

WELCOME
TO
MEANWOOD

A 2030 Vision for

Meanwood



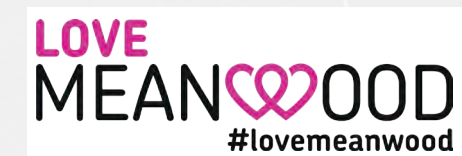
Above: Love Meanwood steering group. L-R: Ron Baker, Vanessa Brown, Isabel Swift, Janet Matthews and Adam Ogilvie. Not pictured: Neil Pentelow and Liz Hargreaves.

We have had a great time meeting people and listening to what they had to tell us about Meanwood, and how we could work together to shape our community in the future.

Our aim was to create a vision for Meanwood involving as many members of the community as we could. We formed a steering group and started meeting with people in winter 2019.

This report is the result of a collaboration between the steering group and the organisations they represent, volunteers, people who commented online, came to workshops and people we have spoken to in the street.

We want to say a huge thank you to those who have made this possible. Our funders; National Lottery Community Fund, the Meanwood Valley Partnership, the Inner North East and Inner North West Community Committees and Housing Advisory Panels of Leeds City Council; the volunteers who helped us to run our community consultation events; Charlie, Lewis, Alicia, Chris, Sue, Tim, Julian and many more.



Supported By:



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Summary

We set out in early 2019 with the goal of finding out what people in Meanwood thought was important for their area, and what they wanted to see change. Almost two years later we have compiled this vision as a comprehensive answer to our original question.

With funding from the Lottery Community Fund and Leeds City Council a steering group was formed. The steering group has seven members representing a diverse range of community groups, organisations and residents, that are based in Meanwood. The group collaborated to design the consultation process and extensive desk based research was undertaken.

We ran a consultation with three overarching themes which we had identified as the major issues our community faces today:

- Enjoying a healthy life.
- Climate change, our environment and the landscape around us.
- Equal access for all members of the community to facilities, services and public spaces.

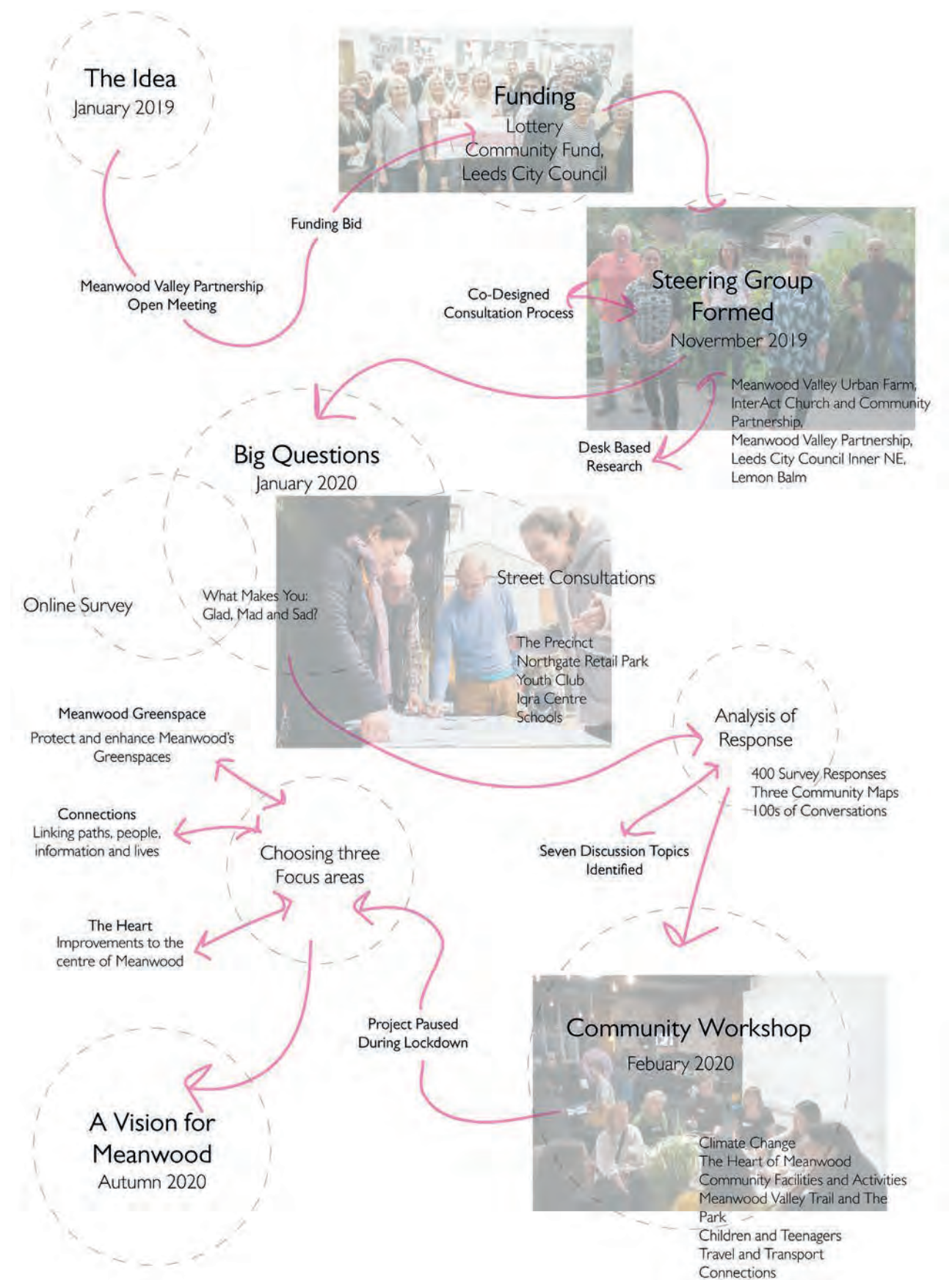
The consultation was in two stages, the first of which being the 'Big Questions' in January 2020. Through a combination of street consultations, an online survey and targeted consultations, to ensure a broad representation, we managed to speak to a wide sample of Meanwood. We asked, "What do you love about Meanwood?", "What don't you love so much about Meanwood?", and "What are

you passionate to change?" The responses were analysed from the 'Big Questions' and identified seven discussion topics to be looked at further.

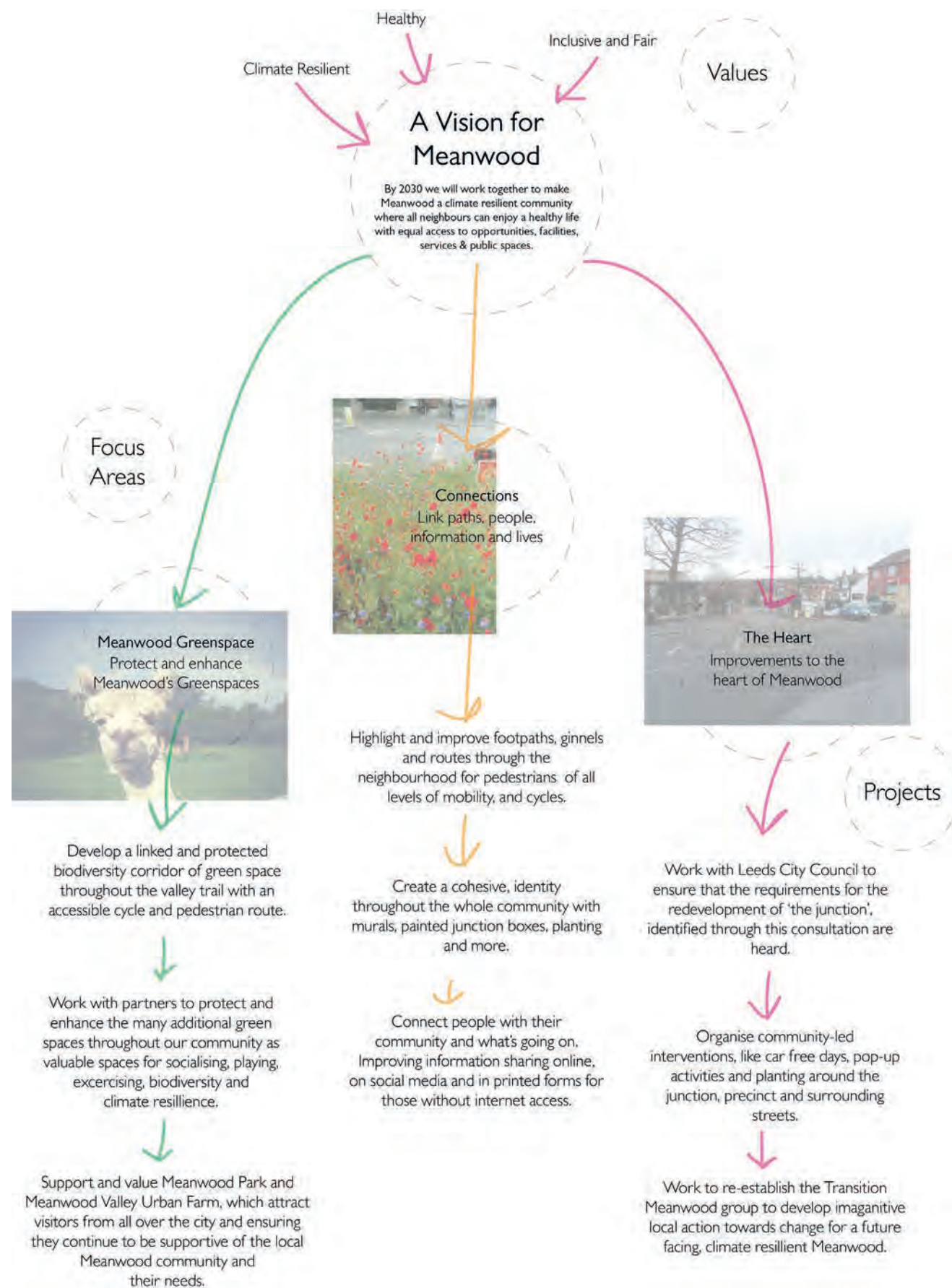
The second phase was more focused; we held a community workshop where we invited people who had registered an interest in helping to develop the vision further. The event, held in February 2020, had seven discussion tables and over the course of the evening everyone had a chance to discuss three of the topics with each other and a facilitator who had some understanding of the topic.

The findings from the community workshop led us to develop three focus areas for the vision. We have called these: Meanwood Greenspace, Connections and The Heart. Each of the focus areas has three projects.

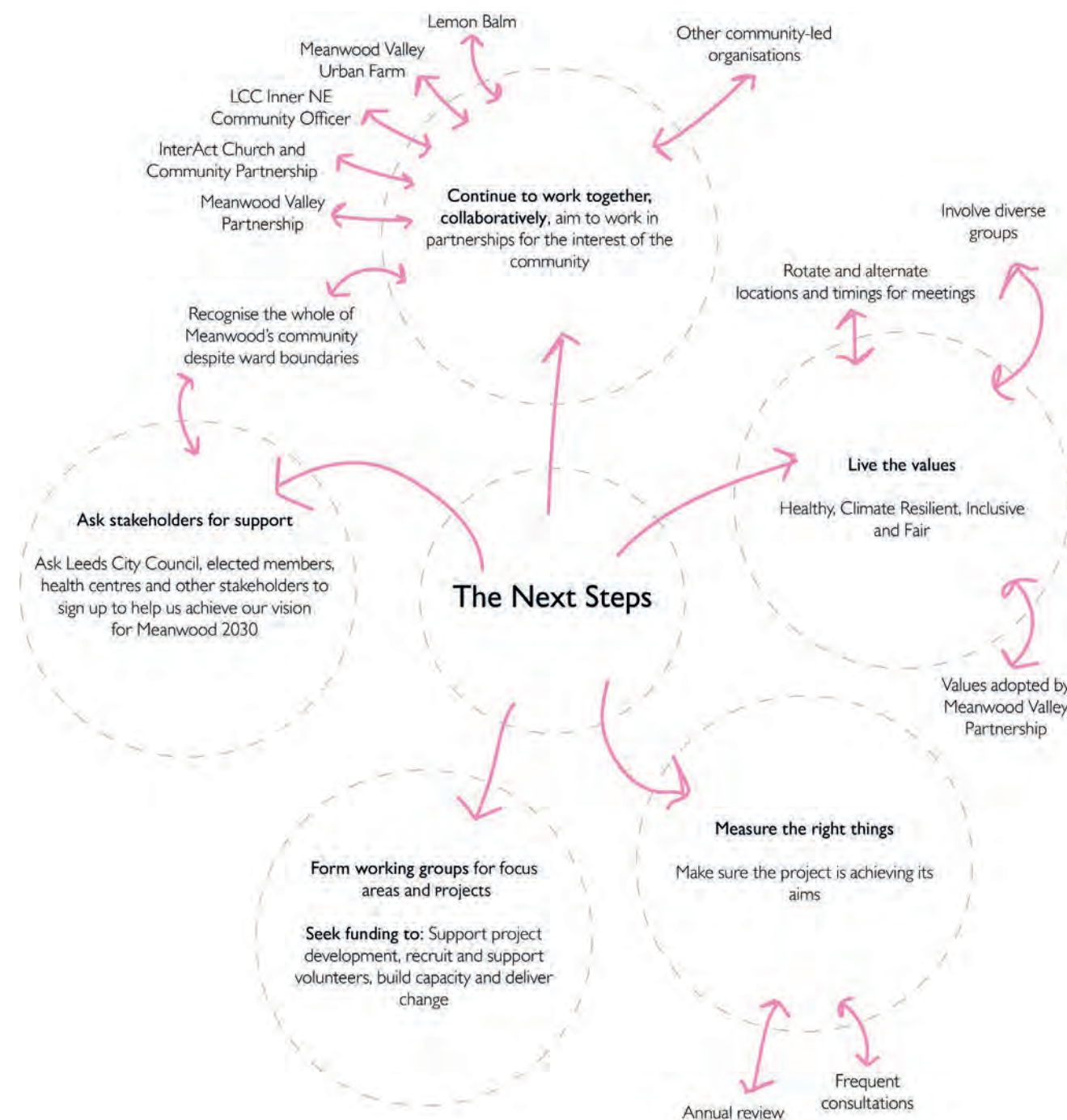
To achieve the vision the individual projects will form their own groups and develop project plans. To ensure that the projects still work towards the original goal of Love Meanwood and respond to the findings of the consultations, the people and organisations who make up the steering group will continue to work together, in partnership, for the interest of the community.



Above: A summary of the process we took to create this vision



Above: The three focus areas and their projects for the vision



Above: The next steps of the Love Meanwood Project



Introduction

We began the 'Love Meanwood' journey with a coffee and an introductory chat in December 2018 where two groups came together to talk about partnership working and priorities. We realised that we could say what we thought was important but we should ask and involve more people. So Meanwood Valley Partnership applied for some money to fund the project and then employed Lemon Balm as lead delivery partner and together we formed a steering group to more broadly represent our community.

“We love living here, it's close to the city but it's still got a rural feel”

The aim of Love Meanwood is to empower and enable people from Meanwood to take part in improving our community. The project to create this vision has been run by a group of people who live or work in Meanwood and love the area.

We have asked as many people who live in Meanwood as possible for their thoughts and ideas on how we can improve Meanwood and the public spaces in our local area. We did this through a series of community events and an online questionnaire.

