

PARKLIFE

your natural health service



See what your council's Parks Development Team, partners and community groups have been doing for your area this year.

**Issue - 1
December 2020**



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Introduction

I'm delighted to see this first issue of Parklife, which highlights some of the work that has been going on across Glasgow's parks and green spaces. Our parks took on a hugely important role during this difficult year, giving us access to fresh air and a place to get some exercise away from home. Glasgow's parks bring so much to our lives, and this newsletter is a chance to showcase the many staff and volunteers whose time and efforts enrich these precious green spaces.

With the double challenge of the pandemic and climate change, we must make the best use of green space for our own health and well-being but also of our wildlife. This issue demonstrates how focusing on food growing and increasing biodiversity can help us achieve all these things.

Parklife illustrates the wide range of opportunities for getting involved in a local green space as a volunteer. Thanks to everyone who has done so this year, and I look forward to seeing all the projects 2021 will bring.

Councillor Anna Richardson
City Convener for Sustainability and Carbon Reduction





Provan Hall set for Major Restoration



One of the oldest surviving buildings in Glasgow is to be fully restored as a new heritage visitor attraction thanks to a new partnership between Glasgow City Council's Seven Lochs team and local community organisations. The council has awarded a £2million contract to restore Provan Hall in Easterhouse, and is working with the Provan Hall Trust to establish this fascinating old building as a unique setting for local people and visitors to learn about Glasgow's medieval past.

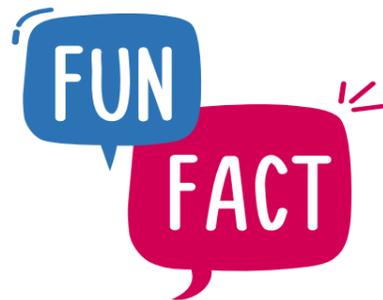
recognition – from the woods and wetlands of the Bishop's estate, through the Industrial Revolution and the building of the Monkland Canal, to the post-war growth of Easterhouse and the modern development of Glasgow Fort – this old building remains largely unchanged. It has been called 'the best example of a medieval fortified farmhouse in Scotland'.

The building is shrouded in mystery and aspects of its history are still not known, including exactly when it was built. What is known is that Provan Hall is an important part of Glasgow's heritage, first as part of lands owned by the Bishop's of Glasgow, then as home to wealthy families and gentleman farmers, and more recently as a hub for community activities.

Provan Hall, which sits in Auchinlea Park, is managed by GCC Neighbourhoods and Sustainability through a lease with National Trust for Scotland, who bought the hall and surrounding land in the 1930s. Provan Hall is a rare survivor. While the surrounding landscape has changed beyond

Following restoration the buildings will be managed by the Provan Hall Trust as a new centre for heritage learning and community activity. The Trust – which brings together the Friends of Provan Hall, local community organisations and the council – will deliver a wide ranging programme of education activities and community events.

The restoration works, expected to start in January, will take over 12 months to complete, with the newly restored building opening in early 2022.



Generations of Easterhouse children have been spooked by scary stories at Provan Hall over the years – with annual Halloween activities just one of the many events the Friends of Provan Hall have organised over the years.



To visit the Provan Hall Community Trust on Facebook



To find out more about Seven Lochs Wetland Park

Glasgow Botanic Gardens

Hedging Our Bets

Glasgow Botanic Gardens have a long and distinguished history related to plant conservation and education. Over the last year staff at the Gardens, along with members of the Neighbourhoods and Sustainability team, have been facilitating a new conservation project, in partnership with the International Conifer Conservation Programme based in Edinburgh.

Globally, around 34% of conifer species are threatened in their native range, and the Chilean Yew, *Prumnopitys andina*, is no exception. A beautiful tree, it can reach heights of over 25 metres but due to the construction of hydroelectric schemes in its native Chile, much of the trees' natural habitat has been flooded and hundreds of ancient trees lost. Although protecting species in their natural habitat is preferable, when this fails it's often necessary to have a backup offsite.

So how do you capture the genetic diversity of a tree with a wide geographic range in one garden?

The answer that Martin Gardner, coordinator of the Conifer Conservation project has come up with is the conservation hedge or "biodiversity compacter". The trees can be planted tightly together as a hedge and provide a useful feature in the garden and act as a bank for the gene pool of the tree.

To complete the project we will be installing interpretation panels at either end of the hedge to enhance the educational aspect of the project and get the conservation message out to visitors.

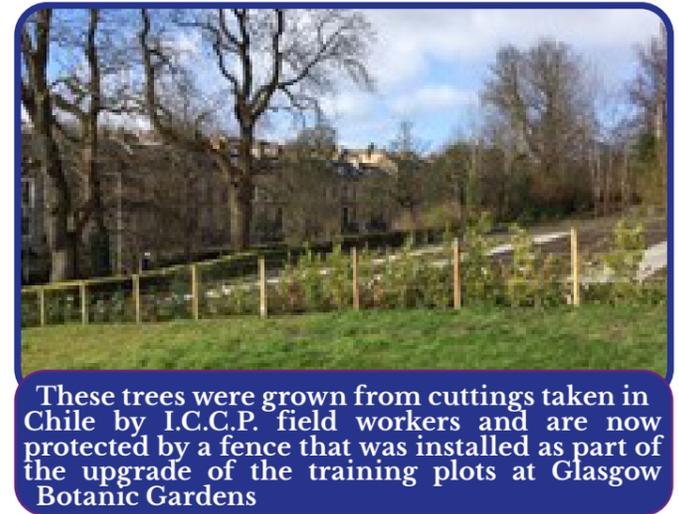
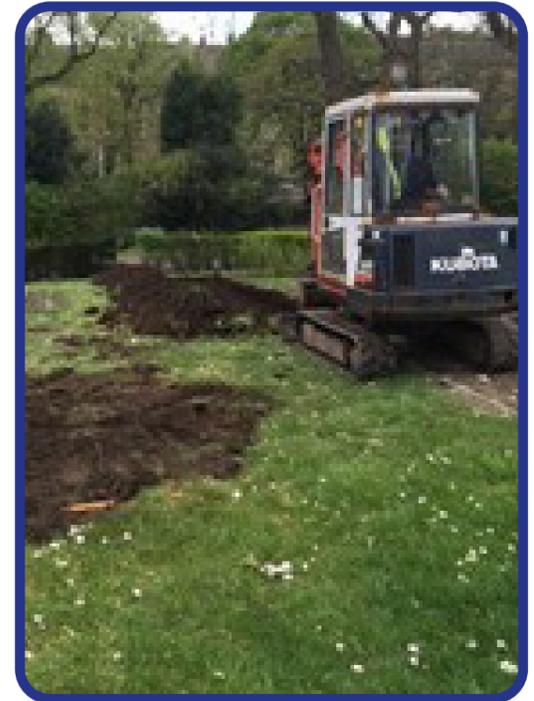
Glasgow Botanic Gardens have worked with I.C.C.P. for 25 years now and acts as a "safe site" for other endangered tree species.

