



EURO
CITIES



Stalled Spaces

Temporary uses for vacant land

Stalled Spaces gets the whole community involved in generating new urban uses for temporarily vacant plots of land, the number of which has increased due to the economic crisis.

Filling the gap

Stalled Spaces encourages community groups to identify plots of land in their neighbourhood which could be temporarily turned to new urban uses. The city supports the community groups in 'borrowing' the plots from the landowners and setting up projects ranging from children's play areas to communal gardens.

While the desire to make use of empty plots is there, many residents feel put off by stringent planning rules and uncooperative landowners. That's where the Stalled Spaces team steps in, providing professional advice and support to community groups on complex planning regulations, as well as liaising directly with landowners to arrange formal agreements for the handover of land for an agreed period of time. At the end of the lease, they also support the residents in the smooth transition of returning the land back to the owner, formulating an exit strategy and, where possible, identifying a replacement plot to occupy.

This is an attractive option for landowners as residents commit to maintaining the plots of land while they are not in use. Because any notice periods are outlined in the agreement, they do not have to worry about the projects impeding on the end use of the land.



Sites in our city which lie empty and unused can depress people and neighbourhoods. Glasgow's innovative approach will assist communities, land owners and developers to gain maximum benefit from a stalled construction site or land which owners haven't been able to sell or develop in the face of the current economic difficulties. Although the grants are small, we believe it makes a great difference to help a community kick start activity on a site to give it back a purpose for all local people to enjoy

Councillor Gordon Matheson, leader of Glasgow city council

cities in action

July 2013

where: Glasgow, UK
what: social affairs
when: 2010+

Everyone on board

The city works with a number of partners to ensure that residents are adequately supported in carrying out their projects.

These include the city's housing association, which, as well as providing funding for the project, also gives creative inspiration in the form of its artist in residence.

Several other partners, including Creative Scotland and Glasgow & Clyde Green Network Partnership, provide creative inspiration and support through promotional activities and advice.

Partners have also contributed to a community fund which provides small grants to groups of residents to help them carry out their projects.

The city council and housing association fund the project through a budget of £88,000 (€104,000) and match funding has been secured to a value of six times the city's investment at £500,000 (€588,000). This is the result of contributions from a number of stakeholders including a lottery fund and a children's charity.

Other help has been donated in the form of materials – such as wood, plants, soil and equipment – as well as staff time and marketing support estimated to be worth around £56,000 (€66,000).

The city has continued to liaise with participants on the best methods of delivery, and has taken their input into account. For example, since the project's launch in July 2010, it has streamlined the grant application process so that citizens can better understand what is required of them.

It has also improved its promotional strategy. To engage with a wider audience, it uses online tools, flyers, videos and has set up a one-stop-shop within the local authority to make the project accessible to everyone.

The project is further promoted through signage developed by the team and placed at the stalled spaces, which helps give a sense of the breadth of projects being carried out and the temporary nature of these.

Healthier, happier lifestyle

The initiative, which has to date supported the creation of over 50 new community projects, representing 22ha of land, 9ha of which is located in the most deprived areas of the city, has helped build a sense of belonging and empowerment amongst citizens. Residents of all ages, from schoolchildren to the elderly, have come together to build community projects.

This has also improved citizens' health and wellbeing due to several factors, one being that some of the plots are used for growing fresh fruit and vegetables which in turn promotes a healthier diet, and also research has shown that just being active and outdoors has a positive impact on health.

The project has received coverage and recognition at local, national and European level, and was shortlisted for a EUROCITIES award in 2012.



“ It has made a terrific difference to how many of us feel about living in the area. And participation in the Friends group and our Open Days has generated a sense of community. Neighbours who would not otherwise have got to know each other have come together around this shared project.

Friends of Kelvingrove Square ”