THE LIBERTON ASSOCIATION

PLACE PLAN

2025–2040

Protecting, Preserving and Enhancing
the Character and Environment of Historic Liberton



Prepared by the Liberton Association
An affiliated interest group of the Liberton and District Community Council (LDCC)
www.libertonassociation.co.uk | @LibertonAssoc

July 2026

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1. Foreword

Liberton is one of Edinburgh's most distinctive suburbs: a historic village settlement that predates the city itself, with a listed kirk and kirkyard at its heart, open farmland and greenbelt to its western edge, and a close-knit community that takes quiet pride in its surroundings. The Liberton Association exists to protect and enhance everything that makes this place special.

This Place Plan sets out our vision for the next decade. It is grounded in what our members and the wider community have told us they value most: open green spaces, a clean and welcoming environment, recognition of our outstanding built and landscape heritage, and the right of local people to shape their own neighbourhood rather than have it reshaped for them by developers.

We publish this document as an affiliated interest group of the Liberton and District Community Council (LDCC), whose Local Place Plan 2030–2040 addresses the broader ward area. Our Plan focuses on the specific priorities of the Liberton village core and its immediately adjoining greenbelt lands, and is intended to complement and reinforce the LDCC's wider work.

Our two primary campaigns — the protection of the greenbelt fields on the west side of Alnwickhill Road/Liberton Drive from housing development, and the pursuit of Conservation Area status, most urgently for the Liberton Kirk and Cemetery area but now also for Liberton Bank House at Nether Liberton — reflect what our community most urgently needs. All are achievable within the plan period, and all would make a lasting difference.

2. About the Liberton Association

The Liberton Association is a residents' community group serving the historic village of Liberton in south Edinburgh. We are an affiliated interest group of the Liberton and District Community Council (LDCC), and work in close partnership with the LDCC on planning, environmental, and heritage matters.

2.1 Our Role and Governance

The Association holds an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each autumn at which office-bearers are elected and priorities set. The committee meets monthly and operates under a constitution that requires democratic accountability to the membership. Key officer roles include Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Planning Correspondent.

We liaise regularly with City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) officers, ward councillors, Holyrood MSPs, and public bodies including NatureScot, Historic Environment Scotland (HES), and Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust. We engage with national planning consultations and respond to individual planning applications affecting the Liberton area.

2.2 Our Activities

Alongside our advocacy and planning work, the Association undertakes a range of practical community activities including:

- Regular litter-picking sessions across the village area
- Graffiti reporting and removal coordination
- Engagement with the Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust over the Alnwickhill Road woodland, through liaison with Trust officer Andrew Gilmour
- Monitoring and reporting of the Alnwickhill Road path, including advocacy for its formal transfer into public ownership

- Local heritage projects including the publication of the illustrated booklet Aboon the Kirk and production of a companion YouTube video celebrating Liberton's history
- Maintenance of a public-facing website (libertonassociation.co.uk) and social media presence (@LibertonAssoc)

3. Liberton: The Place

3.1 Location and Character

Liberton lies approximately four miles south of Edinburgh city centre, occupying a ridge between the Braid Hills to the west and the Pentland foothills to the south-east. The name is ancient — variously derived from Gaelic or Old English — and the settlement pattern of the historic village core reflects centuries of continuous habitation on and around the Liberton Brae.

The area is characterised by a mix of older stone-built properties in the village core, interwar and post-war residential development, and significant areas of open greenbelt to the south and west. The greenbelt is not merely a planning designation: it provides genuine separation between urban Edinburgh and the wider landscape, offers ecological connectivity between habitats, and contributes substantially to the health and wellbeing of local residents.



Figure 1: Liberton Association Local Place Plan Area | Red boundary indicates the Association's area of interest

3.2 Built Heritage

Liberton Kirk is the dominant landmark of the historic village core. The present church building dates substantially from 1815 although the site of Christian worship here is considerably older. The associated churchyard contains grave markers spanning several centuries and represents an irreplaceable record of the parish's social history. The kirk building and several immediately

adjacent structures are Category A listed, reflecting their outstanding architectural and historic significance.

Liberton House, an early seventeenth-century tower house set within designed grounds, is similarly Category A listed and contributes to the distinctive character of the Alnwickhill Road corridor. Other listed structures in and around the village include Liberton Tower and Liberton Dams, though these lie outwith the immediate focus of this Plan.

3.3 The Greenbelt Land — Alnwickhill Road

The greenbelt fields on the west side of Alnwickhill Road and south of Liberton Drive form part of Edinburgh's designated Green Belt. Three distinct land parcels, all forming part of the original Liberton estate of Sir John Little Gilmour, have been assembled by the Cruden group into a coordinated landbank, with development intent explicit on the face of the title deeds.

