

Dunbar In Bloom 2018

The small group of volunteers that make up the Dunbar In Bloom team, collaborate with various local volunteer groups around Dunbar to ensure that we have a beautiful environment to live in.

- The group encourage and mentor local gardening groups.
 - They promote pride of place and good practice.
- They teach and encourage all ages to grow plants for food and biodiversity

This years' theme is the Year of Young People.

Introducing our team:

Belhaven Community Garden

The Ridge

Dunbar Bowling Club

Friends of Dunbar Railway Station Group

East Lothian Council

Friends of Winterfield Park

The Battery

Lauderdale Park

Dunbar Community Woodland Group

Our three pillars are:

Horticultural Achievement

Community Participation

Environmental Responsibility

Belhaven Community Garden

Belhaven Community Garden is a sustaining Dunbar project to transfer an area of land adjacent to Belhaven Hospital, into gardens where residents, community groups, staff, and patients can grow together. The site was initially available on a 5-year agreement which was renegotiated in 2017. The gardens are community gardens promoting health, environmental sustainability, and community participation.

The group of volunteers grows fruit, veg, and flowers for the benefit of the community. Local sales of fruit, veg, and jams provide enough funds for next years' compost and seeds. The BCG has an active Facebook page to advertise local events and garden sessions (e.g. Fork to Fork tasting and Willow Weaving training courses)

The Dunbar Cubs, West Barns Primary School, and Dunbar Dementia Carers support group are all regular visitors.



The Ridge

In 2015, the Ridge acquired a 5-year lease for 3 derelict lots and an alleyway adjacent to the East Lothian town of Dunbar's High Street.

Having previously been utilized as garden space for High Street premises and residential buildings (and casting even further back-livestock), the "Backlands" as it has come to be known has lain idle for the better part of a decade after having been purchased by East Lothian Council. The Ridge's aim for the site was to develop it into a productive and active market garden space that would be accessible to a diverse range of user groups providing opportunities for educational, professional and therapeutic activity in an otherwise

lacking locality. However, for this goal to be realized, an extensive renovation of the site would be required involving vegetation clearance, stonemasonry, carpentry, and landscaping. Limited to two days a week, renovation and clearance work began in the Backlands in the summer of 2015.

Future Plans

Now that the substantial amount of infrastructure has been installed in the Backlands, there is a capacity for it to become a productive and inclusive space that can be used by a variety of groups.

Currently, several groups can use the garden with a variety of projects in the pipeline. From July 2016, a mental health pilot scheme is being launched that will provide its participants with practical and therapeutic experience. Dementia Carers support group are tending to some raised beds. Food production within the garden is intended to be increased for the 2018 growing season. The Ridge in collaboration with Sustaining Dunbar is also piloting a local food waste composting programme using worm boxes to process food waste from households near the garden.

The Ridge's main purpose is to offer training and support to vulnerable people who lack employability skills, horticulture, and conservation masonry, which are now being taught regularly. It has allowed local industries to develop valuable practical and life skills whilst contributing to the preservation of the Historic Backlands.

The Ridge scored "outstanding" in their It's Your Neighbourhood campaign last year and have entered again in 2018.



Dunbar Bowling Club

The Bowling Club are a new entrant to the It's Your Neighbourhood initiative. The Club has a large membership and willing volunteers

The gardens promote a stunning backdrop to the immaculate bowling green.



East Lothian Council

Our group work extremely closely with the Council and are a fundamental part of our team. Our working relationship is vital to our success. Representatives regularly attend our monthly meetings and their work can be seen throughout Dunbar.

The ELC also ensure that the roadside verges, roundabouts and local residential areas are full of flowers.

It is shown below that they regularly supply us with the plants we use to make Dunbar a more beautiful place to live.



Friends of Winterfield Park

A public meeting in 2010 to discuss the development of Winterfield Park prompted residents to form a group known as "Friends of Winterfield Park". Their aim was to preserve Winterfield Park as a unique open space, providing recreational space for the town.

The group works with East Lothian Council. They have been successful in gaining funding for several projects including a picnic area, new benches and the planting areas within.

The Dunbar Cricket Club have established themselves within the park with permanent practise nets being installed in 2015. Games are regularly played throughout the summer. The rugby pitch is used by Dunbar Grammar School pupils.

The friends of the Winterfield Park dog show will be held on the 24th June 2018 as part of Dunbar Civic Week. Kite flying displays and the Circus regularly use the park.



The Battery

The Battery is owned by the Dunbar Harbour Trust. In 2017, Dunbar created a special location at the Battery on Lamer Island.

It is now available for the public to explore and enjoy. Funding was received from East Lothian Council, Historic Environmental Scotland and Viridor for the renovations. The outdoor amphitheatre can seat 60 people and is suitable for musicians, dancers and drama.

The Coastal Garden is a location for people to meet and chat informally. It suits conversation and contemplation.

The planting is suitable for its coastal location blasted by the wind of the North Sea and guarded by the kittiwakes.

It has also been shortlisted in the Architectural Review Awards.



Lauderdale Park

Lauderdale is a family park situated within a sheltered walled garden in the heart of Dunbar. Lauderdale Park is a place to socialise, play or just sit and watch the busy world go by. Lauderdale Park is maintained by East Lothian Council.

Visitors are welcomed by formal seasonal planted borders at each side of the pathways into the main park area. Once through the park gates, visitors are welcomed by colourful perennial borders with bench seating thoughtfully placed around the path to sit and enjoy the area.

