

Green Infrastructure

Community Engagement Fund



Contents

Introduction	3
Recovery through Green Infrastructure	4
10,000 Raingardens for Scotland	9
Garnock Connections Landscape Partnership	14
Renfrewshire Living Water Project	19
The Hidden Gardens	21
Growing Connections	23
Newbattle Community Forest	25
Wild Ways Well	27
Broomhouse Recovery Through Green Infrastructure	29

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Introduction

The Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund (GICEF) was designed to fund projects which contribute towards 'Involving Communities, and Increasing Participation'. Projects were bespoke and specific to the communities they engaged with. Delivery of the fund supported community engagement projects which were designed by communities, were locally relevant and innovative to their area.

Priority was given to projects which involved groups already working in the local area, who both know and were invested in their communities which the project set out to benefit. Our main target group centre around urban deprived areas, and projects which clearly demonstrated how they would engage with the different groups within their community.

We wanted people to value, use and enjoy their greenspaces, and through this to feel happier, healthier and better connected to their communities. We anticipated this approach would lead to inequalities in health and opportunity being reduced, and an increase in how people valued and understood what nature can do for them. Green infrastructure can also help people develop skills and gain the confidence to seek and sustain jobs.

This booklet shows how the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund made a difference to communities across Scotland.



Recovery through Green Infrastructure

Cyrenians



Aim: The Cyrenians Recovery through Green Infrastructure project was set up with the aim of engaging new groups of patients and community organisations across 3 hospital sites in Edinburgh and Midlothian to spend more time in outdoor greenspaces, focusing on growing and cooking food together, improving the outdoor green infrastructure and contributing to participants' health and wellbeing.

Outcomes: The garden projects have become more established in the community and accessed by a far wider group of people than prior to the funding.

Growing and cooking together has become central to what we do, with gardens now having regular cooking classes and dedicated outdoor kitchens.

We now have regular green prescribing activities across our sites, working to support the mental health and wellbeing of participants.

Benefits: The fund allowed us to engage with a lot of new groups that we hadn't previously. In Midlothian this was youth groups as well as groups supporting people with mental health issues and disabilities.

The Royal Edinburgh Hospital Community garden is really well-used, we can get very busy. There are lots of different groups visiting every day, from conservation and green prescribing groups, to individuals from the different wards who come on the back of referrals. When patients are offered a chance to come and contribute to the garden we have 'one-to-ones' with them to talk about what they would like to do, and we have a patient 'buddy system' to help introduce them to the site and ensure they get the most from the garden.

The local community is pretty protective of the site, and lots of people walk through the garden and just enjoy the space. It is open all the time, and anyone can just wander through. Some locals just come in and sit in the garden, perhaps relaxing or reading a book. It was such an amazingly sunny summer in 2022 that the site was particularly well-used.





We were delighted when our Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund was able to support a project by The Cyrenians to help people recover by harnessing the benefits of green infrastructure.

We spoke with **Lucy Holroyd** who is Cyrenians Senior Recovery Services Manager to ask about their Recovery through Green Infrastructure project.

Many of us have heard of Cyrenians, and are aware of the excellent work you do. For anyone new to your group can you summarise what the aims of your group are?

Cyrenians was first established over 50 years ago. We take a public health approach to homelessness, recognising that getting upstream of the challenges people face in their lives is the best way to preventing people from becoming homeless in the first place. We have over 50 services and projects and over 200 staff, supported by upwards of 800 volunteers.

Our community gardens were first established in 2010. Our approach is principally about building community, and providing meaningful, therapeutic outdoor activity for people that helps them to stay well and connected to others.

And what about yourself Lucy, could you tell us a little bit about your role?

I'm Lucy Holroyd, I am the Senior Recovery services manager. I've worked in the Third Sector for 20 years. I joined Cyrenians farm in 2015 on a 1 year contract after which I was fortunate to get a role delivering workshops at the gardens for a few years, and then took up the Garden manager post.

It's a huge privilege to be involved with these projects, I'm inspired every day by the hard work and resilience of everyone involved.

There is a growing appreciation of the power of nature, and greenspaces, to help patients both physically and mentally. How important do you view the connection between nature and people, and is it getting easier to persuade people of the beneficial link?

