

# Almondvale Park, Livingston



## Community Consultation Survey Feedback Report



July 2025



## **Almondvale Park, Livingston – Community Consultation Survey Results**

### **SUMMARY**

#### **Introduction**

A consultation was held in April 2025, in order to gain feedback on what the community thought about Almondvale Park, Livingston. 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. Sixteen responses were received by the deadline of 27 April 2025.

#### **What people like about the park**

The green/open space, the river and the fact it is quiet and away from traffic are all liked. Other positive aspects include the park's wildlife and biodiversity. It is regarded as a great place to walk. The skatepark is also liked along with the viewing platforms.

#### **What people don't like about the park**

Litter, broken glass and graffiti are dislikes along with abandoned shopping trolleys. Broken seating, dog fouling and lack of bins are negative aspects. Overgrown shrubs and the grass being cut too short is not liked. There were also comments about the skatepark and play area facilities.

#### **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 Almondvale Park in Livingston 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.

Almondvale Park is a public park owned and maintained by the council. The park is approximately 9 hectares in size and is located to the north of Livingston town centre. It is dissected by the River Almond with three pedestrian bridges providing access between the north and south banks. It is regarded as a District Park by the council. The majority of the site is designated as Land Safeguarded for Open Space in the adopted West Lothian Local Development Plan, 2018, with a wedge in the southern area of the park allocated for residential development (H-LV 29).

The park is bounded by Howden South Road in the north-east and West Lothian Civic Centre and Inveralmond Bowling Stadium in the north-west. Howden South Road wraps around the park's south-eastern boundary and residential and commercial premises create the park's south-western edge. The park is served by a number of connecting pedestrian routes with sealed surfaces which link into all surrounding areas. Some of these, particularly in the northern half of the park, are lit and designated as Core Paths including National Cycle Network Route 75 connecting Scotland's east and west coasts. The West Lothian Shale Trail also passes through the park.

There are three formal car parks which serve the park: one in the south and two in the north. There are other parking facilities near the park. Bus stops also serve areas around the park.

As well as a formal access network, the park comprises amenity grassland, woodland, street trees, meadow grassland, an equipped play area, a skate park, seating, signage and bins. There are also a number of public art projects in or on the edge of the park.

## **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 3<sup>rd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2025. Emails were sent to the local ward members, Dedridge Community Council, Howden 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 16 surveys completed by the closing date.

## **Feedback**

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

## **What people like about the park**

The skatepark is liked within the park. People also like the river and the fact you can get close to it or use the viewing platforms where you can see kingfishers and other wildlife and enjoy



the noise the river makes. The plants in the wider park are also enjoyed such as the trees and spring bulbs. The open space is a positive aspect and people enjoy walking there especially as it is quiet and away from traffic although the sound of children having fun at the play park is also liked.



### **What people don't like about the park**

The skatepark received some negative comments regarding its design, lack of social areas and viewing facilities. The lack of bins, seating/shelter and a viewing area in the south-west are also dislikes. Trees and shrubs need cut back. Litter, especially along the riverbanks and in the river, including trolleys, is a negative aspect as is graffiti, broken glass and dog fouling. Broken seating is mentioned. The short grass is not liked as it doesn't allow wildflowers to grow.



### **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. These and any relevant comments relating to them or other feedback are as follows –

#### Skatepark

There were a number of suggestions for the skatepark and facilities surrounding it.

A skatepark is regarded as a play asset and different budgets are used for investment in play assets than for park enhancements. The budget that is currently available for the wider park enhancements will not, therefore, be used in or around the skatepark.

The council was, however, granted planning permission at the end of May 2025, to undertake improvement works to Livingston skatepark. The essential structural and surface repairs will ensure the continued use and preservation of the skatepark. Listed building consent was required as the site is designated as a listed structure, Category B, by Historic Environment Scotland.

There is no programme yet to undertake the works. The council will advise on the timescales and duration of the work once agreed.

#### Play area and features

There were comments suggesting various new pieces of play equipment at the play area.

