



Keep Scotland
Beautiful



Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood



Highlights from 2015



Introduction



This report describes the findings of a review of Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood, the Keep Scotland Beautiful campaigns which are affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in Bloom campaign.

In 2015, groups from 28 of the 32 Scottish local authorities participated, giving over 202,000 hours of volunteer time to cleaning and greening Scottish villages, towns and cities. The campaigns, which are year-round, support and celebrate the achievements of communities throughout Scotland in their continuous work to improve local environmental quality, and reward groups for their gardening achievement, environmental improvements and, very importantly, for encouraging members of the community to become involved.

In 2015, It's Your Neighbourhood was supported by The ScottishPower Foundation and proceeds from the single use carrier bag charge from Tesco customers.

Beautiful Scotland is a competition, with 13 categories (from Wee Village to City); whereas It's Your Neighbourhood is non-competitive, for smaller community groups such as community allotments, friends of parks groups, after school clubs, and has five levels of achievement to encourage progression. In both campaigns, communities show that their efforts are sustained throughout the year.

The three pillars



Statements of support Beautiful Scotland

Alison Anderson, Greenspace Team Leader, Dundee City Council: “The clear approach of Beautiful Scotland’s three pillars and support from Keep Scotland Beautiful gives both the Council and its partners a structured route towards caring for and improving Dundee’s environment. The fantastic results that Dundee has recently achieved, in the face of increasing challenges, are due to great partnership working with local groups, such as Bonnie Dundee and Broughty Ferry in Bloom, as well as the commitment of workers on the ground – and just getting out and doing it!”

Steven Shaw, Environmental Manager, Aberdeen City Council: “Aberdeen has a long and illustrious history with Beautiful Scotland, having been part of the campaign since the very beginning. Aberdeen is fully committed to supporting Beautiful Scotland and continues to celebrate and promote all the fantastic and inspiring work carried out by our ever increasing partners and friends as part of the campaign. The continued success achieved is testament to all the hard work and dedication by staff, communities and local individuals in helping to keep Aberdeen looking good through enhancing our surroundings and creating a better environment in which to live.”



Marjory Robertson, Brighter Bothwell, Beautiful Scotland entrant group: “We are committed to making a difference to our local environment so that it is attractive for residents and visitors alike, and we have a strong commitment to biodiversity. Taking part in Beautiful Scotland helps give a focus for our work, and helps to gain support from our local authority. We aim to support and promote as many aspects of Keep Scotland Beautiful’s work as we can.”

Sandy Scott, Beautiful Scotland judge: “I firmly believe that all the campaigns from Keep Scotland Beautiful help shape the Scotland we all know and love, but it is the communities and the people, with the drive to see a sustainable future, that are not only the most important thing but the lifeblood of any community.”



Statements of support

It's Your Neighbourhood

Anne Loughrey, Trustee and Executive Officer of the ScottishPower Foundation: “The foundation is committed to protecting and enhancing the environment and working positively with local communities. We work with truly inspirational organisations and the charitable work they do is admirable. We are delighted to be supporting It's Your Neighbourhood, a universally well received initiative that brings together local groups who are making a positive impact in their communities.”

Keith Jackson, Parks & Community Events Officer, Fife Council: “We have about 40 different It's Your Neighbourhood groups such as tenants and residents, community councils, environmental groups etc. working mostly in our larger towns assisting the community groups to achieve their overall aim. These groups are encouraged to participate in the non-competitive campaign in order to reward their efforts. These groups are also eligible for our Floral Enhancement Grant. There is no doubt that this sort of community activity can help reduce anti-social behaviour and greatly enhance the civic pride of the residents, as well as being a healthy and social activity.”

Sue Biggs, Director General of the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS): “There is no doubt that the campaigns truly capture the enormous power of volunteers, people who are totally committed to their community giving their time generously and selflessly and often bringing about a life-changing and far-reaching transformation of their local area.”