In our busy lives it's easy to stop paying attention to the beauty of what's around us. Whether you live in the countryside or the City, it's important to make time for ourselves to connect. The past few years have highlighted the essential human need to be at one with our surroundings, and to engage in whatever way works for us as an individual. Just getting outside is healing in itself. Connecting to the seasonality of things, putting your hands in the soil, climbing a hill, feeling the sun on your face.... I remember a few years ago a funder saying to us "You can stop trying to tell us now why it works, we get it."

What are the most rewarding aspects of the projects at Royal Edinburgh Hospital and Midlothian Community Hospital?

It's the people. Seeing the impact of what we do, and the little changes in people over time. There are too many stories to tell – from the lady in hospital who looks forward every week to getting off the ward to come to a community meal, to the young people excluded from school who can thrive in a different type of learning environment. Sometimes it's the really little things, the random conversations happening, and the shared excitement in discovering a new butterfly or a particularly large cabbage.

Are their opportunities with the Cyrenians approach to support and help patients beyond time spent as out-patients?

Both our gardens offer regular volunteering opportunities beyond their time in hospital, and on occasion traineeships. In addition, we host regular community meals, deliver gardening and nature-based workshops as well as cooking classes. Both gardens are open to the public, and we host seasonal events open to everyone. One of our other supporters, NHS Lothian Charity, funds us to run a hospital discharge programme. Occupational Therapists

and other health professionals refer people to us just prior to their discharge from hospital. Some will already be working with us. The benefits are huge in giving people some continuity and routine, as well as opportunities for connection when they most need it. We are also able to signpost people to a range of different support services across the city if they need it, including housing and welfare advice.

What are the biggest challenges in keeping projects of this nature on track?

Funding is always a challenge but I am encouraged to see longer funding periods, in some cases going beyond five years. It's still the exception though. Over the years we've seen many very successful projects close their doors after not having their funding renewed.

Staffing is also a challenge; like most sectors we are doing what we can to retain and recruit new people into our organisation. Valuing our staff means not only giving them appropriate pay awards and employee benefits, but also access to a range of supports when they need it, from counselling to mentoring. We have a very good staff retention rate, and a lot of that is down to our shared values that inform a lot of our decision-making.

Where would you like to see the project in a few years' time?

Like many projects we are looking to how we can support people through the cost of living crisis. I would like for us not to be having to do this for people, but for communities to be supported to take collective action, allowing for dignity and empowerment. We hope to run some pantries in partnership with FareShare and get more people learning about growing their own food in a sustainable way.

Our young people always take the brunt of a crisis, so I would like to see more investment into training and upskilling, and more early intervention work happening. Working together and making the best of each organisation's strengths feels like the best use of what will be increasingly limited resources. Running water at Midlothian would also be good!

What difference did it make having the Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund to tap into?

The fund allowed us to engage with a lot of new groups that we hadn't previously. In Midlothian this was youth groups as well as groups supporting people with mental health issues and disabilities. In Edinburgh it was new hospital wards as well as schools. The fund also allowed us to explore a lot of new activity and learning opportunities. For example, we did a heritage wheat growing project with Soil to Slice, involving all participants at different stages, ending up with our own flour. We also undertook a number of community engagement activities around a hospital orchard and ward garden design, all leading to user-involved developments. Some of this work contributed to the Royal Edinburgh being the first hospital site in Scotland to become an NHS Forest site.

Finally, being outdoors can be so rewarding and relaxing. It can be fun too. What's the funniest thing that has happened in your time working in outdoor spaces?

Badgers! The first year of the project, we couldn't harvest any of our wheat as the hospital badgers ate it all. They are also very partial to carrots.



10,000 Raingardens for Scotland



Aim: This project sought, through the design and production of a community raingarden, to improve local greenspace for the residents of Queensland Gardens, Glasgow. The intention was to provide a resource which would allow residents to spend more time in a greener environment whilst demonstrating the function and benefits of a community raingarden. A multi-functional greenspace was envisaged.

