

LEMON'S SQUARE POCKET PARK

REPORT ON RESIDENTS FEEDBACK TO PROJECT

APRIL 2021

PROJECT BACKGROUND

At its AGM on 3rd February 2021, the DTRA introduced a proposal to develop a new community-enriching space in the form of a pocket park in a vacant, State-owned site on Millmount Avenue.

The pocket park proposal involves planters, a shed and seating around a central area. This would facilitate community activities and provide an important green area for nature and relaxation.

The land used to be the driveway to the old Lemons Sweets factory when it existed; in tribute to Lemon's Sweets, planters would be painted to represent the iconic Lemon's lines and incorporate logos and other imagery harking back to the factory.

The key aspects of the proposal would see:

- Greening the area through planters to provide tree cover and for native and pollinator plants to support insects and wildlife.
- Provide a large hardwood shed 15' x 6' on the site for DTRA storage and as a support for street feasts and other activities.
- Access remaining to the laneway behind the houses on Millmount Avenue, for continued resident use.

The AGM noted the following:

- The initiative will rely on DTRA volunteers with the support of DCC who it is hoped will, in time, take ownership of the Square.
- The DTRA is seeking feedback from members on the proposal.

Feedback Methodology:

Following the AGM, a project plan was drawn up and local Councillors and DCC were notified. On 15th April a leaflet outlining the project was circulated to all houses on Millmount and Millbourne Avenues and ancillary streets off Millmount Avenue, and the Lemon's Square proposal was published on <https://www.drumcondratriangle.com/lemons-square-proposal.html> and <https://www.facebook.com/DrumcondraTriangle/>. Residents were asked to submit feedback via a form on the DTRA website. On 19th April a text was circulated to the Triangle News WhatsApp Group further encouraging feedback via the website.

The following report presents the main findings from this feedback process, gathered between 15th and 25th April inclusive.

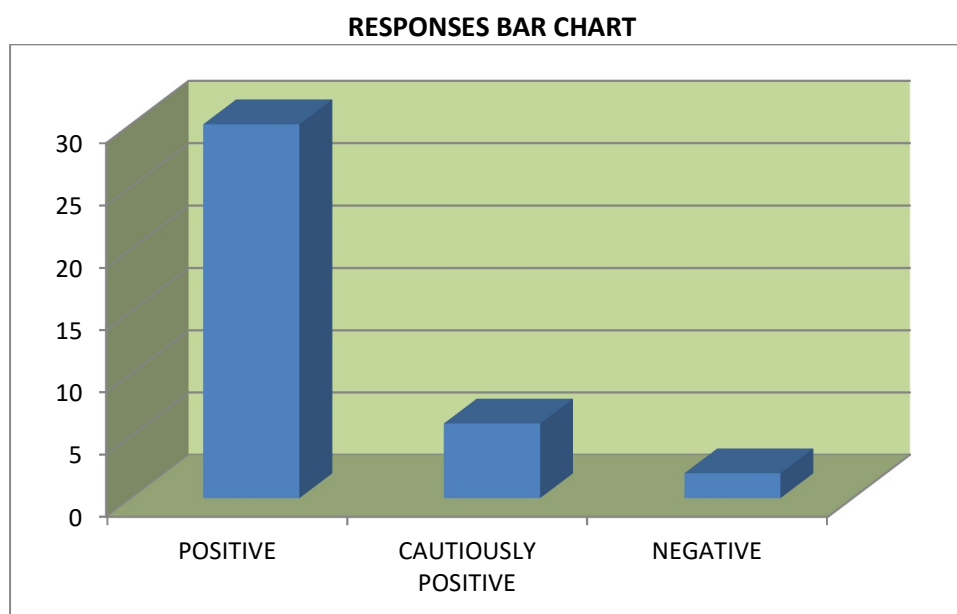
The findings pertain to qualitative commentary submitted through the feedback form on the DTRA website <https://www.drumcondratriangle.com/lemons-square-proposal.html>. From the commentary and recommendations received, a quantitative analysis in the form of percentages was produced, followed by an examination and discussion of the issues raised.

SUMMARY REPORT ON FEEDBACK

A total of 38 responses were received via the feedback form.

An overwhelming 95% (36/38) of the responses were positive, with 79% (30/38) described as 'Positive' and 16% (6/38) as 'Cautiously Positive'.

5 % (2/38) of responses are described as 'Negative'.



COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS

Not all respondents provided recommendations but some provided more than one. Questions were also posed in the feedback which have been noted within the broader term of 'comments/recommendations'. Additionally, cautions were expressed which have also been included under the broader term.

The table on page 3 provides the themes of the comments/recommendations, the number of comments within a theme, and the percentage of comments on a specific premise in relation to the overall number of comments:

Number	Theme	Number of comments	Percentage of overall comments
1	Open at front	3	6%
2	No seats	3	6%
3	Play area for children	2	4%
4	Hobby area	1	2%
5	Seats	3	6%
6	Mural	1	2%
7	Volunteer	7	15%
8	Planting	7	15%
9	Planters	2	4%
10	Access	4	9%
11	Gates	3	6%
12	Anti-Social Behaviour	4	9%
13	Involve other experts	2	4%
14	Funding provision	2	4%
15	Maintenance	2	4%
16	Ownership of site	1	2%
17	Boules	1	2%

A total of 48 comments/recommendations have been noted.

