

# PEDESTRIANS BOOST BUSINESS



Photo credit: Shrewsbury Business Improvement District

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PEDESTRIAN POUND, 3RD EDITION



*transport for quality of life*



**LIVING**

**STREETS**

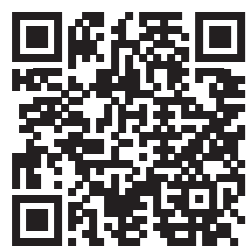


# The Pedestrian Pound presents compelling evidence on how walking-friendly environments are one of the cheapest ways to tackle some of society's biggest challenges and benefit our high streets, communities and health.

The Pedestrian Pound, 3rd edition outlines the challenges facing our high streets, including the rise of online shopping, the cost of living crisis and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. British high streets and town centre shops have suffered, with a record number of retail failures in 2022 and a vacancy rate of nearly one in seven by the end of 2023.

Against this backdrop, Living Streets' report centres on three key themes that highlight the transformative power of walkable environments: economy, community and health.

First published in 2013, this new version of The Pedestrian Pound looks into future trends and how the past decade has changed our relationship with our high streets, town centres and public spaces. By embracing the principles outlined in the report, we can create sustainable environments that help people, businesses and communities to thrive.



**Read the full report at**  
**[livingstreets.org.uk/](https://livingstreets.org.uk/PedestrianPound)**  
**PedestrianPound or scan**  
**the QR code**



Photo credit: Ivon Bartholomew for Living Streets

01

Economic  
benefits



DAILY JOURNEYS  
ARE VALUABLE

44%

of people in Scotland walk to  
local shops daily or several  
times a week.

LOCAL  
ECONOMIES  
THRIVE

25%

more sales during weekend  
pedestrianisation of town centre  
streets in Shrewsbury (particularly  
boosting food and drink sales).



BUSINESS  
LEADERS  
AGREE

95%

of London business improvement districts  
(BIDs) agreed that a safe, attractive  
walking environment is good for business



## Economic benefits of walkable environments. Pedestrians = pounds.

There is a wealth of evidence showing that those who walk or wheel to shops spend more money, and that pedestrianised town centres experience higher sales. Investing in walking is good value for money, evidenced by walking realm improvements having an excellent cost-benefit median ratio of 3.7. These improvements are more likely to achieve their intended purpose compared to similar upgrades for cycling or car infrastructure.



