

Bedlormie Park, Blackridge



Community Consultation Survey Feedback Report



June 2025



Bedlormie Park, Blackridge – Community Consultation Survey Results

SUMMARY

Introduction

A consultation was held in April 2025, in order to gain feedback on what the community thought about Bedlormie Park, Blackridge. Suggestions were also sought from the community for proposals that would enhance the park. This is part of Community Choices, the council's participatory budgeting tool to assist focussed investment as part of the Open Space capital investment programme in parks. The survey was conducted on-line. Feedback was sought via a simple questionnaire. Eighteen responses were received by the deadline of 27 April 2025.

What people like about the park

There were positive comments about the play area. The park is regarded as a large, green space where people can enjoy the outdoors and connect with nature. It is good for young kids and those playing football.

What people don't like about the park

There were negative comments about motorbikes, quad and dirt bikes accessing the park and ruining the grass. The range of play equipment is not liked. There is only one goal. Dogs running free and dog fouling are dislikes along with the uneven and wet ground, lack of seating and grass not being lifted after it is cut.

Proposals

A number of proposals have been drawn up following the community consultation.

Next Steps

A quote for the proposed works will be obtained. If the cost of these proposals is within budget then works will be undertaken with completion expected by 31 March 2026.



Introduction

An online consultation was held to gain feedback on the community's likes and dislikes about Bedlormie Park in Blackridge with suggestions also sought to enhance the park. The consultation was available on the council's website from the 3rd to the 27th of April 2025.

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.

Bedlormie Park is a public park located in the west of Blackridge. It is owned and maintained by the council. The park is approximately 2 hectares in size. It is accessed by foot off Main Street from the north or Bedlormie Drive from the south. It is regarded as a Neighbourhood Park by the council. The site is designated as Land Safeguarded for Open Space in the adopted West Lothian Local Development Plan, 2018.

The park is partially open on the north side with three entrances/exits providing downhill access into the park by surfaced, lit paths. These cut through the park and then climb uphill to various entrances/exits although informal access can be taken all along the open, southern boundary formed by Bedlormie Drive. The park is surrounded by pavements on the north and south which separate it from roadsides. Residential boundaries create the north-western and north-eastern edges of the park. The eastern edge of the park is bounded by Barbauchlaw Burn with farmland beyond. A bus stop is located on Main Street and Blackridge Primary School lies close-by on the park's north side.

The park is predominantly amenity grassland with a mature hedgerow running north-south through the park and mature trees located in the western half towards the boundary edges. There are some areas of bulbs in the eastern area. A play area sits centrally with a single mini-goal located close by. There are two seats opposite the play area with bin provision here and at other locations in or on the park edge. Unsealed paths and boardwalks lie on the far east of the park in flatter but wetter terrain.

Information gathering

An on-line survey was used to gather comments and gain feedback from the community and local stakeholders. This was posted on the Council's website and available for completion between the 3rd and 27th of April 2025. Emails were sent to the local ward members, Blackridge Community Council and a number of council officers advising of the park survey and encouraging their completion and/or sharing. Posters were put up in and around the park which included the website link along with a QR code connecting you directly to the survey.

There were 18 surveys completed by the closing date.

Feedback

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

What people like about the park

The fact that kids can play in the park including within the equipped play area, which is liked, or for informal kick-about are regarded as positive aspects of the park. The large, green space is liked where people can enjoy the outdoors. The fact that you can connect to other paths and natural areas is liked.

What people don't like about the park

The size of the play area and range of play equipment received negative comments. Motorbikes and quad bikes access the park and damage the grass. There is only one goal for football and the surrounding grass area is underused. The ground is considered uneven and wet. When the grass is cut it is not collected. There is a lack of seating and bins. There is a lack of security from the busy roads. Dogs running free and dog fouling are also disliked.

Suggestions to enhance the park

A number of suggestions were made by the community to enhance the park or improve the enjoyment of park users. Comments relating to the park feedback or suggestions for enhancement are as follows –

Play area and features

There were comments suggesting various new pieces of play equipment at the play area and a new bike track or skate park (which are all regarded as play assets by the council).

Funding for play areas and assets including any equipment upgrades or new additions is normally from a different budget to that currently available for the wider park enhancements. There are no plans or proposals to invest in play items within the play area.

A new bike/pump track or skate park requires considerable investment and there is no budget identified or investment planned for any of these in Bedlormie Park. Comments relating to the play area and play assets will be kept on file and considered with any other public consultation feedback, if funding becomes available for Bedlormie Park.

