

Meanwhile Use workshop summary

Held on Zoom:

13th May 2024, 6-7pm

On Monday the 13th May 2024, LDA Design and East Suffolk Council hosted a workshop exploring Meanwhile Uses for the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood projects. The workshop was a ticketed event that was advertised on the East Suffolk Council social media channels. 12 attendees generously listened to information about meanwhile uses and took part in a visioning activity where the attendees were asked to generate some ideas for meanwhile uses for Felixstowe.

The session began with the lead facilitator outlining the agenda for the workshop, before LDA Design spoke about what constitutes a Meanwhile Use, their importance and some examples of Meanwhile Uses around the world. LDA's presentation concluded with the instructions for the activity that would take place in the second half of the session.

As we were at the first stage of the meanwhile use strategy, we asked people to think about the various types of meanwhile uses that might be suitable for the wider town of Felixstowe as opposed to the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood itself. The attendees were encouraged to think about the assets that Felixstowe already had and were asked to identify things that they would like to see more of, in their town.

The participants were also encouraged to think about which groups of people their meanwhile use was for, and who had not been accounted for. This would ensure the group would be considering all of Felixstowe's communities in the activity.

The information from this activity will be shared with the Citizens Panel when they undertake a similar activity as part of their engagement process. It will also inform the Meanwhile Use feasibility study that LDA will produce for the council at the end of the engagement process. The answers (from this workshop and the upcoming Citizens Panel) have been (and will be) categorised by theme and this will form the base of the research for the Meanwhile Use feasibility study.

The workshop was then split into two groups with a facilitator in each. The ideas for the Meanwhile Uses were organised in the following themes:

- Arts and Crafts
 - The group expressed an interest in craft workshops and spaces for local artists.
 - Local craft markets were also identified as a possible meanwhile use.
 - Pop-up shops and shops that aren't in the town centre were identified as things that could make the town a better place.
- Town assets
 - There was an appetite for something with lots of footfall and that could revitalise the town centre amongst certain members of the group.
 - Others suggested a meanwhile use that would be close to the seafront considering the busyness of the space.
 - There was a suggestion that there is no need to duplicate the leisure facilities in the town.
- Connectivity
 - A challenge identified by the group was the number of campervans on the seafront, therefore some of them suggested that a space for camper vans could be useful.

- Others focused on the importance of good transport links that would connect meanwhile uses within the neighbourhood to various parts of the existing town such as Old Felixstowe.
- Good accessibility and strong pedestrian access were highlighted as key aspects for any meanwhile uses in the town.
- Entertainment
 - Felixstowe already has a good entertainment offering in the form of cinemas, theatres, the promenade, and the pier, therefore these types of facilities may not be necessary as a meanwhile use.
 - Community groups such as the choir, were identified as a strong feature of the town.
- Young people
 - Spaces for teenagers for sports and generally something for the children were important aspects of meanwhile uses by some members of the groups.
 - Other attendees highlighted that meanwhile uses should incorporate the need for sports facilities with high quality features such as proper football goals, and the need for outdoor facilities for kids.
 - A general point was made about the opportunity for meanwhile uses to help in bringing up young people.
- Outdoor activities
 - Activities in the outdoors were identified as a priority for one of the groups. This included larger assets such as a country park and smaller features such as bike trails, assault courses and picnic areas.
 - The importance of green spaces for mental health was identified amongst one member of the group.
- Nature
 - Some of the group suggested there is a challenge of anti-social behaviour in natural space and that meanwhile uses may encourage this further, therefore any meanwhile use should be kept far away from The Grove Woodland.
 - Other members of the group proposed that meanwhile uses should require a minimum amount of stewardship such as den building near The Grove (but not within).
 - Meanwhile Uses relating to birdwatching and walking were suggested.
 - One participant came up with the idea of using wildlife corridors to link potential meanwhile uses.
 - There was a consensus that nature was important to the town and there are several sensitive challenges relating to the natural environment of the town.
- Employment patterns
 - Some people suggested that long-term employment space was needed instead of meanwhile uses.
 - Another participant highlighted that meanwhile uses must be appropriate for those in Felixstowe who don't work or who are retired.

- Meanwhile Use opposition.
 - Some of the participants expressed their discontent with the idea of a meanwhile use, instead highlighting the importance of green space retention.
 - One participant of the group suggested that the existing green space is not suitable for development of any kind.
 - Other people stressed the importance of certain parts of the site for football teams and runners.

The session concluded with the facilitators sharing the findings of each group with the wider workshop, before outlining the opportunities to attend further consultation events.

Questions about the wider neighbourhood, including the road infrastructure and the suitability of the land for development, were also raised within each of the groups. The aim of this workshop was to explore the public's perceptions of Meanwhile Uses. In the summer, we will be hosting another online and in-person event where the public will have the opportunity to ask questions about the wider development.



1. Jamboard with ideas for meanwhile uses from Breakout Group 1



2. Jamboard with ideas for meanwhile uses from Breakout Group 2.