

# NORTH BERWICK IN BLOOM 2025





# The NORTH BERWICK IN BLOOM year 2024-25

**The Royal Burgh of North Berwick** is a vibrant coastal town on the shores of the Firth of Forth in Scotland. With a population of 8,000 residents, a small harbour, golf courses, sand dunes and beaches, it is a popular holiday destination, and a great place to live.

North Berwick in Bloom (NBIB) started in the early 1990s with a few volunteers who created thirty permanent beds in the town. 35 years on, NBIB is a registered charity with 20 regular gardening volunteers who look after these beds as well as members who help with raising funds and social media. We have strong support and appreciation from residents and visitors as well as financial support from the town. The volunteers now plant hanging baskets and displays around the town, and have responsibility for an Edwardian rock garden, tropical garden, dry garden, fernery and stumpery in the Lodge Gardens (our public park). We plant summer flower displays, spring bulbs, winter bedding and a seasonal pallet garden display in the High Street. We are lucky to have help, support and advice from East Lothian Council's Amenity team who maintain all the amenity areas, look after the roads and paths and organise rubbish disposal.

New volunteers join regularly throughout the year, along with several who join us when on holiday in the town. We operate a 'buddy' system for anyone who is referred to us or would like to come along for the first time, and we prioritise working with young people in the local schools and youth organisations. We use social media to advertise our regular community planting days in the community orchard and wildflower meadows which are popular with local families with young children. For each of the past five years we have planted trees donated by the Woodland Trust and Rotary, to help the environment and raise awareness of climate issues. The community orchard is now flourishing and used as a learning resource by the local Primary School.

NBIB had a successful year last year, representing Scotland as a finalist in the RHS Britain in Bloom competition, and receiving a Gold Medal. We had so much support from many other voluntary groups in the town that we wanted to recognise this by taking 'Working Together' as our theme this year. These Community groups include the knitters who make displays and post-box toppers featuring NBIB, the Bass Rock group who help us with weeding, cleaning and community events, the Harbour Helpers who are always available for heavy duties such as digging, laying gravel and hanging baskets, the Men's Shed who sharpen our tools, mend fences and make display boards, and Rotary and the Community Council who are always supportive of our work and special events. We work with community groups such as Brownies and Beavers, the Primary School P5 classes and the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. NBIB is a founder member of 'Community Connections', an initiative started in lockdown to combat isolation and loneliness, and which is still going strong.

We have links with nature groups in the town including the Countryside Rangers, Sustaining North Berwick, the Marsh Volunteers, the Law Conservancy group and SOS Puffin. We work closely with North Berwick Gardening Club holding joint plant sales and twice-yearly flower shows as well as talks and garden visits. In addition to growing and planting we clean notice boards, paint benches, and pick litter.

We like to promote our town by entering Keep Scotland Beautiful competitions. We have won the coastal category in Beautiful Scotland twelve times, the Rose Bowl six times and seven Gold Medals in RHS Britain in Bloom including Champion of Champions. We use digital communications for regular updates with our volunteers, and Facebook and website for more public communications.

On 11<sup>th</sup> August 2024, we welcomed two judges from Britain in Bloom. This coincided with North Berwick's 'Fringe by the Sea' festival which takes place outdoors and featured our own floral displays as well as our guided walks along the coast and in the Lodge. Many of our community groups helped to prepare for judging day. We are proud of our restored seating area in the High Street which was inspired by a picture from an old book of cuttings, showing the area outside the Police Station with benches and floral displays. During lockdown it had become dirty and rundown, with bins and rubbish making it an eyesore but with our encouragement and support from the community council, Police Scotland agreed to spruce up the outside of the building and remove the bins. The restored area is now popular with visitors, school pupils and clients from the Day Centre who come along for a seat in the sunshine.



Locals and visitors stop to enjoy our plant displays and read the story boards and notice board which features information about the plants and our current themes. This year we had the bonus of nesting wagtails in one of the planters.

The planted displays in the High Street and Railway station are looked after by our team of waterers who deliver regular watering via bowsers to minimise the amounts we use. We continuously monitor our use of water, and most of our plants are in the ground. We use bedding displays sparingly in places of maximum impact and have installed water butts to reduce the use of tap water. The water butt on the side of the Abbey Church supplies water for the planters and pallet, and we have had discussions with Scottish Water about plans to store larger amounts of rainwater for watering.