As above, the current available budget does not include for investment in the play area. There are, however, plans to enhance the play area with new trampolines, roundabout and musical play items, which are all inclusive pieces, along with new natural play elements as a separately funded project.

#### Littering and bins

There were suggestions for more bins and the removal of broken glass and litter.

There are a number of bins located throughout the park. These are mixed litter and dog waste bins. The Cleaner Communities team within the council determines the number of bins within the county. The current provision in Almondvale Park is considered to be sufficient.

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>

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>

#### River and riverbank clean ups

Some of the riverbanks within Almondvale Park are very steep and it is not safe for operatives to remove litter from them as part of their routine litter picks. The depth of the river, particularly after prolonged rain, also makes the clearance of litter and trolleys from the river unsafe/very difficult. Litter picks by individuals and the community are a welcome addition to the council's operations across the county but the council does not expect or encourage the public to enter water bodies or do any litter picking in dangerous situations such as on steep banking.

Ad hoc litter picks in or near the river are sometimes managed by the council through external contractors when funding allows and conditions are safe.

A scheme operated by independent contractors to recover and return abandoned shopping trolleys to retailers is in place within West Lothian. Independent websites are available to report abandoned trolleys (the council is not responsible for their content):

For Asda trolleys <https://tmsuk.org/collex/>

Unfortunately, graffiti is a common form of vandalism in spaces across West Lothian. As well as defacing property it creates a negative impression of an open space or area and costs the council resources to remove. It can also be defamatory, abusive and offensive. If you would like to report an area of graffiti please use the council's Report It webpage at [Report Graffiti - West Lothian Council](#)

Some comments and suggestions referred to additional seating or the repair of existing seats.

Almondvale Park  
- Seating options

● Existing seating

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There are, however, two stone seating features on the northern river bank at the western edge of the park which are now badly damaged/vandalised. Their repair would not offer good value for money with the limited budget currently available and it is suggested that they are removed. Adding new seating here is not considered appropriate given that the site has a high level of anti-social behaviour. Additional seats are available within a short distance of the existing stone seats.



There are also three benches near the edge of the path along the southern river bank, in the central area, which are no longer attractive due to their condition. It is suggested that these be removed. The gap that would be left would be suitable for a new bench.

There are existing proposals to add seating around the Symbiosis sculpture near the play area as part of the play area enhancements, mentioned above.

#### Additional viewing platform

There are formal viewing platforms along the northern river bank. None exist along the southern bank. Both banks have a number of opportunities to view the river from the path network or grass areas. A new viewing platform is not considered to be a priority spend from the limited budget currently available.

#### New water fountain

A drinking fountain must have frequent inspections and servicing to ensure it does not carry water borne diseases. The cost of installing a new water supply, installing a fountain and the on-going revenue resources required to comply with health and safety is outwith the available budget and, therefore, won't be considered by the council.

#### Path improvements

There is an uneven area of path on the route from the southern car park to the skatepark. It is suggested that this section is re-surfaced although the timing of this needs to be considered in line with proposed skatepark repairs.

There is also an uneven section of path between the skatepark and the Bridge of Remembrance, on the south side of Terrace Car Park. It is suggested that this section is re-surfaced.

A path from the north-eastern car park into the park is becoming uneven with tree roots. Advice will be sought from colleagues in Parks and Woodland to ensure that path repairs are possible without damaging nearby trees and their roots. If so, this path section is suggested for repair/upgrading.

There is a small triangle of ground at the bottom of the steps on the northern side of the skatepark, adjacent to the path on the southern riverbank, which has no hard surfacing. It is suggested that this is upgraded with a Bitmac area created between the steps and path.

#### Signage

There are a number of signs around the park providing directions, information and interpretation. Due to the weather and environmental debris or damage/vandalism some of these require varying degrees of cleaning. The removal of general "muck" to most and the removal of paint/graffiti from some is suggested.

There is an "empty" sign post at the western end of the park near the bridge to Livingston Football Club. It is suggested that a new park sign panel is installed here to mark the park entrance and provide contact details for reporting any issues within the park.