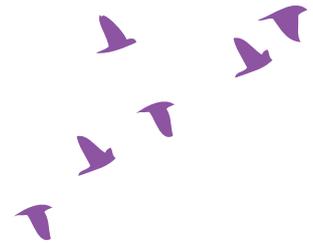
Wendy Gibson, Slopefield Allotment, It's Your Neighbourhood group: “We take part as it helps to keep us motivated and makes us stand back and appreciate our achievements each year. The assessor's report keeps us focused for next year, and we get brilliant support and advice from Keep Scotland Beautiful. The link to the RHS, the assessment report, and recognition as being a proper 'Community Group' which It's Your Neighbourhood gives us, makes it easier to attract grants and resources for the long-term future of the group. It is great to feel part of a 'nationwide' community who, in different ways are all involved in improving people's lives as well as helping the environment. It has helped us to connect to other groups, and we continue to share ideas and learn from each other.”



Lorna Graham, It's Your Neighbourhood assessor: “I deal with quite a lot of negativity in my work. Volunteering for It's Your Neighbourhood is a great opportunity to get out and meet people who are positive and are doing great work in our communities.”

457 press articles reaching
6,552,395 people

Trend over the years



Traditionally, the majority of the entrants into Beautiful Scotland (and Britain in Bloom with the RHS) were council-led. With the change in emphasis away from just ‘horticulture’, more community-led groups now take part, with many working in partnership with their local authority. It’s Your Neighbourhood was created by the RHS in 2006 (Keep Scotland Beautiful introduced the campaign in Scotland in 2007) after it became clear that support and national recognition was needed for groups at the grass root level.

Figure 1. shows the number of groups taking part in Beautiful Scotland and It’s Your Neighbourhood over recent years.

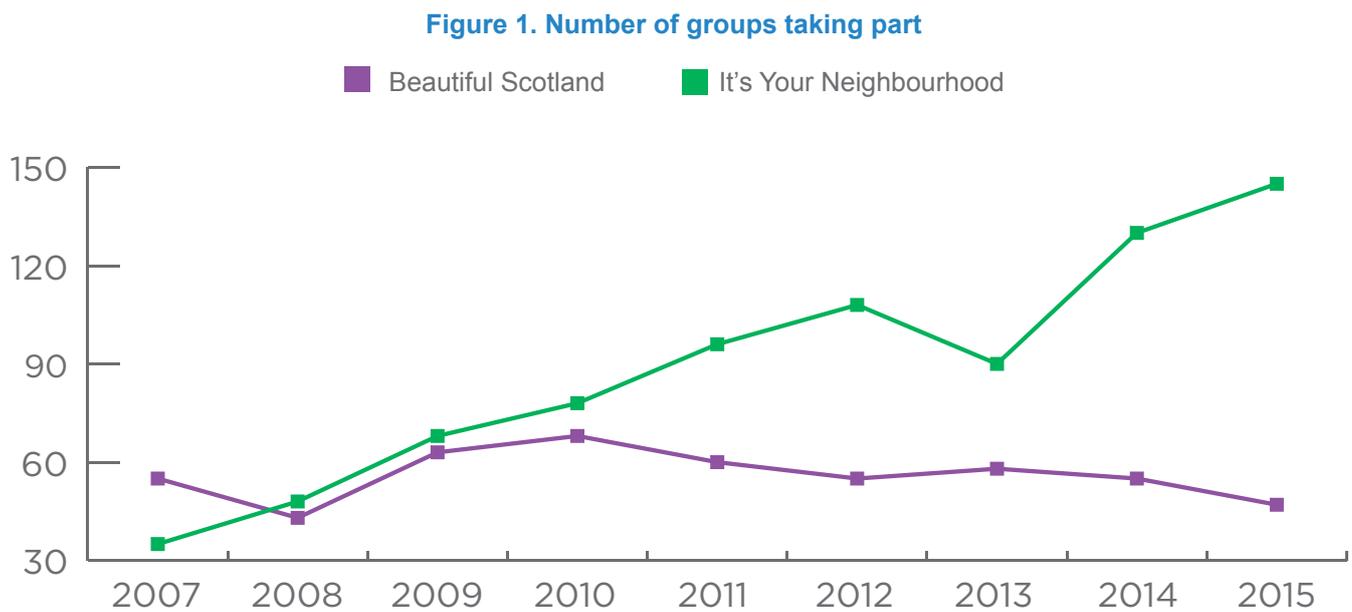


Figure 1. shows a rapid increase in groups taking part in It’s Your Neighbourhood, which is consistent with what is being experienced across the UK, and an almost steady number of groups taking part in Beautiful Scotland over the years.

