



## **Introduction**

Set amidst beautiful rolling Borders countryside Lauder is situated beside the River Leader on one of the oldest routes between Edinburgh and England. Our town straddles one of the main trunk roads and despite the town's expansion over recent years it still preserves its original medieval form of a single main street and two back lanes. Lauder's Common Riding is one of the original and oldest Border Common Ridings, with references to the festival dating back to the 1600s. The Common Riding is now a week long festival which culminates in the Ride Out of hundreds of horses from all over the Borders on the first Saturday in August. Lauder has plenty of leisure activities available including golf, tennis and bowling as well as a network of footpaths with the Southern Upland Way passing through our town. Lauder has a lot to offer with a range of independent shops and places to eat and is growing as a tourist destination. Our town also has an increasing mix of community organisations for all ages. Lauder in Bloom began in 2014 in part at least as a response to a comment that Lauder is a long grey town and nothing much could be done about it! We began by adopting the handful of existing Council beds and neglected planters in the centre of town. Since then we have expanded outwards adopting various unloved areas and working with many other community groups. We currently look after 51 planters, 35 hanging baskets and 34 beds with this number continuing to grow each year. In the 2018 Scottish Borders Council Floral Gateway awards we achieved 1st place in the Large Village category along with a Clean & Tidy award for which we received a new litter bin. We are a relatively small core group of 12 have-a-go volunteer gardeners but we are very fortunate that we have great support from our community. We are active throughout the year and from early spring to late autumn we are out and about at least once a week.

## **Horticultural Achievement**

Now that our local Council is no longer able to continue to supply spring and summer bedding plants coupled with our huge watering workload last summer one of our main aims this year was to reduce our reliance on annuals. We received our last bedding plants from the Council in June and to prepare for next year we have experimented with growing some of our own plants from seed and divisions. Our local Council have had to reduce their grass cutting schedule so we have identified various areas, including the War Memorial and areas surrounding our beds, which we have found local volunteers to help us to cut the grass in between the Council's once a month cut to improve the appearance. Until ownership is established we have also taken over the maintenance of an area of grass next to the main road which surrounds one of our beds.

## Autumn

- For the first time we are making use of a greenhouse which was donated to us. We asked locals for advice on running a greenhouse and propagating plants. We experimented with over-wintering some of the bedding geraniums for display the following year as well as growing on some plug plants. **(A4)**
- We grew spring bedding (wallflowers and forget-me-nots) from seed to help keep our costs down for our spring display in the central Town Hall beds and planters. We re-planted the tulips which we had lifted and stored the previous spring. **(A4)**
- Carried out a lot of work on our pollinator beds at the park. The plants here have mainly been donated and had been left to self-seed and spread. Many duplicate plants were removed and more thought was given to design and impact to increase interest through the seasons. We also re-vitalised 5 of our other beds, removing and re-homing some plants, dividing others and adding in additional herbaceous perennials to reduce our reliance on annual bedding plants. **(A1, A3, A4)**
- We planted-out a pot-bound tree and re-filled the planter with drought-tolerant plants at the entrance to the Health Centre car park. We wanted to experiment with different styles of planting showing that low maintenance doesn't have to be unattractive as well as needing to reduce our watering workload. **(A3)**
- Trimmed hedges at the southern entrance to our town to improve visibility to traffic and pedestrians as well as enhancing our planter. We also trimmed our adopted hedges at the park and Health Centre. **(A1, A2)**
- Planted up the pedestrian crossing railing planters with cyclamen and violas for autumn interest and scent. **(A1, A3)**
- Replaced the annual wildflower bed at one of the entrances to our town with more permanent herbaceous perennials and shrubs visible above the less frequently cut grass. **(A3)**
- We planted 2,000 purple crocus bulbs at one of the entrances to our town as well as alongside one of the main walking routes to school. Once the Council had finished cutting the grass for the season we cut areas where we had planted crocus bulbs to enable them to be seen above the grass next spring. **(A1)**
- We collected up the fallen beech leaves from the Health Centre entrance and car park and stored them for leaf-mould to use as soil-improver. **(B2)**
- We altered the planting in our prominent Diamond Bed from single variety and colour of annuals to a mix of perennials and annuals chosen for their ability to cope with drier conditions yet still provide colourful impact. **(A1, A3)**
- The planting at our two raised beds at the bus stop was changed from annual wildflowers to more permanent perennial prairie style planting to provide a longer season of interest. **(A1, A2, A3)**
- Added spring bedding to our 51 planters. Planted dwarf tulip and narcissi into pots and sunk them into planters so that they can be easily lifted and stored for the following year. We were fortunately given 600 spring bedding plants from our local Council and we added some polyanthus which we had heeled-in from the previous year along with our own-grown wallflowers and forget-me-nots. We top-dressed the planters with home-made compost and forked in bonemeal. **(A3)**

