



## **Introduction**

### **1. Background & Locality –**

Plains Village is a rural village with a growing population. It is believed with new development of dwellings that the population is closer to 3000. The village lies north of Airdrie. The village main street forms part of the A89 which provides access to both North Lanarkshire and West Lothian. There is now a mix of modern housing and traditional local authority housing.

Plains is a former mining village. Last year saw the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stanrigg mining disaster. A formal miners memorial lies just outside the village.

Plains Community Futures are now in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year. The group consists of volunteers who came together and are keen to show that the village is an open and inviting place to live and visit. The group now consists of 14 active members. However, through community involvement and partnership working many more regularly become involved in the group's activities.

### **2. Objectives / Goals**

The set objectives of PCF are set up with the interests of all residents of Plains.

- (1) To work together making the village a more attractive and pleasant place to be.
- (2) To support the elderly and isolated through assisting with gardening or other similar interests ensuring we bring people together.
- (3) To carry out tasks and projects in a fair and professional manner. To ensure the group has an ethical approach and works without prejudice fear or favour.

- (4) To work in partnership with North Lanarkshire Council; Plains Community Council; Police Scotland and any other voluntary or legislative groups.

## **Horticultural Achievement**

### **Autumn 2018**

During August 2018 PCF the results, off the Bonnie Barrels and Wee Bonnie Barrels competitions came to fruition. This allowed residents and visitors to enjoy nearly 80 wooden barrels throughout the village and the many floral displays. It also allowed for children to get their hands dirty and get involved with the planting. The wooden planters have been a great success story – this being the initial project run by PCF. The winners of the Bonnie Barrels and Wee Bonnie Barrels all enjoyed a great evening of awards where the hard work was recognised.

### **Winter 2018**

Volunteers again began planting daffodil and tulip bulbs in preparation for the coming spring. As garden centres cut their prices more shrubs were purchased. These included Pieris; Ornamental grasses; Box; Euonymus; Thuja; Holly; and much more. Many cuttings were taken and being grown to enable further planting in years to come. The community poly tunnel was completed and is now ready for this year's over wintering of plants and next year's new seedlings.

### **Spring 2019**

After a year of planning and working with North Lanarkshire Council PCF formally adopted the community garden on Main Street Plains. Plans were drawn and work commenced as to how this small area of under-used land could become a worthy attraction to residents and visitors. Having been awarded £9400 from Awards from all lottery funding the first step was to purchase a container to allow the group to become more organised and have a formal base to keep all the gardening equipment that has already been purchased. The one thing that was now needed was plenty of muscle to have the years of weeds removed that had built up in the bedding at the front of the garden. This quickly transformed the garden and positive comments have continued about how the community garden now looks like a garden. Many of the original Golden Cyprus trees were subject to windburn. As such new shrubs were planted within wooden planters ensuring they continued to look at their best. Simple pansies made a quick and colourful display in the barrels whilst tulips and daffodils made a great addition to the garden bed in the community garden.

Unfortunately, there had been a few incidents where shrubs had been stolen or broken through antisocial behaviour. PCF found that planting holly or firethorn which have a natural jaggy protection lowered this type of incident.

## Summer 2019

As the weather has improved so has the opportunity to get planting. The wooden barrels along main Street Plans and around the village have come to life again with lots of colour. Many residents have now taken ownership of the tubs and have added flowers of their choice. This in itself providing a wide variety of summer colour.

It is widely known that councils are looking for ways to cut back on their budgets. One such cut back was the amount of hanging baskets that were being put in place by North Lanarkshire Council. Thankfully through continued support with local elected councillors PCF were able to obtain the appropriate hanging basket tubs from the council land services. PCF members then filled the baskets with surfinia to make a terrific display.



PCF always look for opportunities to work with garden centres or businesses that can assist with the supply of plants. As a result of working with Carigmarloch Nurseries Ltd we have been able to secure annuals such as surfinia; verbena; geranium; calibrachoa; and more. All have been planted in the garden box on Main Street; in hanging baskets and in tubs throughout the village.

We also enjoy growing our own plants and have a poly tunnel which will see PCF become more self sufficient.



Beverley Park and Ballochney Community garden was created within the past 3 years. Residents ensured they have maintained and further established the garden. This serves as a focal point on entrance to the Beverley Park and Ballochney housing estate. Residents, through organised gardening days, keep the garden well maintained. Kerbs and paving are cleaned and weeded.

The resident's association have continued their planting activities and have added newly donated shrubs near to Stannrigg Park Plains.