This document is the outcome of the project so far. It explains the process we followed and what we have learnt about Meanwood, 12 months of planning, asking, researching, analysing, listening, generating ideas and discussing what we have learned.

Left: Big questions event held in the centre of Meanwood in January 2020 (Photo: © www.timdunk.com)

Throughout this project we have spoken to hundreds of people and heard hundreds of stories, facts, ideas and gripes. We have discovered 12 different neighbourhoods, all with distinct characters, some which have more public spaces and resources, some which have less.

We have found interesting features and interlinking paths. We all come together to shop, socialise and celebrate as one community with a central ‘heart’ (down the hill at the junction where the retail park, Waitrose and the precinct are) and we also have many other small ‘hearts’ in the form of collections of shops, schools, places of worship and places to socialise. We value the hustle and bustle of the shops, but we love the peace of the Meanwood Valley Trail and value the pockets of green in between our neighbourhoods.

We all had one thing in common. We all Love Meanwood.

Meanwood is a great place to live and work. With a fascinating history and a vibrant community looking to the future. We want to work together to make it even better, sharing the aspiration to make all of Meanwood a really healthy and happy place where we think of and care for the environment, and all neighbours have access to great community activities and facilities.

We hope that this document will be a resource for planning in the future, showing the council, health service and

other statutory services that we have a thriving community who want to be involved in shaping our shared future.

This document is designed to be shared, to be a reference of where we are and how we got here, and to act as a catalyst bringing ideas, support and resources into our community.

The period in which we undertook our research and consultation was an unusual one. The project began in January 2020 and in March we had to take a pause as the global pandemic Covid-19 took hold and we were all forced into a period of lockdown and community and social isolation. This time saw resourcefulness, pulling together, great compassion, it was a time when the ‘how are you?’ at the start of a phone call had real meaning.

School halls became sewing rooms for volunteers to make PPE for NHS workers, businesses diversified to online stores and delivery, neighbours shopped for those who had to stay in and hundreds of vulnerable people were supported by local charities.

We want to empower and enable people from Meanwood to take part in shaping our community. We have based this project around three themes, determined by the key issues facing society today:

- Enjoying a healthy life
- Climate change, our environment and the landscape around us
- Equal access for all members of the community to facilities, services and



public spaces.

to work together (See p.90 for details of how to get in touch).

We will use our vision to guide future plans, designs and ideas for both green and concrete areas, footpaths, shopping areas etc., and also community projects that could benefit us all. It will be a key tool to speak with Leeds City Council about new building developments and town planning policies for our community in the future. And also, to attract the resources (money and help) that we’ll need to achieve change.

Join us! If you have an idea which can tackle one of the issues raised or would like to help with / lead a project, or use the data, then get in touch - we’d love

Above: People taking part in the Big Questions consultation (Photo: © www.timdunk.com)



“It is my whole life, my happy childhood memories, the new memories I’ll now make with my son. I haven’t lived anywhere but Meanwood.”

Along with asking local people about Meanwood, we undertook a review of ‘the Meanwood we have now’, including a look at the history, the ecology, and the political and social landscape. How and why is Meanwood here? What could this tell us about the future? To develop a vision for the future, it’s important to understand what is here and how we got here.

Meanwood Now

An analysis of where we are and how we got here

Left: Enjoying cakes at the Christmas light switch on 2019. (Photo: Paul Dishman)

The History of Meanwood

Meanwood has a rich history in its mills, buildings, streets and people. To give some context, we've summarised the key points of Meanwood's history and how Meanwood has developed into how we know it today.

The name Meanwood goes back to the 12th century, and is of Anglo-Saxon derivation: the Meene wude was the boundary wood of the Manor of Alreton, the woods to the east of Meanwood Beck. Dwellings and farms near the wood were known by a variety of names including Meanwoodside until 27 August 1847 when the parish of Meanwood was established and the woods became known as Meanwood Woods.

A skirmish between Royalist and Parliamentary forces was alleged to have taken place in Meanwood during the Civil War. It is said that the "beck ran red", with the blood of the fallen, hence, the place name "Stainbeck".

The Meanwood Valley was industrialised as early as 1577 and this continued to the 19th century. The Meanwood Beck provided water and power for corn, flax and paper mills, dye works and tanneries. There were numerous quarries.

In 1830 a turnpike road was established through the Meanwood Valley to Leeds. Public transport followed from 1850 and



"I love the history and the old buildings."

electric trams in 1890, meaning that it was practical for people to travel to work from greater distances, encouraging both industrial buildings and housing.

One of Meanwood's most notable families was the Oates family. Lawrence Oates was an Antarctic explorer, who died during the Terra Nova Expedition. This was an act of self-sacrifice to allow the rest of the team to complete the expedition without the burden of caring for him.

Above: A tram in the centre of Meanwood, in the background the spire of Holy Trinity Church (c1900-1904). (Photo: Leodis Archive)



1890s



1930s



1960s



Top: Historic Maps of Meanwood from 1890, 1930 and 1960.

Above: Map showing location of key historic features

Where is Meanwood?

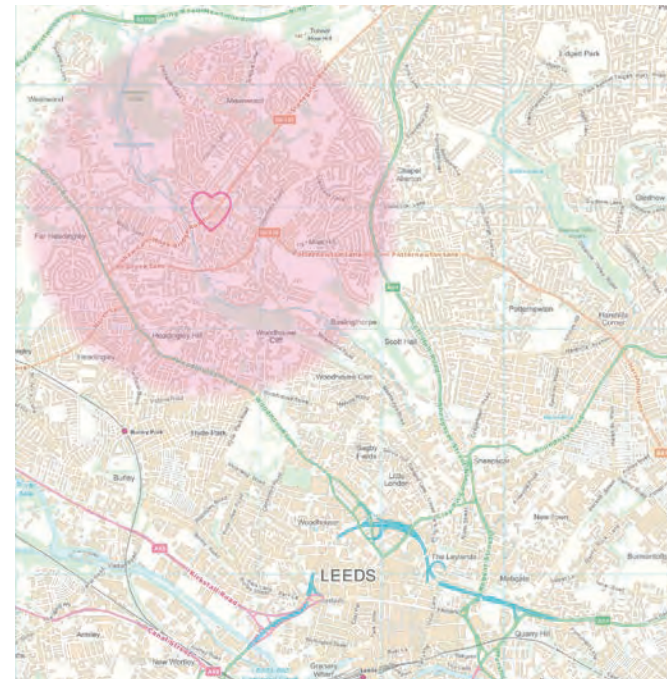
Meanwood is a vibrant community in inner North Leeds, in the North of England. Made up of approximately 18,000 people, based around the economic, retail and leisure centre at the junction of Meanwood Road and Stonegate Road. This is the heart, where people travel in and out to meet each other, shop and access services. Around it are different neighbourhoods each with their own character.

How do you define a community? There is no single, clear definition of Meanwood so we have sought to balance two distinctly different ways to define it:

1. How the people who live here identify where they live.
2. How planners and designers seek to define a community, often using standard measures to enable an objective assessment of where things are or should be.

Both are relevant depending on what you are seeking to achieve.

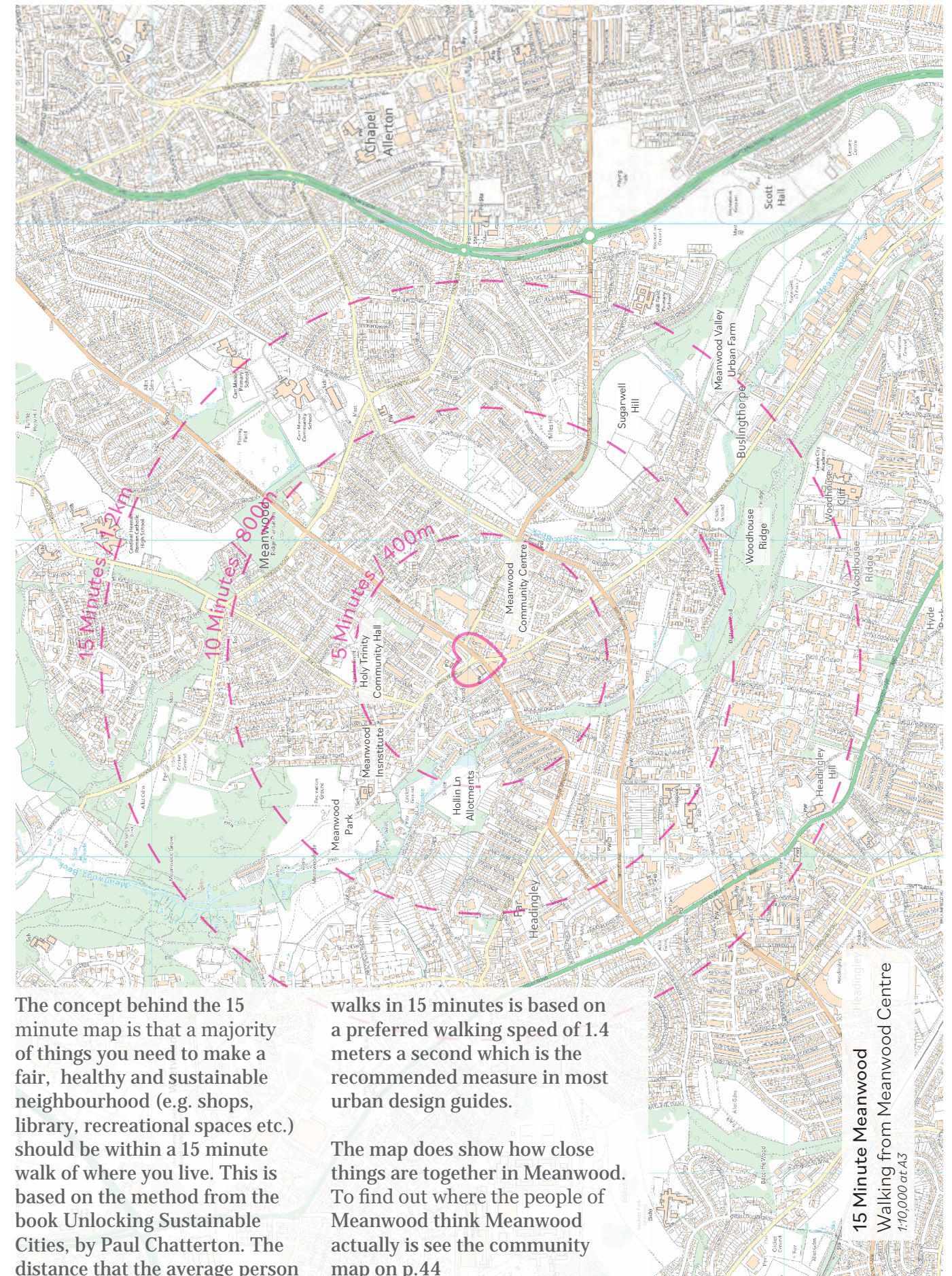
Meanwood has no defined boundary so we decided to ask people to mark where they live and if they feel they live in Meanwood (see p. 44). Whilst most of the people we consulted lived within a standard 15 minute radius from the heart of Meanwood, not all did. People as far east as Scott Hall Road, as far south as the Wharfedales, as far north as the Parklands and the Woodleas, and as far west as the Hollins felt like



Meanwoodians.

We are going to refer to the whole of Meanwood as 'our community' and each of the super output areas (see pg. 22) as 'neighbourhoods'. So for the purposes of this report, Meanwood is one community of 12 neighbourhoods.

Above: Map Showing the location of Meanwood. The pink shaded area is a 15 minute walk from the centre marked with a heart.



The concept behind the 15 minute map is that a majority of things you need to make a fair, healthy and sustainable neighbourhood (e.g. shops, library, recreational spaces etc.) should be within a 15 minute walk of where you live. This is based on the method from the book *Unlocking Sustainable Cities*, by Paul Chatterton. The distance that the average person

walks in 15 minutes is based on a preferred walking speed of 1.4 meters a second which is the recommended measure in most urban design guides.

The map does show how close things are together in Meanwood. To find out where the people of Meanwood think Meanwood actually is see the community map on p.44

Above: Map showing what is within a 5, 10 and 15 minute walk from the centre of Meanwood

Meanwood Mental Map

There are many different ways to look at and analyse a place. For this project we decided to use the method pioneered by the American Urban Designer and Author Kevin Lynch. His book *The Image of The City* observed how people in urban environments understood their surroundings and created mental maps.

Our mental map uses four out of the five elements that Lynch identified people used instinctively to create a map of their surroundings in their head. They are:

- paths, routes which people travel;
- edges, perceived boundaries to movement;
- districts, in this case Meanwood;
- nodes, focal points within an urban area and
- landmarks, identifiable objects which are an external reference point.

For example Scott Hall road is an edge because it is a major barrier to movement - it is not totally impermeable but still makes it difficult for people walking. The beck is also an edge.

Nodes are where pedestrian routes meet, often a node has some sort of destination within it, for example, a small row of shops, a school or a church.

Landmarks such as the spire of Holy Trinity Church are used for wayfinding. They do not necessarily have to be an architectural masterpiece, they just need to be distinctive and visible from a long way.

By thinking about how people understand and find their way around Meanwood, community groups, designers or decision makers can think effectively about how they best work within the area. For example knowing that Scott Hall Road is a major barrier to pedestrian movement could mean a community group with members who walk from Meanwood may decide to base themselves on the western side of the road. Alternatively, a designer may look at the centre of Meanwood and see two nodes which are separated by the Meanwood Road junction and think of ways to make this barrier more permeable to pedestrians.

Through the consultation process this map can be built upon and developed as people share their own 'mental maps'.



Above: Map showing a 'Mental Map' of the Meanwood area. Based on the K. Lynch method of urban analysis

The Neighbourhoods of Meanwood

To allow a closer look between geographic areas, the Office for National Statistics has divided the entire country into super output areas (SOA), and we've looked at 12 SOAs which most closely describe the areas shown in our community mapping exercise. Most of these are to the east of the centre as the Beck and Scott Hall road prevent people walking beyond them.

The northernmost neighbourhood of Meanwood is Woodleas and Parklands. It is mostly characterised by modern semi-detached and detached houses and flats, which are mainly privately owned. The Woodleas estate is built on the site of the old Meanwood Park hospital.

The Carr Manors are home to Carr Manor Community School and Manor Wood Primary School. The housing is a mixture but is mostly post war semi-detached houses which are privately owned. The Wensleys and Carr Holms have similar characteristics to the Carr Manors.

The Miles Hills are located further up the hill beyond the Beckhills. The housing is mostly semi-detached and organised on narrow streets and avenues. It is older social housing, some of which are owner occupied.

The Beckhills are located on the lower levels of the hill between the Miles Hills and Stainbeck Road. It is mainly social housing terraces and flats, some are owner occupied.

The Boothroyds are mostly modern houses in the valley bottom, some of which are social housing. The Farm Hills occupy the valley side up to Sugarwell Hill. This is also home to the Meanwood Valley Urban Farm.

Stainbeck Avenue is located close to Meanwood Community Centre and has a mixture of post war and new build houses. It includes social housing. The Bentleys are sandwiched between Meanwood Road and Grove Lane and are mostly through terraces.