During lockdown, a Ukrainian refugee artist painted a mural for our Lighthouse corner wall. She was a volunteer with NBIB and painted a landscape linking NB with Ukraine. The project was supported by a local trust and is situated on a newly widened paved area. The corner is planted and maintained by NBIB and features a representation of Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Treasure Island' which appeals to children who can switch on the fundraising lighthouse to view the interior.



## Tatiana with Harbour Helpers and NBIB volunteers who installed the painting

In October our High Street pallet changed to a Halloween theme thanks to a donation of pumpkins from a local farm, which created a cheerful display to which local families could add their own decorated pumpkins. The hanging baskets were taken down at the end of October while cannas, bananas and other tender perennials were returned to the council nursery. We took plant cuttings and stored begonia corms for next year. We helped scout groups and Bass Rock volunteers in the Lime Grove community garden (an It's your Neighbourhood group) which sits on a once derelict plot of land between houses and is now an accessible community garden as part of the Community Connections project.



Compost delivery Lime Grove Garden    Planting tulip bulbs in November    Remembrance Pallet

In November the planters were cleared of summer bedding and planted up with over 3000 tulip bulbs in amongst violas, polyanthus and wallflower. Jetfire daffodil bulbs were potted up by children from Law Primary and Nursery Schools, a local playgroup, Beavers and Brownies for the RCHS spring bulb show. The Remembrance pallet display was a talking point for passers-by and church goers. 2024 looked back to the Normandy landings which led to the end of WW11. It was later transformed into a Christmas village,



complete with fairy lights. We helped to knit Christmas toppers for the post-boxes in the town and ran an outdoor Christmas Wreath Making workshop on the day of the Christmas Lights Switch On. NBIB volunteers provided help and materials for local shoppers and visitors to make their own wreaths. The day finished with a march along the High Street with the local pipe band, choirs and representative of local organisations including community council.



Beeswax candles



Christmas Wreath Workshop



Christmas celebration for volunteers



One of our bee-keeping volunteers made home crafted NB wax candles in return for a donation to our funds.

We hold our AGM in November and present the accounts and report to all our members. 2024 was our fourth year of being a registered charity and although this has been a lot of work, it has enabled us to fundraise more effectively.



In December we held a Thank You party in the Scottish Seabird Centre for all the NBIB volunteers, other volunteer groups and community supporters who had helped us to win a Gold medal and supported us throughout the year. A special thank you was given to East Lothian Council's Amenity team, 2024 winners of RCHS Award which is presented to the local authority that demonstrates the highest standard of horticulture in public open spaces.

We created a Christmas-themed planting display in the High Street with hellebores, Christmas trees decorated with natural seedheads and fairy lights to complement the Christmas Lights display.

In 2023, the winter storms created havoc for North Berwick. Storm Babet in October coincided with high tides to cause a large breach of the harbour sea wall and extensive damage to the shoreline and beaches. Huge bundles of waste were thrown up by the sea and sea birds and seals were badly affected. Many groups in the community rallied round to help the Harbour Trust by cleaning up and raising funds for essential repairs. The amount of plastic waste thrown up by the sea was truly shocking and has inspired and resourced many of our displays this summer including a plastics mural at the harbour created by a local artist from East Lothian beach debris. We have continued to use beach waste in our crafting activities and taken part in regular beach cleans to remove the waste.



Hole in the wall of the Harbour    Waste thrown up by the storms    The moment the wall was breached

Despite the profound and costly damage to the harbour, many community groups have rallied round to raise funds and work together to repair the damage. It has resulted in greater cooperation and developments around the harbour area, with plans now underway to create new facilities for visitors and regular users. NBIB maintains several planters at the harbour, a planted boat and also a coastal wild flower bed.

Over the winter we continued our usual activities of tending to perennial beds, holding a planning day, potting up polyanthus, and cleaning and repairing notice boards. One of our house-bound supporters enjoys making artwork for our notice boards and provided us with regular displays for our notice boards, all linked to gardening, growing and nature. We cleared a wild, wooded playground area for the Primary school to make a forest classroom, planted a community cherry tree walk, joined litter picks on the beach and helped with repairs and cleaning at the harbour and the flooded Scottish Seabird Centre (SSC).

In March 2024 some of our volunteers joined the Restoration Forth Project to plant 40,000 sea grass seeds off the coast near NB and returned this May to see how well they had established. This project aims to restore seagrass habitats and native oyster populations in the Firth of Forth. It is managed by the WWF and

hopes to ultimately improve water quality and store carbon. The project is now in its third year and has added a new initiative to re-establish Oysters in the Forth. Several of our members have been involved in field trips and seed sorting in the Sea Bird Centre.