199 groups from across Scotland involved

42 highly experienced volunteer judges and assessors



Profile of volunteers and activities

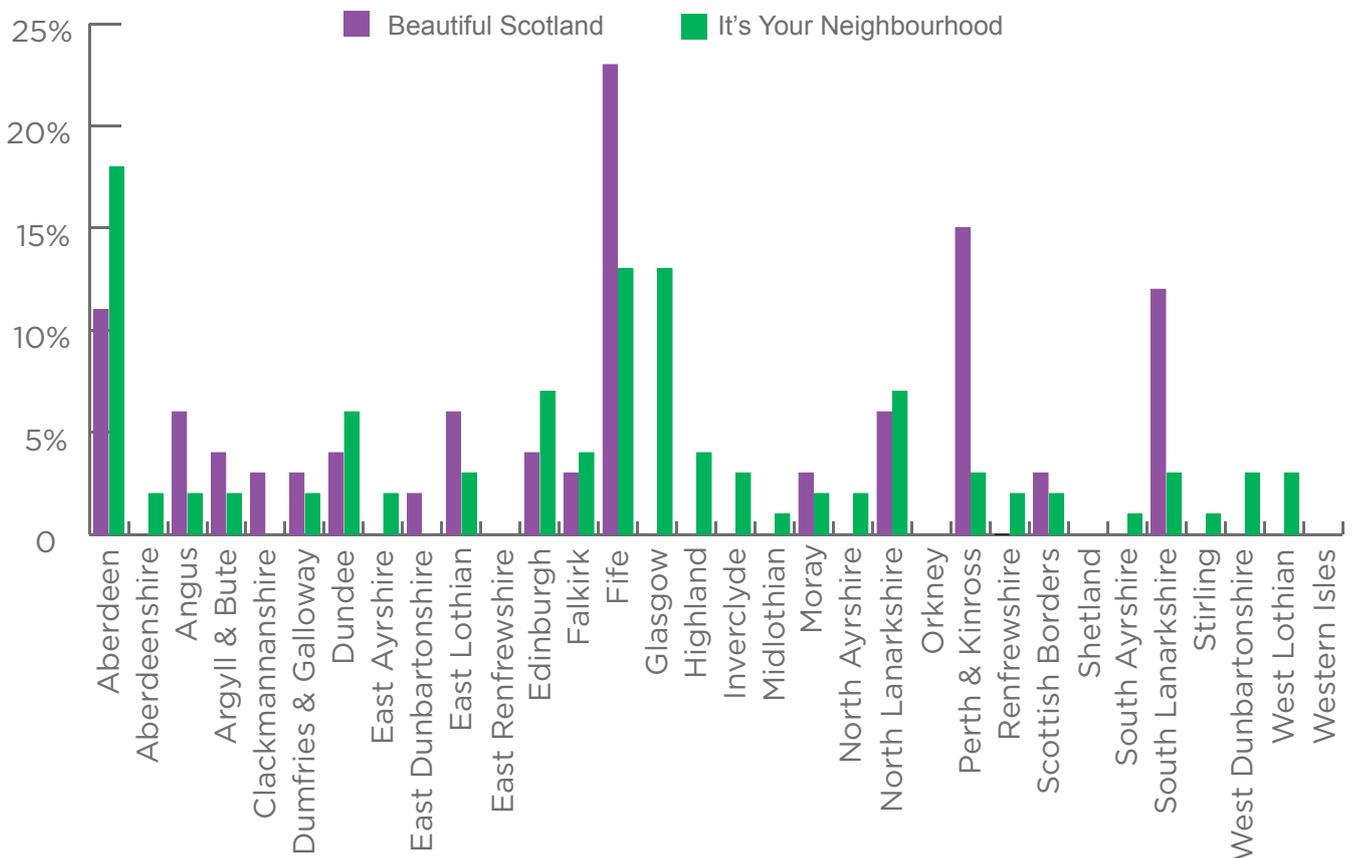
Where people volunteer

In 2015, 46 groups took part in Beautiful Scotland, with an additional seven representing Scotland in the UK-wide 'Britain in Bloom with the RHS' final, and 146 groups took part in It's Your Neighbourhood. **28 of the 32** local authorities were represented in 2015 and Figure 2. shows the percentage of groups from each local authority – NB: the percentage of groups taking part from one local authority in Beautiful Scotland or It's Your Neighbourhood, is a percentage of the total number of groups in that particular campaign (not the total of all groups).

Fife and Perth & Kinross councils are the only two local authorities in Scotland which run regional campaigns that then feed into Beautiful Scotland. They also provide officer support