) [.csv](#)

Number of participants: 13

- 1 (7.7%): Appreciate nature
 - 3 (23.1%): Enjoy scenery
 - 1 (7.7%): Meeting place
 - 2 (15.4%): Picnic
 - 11 (84.6%): Play area
 - 3 (23.1%): Play informal sports
 - 1 (7.7%): Play organised sports
 - 3 (23.1%): Rest and relax
 - 2 (15.4%): Short cut
 - 4 (30.8%): Walk Dog
 - 1 (7.7%): Other
- Answer(s) from the additional field:
- There is none!



5. Q5 - What do you like about the park or play area?

.xls .csv

Number of participants: 13

- It's good there are benches and bins for rubbish, and it's good there's a separate area for younger children. It's also handy the large grass space and football goals are right next to the play park too!
- It would be good to have a playpark for all the kids in Elmwood, Northwood, Middlewood, Woodlands, Maplewood etc. Only playpark is south of Jubilee Ave in Deans
- Easy accessible to surrounding areas, open space
- There is a clear view of the park and pitch all the way round to allow me to walk my dog round the park whilst my child plays or cycles round the outside track.
- The benches are great while they children play
- It's near house/school.
- There's lots of great play equipment and it's a nice way to walk to Deans shops rather than by the road
- Close to my home, good play area for toddlers
- Climbing structures
- Like the climbing frame and slide.
- The park is open, has lots of space and greenery. Loads of potential land to enhance upon.
- Near by to home
- I like that there is one for the little ones and the other side is for the older ones.

6. Q6 - What do you dislike about the park or play area?

.xls .csv

Number of participants: 13

- The equipment is really old for example the roundabout hardly even spins it's so stiff and rusty. There's no bigger kid swings, only baby swings. There's not really enough for the kids to do. After 10 mins max both younger and older kids have had a shot of everything. It needs more varied equipment and okay structures. The giant spider web and slide are good but the spider web is so big it takes up far too much space which could be put to better use. With swings for the older kids, a climbing frame area with s foreman's pole. The 2 play parks at murieston are a good example of things that are more interesting for a wider age range.

Better additions would be;

Younger Kids climbing frame with fireman pole

Bigger kids climbing frame with fireman pole

Swings for the big kids rather than just baby swings

A new roundabout feature, might be best to have a smaller one for young kids and a more adventurous one for the older kids. The ones that spin around are always good for the older kids.

A flying fox is always a favourite for the kids of all ages

The spiders web and slide are good but if you could make the web smaller or use more grass space for additional items that would be good.

Basketball hoops are always a hit

Maybe some tyre swings?

A sandpit area for the younger kids

Maybe a little shelter for the kids to shelter in when it starts to rain? Somewhere for them to sit together

More picnic benches

Better drainage on the grass as it's always mucky and full of puddles

- There isn't one!
- Uneven playing field collects water
- The park is great for babies or older kids but the age range of kids 3-7 that typically play most in a park aren't catered for unless they like heights and there are no swings which is a favourite for most kids. It's also not accessible for those with different needs and abilities.
- The large climbing web is difficult for children that are under 10 to get to get the chute. As it can only be accessed by climbing the rope. It's also not safe and accessible for any child with difficulty's regardless of age.
- It's water logged. The play equipment for small children is too small. I.e. only fit for under 3s. The play equipment for big kids is too big I.e. only fit for over 8s. There's nothing for 3 to 8 year olds except 2 rubbish swings. The climbing/roundabout thing is broken and has been for years. you can't turn it. The climbing frame is too big for under 8s. There's no slide for kids who don't feel confident climbing the spider web frame. There's not enough swings and none for over 3s. The grass area is a mess and always water logged. Not enough seating.
- Bland empty space, very exposed, nothing to make you want to sit and linger or come here as a destination. There's nothing here except the play area and the rest of the park is just waterlogged grass.
- A lot of rubbish from teenagers, sometimes not very adequate behaviour from teenagers, not enough things to do for smaller kids
- More play equipment needed, facilities for football
- Grass around park near football posts uneven and often water logged.

Roundabout in play area very hard to push.

- Always muddy, restricted play area for children. Little to no reason as to why kids should play there for even half an hour as my three year old gets bored and would rather go to eilburn
- There's not a lot of things to play on. Small area for smaller children
- Too much holes in the football field area.

7. Q7 - What would encourage you to visit the park or play area more often?

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Number of participants: 12

- More tree planting here, to create a couple of little copses
And/or some 'relaxed grass' around the edges?

Ecologically, it's quite barren in the main park area and could do with more enhancements for biodiversity

- Our favourite parks that have a good range of equipment for different age ranges are;

Zetland park in Grangemouth
Callander park in Falkirk
Elburn park
Both parks in murieston
Beebraigs

If the park had more facilities like they have there it would make us visit more often. Also if the grass wasn't as boggy and it was kept tidier and not always as overgrown. Basketball hoops and a concrete area for it to be played in would be great.

- One that you did not have to drive to.
- Better football facilities, swings, flying fox,
- Markings on the path like traffic lights and start stop for the kids to encourage exercise and instruction. Better play areas and more tables/benches for parents or carers
- An area more suitable for kids primary school children. The web is too difficult for most and the younger part isn't of any benefit to children over 4+
- Better equipment for 3 to 8 year olds. More swings and swings for older children.
- Nice places to sit by the play area, so you spend time as a family and watch the kids play. Something to make the park more unique, interesting and a place you would want to hang out or meet with friends. More colour, different plants and something to support our local biodiversity
- More playground for small kids
- Loads of potential space to build an all weather 7 a side/5 a side football pitch.
Potential to enhance upon the play area, different age groups. Options such as, a tots play area - foam surface, safe and small sized slides, climbing area.
Toddlers and young children - again something more age appropriate- shipwrecked themed play, climbing and slides.
Then for older kids/teenagers. You can have more advance themed play.

There is potential to make it a standout park in the community, this can only be benefited also by the community football club Livingston United beside the park, more attraction to the park, more footfall to the club and ultimately creating that community atmosphere that is ultimately dying in this day and age.

- More play equipment
- You could plant more trees as few of them left most often cut down or didn't survive the time after plantation.

You could install a swing for older kids.

Also please resurface the small foot path between the new car park on the side of the football ground and the walkway goes to the park. please make it wheelchair friendly!!!!!!!!!!!!!!