The hedge at Glasgow Botanic Gardens will provide a possible source of material for future conservation work but there are other ways they can be beneficial.

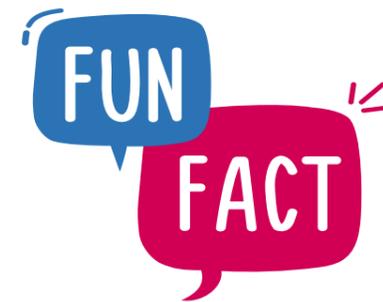
- In your garden or local greenspace you could use a hedge to provide a habitat for local bird species and pollinators.
- Instead of putting in a wire or wooden fence, you could plant a mix of native species that would form a dense hedge and this would provide food and shelter for birds such as house sparrows as well as many species of insect. Blackthorn, hawthorn and holly all produce berries to feed the birds and allowing the hedge to establish you could mix in honeysuckle and ivy. This would provide a rich source of nectar for insects throughout the year. You could finish off your hedge by underplanting it with woodland edge plants such as primrose, dog violet and campion.



Horticulturists added several tons of gravel to improve the drainage and then planted 62 container grown trees



These trees were grown from cuttings taken in Chile by I.C.C.P. field workers and are now protected by a fence that was installed as part of the upgrade of the training plots at Glasgow Botanic Gardens



There are lots of conifers to see at Glasgow Botanic Gardens but only three are native to Scotland;

- The Scots Pine (*Pinus Sylvestris*)
- The Juniper (*Juniperus Communis*)
- The Yew (*Taxus Baccata*)

According to the book on Plant Lore the Scots Pine has lots of other names;

- In English it was the Deal
- In Scots it was known as the Banet Fir, Bonnet Fir, Burr, Preenak or Sheepie

Other forestry trees planted in Scotland such as Spruce, Western Hemlock, and Douglas Fir are all native to North West America.

The Douglas Fir gained its common name to commemorate the Scotch Plant Hunter David Douglas.

David Douglas worked at Glasgow Botanic Gardens from 1820-1823, he left his job as head gardener there to explore new countries and collect plants for institutions back in Britain.

Click Here

To find out more about conifer conservation

Click Here

To visit the threatened conifer action website

Click Here

Follow the rgbe on twitter for up to date information



At the top of the hill, behind the herbaceous border in Glasgow Botanic Gardens, is where you will find the Herb Garden. You might smell it before you see it. Many of the mint species are growing there as well as the curry plant (*Helichrysum italicum*).

Also well known for its smell is *Allium sativum* – Garlic. Many of our younger visitors are already aware that the Romans would cover-up the fact that some meat was rancid by using Garlic (*Allium sativum*) or Bay leaves (*Laurus nobilis*). This fits into the curriculum really well for visiting schools as it covers both history and biology.

Some of the most poignant visits to the gardens are from severely impaired children and their helpers. It is always very moving to see how much they enjoy it, - touching scented leaves and flowers, seeing how tall bamboo and sugar-cane can grow, a close up view of the 'Venus Fly-Trap', and seeing cacti close up.

We regularly have visits from adult groups with health difficulties such as Alzheimers Disease or stroke victims as well as the weekly walkers who enjoy meeting-up with their friends and going on a different walk each week led by our Rangers. Other users of the Botanic Gardens include wedding parties, and regular plant shows of Bonsai plants, Cacti and Succulents.

Each Friday throughout term-time one of the local schools which is participating in the 'John Muir Schools Learning Programme' walks to the Botanic Gardens in the afternoon to learn about a variety of work that we do concerning the world of plants and why humans could not exist without plants.

A short walk from the main gardens brings you to the arboretum and our collection of trees from around the world. This area during the autumn is not to be missed.



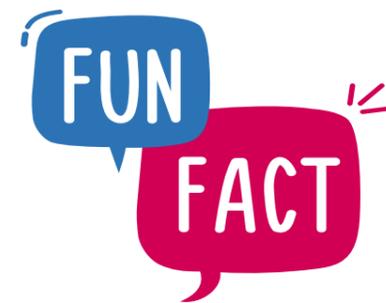
Scents, Students & Walkers at the Glasgow Botanic



Wild Onions



Feverfew commonly used in treatment of migraines



Did you know that the staff at the Botanic Gardens look after a collection of over 9000 different plants with the greatest number growing in the temperate and tropical glasshouses.

Outdoors they have a growing representation of hardy trees that are well worth exploring.

[Click Here](#)

To find out how to get involved

Knightswood Park

It's great when a plan comes together

In February this year, ten wood-crete nest boxes were purchased from a £250 Action Earth grant, supplied by Volunteering Matters to Knightswood Park 'Friends of' group, working closely with the Countryside Ranger team. On 6 March Jimmy Huis (see photos), Countryside Ranger for the north of the city, erected the ten nest boxes for the friends group in suitable trees around Knightswood park (see map) and in June we were delighted to discover that 4 out of 5 were being used by Blue Tits. See the video link of the wee blue tits flying back and forth on the Friends' Facebook page Friends of Knightswood Park.

This is unusual to find nest boxes erected and used in the same year, as birds take some time to get used to the new installations, never mind witness 80% occupancy. This demonstrates that there was a lack of suitable natural nesting holes in Knightswood Park, and that we filled a demand. Moreover it demonstrates that the design was right, thanks to a recommendation by the Friends of Local Nature Reserves who erected similar wood-crete nest boxes a few years ago at Dawsholm Park. Goes to show, when we all pull together to our strengths, we can help enhance nature, the habitats on our doorstep and the enjoyment of nature by local people.

This is all part of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan to increase quality habitat and promote public awareness and involvement. It is also to carry forward actions from our Neighbourhoods & Sustainability citywide nest box survey done in 2015.

Jim Clark from the Friends of Knightswood Park said "The bird boxes that Jimmy Huis from the Countryside Ranger Team installed, of the 10 supplied, 8 are occupied - to say we are chuffed is an understatement. Please say thanks to Jimmy and the Countryside Rangers for organising all this for us".



FUN FACT

An ongoing study by Glasgow University has provided worrying stats that only 4-10% of fledgling Tits survive from nest sites in Glasgow Parks due to poor nutrition and lack of caterpillars.

Fingers crossed all of the Knightswood fledglings survive.

