

## An Introduction to Polmont Community Council



A few of our members recently captured by the Falkirk Herald.

Polmont is a southern village in the town of Falkirk, with a population of around 5500. Its semi-rural environment and lush landscapes are host to several amenities such as local businesses, a health centre and well utilised sports centre and church hall. It is inhabited by a vast age range and large community of both families, young people, and the elderly with facilities useful for each of these groups.

Polmont provides a number of direct travel links overlooking the Union canal as well as a multitude of scenic cycling and walking routes, including but not exclusive to the John Muir Way. Recently, there have been new routes established to link Polmont to the Helix Park and Kelpies in Falkirk, supported by Cycling Scotland. The local community centre provides opportunities for adult learning, socialising, and creativity such as craft groups, coffee mornings and walking groups.

Polmont Community Council was originally founded in 1973, but after recent reform has seen several new projects undertaken and completed successfully – much to the joy and interest of the wider community. Most notably, our recent Christmas Light Switch-On (funded by the National Lottery’s Community Fund) drew in large crowds as Polmont’s first ever Christmas Light event, supported by local businesses and its estimated 500 attendees and generous donations. An elderly member of the community approached a member of the community council to share her thoughts on the event – “I live on my own, I’ve not been out in months, and this is great – will you do it again?”. It is feedback like this which makes volunteering in the community so rewarding and motivates the Community Council to tackle bigger projects.

## Community Response

Alongside our work within the community, our team has managed to build a recognised and active social media presence, mainly through Facebook. In doing this, we can receive feedback from the community but also give those less able to participate in projects a voice in what they would like to see in and around Polmont. By using these platforms, the group feels a sense of reward knowing that the hard work and time dedicated to improving our village goes both noticed and appreciated.



Linda Adams

Saw you yesterday doing the planters at the corner of Station Rd. You're all doing a brilliant job that's been long overdue. 👍



Valerie Mitchell

Great job well done to you all your making a great difference to Polmont thank you x 😊

3 w Like Reply

5 👍

## Area

## Improvement

December 2022

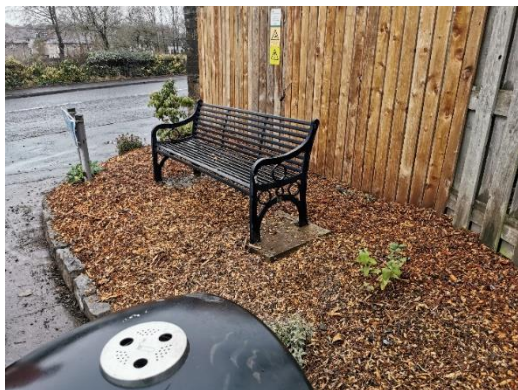
### – Playgroup Bed

Members of PCC worked in partnership with our local playgroup to refurbish a former Rotary bed and planted a commemorative time capsule to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Polmont Playgroup. In addition to this, the children helped to plant spring bulbs and other small plants such as perennials to brighten up the formerly abandoned area for passers-by. This was our first community-involved project since the reformation of the Council.



## December 2022 – Kirk Entry Refurbishment

Another area neglected. Scottish Power had recently implemented a new electrical substation behind the fence and following this work, large amounts of hardcore debris were left strewn around the bed



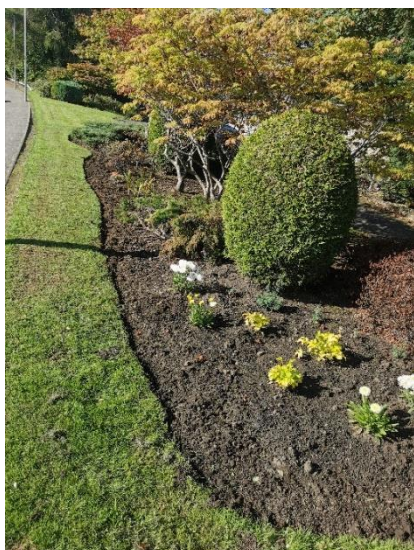
making the area a bit of an eyesore. The team cleaned up this debris and removed weeds

from the areas, using recycled cobbles to edge the bed. A local tree removal company were kind enough to donate us large

amounts of bark to redesign the area, opting for a more modern approach to a previously abandoned area. The team opted for winter and spring bulbs and kept the original bench which has remained in that same spot for an estimated 20 years. In future, the team hope to add a sign and half hanging baskets to the fence, permission dependent.



## August – October 2022 – Marchmont Avenue Beds



These two beds were previously very overgrown, overpowered by large weeds which hid the plants and trees originally planted in the bed.