Photo credit: Ivon Bartholomew for Living Streets

# Swansea Uplands: how making space for a monthly market boosted the local economy and walkability.



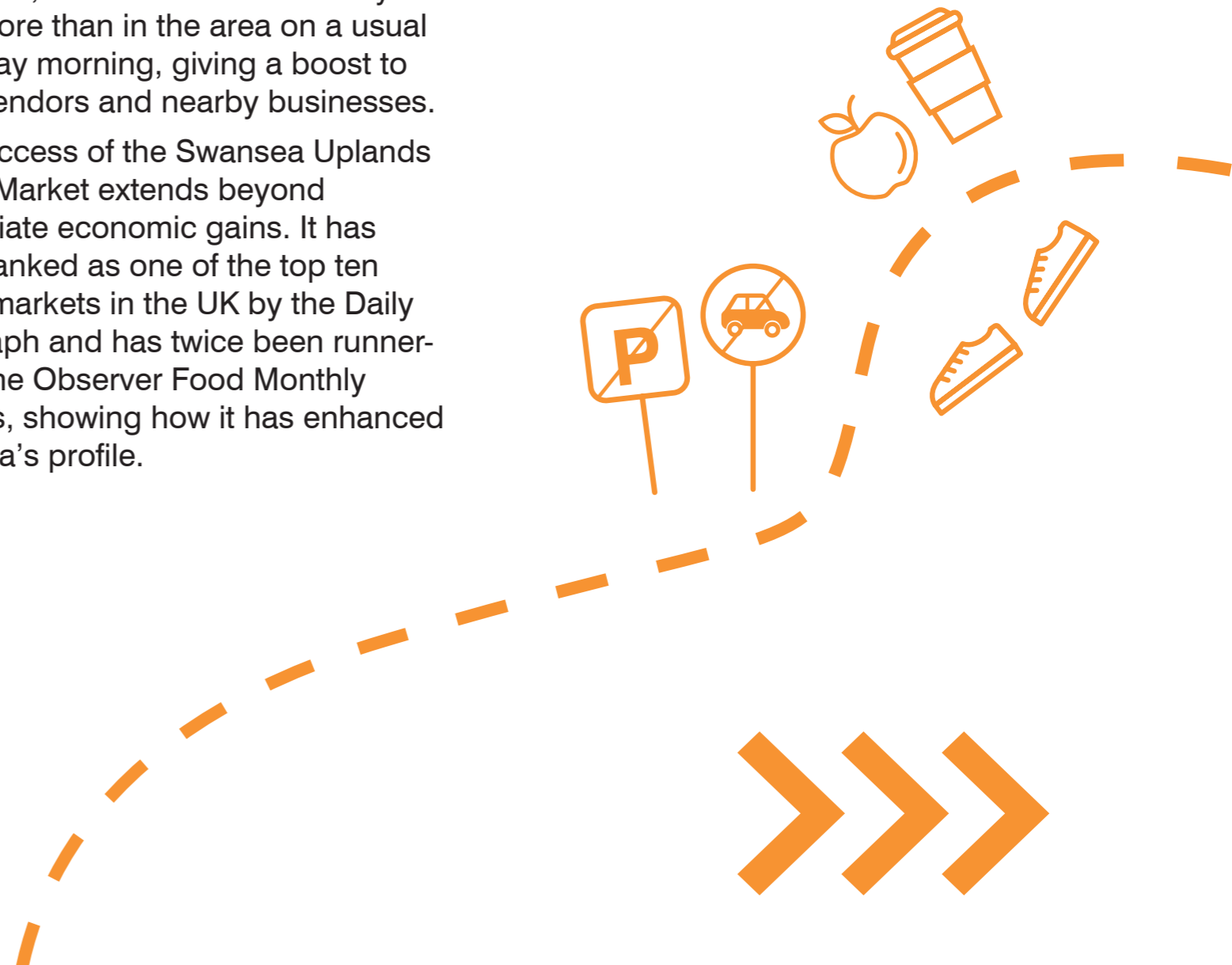
Photo credit: Swansea Bay Street Markets Limited

In 2013, creative regeneration agency, Urban Foundry, transformed Gwydr Square, a car-dominated side road in Swansea's Uplands suburb, into a thriving French-style street market. By temporarily removing a handful of parking spaces for a few hours each month, they created a traffic-free zone that has become a major economic driver for the area. The market now attracts 3,000 visitors on warm days – far more than in the area on a usual Saturday morning, giving a boost to local vendors and nearby businesses.

The success of the Swansea Uplands Street Market extends beyond immediate economic gains. It has been ranked as one of the top ten street markets in the UK by the Daily Telegraph and has twice been runner-up in the Observer Food Monthly Awards, showing how it has enhanced the area's profile.

The market has shifted perceptions towards Uplands as a walkable place – with more people now walking around the area on non-market days.

**The Swansea case study powerfully illustrates how prioritising pedestrian spaces, even temporarily, can revitalise urban areas and create significant economic value.**



# 02

## Community connections

ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS  
BOOST PROFITS

20%



greater profit for town centre businesses when there is a bank and post office present.

URBAN GREEN SPACES  
ENHANCE WELLBEING



41%

of people reported increased wellbeing after using a parklet in London.

LOCAL INVESTMENT  
PAYS OFF



It's estimated that 56p of every £1 community businesses spend stays in the local economy.

IMPROVED ACCESS  
IS A MUST

41%

of disabled pedestrians consider the UK's streets to be inaccessible.



