

Anstruther

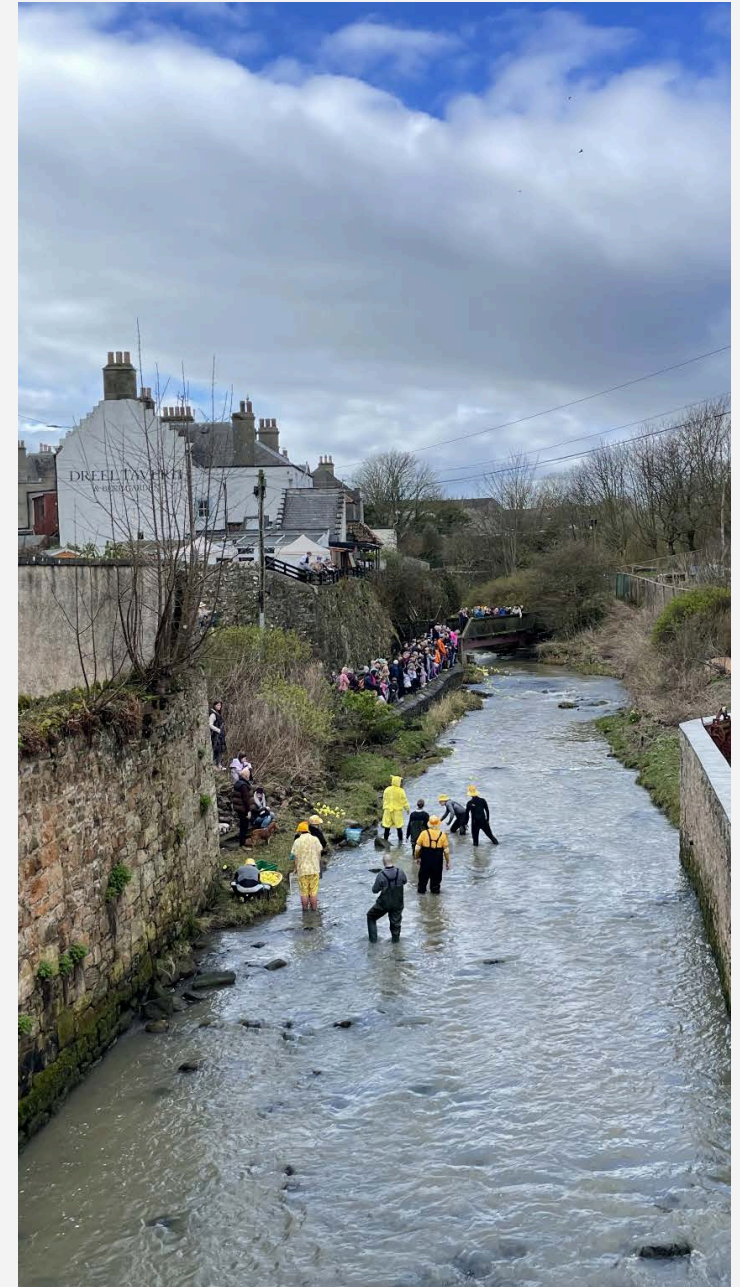
Dreel Burn

Duck Race Day Consultation Report

April 2024

icecream architecture

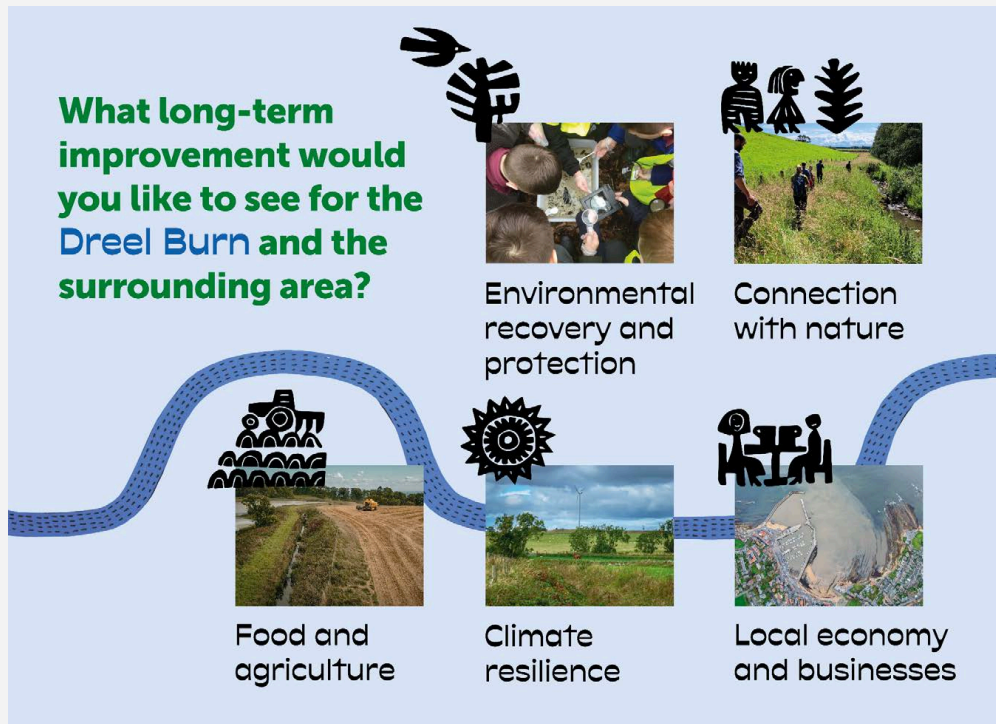
Anstruther Improvements Association



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Line of Questioning & Engagement Activities



Line of Questioning

The main question used as a call to action was:

How do you think the Dreel Burn can be improved?

The conversations were articulated around **three main questions**:

1. How could the community benefit from long-term improvements to the Dreel Burn?
2. Do you have any concerns for the Dreel Burn?
3. What long-term improvements would you like to see for the Dreel Burn and the surrounding area?

Five themes were presented to fuel conversations when needed:

1. Connection to Nature
2. Environmental Recovery and Protection
3. Food and Agriculture
4. Climate Resilience
5. Local Economy and Business

This report details the views of respondents as expressed through the various Engagement Activities. These views are not stated in this report as fact but as a description and summary of the varied views and opinions described in person or submitted through the Online Engagement Activity.

In-person Engagement Activities