These beds were cleared by a Community Council member and his daughter, who

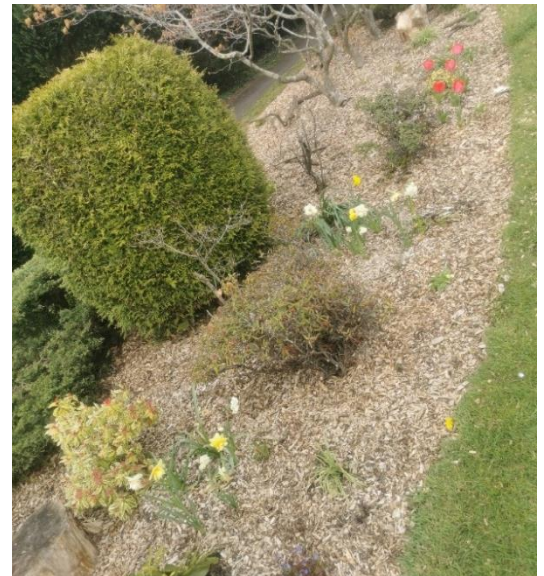
reshaped and replanted the beds after stripping them back to what they were originally intended to



be. Plants were donated by local residents allowing all-year colour and interest, the beds were layered with bark from trees felled locally and dressed with locally sourced branches and logs



Before



After

## January 2023 – Dog Waste Bag Dispensers



Here are our brand-new dog waste dispenser units filled with bags distributed around the village by our hardworking team. These were funded by the Local Authority

Environmental Fund and were quickly utilised by dog owners in Polmont. Following the distribution of these, observation on social media led to the local primary school asking for additional dispensers to assist with problem areas surrounding school grounds which of course the Community Council was happy to help with.

## December 2022 – Polmont’s First Ever Christmas Light Switch On

Our most notable project to date – our Christmas Light Event. The group received funding from the National Lottery Community Fund which was used to purchase braided lamp post lights to decorate Polmont Cross, at the heart of the village. The community evening featured various local businesses and locally sourced entertainment which drew in crowds of all ages, such as vocalists and Santa with his sleigh. The event was a huge success with a large turnout and very positive feedback. Sustainability was a focus of the event, with small Christmas trees purchased by residents to be recycled afterwards.



## March 2023 – NHS Beds at Meadowbank Health Centre

These old NHS maintained beds situated beside our local health centre were shapeless, full of moss and lacked maintenance. Local residents pitched in to help remove overgrown shrubs and excess grass, to make room for the implementation of the new redesign. Blue and white plants were specifically selected to represent the NHS colours, and the bed



was restructured into a heart shape as a symbol of thanks and love for our frontline workers and their values.



bed close by – a COVID-19 memorial bed for those we had lost due to the pandemic, remembered with carefully selected plants and custom made plaques. The beds were both decorated with locally donated gravel and stones and light colours to represent peace.



Following the completion of this area, reclaimed 1920s chimney pots donated by the local nursery owner from the old school were placed alongside the beds with blue and white hearts at the base, to continue our NHS colour theming. A local resident was kind enough to capture these efforts through drone footage.



## Late Summer/August 2022 – Gilston Park Beds

These empty council beds had not been tended to for over two years. Initial work included the beds being dug over and replaced with recycled soil from a local resident's garden who no longer needed it. Funding for new plants was acquired through the Arnold Clark Community Fund, which was used to purchase perennials, chosen for longevity and ease of having to replace regularly. This was our first ever bed completion.



## March 2023 – Polmont Station Bed

Another overgrown ex-council bed full of moss and dead foliage. Local residents helped to clear the area and scatter gravel donated by Jewson.



Some new

plants were kindly donated by local garden centre Klondyke. It was important to the team that this area was presentable as it is situated beside Polmont Train Station, making it a great first impression for those visiting the village.



## April to June 2023 – ‘Repollinate’ Beds

In Spring 2023 two new beds were added to the village in conjunction and partnership with ‘Repollinate’ base charity. The bed shapes were created by participants of the Community Payback Scheme run by the local Young Offenders Institution in Redding. The soil and specific cottage garden planting theme was provided by the Repollinate charity themselves with the planting carried out enthusiastically by local school children.



## Community Involvement

Using natural materials, cut, and created to be repurposed as beautiful signage for around the village.





One of our older community members Paul made us some bird houses and bat boxes which are now in place in some of our gardens.

The little ones at the local nursery created their own wind chimes and mobiles for our partnership Woodland Garden.



Many of our repurposed projects and renovations have been crafted and developed in the gardens and homes of council members, including these planters created for our Country Garden area at Polmont Cross. The planters have been filled with recycled bark from the local park from felled trees and wild geraniums to give a colourful soft edge. Additional features are still to be added to this area, including a boat planter with summer flowers and two themed scarecrows.



## Woodland Area – March 2023

Our new woodland garden is being redeveloped in partnership with the local early years setting. The children designed their own bug hotel, log pile house and natural windchimes. The gardening team have added a recycled birdbath using donated Monoblock from a community



member, and a bench with railway sleepers kindly donated by a local builders' merchants which was then constructed by our gardening



volunteers. The pathway itself was developed using recycled broken slabs after clearing the bushes and filled in with refreshed bark from a local arborist. The team hopes the area is used as a community garden utilised by families and those who wish to observe local wildlife. The team have hope that this area will highlight the importance of nature and wildlife, providing a fun yet educational setting to learn about this.



### Future Plans

- Clear and redevelop disabled access garden area beside shopping precinct and restaurant, involving Community Payback Order participants and funding from local sources for planting and other resources. This will link with new prospective disabled friendly housing currently being built across the road.
- PCC would like an area to grow plants and vegetables using Poly tunnels, partnered with an allotment area to be used by various age groups.
- Local school children are currently designing a brand-new PCC logo to give more identity.