

**Brighter Bucksburn
Beautiful Scotland Portfolio 2019**



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Introduction

Brighter Bucksburn was established some four years ago as a subgroup of Bucksburn| and Newhills Community Council, and has slowly grown. A group of some thirty folk, representing the community and the local schools, meets roughly once a month to make suggestions, plan the way forward and generally help.

Our activities include:

Planters and small beds - some ten locations are scattered through the area, and in general each is looked after by one or two people drawn from the Brighter Bucksburn group and the wider community. These include a herb garden, tended by Bucksburn Academy pupils, and an adjacent small orchard.

School projects - our two primary schools each have an individual project, and in addition help with activities such as planting bulbs and litter-picking. The Academy, through the classes working for the John Muir awards, cares for the established herb garden and small orchard, and also assists with wider projects (below).

Auchmill Nature Walk - this runs for about 1 km between the main road and the railway. A major grant from TBOH some years ago enabled the path to be upgraded and various other improvements to be made. This spring, the John Muir pupils planted 160 wild fruit trees and hedging plants provided by the Woodland Trust. More hedging plants will be added this autumn, as the ones planted this spring cover only a relatively small part of the perimeter that adjoins the road,

Cloverfield Park - a hitherto neglected area of about one and a half acres is being developed as a park. A path has been installed by ACC, and a number of silver birch trees added. In mid- June, some fifteen wild flowers were counted, not including grasses. Further plants of wild flowers will be added in late June with the help of the Academy pupils. Our present intention is to allow the grass to grow long with the exception of mown paths wherever traffic is heavy. More ambitious plans will follow, including more tree-planting

Sclettie Wood - is another project. Some years ago, with the help of John Muir Award pupils at the Academy, a new path was created to provide an additional walk though the area and the trees were given attention. More work is now needed, and it is intended to increase the bulb planting and general wildflower content of the area.

Horticultural achievement, by season

Spring - In early spring 2019, the John Muir class of Bucksburn Academy planted 160 trees in the nature walk. The trees were provided by the Woodland Trust and comprised 105 “wild harvest” trees (elderberry, blackthorn [sloe], hazelnut, crab apple, rowan, dog rose) and 60 hedging trees (hawthorn, dog rose, hazel, crab apple)

The wild harvest trees have been planted in a grove, to comprise a wild orchard. The hedging saplings have been planted beside the adjacent road, with the intention of reducing the traffic noise in the walk. More will be planted this autumn.

More snowdrops were also added, and wild garlic has also been introduced.



April 2019 - John Muir pupils plant “wild harvest” trees in the Nature Walk

The mini-orchard of cultivated fruit trees, established beside the herb garden blossomed well. Small bulbs planted beside the trees flourished. Elsewhere, volunteers from another local shop rebuilt and replanted the planter outside their shop.

Beds outside the relatively new Brimmond Primary School had been neglected, and volunteers for the PTA with the help of a grant from Trellis have installed a sensory garden for the pleasure of the pupils.

Pupils from Stoneywood Primary School began to upgrade a hitherto neglected area of ground near their school P4 sowing seeds and planting strawberry plants.



Stoneywood P4 pupils sowing seeds and planting strawberry plants, May 2019

The stone trough, just visible behind the children planting strawberries, dates from 1874, which amused the children greatly. We hope to find out more of its history, and it has since been planted with bright flowers.

The seeds sown did not thrive, largely owing to cold and dry weather immediately after they were sown. A few marigolds, escholzia and poppies have survived, and pupils have since helped with weeding, and planted chives, iris, pinks, cosmos and other flowering plants.

Summer 2019 - In June, plants raised from seed by volunteers were planted in planters and beds throughout the area, together with bedding plants ordered through the city. Hanging baskets were installed by the city on lampposts along some of the main roads. Additional hanging baskets were installed outside a local pub, and also at the Fountain Corner.

Many planters were refurbished, ready for adding summer flowering plants. Two new planters have been added at the entrances to the Cloverfield Park. In addition, three new planters have been added beside a row of shops that had hitherto lacked flowers: the shops were delighted, and have agreed to water and otherwise tend them.