The engagement activities were led by icecream architecture, in close collaboration with Anstruther Improvements Association. They took place before and after the Duck Race event: an annual event that attracts many families and visitors to the Dreel Burn.

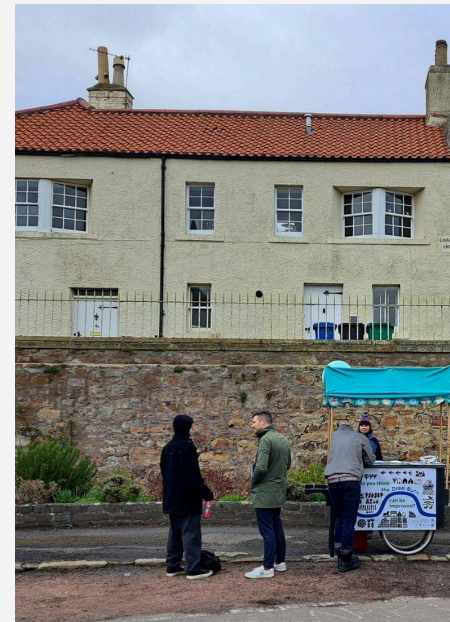
The engagement consisted of a branded cart working as a visible station for the consultation. Three members of the icecream architecture team worked in collaboration with three members and volunteers of Anstruther Improvements Association to consult people in Anstruther about the long-term improvements they want to see to the Dreel Burn area. The half-day of engagement covered four locations:

Dreel Burn and Dreel Halls: Easter Duck Race Fundraising

9.30 am - noon

The engagement was initially setup at the Dreel Burn to catch the crowd participating in and watching the Duck Race. A team stayed at the cart, distributing flyers and chatting to people walking to the race and to Dreel Halls. The second team walked to the banks of the Dreel Burn and to Dreel Halls, having conversations with people coming for the Duck Race. Some people took the time to have a conversation while others took a flyer promoting the online consultation.

