

Gorgie Dalry Community Council



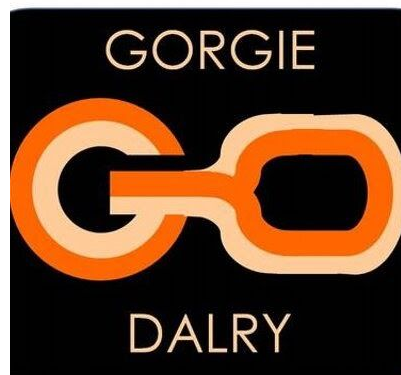
GDCC ANNUAL ENGAGEMENT REPORT 2020

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2020 has been an incredibly challenging year for the Gorgie Dalry community, but it has also been a year in which our community has pulled together like never before. In this report we reflect on how we have responded to some of those challenges, update on our new online communication strategy presented to GDCC earlier in the year, and outline potential plans and ideas for 2021.

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COVID-19 RESPONSE

Gorgie Dalry Community Council has, like many other community groups, worked hard throughout lockdown and beyond to support our community since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. In this section we outline some of the key areas and activities we have undertaken to respond to the unprecedented situation as it has unfolded, and how we have adapted our normal ways of working when necessary. Whilst at times this has been challenging, particularly to balance our own personal circumstances with often fast-changing situations, we have also been incredibly heartened by our community's consideration and efforts to support one-another, and by people's increased awareness of and re-engagement with the GDCC.

SPACES FOR PEOPLE

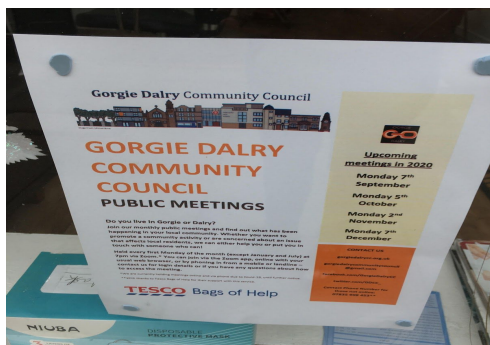


During the City of Edinburgh Council's (CEC) consultation for the new measures to be rolled out as part of the "Spaces for People" initiative, people could submit suggested temporary measures using the Commonplace interactive map. Following correspondence from residents and discussion at our May public meeting however, before this tool was announced, we decided to set up our [own simple online survey](#) that we shared across all our platforms. Despite the tight turnaround (due to the CEC deadline on the main consultation) we managed to gain 74 responses to

the survey in just a few days. We submitted our results to CEC on 11th May 2020. One of the key findings of the survey was that 98.6% of our 74 survey respondents thought that areas are too narrow to socially distance.

We were also pleased to hear from a CEC officer, via Councillor Ashley Grazcyk, on May 21st 2020 that our detailed proposals for widening pavements, supporting cycling, and adjustments to traffic management in Gorgie and Dalry had been "extremely useful in designing the proposed temporary measures which could lead to more permanent changes.". We would like to offer our sincere thanks to Treasurer Alex McKendrick for creating the online survey in record time!

TESCO BAGS OF HELP - OFFLINE OUTREACH



As GDCC meetings switched from in-person to online as a consequence of lockdown, we were aware that although residents could dial into meetings using their landlines or mobile phones, digitally excluded residents might not be aware of meeting dates and how to do that. As we did not want to put any community councillors' private phone number into the public domain, we successfully applied to the Tesco Bags of Help

COVID-19 Communities Fund for £500 to purchase a dedicated GDCC mobile phone, 6 months credit, and fund a poster and flyer campaign to advertise the new phone number (07835 908 453).

GDCC Chair Joan Gordon said, “We are very grateful to Tesco for awarding the GDCC the very generous amount of £500 to allow us to purchase a mobile phone and credit, and to support a local poster and flyer campaign so that we can advertise our new phone number to offline residents. Residents will be able to use this phone number to get in contact with GDCC without the need for an internet connection. Having the mobile will let us explain how they can dial in to our public meetings on Zoom; a helpful function which has been used before. The credit will help us call/text these residents if any changes to meeting details happen, or to keep them up-to-date on things.”

Since being awarded the funding GD Community Councillors have distributed posters to shops, cafes, pubs and other businesses along Gorgie Road, Dalry Road, and Henderson Terrace, and are continuing to roll out posters across community noticeboards. We would like to thank all of the local businesses who have supported this initiative, and also extend our thanks to Connor McNally from Big Hearts for distributing flyers to residences across the area.

