London’s largest parklet provides new community space for Lewisham to aid winter social distancing

Spin partners with Yes Make to create vibrant community spaces that makes London streets more people-centred places for everyone

London, UK, 6th November 2020—Spin, the micromobility unit of Ford Motor Company, has partnered with community-focused urban design agency Yes Make and Lewisham Council, to create “The Arc”, a new community space (also known as a parklet) at Staplehurst Road, where on-street parking is currently suspended.

As part of the UK government’s Streetspace for London initiative, Lewisham Council has introduced measures to create more space for people to safely walk or cycle as the city deals with the coronavirus pandemic. As a result, on-street parking has been suspended in busier areas to make it easier and safer for people to maintain social distancing.

At Staplehurst Road, near Hither Green Station, Spin Streets programme has funded a new adaptable outdoor space to support the local community throughout the pandemic. The parklet is built across 9 car-parking spaces and on a 22 meters by 5 meters platform making it the largest in London and the only one with a cover. The space more than doubles the pavement width and creates an open sided shelter that can be used for everything from coordinating community support efforts through to outdoor social space once lockdown restrictions are eased.

Joel De Mowbray, founder of Yes Make said, “Projects like “The Arc” in Lewisham have never been more important in helping local communities through these difficult times when we are so restricted in terms of how we can see our friends and family. Using the suspended parking area, which local residents assumed was for building works, to instead create a space that self-evidently supports social distancing and local businesses is essential to supporting the local community over the winter.”

The parklet is to stay for 12 months and also includes a wooden canopy with 10 meter table space in front of local businesses such as Blue Marlin, You Don’t Bring Me Flowers, Hither Green Cafe and Favourable Chicken and Ribs, who are looking forward to using the sheltered outdoor dining space that the design offers when lockdown will be eased. A key component of the build is a bicycle rack and a push for electronic scooter parking space in anticipation of the vehicles being legalised following the conclusion of the national trials next year.

Local artists This is My Costume and Harriet Parry Flowers contributed by installing playful murals and planting ferns and herbs to create a green, vibrant and inviting space. The structure is built almost entirely from reused materials, including naturally fallen ash tree branches for the support beams and wood chippings as mulch.

Lewisham Councillor Sophie McGeever, said: “We hope that this new parklet will help with social distancing and allow local businesses to serve more customers in a COVID-secure way. It was made possible through the work of the e-scooter sharing company Spin and community space designer YesMake.”

Commenting on the project, Kay Cheng, Streets Program Director, at Spin added, “Through our Spin Streets programme we are committed to helping UK communities by making their streets safer, more liveable and enjoyable for everyone, be it pedestrians, cyclists — and hopefully soon e-scooter riders. For now, we need to stay indoors but when people do pop out for essential shopping or outdoor exercise this space serves as an urban pit stop whilst supporting local businesses doing take-aways during these challenging times.”
Already serving Milton Keynes residents and soon Essex residents, Spin has begun to roll out its e-scooters through the Department of Transport’s and local councils national e-scooter trials scheme. While doing so, it is bringing its commitment to a holistic vision of more sustainable and people-friendly streets. Its Spin Streets team has creatively transformed streets across the U.S. into people-centered places for people to walk, bike, scoot, or otherwise get around safely.

“The Arc” is Spin Streets’s second project in London, building on the “Pallet to Pavement” project in Brixton in collaboration with Yes Make and InUse-ReUse. The project created a vibrant expanded footway on Atlantic Road to help pedestrians stay distanced by giving new life to the wooden pallets that Brixton businesses receive their deliveries in.

About Spin

Headquartered in San Francisco, California, Spin is one of the leading micromobility companies and a subsidiary of Ford Motor Company. Spin has been recognized for launching the first stationless mobility program in the United States and was instrumental in crafting the world’s first mobility permit system. As a trusted and reliable partner, Spin currently operates electric scooters in many cities and universities in the U.S., UK and Germany. Spin consists of a diverse team of experienced professionals from government and private sectors, and the transportation advocacy world, all of whom are committed to fulfilling the company’s mission — giving people the freedom to move and bringing people, communities, and their urban environment closer together. https://www.spin.app/