Sorting sea grass seeds



Emptying the greenhouse



Harbour Volunteers help with Baskets

Last December we entered a challenging phase when we lost both of our greenhouses and gardening storage area when East Lothian council decided to sell one of the local care homes. At the same time, we lost our tool storage area in the town when the Police Station was sold. We now have temporary accommodation in the local Community Centre grounds and a poly tunnel which we bought to replace the greenhouses. Despite these setbacks we were still able to overwinter cacti and fuchsia, and sow seeds in the spring. Our annual Tulip Festival came into its own in April and May when planters and beds throughout the town erupted in a blaze of colour and our 14th Tulip Festival Leaflet was distributed to shops, information points, the library and museum. In April we held a fundraising Tulip Festival Coffee Morning with stalls including baking, tombola, and plant sales. There was a talk on 'All you need to know about tulips and pots of tulips for sale.

We take safety seriously and every year all the brackets are professionally tested in preparation for hanging the baskets in the High Street in June. North Berwick Gardening Club Spring Show took place at the end of March with displays of club bulbs and spring flowers. The Caley Children's Bulb Show in Edinburgh awarded the Spring Bulb Cup to Law Primary school, and certificates for the Nursery School, Brownies and playgroup. The Cup was presented at assembly and the certificates were presented at group meetings or in class. The two High School beehives in the Country Park were augmented by two more and continue to produce huge amounts of honey. The daffodil displays in the Lodge and around the town were particularly impressive this year. Annual flower seed mixes were sown in many locations around the town.

The stumpery puts on a good spring display with erythroniums and corydalis which grow well alongside hellebores and snowdrops. In April some of our volunteers had a guided tour of the council nurseries where the plants for our hanging baskets are grown and cannas and bananas overwintered. Several of our volunteers work alongside the Seabird centre volunteers to monitor the birds on the islands, spot whales and dolphins and control invasive species such as mallow.

Every year we lift the tulips at the end of May for our annual fundraising event. This year over 500 tulip bulbs were given away and the sale of plants raised £1000 for our funds. A group of volunteers planted up 100 hanging baskets at ELC nursery for delivery in June.





Tulips at Elcap corner



Tulip festival pallet



Tulips in the High Street

We are grateful to receive donations of compost from Caledonian Compost, our local brown bin recycling centre. This is used for potting on seedlings and topping up planters. The harbour volunteers helped with weeding, clearing and painting around the harbour as well as undertaking extensive repairs to benches, storage buildings and the beach huts used by local artists. It was a huge undertaking to recover the harbour area from the ravages of the storms, and professional repairs were completed in the spring. In May, our Scone Palace pallet entry 'Home is Best' based on the story of Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz won a gold award and it is now displayed outside St Andrew Blackadder church for everyone to appreciate., alongside the Law Primary planter entry 'The Joy of Gardening' which won a silver award.



February visit to ELC nursery



Planting up hanging baskets



Harbour helpers help with planters

In June the tender plants for the dry bed and the tropical beds in the Lodge were planted out again in collaboration with ELC Amenity team. Summer bedding and a mix of vegetables and drought resistant perennials went into the blue boxes in the High Street to demonstrate companion planting. This summer, the East Lothian Council amenity team have created a planted remembrance tribute to remember VE day and VJ day in their carpet bed in the Lodge. At the station we continue to develop our wild flower meadow with a bug hotel designed and built by the Men's shed and the Scotrail groundsman has embellished the railway station sign with paintings of the Bass Rock and Law. The Men's Shed have also repaired the backing behind our station boat and information boards in the Lodge grounds. Our 4 planted boats in the town have all been refurbished and decorated with the knitted signal flags created by the knitting group.





Boat at station



Coastal wildflower walk



Boat at the Bank

## Horticulture

Seasonal displays of bedding are concentrated at key sites for maximum impact. One hundred hanging baskets are placed along the High Street each summer to provide a colourful display. One hundred planters and tubs are planted twice a year, with spring bulbs and winter bedding in the autumn, and summer bedding in May/June. Bedding is grown for us by East Lothian Council Nurseries, and we support them by raising funds for the plants. We supplement these with vegetables and flowers raised by seed in our polytunnel, and herbs from local group 'Herbspace' which are grown by High School pupils.

