

Hunslet Initiative Background

We aim to bring about positive change across inner South Leeds (particularly Hunslet and Belle Isle) to build bridges in the community, invest in the well being of children, young people and their families and empower them to reach their potential. We do this through the provision of high quality activities and support programmes, which include children's and youth clubs, detached sports activities, cookery classes, job application support, mentoring, community clean-ups, trips and training for vulnerable young people living in the areas of Hunslet and Belle Isle. We believe in the potential of this community and are committed to working with our participants to enable them to take the next steps in fulfilling their potential.

Ls10 Kids Good Community Forum

Funding from The High Sheriff of West Yorkshire enabled the launch of Ls10 Kids Good Community Forum. Despite difficulties with meeting together throughout covid 19 the project has managed to listen to local people individually while also bringing young people together to share their experiences and gain a better understanding of crime issues in their neighbourhood. The Forum has gathered perspectives from local children and their families to identify priorities, share knowledge and solutions for tackling crime and antisocial behaviour, creating a safer environment and promoting community pride. Also participants explored their neighbourhood and shared the things they love about living here. We celebrated the good things together while also identifying things needing to change or improve in Belle Isle. This report summarises the outcome of all these conversations.

Priorities

Young people identified a list of priorities for Belle Isle and although there were many ideas created by participants there were a few prioritised that were identified and voted as top priorities.

Of all the participants involved....

- 100%** identified the priority **Safety for kids**
- 90%** identified the priority **More local activities**
- 90%** identified the priority **Space for exercise**

Children and parents were both concerned for the safety of children and young people in the area. All participants gave examples of recent negative incidents and these have created a sense of fear and reluctance to let children and young people play or walk around the area unsupervised. This led into participants voicing the great need for organised activities in the area, both to help young people feeling safe while being out alone and also to help those young people who get caught up in anti-social behaviour without having the options for other local positive activities.

Specific areas that 'feel good' about Belle Isle

- MUGA at the top of West Grange Road
- John Charles Centre for sport
- Shops on Belle Isle Parade.

Specific areas that 'feel unsafe' about Belle Isle

- Walk to Corburn Academy (especially in the winter with poorly lit areas).
- Roads due to speeding on West Grange Road and Winrose Crescent.

Local Crime

Participants who all live locally identified concerns about crimes that take place in their locality. Participants identified and voted which crimes they feel take place most in the area and which caused the most concern.

Knife crime was particularly discussed as a growing fear in the neighbourhood for local people but especially young people and children.

50% identified concerns with **Knife Crime**
36% identified concerns with **Car theft**
36% identified concerns with **Burglary**

Ideas were discussed that could help address the issues of knife crime and theft. Participants agreed that an increase in Police presence and CCTV would help deter perpetrators and reduce fear on the streets. Young people were also interested to find out what developments could be made to Police strategies or law changes around knife crime and carrying a knife that could make a difference.

Lockdown and Covid-19

Although this project has been focused on local issues of crime and community pride it has inevitably also brought up discussions about lockdowns and covid-19. Over 50% of participants felt that Belle Isle has changed since covid-19 and lockdowns occurred. Participants felt that crime decreased earlier in lockdown but had begun to significantly increase recently. Participants felt people in the community had 'pulled together more' and there was a better chance of building a greater sense of community now than before. **Despite the difficult times individuals and communities have faced over the last 18 months it seems now is a very important opportunity to put further resources into the neighbourhood and build upon the togetherness and resilience that has emerged during these turbulent times.**

Please respond!

We would like you to please respond to this report around the following areas below. We can then feedback your responses to participants that have been involved so we might all work together to making Belle Isle an even better place to live.

Please comment on.....

- What current measures are in place now and what are the plans for helping make Belle Isle safer for children and young people?
- What are the plans for supporting more local activities in Belle Isle?
- What current measures are in place now and what are the plans for tackling knife crime and theft in the area?
- Please also comment on what local residents could do to help with these areas.

Thanks for your time and commitment to Belle Isle.