The Highburys are terraced houses on the hillside accessed off Monk Bridge Road. Some of the houses are owner occupied but many are privately rented. The population is more transient.

Towards the park, Hollin Drive is mostly privately owned semi-detached and detached housing with close access to the park.

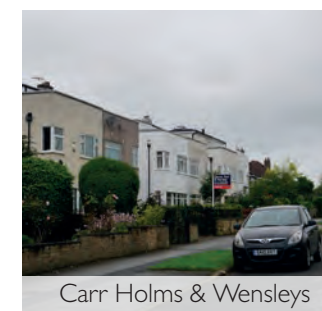
Church Lane, The Parkside and Sunsets are north of the centre of Meanwood, near Holy Trinity church whose spire is visible across Meanwood.



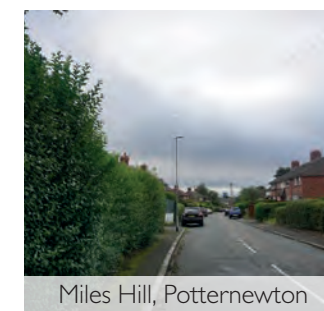
Woodleas and Parklands



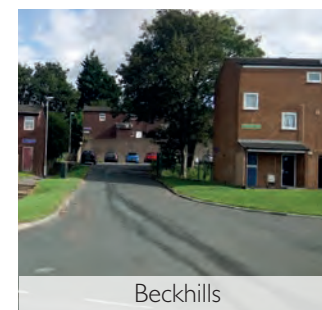
Carr Manor, Stonegate Rd.



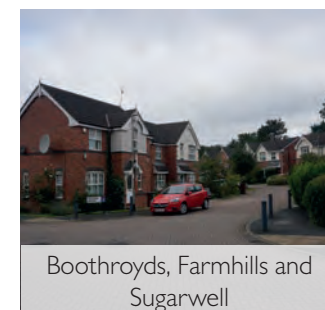
Carr Holms & Wensleys



Miles Hill, Potternewton



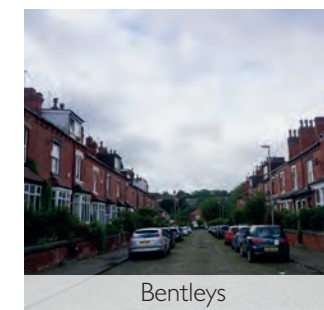
Beckhills



Boothroyds, Farmhills and Sugarwell



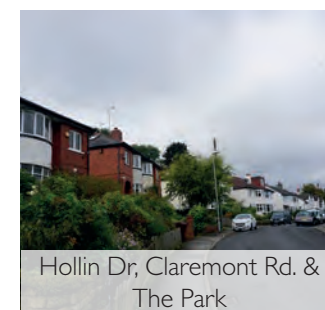
Stainbeck Ave.



Bentleys



Grove Ln. & Highburys



Hollin Dr, Claremont Rd. & The Park



Church Ln, Parkside & Sunset



Sugarwells



These neighbourhoods were confirmed when we undertook community mapping at the big questions event. (see p.44)

Above: Map showing the general locations of each neighbourhood/SOAs within a 15 minute walk from the centre of Meanwood

People and Community

The population of the 12 neighbourhoods of Meanwood is approximately 18,000. Meanwood is fortunate to have an active and visible community. Many streets have residents associations and the whole valley has a partnership dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the area!

To gain accurate statistics about the people of Meanwood we requested information from Leeds Observatory (see appendix 2). For this project we used the census data from the 12 neighbourhoods of Meanwood (see page 22).

- On average there is a higher proportion of people aged 20-39 in Meanwood than in England. However, this closely follows the average for all of Leeds.
- Meanwoods biggest religion is Christianity (50.4%)
- A considerable proportion of Meanwood (30.76%) said that they had no religion.
- Most people own their houses. However there is a higher proportion of private and social renters in Meanwood than Leeds and the rest of England.
- 30% of households do not have a car which is a higher proportion than in England as a whole but lower than the rest of Leeds.

The ‘Your Road, My Street’ project, run by a group of geographers and artists, produced an alternative map of Meanwood Road. The project discussed the difference between a road and a street and reached out to people with a connection to the street who contributed facts, memories and comments about the street.

“I love that the community
is diverse and welcoming to
all”

The Love Meanwood project is an example of Meanwood's community in action. A consortium of local organisations have come together to speak to the wider community to ask them what they want, how they want to do it and enabling them to get involved. The Meanwood Valley Partnership are a well-known group that works with a large number of groups on projects along the Meanwood Valley.



Above: Extract from Your Road My Street map of Meanwood Road. (Credit: Lizzie Coombes, David Dawson, Matthew Bellwood and Amy Levene)

Health and Wellbeing

By this we mean our physical health and mental wellbeing. There are a variety of things we can do to enhance our health and wellbeing, such as eating well, exercising regularly, reducing stress, and there are services we can access if we have a problem or need support. Some of these can be accessed for free such as walking, or at a subsidised rate, like the Health Centre and Scott Hall Leisure Centre. Others have to be paid for privately. We need a good mix of both so that everyone in Meanwood can feel healthy and well.

Five ways to wellbeing

A review of the most up-to-date evidence suggests that building the following five actions into our day-to-day lives is important for well-being:

Connect...

With the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

Be active...

Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

Take notice

Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

Keep learning...

Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.

Give...

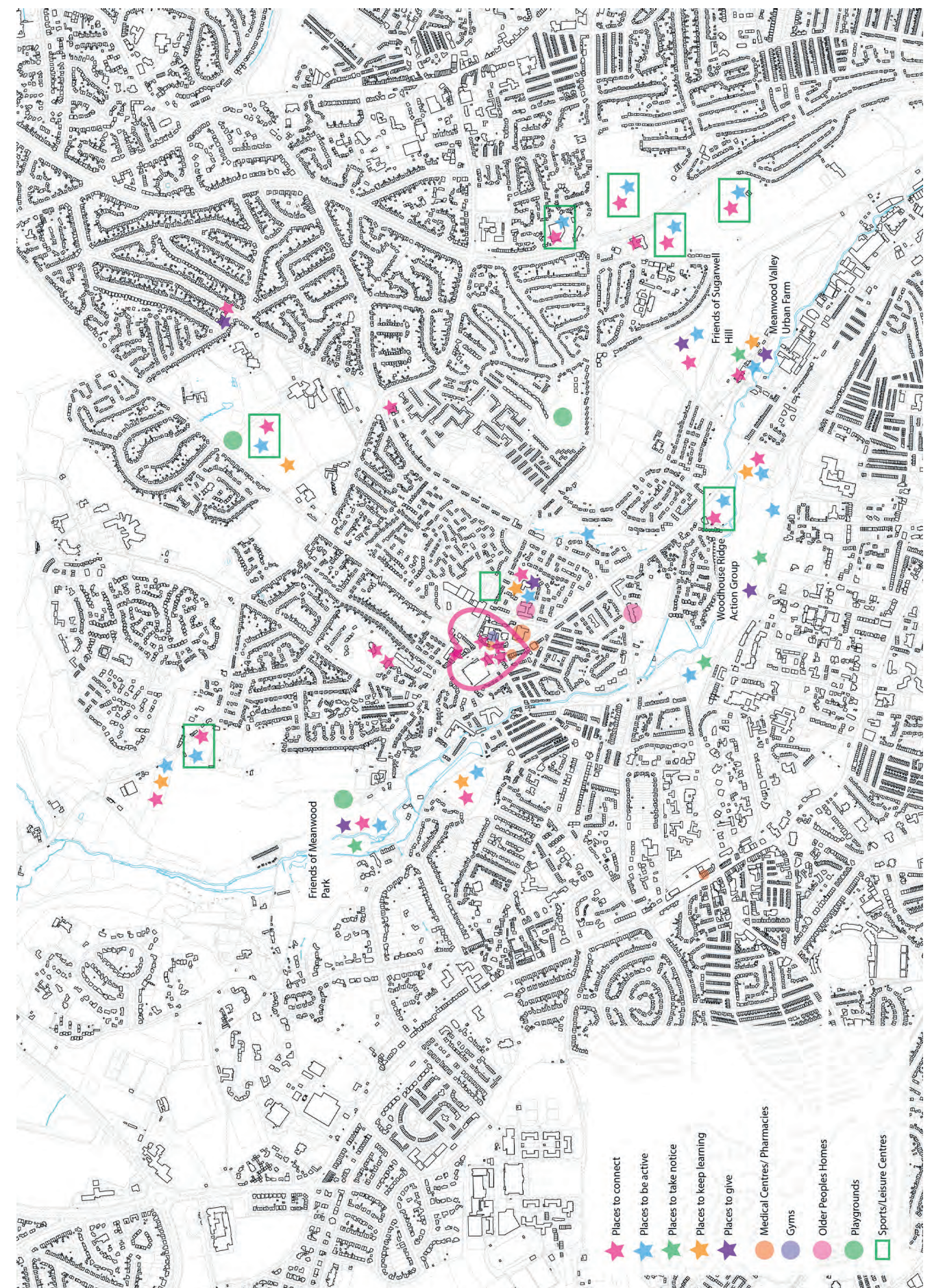
Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

A happy community where these needs are met for all, regardless of income, age, gender, ethnicity, race or any other reason is the Meanwood we'd like to see!

We have tried to map out where opportunities for these five things exist in Meanwood and where there are opportunities for more of this.

In Meanwood we have many locations and facilities that are specifically for health and wellbeing, for example: the medical centre, pharmacies and gyms. But what about our green spaces, is Meanwood Park a health and wellbeing facility? What about playgrounds? We know that there is a connection between green spaces and mental health. People's wellbeing could be improved by spending time in the green spaces around Meanwood.

Left: The Five Ways to Wellbeing from the report by the New Economics Foundation. See appendix for more information.



Above: Map of the 5 ways to wellbeing and the locations of key health and wellbeing facilities in the Meanwood Area

Green Space, Ecology and Biodiversity

Meanwood is fortunate to have a significant green corridor, two becks and many green spaces throughout the area. Meanwood Park and Meanwood Valley Urban Farm are two green space destinations which are visited by people from all over Leeds. There is an opportunity to invest more in the character and biodiversity of the many green spaces throughout Meanwood.

Meanwood is home to many remarkable trees and for an urban area is fortunate to be home to two key city environmental destinations - Meanwood Valley Urban Farm and Meanwood Park.

Meanwood beck starts at Adel Dam and flows into the river Aire as the Lady Beck in east Leeds. It is the backbone of a long habitat corridor that includes Golden Acre Park, Adel Woods, Scotland Wood, Meanwood Park and Woodhouse Ridge. This green finger into Leeds is both a habitat and an ecological corridor. It connects different habitats across the valley allowing wildlife to travel across a wide area, thus supporting a larger and thus healthier gene pool for the species it supports. It also means that the valley can support a wider diversity of wildlife than smaller 'islands' of habitat could.

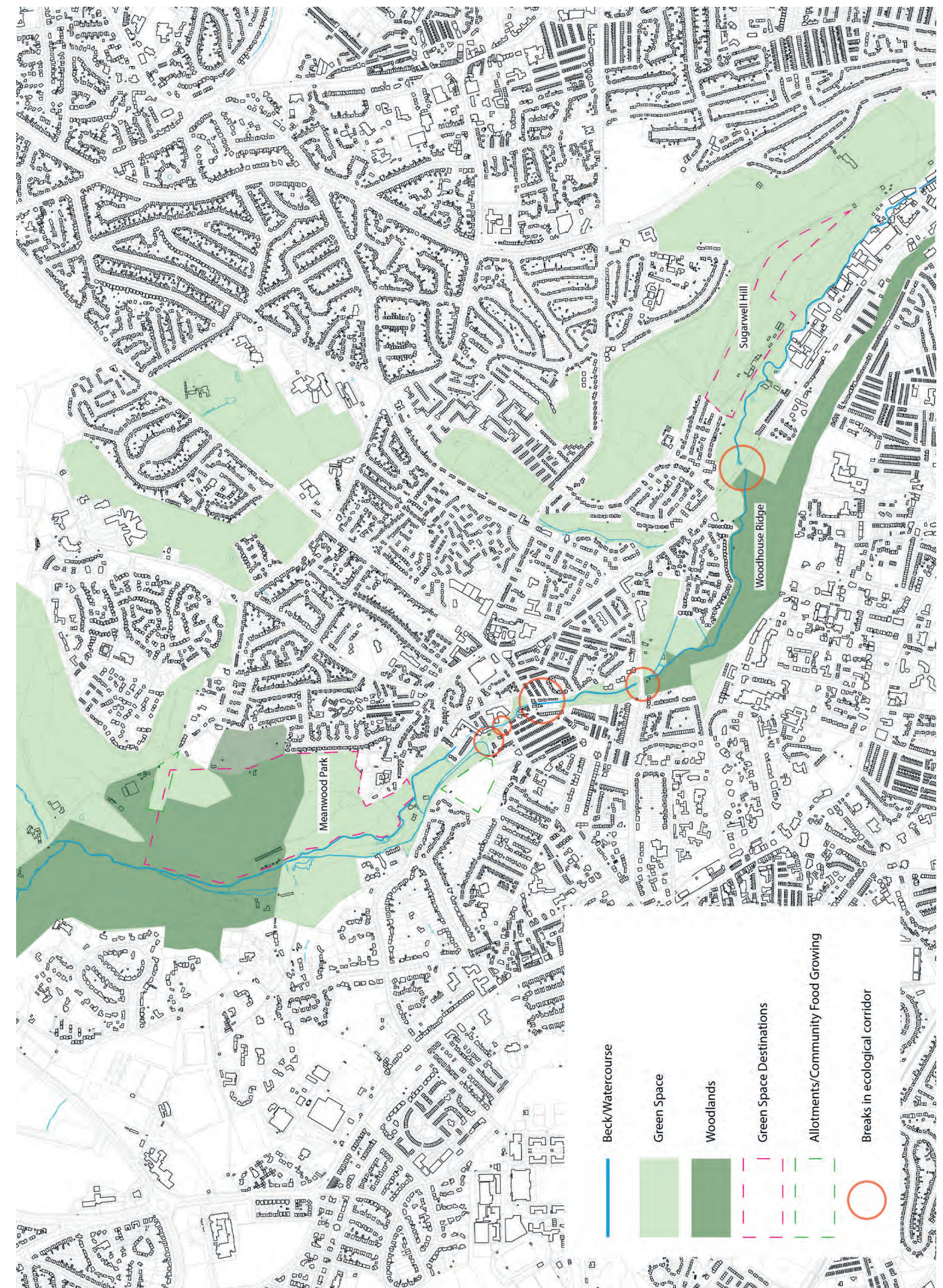
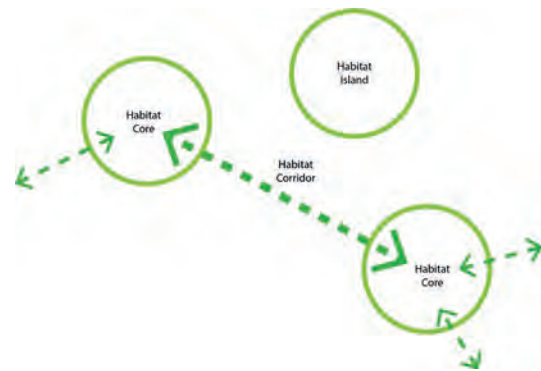
The water quality of the beck is currently good indicated by the diversity of species that are found in its waters. In 1999 there was a serious pollution incident leading to 10,000 litres of oil overflowing into the beck.

