



DUNDEE IN BLOOM 2015



Royal Horticultural

Organised by the Society (RHS), Britain in Bloom is one of Europe’s largest horticultural campaigns involving over a thousand communities each year and creating lasting improvements to local environments for the benefit of residents, workers and visitors.

Why Dundee

Following on from its success at the 2014 Beautiful Scotland Awards, the City was invited to take part in the national Britain in Bloom campaign in 2015. The entry into the campaign offered Dundee in Bloom the opportunity to showcase the fantastic partnership working in the City and show off Dundee’s wonderful setting on the banks of the River Tay.



Common Vision

The three main partners in the Britain in Bloom campaign are Dundee City Council, Broughty Ferry in Bloom and Bonnie Dundee. All three share a common vision of improving the environment for all, creating Greener Streets and Better Lives through working together, involving others and just getting out and doing it!. This partnership working gives a huge amount of added value to the campaign and engages a wide cross section of our communities.

The Dundee In Bloom Portfolio

To evidence partnership working Dundee in Bloom produced a Portfolio which was sent to the Britain in Bloom judges before they visited the city, so that they were well prepared for the judging day. It gave us the opportunity to showcase the campaign’s year-round activities and the things we couldn’t show the judges on the tour, such as spring planting.



<http://www.dundee.gov.uk/dundeebloom>

“Take Pride in Your City”



This new public awareness campaign, launched in 2015, involves the Dundee in Bloom partners, local media and the citizens of Dundee. It encourages everyone to make positive changes to their environment by reducing things like litter, graffiti and fly tipping. Around 30 clean ups throughout the city’s parks and open spaces have taken place. The campaign builds on Dundee’s already impressive track record on cleanliness and public satisfaction about the quality of our parks and open spaces.

<http://www.dundee.gov.uk/takepridedundee>

Dundee in Bloom Partners

Dundee City Council

Horticulture

Dundee is a green city with 59 parks and many other open spaces, covering 4,000 acres. The City has more urban green space per head of population than anywhere in the country and the Council is responsible for managing the majority of this. For instance, the council mows the equivalent of 1,300 football pitches up to 14 times a year and maintains 90 play parks.



Dundee is well known for its displays of daffodils in the spring and beautiful tree lined streets. The City has been awarded and flies 4 Green Flags, an international benchmark standard that recognises excellence in the management of public spaces. These are Baxter Park, Barnhill Rock Garden, Templeton Wood and Trottick Mill Ponds. 20 additional

parks and open spaces are subject to the Council's internal Green Flag Assessments, 9 schools have also achieved Green Flag Status.

Alternative Management

The council has started to try out alternative management of grass. Although this is driven by the desire to reduce costs it can have biodiversity benefits too, as well as making for a more interesting landscape. Trialling yellow rattle on a steep bank location will help to reduce grass vigour, meaning less maintenance requirements and also enable wildflowers to establish.



Popular annual wildflower meadows are sown in visible locations in the city centre again cutting down on the need for frequent grass cuts and providing habitat for pollinators. The Council has also introduced more sustainable planting and was awarded the Wright Sustainability Trophy in 2015 by Beautiful Scotland for these efforts. These changes, particularly the annual wildflowers, are welcomed by citizens and visitors, with the Council receiving many compliments.



However, not everything works out perfectly every time and it's very much a trial and error process. Obviously we are learning from best practice, but also working out what works for Dundee.

Wider Environment

Discovery Compost is produced by Dundee City from green waste collected from residents, greenspaces and commercial landscapers. The compost can be used as a peat-free soil conditioner, mulch or soil substitute in domestic gardens, allotments or larger scale projects.

Dundee builds its wider environmental credentials by having the largest fleet of electric vehicles in the country. The commitment to this initiative is also having additional benefits with the expansion of charging points and a local taxi company investing in 30 vehicles.



Broughty Ferry has a fantastic sandy Resort Award winning beach. Local people are involved with beach clean ups as part of Broughty in Bloom and the sand dunes have been planted with native marram grass to aid their stabilisation.

Bonnie Dundee

The Bonnie Dundee Group work in partnership with a variety of organisations throughout the year, such as Dundee University, local businesses and Castlehill Gardeners. Volunteers are currently working in partnership with the Overgate Centre and Dundee and Angus College to improve the external environment of Dundee's shopping centre. The group mainly concentrate on initiatives in the City Centre and look after a number of planters in Union Street and Dundee Science Centre. All the plants the group use are raised in a shared polytunnel at Duntrune Community Garden.



The University of Dundee campus covers 22 hectares in the heart of the city and is fully accessible to the public. The University has an ever increasing recycling rate – currently at 75% and in 2014 through furniture reuse saved over £100,000. Over the last year, they have increased the number of solar powered bins on campus and created 5 new external recycling points. Bicycle parking has increased by over 500% in the last 8 years.

Broughty Ferry in Bloom

As with Bonnie Dundee, the group concentrate on blooming-up Broughty Ferry. The Floral Boat at the Harbour, hanging baskets in Brook Street and Gray Street, planters in the Windmill car park and Campfield Square are all planted up with plants that have been raised in the shared poly-tunnel in Dawson Park Community Garden. Broughty Ferry in Bloom Group plan various events including the annual Garden Competition, the Secret Garden Trail and the Snowdrop In to raise funds and awareness amongst the community. The Group also have excellent links with other local organisations such as Friends of Barnhill Rock Garden.



