



Polmont Together

Our Beautiful Scotland Diary – Celebrating
a year of greener spaces and stronger
bonds.

Polmont Together: Growing Community Roots in the Heart of the Village



2024-25 has seen another productive year for Polmont Planters, with the overarching group Polmont Together receiving charity recognition by OSCR (reg. charity number SC054217). The group's prevalent aims continue to be:

- To maintain and redevelop green spaces within Polmont.
- To build partnerships with local businesses, institutions and initiatives.
- To promote sustainability and encourage engagement with nature.
- To provide cost-effective and accessible events for the wider community to engage with and enjoy.

This year, with more time and overwhelming support from the local community, the Polmont Together (PT) team and Polmont Planters – now with a combined 21 volunteers - have been able to implement a variety of new projects and events in partnership with several local businesses and associates.

Polmont Together is active within the small town of Polmont, within the Falkirk District area. The village is situated in close proximity to the Union Canal route and is houses one of the stations on the main arterial train route between Glasgow and Edinburgh. Only a short distance away from popular tourist attractions such as the Falkirk Wheel, Helix & Kelpies and Antonine Wall, Polmont

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sees many visitors each year and continues to become home to Falkirk's quickly growing population (ONS 2021, [UK population pyramid interactive - Office for National Statistics.](#))

The group was created with an interest to improve the visual aesthetic of the village by renovating neglected green spaces previously maintained by local authorities that lay abandoned and unused. The Polmont Planters underpins this objective by cultivating new spaces to socialise and relax within, stimulate imagination, and encourage the wider community to try and actively engage with their own gardens. Additionally, the group aims to provide accessible and cost-effective events to celebrate a sense of community within the village, giving families and residents of all ages a common ground and opportunity to socialise through a variety of shared experiences.

The group also provides opportunity for like-minded individuals to volunteer for the benefit of both themselves and the community, whilst enjoying the physical and emotional benefits of working outdoors in a fun and relaxed environment. With a range of ages and strengths as part of our team, we strive to promote a happier, more inclusive and more environmentally conscious Polmont, Together.

Horticultural Achievement – Autumn/Winter

Preceding our silver gilt award in 2024, one of the recommendations issued was to improve on some of the planting in three areas. To provide more density and texture, we had to carefully consider the conditions of the soil and area we were planting in, e.g., shaded areas or dry conditions.

We were donated a wide variety of species from local residents to allow for this, who also helped us implement the new displays. Following this involvement, these volunteers decided to become full time members of the group.

Our beautiful heritage garden – established in 2024 – has been complemented with gravel and more carefully chosen planting, in line with last year's advice. More perennial plants have allowed us to ensure more year-round colour and variety.

A donation of 750 Spring bulbs from a local garden centre allowed us to enhance the village in preparation for Spring, with Autumnal bulbs allowing us to create a seasonal feature in our Station Road flower cart display.

Beds for bees also benefitted from additional planting, to provide more density and texture to increase pollination in preparation for Spring.

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Horticultural Achievement – Autumn/Winter



Horticultural Achievement - Spring

In March, we added recycled drainage tubes repurposed as planters to our flower cart display area to create new additional features. Additionally, we took ownership of another small, neglected space and transformed into a small, pebbled garden filled with small shrubs and a variety of perennials.

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This has received positive feedback from the locals who live adjacent to this area.

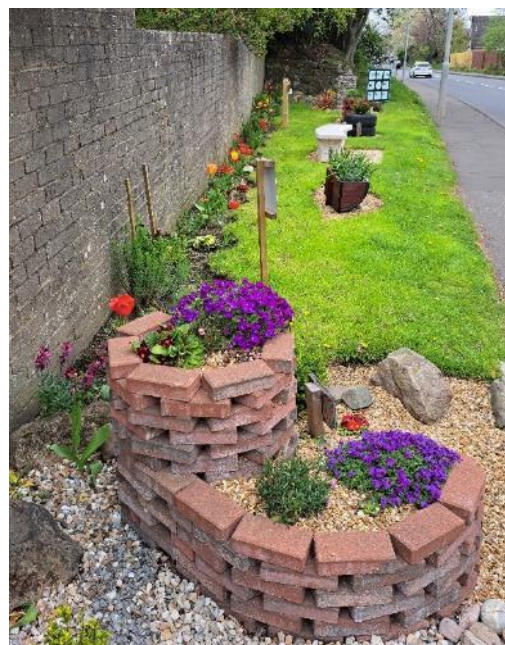
Our heritage garden has been further developed with the addition of new plants for increased density and variety. This area continues to be enjoyed especially by elderly members of our community from the local residential home, who volunteers have frequently seen visiting the garden with carers.

Our partnership woodland garden with Parkhill ELC has seen a revamp this Spring where the children have helped to plant new bee pollinators, trees and specific planting to encourage new wildlife and provide a sensory experience.

In one of Polmont's communal spaces, our Country Garden has seen the cultivation of new plants, carefully chosen to reflect the theme of the area.



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Environmental Responsibility

- Throughout the year, there has been a significant increase in additional, sustainable planting in the village. A higher presence of sustainable perennials and trees in our gardens and green spaces aims to attract both bees and butterflies, encouraging pollination and diversifying the wildlife population in Polmont. Additionally, many of these new plants

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have been donated by local residents, such as our wild Geranium and Hardy Lavender.