"I love the wild untamed Green spaces, unbroken habitats for wildlife along the Meanwood valley trail"

The valley is home to a variety of wildlife. Most visible is the grey squirrel but there are also European crayfish, roe deer, tawny owls and otters. A longer list and map are available from the Meanwood Valley Wilderness on your Doorstep (see appendix).

Most of the bedrock beneath Meanwood is sandstone, a sedimentary rock that formed in the Carboniferous Period.

Above: Diagram showing how networks of habitats are linked through habitat corridors and how isolated habitats become habitat islands



MEANWOOD VALLEY
Wilderness on your Doorstep

Above: Map showing the ecological corridor through Meanwood

Meanwood and the Climate Emergency

Meanwood exists because of the potential of the beck to make energy, however the water that once powered the valley's mills is now its greatest threat. How will Meanwood navigate the ongoing climate crisis and how must we innovate to prevent catastrophe?

It is now accepted that the world is facing a climate emergency which must be at the forefront of everything we do.

The Meanwood Valley Partnership was originally established to connect different conservation organisations along the beck to create a joined up approach to manage flooding.

There have also been actions from Extinction Rebellion in Leeds highlighting the urgency of changing how we live and work to reduce our environmental impact.

Much like the rest of the world, Meanwood must be prepared for more unpredictable and extreme weather conditions and more unknown impacts of the climate crisis.

One impact that Meanwood is already becoming familiar with is the increase in flooding frequency and severity, and with close proximity to the beck this is a real concern. Solutions to this could include investing in and developing an approach to natural flood management. Engaging the wider community

throughout the catchment to 'slow the flow' and help the wider river network deal with high volumes of storm water.

There are also serious concerns about the loss of biodiversity as a result of habitat destruction. Often urban expansion can lead to small, but valuable habitats being destroyed. As the city and region develop, the value of land that is currently 'empty' increases and is sold to development. The land considered empty may in fact be a rich and diverse habitat. Development can also put a barrier in an ecological corridor leading to habitat islands (discussed on p.28).

Food security is also a challenge we will soon face. In Meanwood we have a bread co-op and a community supported agriculture scheme.

The impacts of the climate crisis are too numerous to list in this document. But it is important that we understand the severity of the crisis and how it will potentially change Meanwood.



Above: Map showing the locations of key health and wellbeing facilities in the Meanwood Area

Economy of Meanwood

The beck was the beginning of Meanwood's economy, funnelled into goits to turn the mills which turned the cogs of local economy. Since then much has changed. Meanwood now has a bustling centre with a mixture of local independent businesses, shops, cafés, social enterprises and cooperatives.

There is a thriving creative community in Meanwood. It is home to a large co-working space where new start ups, creative freelancers and crafters can come together to work, and a large photography studio.

On Meanwood Road there are several light industrial units - some contain retail, others contain manufacturing and one is a brewery.

Meanwood is also home to alternative business models such as social enterprises whose business is within the interest of the community. For example Lemon Balm, Community Design & Therapeutic Horticulture located at Meanwood Valley Urban Farm and Leeds Bread co-op who are on Meanwood Road and are operated by and run for their members but placing value on healthy, low impact locally sourced food.

Meanwood Valley Urban Farm is home to a Community Supported Agriculture project which creates local skilled

jobs and provides high quality, locally produced food for members.

There are many people who work from home as tradespeople, creatives and also people who provide services such as dog walking.

“The choice here is fantastic, you have good bars and restaurants and a few good shops too.”

At the centre of Meanwood there is a healthy choice of bars, restaurants and cafés. Many of these are independent or local chains.



Travel & Transport

Meanwood's position in Inner North Eastern Leeds means it is a great location from which to travel in and out of the city. However, proximity to the centre also means that there's a large amount traffic passing through every morning and evening. Combine this with irregular buses, disconnected cycle paths and challenging walking routes, and you are left with a traffic nightmare!

Cycling is a quick and convenient way to travel around the city. Meanwood is fortunate to have several high quality traffic-free cycle routes (see appendix), notably along stainbeck and through the farm. However, there is poor connection between these short segments of path meaning that cyclists' journeys can be disjointed and they are frequently forced onto busy and challenging roads. This can be dangerous and through our consultations we know that this is a key factor in discouraging cyclists from regularly commuting by bike.

The Meanwood Valley Trail runs all the way from Golden Acre Park to Woodhouse Moor. For the most part it follows the beck through woodlands and parkland. It is a route that is both used recreationally and as a part of peoples' daily journeys. It is mostly safe, well surfaced and traffic free, however there are several challenging road crossings and areas where the path surface is difficult to navigate.

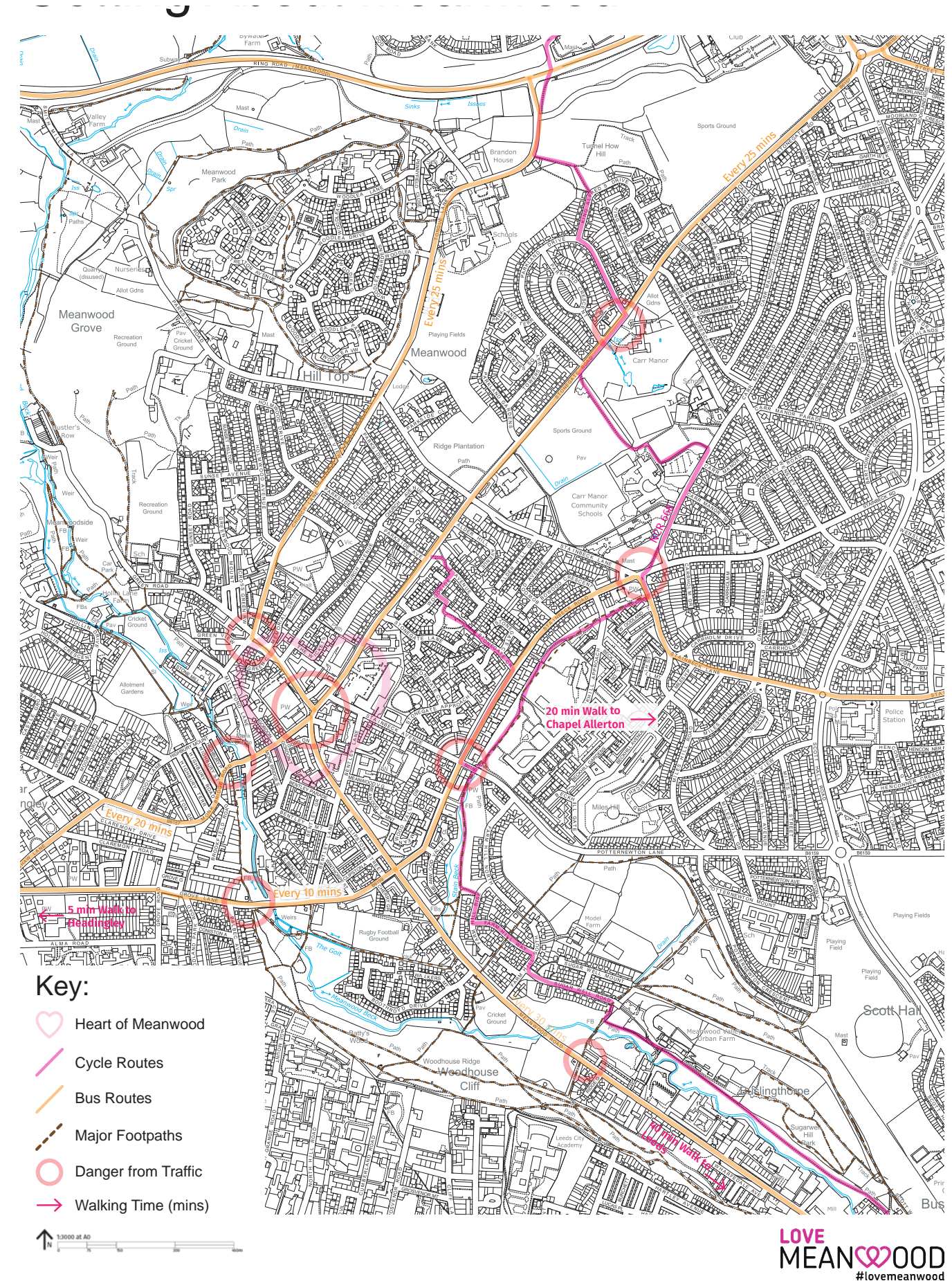
Residents have reported through Meanwood Valley Partnership open

meetings and this consultation that the bus service is inconsistent. Travelling from the centre of Meanwood to the city centre by bus is stated as a 20 minute journey on the timetable. However, many local people claim that this is rarely the case.

Pavements through several parts of Meanwood are narrow. Notably along Monkbridge Road where the situation is so bad that a report has been produced assessing the public realm and pedestrian experience.

“I am tired of risking my life crossing Monk Bridge Road’s zebra crossing”

Some of the ginnels throughout Meanwood, which are a crucial off-road network for pedestrians throughout the area, have fallen into a poor state. By their nature ginnels are narrow but in some cases a lack of maintenance has reportedly made them even more difficult to negotiate.



Above: Map showing the travel routes through Meanwood and from and to key destinations

Meanwood and Equality

We don't all have an equal experience of life in Meanwood. Taking government statistics and terminology we can see that across our 12 neighbourhoods we have some of the most deprived communities and some of the least deprived in the UK. But why is equality important to us all and what could we do to work towards a more equal Meanwood?

Equality is perhaps the key underpinning factor which determines happy, healthy lives and positive cohesive communities. Inequality even has a detrimental effect on climate change. In a fair society, all people have equal access to services and opportunities and experience equal rights and status.

Leeds Health & Wellbeing Board invited Professor Richard Wilkinson to speak at the Health & Wellbeing conference in 2019. He described how his analysis of research studies across disciplines concerning public health and society shows the:

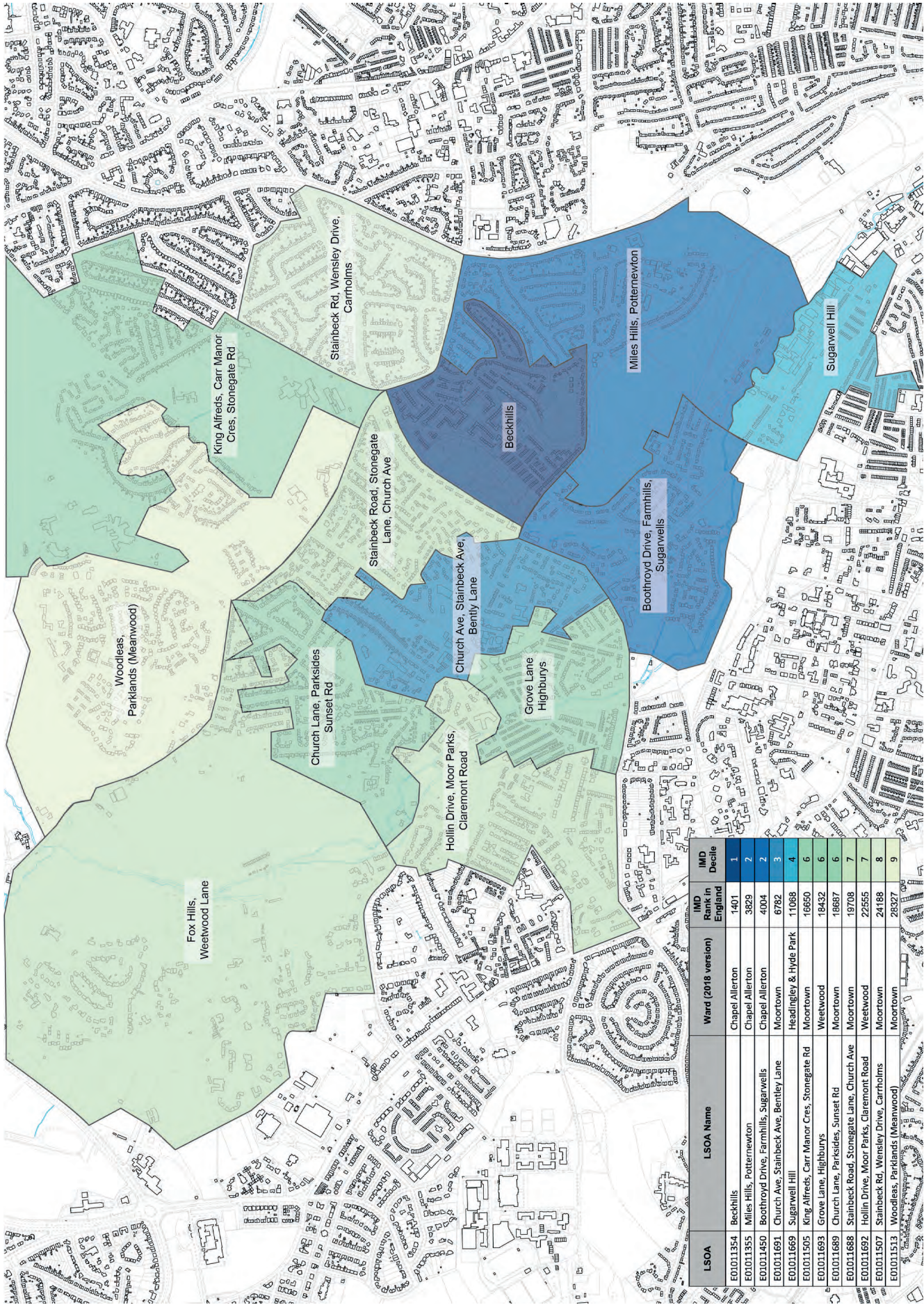
“pernicious effects that inequality has on societies: eroding trust, increasing anxiety and illness, (and) encouraging excessive consumption”. It shows that for each of eleven different health and social problems: physical health, mental health, drug abuse, education, imprisonment, obesity, social mobility, trust and community life, violence, teenage pregnancies, and child wellbeing, outcomes are significantly worse in more unequal rich countries.”

To fully understand our community we need to take a look at equality and accept that we do not all have an equal experience of life in Meanwood.

The Government’s Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) combines information from seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation. The domains are: Income; Employment; Education; Skills and Training; Health and Disability; Crime; Barriers to Housing Services; Living Environment.

“Lack of youth facilities.
Not many events to get communities of different backgrounds together.”

It is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas (or neighbourhoods) in England. The Index of Multiple Deprivation ranks every small area in England from 1 (most deprived area) to 32,844 (least deprived area), these are split by percentage, with those in the top 10% experiencing the most deprivation and in the 90th % the least.



Above: Map showing the 12 super output areas and their ranking in the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Source: Leeds Observatory



“Maybe this is crazy - but I have a dream that the former Highbury cricket pitch land gets converted to an open air swimming facility like Hampstead Heath Ponds. It would be an amazing community asset. There is nothing like it in the city”

We spoke to hundreds of people to produce this vision. Some through our online survey, some in street consultation and others in focused community workshops. This vision is guided by everyone who responded to the opportunity to shape where we live.