to promote Beautiful Scotland, mentor groups, and fund entries. It is evident from Figure 2. that this is leading to a high uptake of the Beautiful Scotland campaign, and we would be delighted if other local authorities followed this example.

Aberdeen, Fife, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow councils provide officer support to promote It's Your Neighbourhood, and to mentor and support groups. It is evident from Figure 2. that this is leading to increased participation in the It's Your Neighbourhood campaign, and Keep Scotland Beautiful would encourage other local authorities to join in this innovative way of engaging communities.

Figure 2. Percentage of groups by local authority

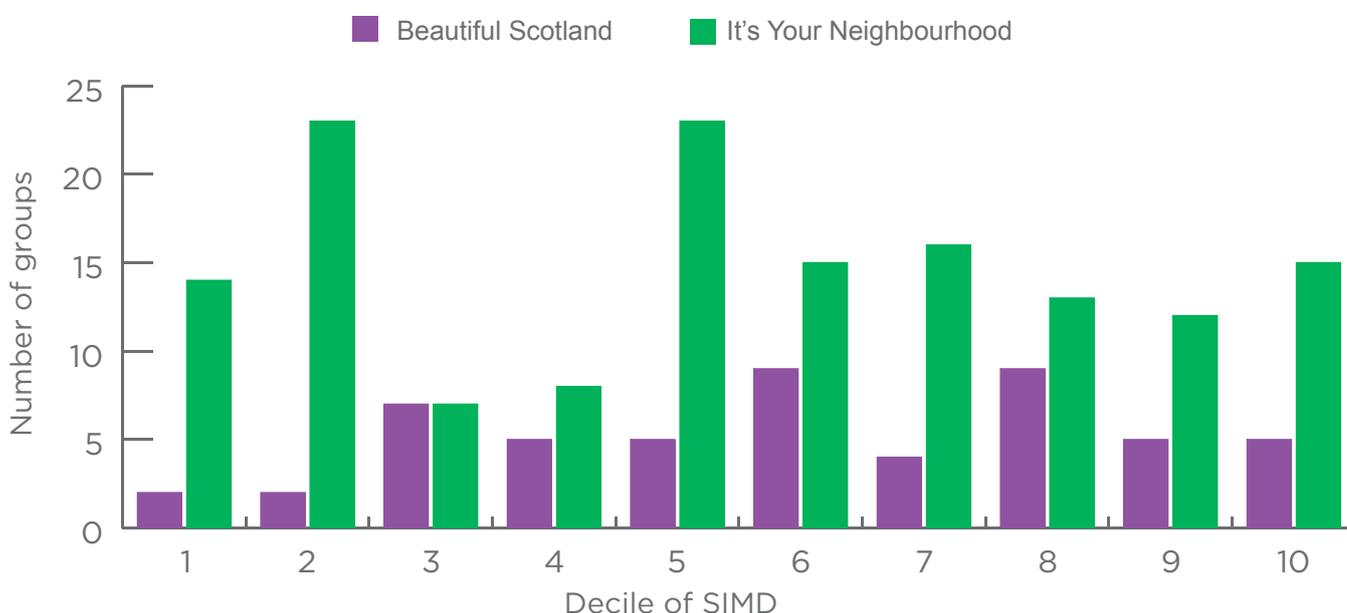




Using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Decile (SIMD) (2012), Figure 3. shows how the 199 groups rank (a decile of 1 = most deprived, a decile of 10 = the least deprived).