- Within our local park, new saplings have been planted and are protected with mulch from nearby woodland to increase their chances of longevity and whilst committing to our promise to utilise natural materials as much as possible. Additionally, wildflower seeds have been scattered around the circumference of the park to combat the lack of flowers in Gray Buchanan Park, encouraging wildlife.
- Our bat and bird boxes remain monitored by our volunteers and have been frequently in use this Spring.
- Additional signage added to green spaces and gardens has enabled us to provide important wildlife information to the community, to support an increased awareness and understanding of different species.
- Continued use of natural material such as decorative pebbles and rocks enhance green spaces, seen most recently in our Gabion benches. These utilise natural materials to create pieces of artwork with practical uses.
- We have started growing some of our own plants such as annual bedding, from seed. This cuts back on our annual spend, while also increasing sustainability.
- The implementation of our new small wildlife pond created from an old, donated sink provides both a relaxing feature as well as creating a new space for wildlife to thrive and access water on warm days.
- The gravel present in our projects is all recycled. This would usually be thrown away by building sites, increasing the need for quarrying and in turn, habitat damage. This not only improves the drainage of select projects and protects roots from drying out, but means our projects are constructed sustainably.
- With the intention of taking on a new building later in the year, we have explored the possibility of installing solar panels to assist with heating.

Polmont Together: Growing Community

Roots in the Heart of the Village

Environmental Responsibility



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Community Participation

To create an improved experience for both our volunteers and community, the group purchased a small stage, gazebos and a Soundsystem using a funding grant. This has made our events more professional and enabled us to offer more engaging experiences.

Our annual scarecrow competition saw some imaginative and creative entries in 2024, with all participants using mostly recycled materials to create their masterpieces.

Christmas 2024 was still popular despite taking place during a storm! We welcomed two Boys Brigade volunteers, working towards their King's badge, who helped with packing gift boxes and manning game stalls on the night. Musicians featured in our previous years were keen to return and gave positive feedback despite the difficult conditions. We were set to welcome

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a local Theatre Group to the stage after a long period of communication and rehearsals; however, this was unable to happen due to the weather – they have already expressed interest in returning next year! Local businesses in the area where the event takes place once again got involved in the festivities, donating prizes for our mega raffle and providing hot drinks/food stands for attendees to enjoy free of charge. Our returning special guest alpacas returned, ready to greet families and were captured perfectly by our new photographer, who was able to capture the event while volunteers were hard at work. New features, games and a reorganised mini-Christmas market which remained popular during horrendous Winter weather showed us that the demand for Polmont's Holly Jolly Christmas will remain for years to come, rain or shine.

Work began in the Spring on a delayed project, our disabled access area beside the shopping precinct, with the theme of 'A walk by the riverside'. The aims to make our village more accessible and enjoyable for those with limited mobility and pram users, renovating a previously neglected space.

In response to last year's comments from our community, this year's Easter Event saw numerous new features and an increased attendance. This was favourable with our families, especially those with children who engaged well with the game stalls and activities on offer during the day, many whom had not attended any of our previous events. This year was the first attempt of our Easter Bonnet competition which encouraged children to use recycled materials to create imaginative designs. Additionally, we welcome several new business partnerships from around the local area who saw success with their stalls at the event, all giving positive feedback.

The main goal for our events this year was to expand on our existing events and provide new opportunities whilst remaining a cost-effective option for families. As a result of this, we welcomed families from out with the Falkirk district to our events, as they provided a more reasonable alternative and were generally taking place at accessible times and locations.

In May, some of our Planters participated in our first ever community Plant Sale, where locals had the opportunity to purchase beautiful plants and trees from our main supplier. This was a great success and sold out very quickly. For the younger ones, there were activities related to propagation and supporting local wildlife to encourage them to heighten their awareness of wildlife, recycling and planting. We welcomed back one of our new

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business partnerships formed at our Easter event, selling themed sweet treats and encouraging some of her own customers to attend the event.

In partnership with Falkirk Council, PT helped acquire the funding to renovate Gray Buchanan Playpark into a more accessible and modernised space. In order to determine the style of the park and its contents, our Facebook followers and local users were asked to vote via an online form for which design they felt was best. This enabled the community to have a say in what they wanted to see, and the result has meant that the park now has wheelchair accessible features for limited-mobility children to play on. To celebrate, Polmont Together held a small opening celebration with home baking and music, where hundreds of families turned up with picnic mats and eager park-testers.



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Finances and Funding

- **August 2024 - £400 from Community Growing Fund**
- **March 2025 - £2500 from Asda Foundation**
- **March 2025 - £1000 from Robertson Trust for building ownership.**
- **March 2025 - £5000 from Community Choices**
- **May 2025 - £15000 from CSET for playpark renovation.**
- **May 2025 - £500 from Falkirk Rotary**

Our Future

At the present moment, our largest existing works in progress remain of key focus for the remainder of the summer. Our disabled access area needs some finishing touches but is a testament to the commitment of our volunteers when compared with its previous state. This renovation aims to provide a more scenic route for those with limited mobility, as well as providing a “pit-stop” bench halfway up the hill to enable those with limited mobility to access local hot spot and amenities. Alongside this, our £500 donation from Falkirk Rotary Club will be used to create and develop a new garden space, encompassing their colours and logo to show Rotary support for the efforts of community groups.

We hope our newly established partnerships with charities will continue to grow, leading to their involvement in future events. We hope to use our social media to raise awareness to these charities on the relevant awareness days/weeks throughout the year, continuing our engagement with non-profit organisations who benefit our community.

Polmont’s Holly Jolly Christmas 2025 will enter its early planning stages at the end of Summer 2025, with a main concern being to explore alternatives to combat unpredictable weather and make the event still accessible should we be faced with adverse conditions.

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Our annual scarecrow competition will be reviewed for 2025, opening up to a much larger area and making positive changes to the structure and foundations of an “autumn event” – the group plans to explore alternative options to just a scarecrow competition.