## Community connections: walking is important for vibrant high streets

**Walking and walkability are key to creating thriving communities and revitalising our high streets. This fundamental connection is more crucial than ever as our town centres face challenges from online shopping and changing demographics.**

Our high streets need to adapt to changes in society. Not only are people now able to shop online, but we are also experiencing an ageing population. In England, 29% of trips by over-60s were for shopping in 2022, while a Welsh survey found that two-thirds of people were deterred from visiting town centres due to closed facilities like public toilets.

This edition of The Pedestrian Pound considers the value of walking for communities with the experience economy becoming much more relevant to our town centres.

The high street can be a lifeline for those who need social interaction, a place to visit, improve mental health and feel part of a community. And when high streets are walkable and vibrant, they equally benefit – from increased footfall, increased time spent and increased money exchanged.



# Alloa's innovative community hub: how providing accessible amenities can turn a town centre on the decline into one pulsing with life.



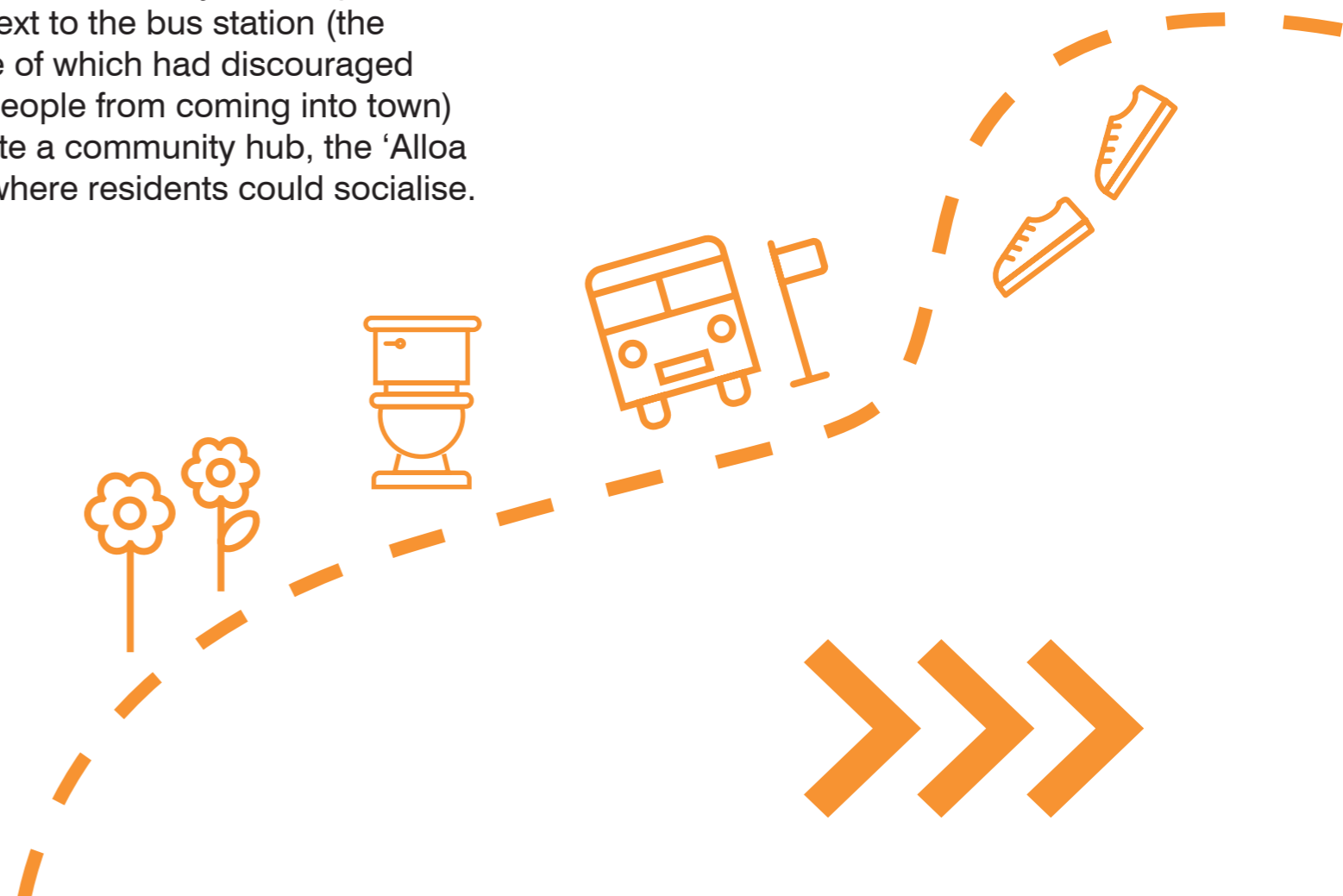
Photo credit: Alloa First

Clackmannanshire Council breathed new life into Alloa's declining town centre through innovative improvements, prioritising accessibility for older residents and pedestrians.

The council acquired a former department store in Alloa, which was on a street with many vacant shops. They conducted a consultation with residents, local businesses and third sector stakeholders to gather views on the town centre and priorities for change.

The first recommendation was to refurbish the recently closed public toilet next to the bus station (the closure of which had discouraged older people from coming into town) to create a community hub, the 'Alloa Hub', where residents could socialise.