Figure 3. shows that the majority of groups in Beautiful Scotland in 2015 are from the least deprived areas of Scotland, whereas in It's Your Neighbourhood there is a much more even spread.

Figure 3. Groups and SIMD



The time volunteers give

The 2015 Keep Scotland Beautiful evaluation survey of the groups found that the average number of volunteer hours spent per year by a Beautiful Scotland group was **1,225**, and by an It's Your Neighbourhood group was **939** hours. The range of hours per group varied from **135 - 2,600** per year for Beautiful Scotland groups, and **50 - 4,000** per year for It's Your Neighbourhood groups. For the **199** groups in 2015, this equates to a total of **202,008 volunteer hours**.

In addition, volunteer judges and assessors have been estimated to contribute over **2,000** hours of time.

Using information on the economic value of volunteering from Volunteer Scotland, the **economic value** of the volunteer hours to Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood in 2015 is calculated at over **£2.78 million** (Volunteer Scotland 2014).

202,008 volunteer hours from **199** groups

Why people volunteer

Keep Scotland Beautiful carried out a survey of participating groups to ascertain what motivates people to take part.

Responses included:

Jessica Herriot, Bute in Bloom – winners of Beautiful Scotland 2015: “We wanted to carry on the work started by the council and develop our own community direction, working with a wide range of local groups of all ages, as well as the council gardeners.”



Carolyn Keane, Kinghorn in Bloom, Beautiful Scotland group: “Because we enjoy making a positive difference to our environment. It cheers people up and encourages them to start gardening themselves. It's also a good opportunity to work with all sorts of groups in our community.”

Jean Weir, Community Green Initiative, It's Your Neighbourhood group: “This was our first year, and we saw it as a good opportunity to get support and feedback from an independent external source. This allowed us to do a thorough self-review before the assessor's visit, to give us a comparison of how we think we are doing with an independent review.

“We care passionately about our neighbourhood and we are glad we joined the It's Your Neighbourhood campaign this year. It's also an opportunity to celebrate the work of volunteers.”

Carol Bodwick, Rosebank Initiative Community Association, It's Your Neighbourhood group:

“Because it is a non-competitive scheme with levels to strive for, and certification of efforts achieved. This brings focus and drive to the groups' activities.”

When asked why they volunteer as a judge for Beautiful Scotland / assessor for It's Your Neighbourhood, responses included:

Alison Anderson, judge (Greenspace Team Leader, Dundee City Council):

“Thoroughly enjoy meeting the groups and seeing what they're achieving. Great to see our recommendations making a difference too. Also good to bring ideas back to Dundee.”

Terence Stott, judge and assessor:

“I enjoy seeing all these beautiful places across Scotland, and meeting people who do such hard work in their community.”

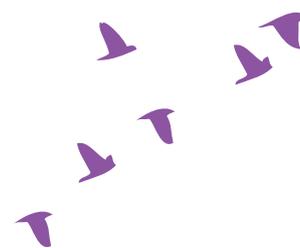
Gregor McGillivray, judge and assessor (Horticultural course leader, Dundee & Angus College):

“To see what organisations/groups have been doing throughout the country and to try and encourage them to do more or get more involved.”

Steven Shaw, assessor (Environmental Manager, Aberdeen City Council):

“Through my job, I meet, hear about and see inspirational people every day. If I can help in any way to support and develop these folk then I will. Volunteering for It's Your Neighbourhood allows me to do this.”

Support from local authorities



Keep Scotland Beautiful has established partnerships with many local authorities in Scotland through the Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood campaigns.