LOOKING BACK AT LOCKDOWN IN GORGIE AND DALRY - ONLINE COMMUNITY PHOTO GALLERY



We set up a [‘Looking Back at Lockdown in Gorgie and Dalry’](#) photo series through Facebook and Twitter, which also went on the website as a community-building project. We asked for submissions of photos from local residents taken during the March 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic UK Lockdown period, with 8 people sending in their photos for the post. The community gallery has received 198 views on the website so far, and was positively received on social media.

SUPPORTING LOCAL FOOD BANKS



At the emergency GDCC members meeting held in March to discuss the Covid-19 crisis and lockdown, members agreed to support 3 local food banks that were distributing emergency food parcels during lockdown: LOVE Gorgie Farm, Tynecastle High School (supported by the BMC) and Salvation Army Gorgie. GDCC donated a total of £200 worth of goods to the three foodbanks, and we would like to thank Moira MacKirdy for doing the food shopping and deliveries. We also continue to use our social media platforms to support fundraising efforts of all local food banks and circulate

requests for donations. Using our social media channels, we also received requests from residents for support with shopping and collecting prescriptions, and we liaised with local supermarkets and mutual-aid groups to ensure that vulnerable residents were receiving the help that they needed during lockdown. We would like to acknowledge the huge emergency effort from volunteers and residents across our community throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, and say a huge thank you to everyone who has stepped up to support our community at this difficult time.

ENGAGING WITH THE SHOP LOCAL FRAMEWORK



In September 2020, several GD Community Councillors attended an online meeting with council officers from the Business Growth and Inclusion team at the City of Edinburgh Council to discuss the Council's plans for a Shop Local framework, which provides practical advice on adapting to new ways of working, introducing physical distancing, health protection measures and adequate signage (with up to date

information), making changes to how payments are taken, and using digital communications and resourcing. The GDCC shared their insights on what kinds of businesses are in our area, what draws people to visit Gorgie and Dalry, and gave some initial feedback on the #ForeverEdinburgh campaign and some of the potential ideas for the Shop Local framework to support the CEC in developing a framework that is relevant to the needs of local businesses in our area.

Community Councillors were pleased to hear that our concerns previously expressed to the CEC that the #ForeverEdinburgh campaign had overlooked our area was being taken seriously, and that there will be a profile to feature Gorgie Dalry on the This Is Edinburgh official website (see examples of existing featured areas: <https://edinburgh.org/discover/explore-areas/>) in the coming months. We were pleased to see Dalry restaurant Locanda de Gusti featured in one of the #ForeverEdinburgh graphics (above), and LOVEGorgieFarm featured on the This Is Edinburgh website as a recommended outdoor activity. We also plan to write up a 'Day Out in Gorgie and Dalry' feature on our own website, sharing Community Councillor's favourite places to shop, eat, drink, and enjoy in the area, and to encourage residents to submit their own local recommendations (see more on future plans for 2020-2021, below). During our days of distributing our meeting information posters to local businesses, we chatted with local business owners to make sure they know that the GDCC is here to support and represent them too, and to see how they are managing since lockdown was eased.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS DURING LOCAL LOCKDOWNS



In September 2020 there were multiple outbreaks of Covid-19 across student accommodation halls at universities in Scotland, including in Edinburgh. Whilst neither of the student halls in our area have announced outbreaks at the time of writing, on the 24th of September we decided to take preemptive action to make sure that students as new residents knew how to access local support in case of self-isolation, or mental health support following the introduction of new restrictions for university students. Within 24 hours, thanks to the support of local printing business the Hotspot Internet cafe on Gorgie Road, the Tesco Bags of Help funding, and with keen

responses from residents in the Coronavirus Support - Balgreen, Gorgie, Murrayfield + Facebook group, we delivered welcome letters with contact information of mutual aid groups, Volunteering Edinburgh, and mental health helplines to all flats (approximately 70 flats) in the Mill House accommodation on Gorgie Road, and the Edinburgh Napier University accommodation on Orwell Terrace, and also to the Nido student accommodation on West Park Place and Student Cribs accommodation on Morrison Circus. Edinburgh Napier University later tweeted their appreciation and thanks, and the initiative was welcomed by Edinburgh residents and a neighbouring community council on social media.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

In the last year (Aug 2019-Aug 2020) we have been actively increasing our online presence, through the website, Facebook and (recently resurrected) Twitter account, and I (MR) would like to thank Laura Wise for her hard work and assistance in achieving this.

