



# Aberdeen Communities Together

## Beautiful Scotland 2024

Aberdeen Communities Together would like to welcome the judges to our wonderful city for Beautiful Scotland 2024. We hope you enjoy your visit and our tour.

Aberdeen has a long and proud In Bloom history and tradition, and it is that time again to really show off our city in all its splendour. Beautiful Scotland allows Aberdeen the opportunity to highlight all that is great about our city and its people, our outstanding greenspaces, parks, woodland, nature, and wildlife, and highlight the collaborative, partnership approach that is key to our success.

Aberdeen's campaign is a 365-day campaign involving a wide range of people from local communities. The overall aim is to ensure that the communities come together with the goal of enhancing their surroundings and creating a better environment. We include all the inspiring and fantastic work done across the city by both our own staff and the many in bloom partners and volunteers.

Aberdeen Communities Together is a coming together, a partnership, of thousands of inspirational people, of leaders, of all ages and backgrounds, who work together for the benefit of Aberdeen's green space, one of our greatest assets – along with those who faithfully and lovingly care for them. We have amazing people doing wonderful things to help look after our city –

- Aberdeen came top in its category (City Award) at the 2023 Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) UK Britain In Bloom Awards, earning a Gold medal at a ceremony in London. We are officially the best in bloom city in the UK.
- Aberdeen was also runner up for the Britain in Bloom Horticulture Award at the awards for showing excellence in its horticulture and landscaping.
- We have engaged with more than 200 community partnerships throughout the year, working on in bloom initiatives and environmental campaigns and improvements.
- Aberdeen's 2023 Clean Up Aberdeen campaign was a huge success in 2023 with 241 community clean ups completed, 2,667 volunteers filled 2,342 bags. We now have more individual volunteers helping to keep the city clean than ever before and 2024 is on track to be an even more successful year!
- The Council's team has worked tirelessly with thousands of individuals for the benefit of the city. We estimate that the communities have delivered 16,895 volunteer hours, with the value of this being in the region of £340K. The real figure is likely to be considerably more.
- Spring bulb planting initiative has seen 160,000 spring bulbs delivered to 112 schools, nurseries, 'Friends of', residents groups, community councils, churches, and individuals.

Continued over





# Aberdeen Communities Together

- The team were finalists in the 2023 LGC Awards for our project Protecting Aberdeen's Beautiful Trees and Woodlands.
- 100+ schools and community groups involved in our wildflower programme, Meadow In A Box.
- The team were awarded Silver in the finals of the APSE Striving for Excellence 2023 Awards for Grounds, Parks, and Street Scene.
- 2024 saw Aberdeen retain its Seaside Award. This was the 18th year in a row that our beach has been recognised and awarded in this way.
- More green flags awarded to Aberdeen than ever before, with nine green flags across our parks and green spaces.
- Aberdeen is also the first local authority in Scotland to have an allotment site awarded with a Green Flag. We have two!
- More groups involved in Keep Scotland Beautiful's It's Your Neighbourhood scheme than any other local authority in Scotland – with 40 flying the flag for Aberdeen.
- Aberdeen Civic Society 2023 presented the Friends of Victoria and Westburn Park with a Commendation Award In recognition of Victoria Park Fountain refurbishment.
- The "Design a Flower Bed" competition, now in its 18th year, gives primary school children the opportunity to get involved with the environment.
- Engagement with more than 100 child minders and their children in our Bee Happy Pollinators and Toots, Roots, Buckets and Boots projects.
- A beautiful Aberdeen with everyone on board!



**Thank you to all our community partners, schools, Friends groups, volunteers, businesses, and staff who care for and maintain the city's green spaces. The environmental and social benefits of their work are there for us all to see and enjoy.**



# Horticultural Achievements



## Britain in Bloom Success

Aberdeen is officially the best in bloom city in the UK. At last year's prestigious Britain in Bloom awards, Aberdeen was awarded a Gold Medal and Best City. The city was also a runner up in the Horticulture Excellence category.

The awards recognise the dedication of all our community partners, schools, Friends groups, volunteers, and staff in caring for and maintaining the city's green spaces. The environmental and social benefits of their work are there for us all to enjoy, across the city.

Aberdeen has a long tradition of horticultural excellence and community partnership. Our parks and green spaces are one of our greatest assets – along with those who faithfully and lovingly care for them.