#### New toilet

A new toilet would require clean water and dirty water connections and a building/module as well as on-going maintenance. The cost of this would exceed the budget currently available for park enhancements. The council is currently undertaking an exercise to remove some redundant community facilities such as sports pavilions and changing areas etc. to reduce revenue costs for on-going repairs and maintenance and would not, therefore, consider a new toilet facility in Almondvale Park, even if budget allowed.

There are toilet facilities available to the public during weekday opening hours of the Civic Centre which is in the central, northern area of the park.

#### Grounds maintenance in Almondvale Park

Operational Services (NETS's, Land & Countryside) maintains the grounds of Almondvale 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>

The council is very aware of the effects that chemical spraying can cause and complies with all health and safety requirements to ensure the safety of its operatives, the public and the environment. The council annually treats millions of linear metres of path edges and road verges as well as many areas under and around park furniture and features to reduce weed growth. The frequency of this varies, depending on how an area is used, e.g. sports pitches are maintained more often than rural road verges.

The council has previously trialled a number of alternatives to chemical spraying to reduce or stop weed growth. This included hot water treatment, vinegar and burning. None of these proved as effective as chemical treatment and were all considerably more expensive than Glyphosate. Hand weeding is not a practical alternative either due to available resources.

#### Wildflower meadow/reduced grass cutting

Grassland sections in the north-west of the park are managed as meadow areas, receiving only one cut in late summer. Much of the river bank and woodland areas are left unmown with only the edges adjacent to paths cut to maintain accessibility and amenity. There are also areas of the park that receive reduced mowing such as around specimen trees, in and around areas of bulb planting and on the banking near the play area.

The council has just approved a change to its Service Standards for grass cutting in order to secure benefits for biodiversity. These changes are required in part to address outcomes from the Community Choice consultation on grounds maintenance service delivery and to address the ongoing Nature/Climate emergency.

The Strategy for Grassland Management sets out a proposed plan for changes over a 10-year period commencing from 2025 which aims to address the results from community choice consultation and deliver a sustainable approach to amenity grassland management benefiting wildlife and the communities they serve. It will help deliver actions of the West Lothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan and link into other council strategies and plans.

Almondvale Park has areas of grassland which could potentially be considered for "NATURE management" (as explained in the committee report available at <https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/viewDoc.asp?c=e%97%9Db%8Ei%7E%8D%8B>) which would result in reduced grass cuts in selected areas of the park without affecting the overall amenity of park users but benefitting its biodiversity.



## **Park proposals**

Based on the community suggestions (excluding the play area and skatepark 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 following the outline of proposals as follows -

### Improved seating–

A number of seating changes are proposed as follows –

Location 1 - Remove remains of 2 stone seats on north-west riverbank. The stone will be retained for works on site including a section of wall repair and a new landscaped area around the Symbiosis sculpture near the play area.

Location 2 – Remove 3 wooden/metal seats near the south bank, central area. Install new metal seat with Bitmac surfacing underneath to improve accessibility and reduce weeds.



### Signage enhancements –

A new park sign is proposed as follows –

Location 3 – Western edge of park on existing lectern near bridge.



The cleaning of park name panels and interpretation boards is also proposed to remove dirt and graffiti.

### Access improvements

The resurfacing of sections of the access network within the park is proposed at the following locations –

Location 4 – Resurface a short section of path from the southern car park leading towards the skatepark. (The timing of this will be determined by proposed works to the skate park and the access route for contractors' vehicles).

Location 5 – Resurface a section of path on the southern riverbank, to the north of the Terrace Car Park, off Almondvale Boulevard.

Location 6 – Repair the steps leading into the park from the north-eastern car park, if possible without damaging trees and tree roots.

Location 7 – Create new Bitmac area at bottom of steps near southern riverbank, near skatepark.





### Grounds maintenance

Location 8 – A tree stump and watering tube will be removed from the slope in the southern central area.



The grass cutting regime will be discussed with Grounds Maintenance and Ecology & Biodiversity colleagues to see if any areas within the park can become NATURE managed. This would not be a capital cost but would require changes to how resources are used

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**.