**Permanent Planting.** The soil by the coast is exceptionally sandy while in the town it is heavier and more water retentive. These soil types determine the natural flora and which plants can be successfully cultivated. Our climate is dry by UK standards - annual rainfall of around 710mm. We normally have little frost but exposure to wind can cause the permanent beds to dry out easily. We have tried and tested planting schemes and use perennials and shrubs that can cope with these conditions and provide colour and interest all year round. Spring bulbs are very important; there are more than a million planted around North Berwick. A few years ago, 3,000 trees and shrubs were planted to enhance new social housing and school extensions and NBIB joined with Sustaining NB group and community volunteers to plant over 1,400 trees during 2020 -1, and a further 400 in 2022 for the Queens Green canopy. A community orchard was created in a local park in March 23, with 57 fruit trees planted by many organisations such as Brownies, Guides, Rotary and the Community Council. This was supplemented by wild cherries and benches donated by a local trust. It is close enough to the local school to enable use as an outdoor classroom.



Brownies with Daffodils



Rose Garden in the Lodge



Fund raising event in May



**The Lodge Grounds.** 'The Lodge' is North Berwick's 11-hectare public park in the centre of the town. It had a £1 million historically accurate restoration in 2008. Our volunteers played a crucial part in the restoration, from initial surveys to hands-on work in the garden. NBIB worked closely with East Lothian Council, creating a series of gardens within a garden. The Edwardian rockery, reconstructed by our volunteers, consists of a series of compartments planted with different species. We believe this may be the only surviving example in the country. The Fernery is a shady area with twenty-two different types of ferns. An arid bed has a collection of plants including cacti that can cope with dry and semi-desert conditions. In summer a sub-tropical bed is planted with exotic species, some of which are overwintered in the East Lothian Council (ELC) nursery. Extensive perennial planting includes a bee friendly lavender garden. A Japanese bed commemorates the end of WWII, with plants popular in Japan such as azaleas and bamboos. The Stumpery, created with logs from a nearby beach, is planted with hellebores, ferns, and primulas. A daffodil display has more than thirty different varieties of narcissus from each of the thirteen Daffodil Society divisions. A carpet bed is planted every year by ELC gardeners. Seven years ago, we provided space for threatened conifers from Chile and Morocco as part of the International Conifer Conservation Programme and Arran whitebeams as part of the Scottish Native Plant Initiative at RBGE, they are all flourishing. Many of the original Arran whitebeams were destroyed in the wild fires on Arran earlier this year.

**Residential & Community Gardening** We have close links with NB Gardening Club and provide advice to local gardeners while our ELC colleagues Garden Aid scheme helps elderly and disabled people. We help local schools with gardening projects and provide displays at three churches including two beds showing plants of the Bible. We have organised a 'buddy' system to help people who are referred for gardening therapy by the local community liaison officer and GPs. Our volunteer numbers continue to increase, and we have active connections with many community groups including Sustaining NB, Scottish Seabird Centre, Community Connections, The Bass Rock Community Group, and have helped and advised two community gardening projects – Lime Grove Community Garden and the Gilsland wood. This last is an historic area of woodland which is now being managed by residents under the direction of ELC amenities team. Lime Grove Community Garden is part of 'It's your neighbourhood' and achieved an 'Outstanding' award last year from Keep Scotland Beautiful. We work with groups of Scouts and the Bass Rock group to weed and maintain the garden. In the Easter holidays a group of volunteers helped us to clear an area of woodland on Law Primary School campus for use as a Forrest School classroom.



Forest classroom clearance



Primary 5 in the orchard



Gardening Club plant sale

**Business Areas** All our baskets and many of our planters are in the main shopping area. Many local businesses have added planters or window boxes to their shop fronts. We work with ELC to add perennials,



shrubs and trees to car parks, some streets and the railway station. We ensure that the traffic calming boxes in the High Street are full of seasonal displays including vegetables and herbs that we have grown from seed.

**Open Spaces** North Berwick has a range of extensive open spaces each managed in a different way. Along the coast the raised beach has two putting greens, two golf courses and a wildflower meadow. The Lodge Grounds has nine hectares of grass with many mature trees and is managed for informal recreation. The ten-hectare Recreation Park has three grass sports pitches, a full size all-weather 3G pitch as well as a children's play area with play equipment, a skateboard area with half-pipe and an enclosed basketball court. The 613 ft Law covers 36.6 hectares of unimproved grassland and scrub of high conservation value and attracts many walkers for its summit views of the Firth of Forth and East Lothian countryside. The wooded valley of the Glen with its burn is the largest area of woodland in the town. Altogether the Glen, Coos' Green, Castlehill and the Greenheads area covers 14.8 ha. This includes a 'Lady's Walk which was constructed over one hundred years ago and is still popular today. We have helped to publicise its history with a leaflet which forms part of the North Berwick Environment and Heritage Trust series including the Lodge Gardens and Two Coastal Walks. These are available in the museum or online.

