



COMMUNITY GREENSPACE CASE STUDIES

Below are a number of case studies to demonstrate the breadth of ways in which Community Greenspace work in partnership with the communities we serve to jointly maintain and improve our open spaces.

Wellbeing (page 2)

- Woodland Activity Sessions – Dementia Friendly
- Green Routes to Wellbeing – Crieff

Take A Pride in Perth and Kinross (page 4)

- Take A Pride in Perth and Kinross Association projects
- Beautiful Perth – Champion of Champions

Woodland Parks (page 7)

- Partnership working with the Kinnoull Hill Park Group

Perth and Kinross Path Groups (page 8)

- Crieff Paths Group – drain clearing at Lady Mary's Walk
- Blairgowrie and Rattray Access Network (BRAN)

Path Auditors (page 10)

- Highland Perthshire Path Auditors

Youth volunteers (page 11)

- Police Scotland Volunteers in Greenspaces
- Junior Ranger programme – Pitlochry High

North Inch Golf Course (page 13)

- Golf course volunteers

Other greenspace groups (page 14)

- Wisecraft working at Larchan Park
- Viewlands Reservoir

Corporate volunteers (page 15)

- SSE in action at the Den of Alyth

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Wellbeing

Community Greenspace have also been proactive for a number of years in providing opportunities for people with special needs to get opportunities to benefit from the social and restorative outdoor activities. People with physical and mental health challenges are involved in regular supervised work in a number of our parks and opens spaces which is rewarding for them and helps with the up keep of these areas.

Wellbeing case study 1: Woodland Activity Sessions – Dementia Friendly

An outreach project that promotes health and well-being through mentally stimulating and meaningful activity on a premier greenspace site. The 'Woodland Activity Sessions' provide a safe, nurturing environment to encourage continued enjoyment of nature and the outdoors for individuals diagnosed with dementia.

Woodland Activity Sessions are designed for people with early-stage dementia who are able to attend safely on their own or who are accompanied by someone to support them who want to take part in an innovative, exciting and fun programme of woodland activities. The sessions are made up of individuals with a diagnosis of dementia and their carer's. They take part in different activities ranging from woodland walks, creating habitats, bush craft, environmental art and learning tree and bird identification. During the 10 week programme the group meet at Kinnoull Hill, at the Shed by Jubilee Car Park. This facility is ideal for the sessions as it has an indoor facility with toilets and a kitchen; it allows us to continue with the sessions regardless of the traditional Scottish weather. The participants only needed to have sturdy footwear and a waterproof jacket to take part, remembering to bring their pack lunch to enjoy during the social lunch.

Through delivering this project we are:

- **Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives** by promoting an outreach activity that **improves health and well-being** using one of Perth's premier greenspace sites.
- **Providing opportunities and support people to live active and independent lives** through mentally stimulating and meaningful activities that help people to have a healthier lifestyle and mental well-being.
- **Reducing social isolation** by encouraging participation in physical activity and providing opportunities for greater means of communication between likeminded individuals and communities.

The 'Woodland Activity Sessions' were extremely rewarding for the dementia clients, their carers' and PKC staff. The activities were meaningful with a sense of purpose. The social element provided social inclusion and appeared to reduce their anxiety levels according to their carers', which was a huge positive for the carers too. The benefits of being able to discuss subjects which they had in common and common interests was also seen as benefit, forging long term friendships and bonds. Through weekly discussions it was evident that carers were unaware of other individuals in the same position as them which made them feel isolated and frustrated; from attending the sessions with their spouses (the individuals with dementia) they unintentionally developed a support network and long term friendship.



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Wellbeing Case Study 2:

Green Routes to Wellbeing, Crieff

The Green Routes to Wellbeing Group in Crieff are a local voluntary group who take part in horticultural, biodiversity and greenspace improvement works in and around the Crieff area. The group has been active since 2012, originally in partnership with the NHS, with the goal of improving the mental and physical wellbeing through outdoor activities and volunteering.