The Alloa Hub is now much more than just a public 'lavvie'. It is an orientation point for people arriving in the town by public transport or bicycle. It offers community and travel information, sells local books and merchandise and promotes active travel. Anecdotally, the project has been very well received by the local community.



03

## Healthier people & environment

WALKING TO WORK  
SAVES LIVES AND  
MONEY:



In Scotland, the number of deaths averted by walking to work was worth over £600 million a year.

LOWER SPEED LIMITS  
REDUCE HEALTH COSTS:

£92m

The introduction of default 20mph limits in Wales is estimated to have saved the Welsh NHS just over £92 million in the first year alone; nearly three times higher than the implementation costs.



PREVENTING FALLS  
AMONG OLDER ADULTS:



There are nearly a million outdoor falls among older adults in England each year, with pedestrian falls costing taxpayers as much as £0.5 billion annually – so maintenance could offer huge savings.

## Walkable environments: a path to economic savings through healthier people and environment.



These statistics demonstrate the significant health and economic benefits of creating walkable environments. From reducing mortality rates and healthcare costs to preventing falls among older adults, investments in pedestrian-friendly infrastructure can lead to substantial savings for public health systems.

The Pedestrian Pound presents the impact of walkable places for the environment. For example, a cost benefit analysis for reducing traffic and prioritising walking and cycling in Aberdeen city centre forecast that reducing traffic by 10% or 30% would provide a net present value (discounted net social and environmental benefits) over 30 years (2020-2050) of around £3 million and around £10 million.



# Sheffield's Castlegate transformation: how reducing traffic can allow for an increase in biodiversity, which further helps boost business.