## Winter

- We re-planted daffodils in an old donated Belfast sink in front of the former bank along with a sign providing a brief history of the institution in Lauder. The summer display in the sink is blue and white to represent the former bank's logo. **(A1, B1)**

## Spring

- We mulched many of our beds with our own home-made compost. **(B2)**
- In time for the historic annual 'Picking Night' – when the Lauder Cornet, the principal man for the Common Riding, for the year is announced – we added planters either side of the Town Hall door filled with yellow and blue (Lauder colours) spring flowering plants. **(A1, B1)**
- Continue to add plants at our beds at the park to increase year round interest including phlomis, witch hazel and black elder. **(A3)**
- We began our watering rota of our planters. Liquid feed is added once the baskets and summer bedding are in.
- We pruned and tied-in the willow at the School's Quiet Garden which we maintain and we used the whips to re-instate the little willow fences which significantly reduce foot traffic. **(C2)**
- We commissioned a local dyker to edge the Town Hall side beds to improve their appearance and to tie in with the dyke in the central bed which we had commissioned previously. **(B1)**
- We added donated hellebores and astrantia to our Shady Bed on one of the walking routes to school. **(A1, A3)**
- We have worked hard to revitalise an important bed at one of our entrances to our town. We added more herbaceous perennials (donated and divisions from exiting stock) and thickly mulched with compost to improve the soil structure. **(A1, A2, B3, C3)**



*Daffodils at an entrance to our town, April 2019 and early summer colour at our beds at the park, June 2019.*

## Summer

- Despite several of the Market Place businesses changing hands recently we have been able to encourage owners to purchase the hanging baskets again as well as a few extra. We are able to subsidise these to cover the price increase from the grower from last year. We also feed and water them throughout the season. We also planted up one of the local hotel's window boxes which we also feed and water for them. **(A1, A2, C3)**
- The tulips in the Town Hall beds were lifted, dried and stored. Now that they have been used for two spring displays they will be planted out into some of our mixed beds and thanks to a generous donation we will plant different varieties and colours of tulips for next year's display in our central beds. The primulas removed from our planters were divided and heeled-in at our plot to be re-used for the display next spring and the other bedding was shredded and added to our compost heaps. We have also begun sowing wallflowers and forget-me-nots for next year. **(A1, A2, A3, A4, B3)**
- We created 'living pictures' with our Juniors & Seniors group which we will put on public display. **(C2)**
- We strimmed the grass beyond our town limits to enhance one of the main entrances. **(A1)**

## Environmental Responsibility

- We have 3 compost bays which we made from old pallets with 'feed me', 'maturing' and 'ready' signs. We use this compost where possible and buy in additional peat-free versions as required. Our community-made compost includes raw fruit and vegetable waste and coffee grinds from local cafes and restaurants along with shredded paper from local businesses, horse manure and our own shredded garden waste. Once our compost bays are full we have our garden waste excess, along with any weeds, uplifted by a local company to be recycled into soil-improver. **(B2, B3, C2)**
- We reuse and re-home nearly all of our plastic plant pots and trays. They are especially useful when we run sessions with the various community groups who often take home a pot of bulbs / cuttings etc as well as for our plant sales. We also make plant labels from milk cartons. **(B3)**
- We don't use pesticides or herbicides and we show our supporters, via our face book group, alternative methods of dealing with common problems. We added a pitcher plant to our greenhouse as an eco-friendly method of reducing unwanted pests. We have also been experimenting with a flame weeder as an alternative to using herbicides. **(B2)**