We use our website and social media regularly to engage with residents, other community organisations, the City of Edinburgh Council, other Community Councils and governance organisations via Facebook and Twitter. We use it to promote and publicise meetings, share information posts on our website, share information of interest or relevant to our community, and highlight funding opportunities for local community groups. We also use it to log flytipping and waste reports with the City of Edinburgh Council via the @edin_help Twitter account, and to promote public spaces and local businesses in Gorgie and Dalry. During the Covid-19 crisis we have also used it to signpost and direct residents to services such as food banks, online council services, and mutual aid groups.

Since we started to actively increase our online presence, we have received positive feedback on our engagement via this medium from residents and other community groups including the Gorgie Community Forum, Tynecastle Parent and Carers Council and Gorgie Collective, and neighbouring Community Councils. We have also been invited to write a short piece for Scottish Community Councils to share our tips for hosting online public meetings and on our Covid-19 response (in progress).

FACEBOOK

Having looked at our [Facebook](#) page insights, we found that (from 1 Aug 2019 to 31 Aug 2020):

- We have gone from 353 Likes of the Page to 554 Likes within a year!
- We have 599 followers (previously 359)
- 509 of whom have Edinburgh as their location
- Some have their Facebook set to another language, such as Spanish, Polish, French, Italian and Arabic.
- Organic Reach was at a previous average of around 10, but it peaked at 1398 in July 2020. This popular post had 60 people engage through 'reactions, comments & shares'
- Our message response rate is currently at 90%
- In terms of 'Event' listings, we have reached 2600 people (due to Covid-19, most of our Events have been the meetings, as several park clean-ups were cancelled).

FACEBOOK MESSENGER

Community Councillors have now formed a Facebook Messenger group chat, which has greatly enabled us to communicate to each other during these unprecedented times. We are now able to alert one another of consultation items and dates, as quite often we are given less than a week to reply to things, and emails are less intuitive for rapid response items. It has helped us greatly especially when organising poster printing, poster distribution and keeping in contact generally between meetings.

TWITTER

We retrieved the login information and resumed the use of our Twitter account ([@GDCC_](#)) on March 9 2020, and began to use it more regularly during lockdown.

- From August 2019 to February 2020 we gained 29 new followers, and made zero impressions as we did not tweet.
- From March 2020 to August 2020, we gained 197 new followers and made an average of 29,400 impressions per month during that period.
- We currently have 575 followers, most of which appear to be genuine Edinburgh or Scotland-based accounts.

WEBSITE

Prior to March 2020 the [GDCC website](#) was primarily used for publishing meeting agendas and minutes, and information regarding planning applications and the Christmas lights switch on. Since March 2020 we have undertaken a complete revamp of the structure and content of the GDCC website, to make it a one-stop shop for residents and visitors interested in our community to access information, links to support services, to participate in surveys and

consultations, and to showcase the positive aspects of living in Gorgie and Dalry. We accelerated this planned revamp in response to the Covid-19 crisis.

Our website now contains the following permanent pages:

- [About](#): FAQ style information on the statutory regulation, responsibilities, functions of GDCC, and explanations of how residents can get more involved.
- [Meetings](#): Updated content of these pages to make it clear how residents can join virtual public meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic, including via phone for digitally excluded residents. It also publishes downloadable copies of [agendas](#) and [minutes](#) of all meetings.
- [Local Issues](#): Pages that explain how GDCC engages with key local issues, and how residents can report problems or contribute to processes. The Parks and Greenspaces page encourages people to visit and enjoy our local greenspaces. Issues include: [Planning and Licencing](#), [Parks and Greenspaces](#), [Flytipping and Litter](#), [Short Term Lets](#), [Public Consultations](#).
- [Support Available](#): These pages provide accessible information and links to support available in south west Edinburgh during the Covid-19 pandemic, based on a document sent by the Supporting Parents and Carers section of the City of Edinburgh Council. This covers: [Covid-19 self-isolation and mental health support](#); [Community food](#); [Financial support and advice](#); [Black, Asian & minority ethnic families](#); [Parents and carers](#); [Family activities](#); [Additional support needs](#) and [Young people](#).
- [Community Directory](#): Our Community Directory lists the contact details for [elected representatives](#) of our area, the [Community Policing Team](#), [local residents and tenants associations](#), and [local community groups and organisations](#).
- [News](#) and [Events](#): This is the section of the website where blogposts are shared.
 - Regular information posts: Since refreshing the website in April 2020 we have published 41 posts containing information for the residents of Gorgie and Dalry. This was a mixture of information that we had been asked to circulate by the City of Edinburgh Council and other community organisations, correspondence, guidance for residents, and information that we felt would be useful based on discussion with residents at public meetings and online. See Appendix 1 for full list of posts for examples of topics.
- Guest Posts: During lockdown we decided to start featuring guest posts on the GDCC website, that bring and share new perspectives on life in our community. So far we have had two guest posts, but we have plans to further reach out to local schools, writers groups, and other community organisations in the area, to invite them to submit.
 - Juliet Wilson on [‘Discovering the Nature of Gorgie and Dalry during Lockdown’](#), which was a beautiful article all about the nature found in our area! (insert stats)
 - Alex McKendrick (GDCC Treasurer) on [‘Dalry Community Park: From Train Station to Local Greenspace’](#) which was spurred on by the recent proposals to improve the park as part of the Roseburn to Union Canal Link, and includes details about its history as Dalry Road Station and how Bob Saville who was largely responsible for the ecological arguments used to save the park.