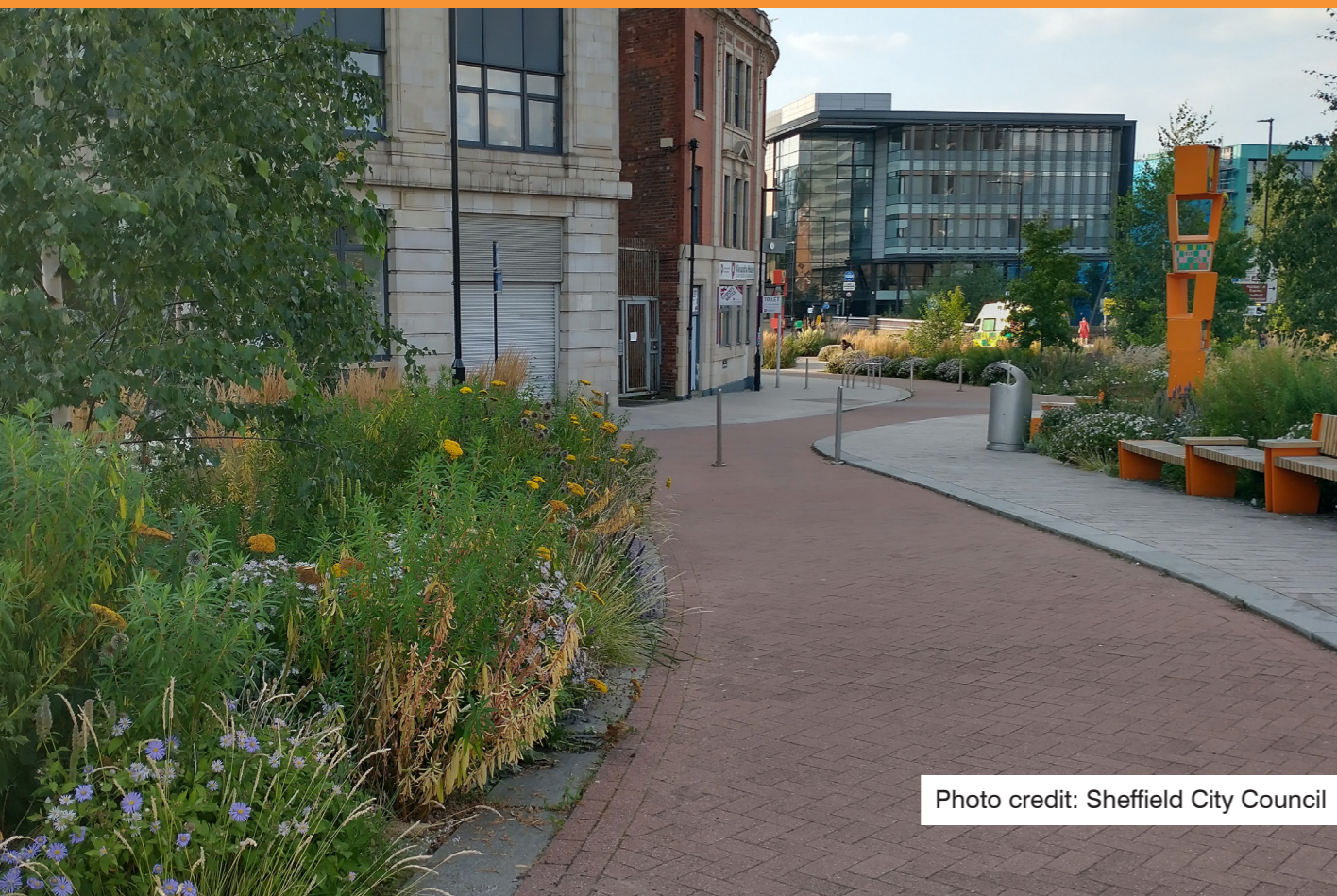


Photo credit: Sheffield City Council

Castlegate was historically the heart of Sheffield, but industrial decay and relocation of shops and civic functions led the area into accelerated decline. The opening of a new inner relief road in 2008 saw traffic reduce on the dual carriageway, which cut through the area. This allowed two traffic lanes to be reclaimed and reversed severance to reconnect Castlegate.

Grey to Green was a transformative environmental project which created a linear park along the redundant carriageways, forming a safe and accessible route through the area.

This more appealing environment would attract new footfall, investment and jobs. Several businesses have relocated to previously vacant office buildings and warehouses in the area. The improvement to the area has created at least 540 jobs and is projected to create more than 1,600 jobs in total. It has also seen a 500%+ increase in biodiversity.



Read the full report, including case studies and an evaluation briefing, at [livingstreets.org.uk/PedestrianPound](https://livingstreets.org.uk/PedestrianPound)

Thank you to our funders:



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HEALTHIER SCOTLAND