## ENVIRONMENT

Evidence based management plans are in place for all the significant open spaces in North Berwick. These plans stress the importance of co-operation between statutory and voluntary groups. NBIB is involved with or linked to them all.

The coast comes under the Firth of Forth Special Protection Area as well as being a Ramsar site - internationally important wetland - and the islands of the Forth are all also SSSIs. On land the Law is an SSSI botanical site with considerable geological interest. To inform the management plans, monitoring is necessary; 200 species have been recorded in and around North Berwick. Gannets are counted using aerial surveys; other seabirds and seals are counted by volunteers from the Forth Seabird Group. Several members of NBIB take part in SOS Puffin to cut down non-native tree mallow on islands. Volunteers join ranger-led work groups once a month on the Law, Glen and Coos' Green, assisted by NBIB volunteers. Tasks include removing ragwort to safeguard a group of Exmoor ponies which carry out conservation grazing; tree planting and protection, removing non-native plants. Reducing mowing to one cut each in autumn on part of Coos' Green has created a c. 2 ha wildflower meadow with up to 30 species of flowering plants all of which were in the ground but suppressed. Recently the area has been occupied by rabbits and also a badger sett. There is now a resident badger sett. Bat and bird boxes have been erected in the Glen and Lodge grounds which are checked by appropriate licence holders. In one part of the town a pond is a breeding site for the specially protected great crested newts and volunteers check nearby drains to rescue any trapped amphibians. In conjunction with the council's arboriculture team non-native sycamore has been reduced to create a more diverse habit for birds and small mammals on the Greenheads banking. Of the highest priority non-native plants listed in the Scottish native species website, no giant hogweed or Himalayan balsam occurs while Japanese knotweed has been virtually eliminated from its two sites in the town. Our local golf courses are managed on environmentally friendly principles. The aim is to maintain turf that is adapted to our relatively dry and windswept conditions. Irrigation and applications of fertilisers and chemicals are kept to a minimum. The path verges and rough at the edge of the fairways provides a habitat for a range of counts of shorebirds as part of the national Birds of the Estuaries enquiry. Along the coast,



breeding eider ducks are monitored by volunteers organised by the East Lothian ranger service. Bee and butterfly transects are carried out while volunteers also monitor breeding songbirds in the Lodge and Glen. The countryside ranger co-ordinates conservation tasks and feeds the results into local authority management plans and the Lothians Wildlife Information Centre. Experience gained by creating a native plants bed at the harbour, planted with wildflowers that flourish on local coasts, has helped to demonstrate the value of native plants.



Echium in the sand dunes



Wild ponies graze on the Law



Marsh orchids

The award-winning Scottish Seabird Centre attracts over 200,000 visitors to North Berwick annually and provides educational activities to thousands of visiting children, as well as running the weekly Wildlife Club for local children. The ranger works with local schools taking groups into the local environment. Several of our NBIB volunteers work with the Seabird Centre clubs and groups. We work with the Harbour Trust to provide plants for their planters including herbs and vegetables such as native cabbages and kale.

We now use relatively little bought compost: 30 bags for the baskets with another 20 to top up planters. This compares to at least 50 tons of recycled green waste used on permanent beds and donated by a local recycling firm for our planters. We re-use spent compost from our baskets and tubs as mulch on our beds. Between NB in Bloom and ELC we use a maximum of 20,000 bedding plants for the whole town over summer and winter. Our hanging baskets are equivalent to an area of 12 sq. metres while our planters are equivalent to around 40 sq metres in total approx. equivalent to one small and one of the larger 30 perennial beds. The range of plants we grow means there are nectar sources from January to December. Throughout the town weed killer use is now strictly limited to glyphosate on pavements and gutters. Two small areas of high amenity grass in the Lodge receive selective weed killer treatment; all other permanent grass does not. No chemical treatments are used on any of the flower and shrub beds. Leaf mould from the Lodge is used when we make or replant our perennial beds. NBIB often makes use of recycled plants and plant donations. Local plant sales and exchanges are held twice a year, including tulip bulbs from the Tulip Festival. A water butt collects water from the roof of the Seabird Centre and children attending the Friday club use this to water the tubs at the harbour. We have installed a second water butt at the church to collect rainwater to water planters and the pallet and are in discussions with Scottish Water about plans to install further collection tanks. We recently carried out a plastic audit and reuse all our plastic, mainly pots and seed trays. Even old compost and gravel bags are regularly re-used when we weed and collect litter. All these policies contribute to reducing our use of carbon. Major works to manage coastal erosion along the west golf course and beach are ongoing.