Wild flowers were planted in the new park.

Autumn (2018) - fruit trees in the nature walk bore well, with excellent **cherries**, which surprisingly were not all eaten by birds. Raspberries and blackberries also flourish, together with elder trees. We expect in due course to be able to gather more wild harvest.

(Photo autumn 2018)



Work continued on the alpine bed with additional bulbs and plants added.

Winter 2018/9

Schools sorted a consignment of mixed bulbs, and planted them opposite the new Stonewood Primary School and in the grounds at Brimmond Primary School. The alpine bed was tidied and more bulbs planted.

A permanent Christmas tree - a well grown blue spruce - was planted at Old Meldrum Road.



Planting our mini-Christmas tree - November 2018

This was later decorated with lights, and much admired



Our permanent Christmas tree, unveiled December 2019.

Brighter lights needed for the future!

Bulbs and more plants were added and a small trough of muscari installed near the Fountain Bed.

Environmental responsibility

Winter - the new conifer planted at the top of Mugiemooss Road will serve as a permanent Christmas tree, decorated with battery powered lights. We had hoped to use solar-powered lights, but they were not bright enough. Perhaps brighter ones will become available in due course, and we shall use those. Shortage of sunlight is however a permanent problem in Aberdeen winters.

Spring - as ever, litter-picking has been essential, and we never cease to be amazed at the trouble people take in distributing litter. Over the years we have had to dispose of crates of bottles and a child's push chair! However, bins placed beside the bus stops along the Nature Walk greatly reduced the litter problem.

As mentioned already, 160 new trees were planted in the Nature Walk. We plan to add more hedging this coming autumn, with the aim of reducing the traffic noise heard in the Walk

Trees, shrubs and possibly climbers will also be planted in Cloverfield Park

Summer - Cloverfield Park is situated on poor ground, which makes it ideal for wild flowers. In June we counted at least fifteen species growing there already, and we have since added a further ten varieties of native wild flower. There is one main hard path through the park; elsewhere the grass will be left long for the benefit of the wild flowers, with just one or two mown paths through it.

We are very sensitive of the need to preserve our natural flora, and encourage pollinating insects, we are especially proud of the range of wild flowers to be found both in the park and in the Nature Walk.

In particular, **wild orchids** flourish in the Nature Walk. Moreover, they appear to be multiplying.

Photograph June 2019

We add additional native species from time to time; recently ramsons - wild garlic - were planted in the nature walk, and this autumn we aim to establish wood anemones there.

At least for the immediate future, grass in Cloverfield Park will not be mown except for a few paths; wild flowers are flourishing there, and we intend to add more this summer.



By producing and distributing leaflets outlining the wild-life - both plant and animal - to be found in the Nature Walk, we hope to encourage more residents - and indeed, folk from other parts of the City - to take an interest in it. Leaflets have been given to all schools in the area, and are available at the library and other public places. They were also given away at the annual Beacon Gala.

Later in the year we plan a fungal foray, with the help of a local expert. We intended to do this last year, but the dry summer had limited the amount of fungi to be found, and it was cancelled. This year looks more promising.

Some other flowers that can be found in the Nature Walk and in Cloverfield Park: -



Mixed wildflowers, May 2019



Ox-eye daisy with pollinator, June 2019

Autumn 2019

We plan to request further trees, and especially hedging plants, from the Woodland Trust.

Some of these will be planted in the Nature Walk, to continue the hedge that was started this year. In due course, in addition to helping reduce traffic noise in the walk, these will play their part in absorbing carbon dioxide.

Hedging plants and shrubs will also be added to Cloverfield Park, which is at present rather open. The view from the park is most agreeable, and we shall not impede that, but additional trees and shrubs for shelter and eye-appeal will add to the amenities in the park - and again, play their part in combating climate change.

Community engagement

Winter - bulb planting was this year undertaken by both our primary schools.

Spring - Plinths were installed at either end of the Nature Walk, bearing plaques carrying information about the history of the area and illustrating the wildlife to be found there.



