



Abernethy in Bloom Heritage Garden

CASE
STUDY

Background

Abernethy in Bloom had ambitions to transform an underutilised corner site in a prominent location in Abernethy into a community garden, rest area and outdoor hub for residents and visitors to enjoy.

The group planned to enhance this outdoor space by delivering an ambitious themed planting scheme which reflected the medieval monastic, agricultural, fishing and manufacturing history of the village. Biodiversity would be improved by introducing pollinator-friendly plant species and increasing the variety of habitats. Visitors would be encouraged to try the medicinal herbs and edible plants grown on site, and interpretation points would bring information to life in accessible formats, enabling users to learn more about their surroundings and the village.

Other features the group planned included creating an ornate stone wall around the garden, accessible pathways, seating, feature paving, a listening post and solar lighting.

Preparatory Work

Prior to beginning work on the project a community survey was carried out to identify the features local people would like to see included in the garden. Local people were also engaged with through informal conversations, and feedback was gathered via the Abernethy in Bloom Facebook page.

Initial plans were drawn up and presented to Abernethy Community Council for approval.

As the site was owned by Perth and Kinross Council a licence to occupy was applied for, which was subsequently granted for a period of 10 years; it was confirmed that planning permission was not required for this project.

As well as ensuring the community was supportive of the project, declarations of support were provided by local Councillors. To ensure the project delivered value for money, comprehensive tendering exercises were carried out to appoint both contractors.



Project Timeline



Project Activity

As plans for the garden developed it became apparent that works would need to be delivered in two phases; probable costs estimated before the COVID pandemic proved to be insufficient to deliver all project elements due to increases in material and labour costs. Fortunately additional fundraising allowed the project to be completed to the original specification and the village now has another community-focused outdoor space for all to enjoy.

Phase 1 (2021 - 2022)

Removal of Trees

Three elder trees and one immature cherry tree were removed to make space for the hard and soft landscaping elements of the garden.

Removal of Turf

Sections of turf were removed to allow for paths to be laid and the creation of a focal seating area in the centre of the garden.

Construction of Walling

A boundary stone wall complete with feature copes was constructed around the perimeter of the garden; an additional section of wall was built to frame the seating area. Three entrances to the garden were created, two of which featured decorative stone pillars and pillar caps.

Minor repointing repairs were carried out on the existing stone wall neighbouring the burn.

Creation of Paths

A network of pathways using CEDEC limestone dry pave type bound gravel was laid, including a large area in the centre of the garden to accommodate a number of seating benches.

Site Furniture and Soft Landscaping

Four timber benches were installed in the central seating area. New turf was laid along path edges and topsoil added to the planting beds.

Phase 2 (2023)

Feature Paving

Three bespoke designed salmon shaped paving stones were laid to create a focal point in the middle of the seating area. The salmon theme was chosen to reflect Abernethy's historical connections to fishing that took place on the rivers Tay and Earn.

Site Furniture

Three information boards were installed which conveyed Abernethy's historical connections to agriculture, fishing and manufacturing. Content for these boards was developed in conjunction with Abernethy Museum.

A listening post was also installed which provided audio information about the village and the garden, along with solar lighting and a litter bin.

A timber sign bearing the words "Heritage Garden" was mounted on the front wall to welcome visitors to the new outdoor space.