Community Involvement

Ideas, appraisal and discussion

Left: Participants contribute to the project at the community workshop. (Photo: © www.timdunk.com)

Methodology

The process was designed early on in the project, collaboratively by the steering group. It was crucial to ensure that we could hear as many voices as possible and to involve lots of people in the analysis and discussion.

The idea of the Love Meanwood project came in January 2019 and quietly developed until being brought to an open meeting at the Meanwood Valley Partnership.

Funding was awarded by the Lottery Community Fund and Leeds City Council which allowed the project to become more active and form a steering group.

In November 2019 a steering group was formed with each member representing a community organisation in Meanwood (see appendix 1). Lemon Balm was employed as the delivery partner and the consultation process was designed collaboratively by the steering group drawing on various methods including Community Organising and Global Cafe.

The consultation was split into two stages. The first stage was about asking the big questions to many of people, and the second stage was developing what we learnt from the first stage further with groups of interested people.

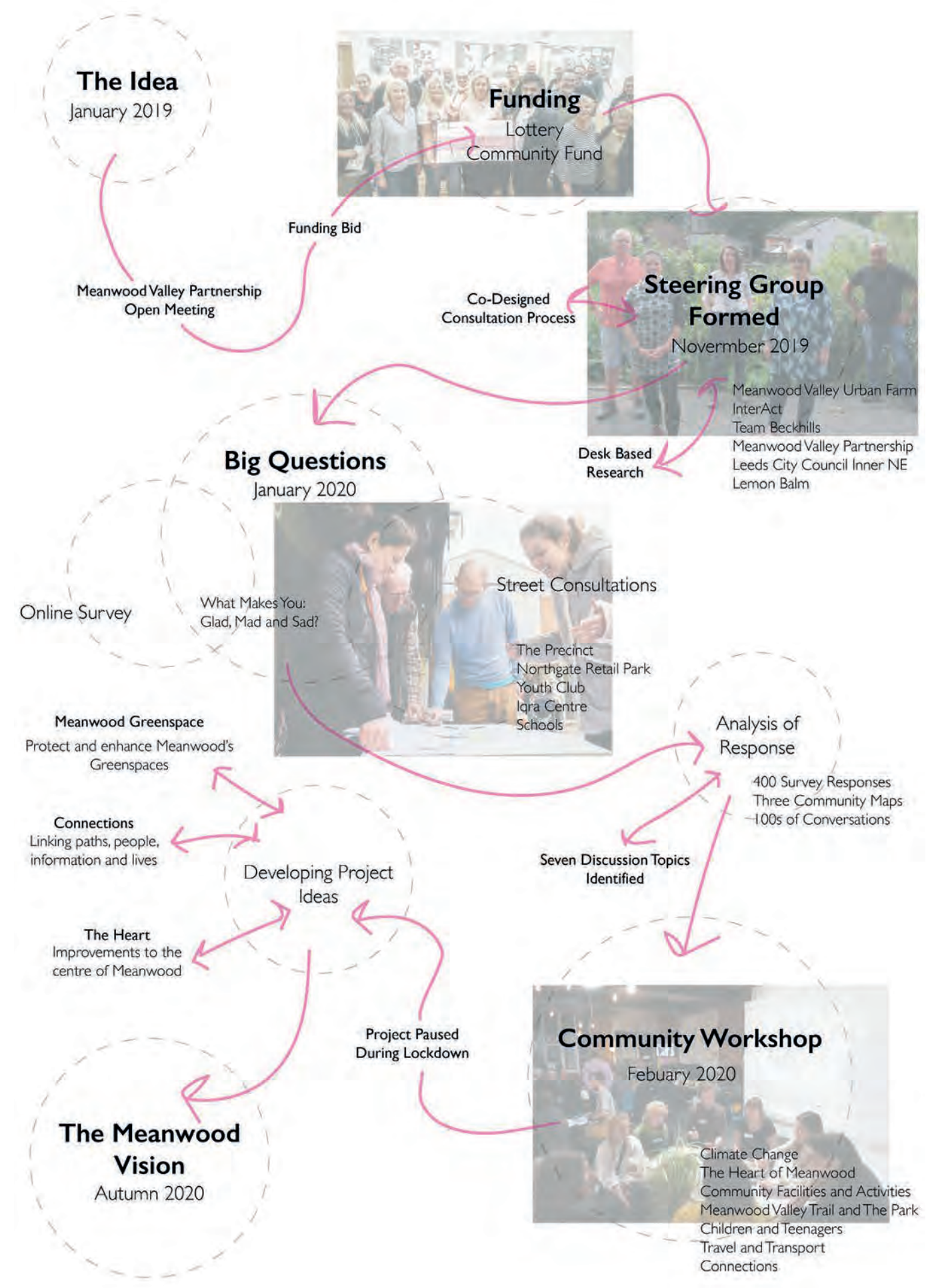
The 'Big Questions' were to capture a wide response from as many people in

Meanwood as possible which would enable us to identify any key themes throughout the responses. With the support of Leeds Observatory we looked at the demographic make up of our community and compared this with the demographic make up of the respondents to the online and street surveys. We identified some gaps and undertook some targeted consultation and promotion of the survey to fill those gaps.

The second stage was the community workshop where the key themes from the 'Big Questions' were brought, discussed and explored further by local people.

The discussions from the community workshop were then developed further by the steering group into three projects which each had a series of smaller sub projects. We invited interested parties to a Zoom meeting to give feedback on the 3 focus areas and project ideas that would go into the vision.

These projects are what makes up the vision at the end of this report. Each project will develop its own working group and its own method of working.



Asking The Big Questions

In frosty January 2020, we spoke to around 400 people in order to gauge what people thought about Meanwood. Many people say they love Meanwood but we wanted to know why. We also wanted to know why they didn't love Meanwood and crucially we wanted to find out what people are passionate to change.

For this stage of consultation it was important that we gathered as much information as we could. The questions were deliberately open as we wanted people to direct us and not the other way round.

The questions were based on the model of glad, sad and mad. This is how the three questions came about. To help people who did not necessarily feel comfortable with such an open question we reminded them of the three key themes of the project, which are based on three trends facing society. These are: enjoying a healthy life; climate change, our environment, the landscape around us; and equal access for all members of the community to facilities, services and public spaces.

Further questions were asked about the respondent to allow us to monitor who had been asked and whether it was a representative sample of Meanwood's population. This information was collected anonymously and used to compare against the statistics we had looked at for the first section of this vision.

There were multiple ways to complete the survey which allowed us to reach so many people across Meanwood.

Many people completed the survey online which was advertised through local organisations and social media. This allowed people who may have been busy on the day of the street consultations or people who may not have felt comfortable discussing these ideas in a public place to still have their say.

“Interesting neighbours - keen to get involved in things and always have something good to talk about.”

We held two street consultations in January 2020. The first one in the precinct at the centre of Meanwood, opposite the Waitrose supermarket and near the Post Office. The second consultation was held outside the KFC



at Northgate Retail Park, a popular shopping destination for people who live in and around Meanwood.

At both street consultations we encouraged people to complete the survey on paper or on their smart-phones using a QR code that was printed on a large information poster.

We undertook community mapping workshops at both street consultations; people were invited to draw on a big map of Meanwood to highlight things that made them glad, sad and mad. We also asked people to put a sticker over the house or street where they lived, if they felt part of the Meanwood Community. The stickers over peoples' houses or street supported our initial analysis 'Where is Meanwood' as a majority of people who participated were within a 15 minute walk of the centre. The community maps proved to be a valuable

collection of local knowledge and observation. They also allowed people to explain things geographically that may have been challenging to describe in writing.

To ensure that we took a representative sample of Meanwood we looked at the monitoring data and organised several extra consultations at the Iqra Centre (Islamic place of worship), a youth club and a local school. The survey was also emailed to social housing tenants and leaflets were handed out at the Community Centre on Stainbeck Avenue.

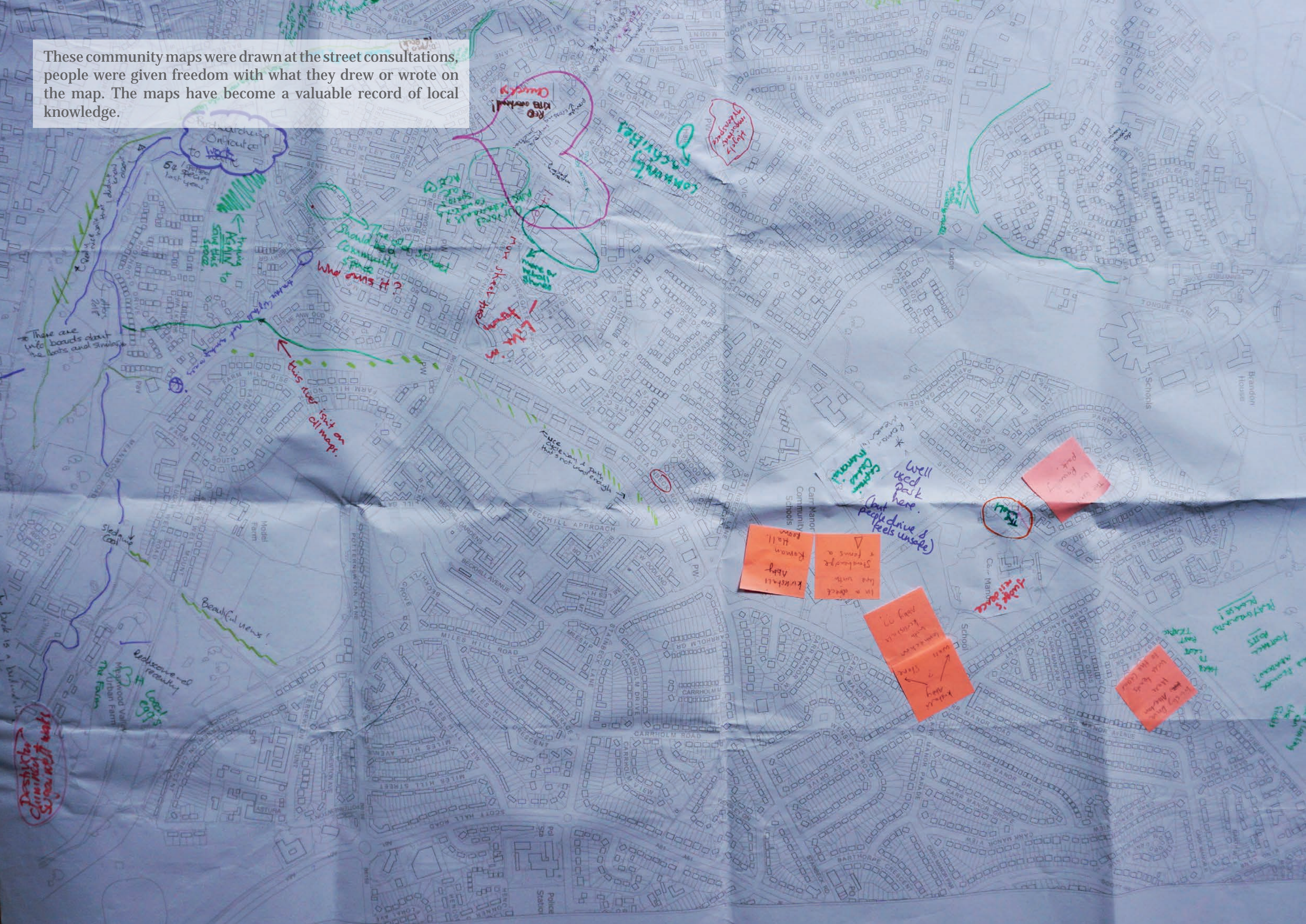
At the end of each survey people were asked if they wanted to contribute further to the project and help develop and deliver this vision.

Above: Big questions event held in Meanwood Jan 2020. (Photo: © www.timdunk.com)

This community map was produced at both street consultation events. People were asked to put a heart sticker over where they live. A majority of people lived within a 15 minute walk of the centre of Meanwood



These community maps were drawn at the street consultations, people were given freedom with what they drew or wrote on the map. The maps have become a valuable record of local knowledge.





Analysis of Response

After the first consultation stage was finished there was a large number of responses to sort through and analyse. We were looking for topics that could be woven into further discussions at the community workshop event.

The first stage of the analysis was to combine all of the ‘big question’ responses. This allowed us to look closely at all of the comments made for each question and group them into topics that were coming up frequently.

With the format of the open questions this all had to be done manually as there was a lot of variation in how people responded to the survey. This was time consuming however it was very thorough and ensured that we were able to fully understand why certain topics were emerging.

Looking particularly at the question ‘What are you passionate to change?’ we received 650 individual responses (people were allowed to make multiple comments) which we sorted into 26 different groups. We then ranked these groups by the percentage of comments that were in those groups. We identified a higher response as 8% or more, medium response as 4-7.9% and lower response as 3.9% and less. (See table opposite)

This ranking gave an indication of what matters most to more people. We were then able to sort these topics into seven discussion areas for the next stage in the consultation.

As well as looking at the responses to the ‘Big Questions’ we could also see the result of the second part of the survey which amongst other things told us:

- 94.5% of people who responded felt like they live in Meanwood
- 12% work in Meanwood
- 81.3% were aged 20-46
- 9% were aged 19 or under
- 9.8% were aged 65 and over
- 38 of the respondents were social housing tenants

Higher Response (8% or More)	Moderate Response (4-7.9%)	Small Response (3.9% and Less)
Meanwood Park	The Junction	Parking
The Precinct (old ASDA square)	General comments about the shops	Appearance of shops
Sports, running and walking	Public spaces (including footpaths)	Independent businesses
Playground in the park	Litter and fly tipping	General look of Meanwood
Cycle lanes and promotion	Meanwood Valley Trail	Smaller/pocket parks
Buses	Wildlife	Dog poo
Traffic	Green spaces	Projects to tackle climate change
Community activities	Recycling, refill and reuse	Police and community safety
	Activities for kids and teenagers	Community centres and facilities

Above: Analysis of responses to the ‘Big Questions’ survey led to the identification of themes.

“I think the ‘Asda Square’ could be developed into a really attractive area, a real ‘centre’ for Meanwood. It would be lovely to see much more planting and greenery there.”

Community Workshop

The workshop was run over an evening in the centre of Meanwood. The themes that we had identified from responses to the 'Big Questions' were developed further and into projects through discussion with interested local people.

The community workshop was at the end of February 2020 and was held in a co-working space in the centre of Meanwood. Invites were sent to people who at the 'Big Questions' event said that they would be interested in developing ideas further and helping to deliver the vision.

The event began with an exhibition of the desk based research and the consultations up to this stage. A presentation from the steering group explained who we were and how we got here, as well as how the workshop was going to run.

There were seven tables, one for each discussion point:

- Meanwood's Green Spaces
- Travel and transport
- Children and young people
- The Heart of Meanwood
- Community Spaces and activities
- Connections
- Meanwood and climate change

Each table had information and research relevant to that particular discussion

topic and a facilitator who was a member of the steering group or a volunteer on the project who had a particular interest, skill or knowledge which would support constructive discussion.

Attendees had the opportunity to participate in three different discussions or if they felt that we had not identified a topic they were free to discuss that. Several people were so passionate about a particular topic that they took part in more than one discussion on it!

We also gave people the chance to suggest their own topic and to host a discussion they had a passion for.