The group has focussed largely on MacRosty Park, Lady Mary's Walk and the Knock of Crieff; tackling tasks that tie in with management plans, aid the general maintenance of our sites and enhance biodiversity and amenity value. The volunteers learn about their local environment, gain valuable experience, and learn new skills from the Greenspace Ranger (and other volunteers!).

Recent tasks that the group have tackled already in 2020 include the creation of tree pits to protect vulnerable trees from grass-cutting equipment, thinning and cutting back of vegetation/shrub beds, cutting back of overgrown Rhododendrons, and planting pollinator-friendly wildflowers. In the summer of 2019 eight people received the John Muir Discovery Award through their volunteering, with some volunteers now working towards the next level of the Award. Within the last year 16 volunteers have taken part in different Green Routes activities, totalling well over 350 hours of work within Council Greenspaces. Several of the volunteers have since joined other volunteering groups such as the Crieff Paths Group and the Green Routes group in Perth.



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Take A Pride in Perth and Kinross groups:

The Community Greenspace team has also had several notable successes in partnership with working with our communities including Take A Pride in Perth and Kinross Association project delivery. In addition to the ongoing success and major contribution of the 48 “in bloom” groups to their communities across Perth and Kinross, the groups and their unique “umbrella” charity association continue to deliver projects in partnership with the council. The council plays a key role in advising on required permissions and connecting with the appropriate service areas within the council e.g. flooding and structures, street lighting, roads team, planning dept etc. Some examples of such projects are noted here:

- Crieff Hairy Coos sculpture installation and replanting in Burrell Square. £30,000 raised and project completed October 2018



- Aberfeldy Lower Birks community garden. £74,000 raised and garden officially opened October 2018 combined with their phase 2 Reflections Garden.



- Kinnesswood Benarty View project. £33,000 raised, hard landscaping completed January 2019, planting followed in Spring 2019

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- **Auchterarder Garrie's Corner project.** £66,000 raised, hard landscaping and planting completed September 2019. Interpretation panel – the final piece of the jigsaw installed Spring 2020



- **Kinross Crosswell Fountain restoration project.** £19,750 project completed Spring 2020



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- **Coming soon Pitlochry Wildlife Garden, Blairgowrie Coronation Corner and Alyth Burnside improvements**

Beautiful Perth 2019 – Champion of Champions

Celebrating its 30th Anniversary, registered charity and PKC Community Greenspace partner Beautiful Perth (formerly Perth in Bloom) has been awarded the prestigious Royal Horticultural Society's "Champion of Champions" accolade, in recognition of its contribution in helping make Perth a "great place to live, work and visit. The city's Riverside Heather Collection was also awarded the UK's best park and public space for another consecutive year in an unprecedented decision taken by the Royal Horticultural Society's judging panel. National and local press coverage of the award results and Perth's great successes featured in national press, including The Times

Underpinned by the three "pillars" of horticultural excellence, environmental responsibility and community participation, July's judging tour was described as "expertly put together" and encompassed a broad reach of community members and partners, such as Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust, Perth and District Beekeepers, Kincarrathie House and Paint Pots nursery, to name a few exceeding the expectations of "community participation". PKC personnel also contributed to the successes each explaining their specialist roles. Such efforts and collaborative working continue to provide a healthy motivation for Beautiful Perth to further develop projects and enhance the offering in Perth and Kinross. An example of this is the group leveraging funds to further invest in the Riverside Heather Collection, striving for a National Heather Collection - the only one of its kind in the UK, and a unique selling point for Perth.



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Woodland Parks

Partnership Working with the Kinnoull Hill Woodland Park Group

The Kinnoull Hill Woodland Park Group was established in 2001. The Group represents a wide range of users of the Park, from horse riders to orienteering groups, to walkers and cyclists.

The Group has been invaluable the Community Greenspace in the development of the Management Plan over the last two years and more recently by contributing to and leading on funding applications to support the implementation phase.

The Group contributes to the management of the hill through volunteer action and by reporting issues such as antisocial behaviour and fallen trees. A facebook page administered by the group provides a useful forum to notify the woodland park users about events which may affect them, to help resolve issues between different user groups and to promote the Woodland Park more widely. It has over 500 followers.