## **Environmental responsibility**

As earlier identified Plains village has had its fair share of littering. Throughout the year organised litter picks have taken place. PCF has worked with North Lanarkshire Council and local elected members to carry out coordinated litter picks. The children from St Phillips School also assisted in an organised litter pick. Further requests for litter bins to be placed around the village has been successful. North Lanarkshire Council adding to the locations of bins situated in the village.

Home-made holders for poop bags have been added to the park. This provides free poop bags encouraging dog walkers to lift their dogs mess.

Many of the residents in Plains although not always involved in organised litter picks make sure they do their part. One local resident aged 72 years old having collected 15 bin bags of rubbish over two days. This only one of many who do their bit to keep Plains tidy.

Unfortunately, some are not so responsible and flout the law, fly tipping their rubbish on the quite back roads. Thank fully PCF and North Lanarkshire Council have a good relationship and when residents or members of PCF report fly tipping then it isn't too long before the council land services have staff attend and remove the rubbish.



*Fly tipping on the quite back roads*

A major step forward for our environment in Plains is taking place. As a result of the new Stanrigg Park plains being developed, numerous scrapings have taken place creating pond areas in a former wetland area. There is also work being carried out to have tree planting and shrubs planted in the park which will create a better living space and assist with the environment

This will allow wildlife to flourish and encourage frogs; newts; ducks and much more in the way of wildlife.

## **Community Engagement**

PCF Facebook page now has 439 members. This is an increase of over 100 members from the previous year. The FB page is a quick and easy way to keep residents up to date with ongoing projects and events.

In the past year PCF has initiated and began its biggest project to date. This would see the park upgraded through grants investment of £270,000. This was an ongoing project with many local meetings having taken place. Within Plains village there are 3 football parks bordered by a wetland area. Football Park 3 had been unsuitable for purpose as a football park for many years. This is due to the park having been waterlogged. Part of the park had been fenced off with a water attenuation area. Through partnership work with Central Scotland Green Network and North Lanarkshire Council work is underway to transform the area into the new Stanrigg Park Plains.

Public consultation was carried out by PCF. The majority who respond are fully supportive. The continual progress is updated frequently updated on PCF Facebook page to keep residents informed.



*Map of new Stanrigg Park Plains*

Pathways have now been upgraded to tarmacadam. Solar studs are to be fitted to the paths to allow for lit pathways and increased use. One of the nicest things was to see a wheelchair user be able to navigate through parts of the park that he had not previously been able to reach.



The bespoke concrete climbing boulder has been built providing the much-needed focal point for the park. Funding has been secured through carers together which will allow community leaders and teachers from 3 primary schools; local Boys Brigade; brownies; local youth club to be trained by mountaineering Scotland, so they can teach children in their care how to climb and navigate the rock. A smaller rock has also been built in situ to offer younger children the same opportunity.

Work is underway to have a bespoke drywall seat built overlooking the park and the climbing boulder. As earlier mentioned, the wetland area has had numerous land scrapes which in turn will form ponds for natural habitat.

The last part of the project will see tree and shrub planting providing a softer view of the harsh fencing around the water attenuation area. This along with areas of meadow grass again providing areas of habitat for wildlife.



In September 2018 work began on a new consultation exercise. Residents of the village were asked if they would like a miner's statute erected at the front of the community garden on Main Street Plains. There was a significant response informing PCF of the desire to have such a miner's statute to celebrate the mining heritage of the village. Response also included the need for an information board and map guiding the public to the original Stanrigg memorial. The local primary schools became involved learning about the mining heritage and completing artwork to celebrate this. PCF have also purchased two original mining carts which will be planted up with flowers. This will provide a further focal / talking point within the village.



Pupils from Plains Primary School as part of the heritage project learned about the work of local miners. They displayed some of their artwork in the school (shown below).



In October 2018 Beverley Park and Ballochney Brae residents held their second scarecrow event. This was well attended and loved by lots of local children. The residents committee provided free barbeque to all attendees.

During November 2018 PCF organised a just giving fund to collect for a village defibrillator. In only a matter of two weeks enough funds were collected to allow for the purchase of a community defibrillator and secure cabinet. This has been placed at the local community hall and if needed can be accessed via 999 and following instructions from ambulance control. The equipment was purchased through a grant scheme organised by St John Scotland. This was soon followed up by an open CPR and defibrillator training session.



In April 2019 PCF donated over 300 cream eggs to the 3 local schools ensuring all children had an egg at Easter time. A letter was provided to the parents of the children highlighting the donation but more importantly highlighting the work that PCF carry out. The letter reminded children of placing litter in bins and not damaging the wooden flower barrels or flowers within.