We use several different types of signage: individual plant names, recyclable slate and blackboards, small paper information notices and acknowledgements to donors. The traditional iron railings and chains

around the town used to require expensive annual maintenance and these have now been replaced with more sustainable galvanised materials. The slate wall celebrates our achievements.

Both of North Berwick's beaches achieved a Seaside Award again in 2024. East Lothian Council is increasing its kerbside recycling collections in North Berwick, with householders required to separate more kinds of waste. This will help to meet Scottish Government targets. ELC has installed two 'big belly' solar bins in the town centre and a group raised funds to buy eight more. This allows waste to be compacted meaning fewer bins. 45 cubic tons of waste from these bins is sent for recycling every week and 80% of it is recycled. We are proud to have had four years of no polystyrene from takeaways thanks to efforts of volunteers from Sustaining NB and NBIB. The Fringe by the Sea festival has a strict recycling policy – only recyclable containers and cutlery are allowed onsite, and all the drinks cups are made into compost which is used to repair the grass after the festival.



Rose garden in the Lodge



Duke of Edinburgh Student



Rotary planting wild flower meadow

## COMMUNITY

Litter picks are a regular feature of the NBIB calendar and litter prevention is heavily emphasised in our local schools. The Seabird Centre organises weekly litter picks on the beaches and NBIB volunteers join the Bass Rocketeers on their frequent litter picks.

### North Berwick Nursery School

The nursery playground has recently moved to a new site on the main school campus and has a wildlife garden, outdoor learning space and playground all in one. Garden waste is composted whilst a wormery deals with food waste. The children plant, grow and tend their own fruit and vegetables. In their playground there is a native wildlife hedge, a wild corner, a water butt to collect rainwater and a log pile. NBIB volunteers join in with these activities and are available for encouragement and advice.

### Law Primary School

This year four NBIB volunteers worked with the teachers and four P5 classes on gardening activities from October to May, these included planting spring bulbs both for the Caley show and in the playground, sowing marigold, calendula and nasturtiums seeds both in the playground and in trays for use by NBIB, some weeding and planting summer bulbs in the playground and tree identification in the playground. This was all contributing to their John Muir Award. The children also produced posters for the annual NBIB display in local shop windows. 2 volunteers from each class also made up a group that entered a planter into the Scone Scottish Garden Festival and were delighted with a Silver award and rosette.

### North Berwick High School



was the first High School in East Lothian to achieve the Green Flag award. Several students from the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme choose NBIB as their volunteer module and spend an hour each week with us. They enjoy all aspects of the experience from tree and succulent planting to creating bug-friendly hideaways and watering with the NBIB bowser. We also help with gardening activities with a local playgroup, the After School and Holiday Clubs run in Law Primary School.



Pollination project with P5



Community tree planting day



Crafting workshop

### **Scottish Seabird Centre**

We work closely with the Education Officer and several NBIB volunteers take part in litter picking, seagrass seed sorting and gathering, and volunteer with the Friday afternoon Wildlife Club and Holiday Clubs, the activities of which are very environmentally focussed.

### **North Berwick Day Centre**

provides a safe environment for frail elderly people and those with dementia and has an enclosed garden with raised planters where the clients enjoy caring for flowers and vegetables. NBIB helps to maintain the garden on behalf of the centre and helps the clients to plant out the beds with herbs and vegetables. Our nearby refurbished seating area at the police station is popular with those who wish to sit outside and socialise while enjoying the plants. A tricycle donated by a local trust and manned by volunteers takes clients out regularly on cycle rides round the town,

### **Fringe by the Sea**

NBIB is once again a partner in the festival this year, featuring in the programme, and our volunteers will provide two talks and demonstrations, and create and install a themed display in the central plant hub.