Outcomes: Prior to this project, the site was mainly impermeable slabs and paths. A range of green infrastructure interventions focussed on surface water management and improving resilience to localised cloud bursts. These range from SuDSPlanters placed at the porches of tower blocks, through to the creation of raingarden feature designs, all of which will help manage water run-off. These approaches will help demonstrate nature-based climate solutions within a wider area masterplan. The project has delivered a better greenspace, a more resilient site, and a richer area for nature.

Benefits: The creation of small-scale green infrastructure interventions which deliver surface water management solutions, and make the wider greenspace more useable as well as more attractive. This project has improved perceptions of the greenspace around Queensland Gardens and engagement with local residents has been a strength. Given the low biodiversity value of the site before the project, enhancing the biodiversity was always likely, but efforts have been made to use native species as much as possible, and including some naturalised species (concentrating on ones which are still of high value to wildlife). The project is committed to undertake annual habitat and species surveys of Queensland Gardens to assess the changes in biodiversity quantity and quality.





The Green Action Trust's 10,000 Raingardens for Scotland project used small-scale green infrastructure interventions delivering surface water management solutions to improve resilience and enhance greenspaces for Queensland Gardens in Glasgow.

Rachel Howlett, Green Action Trust's Raingardens Development Officer, reveals more about their ambitious project.

How did you engage with the local community?

Key perhaps were a series of community picnics organised by the project, participation at events run by Southside Housing Association, and hosting a stand in the foyer of each tower block regularly. Through this mixed approach relationships were built up quickly and effectively with large numbers of the residents.

We created what proved an eye-catching, and fun, public-focussed brand alongside a suite of promotional materials aimed at a range of audiences including general public, homeowners, communities, schools, developers and planners. We used information leaflets, online resources, activity packs and marketing give-aways. This was supplemented by display materials, and the creation of some demonstration raingardens for use at events and in schools. The approach has also been very popular at events attended, particularly partner events such as RSPB's Garden Wildlife Festival and The Back Gardens spring festival.

Has your success locally encouraged your efforts beyond Queensland Gardens?

Yes. Both the general public and resident engagement have led to the production a wider range of materials than originally anticipated, including outline sessions for primary schools linked to the Eco-School Curriculum, a make-your-own green roof shed, and talks and presentations for professional audiences such as planners, architects and developers.

The engagement has been so successful, that the project officer was repeatedly approached by organisations and communities beyond the pilot area to support them with advice, to give talks and presentations, and to attend events. This clearly demonstrates that there is interest in finding out more about these kind of interventions from individual homeowners, communities, and organisations involved in property and water management. The officer was also invited to comment on several flood risk management plans and proposals across Glasgow.

What are the big differences you have been able to make to the site?

We have contributed to improving access to better greenspace for the residents of Queensland Gardens by creating small-scale green infrastructure improvements and supporting the creation of a wider landscape masterplan for the whole estate. This will provide a resource to the residents and allow them to spend more time in a greener environment. This is all about improving the actual greenspace, as access to the site was already very good, the space was just uninviting and unappealing. At the start of the project there was extensive hard standing and paving slabs running across the site, with only one patch of regularly mown grass and limited planting. Now, there are plans for multi-functional greenspace across the whole site, and two SuDSPlanters already installed.

Raingardens bring greater resilience, how has this been achieved at Queensland Gardens?

We have delivered improved resilience in a number of ways during this project. From installing two SuDSPlanters on the porches for the tower blocks to manage water run off, to the creation of raingarden feature designs which manage the water run-off from the rest

of the tower blocks. We've also been contributing ideas and suggestions of nature-based climate solutions to the wider masterplan.

One really pleasing outcome is that the understanding of the community on natural flood management techniques has improved, as demonstrated by the questionnaire results and the engagement in the community events. There will be a range of green infrastructure interventions focussed on surface water management at source following the completion of the Green Infrastructure Fund project supported by the Community Engagement Fund work.

What has been local reaction to the project?

This project has started the process of improving the perceptions of the greenspace around Queensland Gardens. Aspirations and concerns of residents were incorporated into designs that have been through several consultation rounds at the community events we attended and hosted.