In late 2018 members of the KHUG expressed an interest in managing the orchards on the Barnhill side of Kinnoull Hill. In early 2019 volunteers attended a training session of pruning fruit trees and with support from Community Greenspace Rangers the KHUG and the Riverside Explorer Scouts brought the orchards back to life. 2020 will see a further 7 trees being planted by the group with a view to officially registering the orchard.



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Perth and Kinross Path Groups

Drain clearing at Lady Mary's Walk, Crieff



Saturday 25th January 2020 was the first task of the year for the Crieff Paths Group, who were delighted to be joined by a few new members. Armed with a full arsenal of spades, rakes, drainage rods and more, we tackled several of the drainage ditches and culverts along one of Crieff's most popular paths; Lady Mary's Walk.

Months (& years!) of leaf litter build-up and vegetation growth had filled in ditches and blocked off culverts. These require occasional maintenance so that water can run off freely without damaging or flooding the path.

Lady Mary's Walk runs alongside the River Earn and the old dismantled railway. Some of the old railway drainage run offs are still in place, of which one had been overflowing and had started to affect the path. We managed to clear this out and could see immediately that the water was flowing correctly into the ditch and through the culvert into the Earn.

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Perth and Kinross Paths groups

Blairgowrie & Rattray Access Network

Community Greenspace work with local groups to maintain, improve and promote our shared open spaces for all to enjoy.

In recent years, Community Greenspace has actively encouraged the establishment of such paths groups by providing hands on support through our greenspace rangers and coordinators.

Our Path Group Development project promotes effective communication between paths groups and the Council; coordinated through the greenspace rangers who assist groups with planning tasks, lending tools, providing insurance, training and financial support (including grant aid through Community Environment Challenge Fund) and facilitating negotiations with landowners.

By working closely with our local paths groups, we can better prioritise our paths and greenspaces, allowing us to make greater use of our own resources.

One such group which is very active is Blairgowrie and Rattray Access Network who maintain the key paths around Blairgowrie. The group have over 40 volunteers signed up who tackle a range of tasks out on the path network. The tasks include keeping the grass cut on the 10 mile River Ericht Path, cutting back overhanging vegetation, maintaining wooden steps and improving surfaced paths through re-surfacing and leaf blowing.

Recently the group have also lent their hand to improvement projects across the path network. Through fundraising and donations, a path improvement programme at the Cuttleburn was carried out by BRAN volunteers working to build steps and regrade a muddy section of path. This vastly improved the linking core path creating a better link to the upper part of the town. In late 2019 the group employed a drystone dyker to create a cairn and viewpoint at the top of the Knockie Path. This created a feature on one of the main paths the group look after while upskilling BRAN members in drystone walling.

In February we hosted BRAN and other path groups at our path group networking event. This event was a great success and introduced over 40 volunteers to practical training on power tools plus a presentation on how Community Greenspace support groups. The event was co-hosted by Pitlochry path group who lead a guided walk and talk to look at community path projects in Blackspout Wood.

BRAN continue to grow and generate enthusiasm amongst the community. In 2019 BRAN generated £14477 in-kind income through 1763 volunteer hours. This is a testament to the enthusiasm of the group and support which is offered from Community Greenspace.



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Path Auditors

Path groups in Highland Perthshire have always been encouraged to audit their paths. Every group does it differently but each method works!

During lockdown people were encouraged to take daily exercise once a day and that message should not be lost as we come out of lockdown. During these daily walks the Pitlochry Path group sent the Community Greenspace Ranger photos of access, signage, and vegetation issues. This has enabled remote decisions to be made on what further action was required and how the issue could be resolved.

One such example is that of a snapped fingerpost on the Clunie Path and Strathtay Way (also part of the Rob Roy Way). During Phase 1 a household volunteer from the Pitlochry Path group was able to replace the fingerpost. This was achievable by having a small stock of replacement posts available for path groups, and by the volunteer using their own tools. A hand made Rob Roy Way logo was created as the original had disappeared. As lockdown and travel restrictions have eased this route has now been properly way-marked.



