



Helping put Alloa First



**Alloa Business Improvement District
Submission - Beautiful Scotland 2024**

Three Pillars – Overview

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| <p>Horticulture Achievement</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floral plan designed to tie in with ‘celebration/carnival & cake’ family theme for summer 2024 – this means a more ‘tropical, exotic’ feel to the planters. • New tulip and narcissus display in Spring followed a bright orange/red colour theme with more alliums added for continued flowering up to the summer planting. • Replacement of rotten barrels with large barrels made by Forth Valley Men’s Shed – now six on High Street and two on Candleriggs. • Two further large planters from roundabouts donated and moved by Clackmannanshire Council now in place at entry points to the town centre bringing the number to four. A mix of perennials and bedding being used and more bulbs added over time. • New regeneration of the Bank Street section is being planted up to be nature-friendly. Plants have been grown from seed in new polytunnels to replace plants put in by the Council but had to be removed for work on the back wall to be redone. • Hidden Garden at Moncrieff Church provided to the group for summer 2024 and new site at rear of Cat’s Whiskers will home a new large polytunnel and growing area for the future, provisionally named Broadleaf Garden. • All plants grown locally in Clacks by Scottish Autism. • 144 hanging baskets made locally. • Peat-free compost or loam used throughout. • Water contract to be provided by Stirling Community Enterprise, a social enterprise that supports people with significant barriers. • Christmas tree provided by Lord Lieutenant. |
| <p>Environmental Responsibility</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evelyn’s wildlife garden now established at the rear of Clacks CAB building. • Wagon’s End garden is now established with herbs and meadow plants and providing lots of opportunity for urban pollinators. • Baskets were all recycled and reused again in the new vegetable beds at St Mungo’s Church last year and will be recycled into new compost bays at the Broadleaf Garden site. • New vegetable planters being developed at both sites which the groups is hoping to share with restaurants. • Alloa in Bloom is part of the new Clacks Good Food partnership. • Alloa in Bloom has worked with other groups to increase pollinating plants in the town. • Peat-free compost or loam used throughout. |
| <p>Community Participation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer group has been hit hard by the loss of two of its most faithful members from early unexpected deaths. New volunteers have joined the group so trying to recover but they are big feet fill. • Community knitters have been hard at work to cover the bollards at Christmas and Easter. • Big Plant Out Day is part of the Big Help Out campaign for another year – over 20 volunteers took part in the planting on the day from council, community council, business and local groups. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide number of third sector groups involved in supporting group including TCV, Scottish Autism, Stirling Community Enterprise, Alloa Community Council, Alloa Community Enterprises, Moncrieff Church and Cat's Whiskers. Donations have come from a wide number of people and groups. • Alloa in Bloom take part in the local market in June and July to sell plants to fundraise for the group and for Scottish Autism. Around £400 is raised for both groups. • Alloa in Bloom has received funding for a new polytunnel from Forth Environment Link as part of the Regional Climate Hub to be put on the new site at Cats' Whiskers. • Alloa in Bloom will be able to raise more money and as it grows, it is delighted to become a new project and will build to be part of Alloa Community Enterprises a local environmental charity. That organisation will sell flowers, plants and vegetables through its existing shop. • Family Carnival Event to be held on 10th August to promote volunteering and community engagement. |
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New 'Broadleaf Garden' site at the top of Broad Street.



Last planter to be moved from roundabouts to new places in town centre.

The large planters are filled with a mixture of perennials, some grown from seed, bulbs and bedding.



Background 2023-2024

During 2023 and early 2024, Alloa in Bloom lost two of its most committed volunteers, Linda and Darren and it has been a huge loss to the group. Linda was a huge supporter despite her disability. Darren was one of the founding members and had even taken over the watering role in 2023 in a paid position with Alloa First. He loved making a difference to his home town and was so invested in the improvements made around the town. The group is fundraising to plant two fruit trees in the large planters to mark their contributions to the groups.



After such a tough 2023 with Linda's passing in June, the group took the decision not to enter the Beautiful Scotland Awards in 2023. The group however did continue its work and theme, which focused on the UCI Cycling Championships which were being held in Scotland in the summer of 2023, with some events cycling through Clackmannanshire. The group had a cycling theme focused on the colours linked to the Grand Tours jerseys – yellow, red, pink and silver.



The group also worked on the Wagon's End garden which developed and flourished, filled with nature; cleared the large weed-filled planters moved by the Council; supported Evelyn with her nature garden; and started to work on the new Bank Street beds and planters. The group also continued to raise funds through the Alloa in Bloom stalls at the Friday markets.

The group also planted over 1000 bulbs in October and November which brought wonderful colour to the town in Spring 2024.



Spring 2024

The planters were bursting with colour from late February with a cascade of narcissus, tulips and alliums which have flowered right up to end May. All the old tulips are now being recycled and replanted in the Bank Street beds.