## Autumn

- We were delighted to be awarded the national RHS & Keep Scotland Beautiful 2018 'RHS Wild About Gardens Award' at the ceremony in Stirling. Along with the water-butt at our hut we have added one to our greenhouse and following our suggestion the Scout Group added one to their hall to assist with watering their garden and nearby planters. **(B2)**

## Winter

- The stems from the herbaceous perennials in the park beds are left in place over winter providing shelter for insects whilst the seed heads from the teasels are a useful source of food for birds. **(B2)**

- Our bunches of Festive Foliage are dismantled with the greenery being taken away for recycling and the ribbons re-used the following year. **(B3)**
- We set up a real Christmas tree recycling service as our local Council are no longer able to offer this service and we invited locals to bring us their trees. This helped to reduce the number of trips to the local recycling facility (16 mile round trip) as well as the number of fly-tipped trees. The Community Council funded the chipper and the local school gave us storage space. The chipped trees will be stored for 12 months and then used to mulch our beds at the park. **(C1, B2, B3)**



*Our Festive Foliage Decorations, December 2018 and Christmas Tree Recycling Service, January 2019.*

## Spring

- Following our success last year our 'Waste Aware Lauderdale' project continues. We promote the good work of local businesses and community groups and encourage them to take further action e.g. switching to paper straws, glass milk bottles, composting suitable food waste, stocking reusable and reduced packaged goods as well as inspiring individuals to make simple small changes in their homes. We have over 200 followers for our Waste Aware Lauderdale Face book page and we encouraged local businesses and landmarks such as the Town Hall and Thirlestane Castle to switch off for Earth Hour. We organised an Earth Hour lantern walk and encouraged locals to make a pledge to make a change. We also encouraged other community groups such as the Scouts and playgroup to take part in Earth Hour activities. **(B2, C1, C2)**
- We worked with the Lauder Primary School Gardening Club to carry out another lunch time litter pick and survey. We showed the children how long different litter items remain in our environment. Following our installation of 2 new recycling bins at the school specifically for crisp packets and biscuit and cracker wrappers, which previously had been the main forms of litter in the playground, the amount of litter recorded this year was significantly less compared to our previous survey. We have been emptying and sorting the contents from these bins along with the one in the local café and neighbouring village and sending them away to Terracycle for recycling. In the past 6 months we have already diverted over 2,000 crisp packets from landfill. **(B3, C1, C2)**

- We attended a 'Plastic Free Borders' seminar run by Zero Waste Scotland discussing ways to reduce waste locally. We also arranged for the Council's local waste manager to present at a Community Council meeting to discuss local recycling. This was well received and it's hoped that an additional session can be arranged in the future. **(C2)**
- We carried out our annual Spring Tidy Up, using compostable bin bags, with over 25 residents attending the litter pick and we recycled as much as we could. **(B3, C1, C2)**
- At our Spring Event we used compostable corn starch bin bags and sugarcane plates as well as wooden cutlery. We borrowed china mugs and reusable plastic beakers to help reduce our waste. We also ran workshops demonstrating:- how to make bees wax wraps (a useful reusable alternative to plastic cling film); how to make bars of soap as an alternative to plastic bottles of liquid hand soap; and we demonstrated how to make a garden pond and the benefits to wildlife. We helped locals to refill their baskets & planters and we re-used non-recyclable polystyrene packaging for drainage at the bottom of planters. Thanks to a donation from a local book trading social enterprise we also held a gardening and cookery book 'Book Swap'. **(B2, C1, C2, C3)**
- Our army of 'Lauder's Litter Lifters' continues to grow as more locals are fed up with litter and want to do something about it. We now have 25 locals, of all ages, signed up to this group. Residents pledge to look after an area of our town and receive a free litter picker, a Clean Up Scotland bag and a Give Your Litter a Lift window sticker. It's often remarked that our town is noticeably one of the cleanest around. **(B3, C1, C2)**
- We created a new planter at our local sheltered housing with our Juniors & Seniors group to screen the bin area. We re-used an old wooden crate, lined with coffee sacks and empty compost bags. We used non-recyclable polystyrene to fill up the lower section and then filled with top soil from a local building site. It was top dressed with broken roofing slates as a decorative mulch. Also as requested by the residents at the sheltered housing we made them a potting table from fly-tipped pallets inspired by a design from Trellis. **(B3, C1, C2)**