Other Community Partners

In addition to the above, there are many other community partners that made up the Dundee in Bloom entry into Britain in Bloom. The organisations below are a selection of those partners:

Ardler in Bloom

In the north east of the city, this small group of dedicated volunteers work on areas around the Community Centre and engage with local schools.



The Miley

This disused railway line is a Scottish Wildlife Reserve in the centre of the City. A local group of volunteers look after the reserve through regular litter picks and improvements to the paths and habitats. In 2015 an all ability access path was installed down an embankment from Kingspark School. All the school's pupils have additional support needs and many have physical disabilities and medical problems. The path enables the school children to experience nature on their doorstep.



Greenbuds / Branching Out



Dundee has a number of health based projects which focus on Dundee's Greenspaces. Greenbuds, funded by the NHS uses practical work to engage with people with mental health issues. The Countryside Ranger Service runs a Branching Out project supporting participants to pursue a John Muir Award.

Dightly Connect

Dightly Connect is a successful project which concentrates its activities along the Dightly, a small river running through a number of housing schemes to the north of the city. Dightly Connect use local people's interests and ideas to build small scale human projects and engage people in the natural heritage. This innovative project is often used as an example of good practice by Scottish Natural Heritage.



Dundee Urban Orchards



DUO is a city-wide art project that supports individuals and community groups to plant and care for small-scale orchards within Dundee. 25 orchards have been planted throughout Dundee and DUO are now working with the groups to care for them. They are planning to create a map of all the community gardens and growing sites in the City.

Community Allotments Initiatives

At the end of 2014, Dundee was lucky enough to appoint a community allotment officer who supports independent gardens and works with communities in regeneration areas to establish new ones. It's a burgeoning area of Dundee in Bloom.

Every1's Garden in the Hilltown has been in existence for a few years. Originally supported by the Climate Challenge Fund, it has plots for individuals and runs a highly successful kids gardening initiative in the summer holidays. Situated in an area of multiple deprivation, it is already embedded within the local community.

Douglas Community Garden was brought into production during 2015. There are 20 raised beds for growing space, a new poly-tunnel, and the fruit orchard was planted in February 2015. They are going from strength to strength.



The Tattie Patch in Whorterbank, Lochee, has been going since April 2015. The Laughter club which is part of Single Parent Families Scotland cleared a patch of unloved grass with help from Community Payback. The results were fantastic and the produce was distributed to families and inhabitants of the multi storey blocks and local people. The children even made porridge out of their own oats.

There are also a number of other growing projects throughout the City led by churches and community groups, as well as those supported by the Community Allotment Officer. Some of these provide produce for Community Cafes supporting local people who are in need.

Annual Networking

To ensure everyone is aware of the fantastic work being carried out by all the groups throughout the City and make sure that there is opportunity to tell them what's happening and annual networking event is organised by Sustain Dundee (a local charity) and the Council. A half day seminar event covers issues and topics common to most of the groups such as volunteering recycling and biodiversity. And of course there's plenty of time to catch up with each other.



The judging day experience

Finally the judging day, Friday 14th August arrived, the 13th was a lovely summer's day and the 15th, but judging day was forecast to be heavy rain throughout the day. Unfortunately the forecast was right - it chucked it down!

Even before the day arrived, a huge amount of work went on, planning the route and making sure members of the community initiatives could meet the judges. We wanted to show them how much community and partnership work happens in the city. As we couldn't possibly visit everything and everyone in our allotted 4 hour time slot, we had to judge places and people, minibuses and umbrellas!

After a short presentation, the judging route started at the Botanic Gardens in heavy rain and continued to Riverside Nature Park in heavy rain. It was drizzling a bit at the Dundee Science Centre, less so when the tour reached the Waterfront, the site of the new V&A Museum and Slessor Gardens.

The judges walked through the City Centre, passing City Square, Desperate Dan, the Overgate Centre planters and the Howff without unfurled umbrellas. From there, the tour took in Baxter Park, passed by areas of annual bedding and visited a few more community sites. By the time the judge's tour reached its conclusion at Barnhill Rock Garden, it was just damp. But spirits were bright and sunny.



It was great to see so many representatives from all of the projects and communities involved in Dundee in Bloom greeting the judges at Barnhill Rock Garden. They seemed impressed with the range of folk there and their special Lochee lettuces presented to them and grown by children from the Tattie Patch!

After bidding the judges farewell and for the next two months, the inevitable post mortem of judging day ensued. Should we have done this, shown them that, invited so and so? What medal would we get? What would the judge's report say?



The results

On the 16th October, a group of 5 Dundee representatives travelled down to the Britain in Bloom Award ceremony in Sunderland.



The University of Dundee won the Environment Award. The award is given to the Britain in Bloom entrant who shows outstanding commitment to their environmental responsibilities. The work of the University was justifiably rewarded and a fantastic achievement.

In the Britain in Bloom City Category, Dundee was up against Norwich and Oxford and we won!

Dundee is officially the best City in Britain!

It was fantastic news and great for all the groups and individuals that had put so much effort into Dundee in Bloom. Needless to say Dundee is delighted! To celebrate Dundee's success, the trophies were displayed in the Overgate Shopping Centre for all to see.