120 interactions were recorded before noon.



Tidal Pool at Cellardyke: Wild Swimmers Fundraising

Noon - 1 pm

One team joined a charity sea swim event at Cellardyke Tidal Pool. The people present for the event were mainly visitors from outside the area or if from Anstruther, considered ‘the Cellardyke side’ to be too far to comment with certainty - ‘I’m a foreigner in those parts!’.

Anstruther Harbour Promenade

Noon - 1 pm

The other team wheeled down to the Harbour. The team spoke to the people walking around the harbour and getting a fish supper. Many people were visiting the town on the day and did not know about the Dreel Burn. There were a few local people who stopped for a conversation. Heavy rain interrupted the engagement.



Anstruther Co-operative Store

1 pm - 2.30 pm

The team’s last stop for the day was at the Co-op supermarket. The team was situated after the cashiers to attract customers leaving the premises. Many flyers were distributed, and some people had more in-depth conversations.



There were a total of 238 interactions during the day, including 35 in-depth discussions which were noted.

Online Engagement Activity

A consultation project page and survey were introduced to the Dreel Burn project website (www.dreelburn.earth/consultation). The survey focused on the Questions and Themes from the Line of Questioning above.

The website was launched in advance of the Duck Race event and was promoted through the AIA's social media channels. It provides a catalogue of information about the Dreel Burn project and will be updated as the project progresses.

The raw data submitted through the website consultation is included as an appendix to this Report.

21 responses were garnered from the survey, and the results have been incorporated into the findings of this report.

The screenshot shows the 'Dreel Burn' website's 'Consultation' page. The page features a navigation bar with links for Home, About, Our Work, Participate, Partners, and Contact Us, along with a search icon, a 'Sign in' link, and a 'Subscribe' button. The main heading is 'Participate Consultation'. Below this, a central graphic asks 'What long-term improvement would you like to see for the Dreel Burn and the surrounding area?' and lists six themes: Environmental recovery and protection, Connection with nature, Food and agriculture, Climate resilience, and Local economy and businesses. Each theme is accompanied by a small image and a stylized icon. Below the graphic, a text box explains the purpose of the survey: 'We want to know what people who live on or near the Dreel Burn think should be done to improve the burn and surrounding area. Please give us a few minutes to share your thoughts about what matters to you, how we can make improvements and what we should prioritise.' The survey form consists of several sections: 1. A text input field for 'How could the community benefit from long-term improvements to the Dreel Burn?'. 2. A table for assigning priority levels (1-5) to each theme. 3. A text input field for 'Do you have any concerns for the Dreel Burn?'. 4. A text input field for 'What long-term improvement would you like to see for the Dreel Burn and the surrounding area?'. 5. A text input field for 'Do you have any additional comments?'. At the bottom, there are 'Submit' and 'Clear form' buttons.

	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5
Environmental recovery and protection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Connection with nature	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Climate resilience	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food and agriculture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local economy and business	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Engagement Findings



Summary of Responses to Main Questions

How could the community benefit from long-term improvements to the Dreel Burn?