### **Area Partnership**

NBIB are members of the North Berwick and Coastal Area Partnership which includes council staff, elected members, community councils and volunteer groups. The Area Partnership brings people from across the community together to get their voices heard and influence decisions about the things that matter to the local community. The group developed a ten-year plan and work to fulfil it, they also consider grant funding applications.

### **Arts and Culture**

Many groups in the town contribute to ideas and art works. Knitting groups, crafting groups and the Mens' Shed meet regularly to produce items for projects, and spend time with others. Many of the meetings involve a cup of tea as well.

A huge number of people from different Community Groups joined in with initiatives to help fundraising for the harbour repairs, including knitting, coffee mornings, writing a children's book, and workshops at Fringe by the Sea. These activities will continue in order to raise funds for the planned improvements.

Senior School pupils have contributed to the 'post box installations' in the High Street and Primary pupils have provided posters for shop windows. The themes are reflected in our planting, displays and collaboration with other groups in the community. There are examples throughout the preceding pages and many more to be seen during the tour of the town on judging day.



We would like to be considered for the Discretionary Award in Community, in acknowledgment of the whole community working together and Tourism for the contribution our planting makes to enhancing the town, attracting tourists and boosting the local economy

## ORGANISATION

North Berwick in Bloom celebrates its 33rd anniversary this year. We have a Board of seven Trustees, and at our monthly meetings we are joined by the local ELC Amenity Officer. Our volunteers carry out over 3,000 hours of unpaid work each year, which is greatly appreciated by people in North Berwick. We provide our volunteers with training; assist other Bloom groups through visits and talks and have organised judges training days for Beautiful Scotland. We are planning to increase the numbers of water butts around the town, increase the use of recycled compost, and increase awareness of pollinators and biodiversity through our planting.

The NBIB Facebook page is regularly updated with details of our activities and has followers across the globe. Our website ([www.northberwickinbloom.org](http://www.northberwickinbloom.org)) is maintained by one of our volunteers. All our beds feature signs with our logo. We hold regular fundraising events and apply to local shops and businesses for sponsorship. Our volunteers wear distinctive green hi-vis North Berwick in Bloom tabards. We produce our own posters, handmade labels and recyclable signage for all our fundraising and other events. Our pallet garden in the High Street supports local and national causes with its displays and we offer the chance there to donate through our QR code. We have twice featured on the Beechgrove Garden.

We try to tie in fundraising to events that also raise our profile for example at various Fringe by the Sea events and venues and the newly established Picnic in the Park. We apply for grants for major projects. Many local shops and businesses have a North Berwick in Bloom collecting can by the till. In May we visit all the shops and businesses in the town centre and ask for donations towards our flowers and in particular



the hanging baskets; businesses in general are generous and those who donate receive an annual NBIB Supporters 'roundel' to display in their window. Our quiz sheets are provided by a local newsagent and are popular with visitors and locals alike. We hold coffee mornings and afternoon teas where volunteers serve refreshments and man stalls. The lighthouse at Quality Street has raised hundreds of pounds since it was installed. Scotrail support our many planters at the station. We plant up North Berwick Golf Club's displays twice a year in return for annual sponsorship. Local Clubs also donate proceeds from their annual fundraising. Several local eateries sponsor planters outside their businesses. One of the town's dental practices sponsors some of our planters.

Every year we forge ever closer links with the other voluntary organisations, businesses and local authorities and this year is no exception.

## **THANK YOU**

*Thank you to all of our sponsors, supporters and volunteers for their generosity and support. Without such a great team behind us, we could not do what we do!*

*East Lothian Council, particularly our local Landscape and Countryside team and ranger service. North Berwick Community Council- North Berwick Nursery School- Law Primary School- North Berwick High School- Rotary Club of North Berwick- North Berwick & District Business Assoc- All the Quiz-selling and can-holding traders- John Skillen at Sweet News for compiling Quizzes. Scottish Seabird Centre- North Berwick Gardening Club- Scotrail - The Abbey Church, for use of tap and giving a home to the pallet garden, fish boxes and water butt - The Abbey Residential Home, for our greenhouses- Alastair the Carousel Man for watering duties- NB Police Station for use of their garden store and tap- Bank of Scotland for providing a home for the edible boat- Jim's Taxis - judges' transport- Katty Baird & Mike Thornton for additional wildlife records.*

## **PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

We will continue our plans for the flower beds in the historic area of North Berwick known as Coos' Green, the original public grazing land for the town. This was also the place where people met, hung out their washing, played sports, mended nets and held annual fairs and gatherings. We will continue to explore ways of conserving water, replacing planting with drought resistant species, installing more water butts and finding innovative storage solutions.