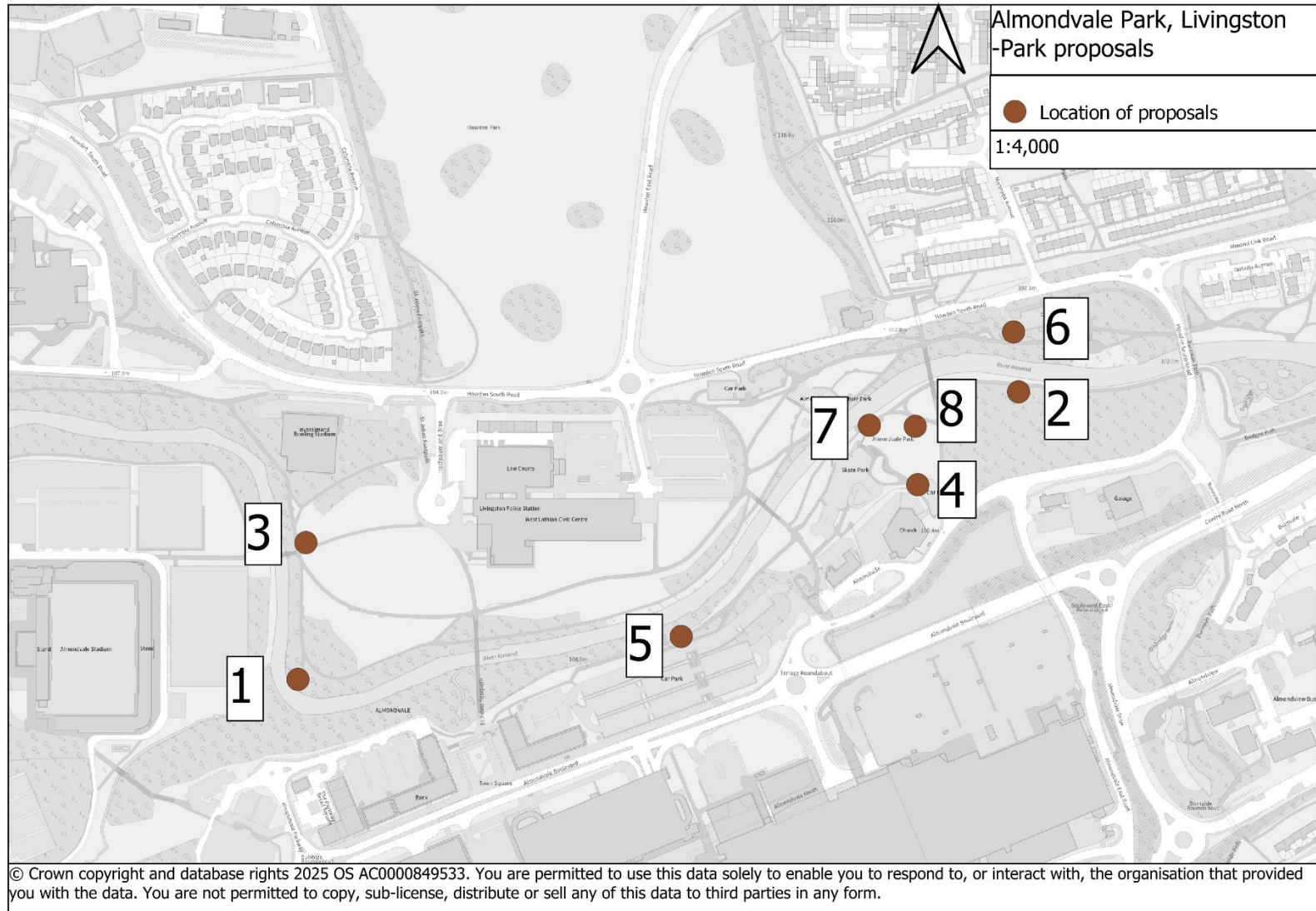
Discussions with colleagues will be undertaken on some of the above proposals.