The city category was judged on its horticulture which is our amazing parks and green spaces, community involvement, which is all our fantastic green partners, including Friends groups, schools, businesses, community groups and the thousands of volunteers who help us, and environmental responsibility which is the work carried out for the Council's climate plan, carbon reduction, and other similar projects.

Britain in Bloom is organised by the Royal Horticultural Society and is the top gardening competition for councils and other community organisations across the UK.

The city has won a medal in either Britain in Bloom or Beautiful Scotland every year since 2008 and has been award-winning in the competitions since 1964.

## Nine fresh Green Flag Awards handed to Aberdeen

Environmental charity Keep Scotland Beautiful has presented Aberdeen with nine Green Flag Awards in recognition of its quality open spaces.

The nine flags exceed the seven awarded in 2022, with Westfield Park the recipient of its first flag, and Cove Woodland, managed by the Cove Woodland Trust, another new winner. Seven others retained their green flag status: Hazlehead Park, Seaton Park, Victoria Park, Johnston Gardens, Slopefield Allotments, Garthdee Field Allotments and Duthie Park.

Receiving nine Green Flag Awards is national recognition of just how good Aberdeen's parks and open spaces are and how much they are valued. Green spaces contribute to better air quality, security for the future of wildlife, and improved mental health for residents and visitors alike. The awards highlight the effort of City Council staff in maintaining the high standard of these spaces every year and recognises the partnership approach with communities.





# Horticultural Achievements



## Communities bring spring colour

Aberdeen has had some extra colour this spring thanks to the work of communities across the city. Pollinators need our help in early spring a great way to help them is to plant spring bulbs in autumn giving a source of pollen and nectar when there's little else in flower.

In a frenzy of autumn activity, community groups, schools and individuals braved the outdoors to plant crocuses and muscari bulbs. Working in partnership, Aberdeen City Council's Environmental Services team supplied the bulbs while enthusiastic volunteers provided the manpower. More than 100 groups throughout the city were involved in planting 160,000 bulbs.

## Inaugural Winter, Wonder, Wander sells out!

The first ever 'Winter, Wonder, Wander' was held in the **David Welch Winter Gardens** in November with the gardens being transformed by stunning light displays for all to enjoy.



Organised by the **Friends of Duthie Park** and sponsored by Ponticelli UK Ltd, the event was a resounding success with more than 9,000 visitors enjoying the gardens in a completely different light over the six evenings.

A relaxed session was also held in conjunction with **We Too!** and **Charlie House** the night before opening to the public. The event, which will go ahead again this year, was a tremendous success thanks to the staff, volunteers and sponsors who went above and beyond to deliver a fantastic experience for the visitors. The event was originally scheduled over three days but proved to be so popular a further three evenings were added which were also fully booked.



# Environmental Responsibility



## Aberdeen B-Lines

### Aberdeen B-Lines Wildflower Grasslands Project

In February 2024, an exciting partnership project between Buglife Scotland and Aberdeen City Council called 'Aberdeen B-Lines' started. B-Lines are Buglife's creative solution to address the issue of habitat fragmentation faced by invertebrate species such as pollinators, having lost an estimated 97% of flower-rich grasslands in the UK since the 1930s. The project, which employs a full time Buglife Conservation Officer, will see 20 hectares of amenity grassland within the city transformed into wildflower rich grasslands across 12 sites, whilst actively engaging local communities through volunteering and training events and helping to connect people with their natural environment.

One key site is Westfield Park, which is the largest formal park in the Bridge of Don, featuring tree belts, footpaths and large grassy expanses. During the Spring, the Aberdeen B-Lines Officer has been working with the Friends of Westfield Park group to seed areas of the park with native wildflower and grass seed mixes from local company Scotia Seeds, as well as planting plug plants grown by the Friends group. A large grassy area which flows downhill from one of the core

paths will be transformed into a meadow, as well as a strip alongside the woodland area, bordering a path which sees a lot of footfall. The goal is to create diverse natural flower-rich grasslands to enhance habitats for pollinators and to offer a new feature for park visitors, emphasising the importance of this type of planting for biodiversity and well-being.

In the coming months, the Buglife Conservation Officer has plans to work with the Friends of Westfield Park group to provide training on surveying pollinator species. This will help educate people about the value of invertebrates whilst also encouraging the contribution of beneficial data to pollinator monitoring schemes and local biological records centres such as NESBReC.