Feedback has been increasingly positive from all sectors of the residents spoken to, including the changing of some minds. For example, a group of elderly residents who attend classes and meet informally in the community "flat"

were initially concerned over benches and seating being incorporated, as they saw this as a way to increase anti-social behaviour and would give somewhere for the kids to hang out and be a nuisance to the rest of the residents.

They have largely changed their minds now, and are pleased to see opportunities for them to sit and enjoy the new gardens, whilst providing alternative areas for young people to play and gather.

How important was it that you had good partners in this work?

We were fortunate that Southside Housing Association (SHA) had already undertaken some level of community engagement at the site, and had a dedicated member of staff working with the residents. We were also able to capitalise on summer activities provided by SHA for the local children. This enabled us to engage with parts of the community that might have been more difficult to access. We undertook a range of different activities from activity sessions to drop in sessions at the community foyers, as well as sessions with the local primary school. This seemed to be successful in reaching a wide range of members of the community.

Sustainability lay at the heart of your work, can you tell us a little about that?

A requirement for sustainably-sourced, local material to be used was written into the contract for the design of the community raingardens at Queensland Gardens. During the development of the media and publicity campaign using sustainably-sourced materials was part of the assessment criteria for the successful candidates. This was carried through to event where locally-sourced catering and recyclable materials were used.



Garnock Connections Landscape Partnership



Aim: A number of integrated activities sought to engage people with green infrastructure across North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire.

A clear aim was to improve heritage volunteering with a particular focus on citizen science to increase the number of people recording wildlife. Self-guided themed trails were designed to encourage appreciation of the rich natural and cultural heritage of the area.

The project also aimed to improve local nature reserves on urban fringes to create vital new habitats including dunes, wetlands, wildflower meadows and woodlands.

Outcomes: Through successful creation of new and improved habitats, local people have enjoyed a more varied environment to appreciate, understand and use recreationally.

The creation of a heritage trails app has encouraged more exploration of unknown places, and increased awareness of what heritage can be visited. This is evidenced by the number of trails added to the app by local people sharing knowledge, pride and appreciation of local heritage, as well as encouraging more active travel throughout the project area.

Creating a dedicated wildlife monitoring activity has proved popular with people submitting wildlife records. Using new skills, recorders have submitted 19,000 new records.

Benefits: The outputs funded through GICEF allowed more people to trial wildlife recording and inspired volunteers to devote time in conserving important habitats. This was evidenced by the impressive number of records submitted to the online wildlife monitoring system and number of active members on the volunteer facebook page.

The creation of the trails app has allowed people to share with others their locally known heritage important to them. The new platform allows people to improve or maintain their physical and mental wellbeing by exploring new trails.

Loans of recording equipment have been a great success, with almost 200 recordings and some loans being used for other community events which is a really encouraging sign.





Alyson Hunter is the Garnock Connections Landscape Partnership Project Manager. That's a huge undertaking as this is a far-reaching venture covering 28 distinct projects. Essentially a National Heritage Lottery funded project, it also benefitted from considerable match funding, of which our Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund was one element.

What sort of things has the Community Engagement Fund helped support?

Oh, so many things. The funding has enabled us to plant thousands of trees, develop a heritage trail app, support trainee positions to encourage volunteer engagement and wildlife recording, and buy a plethora of recording equipment to introduce people to wildlife recording as a tool and something to enjoy. All of this links in with the four themes the Garnock Connections partnership was based around – namely, community, access, habitat and knowledge.

It is a four-year project which was launched in mid-2018 and would have finished in March 2022, but with the pandemic having hit the ability of communities to travel and get out and about we have managed to extend the project to include an extra summer to focus on engagement. Which was great as it gave people a chance to get out and about, and enjoy the many things the project had put in place. So things like helping people learn meadows and pollinators, for example, was able to happen in what was the most active season for insects.

You seamlessly combine natural and cultural heritage. How is that achieved?

We were always clear that we aimed to make it easier for communities to learn about this area's natural and cultural heritage. So where we encouraged folk to follow a route out into the landscape that may feature an old castle or a medieval tower we also looked to weave in opportunities to absorb information on nature either visually or through wildlife recording. The fund helped us put on wildlife recording training sessions, and this helped us increase people's awareness of the nature around them and improve their knowledge of what they have on their doorstep.