Click Here

To visit the groups FB page for more information

Oatlands Gate Allotments Association

A Wee Boost

Well done to the Food Growing Team for their hard work and supportive attitude with Oatlands Gate Allotments Association (OGAA). Here's a thank you letter from OGAA to show their appreciation



Site Improvements and Volunteers



The young people, adult volunteers and co-ordinators at the Police Scotland Youth Volunteers whose energy and enthusiasm made this project the success it was. As you'll see from the testimony above it also inspired other members of the allotment association to join in with the works and bring further value to the site. Despite atrocious weather on several of the work party dates, the young people from PSYV showed their commitment and desire to see the project completed and deserve credit for their application and attitude towards the project.

“On behalf of Oatlands Gate Allotments Association we would like to offer a “thank you” to Glasgow City Council Neighbourhoods and Sustainability and in particular our allotment officers for all support offered throughout 2019/2020, especially with the Police Scotland Youth Volunteers. This ongoing support has lifted the moral of people on the site.

“Our allotment site has made improvements in areas around the communal areas such as our compost toilet, which has been turned over and toilet seat moved. The Green Hut has been cleaned thoroughly and brought up to a good standard now to offer assistance to our members when they meet in the Green Hut.

“The concerns of overgrown trees breaching the site rules have now been reduced in height and pruned accordingly.

“We would like to thank Glasgow City Council for their assistance of a skip to remove rotted wood, thick tree branches, metal/plastic waste and litter. Our pathways have been cleared from any invasive weeds.

“Volunteers have come forward and offered assistance to maintain our Communal Harmony Garden area, where we hope to run collective care days to support members and provide local people with

knowledge surrounding food waste and how we can share herbs and plants to cook with.

“We fully appreciate your continued support and understand success stories may continue to improve allotment site management, especially committee training through GCVS (Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector) and other training bodies like our local Housing Association who offer training to committees on capacity building.”

Sandy Paterson from the Glasgow City Council Food Growing Team noted:

“Food growing, whether on an individual or collective basis, can impact positively on people's lives, providing access to gentle exercise in an outdoor environment, helping break down isolation, improving community cohesion, providing access to locally grown fresh nutritious food, lessening food insecurity, increasing social justice, reducing your carbon footprint and improving your local environment for wildlife as well as residents.

“It also allows people, who otherwise might never cross paths to exchange learning and through, shared experiences, empower communities.

“It can help increase individual and community resilience and contribute positively to climate change reduction.

“It can also be a lot of fun.

“Collaborative projects such as this show what Glasgow can achieve when we work together, bringing together participants from various walks of life for the benefit of our communities.

“As a Council Officer it is a wonderful experience to see projects such as this bringing so

many benefits to the people of Glasgow, so it only remains to say, if you're interested in growing, volunteering on a growing project or just wish to learn more, get in touch.”

The Food Growing Team have also been working hard on our new Food Growing Strategy. You can view this online using the link below.

Click Here

To visit the Glasgow Allotments Forum

Click Here

To view our Food Growing Strategy

Click Here

For the Glasgow Community Food Network

Click Here

To find out about Police Scotland Youth Volunteers

Friends of Alexandra Park

During these uncertain times it has become clear that our parks and greenspaces are crucial to our health and well-being. Our Dear Green Place has helped many of us get through a tough day.

The Friends of Alexandra Park group know this well and have been working tirelessly to make Alexandra Park a fun, friendly safe place for everyone to go, whether they want to have fun, do some exercise or just ponder their thoughts.

Ann, who is a member of the friends' group, said: "We started our friends' group about a year ago and have had several events, one of which was the spooky walk at Halloween last year where we had expected about 40 children (we stopped counting at 300). There were around 150 children at the pond at one point listening to Merlin telling them ghost stories. Safe to say it was a massive hit. We also had a Santa's Grotto and party at Christmas which was just as

successful".

One of the friends' group's main goals is to get kids away from TV and into the park, so they have been in talks with one of the primary schools for the children to go the park and help to plant some bulbs. There are two main planters which they are decorating in the colours of a rainbow to dedicate to the NHS and frontline staff who have died due to Covid 19 so that no one forgets them.

They have secured new benches for the avenue of the park, had a pond clean and litter pick, and for the last few months, have been giving out fresh fruits and vegetables, pet packs and afternoon tea which the Lord Provost gave out to people in the park. They also have a pop-up library and sports hub which has recently been completely refurbished and hosts a youth club three nights a week, has a café, pop-up pantry, meeting room, free wi-fi, football, bowls, pitch & putt, lawn tennis, boxing



Our Wonderful Friends



Fountain Before

club and yoga.

The number one aspiration of the group has always been the restoration of the Saracen Fountain, so they are in the process of raising funds to help with the cost of bringing it back to life and allowing today's generation also to enjoy its beauty.

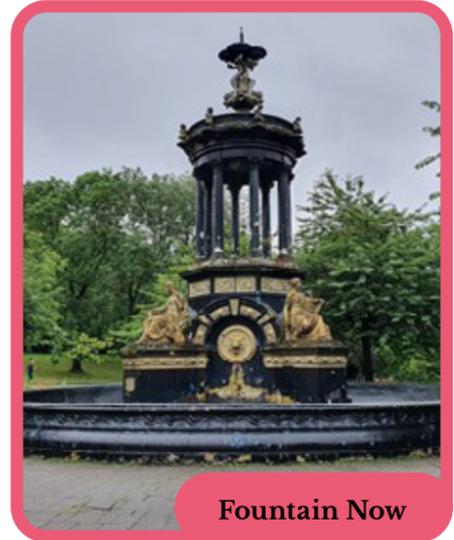
The A-listed Saracen Fountain from 1901 was sculpted by David Watson Stevenson and the foundry was Walter Macfarlane & Co at their Saracen works in Possil. The 40-foot-high/38-foot

basin cast-iron structure remains one of the most significant iron fountains in Europe. The Walter MacFarlane Saracen Fountain was gifted to the City after the 1901 International Exhibition and remained in Kelvingrove Park for 12 years after the exhibition. In 1914 Glasgow Corporation took the decision to re-site this magnificent piece of industrial architecture to its present location in the park

This is a work in progress and more funding is still needed. You can donate to the fountain by texting 'SARACEN' to 70085 to donate £3. Alternatively, you can opt to give any whole amount up to £20. Text 'SARACEN20' to donate £20.

Thank you and a massive well done to all members of the Friends of Alexandra Park for your hard work and effort. You are making a huge difference to people's lives.

Alexandra Park is a very well known, popular park in Glasgow and has been the most viewed park on the My Park Scotland website for 4 years running, with last year having a massive 1548 views.



Fountain Now



Spooky Walk Halloween 2019

[Click Here](#)

To stay in touch please join our facebook page

[Click Here](#)

To find out more about the park

[Click Here](#)

To view council information about Alexandra Park

Team work and socialising are integral to the project. "Life Skills are being forged within the class with learners returning to college and discussing what they have learned even out with class time."

Colin Scott, lecturer Kelvin College



All photos were taken before Covid-19 social distancing regulations



Hedge planting to protect the native bluebell patch. "Learning in class has been fun but learning outdoors has been great!!" Colin, lecturer Kelvin College



Colin Scott, lecturer within the Support for Learning team at Kelvin College had this to say.

"We have been extremely fortunate to be part of the Glasgow City Council 'Flower Power' Programme. Visiting the park every second week, my learners have been able to work under the guidance of Lynsey and Fiona while taking part in a variety of tasks. Both Rangers have been kind, considerate, understanding and motivating when supporting this group of young people as they work towards their individual and group goals. Indeed, my learners have become so motivated by both Rangers that they are now not only working towards their SQA Community Award but have also gathered significant evidence that will see them achieve the 'John Muir Award'."

Pollok Country Park

Flower Power Heroes

Britain has lost 97% of its wildflower habitat and, as a result, there has been a huge decline in the insect species which depend on this habitat. These insects are extremely important for the environment and the continuation of human life on this planet.

Country Park. The transferable skills developed through working on Glasgow's Flower Power project have been instrumental in securing positions in horticultural courses for Kelvin College students after they have completed their SQA. For the project to open doors for these young people is just a fantastic outcome and well deserved for all their hard work.

Based in Pollok Country Park, Glasgow's Flower Power project aims to reverse this decline by working with volunteers to grow native wildflowers for the restoration of wildflower habitats across the city. The project is a collaboration between Glasgow City Council's Natural Environment Team, Grow Wild (part of Kew Gardens) and The Conservation Volunteers (TCV).

The amazing students from Kelvin College have been working hard to restore the wildflower habitat at Pollok



Confidence grows as new skills are mastered

[Click Here](#)

To find out more about the flower power programme

[Click Here](#)

For more information about Kelvin College

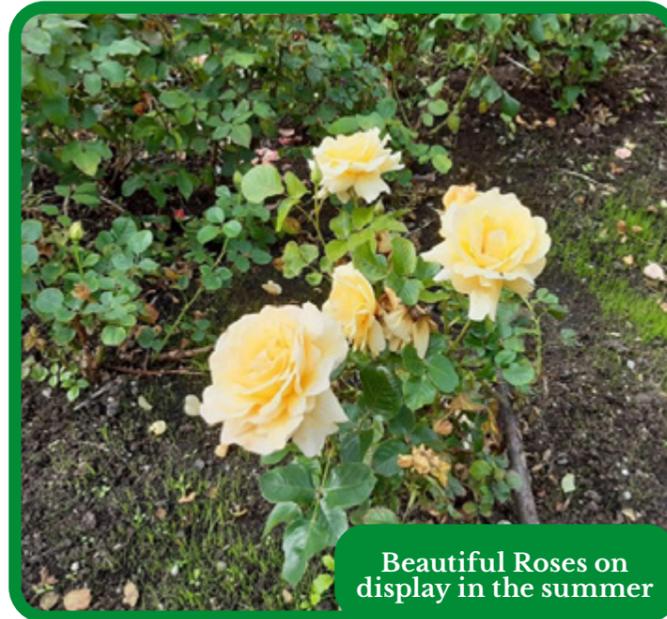
Thank You Volunteers



Before our volunteers got to work - Tollcross Rose Gardens



Back to it's former glory - Tollcross Rose Gardens



Beautiful Roses on display in the summer

In October 2019, our Parks Development Team started to record volunteer hours across the whole of the city from community groups and other willing organisations.

Since then we have tallied up a whopping 1021 volunteers with 7518 hours' worth of invaluable work between them in and around our parks and greenspaces.

It is anticipated that this number could have been much higher but unfortunately, due to the Covid 19 pandemic, all of the volunteering works had to be put on hold until it was deemed safe to return.

The works included a wide variety of projects including The Glasgow Growing Schools event which is featured in this newsletter, upgrading allotment sites, horticulture projects, wildlife surveys, tree planting and doors open days, as well as participating in clean-ups in their local park or greenspace.

One of our volunteers Norman Robb decided to help out with some weeding on our rose beds in Tollcross Park to keep them in tip top condition for the International Rose Trials competition next year. The trials were cancelled this year due to the pandemic and the gardeners that would usually do

this task were posted to different departments to help out where it was needed the most. Norman said:

“I always enjoy a visit to Tollcross in the summer when the roses are in flower. Seeing the roses this year, lost amongst the weeds; I wanted to make sure that visitors to the park could continue to enjoy the colourful and spectacular displays. The park has been well-used in recent weeks and it seems a real shame that visitors couldn't see the roses for the weeds.”

So a huge thank you to Norman and others like him!

The fantastic work that all the volunteers are doing ties in with Glasgow City Council's plans for a healthier city with more involvement from our communities, so we would like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone involved.

Volunteering has lots of great benefits:

- It's good for your health
- It boosts your confidence and can help your career
- You learn new skills
- You gain real world experience
- You make an impact
- You contribute to a sustainable city
- You contribute to a cause you believe in
- You help to empower others
- You make real connections
- You become part of a community
- You gain a whole new perspective
- You experience more
- You get inspired
- You have fun

[Click Here](#)

To find out more about volunteering within Glasgow

[Click Here](#)

To find out how to start your own group

Dawsholm Park

Regeneration

Neighbourhoods and Sustainability Parks Development Section are currently regenerating Dawsholm Park in Maryhill. This project involves recycling stone saved from Roads Operations - which would have previously been dumped in landfill sites. Neighbourhoods & Sustainability Technical Services has sourced whin kerbs and stone setts rescued from developments in Victoria Road in the Southside of the City which has now been recycled and used to build staircases throughout Dawsholm – several of which have been derelict for ten or fifteen years.

The High stairs, the Viewing Point and the 300 year old Dawsholm Bridge over the Kelvin have all been restored with these rescued materials. These re-instated paths and staircases have improved accessibility, the appearance of the park and ensured a quality park visit for the people of Glasgow.

This project is an indication of co-operative working between NS sections and an obvious manifestation of our Departments commitment to sustainability

There are many benefits to this project that tie in with Glasgow City Councils long term plans, including:

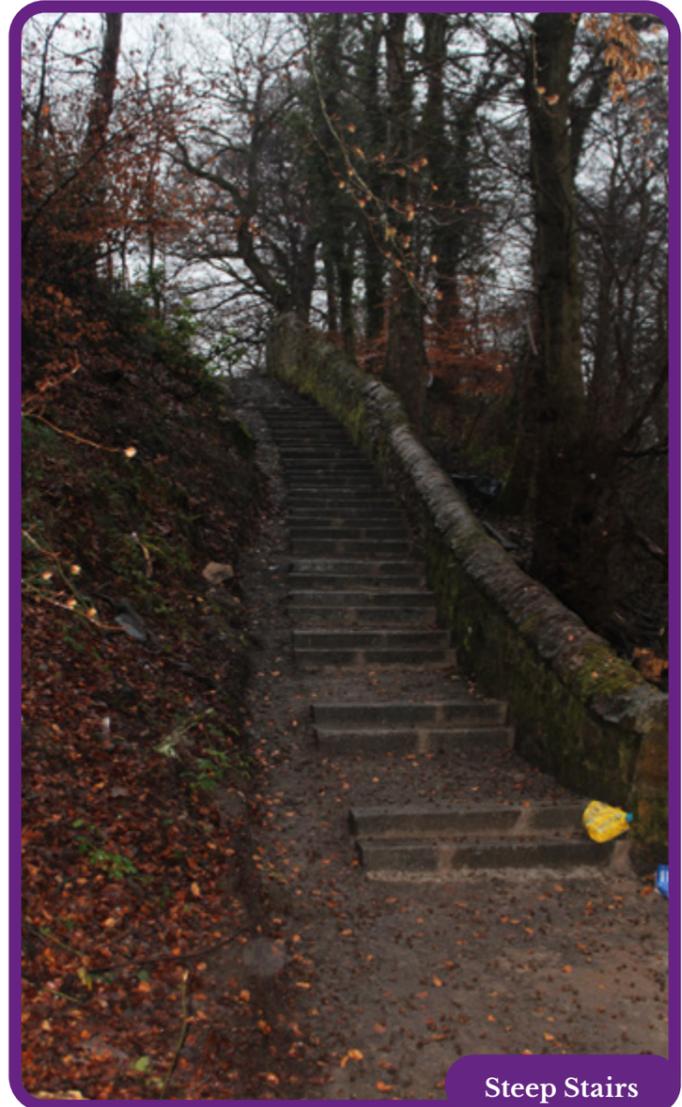
- Restoring Glasgow's parks and landmarks to their original majesty to be consistent with Conservation Management Plan Policies.
- Creating a positive image and raising the profile of Maryhill through urban regeneration.
- Preserving and improving the fabric, infrastructure and appearance of Glasgow's parks as part of an on-going programme of heritage restorations.
- Removing health & safety risks in Glasgow's parks.
- Contributing to the health & well-being of our residents in safe environments.
- Increasing community use and greater utilisation of parkland.



To find out more about Dawsholm Park



Viewing Platform



Steep Stairs



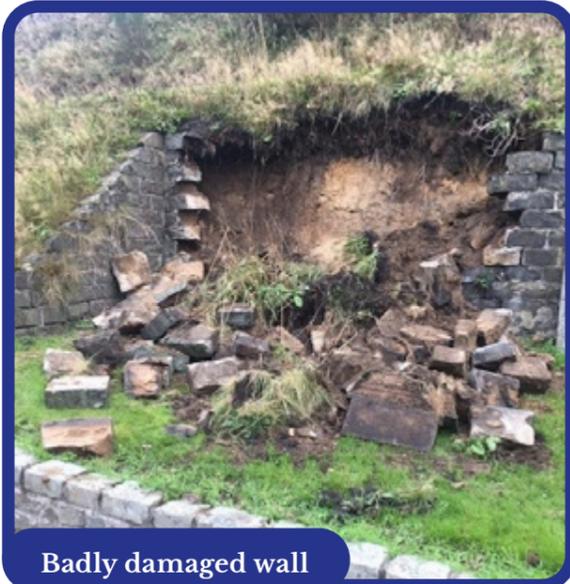
Viewing Platform



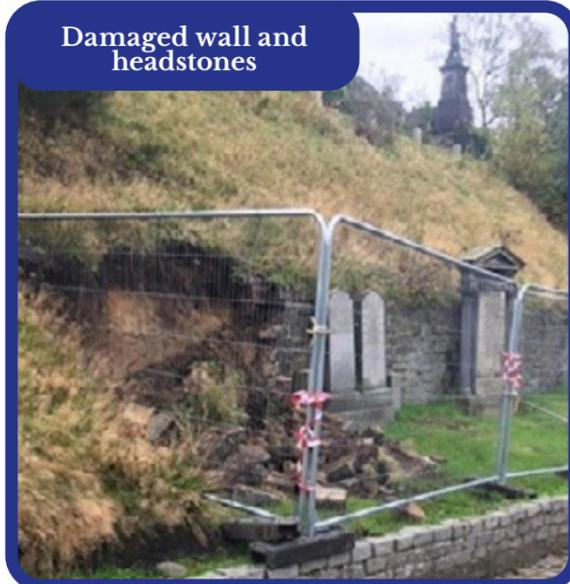
Viewing Platform



Stairs at Dawsholm Entrance



Badly damaged wall



Damaged wall and headstones



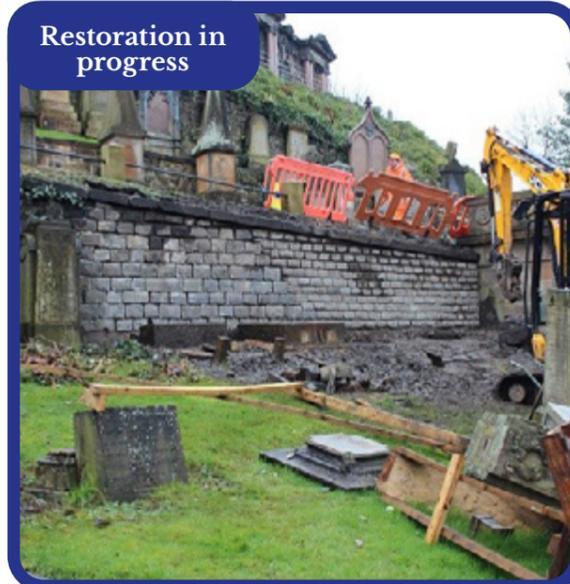
Subsidence damage to wall and headstones



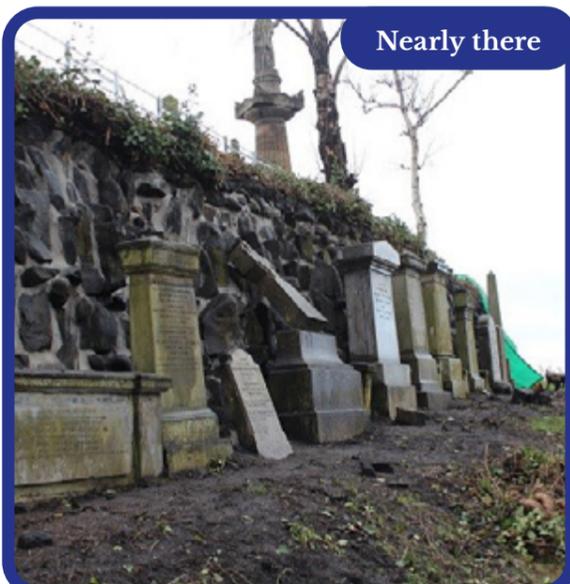
Original wall and headstone damage



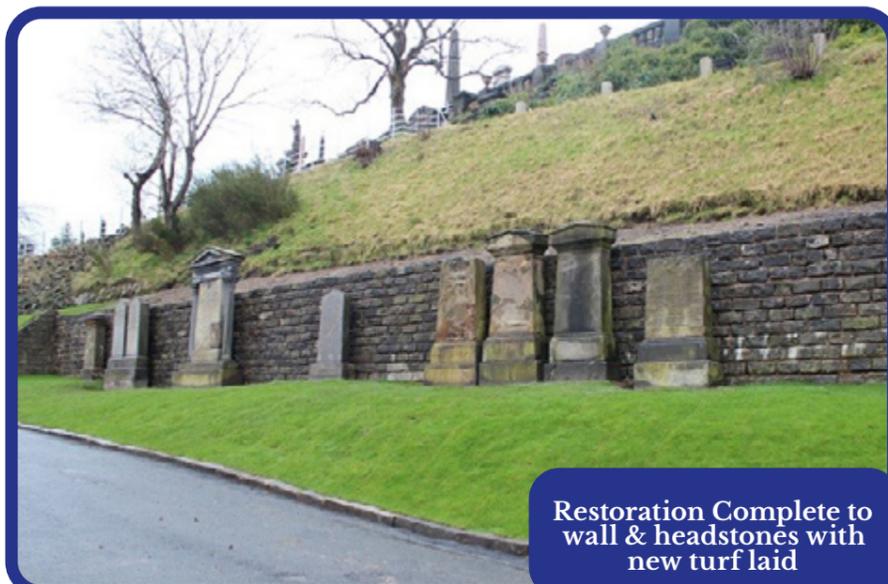
Restoration work begins



Restoration in progress



Nearly there



Restoration Complete to wall & headstones with new turf laid

Glasgow Necropolis

As you are well aware 2020 was one of the wettest years since rainfall records have been collected. Conversely 2019 was a beautiful spring and summer. This unusual weather combination has had serious implications for retaining walls throughout the City. Arguably the warm weather in 2019 dried out a deal of mortar and cement, when combined with the torrential rain in 2020 this has had a torrid effect on retaining walls throughout the City.

In particular the Glasgow Necropolis has suffered badly with three major wall collapses in January 2020 alone. This required Neighbourhoods and Sustainability contractors to make these sites safe and rebuild these A listed walls and ornate headstones in time for the tourist season. The Necropolis can attract 400,000 visitors per annum and is a world famous garden cemetery.

This project highlights the problems facing Glasgow and identified in our Climate Emergency and Ecological Declaration.

There are many reasons to visit the Glasgow Necropolis:

There are 3,500 monuments and 50,000 people buried there with inspiring and sad stories inscribed for people from all backgrounds and positions in society. Some of whom became major inventors, artists, writers and players in the development of Glasgow. Then there are the beautiful monuments. The many architects and sculptors who were inspired to design these memorials include Alexander 'Greek' Thomson, J T Rothead, David Hamilton, John Bryce, Charles Wilson and Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Mackintosh has a particular connection to the Necropolis as he lived on the eastern boundary of the Necropolis and his earliest commission was a monument there.

Contact The Friends of Glasgow Necropolis for further information. They raise funds from taking people on tours to help with the conservation and restoration of the Necropolis.

Click Here

To visit the Glasgow Necropolis Website

Click Here

To read about the Necropolis Heritage Trail

Out and About

Looking for fun, interesting, free things to do?

Why not go on an adventure through some of Glasgow's famous heritage trails for a fascinating history lesson.

These include medieval trails, parks trails and even our city centre mural trail.

Well worth a visit

Or if you enjoy taking a peaceful, thoughtful stroll we have some excellent memorial gardens all over the city. Here are just a few:

The Cenotaph in George Square & Hiroshima/Nagasaki plaques

Cathedral Square Children's Memorial Garden

Linn Cemetery 2 x children's gardens

Daldowie Cemetery Children's Garden

Sand's Children's Memorial Garden at Kirk Lane/Glasgow Necropolis

Sandymount Cemetery Memorial Garden's (for Jewish children)

Glasgow Necropolis Jewish Enclosure

Firemen's Memorial at Glasgow Necropolis

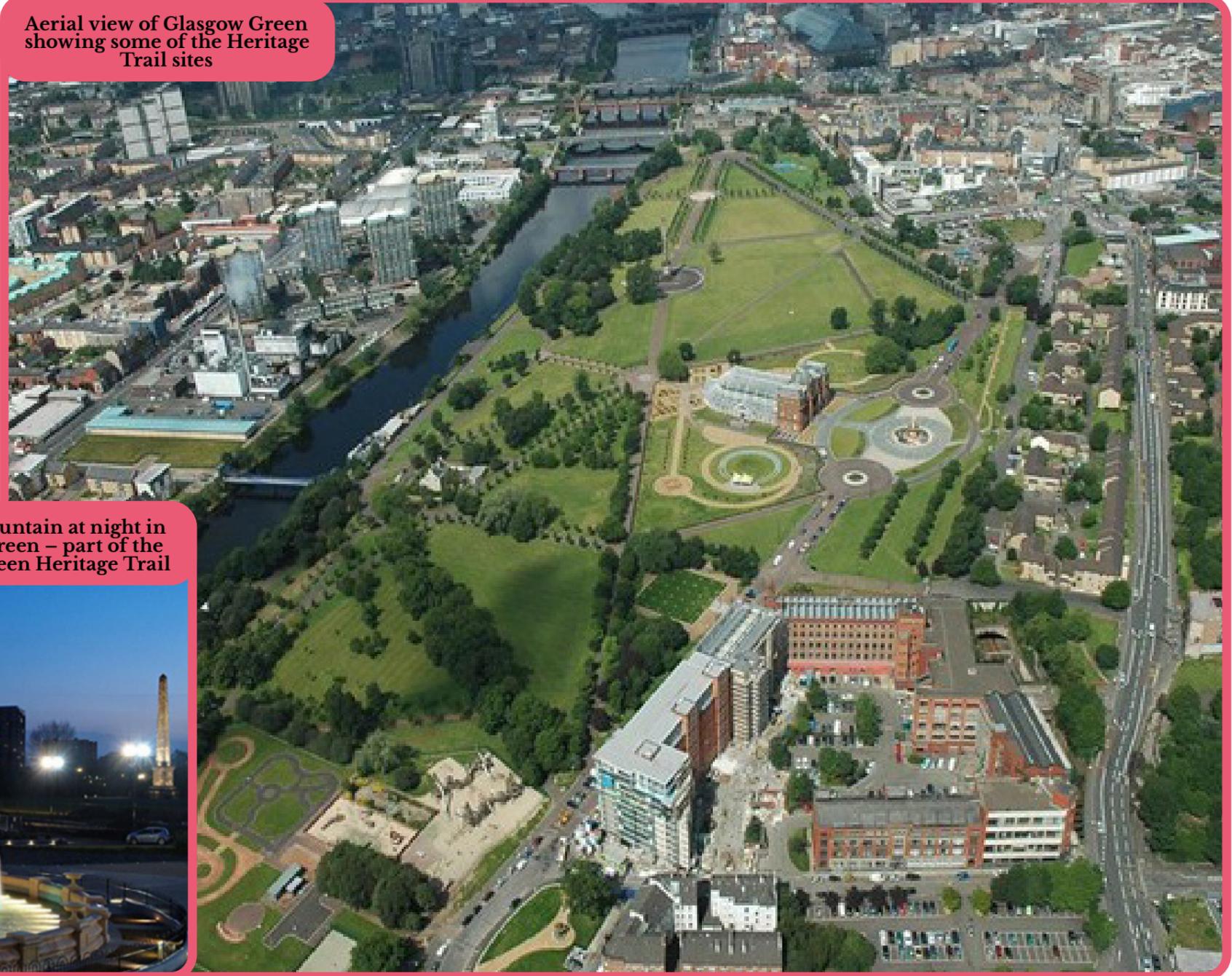
Scottish Poets Garden in Queens Park

Bellahouston Park, Papal Visit Commemoration Garden, His Holiness Pope Benedict 16th

Bellahouston Park, Papal Visit Commemorating Retaining Wall, His Holiness Pope John Paul 2nd

Cathedral Gardens Castle Street, Prince William of Orange Memorial Garden
 Knightswood Cross War Veterans Gardens
 La Passionara on Clyde Street for the Veterans of the Spanish Civil War
 Wallace's Well and the Wallace Memorial at Robroyston
 Irish Famine Memorial Gardens on Glasgow Green
 Bob Innes peace Garden in Springburn Park

Aerial view of Glasgow Green showing some of the Heritage Trail sites



Doulton Fountain at night in Glasgow Green – part of the Glasgow Green Heritage Trail



[Click Here](#)

To view the Heritage Trails

[Click Here](#)

To view the City Centre Mural Trail

[Click Here](#)

To view the Contemporary Art Trail

[Click Here](#)

For advice on getting around Glasgow

Parks Development

Meet Our Team

Gorgeous moth spotting by Derek while doing an ecological survey of Ruchill Park



Ladybird spotted in overgrown area on Great Western Road



Derek helping out at the Botanic Gardens

Here at Parks Development we have a team of 21 people working tirelessly to make our parks and greenspaces a place where everyone can enjoy a clean, safe and sustainable environment. We are committed to making a contribution to important goals relating to social inclusion and improving the health and well-being of our residents while sustaining the cultural and environmental regeneration of Glasgow.

Meet Derek Wells, one of our team members who has been working for Glasgow City Council for a whopping 35 years from 1985:

“In my daily role as Horticultural Officer, I do loads of small tasks that probably go unnoticed but are vitally important and part of a bigger operation. One of my favourite tasks is looking after and organising The City of Glasgow International Rose Trials in Tollcross Park; an event that runs for 9 months of the year with the main judging taking place every August. This is a competition where qualified rose judges score the rose plants and certificates are awarded for the top roses. This year would have been the competitions 33rd year but, due to Covid 19, the event was cancelled. Hopefully in 2021 we can get it back up and running as it is a wonderful event which showcases our parks to a wider, international audience.

“I also organise the spring-flowering bulb, shrub, wildflower displays, and I assist with the seasonal-flowering bedding, flowering planters and hanging basket displays which can be seen across the city.

“Another task I do is coordinate NS COSHH assessments. That is not as glamorous as dealing with pretty flowers, however, it is an important task.

“My day to day role also includes assisting Neighbourhoods and

Sustainability operations with controlling unwanted weeds and with the choice of weed control methods.

“Over the past few months there has been a shortage of grounds maintenance operatives due to many of them supporting other areas of the department. This has allowed the grass to grow a little longer in some areas, in turn allowing myself to inspect certain areas to establish what wildflowers are present through the grass. This will allow us to reassess in which areas we could reduce the grass cutting frequency, allowing these wildflowers to thrive which will benefit pollinator insects and small mammals.

“During the Covid 19 pandemic, I have volunteered to help out with various parts of the section, including Bereavement Services working in both our crematoriums, front of house (chapel) and with the cremation process. During this spell I also made a short training video for the service to help other staff consider volunteering with the team.

“My role is varied and no two days are really the same. Having worked for the City since becoming an apprentice all those years ago, I have seen numerous changes to how we do things as technology and generational needs change. One thing that has stayed ever present is Glasgow residents love of their parks and open spaces.”



Another planter Derek is involved with at Lambhill Stables



Flowering planter at Glasgow Cathedral Derek helps maintain

Ruchill Park

Spring Flowering Bulb Display



A Selection of images from across Ruchill Park



Glasgow City Council Neighbourhoods & Sustainability (Landscape & Design section) along with a private contractor have been mass planting mixed spring flowering bulbs in many parks and greenspaces across the city using a bulb planting machine for the last 5 years. To date, over 2.5 million bulbs have been planted.

The machine can plant over 15,000 daffodil bulbs in 25 minutes compared to a gardener with a spade that can plant around 150 bulbs in 25 minutes. This has saved time and allowed our gardeners to do other tasks in and around our parks and greenspaces.

Ruchill Park in the North West of the city has received around 1 million of these bulbs and roughly had another 1 million bulbs already in the ground from previous years. Mainly Daffodils have been used due to the visual impact they provide; however, many pollinator friendly bulbs have been planted, these include early flowering Crocus and Fritillaria Meleagris to ensure an early source of pollen.

These flowers will help to establish a biodiverse area within the park that ties in with Glasgow City Council's aims to conserve, enhance and create habitats and to protect species of national and local importance.

After flowering, these large bulb areas are left uncut. By not cutting grass as short or as frequently, it allows grasses and other plants such as Plantain to seed and provide food for birds. Other plants such as Daisies and Buttercups provide nectar for hoverflies and bees. Uncut grass also allows small animals and invertebrates to nest, hunt, live and hide.

You can also grow your own bulbs at home, here's how:

Daffodils and Narcissus are great in beds and borders, they are also well suited to naturalising in grass verges, lawn edges and hedgerows. A quick and easy way to plant is to prise up the turf with a spade, place the bulbs underneath and then tread gently back down.

Bulbs can be grown in any pot, window box or planter so long as there is good drainage. Place bits of broken pottery (old broken terracotta plant pots work great) or gravel in the bottom to assist drainage and air circulation. Plant in multi-purpose compost, water thoroughly and leave in a cool place until leaves appear. Bulbs in pots can be planted much closer together but make sure they don't touch each other or the sides of the container. During the winter protect from severe frost by taking them inside or under shelter. Do not let pots dry out in the summer months.

Flowering time varies according to the variety, usually Jan-April with most daffodil varieties flowering in February – March. Try mixing different flowering times for longer display times or add some early flower crocus to the pot for an early pollen source for bees.

It is best to allow daffodil leaves and old flower stems to go very

brown before cutting back, early cutting back can cause the bulbs not to flower in future years.

Some local school children from Benview Campus were invited to the park to plant some bulbs, these bulbs were planted near the school where the pupils attended allowing them to watch the bulbs grow season after season.

The Parks Development team are hoping to host Crocus and Wildflower planting events for local schools and volunteer groups in several of our parks in 2021. This may depend on Coronavirus conditions at the time so watch this space.

Ruchill Park



[Click Here](#)

To find out more about Ruchill Park

[Click Here](#)

To watch the Ruchill Park Development Video

Water Voles in the City

Glasgow's wetlands and watercourses have always been home to the protected species water voles. Did you know that there is also a unique population of urban dwelling water voles in the North East of the city?

The unusual population was discovered in 2008, when water voles were found living over 1km from water. Ongoing research and surveys have revealed an extensive population of water voles and one urban park has the highest density of water voles in the UK, living in long grass. These grassland water voles can be found in and around the Seven Lochs Wetland Park in parks, nature reserves, greenspace, road verges and some have even ventured into gardens.

This urban biodiversity success story has featured on the BBC's Springwatch programme and it never fails to amaze people that we have our very own unique species, thriving and loving life in Glasgow.

Across Britain, water voles are classified as endangered, so Glasgow's unusually large population of water voles living in grassland is especially important and is recognised as being nationally significant.

A partnership project is carrying out research to find out more about these unusual grassland water voles to help protect them. Researchers from the University of Glasgow have received awards from the Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE) and the Glasgow Natural History Society in recognition for their work with the Glasgow Water Vole Project.

Liz Milne, ALGE's Chair, said "the large number of excellent nominations, all of whom would have been worthy winners, illustrates the fantastic work and dedicated individuals working at, or with, the local government level and demonstrates how important local government is to nature conservation. The awards have been a wonderful opportunity to celebrate this contribution alongside ALGE's 25th anniversary".

The organisations working on this project include, Glasgow City Council, RSPB Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Seven Lochs Wetland Park (funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund) and the University of Glasgow.

Grassland in Garthamlock where the first grassland water vole in Glasgow was discovered in 2008



Glasgow's unique Water Voles live in grassland in urban areas
Photograph © Lorne Gill/SNH



Seven Lochs Wetland Park volunteers planting wildflowers



Water Voles live in burrows and in grassland they create small 'vole hills' at the entrances
Photograph © Lorne Gill/SNH



Robyn Stewart, University of Glasgow and Cath Scott, Glasgow City Council collecting award at ALGE Conference December 2019

[Click Here](#)

To find out more about Seven Lochs

[Click Here](#)

To find out more about water voles

Lets Grow Together

The Food Growing Team are currently working in partnership with the Royal Horticultural Society to deliver the #Glasgowgrowingschools project. This is a series of Train the Teacher Continual Professional Development (CPD) days around growing, to ensure staff can mainstream growing projects in educational establishments citywide. It has the aim of teaching the young people of Glasgow how to grow their own food and enjoy other collateral benefits which arise from this, for example;

- Reduction in food miles, Supporting local produce,
- Gentle exercise in an outdoor environment,
- Improvements to health and well-being,
- Providing opportunities for various school groups to work together,
- Access to outdoor education and locally sourced nutritious food
- Increase their knowledge around their food, where it comes from, and how they can grow their own.

The project was launched by convener of the Environment, Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Committee, Cllr Anna Richardson at the City Chambers on February 12th 2020.

The launch event was attended by over 80 educational professionals who participated in a series of breakout workshops on the day.

A further three CPD events were planned for 2020 to further enhance and embed participants' learning taking place at Glasgow's Botanic Gardens and a variety of schools throughout the city. However, due to Covid-19/lockdown #glasgowgrowingschools will be relaunched in the next school year.

Schools citywide have previously been supplied with over 400 planters to ensure they have access to a space to grow within their grounds and support will be available from the Food Growing Team at Neighbourhoods and Sustainability.

How can you get involved?

If you are a parent or pupil: talk to your school about what opportunities there are for 'growing your own'.

If you are a teacher: future CPD events can be found on CPD manager and details of events will be emailed to all schools.

How can I get growing now?

The RHS campaign for school gardening website has lots of fun and educational activities. You can go to their website using the link below.

Schools will also be able to access further support and resources when they sign up to the RHS Campaign for School Gardening.

Engaging young people with food growing is increasingly important to building resilience and sustainability in an ever-changing environment. #Glasgowgrowingschools is a great opportunity to start conversations with young people around growing and issues such as food insecurity, climate change, soil and plant health as well as complimenting their learning journey within the Curriculum for Excellence.



Just some of the participants at the Continual Professional development day learning how to grow your own (a pre-Covid-19 photo)

Want to get growing your own and don't have a watering can?

Follow this fun 'How to: make a milk bottle watering can' video from the RHS at the link below

Don't forget to take a picture and tag your colourful creations with #glasgowgrowingschools

[Click Here](#)

To create your own watering can

[Click Here](#)

To visit the RHS School Gardening Website

[Click Here](#)

To get involved with the RHS School Campaign



Parklife

If you have an interesting story or have a question, please use the button below to get in touch.

[Click Here](#)