# Environmental Responsibility

## Climate Week North East – Ten Years Old!

Climate Week North East 24 ran from 15–24 March 2024 and celebrated its 10th anniversary. It started out as Climate Week Aberdeen in March 2015 with a handful of

events organised by a few organisations and has grown to more than 170 events, organised by almost a 100 organisations over the 10 day festival.

The week focuses on increasing everyone's understanding of climate change, what we can and are doing about it, with the aim to motivate action. NESCAN Hub co-ordinates the week and provides the publicity, including creating an events brochure, which is distributed all over the North East. It is free for groups and organisations to take part and can really help raise the profile of what groups and organisations are doing to tackle the climate crisis. Anyone can put on a climate week event, as long as it meets the aim. Events range from walks/bike rides to family fun days, workshops, tours, litter picks, tree planting, sewing lessons – anything goes!

## CLIMATE WEEK NORTH EAST

CELEBRATING A DECADE OF IMPACT  
15 – 24 MARCH 2024



## Aberdeen Flagship Parks for Pollinators

Aberdeen City Council is extending naturalised greenspace management by improving and creating blue/green habitats in two high profile parks in the city. In **Aberdeen Flagship Parks for Pollinators**, Duthie Park beside the River Dee and Seaton Park by the River Don have been chosen to show this approach can benefit both people and wildlife. The parks also serve more deprived areas of the city, include extensive areas of traditional horticultural layouts, and are heavily used.

Duthie Park and Seaton Park have very active Friends Groups, with approximately 4,300 and 2,000 Facebook followers respectively

– The Friends groups are involved in fun days, fund raising and gardening as well as support for nature in the park.

The Council is using a **Nature Restoration in Parks** grant from the Scottish Government to survey, plan and design work to further improve the parks for nature. As wetlands and ponds provide a valuable habitat for a range of species, these are being included, in addition to creating/improving wildflower meadow areas for pollinators and tree planting.

Aberdeen Flagship Parks for Pollinators also supports longer term 'B-lines' pollinator work between Aberdeen City Council and the charity Buglife. This includes naturalisation of grasslands in ways that reconcile with people's actual use. 'Quick win' actions in Aberdeen Flagship Parks for Pollinators are creating and restoring habitats through planting native wildflowers and native trees, and a change to a naturalised meadow management regime



# Community Engagement



## Hub North gives Tullos garden a spruce up

**Tullos Community Garden** has been given a clear-up by staff from **Hub North Scotland**, the infrastructure developer delivering the new nearby Torry school and community hub for the Council.

The Hub North team were joined by supply chain partners for a day clearing, weeding, tidying, laying bark and painting in ideal weather

conditions. Another Hub North team painted a sensory classroom at Tullos school on the same day.

The team were delighted to help and enjoyed getting stuck in to help with a great community cause. Many hands made light work and the team pulled together to help transform the garden.



Pupils from Forehill Primary school, in partnership with the Bridge of Don Men's Shed, launched their garden project with a planting workshop.

The Men's Shed funded and constructed a polytunnel in the school grounds to create a space for the school children to grow plants, fruit and vegetables. Additional planters will be built and positioned

## School pupils grow their gardening skills

outside the polytunnel to provide more growing space.

This is a fantastic project which will allow pupils and members of the community to get involved in food production with many opportunities for learning from a young age. The project will provide a growing space for learning and intergenerational community activity with the prospect of children learning all about horticulture and the food cycle.

The Men's Shed will also supply electricity to the poly-tunnel from recently installed solar panels. And members will be lending their advice on how best to garden. Once grown, the produce could be cooked at the school or at home so the children can appreciate what it is like go from seed to the table.



# Community Engagement

## Physic Garden Workshop Duthie Park

At the end of 2023, a new workshop was held to provide an introduction to the Duthie Park's collection of medicinal herbs.

The five raised beds of **Duthie Park's** physic garden contain herbs that were grown in Woolmanhill's apothecary garden and supplied as medicines to Aberdeen infirmary physicians from 1753 to 1791. The first workshop provided a little of the history of the Aberdeen apothecary garden and the relevance of healing plants for us today.

The workshop follows the Duthie Park Physic Garden over the seasons in 2024 and participants will learn about growing and harvesting



herbs for medicines in winter, spring, summer and autumn.

At the group's workshop in January this year, they were concentrating on the marshmallow root from 'infection & inflammation' bed, dividing root and replanting, and removing the soil from roots for processing.