- Contact Information: On the homepage and across the website, information for residents to contact us via email, social media, and telephone are available and made as accessible as possible. We have also created a dedicated contact form, through which we have several enquiries from residents and other community organisations.

Website statistics for 2020:

- 6,210 views from 3,541 visitors, 64 posts and pages published
- This is an increase on 3,141 views from 1,132 visitors, 3 posts published in 2019
- Our top 5 posts were:
 - [*UPDATED* Covid-19 Emergency Road Measures Proposed for Gorgie and Dalry](#) - 395 views
 - [Reply from Spaces for People about Implementation in Gorgie and Dalry](#) - 328 views
 - [Dalry Community Park: From Train Station to Local Greenspace](#) (Guest post by Alex McKendrick) - 314 views
 - [Roseburn to Union Canal Active Travel Route and Greenspace Improvement](#) - 271 views
 - [Proposed waiting/loading restriction changes to facilitate footway widening – Gorgie Road and Dalry Road](#) - 214 views
- Every time we publish a post we share via Twitter and Facebook, sometimes multiple times for posts that require community responses. Now that we have the updated architecture of the website complete, it is easy and quick to update information and add new posts.

PROPOSED PLANS FOR 2020-2021

- Ethnic Minority engagement plan
 - Recognising that the current GDCC composition does not reflect all of the communities in our area, and that there are linguistic barriers for some residents to fully participate and engage with GDCC.
 - We may need to secure additional financial support for any translation/interpretation plans.
- Supporting local businesses during Covid-19 recovery
 - 'Shopping in Gorgie Dalry' series: GDCC Community Councilors write their own piece on what their favourite local businesses are in the area (not all CCs, but some have agreed to).
 - Helping local businesses to contribute or be featured by #ForeverEdinburgh, #ScotlandLovesLocal and #SupportLocal / #ShopLocal campaigns
- Continuing to develop the GDCC website content to support and promote our area
 - Further update the Planning page on the website to expand on the current content, with perhaps direct links to CC guidance on planning issues.
 - Guest Post series from external contributors share new and fresh perspectives on life in our community.

- Gorgie Dalry community history podcast series
 - Online audio/possibly video interviews with past and present members of GDCC and other community activists to share stories of our community's social history.
- Replacing GDCC noticeboard
 - Currently the notice board is difficult to safely open and is not watertight. May require a funding application to support this.
- Autumn in Gorgie Dalry photo competition
 - As many of our current photos of the area on the website are from spring and summer, we would invite residents to submit their photos of what symbolises autumn in Gorgie and Dalry. Potential prize could be a donation from a local business. All submissions would be displayed on an online photo gallery on our website and across all of our social media channels.
- Dignity and Respect Guidelines for online engagement
 - Adopt policy on engaging respectfully online to support Community Councillors in tackling online abuse.
- Virtual Christmas Celebration in Gorgie and Dalry: Celebrating Christmas 2020 safely and responsibly.
 - Poster competition with Tynecastle High School and Dalry Primary School with online announcement and feature on website/social media, gallery of entries
 - Best Dressed Window competition for local businesses in Gorgie and Dalry with online announcement and feature on website/social media, gallery of entries
 - Virtual Christmas light switch on streaming/video
- Placemaking Survey
 - Online and (possibly) socially-distanced in person survey (subject to regulations) to collect views of residents about living in Gorgie and Dalry, what are the biggest issues concerning residents, and how they feel about the quality of the area's representation.
- Developing Gorgie Dalry Industrial Heritage and Gorgie Dalry Green Spaces walks
 - Creating two maps with routes for residents and visitors to explore and learn about our area's rich industrial and social history, and to celebrate our local green spaces. Initially to be shared online but with the possibility of printing and distributing copies through local businesses. The creation of new walks could also draw visitors to support our local high street while they are in the area (for example, by stopping for a coffee part way through the routes or to purchase something to eat in one of the greenspaces).

