

# Dean Valley Regeneration Project

## NLHF Expression of Interest

Website report

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*for Dean Valley Regeneration Limited*

*November 2019*



## VISION

**Connecting heritage, people and nature in the Dean Valley** and delivering effective cooperative landscape management.

This project will rejuvenate the historic and natural features of the Dean Valley, creating a new, modern sublime landscape worthy of its original splendour, fit for the future. It will be a new template for public private conservation management effectively enhancing access, nature and heritage whilst successfully managing continued growth in visitor numbers. With Hygeia and wellbeing at its heart, it will create a cooperative community focus for sustainable long term conservation and greater enjoyment.

The project area is within the nationally significant designed landscape between Stockbridge and Dean Village within Edinburgh WHS. Including the Water of Leith and the private Belgrave Crescent, Moray Bank and Dean Gardens, it is one of the finest picturesque landscapes in a townscape in Britain. It includes numerous A and B listed structures and properties including Telford's Dean Bridge and St Bernard's Well.

The project is essential as the overall management of the landscape and its features has become fragmented and, over time, this uncoordinated approach to conservation and maintenance has led to its heritage becoming degraded and obscured, with the regeneration of public and abandoned land most in need. The historical and natural significance of this important area where Scotland's capital has its closest connection with its river cannot be appreciated. The need for action is well supported by users, residents and stakeholders demonstrated through their considerable consultation and involvement to date.

The project is being delivered through a partnership comprising City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh World Heritage, Dean Valley Regeneration Limited, Water of Leith Conservation Trust, Dean Village Association and representatives of the three private gardens.

The project will involve more people in actively caring for the landscape, create a sustainable conservation management model, address abandoned land, repair key heritage assets, improve access, improve nature diversity, improve wellbeing, particularly of elderly and disabled residents, provide opportunities for young people and create a new generation of heritage conscious local schoolchildren.

It will do this through:

**Involvement:** delivering events and activities including art classes and exhibitions, green classrooms and gyms, research projects and winter warmer talks, particularly for older residents, public opening of St Bernard's Well, providing health walks and volunteering opportunities and a call for community projects in the development phase.

**Condition:** the restoration of historic fabric, particularly the railings and stone walls and careful nature management, particularly trees and invasive growth, to ensure safe visits and better wildlife habitats.

**Identified and better explained:** an outline interpretive plan identifies the connecting theme of ‘*A city’s changing reliance on water*’ and will deliver the stories of nature, prominent people, industry, social history, landscape and art and architecture through a suite of media that will inspire users and bring the prolific heritage of the landscape and its people to life. These will include interpretive art, benches, inscriptions and a walking trail (leaflet and digital).

**Developed skills:** apprenticeships and vocational contractor training will be provided in ironwork and masonry repairs, tree works and landscape maintenance.

**Changes in ideas and actions:** a collaborative approach to conservation management will be achieved by producing and adopting a long term Management Plan, bringing private owners, CEC and Trusts together and addressing abandoned land to ensure holistic management of access, nature and heritage.

**Wellbeing:** the project will develop the activity and volunteering programme along the ‘wheel of wellbeing’ approach, ensuring that these consider body, mind, spirit, people, place and planet. There will be a particular focus on older and disabled residents, young adults and schoolchildren.

**More resilient:** improved financial sustainability to fund future maintenance will be achieved through donations to St Bernard’s Well and mobile café licences.

**Better place to live, work or visit:** improved access to the walkway, to heritage and to its stories will be delivered, particularly for those who currently find it difficult to access.

Considerable project development work has been undertaken, including the identification of, and contact with, all relevant stakeholders, the holding of public meetings, the production of a Conservation Statement (*Peter McGowan, 2015*), a biodiversity report (*Sue Bell, 2016*), a first phase feasibility study (*Elizabeth Dorrian, 2017*), a second phase feasibility study (*LUC, 2018*), both with detailed cost proposals, and outline activity and interpretation proposals (*RRHC, 2019*).

Proposals with detailed costing are developed to RIBA Stage 2, and are supported by the City of Edinburgh Council. We plan an 18month development phase from Spring 2021 and a three year delivery phase (2022-2025) for activity, capital and landscape works.

Overall project cost (ex.VAT) is estimated at £1.921m, including contingency (£1,326,000 capital and landscape works; £150,000 interpretation; £100,000 activity; £120,000 project management; £75,000 project development; £150,000 inflation). Of these, the Stage One Development Cost is estimated at £125,000 (professional fees, activity testing, project management).