## Summer

- We have harvested the comfrey and added it to our compost heaps. **(B2)**
- We re-purposed an old bird box and turned it into a dog muck bag dispenser which we placed at the playing field in case anyone is caught short encouraging locals to take what they need and to leave a spare for others if they have one. We regularly fill it with biodegradable corn starch bags as the plastic dog muck bags are one of the common finds during our litter picks. **(B3)**
- We helped to organise a swishing (clothes swapping) event to raise funds for the local school's new Eco Committee. **(B2)**
- We strategically placed signed flower pots filled with sand during the Common Riding festivities to help reduce the number of cigarette ends frequently discarded on our pavements at this time. **(B3)**
- We have added window boxes to a currently vacant premises in the centre of our town and we continue to maintain their planters. **(B3)**

## **Community Engagement**

- We have been fortunate enough to have a 3rd Duke of Edinburgh participant volunteering with us this year. **(C2)**
- We have a very active face book group – currently 411 members and growing all the time. It is a really useful online notice board and provides a good place for discussion. Our sub-group Waste Aware Lauderdale also has over 200 followers. We provide regular articles in the Lauderdale News – a free quarterly newspaper delivered to 1,450 local households. We maintain the two community notice boards and have a ‘Friends of Lauder in Bloom’ scheme where members receive quarterly newsletters from us. **(C1, C2)**
- We encourage locals to leave any surplus plants at our ‘Plant Swap’ area at our Community Herb Gardens for anyone to take what they can make use of. **(C2)**

### **Autumn**

- As part of our Waste Aware Lauderdale project we ran sessions with both the Rainbows (as part of their Plastic Free Planet badge) and Cubs (part of their Environmental Conservation badge), highlighting alternatives to single-use plastics. We asked several Cub families to collect all of their household rubbish for a week which was useful for everyone to see the cumulative amount of waste we produce and how much can and cannot be recycled locally. We also assisted the Scout Group with a funding bid to upgrade their hall with environmental features such as solar panels. **(B2, C1, C2)**
- We worked with the School Gardening Club to re-plant the bed at the school entrance with permanent herbaceous perennials. Plants were chosen to include those which generally flower outwith the long school summer break as well as being tolerant of the poor conditions as well as including some for architectural interest. All of the plants here are labelled with both their common and proper names. **(A1, A3, C2)**
- We worked with the Rainbows to plant-up their flower ‘bed’ (it has metal bed ends) primarily with divisions from existing stock. The plants chosen are those which have flowers in each of the colours of the rainbow. **(A1, C1, C2)**
- Once again we awarded the School Gardening Club’s ‘Gardener of the Year’ which is given to the child who has shown the most enthusiasm and knowledge throughout the previous year. **(C1, C2)**
- We ran a session with the School Nursery to plant some of the purple Rotary crocus bulbs on one of the main routes to school as well as investigating the wildlife within the soil. **(C1, C2)**
- We teamed up with the Scouts and Explorers and launched our new Garden Helpers Service whereby we offer a couple of hours of basic gardening assistance to anyone local who is unable to tend to their garden space themselves. So far we have helped 9 locals and have given over 70 volunteer hours. Although this is a free service many of the garden owners who we assist have given a donation to Lauder in Bloom. In turn we have been able to donate to the Scout Group to help fund their essential hall roof repairs. **(C1, C2, C3)**