There were a number of suggestions for a second football goal. It is recognised that a single goal only provides limited kick-about and goal practice. A second goal would allow informal football games and more opportunity for exercise within the park. The site of the existing goal is at the bottom of two slopes, resulting in limited flat ground which is often wet. If funding could be identified/secured then the addition of a second goal and surfacing around the goal mouth could be considered. A second goal would need to be positioned such that the amenity of local residents is maintained, therefore, a playing area approximately 20 metres between goals could only be created but this is still considered adequate as an informal games area, if progressed in the future.

Fenced off area

A gated area for exercising dogs was suggested. It was unclear if this was suggested in order to limit dogs that are off a lead to this area (with leads ideally kept on elsewhere in the park) or as a safe exercise space for dogs but in either case the council does not provide fenced/gated areas for dogs.

The council has considered fenced off areas for dogs before and will not be implementing such areas in parks. This is mainly due to the high level of dog fouling likely to be generated in one area and the health issues associated with this and its management but also the loss of some of the active open space that is currently available to the public.

The council encourages dog owners to keep their dogs under close control when in public parks, whether on or off a lead. The council does not, however, have the resources to ensure

that this happens at all sites and the council has no enforcement powers in relation to expelling dogs from sites.

The council can investigate the behaviour of a dog that is considered out of control but requires particular information from those making the complaint. Further information on this can be found at <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/34360/Out-of-Control-Dogs>

Unfortunately, dog fouling is an issue in many parks and open spaces. The majority of dog owners are responsible and do clean up after their animals but a small element does not. Signage requesting the removal of dog waste is unlikely to be heeded by them and is, therefore, not considered to be value for money for spend from limited park budgets. If you want to report dog fouling that needs cleaned up, want to report a damaged dog waste bin or have an existing one emptied, please use the council's online form at <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/32095/Report-a-Dog-Fouling-Issue>

West Lothian Council guidance aspires to having a play area fenced where it is located within 15m of a vehicular road. The intention of fencing is to mitigate the risk of a child running out into traffic or a car crashing into a play area during a vehicular accident. Elsewhere, in general, fencing a play area is avoided as it often creates a number of issues, such as difficult maintenance access, increased maintenance cost, it may discourage wheelchair users, limit a child into playing in a small space as opposed to the whole park and increase the threat of harm to children through bullying where they may find it hard to leave the space when they wish to.

It is recognised that part of Bedlormie Park play area is less than 15m from Bedlormie Drive and does not have fencing around that area. The play area was, however, in situ before the guidance on fencing was written. The slope up to Bedlormie Drive is also considered to slow down a small child and give a parent/carer time to catch them before meeting the road.

There are many unfenced areas where a child can access a road, such as from most pavements, and responsibility for the safety of a child in Bedlormie Park like elsewhere remains with a parent or carer. Fencing along the edge of the pavement, bordering Bedlormie Drive, that is less than 15m from the play area could, however, be considered if additional funding is identified/secured in the future.

Fencing is not considered a requirement in other scenarios, such as preventing dog access. As a general approach, where a play area is open it is expected that dogs are kept on a lead. This information is included on the play area signage for clarity, but it is not enforceable through law.

The open aspect of the park allows most users to quickly access the open space from most sides. This, however, includes motorbikes, quads and possibly cars. The council has no powers to stop unauthorised vehicle access, remove them from site or charge them with accessing the park. The illegal use of vehicles in the park is a Police Scotland matter and the council would encourage reports to be made via Police 101.

It would not be physically possible to stop motorised access without a considerable amount being spent on fencing or bollards and this would exceed the available park budget. It is also not possible for the council to prohibit access by motorbikes at access points onto park paths as this would also hinder access by wheelchairs and those with wide prams, which we would not wish to do.

Additional seating

Some comments and suggestions referred to additional seating within the park.

There are two seats currently located at the edge of the path on the northern side of the play area with sufficient space in this area to include more seating. The location of any new seating, including picnic tables, has to consider current use, maintenance arrangements and proximity to residential development.

There is sufficient room at the play area to accommodate a picnic table that is wheelchair accessible along with a new Bitmac path and surface under it to improve accessibility.

A new seat could also be placed opposite the play area to increase seating options. A new surface under the seat is also suggested to reduce mowing/spraying under the seat, if installed.

Accessibility

There was a suggestion to make the park more accessible for disabled children. It is unclear if this is to a particular area of the park such as the play area.

The play area is accessed over grass which could cause an issue for those with disabilities, in wheelchairs or for those pushing them. The safety surfacing within the majority of the play area is bark which could also hinder accessibility. There is an inclusive swing within the swing set which has rubberised safety surfacing around it for accessibility, however, this can't be reached without crossing over the grass.