- Increasing the access and network of paths around the Dreel Burn while increasing the plant diversity and number of trees. Creating spaces such as play parks and picnic sites for people to use would be beneficial to the community and would contribute to making the Dreel Burn feel safer for people and improve their wellbeing.
- Having more events related to the burn would also contribute to building awareness and attract more usage by the local community. All these improvements would contribute to a better connection to nature while enhancing the habitats and providing nature walking. It could also become a resource for learning and education, becoming an asset for the community.
- Improvement to the local food system and agriculture would allow the community to access good quality and local food, creating a better bond with the local farmers. A better relationship between local farmers/producers and the community could be built through improvements to the Dreel Burn.

“Each community can benefit in so many ways: fishers & bathers from clearer, cleaner water; farmers from less fertiliser and soil waste and greater water-resilience; nature and nature lovers from better habitats and greater biodiversity.”

“If the burn was managed for the environment it could have a large ecological and community connection. Having a mosaic of habitats along its length would be very beneficial for the ecology of the burn.”

“Having a place to go and be surrounded by the sounds and smells of nature will help with the mental health of anyone visiting.”

“Better water, better life, less field flooding, the wider community of species will benefit.”

“Higher diversity of wildlife. Cleaner water, increased awareness of the habitat, greater use of the area. Improved education. Opportunities to volunteer. Better rapport with farmers and local businesses.”

Do you have any concerns for the Dreel Burn?

- The water quality was the most prominent concern. The Dreel Burn appears polluted to many respondents, although they did not know exactly how true this was and asked. The agriculture and industrial run-off were said to be concerns and likely factors. On this topic, there are concerns that there is a lack of awareness among farmers and industry. Respondents voiced concerns that flooding (like recent floods on the East Coast) could become more regular.
- The wildlife decrease has been noted by respondents, especially the number of varieties of birds and fish. Others did not know what type of wildlife was present at the Dreel Burn. There were concerns about invasive species such as hogweed and ivy growth, which required more awareness and management to be responsive to sites of concern.
- Some of the conversations highlighted concerns about litter present along the Dreel Burn and a risk of too much development.
- The access to the Dreel Burn was as much a concern as a benefit. There is limited access to the Burn and a lack of accessible paths along steep sides. Some respondents do not feel safe walking or letting children visit the Dreel Burn.
- Other comments, though broader in their intent for Anstruther than the Dreel Burn itself, highlighted concerns for local businesses. Respondents felt that local businesses do not get enough support or attention.

"My biggest concern is that [the Dreel Burn] continues in its demise"

"I'm concerned about its current state and that the process to improve it must be inclusive of the various stakeholders: residents, farmers, fishers, owners, wider sector experts etc."

"I'm concerned about the water quality and impact on wildlife."

"If it gets over "developed".

"Concern that industrial/agricultural runoff and litter could damage the burn and all plants and animals in it."

"A proper walk established along its banks."

"Don't let commerce in to wreck it. Keep Burn side natural & undeveloped. Let birdwatchers & other naturalists enjoy the all too rare opportunities to wander amongst nature close to the town."

What long-term improvement would you like to see for the Dreel Burn and the surrounding area?

- A clean river with good water quality that is regularly tested.
- Increased stocks and varieties of fish.
- Having more trees and improved biodiversity and habitats.
- An improved visitor and local offer with more access and trails that run from the town right to the Gillingshill reserve and reservoir and a better link to Dreelside Walk. This network would include nature interpretation to know what to see at the burn and amenities.
- A change in legislation for better environmental protection that would impact agricultural and industrial practices. Contributing to implementing agriculture practices that benefit the Dreel Burn. The river would be better considered by all stakeholders and the public with increased communication and information about it.
- The local food would be valued and promoted, with limited imports of cheap food in the area. The local farmers would be better supported.
- Any new housing schemes would promote sustainability and food growth. Businesses and the economy would support the burn and be supported by it, developing a sustainable relationship between land and industry.

“Cleaned up and maintained like it used to be done.”

“Paths maintained, steps and bridges safe for public use. Perhaps some information boards with wildlife and birds that can be spotted in the area. Bird and bat boxes could be installed as well as a feeding station perhaps.”

“People valuing our waterways!”