## Duthie Park Ranger Service Environment Event



The event took place at the end of July and was attended by a variety of organisations including Aberdeen Science Centre, Aberdeen Climate Action, Royal Horticulture Society of Aberdeen, North East Herbs, The James Hutton Institute, The Allotment Market Stall, One Seed Forward, Scottish Badgers, Critter Creature and 2 Witt 2 Woo.

Over 600 people attended the event held on the former bowling green at Duthie Park. Children saw some of the species that can usually be found in the linked ponds at the park when they visited the Duthie Park Rangers. They also saw some of the exotic creatures with the Critter Keeper and the fantastic owls and birds of prey brought by 2 Witt 2 Woo. This family event aims to encourage more people to be aware of the outdoor environment.



# In the Future



## The future for Aberdeen Communities Together is very positive and exciting.

Everyone involved is an inspiration and they are driving change across the wider green agenda. Across the city, there is a passion for community spirit and a sense of pride and appreciation of our green space and natural environment. The opportunity to nurture this pride and channel the efforts of dedicated individuals and groups into fully fledged members of Aberdeen Communities Together will be a key focus in the months and years ahead. Our community groups and volunteers continue to find innovative ways to interact and lead our campaigns and projects, and most importantly, maintain the strong connections that we have built up together as a partnership, our 'green' family.

Aberdeen City Council is committed to helping to address climate change and wants to position Aberdeen as a climate positive city while helping to lead the world on the rapid shift to net zero future. The current administration has a Policy Statement and Local Outcome Improvement Plan in place which includes ambitions to improve and protect the local environment. This is welcomed by Aberdeen Communities Together as much of what is being aimed for is at the heart of what Aberdeen Communities Together has always strived for. These include;

- **Working with communities, review the management of council-managed open spaces to create more sustainable and safer green areas and open spaces.**
- **Protect and enhance Aberdeen's Green Belt, green spaces, and open spaces so they can be enjoyed for purposes of leisure, sport, and environmental wellbeing, and investigate the creation of new pocket parks.**

- **Promote and improve woodland in our city and in particular launch a "A Million Trees for Aberdeen" programme to plant, with partners, a further one million trees in Aberdeen by 2032 at minimal cost to the Council.**
- **Invest in Aberdeen's green future by maintaining and planting street trees and ensuring the right trees are planted in the right places.**
- **Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of climate change.**
- **Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking; 5% of people cycling and wheeling as a main mode of travel and a 5% reduction in car miles by 2026.**
- **26% of Aberdeen's area will be protected for nature and 60% of citizens report they feel that spaces and buildings are well cared for by 2026.**
- **Develop a Community Environmental Improvement Fund, for communities to access, to implement their own small-scale local environmental improvements.**
- **Increase the amount of land available for market gardens, orchards and allotments for community food growing and support the expansion of community food pantries.**

Community engagement and partnership is a powerful tool for making change and age does not matter.

Aberdeen Communities Together is there to support, encourage and inspire. The success of our campaign is fitting recognition for the thousands of fabulous people involved who work tirelessly for the benefit of the city's parks and green space.

The outlook and future is positive and everyone involved is excited about the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.



# SPONSORS 2024

**Ashley Ann Kitchens Bedrooms  
and Bathrooms**

**21 Rubislaw Den South**

**Aberdeen Property Leasing**

**Anderson Bain**

**Aberdeen Funeral Directors**

**Aberdeen Ladies Golf Club**

**Ashley House**

**Albert Terrace**

**Bryce Hearing Services**

**Broomhill Nursery**

**Bloom**

**Bridge of Don Community Council**

**Café 52**

**Casc Bar**

**Country Ways**

**Colin Wood Antiques**

**Cup**

**Dinardos**

**Da Vinci**

**Dunnydeer Guest House**

**Danestone Community Council**

**Four Seasons**

**Family History Centre**

**Gourmet Cheese Company**

**Gavin Bain**

**Gordon and Watson**

**Homeguard Leasing**

**Ishoka**

**Juniper**

**Jenson and Ledingham**

**Jo Dazzle**

**John Park Jeweller**

**K. Milne butchers**

**Masada Bar**

**Bridge Bar**

**Kirkgate Bar**

**MOandCO**

**Mackinnons**

**MacBeans**

**PCL House**

**Patience and Buchan**

**Queens Cross Roundabout**

**Richmond St Deli**

**Rosemount Centre**

**Rubislaw Church**

**Spider's Web**

**Thorpe Molloy**

**Tricker Communications**

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