Jenny Williams, Senior Greenspace Officer, Perth & Kinross Council: "We are proud to be involved with the Beautiful Scotland campaign. The Beautiful Scotland pillars of Horticultural Achievement, Environmental Responsibility and Community Participation are the backbone of our own Take A Pride in Perthshire campaign. This environmental campaign has built steadily over the years and a total of 44 groups in Perth and Kinross are now members of the Take A Pride in Perthshire campaign. The campaign encourages strong community partnership working and embeds a deep value within our communities as well as providing strong environmental, social and health benefits to the area.

28 local authorities in Scotland
out of **32** were represented

"The campaign brings together many communities and unites them behind a single, common purpose: to make our towns and villages better and more attractive places to live and visit. We are proud of the fact that many of our communities have enjoyed outstanding success in the Beautiful Scotland campaign and we receive excellent support from the community projects team at Keep Scotland Beautiful. Perth & Kinross was delighted to host the Beautiful Scotland Awards Ceremony in September 2015 and looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with Keep Scotland Beautiful colleagues as we move forward."

Keith Jackson, Parks & Community Events Officer, Fife Council: "We recognise the vital effort that the communities make to improve their local environment. The Beautiful Fife Campaign has in excess of 60 entrants that are assessed on the Britain in Bloom and Beautiful Scotland criteria with the best of these entrants participating in Beautiful Scotland. Fife Council supports our community groups through the Floral Enhancement Grant and also 'in kind' assistance were possible. It is significant that in these challenging financial times, the number of active community groups is on the increase and their activities help to reduce anti-social behaviour and greatly enhance the civic pride of the residents, making their respective communities a better place to live, work and visit."

Peter Sandwell, Environmental Asset Manager, Dundee City Council: "We support a network of community initiatives and this enables projects to learn from each other. The 'It's Your Neighbourhood' campaign provides a fantastic opportunity for community groups to be recognised for their hard work in their local areas. The annual award ceremony gives communities public recognition for their commitment to Scotland's environment and gives them a chance to meet other likeminded groups.

"The heightened media attention that entries in the It's Your Neighbourhood campaign attracts, gives Dundee groups and initiatives welcome public exposure and encourages others to get involved, further increasing the benefits to local communities and local environments."

A campaign in numbers

199 groups from across Scotland involved

42 highly experienced volunteer judges and assessors

202,008 volunteer hours worked by groups

2,000 volunteer hours donated by volunteer judges and assessors

170 delegates from across Scotland attended award ceremony

200+ delegates from across Scotland attended the Annual Seminar

1 Beautiful Scotland top award – the Rosebowl – won by Bute in Bloom

11 Beautiful Scotland Gold Medal Certificates

13 Beautiful Scotland Category Awards

10 Beautiful Scotland Discretionary Awards

7 Scottish groups in UK 'Britain in Bloom with the RHS' finals

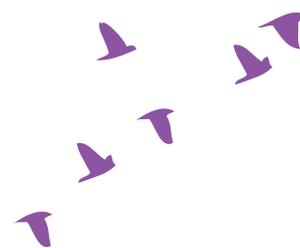
2 UK Class awards won by Coupar Angus (Large Village) & Dundee (City)

15 It's Your Neighbourhood Certificate of Distinctions

35 It's Your Neighbourhood Outstanding Certificates

457 press articles reaching **6,552,395** people with advertising equivalent value of **£603,033**

Impact and legacy



Experience to date indicates that the Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood campaigns contribute to short and long-term environmental, economic, social and health benefits.

Environmental benefits

Groups achieve environmental benefits through planting, clean-ups and maintenance. This is being done by encouraging horticulture, from hanging baskets to community gardens; introducing environmentally conscious practices such as composting, recycling and biodiversity projects and promoting the use of peat-free compost; promoting an interest in food growing; and promoting an interest in the environment.

Transforming unloved spaces is also an area groups concentrate on. In 2015, the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) launched the 'Greening Grey Britain' campaign to tackle the growing number of grey spaces spreading across our towns, cities and villages and to transform them into beautiful, green places for people and wildlife. To kick start the campaign, the RHS provided free nasturtium seeds to all groups.

In addition, many groups participate in Keep Scotland Beautiful's annual Clean Up Scotland campaign, engaging with a cross range from the community and improving their surroundings.

'Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood groups look after a significant amount of space across Scotland. In doing this they both improve the quality of the environment for the human population, and bring positive benefits for the local ecology.' (RHS Britain in Bloom Impact Report 2011)

'As a result of participation in either campaign, places look better and have less litter. When local people are more satisfied with their environment they take greater care of it.' (RHS Britain in Bloom Impact Report 2011)

For example, everything that the East Haven Heritage Group, winners of the 2015 Award for Sustainability, does, enhances the environment and promotes biodiversity of the coastal community. Activities include:

- seeking advice from experts and working in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage;
- developing a sustainability strategy linked to the groups' charitable aims;
- developing a new partnership with its waste water treatment plant;
- using bio-solid pellets as a slow release fertiliser and free soil enricher from Angus Council;
- planting new flower beds using locally grown herbaceous plants and native wild flower seeds; and
- adding water butts, hedgehog, bird and bat boxes to create a new wildlife corridor in the village.

Lower Braes Woodland Group takes part in It's Your Neighbourhood "as a new way of illustrating our progress in a very short timescale and how we have transformed the glen from a rubbish dump to a natural oasis."

Economic benefits

The campaigns encourage inward investment by making areas better places to be, so locals stay and visitors are attracted to spend time there, bringing more customers and revenue to local businesses, and more tourists to an area. They help volunteers develop a wide range of skills and help those at risk of social exclusion back into the labour market, and can enable local authorities to free up funds to further invest and develop an area.



1. Tourism

St Andrews in Bloom was awarded the VisitScotland Award for Tourism in 2015. Philip Smith, Regional Director at VisitScotland said: “The St Andrews in Bloom group complements and supports the local tourism industry, with recent projects focussing on high-profile areas and ones heavily used by visitors. These include upgrading entrance points, transforming the harbour area, increasing the number of hanging baskets and planters in the main streets, working with tourism businesses to brighten up their shopfronts, working closely with the official ‘Visit’ website, planting for year-round colour, and working with the Links Trust to demonstrate to golfers how the community cares for its natural environment.”

2. Businesses

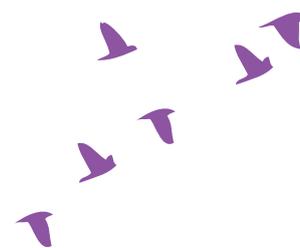
One of the reasons Blooming Haddington, which won the Medium Town category in 2015, takes part in Beautiful Scotland is to ‘help the town centre business community’.

When asked why the businesses in Haddington support the group, Joe Forte from Joe Forte Sports said: “We have noticed over the last couple of years the joy and real appreciation that our residents and visitors have shown towards the efforts made by the local business community. It has made the town centre a much more colourful place to be.”

In 2012, Keep Scotland Beautiful piloted a new category in the Beautiful Scotland campaign – Business Improvement Districts. A business improvement district (BID) consists of businesses from a defined area, e.g. a town centre, working together and investing collectively in local improvements, which benefit the businesses involved whilst also contributing to the sustainable economic growth of the local economy and the local community. The pilot was a success and has now been rolled out across the UK.

Angela Joss from Aberdeen Inspired said of winning the 2015 BID category: “We are still ‘on a high’ from winning our second award in a row. We are so pleased, and it reflects so well on all the partner organisations, both in the business and voluntary sectors, who helped us achieve that.”





Social benefits

The campaigns build a sense of community by providing a common goal, creating opportunities for increasing understanding and encouraging neighbourliness; encouraging individuals to invest in their neighbourhood, contributing to its development by volunteering; and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour by fostering a greater respect for, and sense of ownership of local spaces.