“The burn & burnside need to be protected for wildlife & wildflowers as a sanctuary from noise & development, because once compromised it's a haven lost.”

“Improvements on making walking all year round easier.”

“Removing physical restrictions which slow down water flow and the ability for fish /invertebrates and other wildlife to flourish.”

Main Themes

The following pre-determined themes have been ranked following conversations and what mattered most to people in their responses. This ranking is based on the number of times that these topics or related sub-topics were raised by participants during in-person discussions:

Rank 1 Connection with Nature

- Better access to the Dreel Burn.
- The benefits of the natural environment on wellbeing.
- Improve knowledge and learning.

Rank 2 Environmental Recovery and Protection

- Habitat protection.
- Improve water quality.

Rank 3 Food and Agriculture

- Local food access.
- Good quality of products.
- Supporting local farms.

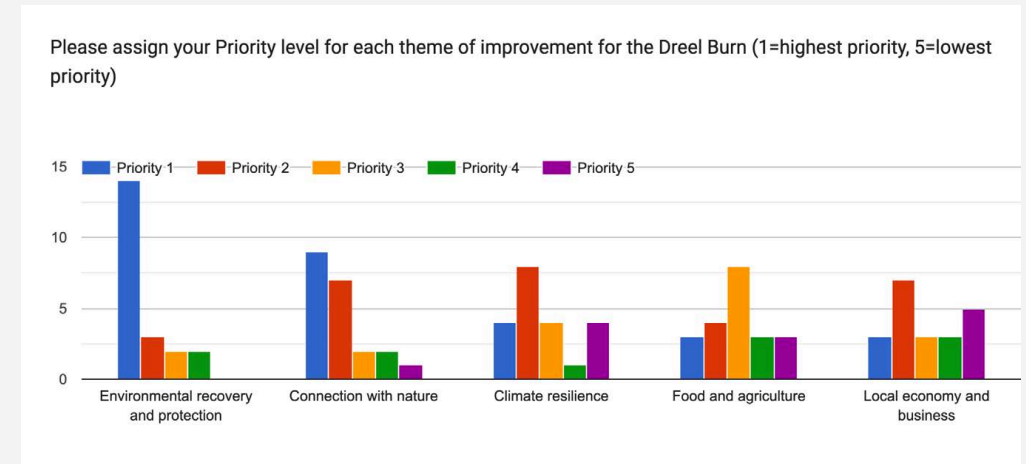
Rank 4 Climate Resilience

- Renewable Energy.
- Education.

Rank 5 Local Economy and Business

- Businesses develop in harmony with the Dreel Burn.
- Opportunities for farms, industries and businesses to do things differently.

There is a slight variation between this Priorities ranking perceived from in-person discussion and the Priorities ranking given by respondents online (shown below).



Insights

Water Quality

Many people were concerned about the water quality of the Dreel Burn. People suggested that the water is polluted and low quality. There is a concern that the agricultural and industrial sectors are the main sources of pollution, especially run-off in the burn. Some people asked for regular water testing to be done. One person suggested that the testing should be done at strategic locations to monitor the level of pollution next to the potential source. The monitoring of water testing led to calls for more public information about the surveys done at the Burn to know how polluted the water is. There is an opportunity for more awareness of the environmental issues related to the Burn.

“Pollution goes into the fish, and then we eat the fish!”

Safety

It was reported by a number of people that the area along the Dreel Burn does not feel safe to walk along or let children go alone. One person said that the walking paths are safe though they could always be improved.

“Sea skills training is brilliant, but maybe water safety skills could happen along the burn also.”

Digital Nature Trails

As a way to attract families and children to the Dreel Burn for walks, multiple groups suggested creating a digital nature trail or app. Having interactive info and a map to tell visitors about the wildlife and habitats would be of interest along the Dreel Burn and across Anstruther. This would increase knowledge of the local flora and fauna and encourage visitors to preserve it.