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.

The 13 respondents who requested to join the park email list 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](mailto:Carol.Campbell@westlothian.gov.uk)



## Park proposals plan



## **Appendix 1 - All survey results (as returned in surveys).**

### **1. What do you like best about this park?**

- Livingston skatepark
- River
- Skatepark
- Skatepark
- The viewing gallery
- Open space, south facing.
- it goes close to the river and there are nice birds like kingfishers there
- Quiet walk away from traffic
- Great walk with dogs
- The open space and accessible paths
- The abundance of wildlife and the wide range of plants and trees.
- The skate park
- The peace and the river.
- I like the open spaces, which makes me feel safer when walking along. I also like to hear the sound of children having fun at the play park. I enjoy the noise of the river running through it and knowing that wildlife can use the river. I enjoy the spring bulbs
- Nice walk
- Looking at the river, wildlife, access to green space for mental health

### **2. Is there anything you don't like?**

- Lack of viewing spaces and social areas around skatepark that doesn't hinder the skatepark itself
- not enough bins especially at the skatepark
- Skatepark not having new stuff added to it
- Shrubbery maintenance by river
- There isn't a viewing gallery on the south west of old howden bridge in the trees.
- Trees need cut back. They're coming onto the paths and narrows them.
- There is lots of litter about and trolleys in the river. One of the paths that goes under a bridge gets flooded and there is lots of thick mud.
- Too much litter especially in the river
- Graffiti, rubbish, broken glass shopping trolleys and broken seats
- No
- The river is severely neglected and it's depressing (and frankly embarrassing).
- The full pipe segment of the skate park. ; ; There has been numerous council and/or MP members who have visited and agreed with the errors that this segment of the park is uneven and would benefit from being rebuilt.; ; I have been told on a few occasions that who I vote for in elections would determine if this gets fixed but years down the line this segment remains untouched.; ; This area of the park would be perfect for a proper street style of skating with stair sets, ledges and banks at varying heights which would be good for people of all ages and makes it easier to achieve as it would be less to knock down or if the funding is there putting a vote on what the users of the park would love to have.; ; I have attached an article and would be happy to be contacted to point out in person what areas are uneven. It would be really nice to talk to someone from the council who states that something is going to be fixed and achieves it, everyone makes mistakes.; ; I think any development moving forward should have skaters advice livi is known for being one of the best skate parks in the world because everything flows with each other. Most skate parks have disconnected segments where you skate one area and have to push for a long

time to get to the other but in Livi you can hop in and out of everything and whatever comes next should have this flow in mind.; ; I would love if a member of council would come down for a few days for 30 minutes and look at all the other areas of the park that get so much attention and time spent in them then look at how long if at all is someone in the full pipe.; ; <https://skateboardscotland.com/2013/03/06/livi-newspaper-article/>; ; Another option may be to attach something to the side of the full pipe segment in a street style of skating if the removal of the full pipe is not achievable there is still plenty of space around the park.; ; This skate park is one of the last semi free things to do in Livingston and services the needs of the 18-24 population as well as all other ages. I believe the skate park decreases anti social behaviour because it gives people something to do which is one of the biggest problem of this generation especially as the cost of living increases.; ; Other areas of Almondvale park may benefit from a seating area or sheltered area to give the kids a place to hang out.

- Broken glass, graffiti and littering.
- I don't like that the river and the steep banks on the Almond Boulevarde side are full of litter, abandoned trolleys and other detritus.
- Dog fouling. Discarded dog poo bags. Litter in bushes. Dumped items in the river.
- Litter and too much grass without wildflowers, mown too short