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Youth Volunteers:

Study 1: working with Police Scotland Youth Volunteers

Partner Recognition Award Presented to PKC Community Greenspace (February 2020)

The Police Scotland Youth Volunteers (PSYV) are groups of up to 24 young people based across Scotland. Supported by adult volunteers and led by a police constable, the PSYV volunteer at community and national events across Scotland.

The PSYV programme aims to strengthen the relationship with the police and young people, breaking down barriers and promoting positive role models.

In addition, each year when the clocks go back, PSYV takes the opportunity to deliver a national housebreaking campaign which focuses on providing residents information on how to keep their property safe and secure during the darker nights. The PSYV groups involvement in such initiatives results in tens of thousands of leaflets being delivered and distributed across Scotland in a short time frame and ultimately assists in the prevention of crime. In 2019, the local group of volunteers distributed 2000 leaflets to households in Perth.

Over the past 18 months, Community Greenspace have had the privilege of working with their locally based PSYV, under the supervision of PC Euan Mitchell. Activity sessions have included clearing, weeding, mulching and bulb planting at Beatrix Potter's Garden, Birnam, tidying, planting and mulching at the War Memorial in Comrie, assisting with litter picks in preparation of the RHS Britain In Bloom judging, and bark spreading at Mac Rosty Park, Crieff.

Across Perth and Kinross, the volunteers contributed to over 6 000 hours of volunteering effort in 2019, and raised over £2K for the SCAA charity. Their partners and events supported included the 80's Rewind Festival, Paws at the Palace, Auchterarder Run event, Perth's Santa Run and the Solheim Cup, to name but a few.

The culmination of the efforts of these inspiring individuals was recognised at their Annual Awards Ceremony and Passing Out Parade held at the North Inch Community Campus on Tuesday, 25th of February, 2020 where Provost Dennis Melloy presented the Awards and inspected the Parade. The event was also attended by Murdo Fraser MSP and local Councillors.

Community Greenspace officers were thrilled to receive the PSYV Partnership Recognition trophy, voted by the volunteers themselves as a testament to their enjoyable and fruitful partnership with Community Greenspace.



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Youth Volunteers Study 2:

Junior Rangers

The Junior Ranger programme at Pitlochry High is the most successful junior ranger programme in the Cairngorms National Park. This is due to the partnership ethos within the School, PKC Community Greenspace Rangers, The National Trust for Scotland, Atholl Estates Ranger Service and Highland Perthshire Community Land Trust and the Cairngorms National Park.

The Cairngorms National Park Authority provides the financial support for equipment, PPE, fuel and the administrative support for the Junior Ranger programme. The school provide the transport, and staff to support the pupils on the programme. The programme is delivered by a partnership of ranger services. Perth and Kinross Council Community Greenspace Ranger Service uses this programme to achieve Forest Plan Target, programmed management task, working with Bloom and other community groups. The participants therefore gain a true experience of the varied work the Greenspace Team works and delivers on.

This project is run efficiently as the workload and delivery is shared between the partners. This reduces the workload for teaching staff and the pressure on individual ranger services. The work undertaken by pupils contributes to each Ranger Service remit and workload. The pupils all learn new transferable skills from public speaking, bush craft hand tool use. Through the programme they gain a deeper understanding of the rural environment of Highland Perthshire and get to explore wild places which they might not otherwise see.

Through this programme we are delivering on;

Our children will be cared for and supported to learn in nurturing environments – by providing pupils with the opportunity to gain rural skills and explore wild places around Highland Perthshire - supported throughout by rangers from the partner organisations. The follow-on programme allows disadvantaged pupil and those with carer responsibilities to join in due to the variety of timings of as recommended by the Fairer Futures report.

Protecting our outstanding area and supporting community projects– by providing opportunities bringing together rangers, local community groups and pupil participants to address a number of environmental concerns and issues.



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Working with communities at North Inch Golf Course:

Our golf course volunteers meet regularly throughout the year to assist our green keeping team with works around the golf course. Their work can be varied and will include tasks like bunker edging and raking, loping tree branches and clearing areas of scrub. A number of our volunteers have also been trained to use grass strimmer's and they help keep a check on many areas of the golf course where ride on mowers cannot access.