Groundworks for new paths



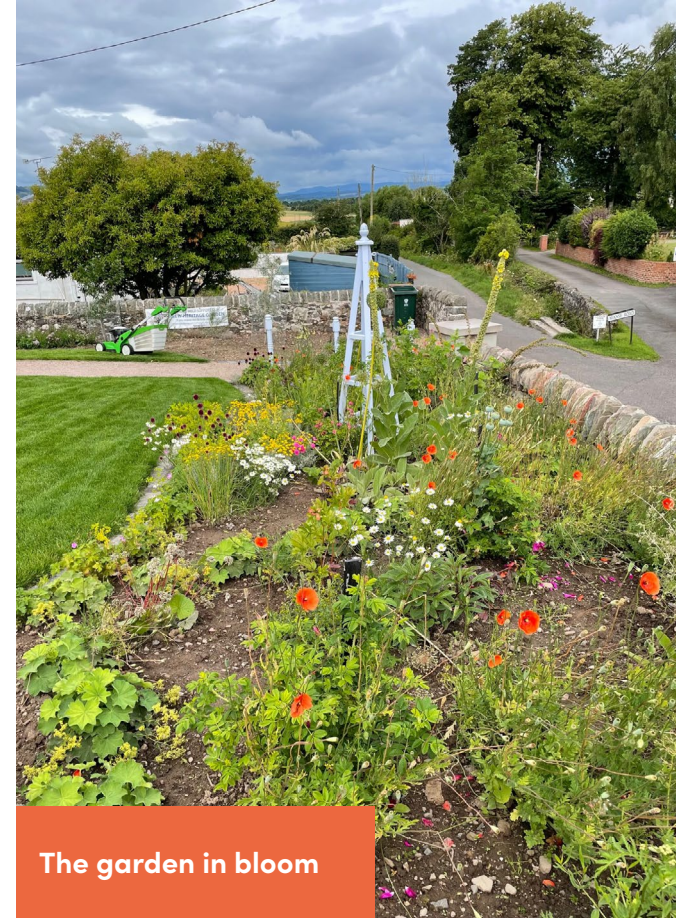
Laying new paths



Preparing the beds for planting



Seating area



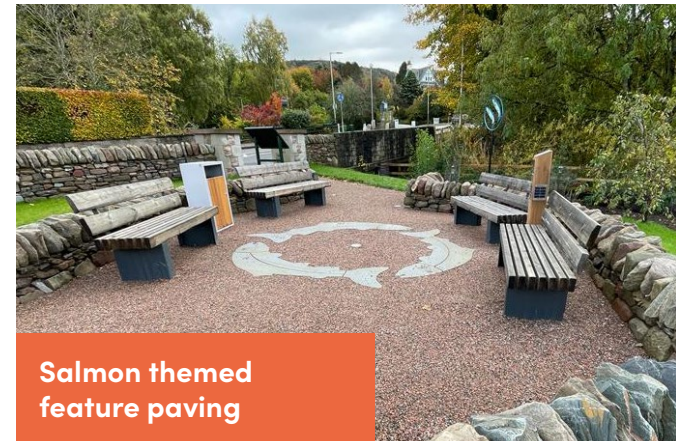
The garden in bloom



New stone wall and entrance pillars



Adding compost to the planting beds



Salmon themed feature paving

Lessons Learned

Patience is a virtue - COVID delays and disruption required flexibility, faith and perseverance.

Adapt to the weather - months of drought followed by endless rain seems to be becoming a pattern. Addition of considerable amounts of organic matter has improved the soil to help cope with these extremes.

Phenomenal growth and resistance of perennial weeds - despite covering the soil in winter and hours of backbreaking removal of weeds we eventually succumbed to the need for some weed killer. Our battle continues but with regular hand weeding we are winning!

Grow what you can yourself - apart from trees and some larger shrubs, all the perennial plants have been grown or dug up from their own gardens and donated by people from the village. Given the post pandemic rise in costs this has been a major saving and ensured we know things planted grow well in the area.

Involve the village to increase interest and support - donations and growing of plants have helped boost a sense of what can be achieved locally and created a sense of common purpose.

Project Benefits

The Abernethy Heritage Garden project realised a host of benefits for both the local community and visitors to the area. It has transformed the site from an underutilised, uninspiring grassy monoculture to an attractive garden with beautiful stone walls, paths and seating. The garden is well used by local people and visitors, providing a popular meeting space when the weather is pleasant.



The finished product

Total Project Cost

£83,685

For further information about the **Abernethy Heritage Garden project** or the **Take a Pride in Perth and Kinross Association** please email info@prideinperthshire.co.uk

Funders and Stakeholders

The Abernethy Heritage Garden project could not have been realised without the generous support of the following funders:

- Scottish Landfill Communities Fund
- Gannochy Trust
- National Lottery Awards for All
- Perth & Kinross Council Community Environment Challenge Fund
- Grocers Hall
- Mushroom Trust
- ArtRoots (Sustrans)
- Cairncross Trust
- Arnold Clark Foundation
- Perth & Kinross Council Community Investment Fund
- WM Mann Foundation
- Branston Ltd
- Abernethy in Bloom
- Take A Pride in Perth & Kinross Association
- The Community of Abernethy

Abernethy in Bloom would also like to thank the following Perth & Kinross Council departments who provided technical support and expertise throughout the project:

- Community Greenspace
- Planning
- Roads