



Ardencraig Gardens in Rothesay, winners of the Rosebowl in 2015. © John MacLennan.

Flourishing at 50!

Juliette Camburn

Keep Scotland Beautiful, the charity for Scotland's environment, is proud to celebrate 50 years of community growing in Scotland through the Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood campaigns.

Keep Scotland Beautiful has been running Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood, both linked to the UK-wide Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Britain in Bloom campaign, for many years now, and has supported and celebrated the achievements of communities the length and breadth of the country in their local environmental quality improvement work. Both programmes focus on year round horticultural / gardening achievement, environmental responsibility and community participation and there are numerous awards to recognise exemplar work in areas such as tourism, biodiversity and sustainability.

In 2016, we would like to welcome even more communities to join in the celebrations by participating in the Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood campaigns. The charity is also encouraging local authorities, businesses and organisations to show support for their local communities involved in these campaigns, with promotion of the campaign messages and with sponsorship opportunities.

Background and history

Beautiful Scotland in its current and previous incarnations such as 'Beautiful Scotland in Bloom', has been running in Scotland for almost 50 years. At its launch in 1967, 'In Bloom' was run by the then Scottish Tourist Board and supported by the Scottish Women's Rural Institute, and provided a platform for adding colour to villages, towns and cities all over Scotland. The initial focus of the campaign was on horticulture, and while



Planters in Falkland. © Keith Jackson.



East Lothian Council bedding in Dunbar. © Andrew Hogarth.



Glenrothes hippos now wear wellies. © K. Jackson.



Street colour in Kinghorn. © J. MacLennan.



Year round interest. North Berwick's edible summer boat loses its runner bean mast and is planted with polyanthus for winter and bulbs for a spring tulip festival. © Rosie Oberlander.



Aberdeen youngsters involved in Growing Smarter Granite City. © Aberdeen City Council.



Glenfiddich distillery, Dufftown. © Anne Fraser.



Wick's floral clock. © Andrew Hogarth.

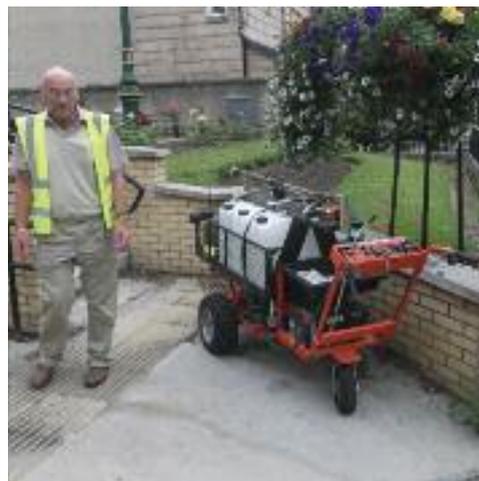
that remains a key theme there is now also a focus on environmental responsibility and community participation which accord with the whole spectrum of activity of Keep Scotland Beautiful. Therefore, while shrubs, flowers and trees form an important part of a submission, so do considerations of the litter and graffiti in the area and the area's work on sustainability issues such as recycling.

Beautiful Scotland provides the Scottish entrants to the UK wide Britain in Bloom competition, which is run by the RHS, with a number of winners from Beautiful Scotland being nominated to take part in the UK finals

in the following year. The UK wide competition takes place between the regional and national winners from 18 areas: Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey and 12 English regions with 70 finalists taking part in 2015. Scotland has been extremely successful in the UK competition in recent years, with at least one class winner in every year since 2005. Most impressively, Scottish entrants have won the Champion of Champion award three times in the seven years from 2006–2012, with two successes for the large village of Falkland in Fife, and one win for the small town of Alness in the Highlands.



Bridge of Earn's water truck.



A motorised water cart at Bridge of Allan. © Andrew Hogarth.

Beautiful Scotland is a competitive campaign which is judged by Keep Scotland Beautiful. Over the years, the charity has found that healthy competition serves to improve the standard and encourage the participants to strive for excellence in their submissions.

Each year, entrants compete in 13 categories ranging from Wee Village right through to City, and a series of awards are available as well as medal certificates for all entrants. The Premier Award, The Rosebowl Trophy, is given to the overall winner and there are Class Awards for the best entrant in each category. There is also a series of Discretionary Awards for outstanding performance in particular areas such as Biodiversity, Tourism, Sustainability, and Community Involvement.

attract volunteer-led community groups which are cleaning and beautifying their neighbourhoods, whether through community allotments, after school wildlife clubs, school eco-groups, Friends of Park groups or adopting pieces of derelict land. Keep Scotland Beautiful rewards participating groups through a series of certificates to acknowledge the good work being done by the groups and, for groups who have consistently grown and improved over the years of the campaign, a Certificate of Distinction is awarded.