A new sealed path between the existing path and the edge of the swings would improve accessibility to the swings. If this was extended to the edge of the bark it would also improve accessibility for all users to the play area. The path would be the same one serving a new picnic table (mentioned above), if installed.

Litter bins

There were suggestions for more bins within the park. The Cleaner Communities team within the council determines the number of bins within the county. The current number of bins is considered sufficient for Bedlormie Park.

The park is regularly litter picked and the bins emptied. If you would like to report an overflowing bin or litter on site please use the council's on-line form at <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/32091/Report-Litter>

Soft landscaping

There were suggestions for landscaping including hedge planting and flowers. These features all require some element of maintenance. Any additional maintenance would impact on the available resources of the council with some new additions, such as hedge planting, requiring more maintenance than say tree or bulb planting.

Additional trees would enhance biodiversity within the park and, depending on the species, add colour and height for visual interest, canopy cover which provides shade and reduces temperatures and can even remove pollution from the atmosphere and improve the environment.

Bulb planting would also add colour, interest and improve biodiversity. To allow the bulbs to grow, flower and die back naturally (in order to "feed" for the following year), the grass around them needs to be left uncut for a number of months. It is unlikely that this would be an issue where "better" access was already available, such as near a pavement where the bulb display would also be more noticeable or in an area that gets less use or where temporary long grass would not reduce amenity of the park such as on a slope.

There is room in the park to accommodate both new tree planting and bulb planting without negatively affecting current park use.

Grounds maintenance in Bedlormie Park

Operational Services (NETS's, Land & Countryside) maintains the grounds of Bedlormie Park. This includes grass cutting, weed spraying and hedge/shrub cutting. Service level standards are in place to ensure that grounds maintenance is planned consistently and effectively across the county with the resources that are available. Further information on these can be found on the council's website at <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/groundsmaintenanceservice>

Grass clippings are not collected after cuts in parks throughout West Lothian.

Step repairs

Some of the sleeper steps on the eastern edge of the park are now deteriorating or have been damaged/vandalised. They need to be repaired to ensure that they remain safe to use.

Signage

There are two park signs on site providing contact details for reporting issues. These are now out of date and require replacements.



Park proposals

Based on the community suggestions (excluding the play area, skatepark and bike/pump track suggestions) that can be implemented within the park (and likely to be within budget) a number of proposals have been drawn up. A plan showing the location of each proposal is included below with each proposal outlined as follows -

New seating

New picnic table with wheelchair access – A new metal picnic table with an extended table top is proposed on a new Bitmac surface on the northern edge of the play area. A new Bitmac path is also proposed for access to the picnic table.

New seat – A new metal seat is proposed on the northern side of the path running along the northern edge of the play area. A new Bitmac surface is also proposed under the seat to make maintenance around the seat easier and provide a hard standing rather than wearing the grass.

New path into play area

The path that is proposed to access the picnic table (above), is also proposed for extension to the edge of the play area to improve access to this area of the park.



New Trees

Additional trees are proposed in the central, northern grassed area of the park. A dead tree is also proposed for removal (and replacement). This would add more structure and colour to the park but also enhance the nature network and biodiversity provided by the existing trees.



Suggested tree species include Field maple, which are already on site, and Cherry. Both would provide interest in terms of shape but also spring flowers and autumn leaf colour changes, as well as nectar which is valuable to wildlife.

New bulb planting

Additional bulbs are proposed along the southern boundary of the park, off the pavement edge. They are also proposed near the edge of the park path that runs north-south in the north-eastern area of the park.

A mix of Daffodil and Crocus is proposed in order to provide a nectar source for early season pollinators from the purple Crocus followed by the yellow Daffodils a month or so later. This will also add colour and interest to the park.



Step repairs

Some of the wooden sleepers forming the risers on the steps and the wooden step edges need to be replaced. The treads also need to be cleared of vegetation and in-filled to create level areas for pedestrians to go up and down.



Signage enhancements

The two existing park sign panels in the north-west and north-east of the park have an old contact number on them to report park issues. These will be replaced with the new park panel design providing the Customer Service Centre number and contact email.



Play area fencing

A cost for the installation of a section of metal fencing along the northern edge of the pavement off Bedlormie Drive, to the south of the play area, will be obtained. If this is within the park budget, after the above items can be accommodated, then it will be considered for installation.

Second football goal

A cost for the installation of a second mini-goal and play surface at the goal mouth will be obtained. If this is within the park budget, after all of the above items can be accommodated, then it will be considered for installation.

A layout plan showing the above proposals is shown below.