For example, Milngavie in Bloom, which won the Community Involvement Award in 2015, has made huge strides forward in the area of community involvement. Over the past year, they have attracted new volunteers through a leafletting campaign, asking for people to come forward and look after specific areas, 'pocket parks' through the town. This has given volunteers a sense of ownership in looking after spaces and has resulted in some really interesting planted areas and a sense of surprise and discovery as you walk through the town. The group also has a community bed in the town centre, which is used by local organisations to showcase their own work – in 2015 the bed was looked after by a carer's charity, who said that it has helped them to raise awareness of their organisation. Milngavie in Bloom has also helped other organisations to link with each other e.g. Tesco volunteers helped out with the Town Hall bed replanting and met the friendship group for elderly people who meet in the Town Hall – Tesco now provides food for free for the friendship groups' weekly sessions.



Car-Brae Residents Association, an It's Your Neighbourhood group, was formed to bring all 34 households together to turn their flytipped, muddy, and dog fouled back lane into a peaceful and safe oasis for the residents and their children to enjoy, play and socialise. Residents who live on their own now have a place to stop and chat with neighbours, lessening the sense of isolation.

Another It's Your Neighbourhood example, CLEAR Buckhaven which is in one of the most deprived areas in Scotland (SIMD decile of 1), has developed a community shop which continues to thrive, engaging more of the community through regular meetings, plant sales, talks and classes or just as a place to chat, lend support and have a cup of tea.

Rosebank Initiative Community Association takes part in It's Your Neighbourhood because "litter is so ugly and an environmental hazard. Local councils have to deliver more services with less money and, unfortunately, cuts are made to environmental causes. It is important to keep Scotland beautiful, not only for commercial reasons of attracting tourism etc., but for the mental well-being of Scottish people."



North Berwick in Bloom which was in the UK finals in 2015, takes part because the members have "a desire to better the community through floral enhancements, sustainable improvements and working together."



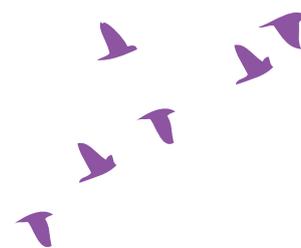
Health benefits

Participants and their communities experience a series of benefits to health and well-being by taking part, from growing fruit and vegetables to creating a safe, pleasant space to exercise.

For example, Flourishing Forth, a Beautiful Scotland group, holds sessions for a 'Stepping Out' group of vulnerable women at its eco site. During the sessions, the women create wonderful products such as calendula salves and sugar scrubs, and get to experiment with different colours making tea-lights and felt covered soap bars. Another group, Bonnie Dundee has employed a Community Allotments Officer to give support, guidance and advice to people within Dundee to empower them to grow their own fruit and vegetables, leading to healthier diets.

Another example, Craigneuk Allotments, which participates in It's Your Neighbourhood, is in one of the most deprived areas of Scotland (SIMD decile of 1). It is situated in the middle of a council housing estate on a piece of land once neglected and prone to anti-social behaviour. Well maintained, flourishing allotments have been established over the past six years and are an excellent resource, both for members of the allotments and the wider community. There is a huge variety of crops growing including fruit, vegetables and herbs, as well as raised flower beds and a wildflower area. A new pond area has been developed and chickens have been adopted from the local nursery, all of which have free range of the top allotment sites and provide fresh eggs for members of the community.

The future



2016 sees the 50th anniversary of the Beautiful Scotland campaign, and communities the length and breadth of the country will be encouraged to join in the celebrations.

The CEO of every Scottish local authority has been contacted, asking them to promote and engage with the 50th year. Press releases have been issued, along with social media, calling for past and new groups to take part – whether through registering for the campaign, registering a specific project for the non-competitive sister campaign It's Your Neighbourhood, or by sending in memories and photos from over the 50 years. Keep Scotland Beautiful has chosen a colour theme to recognise the 50th anniversary – the four colours of the charity's saltire 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 wonderful, colourful, innovative and creative showcase plantings (including sustainable planting) and / or hard/soft landscaping across Scotland to mark the occasion.

These steps will ensure that the number of groups supported through the campaigns will continue to grow, and Keep Scotland Beautiful looks forward to celebrating the success of all participants in 2016.

Keep Scotland Beautiful is the charity that provides advice, support and training to others to achieve clean and safe local environments and to change behaviour. It's part of our work to make Scotland clean, green and more sustainable.



In partnership with:



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