Many It's Your Neighbourhood groups work with Beautiful Scotland groups to add value to beautification initiatives in villages, towns and cities all over Scotland.



Community action: planting rare conifers at Coupar Angus. © Coupar Pride of Place.

It's Your Neighbourhood was introduced by the RHS in 2006 and is a non-competitive campaign with greater emphasis on community participation. The campaign has run in Scotland since 2007, and is managed by Keep Scotland Beautiful. The number of groups taking part each year has grown from 34 in 2007 to 146 in 2015, a pattern which is reflected across the UK.

The campaign is based on the three themes of community participation, environmental responsibility and gardening achievement, which accord with the spectrum of activity of Keep Scotland Beautiful, and is designed to



Effective perennial planting at Cockenzie war memorial, East Lothian. © A. Hogarth.



Cornfield annual wildflowers make a fine show at Alness. © Keep Scotland Beautiful.



An annual mix in East Lothian. © Blooming Haddington.



*All ages at work in Dunkeld Community Orchard.
© Katharine Melville.*

Environmental value and participation

There is ample evidence that a good local environment can deliver a broad range of associated benefits in terms of physical and mental health and wellbeing, community cohesion and civic pride, and the creation of economic opportunities. Volunteers taking part in Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood make a difference to this.

Evidence from national and local research shows that local environmental quality is one of the most important issues to people across Scotland. That is why Keep Scotland Beautiful provides a range of programmes to support communities and the number of volunteers grows every year. If we take those engaged with Clean Up Scotland campaigns, those

delivering projects funded through the Climate Challenge Fund, and those involved with Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood activities, we are rapidly approaching three quarters of a million people engaged in voluntary work of some sort. Three quarters of a million from a population of five million is remarkable. There must be more to it than just a desire to make a difference though; for so many people to "get out there and do it", it must be fun, we must enjoy making new friends, and the socialising that goes with it, the joy of doing something positive and rewarding - not only are we improving our environment and the wellbeing and feel good factor of others, it improves ours too.

Assessment

Both campaigns could not run without the support of volunteer judges and assessors. In 2014, volunteer judges and assessors contributed almost 2,000 hours of time to the campaigns so it is clear that without the contribution of Keep Scotland Beautiful's expert judges and assessors, and the invaluable guidance they give to the entrants, Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood would not be the campaigns they are today.



The 2015 Beautiful Scotland award winners in Perth Concert Hall. © KSB.



It's Your Neighbourhood participants at their awards day in Stirling, October 2105. © KSB.

So why should a group take part?

There is a suite of benefits, support and resources available to Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood groups, which include:

Part of a Scotland-wide campaign and the chance to network with groups from across the country.

- Developing a sense of community and creating positive interaction between community members.
- Positive effects on the local economy and helping the environment.
- Monthly newsletter full of inspiring case studies and useful hints and tips.
- Visit from an experienced judge/mentor and a written report highlighting achievements and suggesting ways to improve.
- Free attendance at award ceremony, annual seminar and regional networking events.
- Certificates & awards to recognise achievement.
- A dedicated web page for your group to promote your work.
- Press and media support.
- Access to free advice and resources through Keep Scotland Beautiful's new Community Projects e.g. Bee Diverse and Tasty Spaces and the Clean Up Scotland campaign.
- Access to discounted insurance and free growing advice through the RHS.

For 2016, to recognise the 50th anniversary, Keep Scotland Beautiful has chosen a colour theme incorporating the four colours of the

charity's logo: green, blue, gold, and purple. Every group will receive a pack of native seeds in one of the colours to get them started, and the charity looks forward to seeing colourful plantings across Scotland to showcase the occasion. We are keen for communities to hold their own mini 'Keep Scotland Beautiful festival' in May/June 2016 to bring people together in activities such as clean ups, fund raising events, community celebrations and environmental picnics - details of all of these ideas and more can be found on the Keep Scotland Beautiful website.

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Juliette Camburn heads the Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood campaigns at Keep Scotland Beautiful. She has an MSc in Wildlife Biology and Conservation, worked with the Marine Conservation Society, tried her hand at teaching, worked for Maggie's Cancer Caring Centres in Edinburgh and Glasgow, Wilderness Scotland and for National Museums Scotland before returning to her environmental roots when she joined KSB in 2008. Part of her role at KSB involves the Garden for Life Forum which links gardening with biodiversity. Juliette was recently awarded a Community Champion Award from the ScottishPower Foundation for her work on the Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood campaigns. She has volunteered for the John Muir Trust and the Scottish Wildlife Trust, and enjoys running up hills and exploring the North-West coast of Scotland by bike.