Access

The majority of respondents have asked for better access to the Dreel Burn. There seem to be limited access paths to accommodate a wide range of visitors including children, elderly people and people with disability needs. There are proposals for walking paths to do a loop from the harbour. It was noted that the stepping stones in the harbour need repair, and the walking paths and access in general need to be improved. Some people did not know how many paths and how much access is possible along the Dreel Burn. There is an opportunity for increased signage and wayfinding. Giving better access to the Dreel Burn would allow connection with nature and contribute to improved well-being - especially for those living in Anstruther.

Some people asked for a dipping pond or being able to swim in the Burn. It was pointed out that a man-made pond cannot be used for liability reasons.

“A space for freshwater doking would be super; especially because my daughter is scared of jellyfish and won’t go near the sea.”

“It’s dangerous for kids to walk around the Dreel and nearly impossible for older residents to enjoy the view and walk around.”

“Walking is my everything; any safe, easy access routes.”

“Easier and more obvious access.”

Training/ Learning

Many voiced that they would like to see training schemes to engage young people to appreciate nature at the Dreel Burn. More training and learning tools would build awareness among people of the conditions of the Dreel Burn. It would also empower and encourage local people to get involved in preserving and restoring the Dreel Burn.

The kind of activities suggested were active workshops with children to show habitats and river life. The water safety skills are really useful for young people.

“There is scope to get the Uni at St. Andrews and the Colleges more involved.”

“Tadpoles are a great way of getting people interested in the aquatic life”

Future Generations

Involving children and young people will give them a sense of ownership of the Dreel Burn and encourage them to care for it. By being involved in more activities along the Dreel Burn, respondents felt they would have a better understanding of the opportunities for the Dreel Burn to be improved.

“More involvement with schools as they’re still not getting out enough after COVID”

“More education initiatives”

“Kids need to be involved in the process in order to ensure more stable and lasting changes in terms of pollution.”

Habitats

Improving the quality of the water will help the wildlife return to the area. A couple of people have said that they used to fish for brown trout and see eels in the Dreel Burn, but that there are no more fish. One man saw a decrease in number in the ‘70s. There was a suggestion that the Dreel Burn should be used as a dedicated avenue for habitat along its entire length. This would provide broader verges and areas of tree and hedge planting to encourage more animal and bird species and allow their movement.

“More trout for fishing! That will bring people.”

“Needs more plants for the wildlife to thrive all year round.”

Seaweed

A person has asked for an improvement to stop seaweed from going up the burn. The seaweed smells bad and attracts flies that can be horrendous, with houses at the harbour being particularly impacted after high tides.

Invasive Plants

Hogweed and ivy growth is perceived as a major problem. People believe invasive species should be actively cut out and managed wherever present. Opportunities to build awareness about these species and their management would be helpful.

“The continuation of weed management, and underfoot walkways.”

Events/Social

Many families spoken to at the Duck Race were coming to the Dreel Burn especially for this event. They do not visit the Burn at other times, the event is what draws them to it. The Duck Race was extremely popular and highlighted to respondents an opportunity for Dreel Burn-based events in the future.

“I don’t socialise much as I’m not sure what’s going on, so knowing that things are happening and having easy-to-access groups would help.”

“More social events are needed so that people realise the importance of the Dreel.”

Tourism and Amenities

There are opportunities for paddleboarding and watersports in the harbour area. Increasing the offer at the Dreel Burn with amenities such as a play park and info boards could expand the tourist offer in the area. Some people suggested that they would visit more often if they had something to visit and a reason to stay.

“Developing amenities at the Dreel Burn such as a play park or a café would give incentives to visit and spend time at the Burn.”

“Trails and info boards make a great amenity for exploring and understanding more about an area.”

“Walking, with child-friendly activities along the way.”

“Bins that stay shut in places people would use.”