One thing I am really pleased about is that people often entered our workshops concerned that they really needed to be a scientist or a graduate to get the most out of our sessions. Hopefully we have reassured them that this definitely isn't the case for them to enjoy identifying wildlife.

The pandemic clearly disrupted your plans. What are your reflections on that?

Over the past 18-months people have not been able to get out and about in the way they used to, and that was a blow not only to our progress but for some people being stuck inside for a long time hit their confidence when it came to re-joining groups. However, on the plus side we did so much online, and this was a bonus. The pandemic halted our workshops outdoors but by going on line we helped not only keep interest alive but offered an opportunity for folk who maybe couldn't have got to the outdoor workshop in any case. We developed our App and this means that when people go on a walk now they can add their route, their pictures, and simply share what they have enjoyed. Nevertheless, I'd be the first to concede that there have been pros and cons to things being online. Not everyone is engaged in the same way.

When it came to explaining the role of meadows or the importance of pollinators, being online offered some plus points. We bought wildflower seeds to create meadows, which was great for biodiversity, and let us tie in with some of our partners such as the Scottish Wildlife Trust and their Nectar Networks project. So we began by meeting

volunteers and community groups who shared a passion and an interest in helping wildlife.

The coronavirus crisis halted those face-to-face meetings but by harnessing online approaches our volunteers and community groups were able to engage virtually or digitally, whenever it suits them. The great thing about having things on line is that you can record them so we now have a YouTube channel where all the workshops are available and people can go online now and re-watch at their leisure. We have made good use of our resources on our website too.

It has helped us explain the value of wildflower meadows to a larger audience than we could have met face-to-face. Meadow creation can be a contentious issue for some. So if people see the meadow in its early or late stages and think "What's that? It's a mess, they are letting things go here, where is my neatly-mown grass'. We can counter that by explaining and posting about the benefits of the meadow. An online workshop about something familiar like bumblebees can be a huge bonus as we explain what they need to survive, explain that they aren't the only pollinators, and open up a wider discussion. So we can set folk off on a journey all from one online workshop.



If you were to pick out a highlight?

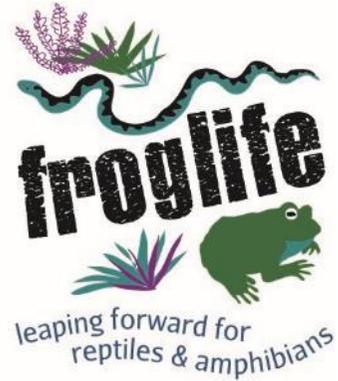
When I joined the project, everything looked great on paper. But when things happen and you see it on the ground for real it is even better. You get an awful lot more from a project like this than is just written down on paper. All the people that engage with it confirm that, they seize the opportunity to collaborate and take good elements from one project into another project. It really is Garnock 'Connections' because no project is truly stand alone, the four interconnecting themes dovetail well. So it's that coming together on a range of activities and approaches that is most pleasing.

You have opened up the Garnock area for many people. That must be satisfying.

Yes, our All Abilities Access is a wonderful part of that drive. It's improving access to the wider countryside for those with mobility issues, and people in wheelchairs, helping them get beyond tarmac paths. Our new wheelers allow folk to access the beach at Ardrossan and Saltcoats, and get off-track at Irvine's Eglinton Country Park. The app can support this too, by letting people share routes and experiences.



Renfrewshire Living Water Project



Aim: The project set out to create habitat for amphibians in Renfrewshire whilst engaging the local community.

It was intended that a mixture of local volunteers, training courses, and community events would raise awareness of species and habitats whilst ensuring that future maintenance of sites, and monitoring of species, could be self-sufficient in the area.

Outcomes: Through a series of training courses the project has enabled over 100 people to survey, monitor and record species in the new amphibian habitats.

Community events at Country Parks and Open Days have raised awareness of and created additional interest in these species and habitats.

Over 13,000 people engaged with our Virtual Reality Experience which was part of a programme of community events.