APPENDIX: WEBSITE POSTS, MAY 2020 - SEPTEMBER 2020

Date	Post
01/05/2020	GDCC Public Meeting: 4th May 2020, 7pm
06/05/2020	Spaces For People Survey
11/05/2020	Spaces for People: Suggestions for Gorgie and Dalry
12/05/2020	GDCC Public Meeting: 1st June 2020, 7pm
13/05/2020	Support Available in Gorgie and Dalry
21/05/2020	Spaces for People in Gorgie Dalry – Update
05/06/2020	Spaces for People: City of Edinburgh Council Suggestion Map
11/06/2020	Spaces for People Open Letter to CEC
16/06/2020	Reply from Spaces for People to our Open Letter
19/06/2020	Interim Notification Measures for Traffic Orders in Edinburgh
19/06/2020	*UPDATED* Covid-19 Emergency Road Measures Proposed for Gorgie and Dalry Town Centres
20/06/2020	Rząd Szkocji uaktualnił zasady kwarantanny / Guvernul scoțian a actualizat reguliile de blocare (Changes to lockdown rules information in Polish, Romanian and English)
21/06/2020	Temporary Traffic Regulation Order for Ardmillan Terrace
28/06/2020	Local Town Centres – Update on Town Centre Phase 1 Proposals
06/07/2020	Support Available during COVID-19
06/07/2020	Proposed waiting/loading restriction changes to facilitate footway widening – Gorgie Road and Dalry Road
13/07/2020	GDCC Public Meeting: 3rd August 2020, 7pm
13/07/2020	Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places Within the City of Edinburgh Council Area
17/07/2020	COVID-19 Emergency Road Measures Approved for Gorgie and Dalry
23/07/2020	Delay to Spaces for People measures at Ardmillan Terrace/Henderson Terrace sections
25/07/2020	Network Rail Improvement – Wheatfield Road

07/08/2020	How to Report Flytipping and Litter in Gorgie and Dalry
08/08/2020	Funding Opportunities for Community COVID-19 Response
09/08/2020	Looking Back at Lockdown in Gorgie and Dalry – Community Gallery
10/08/2020	Temporary Automated Crossing at Junctions in Gorgie and Dalry
11/08/2020	Roseburn to Union Canal Active Travel Route and Greenspace Improvement
11/08/2020	Reply from Spaces for People about Implementation in Gorgie and Dalry
14/08/2020	Dalry Community Park: From Train Station to Local Greenspace (Guest post by Alex McKendrick)
15/08/2020	GDCC Public Meeting: 7th September 2020, 7pm
22/08/2020	Rosebery House Redevelopment at Haymarket
24/08/2020	New Report Published on Impacts and Costs of Spaces for People Measures in Edinburgh
25/08/2020	Proposed Spaces for People Measures at Dalry Primary School
26/08/2020	GDCC Awarded Tesco Bags of Help Funding for COVID-19 Response
28/08/2020	Information Events About Communal Bin Review
29/08/2020	Discovering the Nature of Gorgie and Dalry during Lockdown (Guest post by Juliet Wilson)
30/08/2020	Introduction of Secure Bike Storage Units in Edinburgh
31/08/2020	Edinburgh Talks Climate
03/09/2020	Proposed Amendments to Loading Bay on Gorgie Road
09/11/2020	Planning Update: Link Between Roseburn And Union Canal – Comments Due 30th September
10/09/2020	Planning Update: Purpose Built Student Accommodation, 24 Westfield Road
15/09/2020	Free Benefit and Debt Advice for Edinburgh Residents
16/09/2020	How to Get a Replacement Bus Pass
24/09/2020	GDCC Public Meeting (AGM): 5th October 2020
26/09/2020	Proposed Amendments to Speed Limits on some Edinburgh Roads