New polytunnels – Like London Buses – they come all at once!

In Spring 2024, we learnt that the private operation that was using the Moncrieff Church polytunnels was closing down and that they might be available for the group to use. The garden, which is called the Hidden Garden was a mess filled with old pots within its two small polytunnels but finally it allowed the group to have a base in the town centre that it could store plants and grow from seed, new plants. Sadly the church is to be sold, and at the time of writing it is not clear if we will have this base in the future. The group spent the early months of 2024 clearing it and sorting the pots. The group were able to grow a wide range of seeds for the first time which will be used in the new bed on Bank Street.





The group took the decision to invest in the space with the hope that it would continue to be a place where the group could develop its plants and ideas in the future.

However, the group was delighted to be offered a second more permanent site in Spring 2024 at the top of Broad Street behind the back of Cat's Whiskers, a local charity who had purchased the site for its new cat boarding provision. At the same time, a new grant offer was opened up locally for 'seed grants' for environmental projects and a partnership bid was submitted successfully for equipment and a new polytunnel for this new site.

This allows the group to grow and start to look at having separate 'flower' and 'veg' bases where we can grow tomatoes,

cucumbers, herbs and much more for the local restaurants in the town centre. Initially the group has grown lupins, dahlias, zinnias, cosmos all of which will be moving into the beds and planters over the summer, plus tomatoes and cucumber.

New opportunities

With the opportunities opening up for the group in 2024, it was also time to review the potential of working with new groups and building more permanent partnerships that can benefit the volunteer group and build capacity. The board of trustees at Alloa Community Enterprises which is the only local environmental charity and is keen to support Alloa in Bloom to sell plants and help deliver more training opportunities. This also allows the charity to apply for funding in partnership with the volunteers going forward.

Big Planting Day

The Big Planting Day was held on 3rd June this year with over 25 volunteers involved from Clackmannanshire Council, Alloa Community Council, Alloa Community Enterprises, TCV (on day after) and some of the businesses.

In addition, all the hanging baskets arrived on the same day and were put up by Stirling Community Enterprise, a local social enterprise.

Over 1000 plants were put out and 144 hanging baskets put up. In 2023 Alloa First invested in Aperol baskets which are now used on the more exposed lampposts on the High Street and Mill Street. The Forth Valley Men's Shed has also helped put up new A Brackets.



Yarn-bombing at Christmas & Easter

Local businesses and volunteers continued to support the town by yarn-bombing at Christmas and Easter and helping encourage people to visit the town.

Alloa First also ran events at each holiday period to encourage people to visit.

. Yarn-bombing was a fun feature of the town!





Alloa Hub – Scottish Civic Award – Highly Recommended

Alloa Hub has been open for over a year and is now the East of Scotland winner of the Visit Scotland award and also was given a Highly Recommended at the Scottish Civic Awards in 2024. [Alloa Hub – My Place \(myplacescotland.org.uk\)](https://myplacescotland.org.uk)

Alloa Hub provides a great venue for family events and they tie in with our themes every year including a series of carnival themed family events this summer offered to families free of charge.

More photos from around town – new planter at Bank Street & Wagon’s End now established



Appendix: Climate & Nature Friendly & Action Plan 2024-25

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| Climate & Nature-friendly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New nature based wildlife garden – see Instagram page – alloabloomers to see short video • Peat-free compost or loam used throughout. • Plants grown locally and more from seed. • Continue to consult and consider new community learning and growing areas next to Alloa Hub • Work with the council to encourage more wildlife to the new Bank Street seating area and Kingdom Housing at Primrose Street. |
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Action Plan 2022-23

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| July | Continue to plant up biennials for 2023 flowering. Continue to sow seeds for next year. Submit grant applications for paying for the new polytunnel being erected. Work on Bank Street and plant all the home-grown cosmos |
| August | Prepare for judges visit Hold Carnival event and run activities for families. Start selling plants and veg at Alloa Community Enterprises |
| September | Hold AGM & decide colour themes for 2025 Gather ideas for 2025 Collect seeds from cornflower; comos and other annuals for next year. Order bulbs for Spring |
| October | Recycle all baskets for next year. |
| November | Bulb planting of tulips |
| December | Tree and light switch on with community events; Santa's Grotto in new Alloa Hub. Prepare wreaths for town business doors |
| January-February | Break with some low level maintenance only. Hold winter series of talks at Alloa Hub in conjunction with ACE. Fundraising events |

Tour on 8th August

Meet: Alloa Hub for presentation

Tour will take in the two newly placed planters at entrance to the town centre and down TSB lane. The judges will then proceed to the new Hidden Garden polytunnels and then back to the High Street and down to Mill Street and right to Candleriggs then across to Bank Street and down to the new Broadleaf Garden site.

Prepared by Anthea Coulter, Volunteer Alloa in Bloom

June 2024