Our plans for next year will include further development of our new home for our shed and polytunnel, stocks of cacti and fuchsia and equipment.

Most importantly, we want to continue caring for our community and our volunteers to ensure the future of our group.

Our Monday morning volunteer sessions always end with a cup of coffee and a chat.







## Appendix 1 East Lothian Council Amenity Services Sustainability and Carbon Reduction 2025

The Council's Amenity Services Team is responsible for Grounds Maintenance, Street Sweeping, Burial and related front-line services. The following summarises our progress in making East Lothian more environmentally friendly.

1. Annual Bedding Displays have been reduced by over 50% and replaced with perennial herbaceous and annual 'wildflower' displays, some of which are self-sustaining.
2. Sports Pitch dressings are now predominantly based on green waste recycled sources collected and processed locally.
3. Diesel vans consuming up to 120 litres of fuel per week have been replaced with Gator / Polaris type vehicles which consume only 20 litres per week.
4. Trials continue to replace our fleet of strimmers, hedge trimmers and mowers with rechargeable battery powered units. Approximately 10% of our fleet is now battery powered.
5. Overall waste recycling figures for the service now achieve 98% for mixed waste, 95% for mechanical sweeping and 100% for green and inert waste. The waste is diverted from landfill and after recovery from the waste types, the residual is sent for SRF or RDF (Waste to Energy). The example below is for the period April 2024 to March 2025.

TOTAL					
		TOTAL WEIGHT	RECYCLED WEIGHT	SRF/RDF WEIGHT	%age
MIXED		1390.57	1362.759	27.811	98.00
SCRAP		2.44	0.000	2.440	100
ROADSWEEP		1359.08	0.000	1359.080	95.00
GREEN		667.04	667.040	0.000	100
WOOD		0.60	0.600	0.000	100
MATTRESS		164.38	164.38	0.000	100
INERT		35.52	35.52	0.000	100
TYRES		7.02	7.02	0.000	100

6. Over 1000 new trees have been planted on our open space estate in the last seven years all mulched with woodchip from the trees they replaced to eliminate the need for chemical weed control.
7. Mechanical Beach Cleaning has now all but ceased and the focus is now on more frequent hand picking of non-natural material, avoiding the previous situation of removing hundreds of tonnes of organic material from beaches every year along with an associated reduction in tractor fuel.
8. Use of weedkillers in our open space maintenance programme has been reduced as well as use of mulching with locally recycled material on most permanent beds.
9. We have developed the use of recycled plastic materials for construction of edge boards and handrails on core paths eliminating the traditional 5–7-year replacement of wood materials used previously.

Ed Hendrikson  
Team Manager – Amenity Services  
June 2025



# North Berwick in Bloom (Charity and SCIO)

## Summary accounts for year ended 30 September 2024

	12 months to	12 months to
	30 Sep 2024	30 Sep 2023
<b>Income:</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Donations	4,759	5,393
Grants	6,069	15,826
Coffee Morning Proceeds	1,123	759
Golden Giving	400	2,865
Gift Aid recovered	65	738
Lighthouse collection box	313	326
Collecting cans in shops	376	748
Plant sales/North Berwick Gardening Club	1,910	540
Catering & Hospitality	0	130
Walks and talks	0	41
Quiz	262	100
Amazon Smile	0	39
<b>Total income</b>	<b>15,277</b>	<b>27,505</b>
<b>Expenditure:</b>		
Plants & materials	9,497	9,320
Lime Grove Community Garden prior year receipt	0	3,800
Repairs, maintenance, health & safety	4,700	3,668
Signman	1,056	0
Insurance	210	190
Catering & hospitality	564	650
Tulip leaflets	124	163
Miscellaneous	943	1,966
Glorious Gullane	0	1,000
Aberlady in Bloom	350	149
Hi viz jackets	405	0
NB Gardening Club	580	0
Quiz	70	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>18,499</b>	<b>20,906</b>
Surplus(Deficit) for year	(3,222)	6,599
Plus balance from previous period	17,432	10,833
<b>Balance at 30 September 2024</b>	<b>14,210</b>	<b>17,432</b>
Reserves		
Balance at Bank	14,210	17,432
<b>Reserves at 30 September 2024</b>	<b>14,210</b>	<b>17,432</b>