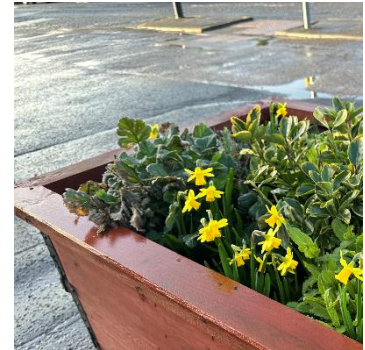


## An Introduction to Polmont Planters

Polmont Planters was formed in May 2024, involving most of the same group of volunteers as were part of last year's submission by Polmont Community Council. The gardening group is a sub-group of the overarching Polmont Together, a new group dedicated to uniting the community within Polmont through events and the redevelopment of our green spaces.

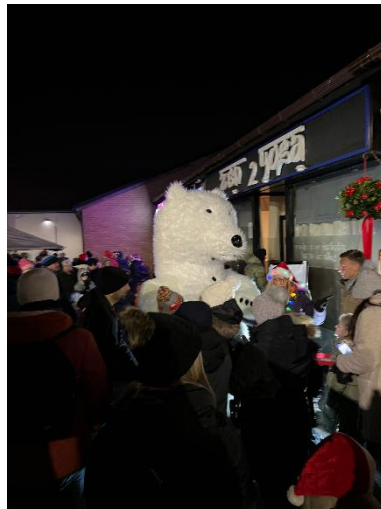
Following on from the wonderful success of last year's competition, the gardening group have taken onboard the judge's advice and looked at additional planting to provide all round colour. In doing so, we have considered the village's features and importance of natural materials in our planting and style of gardens. In Autumn 2023 we set about planting a massive 700 bulbs combining the judge's suggested smaller tet-ta-tets with muscari and tulips. This was great to involve members of the community to help plant our bulbs all around the village, expanding on last year's efforts.



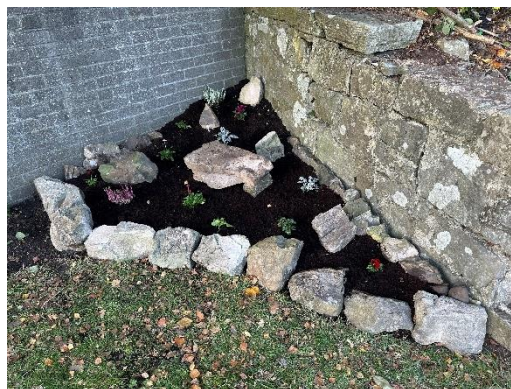
In October, we had our first ever Scarecrow competition in the village which was a huge success and brought social media engagement from as far away as Canada. It provided an opportunity for families to get together, meet new people and visit areas of the village they hadn't previously as the community voted for their favourite scarecrow. It was wonderful to see such imaginative displays and creative scarecrows, with the village even requesting that the event be made annual.



The beginning of December saw our annual Christmas Event make its return for a second successful year – with an even higher attendance than last year of over 1000 people, attracting families from further afield. We were even paid a special visit by not only Santa, but Annie the Alpaca and her baby Baillie who are keen to attend again. We also had our first Christmas tree, where members of the community could add tags to remember someone special at Christmas. The most impressive spectacle of the night, however, was Monty our giant 8-foot polar bear!



In March 2024 a small piece of empty land alongside the existing Beds for Bees became the first focus of the group's attention, to complement the newly planted bulbs. A small rockery was created using recycled sandstone from an old cottage in the village that had previously been an outhouse. A relation of one of our group members kindly donated some stones from his home within the village, built in the 1930s – provoking the idea of a heritage garden.



Some established local businesses that have been a key part of the village for a substantial length of time were asked if they would like to contribute an artefact itself for the heritage

garden, or alternatively help us fund obtaining artefacts. As a result of this, we saw great involvement from the businesses, with some even able to provide information or photographs. Polmont has a historical background particularly known for its large mansion houses, education history and scenic walks, including parts of the Antonine wall. In respect of this, we have managed to install a large information board providing details of suggested cycling and walking routes in and around the area.



A beautiful bench was custom made and donated by a local reclamation yard, making this space a place where members of the community can reflect or relax in a pleasant and aesthetically pleasing area.



A couple of representatives from the businesses came to help install their commemorative pieces and also helped us plant lovely new flowers in the garden. Personal statements related to their own business heritage has been added to this area, giving the area an authentic feel. A local historian, Mr Ian Scott has come on board to help with gathering information about all the other areas of interest to create commemorative plaques. The garden is also hoped to be a learning resource for visitors of the village as well as children within the community, highlighting the history of Polmont which is often forgotten. Additionally, the group hopes the space will appeal to elderly members of the village who may enjoy reminiscing memories of the past.



We were asked to provide more large planters in the village in areas that lacked attention and colour. This was again carefully planned to focus on a combination of annual and perennial planting – some of these have been donated by local residents who no longer need them.

Following on from a volunteer's visit to London, we approached our Blacksmith from last year to see if he would be able to design a metal flower cart in the same style as the ones on display in Covent Garden. This is intended to become a new talking point within the village, perfect for photos. The new feature is planned to be encompassed into our seasonal events throughout the year such as our Christmas event, where locals can get involved by adding a small personal item to the cart. This will not only help to encourage wildlife preservation (specifically for bees in the warmer months) but will also consider plants for all year round with help from our usual plant nursery owners Derek and Ross.



Old vegetable planters and three large Bolinsky barrels were donated by local residents, which were used to enhance the outside of the local library and complement the existing work in the area from last year. Two of these barrels were also used alongside tyres to brighten up an area that was previously neglected.



Our first ever small Easter event was a great hit with our younger families in the village. Keeping this event low-key to observe engagement, we provided the opportunity to hunt for easter bunny clues around the village, play games, and participate in our chocolate raffle – all while enjoying some free Easter treats! This event was met with positive feedback and enthusiasm, with calls to make it an annual event in our calendar. It was so lovely to engage with younger members of our community and provide a cost-friendly event for families to attend.



### **Future Projects:**

- Continued redevelopment of lower precinct and disabled access area.
  - Development of charity beds within beds for bees area.
    - Installation of flower cart.