- For Remembrance this year we again invited locals to knit/crochet red and purple woolly poppies for us to add to those created last year for us to display in our beds and planters along the route of the Remembrance parade. Various community groups joined in including the local crafting group and sheltered housing residents. We were overwhelmed by the response and had 1,179 poppies for the parade. These have now been dried and stored to be re-displayed next November. **(C2)**
- We were invited by the Community Council to again provide the catering for the Community Bonfire to raise funds for our group. This was well received by locals. **(C3)**
- Following concerns from the community we worked with the Council's Roads Department to add a new planter to assist with traffic-calming. This was funded by the Council and is maintained by us.
- We launched our new Lauder in Bloom Juniors & Seniors Club. This monthly club is open to all local residents and it's held at the local sheltered housing complex. For our first session 17 locals attended ageing from 5 to 79 years old. We helped them to make festive wreaths and they also planted up two large planters which we placed at two of the bus stops where there had previously been no planting. **(C1, C2, C3)**



**Our Lauder in Bloom Juniors & Seniors Group**

## Winter

- We held our annual fundraising quiz which provided a useful boost to our funds. **(C1, C2)**
- Once again we teamed up with the Lauder Christmas Lights Group and held our annual Festive Foliage community event as well as running a session at the school. We created well over 150 bunches of evergreen foliage which we decorated all of the lamp posts from one end of Lauder to the other. **(C1, C2)**
- Again this year we designed and sent out nearly 100 Christmas cards to all of our volunteers and supporters to thank them for their invaluable help. We also ran a crafting session at the school library working with the children to re-purpose non-recyclable glittery Christmas cards into book marks and gift tags. **(C1, C2)**
- We ran our annual Willow Harvest & Take Away session inviting locals to use the willow for crafting or living willow structures and we used some of the willow to revitalise the little willow fences at some of our smaller beds effectively reducing the amount of foot traffic across them. **(B2, C1)**



## Spring

- Inspired by Blooming Haddington we created a Garden Trail insert for the Lauder Town Trail booklet which we distributed to local shops and businesses. **(C2)**
- Once again we created a bike-themed display to show our support for the annual Tour de Lauder charity cycle event. **(C2)**
- We set up a free Seed Swap at our local library. **(C1, C2)**
- Following our publicity about us helping to maintain some of the grass areas in our town we were donated a push mower as well as a small second-hand sit-on mower which we are currently restoring.
- We ran a pond dipping session with the Juniors & Seniors at the sheltered housing wildlife garden which we created with the School Gardening Club previously **(B2)**.

## Summer

- We held a summer plant sale of thinned planting and divisions from our stock and own gardens along with many donated by residents. **(C3)**
- We worked with the School Gardening Club to create jam jar posies of flowers to decorate the church. After the service the posies were distributed to house-bound residents. We also worked with the children to create the floral displays for a local wedding. **(C2)**
- We have also provided an advice service to several residents who felt they lack confidence in gardening. **(C2)**
- We worked with Butterfly Conservation Scotland to design a permanent sign at our beds at the park to help residents to identify locally found species and to encourage them to report their sightings. We have also been able to renew our bee identification and Bee Tower signs thanks to a generous donation. **(B2, C2)**
- We created a unique and well received display to publicise the annual vintage car show which attracts over 6,000 visitors a year to Lauder. This year the highlight of the show was celebrating 60 years of the Mini. The plants were funded by the local vintage car club and were re-used in our planters afterwards. **(A1, C2)**
- We worked with our Juniors & Seniors to create our intergenerational themed planters in the centre of town. These sensory planters are based on their fond memories of trips to the seaside and include strawberries and chocolate peppermint to represent ice-cream flavours along with ornamental grasses sown by the Club for the waves. **(A1, A4, C2)**
- This year we are supporting Lauder Pride and adding our group to the list showing support to our community. **(C2)**
- We continue to support our local Flower Show and sponsor the Junior Grow-to-Show trophy encouraging youngsters to exhibit any fruit or vegetable grown themselves. We also take part in the Flower Show scarecrow competition. **(C2)**