Benefits: The new ponds either enhanced or added new habitat at each of the sites at Barshaw Park, Gleniffer Braes Country Park and Jenny's Well Local Nature Reserve. The project has also improved habitat connectivity within the sites.

The project has succeeded in its community engagement goals by welcoming groups from Ralston Primary School, Jenny's Well Nursery, New Limits, Community Networks, Grow in Glenburn Community Garden and staff from Renfrewshire Council. These have helped to expand the knowledge amongst a wider group of people on how to manage habitats for amphibians and reptiles. This knowledge will be applied on the sites but also taken away for application in domestic gardens, allotments and community green spaces.

The benefits of being involved with and enjoying nature are a considerable health and wellbeing benefit.



The Hidden Gardens

the hidden gardens



Aim: The aim of this project was to improve the sense of arrival to these Glasgow gardens with better signage, audio and visual cues, planting and interpretation materials so that more people would find us, understand us better and learn how to engage with a green space, discover nature and feel the benefits for themselves of doing so.

Outcomes: We developed a new website, audio guides in two languages; a new sensory tour, new signage and visual cues; and ran events and activities including unpaid volunteering opportunities that engaged new audiences and repeat visitors between 2017 and 2019.

We remained open during the pandemic for local people to get fresh air in a safe way and we moved a lot of our frontline services online during this time to keep engaging with vulnerable people who might otherwise have felt quite isolated.

In 2021 we were honoured to host over 40 indigenous Elders from the Americas, who travelled from the depths of the Amazon rain forest and high mountain ranges, to come to Glasgow to inspire people to become guardians of biodiversity. Over 400 people gathered in the gardens to stand shoulder to shoulder with these incredibly brave and knowledgeable guardians of biodiversity, as they performed sacred rituals and ceremonies to coincide with the COP26 Glasgow conference. To this day people remember and talk about those two weeks of inspiring conversations with the Elders.

Benefits: The project has provided the people of Pollokshields and Govanhill with a fantastic community asset that is more accessible now and easier to understand through interpretation materials. It has provided a space in which residents can come together to develop their gardening skills, become inspired to conserve biodiversity, and to improve their health and wellbeing.

Many new working relationships with organisations, including Deafblind Scotland, began and we have delivered more tours for them and members of the Glasgow Disability Alliance ever since.

In 2019 our gardening volunteering programme was awarded the Inspiring City Alistair Malloy Award for Inclusive Volunteering.

We also came up with a way to make sure that local people and citizens of Glasgow can share their voice and influence our ongoing strategic direction. The Hidden Gardens Advisory Group started out with six members during the project period, from which two were elected to the board of trustees. The number keeps growing and today they have a total of 18 members.



Growing Connections



Aim: This project aimed to deliver an ambitious green space improvement and engagement plan in Toryglen, Glasgow. Amongst the objectives were drives to increase participation in greenspace activities by expanding volunteering opportunities and events to support activities ranging from food-growing, conservation, and clean-ups to biodiversity improvements.

Outcomes: Increased learning opportunities and skills attainment in traditional environmental subjects, bushcraft, food-growing and Citizen Science were delivered through a range of popular workshops, courses and family activities.

A particular strength was the encouragement to young people and children to access and value the green places through outdoor-based after school clubs and holiday play schemes. Engagement of the wider community with events significantly improved through a series of regular outdoor actions, family activities, guided walks and cycle rides.

Benefits: One celebrated outcome was the improvement to health and wellbeing for participants taking advantage of meaningful activities in the outdoor setting. There was also a noted increase in biodiversity in the local area as well as an improved appearance of local green spaces. The project created coherent links and pathways between green sites and an increasing use of the local environment by local people for leisure activities. An increase in skills and knowledge of residents around biodiversity, conservation activities, and food-growing was achieved.

There was an increased sense of ownership by local residents, particularly young people, of community woodlands and gardens. Growing connections stimulated wider interest in local green places by carrying out targeted outreach to groups and individuals facing particular disadvantage, and provided appropriately tailored 'taster' sessions in the Local Nature Reserve.



Newbattle Community Forest



Aim: Hosted at Newbattle Abbey College, Scotland’s first Forest College sought to develop this woodland site to foster skills in forest management and build community engagement. Outdoor learning and progressive woodland management were moulded to offer enhanced training opportunities.