The seasonal café provides a range of snacks for visitors and is a welcome lunch venue for local workers looking to catch some of the day's sunshine during their lunch breaks. A selection of picnic tables is scattered around the grass areas and are well used by families enjoying their time in the park. Beyond the café there is an award-winning play area for young to teenage children, with well-spaced play equipment for each age group to play safely. A children's memorial of mushroom houses carved from wood, with steps, doors and windows for the fairies who may live there.

2016 saw paths being replaced and new borders being planted. Dunbar In Bloom helped plant up a new perennial border and new Alpine rockery at the entrances to the park. This has been maintained by the group in the following years. New benches have been built and provided by ELC Spott Road Amenity workers, who spent the winter months building and painting them ready for placing in the park in the spring.



Dunbar Community Woodland Group

75 acres have been restored to provide an important recreational and educational space for residents and visitors. The group manages the woods as a community resource, nurture wildlife and maintain pathways and waterways. They encourage all who use the woods to treat them with respect, to clear up litter and discourage damage.

The gathering space at the corner of Kellie Road is often used for woodworking classes. There is an outdoor clay wood-fired oven for visitors to use. The Woodland Group also look after a carpet of snowdrops and bluebells in Lochend Woods before the tree canopy closes in.



Friends of Dunbar Railway Station Group

The Friends of Dunbar Railway Station have had a busy year, keeping the station garden in order and building a relationship with station management. Planters have been placed at the station front door to welcome passengers all year round with herbs and flowers mixed to give added interest. The station platform has a long shrub border and a carpet border with the town name formed from box hedging. The train planter is very popular with children and adults and add interest and colour to the platform area. Volunteers are busy all year round, keeping borders weeded, watering planters and ensuring that the garden always look its best. The platform is open to the elements and gets the best of the sun and the worst of the winds which makes it a challenging place to garden.



Zero Waste

The Zero Waste Dunbar Team is working with residents and Dunbar Grammar School, to develop and educate good practise with food and household waste. They have opened a shop in the town to sell items that are too good to throw away at the landfill.

The East Lothian Recycling Centre

Based at the Spott Road Dunbar, the centre is well used by local gardeners and householders to recycle all waste items.

A BBC TV show filmed at the centre throughout last year.

The workers at the centre have also collected garden plants and planters, placing them all around the site to brighten up the area.

The cuddly monkey hanging from the tree makes everyone smile.



Horticultural Achievement

Planning for the year ahead starts in September. Seeds and plug plants are chosen and orders with sowing and planting on taking place in March and May. The plants this year were selected to tie in with the council's choice of colours, making a more cohesive display.

Dunbar In Bloom consult with local gardening groups to ensure we produce enough plants for the gardening year. Residents asked for a bit of colour to be put in the planters for the spring. This is always a challenge as Dunbar High Street can be a wind tunnel and the salty East Coast air is a challenge to any plants caught in a gale. The plants are watered by volunteers at the Ridge when they water the traders hanging baskets.

After discussion we decided to plant the High Street planters out with tete a tete daffodils as they are small enough to miss the wind

and their bright flowers have a good long flowering period. Violas have been used this year to prolong the flowering display. The team have access to a Victorian greenhouse just off the high street at Maidendew. The plants are potted and grown undercover. There is also a timed watering system. Lavenders and rosemary have been planted in the half barrel planters near the station providing a drought tolerant display on a windy roadside.



Community Participation

Facebook has become a valuable communication tool for the community and helps to keep us up to date with local events.

The DIB team organised a window display in the Be Green Shop on the High Street, which encourages the community to get involved.

The Dunbar traders water the plants near their shops and are always happy to give out water to our volunteers. Some shops have hanging baskets to brighten their doorways. The local public toilet staff have a set of planters and do a wonderful job every year, brightening up the toilets with flowers both inside and outside. Dunbar Recycling Centre staff are also doing an excellent job placing planters all around their site. Even discarded garden gnomes have a place of safety there. DIB volunteers also work very closely with BCG volunteers to plant and grow produce throughout the year.

Dunbar In Bloom volunteers can also be found at the Dunbar Flower Show every year. We encourage people to take part in all different varieties of the show, and there is now a special beginners section which the Dunbar Cubs entered in 2017. Dunbar Primary School Lochend Campus have a selection of raised beds and a very keen gardening club, who enjoy learning about and growing plants. The DIB team are regular helpers at their gardening sessions and assist

with the digging and education. West Barns Primary School walk along to the BCG for regular sessions – growing peas, making posters to brighten planters and squashing snails! DIB rely on the support of local people, businesses and residents who fill our collection tins and support our fundraising activities.

Environmental Responsibility

The plants we order are locally produced within East Lothian. The Ridge and Seafeld Residents have created small orchards, within their areas. The Belhaven Community garden have extended their orchard and planted nut bushes and trees. The field along the side of the railway line is planted with phacelia and wild flowers this year. They have also developed a dry hedge to promote habitat, and seaweed from our local beaches is used as fertiliser for the fruit trees. They also have a compost system.

The Lochend Woods Woodland Group have been busy tidying up the woods after winter gales and spring and summer wildflowers are doing well in the wild areas. Fallen wood is offered to residents to fuel stoves and the local Primary schools have wood piles to attract wildlife and give insects a home.

Beekeeping has also been encouraged throughout the town. Hives are also doing well at the Belhaven Community Garden. Bee school classes are regularly held within the garden.

The ELC recycling centre at Spott Road is well used by local gardeners and householders to recycle all waste items. The workers at the centre have also collected garden plants and planters, placing them all around the site to brighten up the areas. Zero Waste collection points are also located at the centre.