The discussions were looking for ideas, solutions and projects. The steering group member on each table took down notes during the discussion which will shape the next stage of the project.

The next pages are a brief overview of what was discussed on each table during the workshop.



Top: Isabel from Lemon Balm introducing the event and explaining the process so far
(Photo: © www.timdunk.com)

Above: Round table discussions about the heart of Meanwood (Photo: © www.timdunk.com)

Discussion: Green Spaces

The green spaces discussion was about all the green spaces through Meanwood, the big ones like the park and valley trail; but also the smaller pockets of forgotten green space that are dotted throughout the area.

The key project ideas and suggestions that arose from this discussion were:

- More information on connecting paths (e.g. the Dales Way).
- Improved management and care for the woodlands.
- Plant more trees in Meanwood.
- Manage dog poo: by making people responsible for their own dog's waste; dog free areas.
- Improved maintenance of paths and tunnels including lighting and drainage.
- Make the most of Meanwood Park: more events, outdoor theatre/ cinema, orienteering course.
- Highbury Works: needs action by either council or the community; improved signage on what is going on.
- Thinking of greenspaces as a whole: Visual connectivity, survey of what we have, Love Meanwood App.
- Rewilding project.

People who discussed greenspaces were keen to protect what we have (especially the sledging slope!) and keen to enhance and make the greenspaces even wilder and even more accessible.



“Over the years I've seen an amazing 64 bird species as I walk through Batty's Wood”

Above: The Beech Trees in Meanwood Park. (Photo: Lemon Balm)

Discussion: Travel and Transport

People at the Travel and Transport table discussed getting around Meanwood and beyond, where is the problem and what can be done to improve it?

The key project ideas and suggestions that arose from this discussion were:

- Community schemes: lift sharing scheme, car pool.
- Cycling: Bike share/park and ride, Meanwood would benefit from a bike shop, improved and safe cycle routes into Leeds, could part of Woodhouse Ridge be a bike path?
- ACORN Leeds is starting a West Yorkshire 'Take back our buses' campaign. The first fight will be to get the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to institute franchising over the bus system.
- Think about connecting to Leeds as one project/overall vision. Political landscape is a barrier.



“Better cycle routes that are actually designed for cyclists to be better protected from traffic.”

Topics raised at this discussion were mostly about sustainable methods of transport such as cycling or how we can reduce air pollution with car shares and community schemes. There was also the desire to look at transport from a city wide viewpoint to create an overall vision.

Above: Meanwood Bus Stop (Photo: Lemon Balm)

Discussion: Children and Young People

This group discussed how Meanwood could be better for children and young people. Not just playgrounds and schools but looking at the whole area.

The key project ideas and suggestions that arose from this discussion were:

- Ask children what they want - children's voices must be listened to.
- Teenagers need a space to just be and feel like they are wanted there and not constantly being told to move on.
- There is a need for a bigger park that families visit at the weekend, as well as smaller parks that children can visit by themselves.
- There is a need for smaller parks/ green play space so everyone has equal access.
- More wildlife signs around the park - they must be child friendly.
- Create a children's and young person steering group made up of local school children.
- Install happy to chat benches to help encourage social interaction.
- New play equipment should include some more abstract pieces that encourage imaginative play.
- Some families feel unwelcome at certain parks.

This group consistently felt that children and young people should be asked to guide what they want to see in Meanwood.



“More kids playing out- safer roads/ weekly road closures for playing”

Above: Play street in Meanwood. (Photo: Lemon Balm)

Discussion: The Heart

This discussion centred around ‘the heart’ of Meanwood the junction at the centre and the nearby precinct.

The key project ideas and suggestions that arose from this discussion were:

- Create a space in the centre that is for the people of Meanwood not cars.
- Ensure that the community is thoroughly consulted on every proposal to the junction.
- Car free days and play days on the street. Ensure local businesses are not affected by road closure.
- More greenery in the whole area.
- Take an upstream approach to reduce traffic pressure on the junction.
- Invite and support independent businesses to open in the precinct.
- Make better use of the precinct area.
- As Meanwood becomes ‘better’ it deserves a more amazing space.
- Use health and wellbeing funds to pay for improving and greening the area.



“More support for new independent businesses to launch and develop within the area”

The junction at the centre of Meanwood is contentious but people know what they want to see there. The group was keen that traffic was not prioritised over pedestrians, cyclists, green spaces/planting and wellbeing. The priority for the precinct was to encourage local business and make the square more welcoming and a centre of Meanwood.

Above: The junction at the heart of Meanwood. (Photo: Lemon Balm)

Discussion: Community Spaces and Activities

People in this group were discussing what community activities they like, what they would like to see and whether the current facilities support them.

The key project ideas and suggestions that arose from this discussion were:

- People said how much they enjoyed events that brought a sense of local community. For example the Christmas light switch on and bonfire night.
- Linking and promoting all community spaces during Meanwood festival and some way of accessing such info year round would be useful.
- People wanted to see social events at Meanwood community centres.
- People want to know what is going on/improved communication: Physical notice boards at key places, better website.
- Cross promotion between events.
- Brass bands in the park.
- Meanwood Networking: individuals, businesses.



“More allotments to grow fresh fruit and vegetables”

Generally people were happy with community spaces and activities. However, they wanted more activities and more communication of those activities acknowledging that some people access information through, social media, other websites on the internet and some people access information differently.

Above: Christmas light switch on 2019. (Photo: Paul Dishman)

Discussion: Connections

The connections group discussed how linking paths, features and destinations in Meanwood could be improved and how these connections could improve the wellbeing of the people who use them.

The key project ideas and suggestions that arose from this discussion were:

- Map all the footpaths and ginnels throughout Meanwood – ‘Explore Meanwood’.
- Make a publicly available map of Meanwood that shows key information about: nature, history, blue plaques, art, different trails that link together different elements. (e.g. history, nature etc).
- Decorate telecoms boxes to create an art trail throughout the area.
- Links through Meanwood to other places.
- Ginnels improved with signage and some of them need to be unblocked.
- A big mural could represent Meanwood and be the start of a trail of artworks.



“Meanwood is lovely, the best part of Yorkshire!”

The connections group was the most popular group discussion at the event. The group identified the network of paths and ginnels that are all across Meanwood. The group were keen that information about this network should be shared.

Above: A ginnel through Meanwood. (Photo: Lemon Balm)

Discussion: Climate Change

This group discussed how Meanwood could respond effectively to the climate emergency. What are we already doing and what could we do better?

The key project ideas and suggestions that arose from this discussion were:

- Alternative energy: Wind turbines, community energy schemes (e.g Transition Town Movement).
- Flood defences: resist and engage community in planning, investigate natural flood management.
- Wild flowers: more of them across Meanwood, better and more organised management.
- Sharing resources: Cars, expertise, things (e.g. lawn mowers, hedge trimmers, power tools etc.).
- More wildlife: tree planting, green walls. Trees for shade too!
- Transport: Trams, improve cycling routes to encourage sustainable and active transport.
- Zero carbon movement: like zero carbon Headingley.
- Retrofit existing buildings with renewable features. e.g. green walls, solar panels on key buildings.
- More recycling points for coffee cups and things that are not collected on the roadside.

There is passion to adapt Meanwood and the way we live in response to the climate emergency. There needs to be direction and structure in order to turn these ideas into reality.



“The air quality on Meanwood Road is poor - when I run/walk along them I can feel that I’m inhaling fumes and can smell them on my hair and clothes afterwards”

Above: Snow in the Monk Bridges. (Photo: Lemon Balm)

Event Feedback

The event was well attended and the atmosphere was overwhelmingly positive. Everyone made a valuable contribution to discussions and there is energy to make change.

At the end of the evening we asked people who would be interested in developing these ideas further into projects and actions to leave their details. We asked which of the 7 topics they were interested in being involved with further, what skills they could bring and ideas for training and support that could help their involvement.

These people will be invited to join the project working groups that emerge from this process.

The tasty soup was a welcome meal on a cold February evening!

“Thank you for an amazing evening. It was so good to meet people from Meanwood who are equally or more passionate about different aspects of Meanwood. I hope lots of good things come out of it and look forward to being involved.”



Above: Big questions event held in Meanwood Jan 2020. (Photo: © www.timdunk.com)



By 2030 we will work together to make Meanwood a climate resilient community where all neighbours can enjoy a healthy life with equal access to opportunities, facilities, services and public spaces.

This is our vision for Meanwood over the next 10 years. Our 2020 research has led to three focus areas each with their own projects. We plan to consult again over the next ten years as these projects begin to happen, to be sure the focus areas are still relevant and to identify new projects based on current needs, and new ideas.

The Vision

Left: View of Leeds from Sugarwell Hill.
(Photo: Lemon Balm)

The Vision

The vision was created from the information gathered at the community workshop. All of the notes and drawings from each discussion were collected and considered in order to create three focus areas: Meanwood Greenspace, Connections and The Heart.

In determining the three focus areas we also asked the attendees of the Community Workshop to vote for which of the seven discussion topics they would be willing to help come to fruition in future.

Analysis of all of the feedback from the community workshop allowed us to identify cross-overs, parallels and topics that came up several times. From this analysis we formed three focus areas each with three projects which we hope to be able to work on and continue to involve community members.

To check that our process and chosen priorities were in the right direction, we invited the people who attended in February and anyone else who had approached us in the meantime to a Zoom meeting on 5th August. They said that it looked good.

Each project will develop a working group that will hopefully be able to begin meeting, in person in spring 2021. We will explore linking with relevant Leeds-wide initiatives that support our aims and seek funding to help us resource projects which need it.

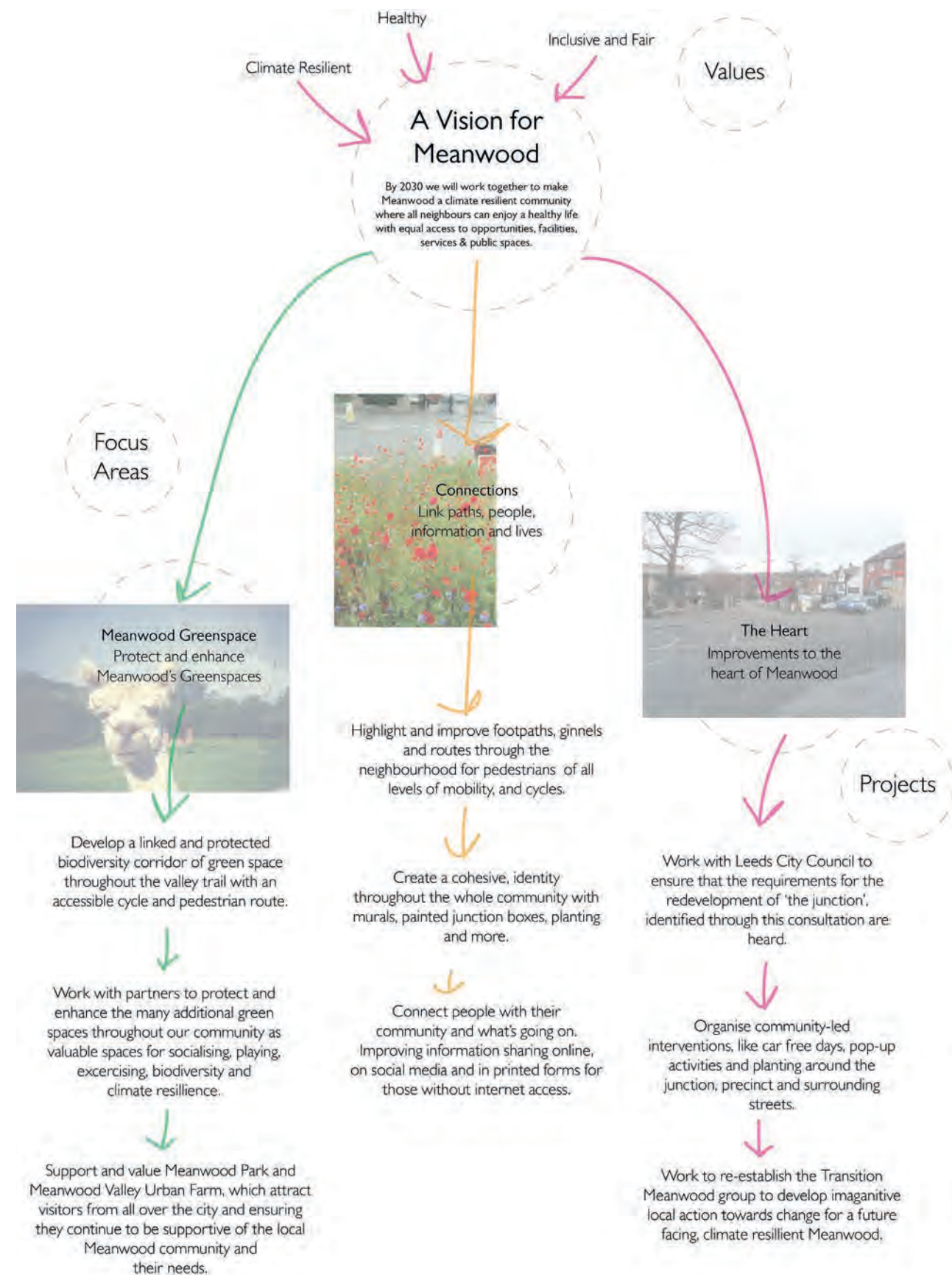
We began the project to create a vision with three themes, based on the big issues facing society today. Going forwards we have summarised these into three values which underpin each of the focus areas and all of the current projects.

- Climate Resilient
- Healthy
- Inclusive and Fair

We plan to use our values as a 'sense check' for any new project ideas and as a general decision making tool.

For each project we have provided a vision statement and included a case study to give an illustrative example. The idea is not to replicate what the case study shows but to use the example as inspiration and demonstration of what is possible.

We have also included what has already been done either as part of the project or has occurred organically and we have provided the next steps of the project.



Above: A summary of the process we took to create this vision

Green Spaces

Green Spaces are at the core of Meanwood. We will take action to protect and enhance our green spaces and we will increase and enhance habitat to promote biodiversity. We will increase our climate resilience and mitigate some of the damage already done. We will ensure that all members of our community are able to access good quality green space, which meets their health & wellbeing needs.



Above: Winding path through the Hollies
(Photo: Lemon Balm)

Projects:

A linked and protected biodiversity corridor of green space throughout the valley trail with an accessible cycle and pedestrian route.

Work with partners to protect and enhance the many green spaces throughout our community as valuable spaces for socialising, playing, exercising, biodiversity and climate resilience.

Supporting and valuing Meanwood Park and Meanwood Valley Urban Farm, which attract visitors from all over the city and ensuring they continue to be supportive of the local Meanwood community and their needs.

Project

A linked and protected biodiversity corridor of green space throughout the valley trail with an accessible cycle and pedestrian route

We will fill in the gaps in the existing ecological corridor and aim to have an unbroken link from the countryside to the city centre. Green spaces will be beneficial both to people and wildlife.

Case Study: Kirkstall Valley Development Trust

The Kirkstall Valley Development Trust is an ambitious community driven project.

They are working to protect green space along the Kirkstall valley and open it up for people to enjoy. They are also working on converting a semi-derelict mill into a community hub and social housing.

Along the valley they are also starting a community supported agriculture scheme with 135 members.