A new golf starters box is to be installed at North Inch Golf course in 2020. We are working closely with the North Inch Golf Course User Group, in respect to the design, layout and functionality of this building. The User Group are planning fundraising events throughout the year to help assist with the kit out of the building's interior. They are also investigating funding opportunities to further enhance the golf course and its facilities.



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Other greenspace groups:

Looking after Larghan Park Meadow with Wisecraft:



Volunteers from Wisecraft in Blairgowrie recently helped give the Wildflower Meadow in Larghan park its Autumn makeover. The meadow is an important feature in the park, creating great habitat for pollinators throughout the summer months.

Now Autumn is upon us the meadow is cut and raked to help spread the seed while the cuttings are lifted by keen volunteers. Lifting cuttings helps our wildflowers thrive by removing the nutrients from the soil.

It is hoped the work will contribute towards the John Muir Award which the group are hoping to complete in due course.



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Looking after Viewlands Reservoir:

Viewlands Reservoir Park is a park located just 1.5 miles from Perth. The area was the site of a covered reservoir in the 1880's providing drinking water to the city before it was decommissioned in 1970 and is now maintained as community greenspace enjoying an elevated position with beautiful views across the city. There are 2 secondary and 2 primary schools with walking distance and the surrounding area is predominantly residential. Due to its location Viewlands is well used both by dog walkers and pedestrians and the twice daily passage of pupils to and from school. Viewlands has formed the starting point for several new initiatives focusing on creating links between various user groups and PKC.

In September 2019 a group of patients from Murray Royal hospital began volunteering on a variety of tasks as part of a supported programme of activities aimed at improving mental health under the 'Green Routes to Wellbeing' in partnership with the NHS. The group were introduced to the site and encouraged to identify and prioritise tasks which would improve the site for both park users and biodiversity. To this end they have contributed over 240 hours of works including; building and installing a bug hotel and bird boxes, removing invasive species and clearing overgrown paths, litter picking, tree planting and path works.

Viewlands lies on the boundary with Perth Royal Infirmary and Cornhill Palliative Care Unit; potentially offering patients who would not normally be able to access local greenspace a chance to contribute by working collaboratively with the volunteers from Murray Royal (MR). A 4-week programme involving 8 patients and their families was run from the Palliative Care Unit where patients gleaned wildflower seeds from plants harvested in the park to be planted by the (MR) group in identified areas in the spring. Bird boxes were made by MR then decorated by Cornhill and ceramic tiles were made and decorated by Cornhill and installed by MR. the location of all pieces, bird boxes and flowering areas was mapped so patients' families can visit the park and see the work of loved ones.

Further groups include Perth and Kinross Council 'DOO Day' saw the planting of over 100 native trees by PKC staff volunteering in the park creating a lasting asset to the parks' biodiversity. Perth High School students are completing their Duke of Edinburgh Award caring for the environment section over 6 weeks in the park. April 2020 will see the launch of a Viewlands Task group encouraging residents to take park in monthly conservation activities aimed at improving the amenity of the park for users now and into the future.



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Corporate volunteers working with Community Greenspace

SSE in action at the Den O Alyth



Community Greenspace work with communities to manage a variety of sites across the area including the Den O Alyth which is known for its native woodland, red sandstone geology and its freshwater ecology.

Recently staff from SSE Renewables as part of their corporate volunteer programme helped to conserve the den by working towards the aims of the management plan. Staff spent the morning working with the rangers to remove Beech Tree saplings from an area of native woodland using tree popping tools and bowsaws. Beech are not native to the area and out compete native stock so staff were given the opportunity to take the trees home to replant. In the afternoon footpaths were cleared of leaves and mud making a huge difference to the paths which crisscross site. As an extra challenge the team also removed a tractor tyre which had been fly-tipped.



This is the second time SSE have helped us at the Den O Alyth. The help is invaluable and allows the many objectives of the management plan to be achieved. The team from SSE worked hard and enjoyed the challenges of doing something different.