Next Steps

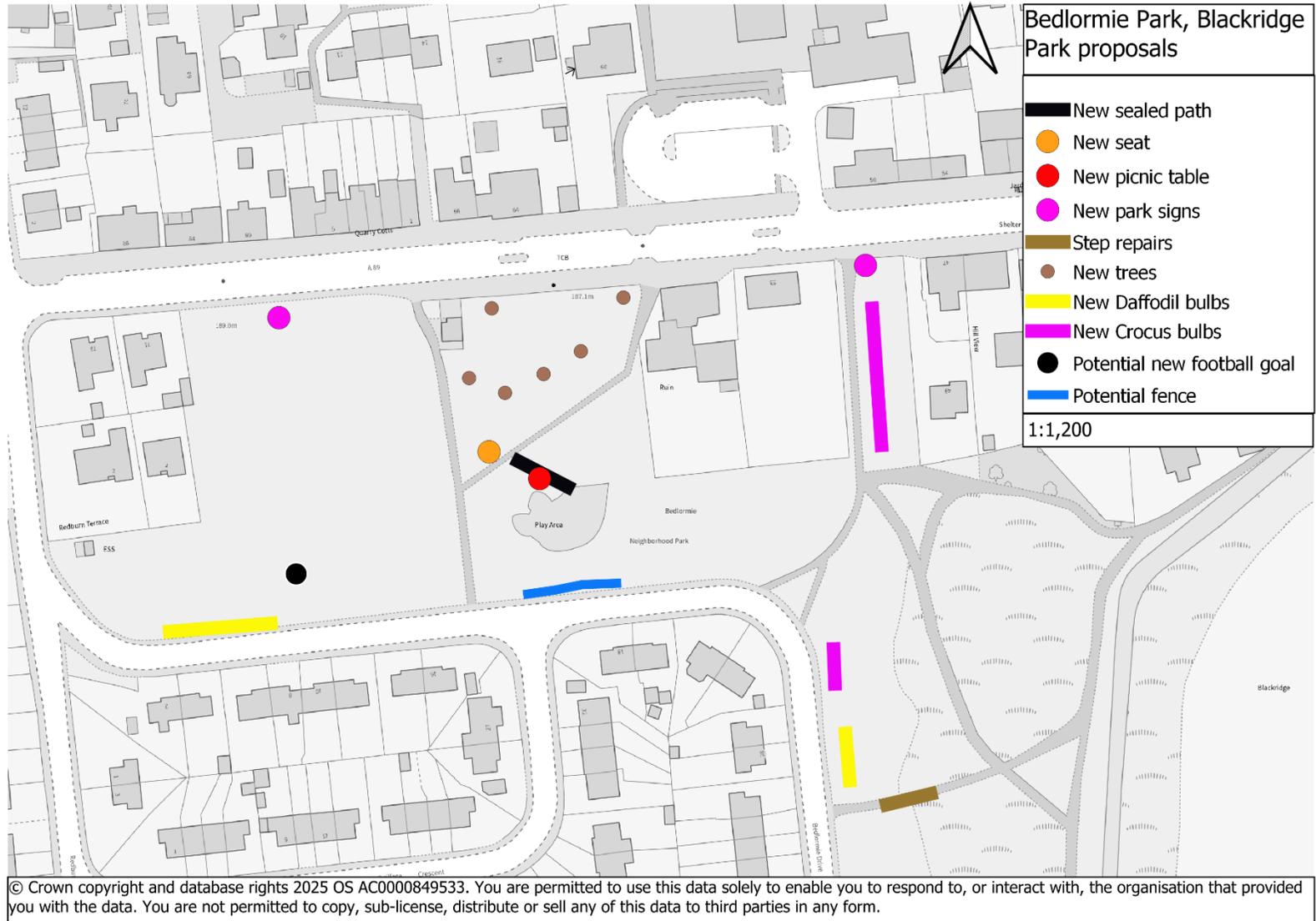
This report will be made available on the Council's webpage at <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/parkinfo> under **Reports**.

The implementation of any of the above proposals depends on their costs being within the available park budget. A quote for the above proposals will now be sought. If the cost of this is within the park budget then the work will be implemented. It is hoped that all work can be completed by the end of March 2026.

If the quote exceeds available budget then the enhancements excluding the fence section and second goal will take priority. These two items could then be considered if any future play asset funding becomes available for Bedlormie Park.

The 8 respondents who provided email addresses will be kept updated about the park improvements. Anyone else who would like to join the list can request to do so by emailing Carol.Campbell@westlothian.gov.uk

Park proposals plan



Appendix 1 - All survey results (as returned in surveys but with some personal details redacted).