The principal parcel is the main greenbelt field of 3.37 hectares (Land Register title MID216762), lying immediately adjacent to Category A listed Liberton House. The title is currently held by Land Options (East) Limited (SC192467), an RBS group entity, with a Standard Security assigned to Royal Bank Investments Limited. The burdens derive from a 1977 Disposition by the Gilmour Trustees to Cruden Investments Limited. A 0.4-hectare strip of trees extending west from Alnwickhill Road (GRS Midlothian MID 96 1231) was acquired by Cruden Homes (Scotland) Limited from the Gilmour Trustees in 1996 for £20,000. The deed restricts use to amenity tree-planting and includes a clawback payable to the Gilmour estate if non-silvicultural consent is obtained — but the same deed explicitly records Cruden's intention to develop the adjacent field for housing. A third parcel, 68 Alnwickhill Road (MID204646), was acquired by Cruden Property Investments Limited in December 2018 for £325,000, completing the site assembly.

The site has outstanding ecological value. A specialist survey submitted at the 2006 public inquiry recorded more than thirty bird species including four of particular conservation concern: Lapwing and Yellowhammer (Edinburgh BAP priority species, RSPB Red status) and Greylag Goose and Linnet (RSPB Amber status). Bats were recorded feeding along both field edges, and the proximity of the arising spring and pond within the grounds of Liberton House makes the site especially attractive to water-associated species. The pattern of rough grazing, arable land, trees and hedgerows represents a type of diverse conservation landscape that is becoming increasingly rare within Edinburgh.

4. Vision and Priorities

Our Vision

By 2040, Liberton will remain a distinctive, historic village community within Edinburgh: its greenbelt protected from inappropriate development, its built heritage formally recognised and conserved, its open spaces accessible and well-managed, and its residents empowered to shape their neighbourhood for future generations.

This Place Plan is structured around five priorities, with Priorities 1 and 2 identified as primary campaigns requiring the most focused effort and advocacy throughout the plan period.

5. Priority 1: Greenbelt Protection

5.1 The Alnwickhill Road / Liberton Drive Fields

The greenbelt land on the west side of Alnwickhill Road and south of Liberton Drive is the single most urgent planning issue facing the Liberton community. Cruden Homes has held a landbank interest in the Alnwickhill Road corridor for many years and has repeatedly sought to advance the case for residential development on this land. The Liberton Association is unequivocally opposed to any such development.

The Evidence Base

The evidential case against development rests on multiple grounds. The principal field (MID216762, 3.37ha) lies within Edinburgh's designated Green Belt and in the setting of Category A listed Liberton House. The 1996 disposition of the 0.4ha tree strip explicitly records Cruden's intention to develop the adjacent field for housing — confirming that the tree-planting was an act of development preparation, not conservation. The same deed includes an amenity-only restriction and a clawback to the Gilmour estate, but this does not neutralise the development intent. Crucially, at the 2006 Scottish Executive public inquiry, community campaigner Derek Kennedy placed on the inquiry record that the trees were planted by the developers themselves, and that Cruden simultaneously cited the growing woodland to argue for diminished landscape value. The 2006 Reporter refused the appeal notwithstanding that argument. A developer cannot manufacture a change in landscape character through its own preparatory acts and then rely on that manufactured change as a planning justification in subsequent proceedings.

The 2006 public inquiry was a full Scottish Executive procedure lasting more than three weeks. The reporter’s decision to refuse the Hart Estates appeal is a material planning precedent. The community’s archive of inquiry documents — assembled by Derek Kennedy, chairman of the Liberton Green Belt Fund, and scanned and digitised by the Association — provides a comprehensive record of the arguments advanced and rejected at that time, including Kennedy’s precognition (sworn witness statement) and the professional submission by Edinburgh City Council. This archive constitutes a significant evidential resource for any future planning engagement.

This was the fourth time the Alnwickhill Road land had come forward for development when the 2006 inquiry was held. The Association notes that development interest has not lapsed: Cruden Homes’ landbank manager was observed on site in May 2026 and has indicated an intention to bring forward a development proposal. The community must be organised and ready.

5.2 Policy Context

Edinburgh’s Green Belt is designated under City Plan 2030 and reinforced by NPF4 Policy 8 (Green and Blue Infrastructure) and Policy 30 (Rural Policy). Any planning application for residential development on this land would need to demonstrate that the 2006 reporter’s decision refusing the Hart Estates appeal has been materially overtaken by changed circumstances — a high evidential bar that the Association believes the developer cannot meet.