## **Finance & Support**

- We have adopted the 3 former Council beds and our local Council have been able to provide us in the past with over 1,090 summer and 640 spring bedding plants. Unfortunately this is the last year that they are able to provide this service. We have reduced our need for bedding plants and only requested 50% of our allowance for the summer bedding this year. This was in part due to our shift towards more sustainable hardy perennials in many of our beds and the need to reduce the watering demand on our relatively small team. As our Council's grass cutting, street cleaning and weeding services have also been reduced we are finding ways in which we can assist to fill the gap.
- We started off as a sub-group of Lauderdale Community Council and we continue to have a good relationship with them. We have really good working relationships with the School Gardening Club, the Lauderdale Scout Group, the local path network group and the sheltered housing association. The school Gardening Club was the first in the Borders to achieve Level 5 of the RHS Campaign for School Gardening and they achieved 'Outstanding' in the It's Your Neighbourhood Awards last year.
- The cost of the plants in the baskets is covered by the businesses / residents where the baskets are hung. We have been able to cover the price increase this year. In the past 12 months we have run 4 fundraising events raising £1,505. We were also fortunate to win £300 from our local Council's Floral Gateway competition last year. In the past year as well as our on-going sponsorship renewals for our 38 sponsored planters which brings in £1,475 annually and our Friends of Lauder in Bloom scheme we have been very fortunate to have received £1,207 in donations. This includes our collection tins, the dissolution of a local hall trust and the Tour de Lauder (charity cycle) Community Fund. This last donation will help us in the transition from receiving Council bedding plants to purchasing our own and to ensure that our town is looking it's best in spring for the annual charity cycling event which attracts over 1,000 visitors. This money has also enabled us to purchase more litter pickers for our 'Lauder Litter Lifters' as well as a couple for a small neighbouring school along with helping to finance the restoration of the donated sit-on mower.

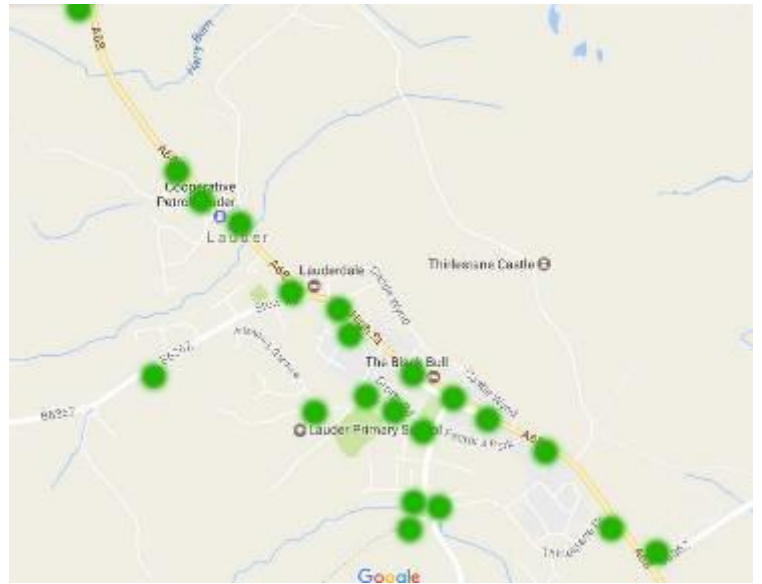
## **Plans for the future**

- Continue to work with different community groups to bring them together – in particular cross-generational activities. Including the local leisure centre and newly established Lauder Shed.
- Continue to grow the group and encourage additional regular volunteers.
- Continue on-going discussions with the various authorities regarding the landscaping along Edinburgh Road including the removal of a couple of unsightly semi-dead evergreen trees as requested by many locals. Also to investigate the possibility of adopting some neglected shrub areas next to a social housing estate.
- Look into setting up a local Gardening Tool Library.
- Our biggest challenge moving forward will be finding a financially sustainable way of obtaining spring and summer bedding to enable us to continue to provide a colourful impact in our town centre despite the Council cutbacks.