1. What do you like best about this park?

- Swing park
- Allows my little boy to go and play football
- Green space
- Play area
- Kids playing football or in the park using swings etc it's a massive park for youngsters
- Play area not a very level surface for kids playing football
- Football net
- The amount of green space, varied play equipment
- Great green space in the village.
- It's a place for kids to play and enjoy the outdoors
- Great for younger kids
- The large space.
- Nice space
- It's a nice big space
- The play park is nice for young children.
- I like that it is a nice green are for kids to play.
- It's a good size space, connects to nature area/other paths
- The common area for people to enjoy.

2. Is there anything you don't like?

- Motorbikes on the grass ruining it
- No benches at the football park and only one goal which isn't ideal for playing games
- Lack of security for little ones from busy roads on all sides
- The waste of space around it
- When grass gets cut and no collected kids clothes wasted by wet grass
- It's accessible to dirt bikes that fly across park (maybe fencing to keep them out before a child gets hit)
- Needs better drainage. Gets swampy
- Not enough seating; only one waste bin; only one football goal (can there not be two?)
- It's open to quad bike/dirt bike abuse. Football area could be improved
- No
- Although this park is great for younger kids toddler age I feel there isn't much for 5+
- Play park needs updating. More things for babies. More swings.
- There is nothing in it
- The uneven ground , the emptiness of any seating and the play area is very small; For the area
- The grass area where the goals are could be better utilised. Grass is covered in dog mess, sodden in areas and when cut the left over grass is a terrible mess and kids get covered in it.
- I don't like that it's a place where most people walk there dogs and let them run free. The kids are playing in there and rolling about they are so unaware of the dog poo that is not being lifted. Also more often now there are boys on quads and of road bikes racing and turning up the grass and the noise from these bike awful. [REDACTED] look into that park. so the kids can't play the football or other games it's and the park is left a mess.
- I appreciate the work done to maintain the park, but wish the landscape workers would pick up and remove the grass cuttings once the grass has been cut. Really

glad they are allowing the daffodils to grow for the last two years.; ; The lack of a bin in the area immediately next to [REDACTED] is a hindrance. We used to have a bin there, but the support pole rusted away. the collapsed pole was removed and a bin for dog waste fixed to a lamp post. However we have a number of community events that service our whole village and there is not a bin there. Also when the children play on this part, there is no bin and they leave their rubbish where they drop it.

3. Please suggest things that could enhance the park or improve your enjoyment of it.

- Maybe a gated area for dogs
- Add another goal to allow the kids to play actual football games, add benches at the football side
- Fencing
- An enclosed football park or bmx pump track to replace the old bmx track that was taken away would be great considering the amount of kids who use bikes around my street
- A small Astro turf in the part where you see goals
- Anything that could make families get enjoyment of it
- Skate or bike track ; Bigger & two goal football park ; More assessable for disabled children
- More benches; few more waste bins. Another set of goals, so kids can play; aerial runway slide
- Hedge planting along the boundary. Improve the football bit by introducing a second goal
- Picnic tables and benches
- Older kids climber/slide; Sand pit ; More seating/tables
- Updated play park.
- Seats picnic area flowers outdoor games for kids
- More seating and smaller little areas for sitting and chilling
- Pump track/skate park. My children have loved these type of facilities all through their youth and continue to at the ages of [REDACTED]. Great space for older children as well as young. Other than play parks there are no other play activities offered to children, especially older children. Would be a nice addition and the space is big enough to accommodate. The local school would also benefit this space as it is directly opposite and they would be able to use the bikes/scooters. Furthermore it would help promote cycling and scootering in young children which we know comes with many benefits and hopefully instills a love of cycling/scootering as they grow older. Also getting children involved in cycling/scootering at a young age can only have a positive effect on the environment and hopefully cycling becomes more of an alternative for commuting/enjoyment rather than vehicles.
- It would be nice to see some landscaping of some sort. Some nice seating areas. Something to keep out the motor bikes and quads. Something more in the way of signs to stop dog walker letting there dogs loose and poop in the area without lifting the mess..
- Picnic bench, seating on the other side of the play area opposite current benches. With bins near them.; ; More play equipment for slightly older ages? Ages 2-5 is quite well provided.
- Install a bin in the upper area (next to [REDACTED]). Please continue the excellent work on maintenance and clean up after the events, especially after guy fawks celebrations.; ; The steps leading down to the lower path in this area are in need of repair. Unfortunately we have a destructive element of youngsters in the area, and anything showing a slight weakness is made worse by them immediately they notice it.