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

- More seating, information about skatepark
- get more bins at the skatepark
- Adding a street plaza style section at the skatepark
- Smoother paths to the skatepark from both car parks.
- Add a viewing gallery to the South west of old howden bridge up high looking down and clear away some of the young saplings obstructing the current view
- More benches. Regular broken glass removal. More equipment at the swing park. More swings. More seating.
- Super smooth paths to roller skate on.
- There are almost no litter bins on the south side of the river so more added might encourage their use.
- Clean up graffiti ; ; Regularly clean rubbish, broken glass etc; ; Clear shopping trolleys etc dumped in river and alongside river banks etc.; ; Repair broken seats
- I'd love to see a water fountain near the civic centre. This would be especially useful for parkrun and running groups who train here, runners, walkers, dog walkers & cyclists who use the paths.; I'm part of Lothian Running Club and it's something we'd love to see, and also help with in some way.
- The river and its embankment desperately need cleaning up. The river is full of shopping trollies, tyres, fire extinguishers and other bulky items, whilst the embankment is just absolutely strewn with litter. Regarding the litter, I'm a member of West Lothian Litter Pickers and we regularly pick the area, but it's just too much for a volunteer organisation to keep up with. Regarding the bulky items in the river like trollies, I previously reported these regularly to the council until someone from the NETS team called me personally and discouraged me from reporting any more because it was costing the council too much money to deal with. He said I should use apps like Trolleywise and Collex instead so I tried them for several months, but the trollies were never collected and so I stopped wasting time reporting them anywhere and now they're just everywhere. If you have spare money, please please PLEASE consider cleaning up our river. It's so depressing to see wildlife swimming in it and interacting with it in its current state. Honestly, I regularly retrieve trollies myself if they're not right in the middle of the river, and I'd do them all myself if I had the right equipment. Please, clean the river!



- Enhancing the skate park with input from local skaters ; ; Big level of funding; ; Remove the full pipe segment that the council has verbally promised in the past, and replace it with a street style of skating and/or a more equal bowl or halfpipe where skaters are consulted in the design.; ; Plaza style skating area would be ideal as it adds variation to park . Stairs,ledges,planters with grindable ledge, variety ledge heights for all levels and also acting as bench's.; ; Keep nature intertwined with design with Plant boxes with wide ledge for grinding ; ; More achievable enhancements to the skate park; ; Smooth/update paths into the skatepark; ; Bins that are non electric it's a waste of money they get broken easily; ; A Few "skate-able" benches; ; Update the signage at the front of the park to give the history of the park ; (email for info :lulzMacky@gmail.com); ; Toilet (good for all parts of the park); ; ; Another option may be to attach something to the side of the full pipe segment in a street style of skating if the removal of the full pipe is not achievable. There is still plenty of space around the park so other areas may be good as well I believe there used to be a BMX track near the skate park this may be good to bring back to enhance the use of Almondvale park.
- Benches and bins. Regular cleans.
- A long needed clear out of the river would improve the space for people and wildlife alike. Remove some shrubbery or prune it down as a deterrent to anti -social behaviour. ; Supplementing the beautiful spring planting with a wildflower meadow.
- More seating
- Big cleanup of things in the river and on the riverbank; Wildflower "mosaic" planting with paths mown through the main area, but majority left to higher than 2 inches, this is essential for invertebrates, pollinators such as bees and butterflies who we know are in decline. By increasing the mowing height, and mowing less frequently we could see grassy areas covered in short growing flowers like daisy, violet and self heal which are beautiful as well as being imperative for the balance in our environment. Dedicated wildflower meadows are essential, so an increase in their area would be good but the variation in heights, allowing some short growing but less frequently mown parts will encourage a biodiverse range of species.; ; No pesticides to be used in any area in or near the park as it is so close to a watercourse, and the aquatic life that can be affected by runoff, as well as those affected by soil absorption and the fact this park is used by dog walkers and children, to protect them not only within the boundaries of the park, but in the areas leading to it.; I am very concerned to see there are dead areas of grass in your photograph below around the tree and sign. Grass around these could be better controlled by either hot water jet or by hand weeding instead of using carcinogenic chemicals, which puts both operatives, and those of us using the park at risk of cancers, especially those most likely to come in contact with it, children and dogs. ; There are already several pesticide free council areas in the UK, and looking to Europe we can see there are successful examples of how we can maintain our public spaces without the need for harmful chemicals which impact human health, pets, wildlife and the cycle of marine and terrestrial life.