

Community Biodiversity Action

June 09 Bulletin

Spring and early summer have been really busy and exciting things are happening in some communities. Here's a update on progress with Community Action over the last two or three months

A Bog Down in The Valley—OH?



A new footpath forming a loop linking the adjacent housing areas into Castlehill park was constructed in May.

An area for seating with interpretation has been created and a large bed scraped out for planting a Bog Garden— or more accurately— a damp clay garden. Sourcing plants, developing publicity and encouraging involvement have been a priority and the first **Build a Bog Garden Day on 19th June** went well with a dozen local volunteers and 24 children helping out.



More community events in the park are planned. Local people are starting to ask if they can have a tree planted in memory of a loved one, plans for the seating area are progressing and areas for further plantings have been marked out.

We've also been supporting the Evergreens at Whithorn primary school to improve biodiversity on a patch of land which borders the school and community centre. Here's Peter Buxton handing out wild flower seed.



Trees, Muck and Wildlife Gardens

P5 children from Johnston School, Kirkcudbright submitted the winning entry to the Dr Finlayson Environmental Challenge competition for the wildlife garden to be created at Allanton House, Auldirth. Twenty five children were involved in researching the project and their individual contributions were all cleverly illustrated around a central design.



They worked very hard and their design includes a pond, a berry hedge, a meadow, a marsh area and other features such as log piles and compost heaps.



They all deserved their day out at Allanton on May 8th when they received their trophy, dug the first turf and took part in mucky wildlife games, tree trails and mini - beast hunting.



A landscape design based on the children's submission is being worked on now by John Kennedy of Landlab and, following preparation work, children from Johnston and other schools will be involved in creating the garden over the next year.



Idea for a project? Contact 01387260127 or ruth.paterson@dumgal.gov.uk

Amisfield gets Six out of Six for Bumblebees!

All six common bumblebees were identified at the Amisfield community Bumblebee day on the 7th June to the delight of Mark Pollitt from Dumfries and Galloway Environmental Resource Centre.

Expertly caught by young Conor Templeton in bug containers, members of the community learned how to identify males, workers, queens and cuckoo bees of all six categories.



Lots of other flora and fauna have been spotted in Amisfield Community Woodland recently—including wild orchids, the chimney sweeper moth, a woodpecker, knapweed and nettles (great for bees and butterflies), wild raspberries, marble galls on the oak trees, lots of crosswort and vetches to name but a few. However, there's a lot of stuff in there that could do with some reduction management! Like thistles, ragwort and rosebay willow herb. Community members are needed to help!



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Kelvin attends Grand Opening Day at Rhonehouse Fair Green 9th May

Kelvin the paper Clydesdale Horse turned out along with a big crowd of residents to watch the wildlife boards and seating being unveiled at Rhonehouse Fair Green.



Despite Kelvin succumbing to gale

force winds at one point, a great day was had by all, with a bug hunt for the children and tea, cakes, an indoor tree trail and exhibitions of the history and conservation of the Fair Green in the Hall.



Eskrigg Centre awarded Leader funding Lockerbie Wildlife Trust

Plans for the environmental education centre were given a huge boost following a decision of the Leader Action Group to award £20,000 to match Sulwath Connections CBA funding and funding from the Community Wildlife scheme.

Jim Rae, Reserve Manager, was so delighted he walked 20k over the hills and raised another £1100! Now only a wee bit more money and some final hurdles need to be crossed before work can begin to bring this unique all ability facility to the Eskrigg Reserve.

Marvellous Moths

It's wonderful to witness the gasps of amazement from a dozen children as the contents of an evening's moth trap are revealed. The beautiful winged creatures coated in many colours and camouflages dozed contentedly amongst the folds of egg cartons whilst a dozen P6 children from Penpont were enthralled to balance them on their hands and watch them gradually begin wake up—fluttering their wings.



54 moths were found in the traps—with 23 different species. A bonanza at Allanton House grounds.

School visits

Clair McFarlan of Solway Heritage has been busy visiting four schools organising hands on and on site activities for children of all ages.

- Ae Primary—Community Tree event/wildflower planting on the banking, tree identification and games with an environmental theme
- Whithorn Primary—planting wildflowers and games with an environmental theme
- Amisfield Primary—community woodland—wildflower planting
- Langholm Primary—woodland games and mini—beast hunts