The comments were predominantly complimentary of the initiative and remarkably positive in advice and recommendations posited. Specific comments or recommendations varied, with advice or preference on type of planting and offers of help dominating the dialogue. Opinions and questions were put forward which provide constructive criticism and also a more cautious stance, for consideration by the DTRA. The following points highlight the key concerns of respondents where there were three or more comments on a theme:

- There were a number of offers of help (7)
- There was consensus on the need to plant native and pollinator friendly plants (7)
- Continued access to the laneway behind the houses is an important consideration (4)
- Concern was expressed regarding the potential for anti-social behaviour(4)
- It was suggested that gates could be added to deter anti-social behaviour (3)
- Some respondents recommended an open front to monitor activity (3)
- Opinion was divided on the question of seating with an equal number of respondents in favour of seating to those against seating (3+3).

AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION

This part of the report addresses some of the suggestions and issues raised, as outlined in the previous section.

Offers of help:

The committee is very grateful for and encouraged by the many offers of help for the Lemon's Square pocket park project. We have compiled a list of people who have expressed a desire to

volunteer in some way, and we will be in touch in due course as planning moves ahead for the next stages of the project.

Planting:

Multiple respondents expressed a desire to see both native and pollinator-friendly planting prioritised within the pocket park. The committee is fully on board with this, and will ensure that a long-term planting scheme is developed with this in mind.

Laneway and pedestrian access:

Retaining access to the laneway that borders the back of the proposed pocket is an area of concern for several respondents. The proposed design does not encroach on the laneway in any way; the rear border of the park will end at the border of the laneway. The proposed design also does not affect the existing footpaths that run along the side of the site.

Anti-social behaviour:

Several respondents expressed concerns that development of the site as a pocket park would encourage anti-social behaviour, particularly at night. The committee understands the concern caused by a perceived increase in risk of anti-social behaviour in the area. The committee feels that overall, the development of a currently unused and unsightly location into a green, welcoming and useful space for enjoyment by the whole community, is an ideal worth pursuing.

Anti-social behaviour is always a risk, but one that we feel can be mitigated in a variety of ways. We have a good relationship with the local community gardaí, and will request that the pocket park is paid particular attention during patrols. The possibility of additional lighting for the park can be explored.

During research for the project, the committee contacted other local pocket parks at St Anne's Road and Courtlands, to ask for their experiences. Whilst anti-social behaviour is something that has been experienced from time to time, overall the issue has not been particularly problematic and has not adversely affected the overall benefits to the community of having the pocket park. Community engagement with and sense of ownership of the park is important for ensuring its success and encouraging respect of the space. The St Anne's Road pocket park has a relationship with local schoolchildren who use the space in a variety of ways, which again encourages others to respect it as a space for all. There are similar possibilities for the proposed Lemon's Square pocket park.

Gates and fencing:

A desire for the pocket park to have restricted access through the erection of fencing and gates was expressed by some respondents. Typically, community gardens or allotments used for growing food produce are fenced and gated. Pocket parks, on the other hand, are typically spaces open to all, for enjoyment by passers-by as well as residents more immediate to the facility. The proposed plan is for a park rather than an allotment, and the committee feels that it is important that the space is open to be of benefit to the whole community. That is not to say that in due course the idea of fencing could not be revisited, if it was deemed necessary; however, starting the project by favouring open and positive community engagement with the space allows room for that ideal to be explored in the first instance.

Layout and visibility:

A number of responses emphasised the importance of ensuring that there is good visibility from the road front into the pocket park. This could be achieved through careful planting design; planters placed at the front border of the park could contain low growing plants that will not block the view into the pocket park.

Seating:

An equal number of respondents were for and against having seating within the pocket park. Proponents wanted seating included to enable people, particularly older people, to enjoy a rest whilst out for a walk, and also to encourage enjoyment of the space in general. Opponents expressed concern that seating could encourage unwelcome loitering.

Upon reflection, the committee feel that starting the project by favouring the anticipation of positive outcomes for the new park is the best approach. Including benches in the design will encourage a sense of rest and enjoyment in the space for everyday users. If it is found after a period of time that anti-social loitering at the seating areas is a recurring problem, solutions to address this can be examined, which may include the removal of the benches.

Additional design features:

We received several wonderful and interesting suggestions for features that could potentially be incorporated into the pocket park, such as a dedicated hobby area, a free play area, a sensory trail, and a mural. All of these ideas are most welcome and can be explored in due course during later stages of the project.

Maintenance and ownership of the site:

Ownership of the site currently lies with the State; whilst DCC do not own the land, they have stated that funding provided by them can be used for development of the site. It is proposed that the pocket park is maintained by the community, including the DTRA and a volunteer group of local residents who wish to be involved in the upkeep of the park. Low maintenance planting is something that will be considered when creating a planting scheme of the park.

NEXT STEPS

The pocket park project is a long-term project to be completed over multiple stages. A project plan was drawn up with **Stage 1** covering communication with key stakeholders on the project:

- Publication of the proposal
- Circulation of leaflet to local residents
- Feedback from residents
- Notification of intentions to Dublin City Council

Stage 1 of the plan has now been completed and the DTRA, together with the community and the support of DCC are embarking on **Stage 2**:

- To re-surface the site to ensure it is usable and safe
- To install new, durable planters.

DCC have committed to supporting us in undertaking these vital first steps and work on the surface will be starting shortly.

The Lemon's Square Committee will then be considering what elements of the development should be prioritised within **Stage 3**; these may include:

- Deciding on a long-term planting scheme
- Deciding on whether seating should be included and if so, on a design for same
- Designing and procuring a 'Lemon's Square' arch for the entrance
- Fund-raising.

Integral to each stage of the project is the support of the community and engagement through volunteer work, suggestions and, in the long-term, maintenance of Lemon's Square.

The DTRA will continue to liaise with the local community regarding the development of the Lemon's Square pocket park, and will post updates on the project on our website. As always we can be contacted through the contact form on the website or by emailing drumcondratriangle@gmail.com