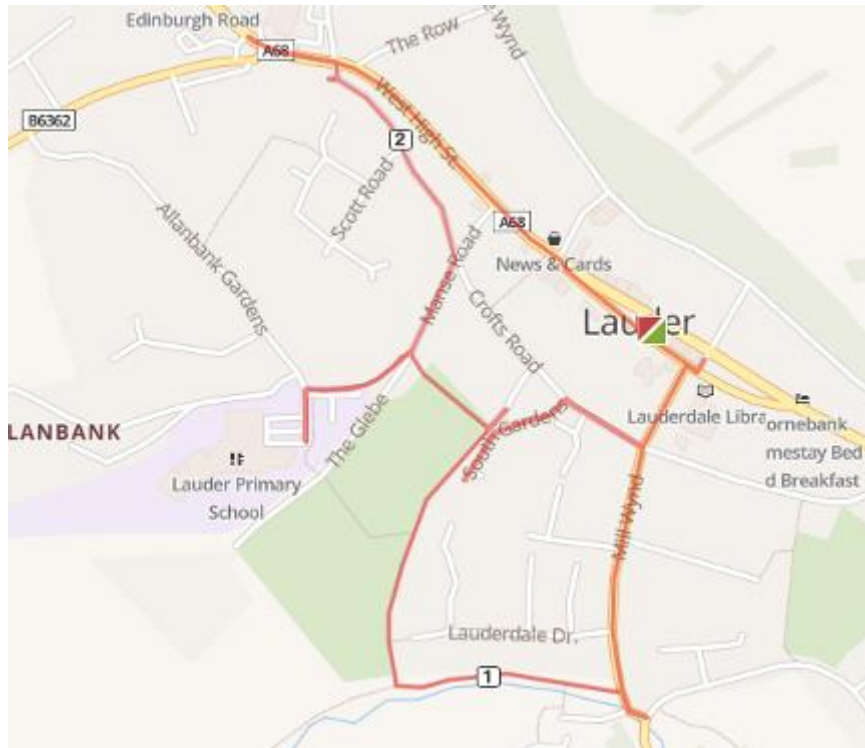
## Appendix



RHS Mapping Tool



Map of Lauder showing the spread of our work throughout our town



2019 Beautiful Scotland Judging Route



Pipers Euan Craig, Jake Mirley and Callum Atkinson lead the parade along the poppy-clad Main Street in Lauder on Sunday.

*The Southern Reporter 15/11/18*



2018 Floral Gateway champions: Jedburgh (Town), Westruther (Champion of Champions), Birgham (Wee Village), Ayton (Small Village) and Lauder (Large Village)

*The Border Telegraph 3/10/18*

Unique display for motoring event



Lauder in Bloom is gearing up for this year's Borders Village Automobile Club classic car show on Sunday June 2 at Thirlestane Castle. The show is billed as being the best in Scotland, and this year it is celebrating 80 years of the scenic M14. In support of the show, Lauder in Bloom have created their own Floral Mini tribute. The group would like to thank S&T Thomson for supplying the car and to DVOC for assistance with the plants.

*The Border Telegraph 29/05/19*



Scout leader Vicky Hammersley, Lauder in Bloom's Charlotte Aitchinson and Ray Theedam Parry, and Lauderdale Scouts Scarlett, Jack, Lucius and Rose lend a hand in Brian Ellis' garden.

# Help at hand for Lauder gardens

by **KIRSTY SMYTH**  
kirsty.smyth@press.co.uk  
@Reporter

**An award-winning floral group has teamed up with local scouts to help residents keep on top of their gardens.**

Lauder in Bloom is trialling a new garden helpers scheme, with a view to rolling it out fully in the spring.

With support from Lauderdale Scouts, the group, which recently won a Gold Beautiful

Scotland award for the second year running, has offered to help tidy outside space for residents who are unable to do so.

The project will see green-fingered volunteers help residents who are unable to tend their gardens, or who find certain tasks tricky.

Lauder in Bloom member Ray Theedam Parry explained: "It is for any local garden owner who is unable to tend their gardens.

"We can help with tasks such as weeding, pruning, raking up leaves, light hedge

trimming and general garden tidying. We can also help plant bulbs and plants.

"If you would like us to lend a hand to yourself, or someone you know, for a couple of hours then please get in touch.

"We are trialling this new service this autumn and hope to be able to help more locals next spring."

The first session took place on Sunday, when four Lauderdale Scout Group members and their leader, and two members of Lauder in Bloom worked in Brian Ellis' garden.

*The Southern Reporter 1/11/18*