The development trust have a temporary community base at Kirkstall Bridge Retail Park. Here they have space for events, exhibitions and workshops; a play space, a library, a kitchen and a meeting room.



Top: Kirkstall Valley Farm

Above: Temporary Community Base

(Photos: Kirkstall Valley Development Trust)

How does this project meet the values:

Climate Resilience: This project will create a long and fully joined up habitat corridor that will increase local biodiversity. Increased tree canopy will help reduce the urban heat island effect and reduce air pollution. Connecting spaces along the valley will allow for a connected natural flood management approach.

Healthy: Improving the valley trail will encourage more people to make their daily journeys actively on foot or bicycle allowing them to incorporate exercise. Accessing green space has a proven link to improving mood and is beneficial for people's wellbeing. Reduced air

pollution from increased tree cover and a reduction in fumes from less vehicles on the road will also result in health benefits.

Inclusive and Fair: The valley covers a large area, we will make sure that improvements to the trail and valley give positive benefits all along the trail. Visiting and walking through the valley and the trail are free, meaning that there is less of a barrier to people accessing the benefits of it. Improved cycle and pedestrian routes will mean that the path is more accessible to people with lower mobility.

Things That Have Happened:

- Meanwood Valley Land Trust has been set up to allow pieces of land to be protected and cared for by the Meanwood community.
- Monk Bridge Green has been given identity and a group has started to care for it.
- Discussion between the Environment Agency, Leeds City Council Flood Defence Team and Love Meanwood have occurred. We shared information, collaborated and ensured that the community was involved. We have more meetings planned.

Next Steps:

- Form a working group of people who are interested in the project and who have skills and knowledge that they can offer.
- Seek further training and undertake research to enable the project to be carried out.
- Review guidance from organisations such as Fields in Trust and Plantlife.

Project

Supporting and valuing Meanwood Park and Meanwood Valley Urban Farm, which attract visitors from all over the city, and ensuring they continue to be supportive of the local Meanwood community and their needs.

Ensure that the development plans for these two destinations which attract visitors from all over the city are supportive of the local Meanwood community and their needs, linking with the values and other focus areas of our vision. The Meanwood community values these two assets.

Case Study: *Eden Project*

The Eden Project runs a nation wide scheme which aims to improve the happiness and wellbeing of people across the UK by bringing communities together and inspiring them to make positive changes where they live. This is an example of a large visitor destination working to support the local and wider community.

The Eden project itself runs a social prescribing programme meaning that GPs, nurses and other professionals can refer people to the Eden Project to take part in programmes such as: wellbeing walks, get-together groups for over-65s, nature art and therapeutic horticulture. These programs are designed to help people with their physical or mental health and wellbeing. As well as empowering people to take responsibility for their own health it takes pressure off local NHS services.



Above: Therapeutic Horticulture programme at the Eden Project in Cornwall (Photo: Natures Way/Eden Project)

How does this project meet the values:

Climate Resilience: Both destinations support a wide range of wildlife and both have areas of woodland. Meanwood Valley Urban Farm plays an important role in demonstrating good environmental practices.

Healthy: Outdoor spaces at both destinations are places where people can walk. At Meanwood Park exercise classes run outside. The project will consider balancing the needs of

exercising, socialising and biodiversity. The farm has a community supported agriculture project that provides local members with weekly veg boxes.

Inclusive and Fair: Meanwood Park is free to access, the Meanwood Valley Urban farm is affordable.

Things That Have Happened:

- A representative of Meanwood Valley Urban Farm has been part of the Love Meanwood steering group.
- We promoted the community supported agriculture scheme from the farm, which provides local members with a weekly box of produce for 20 weeks of the year.
- Friends of Meanwood Park consulted on Leeds City Council's parks strategy.

Next Steps:

- Form a working group of people who are interested in the project and who have skills and knowledge that they can offer.
- Form partnerships with these two destinations to help them continue to support the local community.
- Encourage a link between Meanwood Valley Urban Farm and the Meanwood Valley Partnership so that they can communicate effectively.

Project

Work with partners to protect and enhance the many green spaces throughout our community as valuable spaces for socialising, playing, exercising, biodiversity and climate resilience.

We will continue to work with partners and forge new relationships with land owners and stakeholders to make sure that our green spaces are there to benefit all of us.

Case Study: Pogo Park

Pogo park is based in Richmond, California in an inner city neighbourhood known as the Iron Triangle.

Their goal is to transform pockets of land into safe places for children to play. They do this by empowering members of the local community to plan, design, build and manage these pocket parks.

They are also using their approach to develop a 'yellow brick road'. The network of streets that are safe and accessible for children and also bring trees and planting into the neighbourhood.



Above: Local residents helping to construct the Elm Playlot (Photo: Pogo Park)

How does this project meet the values:

Climate Resilience: Protecting greenspaces for peoples' use also means that they will be protected for wildlife. Many small green spaces can allow water infiltration as part of a wider natural flood management system.

Healthy: Protected sports areas can ensure that people have reliable access to outdoor exercise facilities. Small green spaces and pocket parks can have an uplifting effect on people who use them or pass by them. The wellbeing value associated with the frequent use of parks and green spaces is worth £34.2 billion per year to the

entire UK adult population. Parks and green spaces are also estimated to save the NHS around £111 million per year (see Fields in Trust report listed in the appendix 2). The spaces can be used as urban orchard pods to grow fresh fruit and vegetables.

Inclusive and Fair: Many people do not have access to a garden so protecting public greenspaces will ensure that everyone will be able to experience the benefit of green spaces. Green spaces are places that can host community events and activities.

Things That Have Happened:

- Meanwood Valley Land Trust has been set up to allow areas of land to be accessible to and cared for by the Meanwood community.
- Through the consultation and community mapping exercises we have found green spaces with potential for more benefit.
- Meanwood's play project has popped up in the green space next to Meanwood Community Centre.

Next Steps:

- Form a working group of people who are interested in the project and who have skills and knowledge that they can offer.
- Seek further training and undertake research to enable the project to be carried out.
- Review guidance from organisations such as Fields in Trust.

Connections

The connections project is all about linking paths, people, information, and lives throughout Meanwood. Connect is one of the five ways to wellbeing that was identified by the New Economics Foundation (see appendix 3). We want the connections in our public and green space, along with our communications, to be accessible to all. We want improvements to the streetscape to feature throughout all of the neighbourhoods in our community. We also want to find creative ways to allow our shared landscape to encourage us to positively connect with neighbours, to improve our health and wellbeing.



Above: Diagram showing an example of how connecting can improve a persons wellbeing. Following: NEF 5 Ways To Wellbeing. Pg. 26

Projects:

Highlighting and improving footpaths, ginnels and routes through the neighbourhood for pedestrians and cyclists of all levels of mobility.

Creating a cohesive identity throughout the whole community with murals, painted junction boxes, planting and more.

Connecting people with their community and what is going on. Improving information sharing online, on social media and in printed forms for those without internet access.

Project

Highlighting and improving footpaths, ginnels and routes through the neighbourhood for pedestrians and cyclists of all levels of mobility.

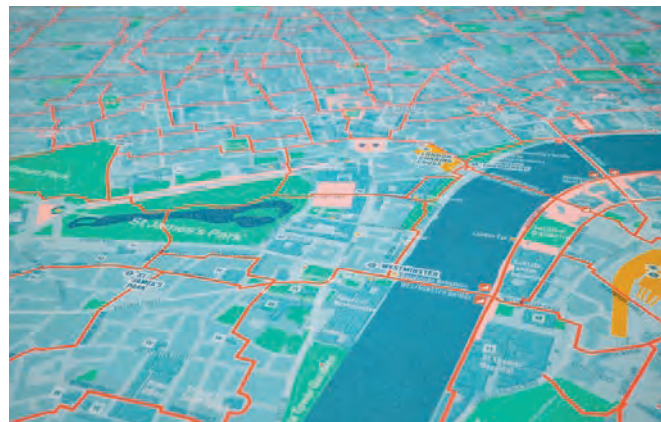
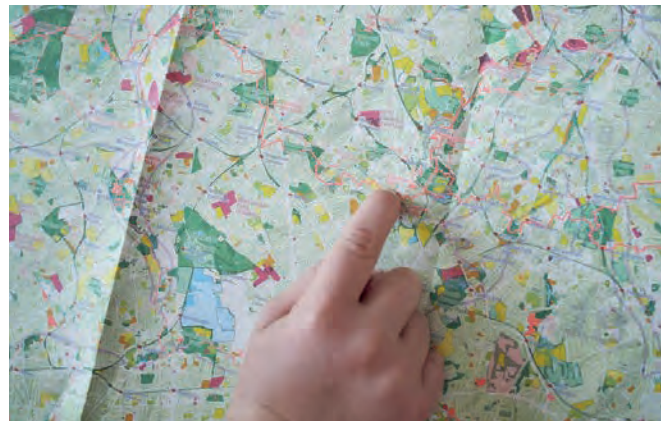
Identify a network of destinations, points of interest and anything else that people would want to travel to. Discover the network of paths, streets and ginnels that connect these places and produce a map to show interesting routes through and around Meanwood.

Case Study: *Urban Good Maps*

Urban Good CIC are cartographers based in London whose mission is to improve the urban environment.

They produce maps such as the National Park City map (right) which does not mark any buildings. Instead it shows: parks, woodlands, playing fields, nature reserves and marks on places to go outdoor swimming and where to pitch a tent.

The footways map (right) shows a network of major places such as train stations and green spaces all connected through appealing and accessible streets. The project aims to encourage people to explore the city and choose walking as the most enjoyable, efficient and healthy option.



Top: National Park City Map (Urban Good)

Above: London Footways Map (Urban Good)

How does this project meet the values:

Climate Resilience: Encouraging active transport will help reduce the number of vehicles on roads which will reduce pollution and improve air quality. Maintenance of these footpaths and ginnels can be tailored to help create small ecological corridors connecting routes for both people and wildlife.

Healthy: Encouraging people to travel around Meanwood on foot or by bicycle means that they can exercise as part of their daily journeys or as a specific activity. Spending time outside has

a proven link to improvements in a person's wellbeing. Taking routes that do not follow a road could also mean that people are less exposed to poor air quality.

Inclusive and Fair: Exploring where you live on foot is free, and a Meanwood wide network of paths will cover all of the area not just the centre. Maps that are produced will include all of Meanwood and some of the surrounding area, building upon what we found during research and through the consultation.

Things That Have Happened:

- Meanwood Valley Partnership have been working to create an interactive map of Meanwood that could form the basis of this project.
- Community Maps that were part of the 'Big Questions' give an insight into where these connections are.

Next Steps:

- Form a working group of people who are interested in the project and who have skills and knowledge that they can offer.
- Seek further training and undertake research to enable the project to be carried out.
- Begin mapping and auditing Meanwood's network of footways and connections.

Project

Creating a cohesive identity throughout the whole community with murals, painted junction boxes, planting and more.

Communicate with existing groups to connect our skills, knowledge and funding. Ensure that Meanwood based projects can connect with all of Meanwood.

Case Study: Meanwood Street Art

Throughout the summer of 2020 two residents formed Meanwood Street Art and began crowd funding to pay artists to paint murals on telecom boxes. The boxes that are usually a dull feature of street corners are now uplifting art pieces.

The brightly coloured murals and the raised community spirit has been a welcome addition to Meanwood during the pandemic.

The street art is not just limited to telecom boxes. A large mural on the side of Wild Craft Bakery in the centre of Meanwood has completely changed the atmosphere of the place.

Further murals are planned.



Top: Artist Ekaterina Sheath painting a box on the corner of Stonegate Road (Meanwood Street Art)
Above: Section of the mural at Wild Craft Bakery.

How does this project meet the values:

Climate Resilience: Introducing more planting and trees into Meanwood will have positive impacts, including: reducing the urban heat island effect, increasing air quality and contributing to a valley wide natural flood management approach. Local food projects such as the urban orchards will increase local food security and reduce Meanwood's dependency on oil.

Healthy: Connect is one of the five ways to wellbeing (see p.26) and through a cohesive identity people in Meanwood will feel more connected.

Also, perennial edible pods (small community gardens for growing food) are a good way for people to access fresh and healthy produce. They are also a place for people to stop, chat and tend the garden together.

Inclusive and Fair: Making sure that the connections project positively benefits the whole community. The project will ensure all of Meanwood is represented within the cohesive identity and that connections reach all of Meanwood.

Things That Have Happened:

- Meanwood Street Art have been organising the painting of street spaces across Meanwood with funds raised through crowd funding.
- Lemon Balm have installed several perennial edible pods throughout Meanwood including at Meanwood Community Centre and the Holy Trinity Community Hall.
- Meanwood in Bloom have planted up boxes around the Junction.

Next Steps:

- Form a working group of people who are interested in the project and who have skills and knowledge that they can offer.
- Work with partners such as Meanwood Street Art to support and enhance projects that are already underway and in the pipeline.
- Identify other potential projects that could help connect Meanwood.

Project

Connecting people with their community and what is going on. Improving information sharing online, on social media and in printed forms for those without internet access.

Think about Meanwood's online presence, websites where people access information and how we can communicate through social media. Also, think about how Meanwood can connect with people who do not use the internet, such as notice boards with someone who can spend the time making sure they are up to date and cared for.

Case Study: Cardigan Triangle Notice Board

The Cardigan Triangle is an area within Headingley. One way that residents communicate about local activities is a well constructed and maintained community notice board.



Above: The Cardigan Triangle notice board (Photo: Cardigan Arts)

How does this project meet the values:

Climate Resilience: Efficient communication can help organise volunteering groups to work on environmental projects throughout the valley. We can communicate with people who do not use the internet without having to print and deliver thousands of flyers.

Healthy: Effective communication within the community can help share important health information, such as advice, information about activities and public health announcements.

Inclusive and Fair: Ensuring that all information is available online and on notice boards means that people who do not necessarily have access to the internet are still able to get involved in community activities. Having well maintained notice boards all around Meanwood will help everyone who lives locally to feel included in Meanwoods' community.

Things That Have Happened:

- Through the consultation and community mapping exercises people have identified locations that could be suitable for these notice boards, and some locations where notice boards already exist.
- Through this process we have identified the 12 Neighbourhoods of Meanwood.
- The Love Meanwood social media platforms have been used for communication.
- The Love Meanwood website has been used to support people and businesses.

Next Steps:

- Form a working group of people who are interested in the project and who have skills and knowledge that they can offer.
- Identify what information needs to be communicated and how information is already communicated in Meanwood.
- Determine how to best reach out to all of Meanwood.
- Merge Love Meanwood and Meanwood Valley Partnership communications.
- Work out how to link all of Meanwood's community organisations communications together.

The Heart

We will influence the design of the junction at the centre of Meanwood to make sure it is safe, fair and brings wellbeing and climate resilience benefit to the community. We will work to improve the streetscape and the precinct. We will take climate change seriously and put developing a bottom up approach to becoming a more sustainable, more climate resilient community at the heart of Meanwood.



Above: Volunteers from the local supermarket help plant trees in the centre of Meanwood (Photo: Lemon Balm)

Projects:

Work with Leeds City Council to ensure that the requirements for the redevelopment of 'the junction', identified through this consultation, are heard.

Organise community-led interventions, like car free days, pop-up activities and planting around the junction, precinct and surrounding streets.