Food

In terms of long-term improvements for the area, access to local and sustainable food seemed important and was valued as a way to support the local economy. There was an emphasis on the good quality of the food, but also an understanding that it would involve higher prices. Someone pointed out that 70 trucks with fish leave Anstruther each day. There are opportunities for local craft foods to be distributed through the same channel.

Agriculture and Industries

The monoculture and standardised agricultural practices around the burn do not support the local wildlife and habitats and increase the risk of flooding.

Many people expressed that they wished for the farmers to be better supported and their products to be sold locally at a fair price. There were suggestions around the agricultural subsidies and policies that could influence positive change.

“More solutions required on highlighting the main issues we are faced in creating a better environment. Landowners and farmers MUST be on board.”

“The burn flows through large areas of farmland and as such will be subject to agricultural run off; then running down the brim onto the sea, this water is played in by children where it reaches the sea. Alongside this any runoff will have an impact on the ecology of the burn along its entire length.”

Jobs/Workspace

Developing spaces for people to work or hot-desk in Anstruther could support local businesses to setup nearby.

“With the right environment and space to walk the Dreel Burn during lunch would make it a really attractive offer.”

Energy

Renewable energy, especially off-shore wind turbines, takes advantage of local resources and improves the sustainability of the area.

“Climate-friendly improvements, especially for energy generation.”

Policies and Government Role

Respondents felt the efforts to make improvements should not be limited to either local views or governmental policy decisions; it should be a coordinated effort. The Government and local authorities or public agencies have a regulatory role to play to ensure improved practices. Transparency of why policies must be put into practice should be shared publicly to build awareness.

Recommendations

There was general positivity from passers-by to being engaged about the Dreel Burn and the common view was that improvements could be made which would have positive effects for Anstruther and the wider area.

The format for engagement encouraged short discussions, with passers-by generally on a leisurely visit to the area. This meant there was a high number of separate interactions (238), though about half of these were brief discussions or a short introduction with the flyer being handed out.

To further the consultation it would benefit from a more in-depth discussion format, for example with a targeted audience and themed workshops.

There were 2 young residents who shared a wealth of valuable insights into the Dreel Burn from their regular visits. If an opportunity was available to proactively engage them or others in the project through relevant training as Local Champions of the Dreel, it could prove a valuable experience and outcome for the project.

Due to the nature of the events and the Easter weekend, the audience targeted was formed of families or small groups. A significant minority were occasional visitors (visiting relatives, or staying at a holiday home in the area) who were not very familiar with the Dreel Burn. However, many local people had a good understanding of opportunities and local issues surrounding the Dreel Burn.

Appendix 1: Online Feedback

How could the community benefit from long-term improvements to the Dreel Burn?	Do you have any concerns for the Dreel Burn?	What long-term improvement would you like to see for the Dreel Burn and the surrounding area?
Yes	No	More plant diversity
Connection with nature	Litter	Nice place to walk with seats and picnic area
Increase the wellbeing of nature and people	That it continues in its demise	Cleaning water quality and surrounding area - creating community involvement
Plant more trees	No	Needs more plants for the wildlife to thrive all year round
each community can benefit in so many ways: fishers & bathers from clearer, cleaner water, farmers from less-fertiliser& soil waste and greater water-resilience, nature and nature-loves from better habitats and greater biodiversity etc etc..	1) its current state (2) that the process to improve it must be inclusive of the various stakeholders: residents, farmers, fishers, owners, wider sector experts etc.	better soil water-retention to slow and improve water flow and improve drought resilience
It would be a popular place to enjoy nature	I'm concerned about the water quality and impact on wildlife	Protection against flooding and poor water quality
Given the state of Britain's rivers, the first priority must be the absence of pollution. Amenities such as paths, bridges etc are secondary issues.	First and foremost, for the health of the burn.	That all communities bordering it feel themselves bound by a chain of responsibility. The burn is not just an 'Anstruther' issue
If the burn was managed for the environment it could have a large ecological and community connection. Having a mosaic of habitat's along its length would be very beneficial for the ecology of the burn.	The burn flows through large areas of farm land and as such will be subject to agricultural run off.then running down the brim onto the sea, this water is played in by children where it reaches the sea. Along side this any run off will have an impact on the ecology of the burn along its entire length.	Creating a mosaic of habitat along its length could be very beneficial for the local ecology. This could also include areas of filtration through natural means such as reedbeds to take out any farm run-off that comes into the drill burn higher up the water course, stopping this flowing down to the low eras of water, course into Anstruther, and then into the sea beyond. if this is completed, it would then attract community benefits, such as nature, tourism to the area.
Having a place to go and be surrounded by the sounds and smells of nature will help with the mental health of anyone visiting	No	The continuation of weed management, and underfoot walkways