It is the Association’s position that no material change in circumstances has occurred since 2006. The site remains designated greenbelt, Liberton House remains Category A listed, views to the Pentland Hills are undiminished, and the ecological value of the land is as Kennedy described it. Any visual impact argument based on the maturity of the tree belt must be treated with particular caution: those trees were planted by the developers themselves as part of deliberate site preparation, and that fact was placed on the public inquiry record in 2006. The reporter refused the appeal notwithstanding that argument.

5.3 Actions

Priority	Greenbelt Protection — Alnwickhill Road/Liberton Drive
Description	Prevent residential development on the three greenbelt parcels assembled by the Cruden group: main field MID216762 (3.37ha), tree strip GRS MID 96 1231 (0.4ha), and 68 Alnwickhill Road MID204646. The Liberton Association Greenbelt Evidence and Precedent Document (June 2026) sets out the full evidential case.
Proposed Actions	1. Register with the CEC planning portal for automatic alerts on applications affecting titles MID216762 and MID204646 2. Obtain a copy of the 2006 Scottish Executive reporter's decision from the DPEA — the single most important planning precedent document 3. Write to Cruden Homes requesting advance notice of any planning application and an opportunity for pre-application community consultation 4. Notify Liberton ward councillors and Edinburgh MSPs of the intelligence received in May 2026 regarding Cruden's stated intentions 5. Complete the digitisation and indexing of the full Kennedy Archive (precognitions, submissions, correspondence, photographs from the 1995–2006 campaign) 6. Commission an up-to-date ecological survey to establish current biodiversity value, building on the Branney bird survey cited at the 2006 inquiry 7. Engage CEC Planning to ensure the Greenbelt Evidence Document and the 1996 deed restriction are formally registered on the planning authority's files 8. Coordinate with the LDCC to ensure the LPP 2030–2040 Green Belt position is formally submitted to the City Plan 2040 evidence base 9. Build coalition support with neighbouring community councils and residents groups facing similar greenbelt development pressure
Policy Context	NPF4 Policies 3, 5, 8, 30; City Plan 2030 Green Belt policies; 2006 Scottish Executive Inquiry decision (DPEA); Liberton Association Greenbelt Evidence Document June 2026; Titles MID216762, MID204646, GRS MID 96 1231

5.4 Wider Greenbelt Context

The Association's concern extends to the wider greenbelt setting of Liberton and the neighbouring communities of Gilmerton, Gracemount, and the Pentland fringes. We recognise that development pressure on Green Belt land is not unique to our area and that collective advocacy, coordinated across community councils and associations, is more effective than isolated objections.

We will monitor and, where appropriate, formally respond to planning applications affecting any part of the Liberton greenbelt setting, including those brought forward by developers other than Cruden Homes. We will also engage with the CEC's forthcoming Local Development Plan review to ensure that the Green Belt boundary in this area is robustly defended.

5.5 The Liberton Tower and Liberton Drive Fields (Craigmillar Trust Land)

Beyond the Alnwickhill Road site, the Association has become aware of survey activity on two further parcels of greenbelt land in Craigmillar Trust ownership. The first comprises the upper and lower arable fields extending east from a line between Liberton Tower and Blackford Glen Road

towards Liberton Brae and Alnwickhill Road, running down to Blackford Glen Road ("the Liberton Tower fields"). The second is a smaller field south of Liberton House and north of Stanedykehead, off Alnwickhill Road near Seven Acre Park ("the Liberton Drive field"). Neither field is currently the subject of a live planning application, but the pattern of survey activity, taken together with a confirmed historic development option, gives the Association cause for concern and informs the precautionary position set out below.

The Evidence Base

Between June and July 2026, Association and Community Council members separately observed land surveyors working on both fields. On 24 June 2026, Norman Forsyth observed a surveyor carrying out a topographical survey on an approximately 10m x 10m grid across the barley field west of Liberton Brae/Alnwickhill Road and east of Liberton Tower; a similar survey was reported around the same time on the field south of Liberton Drive. On 17–18 July 2026, Alex Hammond-Chambers reported a further survey of the field opposite his premises on Liberton Tower Lane, carried out by a firm identifying itself as Land & Mineral Surveys and described as a topographical 3D survey covering the wider greenbelt around the west end of Liberton; the surveyor declined to name his client or manager. Asked directly, Andrew Gilmour (trustee of the Craigmillar Trust) confirmed on 7 July 2026 that he had neither commissioned nor been informed of any such survey, but stated that "MacTaggart and Mickel have had an option on part of the land for some years now" — consistent with an account given by a representative of the housebuilder at a 2019 Liberton Association meeting, when M&M were described as holding a "controlling interest" in the field. Martin Reynolds separately understood, via a neighbour, that M&M's option covers the field immediately east of Liberton Tower Lane.

In fairness, the Trust's land agents subsequently advised (30 July 2026) that one of the surveyors seen in the area that month was working for Treeline on a Phase 1 Habitat Survey supporting the Craigmillar Trust's Scottish Forestry woodland grant application — an entirely legitimate and unrelated piece of work. This explains at least some of the activity reported, but does not account for the differently-described 10m grid topographical survey witnessed in June, nor for the separately named "Land & Mineral Surveys" 3D survey reported in July, whose commissioning party remains unconfirmed.

Mactaggart & Mickel's Scottish housebuilding business was acquired by Springfield Properties in June 2022, but M&M's Strategic Land division — where options of this kind are typically held — was not part of that sale and remains under Mactaggart & Mickel Group control, now linked to Springfield through a strategic alliance covering future site acquisitions. On that basis, any live option on the Liberton Tower fields most likely still sits with Mactaggart & Mickel Group, with Springfield positioned as a probable eventual developer rather than the current option-holder.

Both fields, though presently in agricultural use, form part of Edinburgh's designated Green Belt in exactly the same way as the Alnwickhill Road site, and lie within the same historic Liberton estate. It is the Association's position that they should remain outside any housing allocation brought forward through City Plan 2040 or subsequent development plan processes. The combination of a confirmed historic option, repeated survey activity, and the emerging City Plan 2040 call for sites means this land now warrants the same level of vigilance the Association applies to the Alnwickhill Road fields.



Figure 4: Additional Greenbelt Fields Identified for Protection — North (Liberton Tower) and South (Liberton Drive/Stanedykehead) | Red boundaries indicate the approximate field extents

5.6 Policy Context

As with the Alnwickhill Road site, this land is designated Green Belt under City Plan 2030 and protected by NPF4 Policy 8 (Green and Blue Infrastructure) and Policy 30 (Rural Policy). No planning application has yet been submitted for either field, so no reporter's decision or inquiry precedent exists specific to this land; the Association's position rests instead on the Green Belt designation itself, the absence of any exceptional circumstances under NPF4, and the precedent set by the 2006 Hart Estates decision on the neighbouring Alnwickhill Road land, which the Association considers equally applicable in principle here.

The Association will treat any future call for sites, pre-application enquiry, or planning application affecting this land with the same evidential rigour applied to the Alnwickhill Road site, and will seek to establish clearly and publicly who currently holds the option before any proposal is formally advanced.

5.7 Actions

Priority	**Greenbelt Protection — Liberton Tower and Liberton Drive/Stanedykehead Fields**
Description	Prevent residential development on the two further greenbelt parcels in Craigmillar Trust ownership — the Liberton Tower fields (north) and the Liberton Drive/Stanedykehead field (south) — both subject to recent survey activity and a confirmed historic option in favour of Mactaggart & Mickel.
Proposed Actions	10. Write to the Craigmillar Trust and its land agents, Davidson & Robertson, requesting written confirmation of the current status, scope, and holder of any option or promotion agreement affecting these fields 11. Carry out a Registers of Scotland title search on both fields to check for any registered standard security, advance notice, or other registered interest in favour of Mactaggart & Mickel, Mactaggart & Mickel Group, or Springfield Properties 12. Register with the CEC planning portal for automatic alerts on applications affecting these fields 13. Notify Liberton ward councillors and Edinburgh MSPs of the survey activity and the confirmed historic option 14. Monitor the emerging City Plan 2040 call for sites and evidence base for any nomination of this land, and submit a formal objection to inclusion if nominated 15. Maintain a written record of all reported survey sightings, including dates, locations, and surveying firms, to support any future planning

	engagement 16. Coordinate with the LDCC to ensure this land is explicitly identified as protected Green Belt in the LDCC's Local Place Plan and City Plan 2040 submissions
Policy Context	NPF4 Policies 3, 5, 8, 30; City Plan 2030 Green Belt policies; City Plan 2040 emerging evidence base; 2006 Scottish Executive Inquiry decision (DPEA) — Alnwickhill Road precedent

6. Priority 2: Conservation Area Designations

The Association is pursuing Conservation Area status for two distinct areas within Liberton, reflecting the depth of the community's historic and built heritage. The first is the Liberton Kirk and Cemetery at the heart of the historic village, set out in sections 6.1–6.4 below. The second is Liberton Bank House at Nether Liberton — an eighteenth-century house with significant literary and educational associations, now home to Dunedin School — set out in sections 6.5–6.7.

6.1 Liberton Kirk and Cemetery: The Case for Designation

The Liberton Kirk and Cemetery area constitutes one of the finest historic village settings in south Edinburgh. The Category A listed church building, the historic kirkyard with its multi-century grave markers, the stone boundary walls, the avenue approach, and the surrounding vernacular buildings together create a coherent historic environment of outstanding character. It is the Association's firm view that this area merits designation as a Conservation Area under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

Conservation Area designation would bring a range of statutory protections that are currently absent, including control over the demolition of unlisted buildings, permitted development restrictions that preserve the character of the area, and a duty on the planning authority to formulate proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the area's character. It would also give the community a stronger voice in any future planning decisions affecting the setting of the kirk.



Figure 2: Proposed Liberton Kirk Conservation Area | Red boundary indicates the proposed Conservation Area extent

6.2 Liberton Kirk and Cemetery: Character Appraisal

A Conservation Area designation requires a Character Appraisal identifying the special architectural and historic interest that justifies the designation. The Association proposes to work with Historic Environment Scotland (HES), City of Edinburgh Council, and local heritage specialists to produce such an appraisal. Key elements to be captured would include:

- The Category A listed kirk building and its architectural significance
- The historic kirkyard: layout, grave markers, and inscriptions spanning the seventeenth to twentieth centuries
- Stone boundary walls, gate piers, and other historic structures
- The approach avenue and designed landscape setting
- Vernacular stone buildings in the immediate vicinity forming the historic village core
- Views to and from the kirk from surrounding streets and open land
- Trees and planted features that contribute to the character of the area

6.3 Liberton Kirk and Cemetery: Local Heritage Work

The Association's heritage work provides a strong foundation for the Conservation Area campaign. The Aboon the Kirk booklet, produced and distributed by the Association, documents the history of Liberton Kirk and its community from earliest times to the present day. The accompanying YouTube video brings this history to a wider audience and has generated significant local interest and engagement.

This material demonstrates both the historic depth of the area and the community's active engagement with its heritage — two factors that strengthen the case for statutory designation.

6.4 Liberton Kirk and Cemetery: Actions

Priority	Conservation Area Designation — Liberton Kirk and Cemetery
Description	Secure Conservation Area designation for the Liberton Kirk, Cemetery, and

	historic village core area under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.
Proposed Actions	17. Produce a draft Character Appraisal for the proposed Conservation Area boundary, drawing on the Aboon the Kirk research and engaging heritage specialists where appropriate 18. Submit a formal application for Conservation Area designation to City of Edinburgh Council, supported by the Character Appraisal 19. Engage Historic Environment Scotland (HES) at an early stage to seek advisory support for the designation 20. Consult residents and property owners within the proposed Conservation Area boundary to build community support 21. Respond to any CEC public consultation on the proposed designation 22. If designation is approved, engage with the CEC's preparation of a Management Plan for the Conservation Area 23. Ensure the Aboon the Kirk booklet and video are lodged with Edinburgh City Archives and the National Library of Scotland as permanent heritage records
Policy Context	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997; NPF4 Policy 14 (Design, Quality and Place); City Plan 2030; HES Conservation Area guidance

6.5 Liberton Bank House (Nether Liberton): The Case for Designation

Liberton Bank House is an eighteenth-century house on the northern bank of the Braid Burn, close to what was once the separate village of Nether Liberton before its absorption into Edinburgh's southern suburbs. Built at some point between 1777 and 1793, it is a fairly standard example of domestic architecture of its period, but its rarity as a survivor from the centuries before Liberton's urbanisation, together with its literary and social history associations, gives it a significance out of proportion to its modest scale.

The house was the long-term home of Mary Burton (1819–1909), an educational pioneer and early women's rights campaigner who lived there from 1844 to 1898. Burton served on parochial and school boards, was active in the women's suffrage movement, and in 1869 persuaded the Watt Institution (now Heriot-Watt University) to admit female students, becoming the first woman on its Board of Directors in 1874. From around 1863 to 1868 she also raised her young nephew Arthur Conan Doyle at Liberton Bank House; the boy attended the nearby Newington Academy and is understood to have written his first work of fiction while living there.

The building's heritage status has itself been a matter of local contest. Liberton Bank House was Category B listed in 1970 but was de-listed in 1997 following cosmetic alterations and the loss of its rural setting to the construction of the Cameron Toll Shopping Centre and its car park. De-listing left the building's then owners free to propose its demolition for a fast-food drive-through. A public campaign by local residents prompted fresh research into the house's history, City of Edinburgh Council refused the demolition proposal, and the building was re-listed at Category C in May 2000. It was subsequently restored between 2002 and 2007 by the Cockburn Conservation Trust (now part of the Scottish Historic Buildings Trust) working with Groves-Raines Architects, at a cost of some £800,000, and given a long-term future as the premises of Dunedin School — a small school for vulnerable and fragile children who have not thrived in mainstream education.

It is the Association's view that this combination — a rare surviving pre-urban building, a documented and significant literary and social history, and a hard-won restoration achieved only after a demolition threat and public campaign — merits recognition through Conservation Area designation for Liberton Bank House and its immediate grounds and setting, as shown in the boundary at Figure 3. Conservation Area status would provide a formal, durable safeguard for a

building whose survival has twice depended on local vigilance rather than statutory protection, and would recognise the wider historic character of this fragment of Nether Liberton.



Figure 3: Proposed Liberton Bank House (Dunedin School) Conservation Area | Red boundary indicates the proposed Conservation Area extent

6.6 Liberton Bank House (Nether Liberton): Character Elements

A Conservation Area designation requires identification of the special architectural and historic interest that justifies it. Key elements to be captured in a Character Appraisal would include:

- The eighteenth-century fabric and form of Liberton Bank House, including original doors and floorboards retained through its 2002–2007 restoration
- Its documented associations with Mary Burton and the young Arthur Conan Doyle
- The building's setting on the northern bank of the Braid Burn, one of the few physical reminders of the pre-urban village of Nether Liberton
- The restored garden grounds, landscaped for recreational and educational use as part of the 2007 restoration
- The contrast between the historic house and its later twentieth-century commercial surroundings, and the case for protecting what remains of its setting from further erosion

6.7 Liberton Bank House (Nether Liberton): Actions

Priority	Conservation Area Designation — Liberton Bank House (Nether Liberton)
Description	Secure Conservation Area designation for Liberton Bank House, Nether Liberton, and its immediate setting under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

Proposed Actions	24. Produce a draft Character Appraisal for the proposed Conservation Area boundary, drawing on the history of Liberton Bank House, Mary Burton, and Arthur Conan Doyle, and engaging heritage specialists where appropriate 25. Submit a formal application for Conservation Area designation to City of Edinburgh Council, supported by the Character Appraisal 26. Engage Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and the Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT), as the building's restoring body, at an early stage to seek advisory support for the designation 27. Consult Dunedin School and residents and property owners within the proposed Conservation Area boundary to build support 28. Respond to any CEC public consultation on the proposed designation 29. If designation is approved, engage with the CEC's preparation of a Management Plan for the Conservation Area 30. Record and publicise the history of Liberton Bank House, including its listing, de-listing, and restoration, as part of the Association's wider heritage work
Policy Context	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997; NPF4 Policy 14 (Design, Quality and Place); City Plan 2030; HES Conservation Area guidance

7. Priority 3: Green Spaces, Paths, and Woodland

Beyond the greenbelt campaign, the Association is committed to the practical stewardship of Liberton's green spaces and active travel routes.

7.1 Alnwickhill Road Path

The path running along the Alnwickhill Road frontage provides an important active travel and amenity route for local residents. The Association has been engaged with the question of its formal transfer into public ownership from the Liberton and Craigmillar Trust, which would ensure its long-term maintenance and public access. We will continue to press CEC for clarity on the legal status of the path and the timetable for any transfer, working with the LDCC as appropriate.

7.2 The Proposed Gilmour Community Woodland

One of the most significant new green infrastructure proposals in the Liberton area is the planned creation of a community woodland on land owned by the Craigmillar Trust (formerly the Liberton Trust, established 1961), whose trustee is Andrew Gilmour. The Trust owns approximately 200 acres of agricultural land around Liberton Tower, and in 2026 — the centenary year of the birth of his father, Lord Gilmour of Craigmillar — Mr Gilmour proposed planting approximately 15,000 native broadleaf trees across 25 acres of Trust land as a lasting community and ecological legacy.

The principal woodland block, as revised following community consultation, comprises approximately 16 acres (7 hectares) of steeply sloping ground between Blackford Glen Road to the north and Braid Hills Drive to the south — a rectangular block of land with a drop of approximately 70 metres over 250 metres in length. The dominant species will be oak, which can support up to 240 insect species, complemented by beech, wild cherry along Braid Hills Drive, and a lower canopy of birch, alder, rowan and hazel, with an arboretum section and ground planting of native woodland flowers. The design aims for a woodland mixed in species, age structure, and stocking density. Planting is intended to commence in autumn 2026, subject to Scottish Forestry grant approval.

The proposal was developed through a substantial community consultation process coordinated by the LDCC, in which the Liberton Association participated through Dorothy Burns-Brown. A pre-consultation meeting on 23 March 2026, attended by Mr Gilmour, LDCC officers, and the Liberton Association, produced four significant changes to the original plan: reduction in the size of the main woodland block to protect the equestrian centre operated by Mr John Fyfe at 51 Blackford Glen Road; the adoption of deer-proof fencing (the estate supports an estimated herd of 30 Roe deer); a phased public access arrangement keeping the woodland enclosed until trees reach approximately waist height (anticipated around 2033–2034); and a very substantial reduction in the number of trees proposed outside the main block, from a large-scale avenue scheme to approximately 40 individual trees across the remaining 185 acres of the estate.

A public meeting on 20 April 2026 at the Nucleus Building, King's Buildings, attended by approximately 40–50 residents in person and 24 online, raised a number of issues requiring further work: a formal ecological survey (a requirement for Scottish Forestry grant funding); investigation of the route of a major Scottish Water main near Stanedykehead; consultation with Hermitage of Braid rangers; an access and parking management plan for Blackford Glen Road; and the maintenance and transfer of the Alnwickhill Road path, which the Trust's land managers confirmed is the subject of ongoing discussions with CEC about transferring ownership to enable proper maintenance.

The Liberton Association supported the woodland proposal in principle from the outset and will continue to engage with its development. We note the community's concern, raised at the April meeting, about the historical use of perimeter tree planting by developers on adjacent land as a device to diminish landscape value for planning purposes. The Association is satisfied that Mr Gilmour's proposal has no connection with any development agenda, and that the revisions made in response to community consultation demonstrate genuine goodwill. The woodland, if realised, would represent a transformative enhancement to the ecological and amenity value of this part of the Liberton greenbelt.

7.3 Litter and Graffiti

Regular litter-picking sessions are a visible and valued part of the Association's community activity. We will maintain and, where possible, expand this programme, seeking tools and logistics support from CEC's waste management team. We will also maintain our programme of graffiti reporting/removal and coordinate removal with CEC and relevant property owners.

Priority	**Green Spaces, Paths, and Woodland**
Description	Maintain and improve the condition of Liberton's open spaces and active travel routes, and support the development of the proposed Gilmour community woodland.
Proposed Actions	31. Engage with CEC and the Craigmillar Trust to resolve the legal status of the Alnwickhill Road path and secure its transfer to public ownership for proper maintenance 32. Continue active participation in the Craigmillar Trust woodland consultation process, including response to the Scottish Forestry grant application and any future planning consultation 33. Advocate for the ecological survey required by Scottish Forestry to be commissioned promptly, and ensure community concerns about existing wildlife habitats are formally registered 34. Support the LDCC's engagement with Davidson & Robertson on footpath maintenance across Trust land, including the Howe Dean Path 35. Maintain monthly litter-picking programme with CEC waste management support 36. Maintain graffiti reporting and coordinate removal with CEC and relevant property owners 37. Improve signage and waymarking on local paths connecting to the

	proposed woodland area
Policy Context	NPF4 Policy 3 (Nature Networks); Edinburgh Access Strategy; City of Edinburgh Council Green Space Strategy

8. Priority 4: Heritage, Culture, and Community Identity

The Association has an active role in celebrating and recording the history of Liberton for current and future generations.

8.1 Aboon the Kirk

The Aboon the Kirk booklet, written and published by the Association, provides a richly illustrated account of the history of Liberton from earliest times. The companion YouTube video has attracted a substantial audience and generated significant community interest. Both represent substantial voluntary effort and a genuine contribution to Edinburgh's local heritage record.

We will seek to make these materials as widely available as possible, including through deposit with Edinburgh City Archives and the National Library of Scotland, and through links from the CEC website and the LDCC's Local Place Plan.

8.2 Future Heritage Projects

The Association will explore further heritage projects during the plan period, which may include a survey of historic grave markers in the kirkyard, an oral history programme, and an updated or expanded edition of Aboon the Kirk. We will seek partnership with Edinburgh World Heritage, the Cockburn Association, and other relevant bodies.

Priority	**Heritage, Culture, and Community Identity**
Description	Celebrate, record, and protect Liberton's heritage for the benefit of current and future communities.
Proposed Actions	38. Deposit Aboon the Kirk and the accompanying video with Edinburgh City Archives and the National Library of Scotland 39. Produce a survey of historic grave markers in Liberton Kirkyard 40. Explore oral history programme with older residents 41. Engage Edinburgh World Heritage and the Cockburn Association as partners in the Conservation Area campaign 42. Maintain and develop the Liberton Association website as a heritage and community resource
Policy Context	NPF4 Policy 14; HES Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes; Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997

9. Priority 5: Community Voice and Civic Engagement

The Liberton Association's effectiveness depends on its ability to mobilise community support, communicate clearly, and engage constructively with statutory bodies. This priority is about sustaining and strengthening our civic capacity.