Unveiling the plaques, April 2019

Volunteers, including members of the PTA, have transformed a neglected area at Brimmond Primary school into a sensory garden



Brimmond School before and after; April/May 2019

The Beacon Cuppa, which runs tea and coffee mornings at the Beacon, funded a bench beside the path in Cloverfield Park. This was 'opened' by the Lord Provost, seen here with the Lady Provost, in the presence of some of the volunteers who run the coffee mornings.



A happy event in April 2019

Summer

A volunteer is developing a hitherto uninspired area in a local housing estate.



Photo June 2019

A small patch, lovingly cared for by a volunteer, who hopes to inspire other resident to follow suit

Throughout the year, regular entries are posted on Facebook, and this has resulted in many new helpers. Our news articles and photographs receive on average 800-1200 likes and are frequently shared by the Bucksburn Community Site. Regular articles and calls for volunteers for Brighter Bucksburn appear in our community newsletter Bucksburn News. Over the year Brighter Bucksburn attends at least three local events encouraging participation, distributing free seeds and selling our local calendar.

Finance

A major project, upgrading the Nature Walk, involving £10,000 from Tesco Bags of Help, was finally completed this year with the installation of permanent stone plinths at each end of the path, bearing informative plaques. They were unveiled by the Lord Provost and the head of ACC environmental services.

The small balance remaining was used to print two thousand informative leaflets which are being distributed free of charge to schools, local shops and the general public.

Each year, BNCC produces an illustrated local calendar. The profits from its sales help finance hanging baskets along some of the main routes in the area.

Funds are mostly maintained in, and audited with, the account of Bucksburn and Newhills Community Council. A separate account is maintained by the Friends of Cloverfield Park.

Various local residents have supplied plants, either grown from seed, propagated from plants in their own gardens or purchased locally.

Acknowledgements to those who have helped either financially or in kind

Aberdeen City Council and Local Councillors
ACC Rangers Service
Beacon Cuppa
Brimmond Primary School and PTA
Bucksburn Academy
Bucksburn and Newhills Community Council
Catalyst City Church
Charlie's Paper Shop
Christies Chemist
Co-operative store
Dandara
Dobbies
Flowerscene
HS Milnes Butchers
Jack Taylors Fish Shop
New Era Chinese Takeaway
McKenzie Printers
Solstice Nurseries
Staging Post
Stoneywood Primary School
Tesco Bags of Help
Trellis
Woodland Trust

And many individuals who prefer not to be named

Plans for the future

Cloverfield Park will be further developed. More trees and shrubs will be planted, and further native wildflowers introduced. We would like to include more seats and some picnic benches. Applications will be made for a grant to install simple fitness equipment, suitable for children and adults, such as blocks and beams for balancing and similar items.

An area of housing locally known as “the Wimpeys” includes many small areas, mostly of grass, that could be enhanced, and an effort is underway to do this, headed by one of the residents who has taken over a small area near her home (photo). Several areas of grey cobblestones are being cleaned up with central beds replanted. The aim is to replicate her efforts throughout the area, introducing a variety of less usual shrubs and perennials to add interest - and more flowers - to some of these generally rather bland areas.

A small local wood, known as Sclattie Wood, will be developed as an additional area of interesting plants, and trails through it will be improved.

A memorial seat, in a neglected state, in a small enclosed area will be refurbished, and scented plants added around it, to comprise a pleasant place to sit. A nearby neglected patch will be enhanced with topiary, rescued when a developer was throwing away shrubs from the show-house.

Other ideas include:

- Increasing the number of hanging baskets and planters round the area.

- Developing a wet or bog area in the Nature Walk to enable damp-loving plants to flourish.

- Developing a new woodland walk at a new housing development.

- Constructing a display beside the A96 to welcome travellers to Bucksburn

- Running bulb-planting workshops to encourage more pots of bulbs

- Three potential new planters in the Bankhead area.

And, as ever, we shall plant more trees - and snowdrops.



Appendix
Some of our bright spots.

Two uses of former horse troughs; lupins; wall garden; orchard fruit

