

Be inspired – Brighter Bothwell

Who:	Brighter Bothwell
Progression:	Beautiful Scotland - Climate Challenge Fund – Clean Up Scotland
Quote:	“Our group is keen to maintain an attractive environment and positive ethos within our community. The Beautiful Scotland campaign reflects our overall aims, and taking part helps to provide a focus for our work”. Sheena Walker, Brighter Bothwell.

Brighter Bothwell, a community group in South Lanarkshire has taken part in the Beautiful Scotland competition since 2001. The group achieved Silver medal certificates for the first few years as it developed relationships with the community, improved horticultural standards and addressed environmental quality issues.

The group has carried out a number of litter picks over the years in association with Keep Scotland Beautiful’s former National Spring Campaign and in 2013, the newly launched Clean up Scotland campaign.

Brighter Bothwell is a catalyst for many activities. Following a suggestion from Brighter Bothwell members to create a Community Garden, The Organic Growers of Bothwell group was formed to take this task forward. In July 2009 the group applied for £196,354 from the Climate Challenge Fund (CCF), administered by Keep Scotland Beautiful, to create an Organic Community Garden on land provided by the local authority on a 15 year lease. This garden aimed to demonstrate how wildlife co-exists with food production, while showcasing good practice in sustainability. The following social, environmental and economic outcomes were achieved during the lifetime of the CCF award:



- Improved biodiversity within the garden as well as the creation of interest amongst participants in interacting with nature. Activities such as wildflower planting, bog area and pond development including boardwalk access has made observations easier. This has enabled adults and children to learn about nature.
- Social gatherings for members and their families were popular, with a picnic big lunch and potato day at the start of the new season being well received. The safe, pleasant environment of the garden with its peaceful setting allowed people of all ages to come together and help with tasks at volunteer sessions or simply provide a place to chat. Improved mental and physical health and a sense of well-being are created by gardening together.
- The community’s awareness of climate change and the capacity of communities and individuals to take simple actions to reduce their carbon emissions has been increased.

Participants were encouraged to make small changes to their behavior which would have a big impact e.g. purchasing local food reducing food waste, encouraging more people to walk or cycle to the garden rather than drive their cars.

- Other outcomes include: more vegetables in the diet from growing their own produce will provide healthier eating; and water butts for watering demonstrate how water can be saved rather than just turning on a tap.

In 2011, when the Beautiful Scotland judges were shown the Organic Community Garden on their tour, the results shone through and Brighter Bothwell received a Silver Gilt medal certificate, the second highest level.



There are now 62 raised beds including six narrow ones for easy access, and six low ones for small children – all of which are occupied and in use. All the edibles are grown organically, with a few flowers allowed. The group uses solar panels for energy and collects rainwater for the plot-holders from the roof of the potting shelter, which is used for meetings.

Two small polytunnels are used; one for propagating and the other has raised beds.

Compost is made on site, using hot boxes and a large wormery. Bird and bat boxes, log piles and hedgehog houses are in place to help encourage biodiversity. An orchard and soft fruit cage have recently been added, as has a pond and bog garden. Wildflower areas have been sown with native plants and wildflowers.

An additional bee border and a separate butterfly border feature plants which are particularly attractive to bees and insects. The beekeeping group now nurtures several hives on a nearby site.

The garden is used for activities by local nursery and primary schools, which are all registered with Eco-Schools-Scotland, another programme run by Keep Scotland Beautiful. Several growers now exhibit at the local flower show, and have been responsible for a welcome increase in entries in the fruit and vegetable classes.



In 2013 Brighter Bothwell received a Silver Gilt medal certificate for a second year, reflecting its achievements in the Beautiful Scotland competition, and the group also received the Scottish Natural Heritage Biodiversity Award for the work specifically carried out at the Organic Community Garden. Following on from these results, the group was asked to present at the Beautiful Scotland Annual Seminar so they could share their biodiversity knowledge and experience with groups from across Scotland.



Most recently, Brighter Bothwell took part in Keep Scotland Beautiful's Clean Up Scotland 'Ditch the Dirt' campaign, and came up with some innovative and fun ways to tackle the issue of dog fouling...including a volunteer dog walker scarecrow, a toilet, a large toy dog and knitted poos! The group carried out a 'Ditch the Dirt' survey, recruiting members and volunteers to survey four public areas in Bothwell. The group also sought help from a new residents' group based in one of the survey areas, arranged for South Lanarkshire Council to provide free poo bags to dog walkers in the groups' area, and handed out leaflets based on the 'Ditch the Dirt'

campaign poster to dog walkers. The survey provided a good focus for joint activity, as well as wider publicity for the 'Ditch the Dirt' campaign. Although Brighter Bothwell takes regular action to reduce dog fouling, the group found it helped to take part in a national campaign, with the results from their survey providing further evidence of the extent of the problem in their local area. The group plans to continue working with South Lanarkshire Council to seek ways of reducing the dog fouling problem.