9.1 Engagement with LDCC and CEC

As an affiliated interest group of the LDCC, the Association is represented at community council meetings and contributes to the LDCC's planning and environmental work. We will continue to develop this partnership and ensure our priorities are reflected in the LDCC's Local Place Plan 2030–2040.

We will maintain regular dialogue with CEC ward councillors and officers, including planning, transport, and greenspace officers, to ensure our concerns are heard and acted upon.

9.2 Membership and Communications

The Association's committee meetings and AGM provide regular opportunities for members to shape our priorities and activities. We will work to maintain and grow our membership, improve our communications through the website and social media, and ensure our activities are accessible to all sections of the community.

Priority	**Community Voice and Civic Engagement**
Description	Sustain and strengthen the Association's capacity to represent the community in planning and civic matters.
Proposed Actions	43. Maintain regular attendance and representation at LDCC meetings 44. Hold annual public meeting to report progress and consult members 45. Develop website as primary communications platform, with regular news updates 46. Build and maintain a list of community contacts to support campaign mobilisation 47. Engage with national planning policy consultations affecting the Edinburgh Green Belt
Policy Context	Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015; NPF4 Community Engagement requirements; CEC Local Place Plan guidance

10. Implementation, Monitoring and Review

This Place Plan will be reviewed annually by the Association's committee and updated as necessary to reflect progress, changing circumstances, and emerging issues. Progress against each priority will be reported to the AGM each year.

10.1 Key Milestones

48. Formal adoption of Place Plan by Liberton Association — July 2026
49. Submission of Greenbelt Evidence and Precedent Document to CEC — by September 2026
50. Initiation of Liberton Kirk and Cemetery Conservation Area Character Appraisal — by June 2026
51. Submission of Liberton Kirk and Cemetery Conservation Area designation application to CEC — by September 2026
52. Initiation of Liberton Bank House Conservation Area Character Appraisal — by December 2026
53. Submission of Liberton Bank House Conservation Area designation application to CEC — by Spring 2027

54. Deposit of heritage materials with City Archives — by Spring 2027
55. First annual review and progress report to AGM — Autumn 2026

10.2 Resources

The Association operates on a voluntary basis with a modest budget from membership subscriptions and donations. The actions in this Plan are intended to be achievable within our existing resources, supplemented where appropriate by grants from bodies such as the Lottery Heritage Fund, Keep Scotland Beautiful, the Foundation Scotland, or CEC's community grants programme.

10.3 Relationship to the LDCC Local Place Plan

This Place Plan is complementary to and consistent with the LDCC's Local Place Plan 2030–2040, which addresses the broader ward area. Where priorities overlap — particularly on greenbelt protection and community engagement — the two documents are intended to reinforce one another. The Association will ensure that its priorities are reflected in the LDCC LPP through its representation at community council meetings.

Appendix: Key Contacts and References

Key Contacts

- City of Edinburgh Council Planning — citydev-portal.edinburgh.gov.uk
- Historic Environment Scotland — www.historicenvironment.scot
- Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust
- Liberton and District Community Council
- NatureScot — www.nature.scot
- Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT) — www.shbt.org.uk

Key Policy References

- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), Scottish Government, 2023
- City Plan 2030, City of Edinburgh Council
- LDCC Local Place Plan 2030–2040
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997
- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015
- Edinburgh Green Belt: Supplementary Guidance, CEC

Archive References

- Liberton Association Greenbelt Evidence and Precedent Document, June 2026 — primary reference document for any future planning proceedings
- 2006 Scottish Executive Public Local Inquiry — reporter's decision refusing the Hart Estates appeal (obtainable from DPEA)
- Derek Kennedy, Precognition to the 2006 Public Local Inquiry, May 2006 (Kennedy Archive, digitised by the Liberton Association)
- Title MID216762 — main greenbelt field, 3.37ha; current proprietor Land Options (East) Limited (SC192467)

- GRS Midlothian MID 96 1231 — 0.4ha tree strip; proprietor Cruden Homes (Scotland) Limited; amenity restriction and clawback clause in 1996 disposition
- Title MID204646 — 68 Alnwickhill Road; proprietor Cruden Property Investments Limited (SC153019)
- Aboon the Kirk — illustrated history of Liberton Kirk and community, published by the Liberton Association
- Peter Branney biodiversity survey cited at 2006 inquiry (Kennedy Archive)
- Liberton Bank House: history and restoration record, Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (shbt.org.uk/our-projects/liberton-bank-house)

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