Work to re-establish the Transition Meanwood group to develop imaginative local action towards change for a future facing, climate resilient Meanwood.

Project

Work with Leeds City Council to ensure that the requirements for the redevelopment of 'the junction', identified through this consultation, are heard.

We will ensure that we speak to traffic engineers and the Council so that Meanwood's voice is heard. We do not want the new junction to put the needs of traffic before the needs of the people of Meanwood.

Case Study: Cirencester

Cirencester is a historic market town in Gloucestershire. Its market is held weekly outside the church in the centre of the town. Before the area was improved the busy road that ran past the front of the church was closed on market day.

The re-designed space permanently closed part of the road to allow the market to bring the space into pedestrian domain. This reduced the number of cars coming through the town centre encouraging drivers to avoid the town centre and use the existing ring road.

Traffic was slowed down using techniques such as a change in road surface colour and texture. The road was also narrowed and the centre line removed.



Top: Cirencester and the market place since being re-designed (Photo: Lemon Balm)

Above: Before, when the road ran past the front of the church

How does this project meet the values:

Climate Resilience: We will ensure that the new plans for the junction include significant planting and that the design will discourage people from using cars and encourage forms of active travel such as walking and cycling.

Healthy: Promoting active travel through considerate design of the junction will encourage people to exercise as part of their daily lives. Improving the safety of the junction will have benefits to physical health

and it will also help to reduce stress of road users. Reducing the amount of traffic that passes through the junction and increasing the number of plants and trees will lead to a reduction in air pollution.

Inclusive and Fair: By reducing traffic through the centre of Meanwood pavements could be widened which would allow people with less mobility to safely access the centre. By encouraging active transport and reconfiguring this junction, traffic throughout all of Meanwood could be reduced.

Things That Have Happened:

- The council and traffic engineers were invited to an open meeting with the Meanwood Valley Partnership to discuss the junction.
- A report including the list of requirements that were an outcome of the community workshop have been sent to Leeds City Council and the Traffic Engineers. So far, no response has been received.
- Meanwood Valley Partnership is in active dialogue with Leeds City Council Highways over development of initial proposals for improvements to the junction. Plans have been sent through to the Meanwood Valley Partnership for consultation.
- Landscape Architecture students from Leeds Beckett University are developing ideas for this space as part of their Design and Community Module.

Next Steps:

- Form a working group of people who are interested in the project and who have skills and knowledge that they can offer to give community focused feedback on the Council's proposals.

Project

Organise community-led interventions, like car free days, pop-up activities and planting around the junction, precinct and surrounding streets.

We will organise events to make quick changes to how the precinct (formally ASDA square) and junction feels and looks.

Case Study: Leeds' Pop-Up Parks

As part of Leeds' efforts to improve the public realm and create more family friendly spaces in the city centre, Leeds City Council created a pop up park on Cookridge Street. The road next to the Henry Moore institute was closed to traffic, artificial grass was laid down and deck chairs and benches were put out in the summer holidays.

85% of families who used the park said that they spent more time in the city centre because of the park and 94% of survey respondents said that they would be more likely to visit the city if there were more similar places.

As a result of the pop-up park a large pedestrianised space with excellent cycle routes and more trees is being built in its place.



Top: Leeds pop-up park (Photo: Lemon Balm)
Above: Proposed work to Cookridge Street (Photo: Connecting Leeds)

How does this project meet the values:

Climate Resilience: Closing streets for cars will improve the local air quality and demonstrate how we can reduce our dependence on cars.

Inclusive and Fair: Pop-up events that are free are accessible to lots of people, and encouraging active transport will benefit the whole of Meanwood.

Healthy: Being able to connect with neighbours and other members of the community has benefits to a person's wellbeing. Pop-up events can promote active travel. Closing streets for playing, imagining and creativity can help with children's development and improve their wellbeing.

Things That Have Happened:

- There are ideas for the sort of pop up events people want to see around the Heart from discussions at the community workshop.
- Landscape Architecture students from Leeds Beckett University are developing ideas for pop-up spaces here as part of their Design and Community Module.
- During lockdown we sent a report to Leeds City Council suggesting locations where roads needed to be temporally closed and pavements widened to allow for social distancing (see appendix 2: Suggest a scheme COVID-19 report).

Next Steps:

- Form a working group of people who are interested in the project and who have skills and knowledge that they can offer.
- Seek further training and undertake research to enable the project to be carried out.
- Work with partners such as Meanwood Street Art to support and enhance projects that are already underway.
- Identify potential projects, activities and interventions.

Project

Work to re-establish the Transition Meanwood group to develop imaginative local action towards change for a future facing, climate resilient Meanwood.

We are keen to support the re-establishment of a transition group as a forward thinking imaginative approach to sustainability. We want this 'what-if' mindset to be at the heart of everything we do in Meanwood.

Case Study: *Transition Town Totnes*

The transition movement is communities coming together to reimagine and rebuild their world.

By working together, and weaving webs of connection and support, communities around the world are stepping up to address the big challenges they face.

In Totnes, Devon - which is the UK's first Transition Town - the entire town is taking a bottom up approach for eliminating oil dependency. Local business is encouraged through schemes such as the Totnes pound, which can be spent locally. Other projects include a community forest garden, skill sharing, buying produce direct from farmers and even the Totnes Renewable Energy Society.



Above: Follaton Forest Garden (Photo: Transition Town Totnes)

How does this project meet the values:

Climate Resilience: Develop local action against climate change and reduce the amount of harmful carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere here in Meanwood. Local food projects can reduce food miles and help to ensure food security. Lots of people making a small change to their actions or lifestyle can collectively have a big impact.

Healthy: Taking local action against climate change will reduce air pollution, encourage people to use active forms of travel. Being able to participate or see local community led climate

action could help reduce 'eco-anxiety'. Participating in community activities and connecting with other local people will be beneficial to people's wellbeing.

Inclusive and Fair: The format and structure of the transition movement ensure that there are as few barriers as possible to get involved locally in community action. Improving our local environment across all of Meanwood will bring benefits to everyone in the area. In many cases the negative effects of climate change disproportionately affect communities who are already struggling.

Things That Have Happened:

- There previously was a Transition Meanwood group so there are local people who understand the transition movement.
- Lots of people at all stages of the consultations were very interested in these issues.

Next Steps:

- Form a working group of people who are interested in the project and who have skills and knowledge that they can offer.
- Seek further training and undertake research to enable the project to be carried out.
- Work with the Transition Network to undertake the 12 steps to transition.
- Link with Leeds Climate Emergency Community Action Programme (CECAP).

The Next Steps

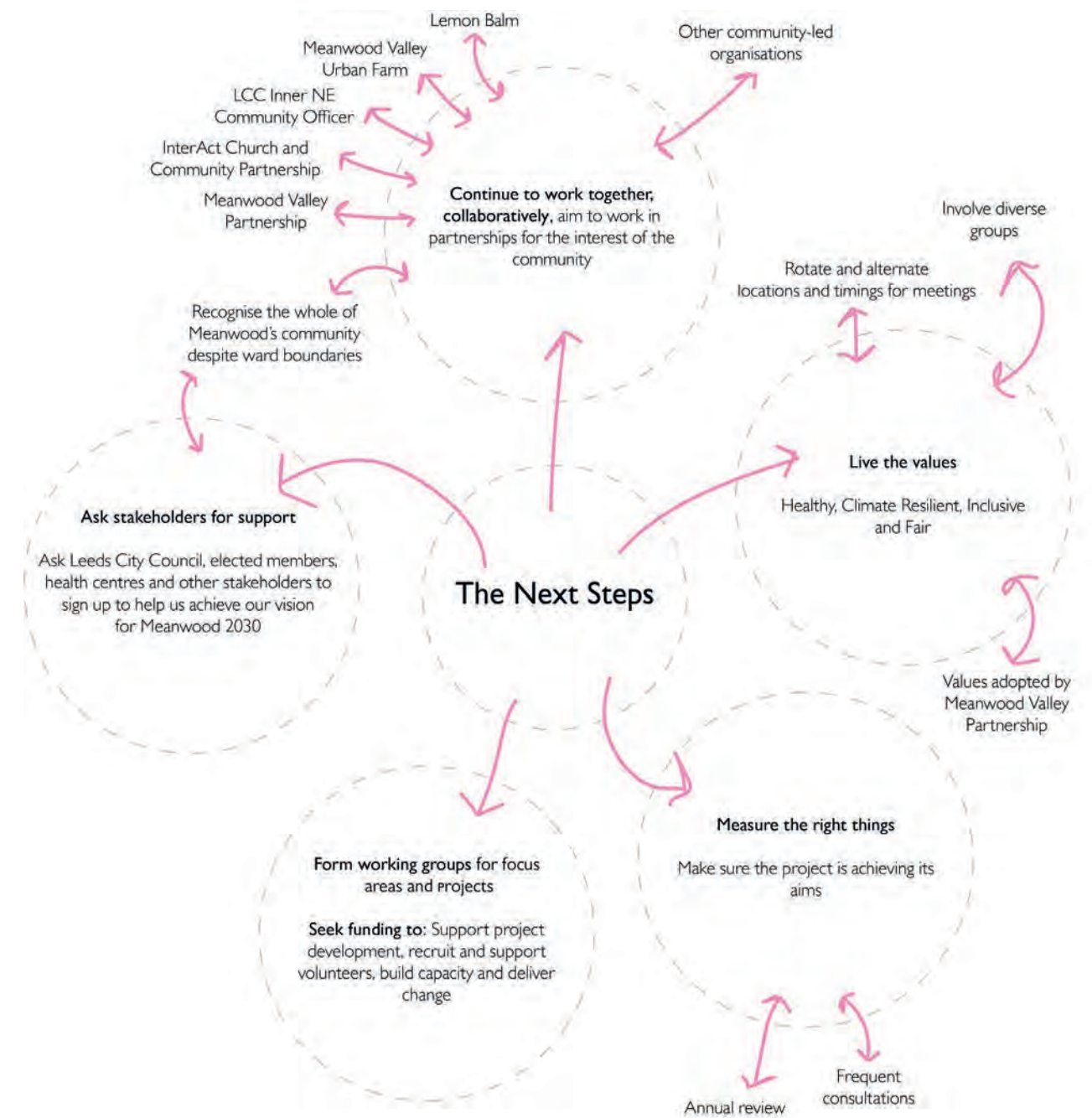
These projects need people to come together and get going. Each project has three next steps to get working on, the first of which is to form a working group.

After the community workshop we asked people who would be interested in taking a project further and what they were passionate about. From January 2021 we will be getting in touch with those people to begin forming working groups.

If you want to get involved in a project or have an idea that you want to take forward and would like to link with us, get in touch with the Meanwood Valley Partnership. Please make sure you put 'Vision' in the subject line.

meanwoodvp@hotmail.com

www.lovemeanwood.org.uk



Above: A summary of the next steps in the project

Appendix I: Steering Group



We formed a steering group of representatives from key local groups who could come together and reach a wide range of people within the community and also who could work together to help make things happen in the future in terms of achieving the vision.



Vanessa Brown
Interact – Church and Community Partnership

Interact has been around for 15 years. We believe communities are important: they give us belonging, human contact and shape our identity. And we believe that we all have something to learn from one another. As a partnership of 5 local churches, we seek spiritual wellbeing and fullness of life for all.

We create opportunities for people in and around the area to come together, through a wide variety of activities. As we get to know one another better, we are better able to overcome prejudices and work together for the good of the whole community.

www.interact.uk.net

Liz Hargreaves
Meanwood Resident

Liz is a local resident who lives between the Miles Hills and the Beckhills with her young family, and volunteered on the Love Meanwood steering group.

She has also volunteered on Team Beckhills and The Friends of Meanwood Park.



Janet Matthews and Ron Baker
Meanwood Valley Partnership

The Meanwood Valley Partnership consists of local residents who volunteer their time and skills to preserve, protect and enhance the Meanwood Valley area. Established over 20 years ago, in recent years we've worked together to deliver the Meanwood

festival, fun day and Christmas lights. Working in partnership with Leeds City Council, local businesses and other groups, we aim to improve resources and facilities whilst maintaining the areas great heritage and community spirit.

www.meanwoodvalleypartnership.co.uk



Adam Ogilvie
Meanwood Valley Urban Farm

Meanwood Valley Urban Farm is a working farm in Leeds, open 365 days a year for the public to visit our animals, gardens, and flourishing woodland. We've been around since 1980 as a city farm, when we were established with the goal of reconnecting

urban people with their food. A locally popular attraction, we sell farm produce in our shop and run projects for schools. Our learners are central to the smooth running and positive spirit of the farm.

www.mvuf.org.uk



Isabel Swift
Lemon Balm

I've lived in Meanwood for 4 years with my partner and our son, first on the Monkbridges and now on the Miles Hills. Lemon Balm is a Meanwood based social enterprise. In partnership with communities, charities and businesses, we deliver landscape

design and therapeutic outdoor activities. We are passionate about the active and passive benefits of bringing individuals and communities closer to nature.

www.lemonbalm.org.uk



Neil Pentelow
Leeds City Council Inner NE Community Officer

I grew up in the Moortown and Meanwood area. I went to Carr Manor Primary School (now Manor Wood) and Lawrence Oates Middle School. As a Communities Team Officer for Leeds City Council, I coordinate the Meanwood Seven Estates Partnership which brings together partner agencies, services, third sector, community organisations

and representatives who work and/or live in the Meanwood area. The partnership's aim is to improve the wellbeing of Meanwood residents, identify challenges and inequalities, improve the local environment and remove barriers to services, through innovative and collaborative partnership work

www.leeds.gov.uk

Opposite Above: Steering group discussing a community drawn map. (Photo: Lemon Balm)

Appendix 2: Further Reading and Resources

- **Meanwood Valley Wildlife Spotters Guide:**
<http://meanwoodvalleypartnership.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/MV-Wildlife-Spotters-Guide.pdf>
- **Unlocking Sustainable Cities, Paul Chatterton:**
Pluto Press (2018)
- **New Economics Foundation: Five Ways To Wellbeing:**
<https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/five-ways-to-wellbeing-1.pdf>
- **The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better, Richard Wilkinson & Kate Pickett:**
Allen Lane (2009)
- **From What is to What If: unleashing the power of imagination to create the future we want, Rob Hopkins:**
Chelsea Green (2019)
- **Revaluing Parks and Green Spaces: measuring their economic and wellbeing value to individuals:**
Fields in Trust (2018)

Visit the Love Meanwood Vision website to see further information including:

- Suggest a scheme COVID-19 report
- Meanwood Valley Partnership report on the junction
- Your Road My Street full leaflet
- Leeds Observatory report and definitions
- High resolution versions of the maps
- Monk Bridge Road report
- Meanwood Valley Partnership report on busses
- How to get involved in volunteer groups
- Community directory
- Community maps
- Sustrans and national cycling network information

Thank You

The Love Meanwood Project and this vision would not have been possible without the support from all the people who have helped us along the way

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And everyone in Meanwood who contributed to the consultations.

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Lemon Balm



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www.lemonbalm.org.uk

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www.lovemeanwood.org.uk

By 2030 we will work together to make Meanwood a climate resilient community where all neighbours can enjoy a healthy life with equal access to opportunities, facilities, services and public spaces.

