



Mixed planting by Burgh Beautiful has brought variety to beds formerly featuring only annuals. All photos by Burgh Beautiful.

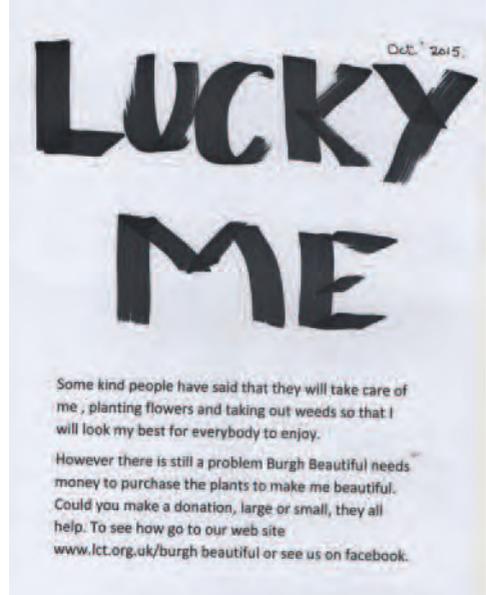
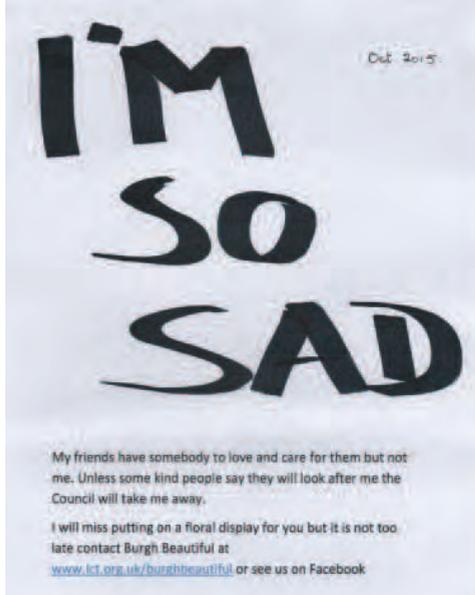
Linlithgow's Bye Bye campaign

Ian Orr

Since 2004 Burgh Beautiful Linlithgow has been enhancing the local environment with a variety of horticultural and environmental projects and features. Our primary aim has always been to make our town look good but by entering competitions such as Beautiful Scotland we gain a sharper focus and feedback from experienced judges. We have been fairly successful winning a series of medals and in 2011 the rose bowl for the most successful entry in Scotland. We were therefore extremely concerned when West Lothian Council decided to stop providing summer bedding throughout the county from 2016 having withdrawn winter displays two years previously. All flower beds were to be grassed over and those tubs and planters maintained by the council would be removed. After unsuccessful attempts to persuade the Council to reverse its decision Burgh Beautiful decided to run a campaign to highlight the situation and if possible keep the floral displays which we knew were very popular with local people.

It was felt that to get the response that was needed the campaign had to be 'in the faces' of the townsfolk. It is all too easy for people to tut tut and says something is terrible but it's just as easy for them then to forget about it. Every tub and flower bed 'at risk' had a handmade sign put in it saying **Bye Bye** or **Help** in letters six inches high and accompanied by a typed explanation of what was proposed by West Lothian Council and how Burgh Beautiful needed the town's help both by volunteering and/or by sponsoring /donating to help keep the floral displays.

The campaign was well publicised in the local newspaper and community magazine as well as through Facebook and the group's website. The response from the townspeople was beyond expectations. The number of volunteers more than doubled to over 90, donations in excess of £3,000 were received and every basket and tub was sponsored. In all we took over 16 flower beds and 27 planters.



Combining these with our own means that we now look after 95 planters and barrels and 35 flowerbeds. We also continue to provide 120 hanging baskets in both summer and winter. As part of the transition to community control, we have reduced the number of bedding plants and moved towards perennial planting with perennials and shrubs in many of the beds, for both financial and environmental reasons, but the town's displays still contain around 20,000 bedding plants over the summer and 7,000 over winter/spring, at a cost to Burgh Beautiful of around £9,600 per annum. Plus of course there are costs for watering and grass cutting to give our displays a proper setting.

The financial support means that Burgh Beautiful can look forward to the future with confidence and plan our future displays. However we know that we cannot be complacent and have to keep a high profile to ensure continued local support while new sponsors may have to be found for other large projects.

*Ian Orr on behalf of
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All the work by Ian and his colleagues was rewarded at the Beautiful Scotland awards ceremony in September 2017 where Linlithgow won the medium town category with another gold medal as well as the special award for overcoming adversity. Burgh Beautiful are also on Facebook.



(left) A poster prominently situated in Linlithgow High Street. (right) The Serpentine Bed.



Beds and planters now with reduced annual content taken over by Burgh Beautiful.



bulbs4u a small family company based in Fife specialising in the sale of high quality garden bulbs at competitive prices. The website www.bulbs4u.co.uk lists over 100 different varieties. The range includes tulips, daffodils, alliums, true British bluebells and hyacinths as well as Heritage and Specialist bulbs. We supply individuals, landscapers, Scotland in Bloom towns and villages, Railway Stations and give talks to local communities.

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