A variety of short courses for people of all ages leading to national accreditation were offered with one intention being to address immediate needs for the management of local woodlands.

Outcomes: The project encouraged individuals to value, use and enjoy their greenspaces. A sense of connection with local communities was fostered, whilst helping people develop skills and confidence leading to sustainable local jobs.

Volunteering and training options were developed to ensure an inclusive and vibrant community woodland could be established which enhanced the adjacent environment.

Benefits: The Green Infrastructure Community Engagement Fund helped this ambitious project with funding to enable the launch of Newbattle's Community Forest project. It enabled the project to launch a long held ambition to host Forest and Outdoor learning awards as well as run a substantial community engagement programme of school events and training sessions. These were free activities and encouraged local people to visit the woodland.

Forest College reached out to people of all ages in this project. Working with a range of age groups was vital to the success of the project as it meant that the majority of the local community engaged with the project

It was important for this project that everyone enjoyed equal access to these amazing outdoor spaces and the associated possibility to participate in outdoor education.



Wild Ways Well



Aim: This project aimed to enhance, restore and reconnect green areas of the town of Cumbernauld. There was a strong desire to support active involvement in improving greenspaces for wider community use and in doing so provide opportunities for improvements in physical and mental health.

Volunteer participation was to be central to the project and would deliver greater engagement and understanding of local greenspaces via community and individual engagement.

Outcomes: Wild Ways Well helped participants visit a range of urban parks and nature reserves within Cumbernauld Living Landscape. The project encouraged use of green routes which connect sites within walking distance of some of North Lanarkshire's most deprived communities.

In essence the project demonstrates that spending time outdoors, amongst nature, makes people feel better about themselves and their lives.

Benefits: Wild Ways Well contributed to the achievement of positive local Health and Wellbeing strategies by providing an effective prevention and early intervention programme. Although known for its built urban landscape, a significant proportion of Cumbernauld is in fact made up of greenspaces, making it one of the greenest towns in Scotland. As well as providing a focus and haven for wildlife, Cumbernauld's greenspaces also offer excellent recreational and active travel opportunities for the local community.

Activities devised by the project connected people to nature. This was achieved with a strong emphasis on volunteering. A model called 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' was used. The core aim of this framework was to boost participants' abilities to deal with life's challenges so they could increase their resilience to common mental health problems – and be more aware of how to better look after their physical health.



Broomhouse Recovery Through Green Infrastructure



Aim: The aim of the Broomhouse Recovery Through Green Infrastructure project was to develop an edible gardening hub in the heart of Broomhouse, Edinburgh which could function as a productive garden with the potential to support other food-growing initiatives in the area.

At the heart of the project was the construction of a fully functioning and sustainable community garden on a plot of disused land. The City of Edinburgh Council leased the plot to the Broomhouse Centre for this purpose.

Outcomes: The garden was constructed over the Spring and Summer of 2019. Initially there was a focus on clearing what was a very overgrown and litter-strewn site to create some growing space. The new growing beds covered over 70m², the garden has developed massively and now produces over 1500kg of fruit and veg per year, ranging from the humble tatties and salad leaves to the more adventurous cantaloupe melons and aubergines.

Benefits: The project has provided Broomhouse with a fantastic community asset valued by local residents. It has provided a space in which local residents can come together to develop their gardening skills and to share the fruits of their labour.

The main garden has helped create very skilled gardeners who produce fruit and veg for themselves, the cafe at the Broomhouse Hub and for the local community. Over the last couple of years, the project has distributed locally-grown food via a series of free stalls which were set up over the harvest months.

At the time of writing the group is in negotiations to take on further space in Broomhouse to develop a community orchard.



The Green Infrastructure Fund is part of the Scottish Government's current European Regional Development Fund programme, which runs through to 2023. This is one of two ERDF Strategic Interventions led by NatureScot – the other is the [Natural & Cultural Heritage Fund](#).

You can follow the [European Structural Funds blog](#) for ESF activities, news and updates. For twitter updates go to @scotgovESIF or use the hashtags #ERDF and #europeanstructuralfunds.

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