In June 2019 Plains Gala took place providing a great community day for the village. Various community groups including Plains Allotments; Beverley Park and Ballochney Brae Residents Association were in attendance. The gala day committee had been successful with an Awards for All grant of £5400 which ensured the day was a major success. The grant also ensuring the gala day will be held for many years to come.



PCF have also worked with Marton Fabrication who have kindly donated two sculpted miners' benches to the Stanrigg memorial. Marton Fabrication have agreed to provide two further sculpted benches throughout the village. The cost being covered by a grant from Tesco bags for help.

Throughout the year staff at St Phillips School have supported not only PCF but other community groups by offering their facilities to the community. The school have again entered the Bonnie Barrels competition and now have 4 wooden planters as well as the new PCF bike planter situated near to the entrance of St Phillips. The school children have also been building a dovecot which will be placed in the community garden.

The Plains Bonnie Barrels have been residents from nearby villages. As a result of neighbouring villages requesting to become involved PCF Bonnie Barrels competition we are now running Airdrie Bonnie Barrels. The villages of Caldercruix; Greengairs; and Glenmavis are all taking part. Each village now having wooden plater barrels sited in their villages. The local distillery – Inverhouse Distillery and Muirhall Energy windfarm have again sponsored the Bonnie Barrels.

The local youth club have been busy keeping their youth garden looking good as well as planting up various vegetables. The poly tunnel is shared by the youth club and PCF.

Plains Allotments continue to be a popular group within the village. The allotment group working well with Plains Primary to educate children in the growing of food stuff.

## Finance

PCF income has been generated through grants donations and funding activities. The group have their own business bank account and a treasurer. The last years financial statement has been independently examined by Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire. The group also have support from a North Lanarkshire Development and education officer.

PCF completed a Just Giving event and raised £1000 to purchase a community defibrillator and secure / heated cabinet. This was placed through St Johns Scotland grant scheme which assisted in lowering costs.



In the past year PCF received a grant for £9400 from Awards for all (lottery). This allowed for the purchase of a container to keep gardening materials and equipment within. The grant also will be put towards garden material and equipment. Also, for purchase of a village Christmas tree.

PCF have also had assistance from Central Scotland Green Network who have project managed the new Stanrigg Park Plains. This required £270,000 funding. This was obtained through North Lanarkshire Council; WREN (landfill tax) and Leader funding (European funds).

PCF has received a further 2 grants from NLC. Both have assisted with administration costs; let fees and the purchase of shrubs.

An application was successful to Tesco bags for help. This provided £1000 to purchase sculpted metal memorial benches to commemorate the mining heritage of the village

Carers together have kindly contributed £600 in funding to allow for community leaders and teachers to be tutored in the basics of rock climbing so that they in turn can tutor children in their care.

A smaller grant was obtained from Xact which was made available to assist with the upkeep and maintenance of the wooden barrels.

North Lanarkshire Council have agreed to project manage the miner's statute and have committed £33,000 to this project. A further funding application will be required to be submitted to landfill tax fund for £12,000 to complete this project.

## Plans for the Future

PCF are in the process of upgrading the community garden on main Street Plains. Plans are in place to have raised beds for the local luncheon club and youth club grow both flowers and vegetables. There will also be a sensory area within the garden. A focal point will be in the form of a miner's statue celebrating the history of the village and its roots as a small mining village.

As we approach the winter months PCF plan to plant further daffodil bulbs on the grass next to the road verges on approach to the village and towards the Main Street of Plains.

Plans are also in place to introduce further villages in North Airdrie to take place in the Bonnie Barrels competition. Residents and community groups have already approached PCF to ascertain how they can get barrels to utilise as planters.

The group intend to continue to build on the previous Easter competition and make this an annual event.

PCF; local elected members and St Phillips School are committed to introducing a new safer route on the local cycle track – route 75. This may also incorporate a cycle pump track or alternative being new road calming measures through Main Street Plains. Initial discussions have taken place.

PCF are looking at the possibility of phase 2 of Stanrigg Park Plains and further installation of play park equipment which will enhance the bespoke climbing rock.

PCF

Funding opportunities to be explored with Paths for all regarding sign posting of available walking routes and landmarks in Plains village.

Further funding to be applied for Tesco bags for help for the purchase of sculpted benches and novelty bins to be sited on Main Street Plains.



*Potential sculpted benches and novelty bin for Main Street*