	Lack of investment	Easier and more obvious access
A beautiful space for walks and to spot wildlife.	That is grt neglected. It can be very slippery when walking	Path improvements
Enjoyment in natural surroundings	If it gets over "developed". Concern that industrial/agricultural run off and litter could damage it and all plants and animals in it	Bins that stay shut.in places people would use.
Hugely it has been left to ruin when a was Wee used go doon there play run up side n slide doon noo you cannae even walk doon the steps to go under bridge they are covered in gunk n leaves and there used be a bench next to Oath way across from Wee Bridge was left to break and now nothing it looks awful there noo used be Lovely x	It is not a place to go for lovely view walk noo. Such a Shame that it is not maintained way it used to be as a kid had loads Fun Playing this Area even walk in Along the Nature Track with the Dogs or Friends no sure a would let ma Bairn do that noo as its that over grown n not looked after its Dangerous a would say Any way	Cleaned up and maintained like ot used to be done
By ensuring the waterway is free from rubbish, no overfills from nearby industrial units. Ensuring paths, steps are safe allowing the public and local schools and nurserys to utilise the area.	Rubbish needs cleared regularly	Paths maintained, steps and bridges safe for public use. Perhaps some information boards with wildlife and birds that can be spotted in the area. Bird and bat boxes could be installed aswell as a feeding station perhaps.
Better water, better life, less field flooding, the wider community of species will benefit	Flooding, loss of biodiversity	People valuing our waterways !
I think it's already beautiful as it is, but maybe that's because I am originally from Holland and nature here keeps astonishing me.	(sorry to be blunt/straightforward) this question could use some rephrasing. The questionnaire itself (as i am now reading the next question) is not very well-focused. Do you, as a group, have a reason for being? Or is it, like some other community/volunteer projects (my experience in the Netherlands...) want to keep yourselves busy, and/or just feel togetherness and a shared purpose? (which is a perfectly valid reason for setting this up).	Perhaps talk with the group in Crail, they did and do beautiful things for Denburn.
	Vandals	A proper walk established along its banks

The burn & burnside need to be protected for wildlife & wild flowers as a sanctuary from noise & development , because once compromised its a haven lost	Yes. It's a wildlife / nature reserve - or should be. Don't let commerce in to wreck it	As above, keep it as a natural haven & protect it from being used as a dumping ground. Keep it safe for people & wildlife to enjoy & thrive . Theres loads of space - beaches for example - for people to let their hair down. Keep Burn side natural & undeveloped. Let birdwatchers & other naturalists enjoy the all to rare opportunities to wander amongst nature close to the town.
Tourism, farming and the environment	Issues with hogweed and nature in surroundings	Environmental issues with the burn and surrounding areas
Been here as long as the town ... should feature at the heart of it		Improvements on making walking all year round easier
Higher diversity of wildlife. Cleaner water, Increased awareness of the habitat, Greater use of the area. Improved education. Opportunities to volunteer. Better rapport with farmers and local businesses	Pollution levels increasing. Reduced diversity.	Removing physical restrictions which slow down water flow and ability for fish /invertebrates and other wildlife to flourish.

Priorities:

