



Registered SCIO: SC049387



Trustees' Annual Report 2022-2023



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Welcome

I would like to start by saying a big thank you to all the staff, volunteers, partners and funders. The garden has continued to grow and develop because of the hard work, dedication and support of everyone.

The Greener Peebles team are working hard to deliver our activities, new projects and engage with lots of different groups. The comments and feedback that have been received have been very encouraging and positive - people really enjoy being in the garden.

A warm welcome to our two new Board Members, Ellie Clarke and Kristina Lewis who we look forward to working closely with in the coming months and years.

I have been attending the garden as often as I can and have enjoyed meeting everyone and partaking in skill share events. It is so nice to see all the staff and volunteers working and enjoying the garden. These events are very informative and a pleasurable experience.

The young people who attend are all benefiting from being outdoors and learning new skills, even the wee ones. The garden is an asset and appreciated by people of all ages.

Team leadership is in safe hands with Dorothy as we go into the next financial year, while Nichole is on maternity leave. We wish Nichole all the best, and hope she is enjoying family time with her new baby and son.

I look forward to the continued growth of Greener Peebles in the year to come, celebrating the 10 year anniversary, and spending time with the team and volunteers. It is a privilege to play a small part in a great local organisation.



Kirsty Kondol

Chair, Board of Charity Trustees

Foreword

What a year it has been! In 2022 our members unanimously supported our change in name to Greener Peebles! A huge 'thank you' to our staff team, volunteers and the public who have been incredibly supportive of this change, understanding why we are keen to align ourselves to the values of 'green' lifestyles, food growing and a strong volunteer network at the core of what our garden is all about.

We launched our new name with a redesigned website and a strong presence on social media. We are always thrilled to see the comments and responses from our community to the work we are doing in the garden.

April 2022 kicked off with the launch of a new project – Growing Community Wellbeing – this will be one of our main projects for the next 2 years, designed to offer volunteering opportunities which support people's wellbeing, and learning about mental health in a safe, non-judgemental way.

The garden also secured funding this year for some key new developments – an eagerly anticipated extension to our herb garden, engaging programme of skill shares, some very exciting community events, and of course lots of activities to celebrate local seasonal food.

Lockdown at last feels like it is gaining some distance, yet we are taking forward our experiences from the last few years. Our team have proved themselves to be adaptable to supporting volunteers in various ways we could not have predicted. We have listened to the voices of our community and created a programme of activities which are engaging and fun. The second half of 2022 has brought fresh challenges, the rising cost of living and anxieties from everyday life have been felt by all our volunteers.

Never has the value of connecting with others been clearer – for all the volunteers giving their time in the garden, forming friendships and making memories – and to working with our partner organisations across Peebles and the Scottish Borders. We look forward to developing and strengthening our community links – after all, we have a big milestone approaching in 2023 – our 10 Year Anniversary!

I always say, every year we grow stronger and better, this year is no exception. Thank you to everyone who gives their time and skills to help our garden thrive.



Nichole Dow
Projects Manager

Who We Are

Our Mission Statement

To promote involvement of the local community, especially young people and those who are isolated or vulnerable, in experiential learning activities which safeguard the health of the planet and enhance the sustainability of the local environment of Peeblesshire.

Our Strategy

To help people discover new ways to create a self-sustaining and more inclusive community using our values.

Our Values

Ecological integrity
Sustainable development
Social inclusion
Empowering people to be the best they can be
Discovery learning
Promoting a healthy lifestyle



Staff Team

Projects Manager: Nichole Dow

Community Growing Coordinators: Heather MacKay, Helen Copley and Rachel Kerr

Administrator: Rachel Kerr

Bookkeeper: Linda Nguyen

Board of Trustees

We are extremely grateful to our trustees, who give their time and guidance to support Greener Peebles.

Chairperson: Kirsty Kondol

Treasurer: Ian Carr / Dorothy Orr

Secretary: Richard McDowell

Non-Office Bearing Trustees: Ellie Clarke and Kristina Lewis

In July 2022 we said a warm thank you and goodbye to Ian Carr, who moved on from his Board position after many years of support. Ian has given his guidance and dedication to helping Greener Peebles from it's origins back in 2013 to where we are today – a thriving community asset. Ian has overseen all our steps to success, and our challenges, we are all grateful for how he has helped lead our group and garden.

Kirsty Kondol took on the role of Chairperson, continuing her varied involvement with our community garden since the gates first opened in 2013. Kirsty's unwavering enthusiasm and support has been fantastic leadership during a very busy year. Working behind the scenes, Kirsty has given more of her time and guidance than people will ever know! Thank you Kirsty.

This year we welcomed three new trustees to join our Board – Ellie Clarke, Dorothy Orr, and Kristina Lewis. Our new trustees are actively involved in the community garden activities and skill share sessions. We are excited to have their input and guidance taking Greener Peebles forward.

What We Do

Activities

474 people took part in our community garden activities in 2022- 2023

99 Volunteer Sessions
88 Grow Kids sessions
23 Grow Babies sessions **NEW to 2022**
27 Skill Shares
5 Community meals at our garden
18 High school sessions
3 uniformed groups

Impact

- Promoting **healthy lifestyles** – outdoor activity, connecting with nature, food security, growing and eating local produce without use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides.
- Improving mental health and **wellbeing**, reducing social isolation, increasing **peer support**.
- Raising awareness of **local climate action** - community growing, waste reduction and active travel.
- Developing **skills and confidence**.





Partnerships

Peebles High School

Tweeddale Youth Action & Food Punks

Victoria Park Day Centre

The Food Foundation

Interest Link

Outside the Box

Scottish Borders Council: Community Learning and Development, Social Health and Care, Adult Learning, and Unpaid Work Team

Tweedgreen

Abundant Borders



Our Projects

Our largest project in 2022-2023 was **Growing Community Wellbeing**, funded by the Scottish Government's Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund.

Greener Peebles, like so many other third sector organisations felt a strong call to help communities, both during and after lockdowns. Our team experienced an unprecedented number of disclosures of people struggling with mental health issues in the wake of the pandemic.

Growing Community Wellbeing offers support to people by offering volunteering in a community setting – connecting with others and learning new skills. Our greenspace is inviting and relaxing, we all know how spending time outdoors and connecting with nature feels therapeutic. Our garden promotes and offers this to local people – uptake for our sessions and activities has been continuously strong.

In addition to providing these activities, we wanted to explore greater understanding of mental health, removing stigmas which are a barrier to discussing mental health, and encouraging mutual support. Our staff team all completed Mental Health First Aid Training, and we partnered with Health in Mind to deliver four Skill Shares dedicated to topics of wellbeing.

Our survey results show the positive impact of our activities: being outdoors and connecting with others. We look forward to continuing this project, funded until April 2024, and seeing the longer term impact it will have on wellbeing in our community.



We know our activities make a difference to people's **wellbeing**.

Growing Community Wellbeing Survey data collated in August 2022, based on the NHS 'Five steps to mental wellbeing':

Since participating in Greener Peebles activities, I feel...

- Volunteering has helped me to meet new people – 84%
- More involved in something meaningful in my community – 81%
- My connection to my local community has improved – 80%
- The amount of contact I have with different groups of people (such as people of different ages (intergenerational activities), backgrounds and lifestyle) has improved – 74%
- I feel I am contributing more to my community – 71%
- My ability to make new friends in my local community has improved – 70%
- The amount of contact I have with people who have similar interests to me has improved – 69%
- The number of opportunities I have to learn new skills has increased – 68%
- More connected to the natural environment – 66%
- I have more opportunity to be physically active – 65%
- My ability to access to fresh food has improved – 64%
- More able to share my experience, skills and knowledge with others – 60%
- My ability to make healthy choices for my body has improved – 60%
- The amount of time I spend outdoors and in nature has increased – 58%
- I feel more supported to try new activities – 58%
- My sense of pride about my achievements has increased – 55%
- I find it easier to connect to the present moment, without worrying about the past or the future – 52%



Volunteer for Wellbeing at your community garden

**Volunteering brings
many personal
benefits...**

Give back to
your community
by helping out

Connect with
others and make
new friends

Be physically
active, and take
home a harvest
of veggies

Learn new
skills and try
new things

Enjoy nature
and being
outside in our
greenspace



We run two sessions a week, with tasks suitable for all abilities and interests.

Everyone is welcome to take a harvest home!

The Greener Peebles Community Garden is behind the Victoria Park Day Centre on Kingsmeadows Road. To find out more, please contact info@greenerpeebles.org



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot



Seed Project

One of Greener Peebles' successes in 2022 was our seed saving project in our community garden. To our surprise we had recently we learned that many popular seed varieties don't actually produce growable seed. Not only does this mean gardeners need to buy in new seed packets each year, it actually threatens the sustainability of our food system. If the vegetables we grow can't make seeds, we inevitably need to keep mass producing all food seed, and become reliant on buying in new infertile seeds each year – this is a far cry from the natural cycle of growing!

We started by purchasing heritage seeds and trialled this project to create our own seed library. We grew our vegetables and flowers as usual, and used the methods outlined here to save and store the seeds. The community garden has saved bags of seeds using these methods, and we run an annual seed swap event at the beginning of the growing season. Everyone is invited to come along, and share different tried and tested seed varieties from our garden, and from their gardens at home. Gardeners are often keen to share their tips about growing delicious produce too, so there is added fun hearing all about the different varieties. It doesn't get more local and community led than that!

"We've been saving some seeds at home since the Greener Peebles skill share, we've now got broccoli and peas and beans. It feels good to move towards being more self sufficient..." Volunteer

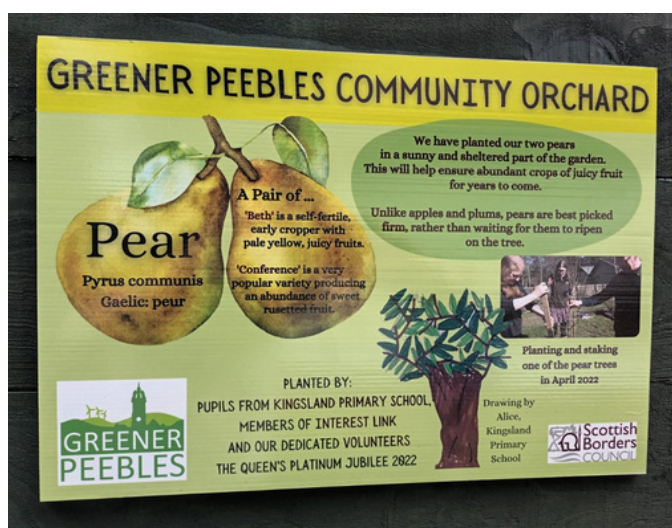
This growing season we sprang into action, beginning by carefully purchasing heritage seed varieties which we can harvest and store ourselves. Our vision is to build a community seed library, so local people can save and swap varieties of seed they grow in their gardens. This year we planted lots of new exciting varieties, in an effort to reduce our use of the F1 Hybrid seeds. We followed these "seeds" throughout the year, hosting skill shares on seed collection, storage and producing resources for our website giving advice and information on how to do this. Our learning from this project is reflected in our Seed Resources available on our website.

Community Orchard and Jubilee Celebration

We were keen to increase the amount of fruit trees in the garden, both to give us more fruit to harvest and also to have enough trees for an orchard. In Spring volunteers planted two pear, two plum and two more apple trees, staff member Helen designed information boards for them, and the orchard was officially opened by our then newest trustee, Ellie Clarke, at the Platinum Jubilee Cream Tea.

Local environmental organisations Tweedgreen and Greener Melrose also joined us at the event to talk about Transition Towns. Food Punks provided the delicious scones and vegan cake.

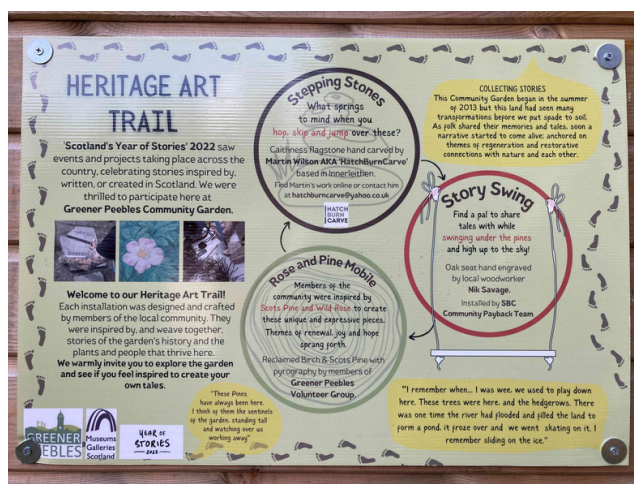
The event, the new fruit trees, and the information boards were funded by the Scottish Borders Council's Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fund.



Heritage Trail Project



We were delighted to be awarded funding through 'Scotland's Year of Stories' (YS22) to enable us to share the garden's heritage. YS22 saw events and projects taking place across the country, celebrating stories inspired by, written, or created in Scotland. Our project began with our fantastic Summer Solstice celebration in June, with storytelling from Dougie Mackay, and performances from the local Dance for Parkinson's group; Where's the One? drumming group; and circus artist Juzstina Hermann. We will remember this shared experience for a long time to come. The creation of a heritage trail was the key legacy of this project, consisting of information boards, carved Caithness Stone paving, a carved wooden swing, and wooden discs engraved using pyrography and installed around the garden. Each installation was designed and crafted by members of the local community. They were inspired by, and weave together, stories of the garden's history, the plants and people that thrive here and their connections with the Solstices.





Community Garden Highlights

Seedling Swap and Easter Treasure Hunt

Our first community event of the year, was the Young Plant Swap on 23rd April. 30 people joined us for venison or vegan chilli prepared by Food Punks, and over 50 people came to participate in the plant swap. We gave people a space to bring excess plants from home and share these with others in the community. There was no obligation to bring a plant, anyone could turn up and adopt one and give it a new home!

That morning we also held an Easter Treasure Hunt around the garden attended by 20 children. Younger children searched for and collected a list of garden 'treasure', and older children followed clues to find letters that together would make a word. This was great fun for young and old, and finished with a chocolate reward kindly donated by Tesco Peebles.

Herb Garden Extension

Our herbal aspirations had been developing for some time before we hit upon a design to extend the existing herb garden by building a wooden raised curved bed behind the tree and existing stone wall to effectively form a spiral shape. We are very grateful to the Unpaid Work Team at Scottish Borders Council for building the new section over the course of the year.



The Kiltwalk, 'Film Seeds', and 'Green Hallowe'en'

In September, our amazing fundraising volunteers Andy and Rosa took on the Mighty Strider 16.5 mile hike at the Edinburgh Kiltwalk for the second year, raising £1,023 for the community garden.

As part of the 'Film Seeds: Pollinate!' tour of the Borders, we were delighted to host Kerry, Fraser and their Moving Images solar-powered caravan in the garden. They showed 9 short films on a rolling programme throughout the day, on themes of climate change, community gardens, and the environment. Joining them was Claire leading some Climate Conversations, Elisa from Tweeddale Youth Action and Emily from Connecting Threads: Tweed River Culture with home-grown cinema snacks with a difference! Food Punks made their delicious pizzas on site for our community meal. This special event really showcased the garden as an outdoor hub for community events.

In October, Clare Donaldson joined us to lead 'Green Hallowe'en'. She reminded us that it's about much more than ghost stories - it's about using everyday and natural items to make costumes and have fun. Parents and children alike had a great time dooking for apples; storytelling with the company of two turnip lanterns; collecting no-hands treacle scones; and collecting leaves and sticks to make a mask!





Permaculture & Awards

In January 2023 we asked permaculture expert James Chapman to come and visit us. Our aims were twofold: to find out about the principles of this approach to food growing, and to discuss how we might apply these in the community garden. James gave us much to consider - we know it will take time, but we are excited to start this journey.

In Autumn 2022 we were delighted to be given a Gold in the 'Cultivating Communities Award' category of the Scottish Borders Council's Greener Gateway Community Awards. In February 2023 we won 'Best Group' in the Volunteer Centre Borders' Loving Our Volunteers Awards. We are incredibly fortunate to have such a friendly and willing group of regular volunteers who come to the garden week in, week out, all year round, and without whom the community garden would not be the welcoming, supportive and successful place it is. In 2023 we look forward to celebrating the 10-year anniversary of the community garden, and all its achievements.



Grow Kids

We think our Grow Kids are superheroes. They don't just work their socks off, they work their wellies off too! These teams of families with young children are essential to the success of the garden year in, year out. The Grow Kids programme flies our flag both for outdoor learning and sustainable income generation. With a long waiting list, we introduced a new group in 22-23, and hope to introduce more next year.

Here are just some of the jobs they have helped with:

- Weeding a plot, shovelling compost onto it and planting beans
- Tattie planting - a big thanks to Priorsford PS for providing some of our seed potatoes
- Fleecing the strawberry plants to help protect the flowers from the cold night air
- Planting, e.g. peas, radishes, sweetcorn, onion
- Transporting our homemade compost to help fill the raised bed in the polytunnel
- Pulling up all the old kale from last year and chopping it up for the compost



Grow Babies

In summer 2022, with funding from Cattanach, we ran a pilot block of "Grow Babies" - a parent peer support and baby sensory group in the community garden. The summer months are an ideal opportunity for families to come together and explore the outdoors. Grow Babies is a 1-hour session for expectant parents, and families with newborns up to toddling. We offer a hot drink, biscuits and a chance for families to enjoy the garden space. Sessions include a gentle garden activity (for example seed sowing or harvesting) and a sensory activity (such as smelling and exploring herbs or tasting fruit and veg). Participants can relax, share their experiences and connect with others. The pilot was so successful that Grow Babies continued, and by the end of the year had become an established programme.

Feedback from our first session:

"I love that Annie is going to know where fruit and veg comes from at such an early age and that some of the first food she tries will be fresh from the garden"*

"As a mum with significant mental health challenges, knowing I have a place of calm to come to on a Friday afternoon just helps me get through the week to be honest. And then I felt it throughout the whole weekend and I'm certain Angus did as well"*

*names changed





Skill Shares

We love learning, we know how good it is for our wellbeing, and so we adore our Skill Shares! This fun, broad and flexible programme offers the opportunity for anyone in our community to share a skill with others within the inspiring and informal garden environment. Our aim is to offer at least one Skill Share a month, however in 2022-23 we hosted 27 Skill Shares, many of these led by either regular volunteers or local residents, and even an international visitor!



Willow

Seed Sowing (two sessions)

Herbal - Plantain

Storyboards

Sing for Wellbeing (two sessions)

Beeswax Wraps

Wellbeing: Sleep

Seed Collecting (two sessions)

Spanish (two sessions)

Wellbeing: Music

Herb Garden Showcase

Wellbeing: Mental Health Conversations

Herbs for Cooking

Herbal Cleansing Sticks, Teas, Oils

Drama for Children

Yurt Care

Green Hallowe'en

Chutney Making

Upcycled Christmas Decorations

Willow Stars

Upcycled Christmas Crackers

Winter Wander & Wreath Making

Winter Lanterns

Herbal Immune Booster

Garden Planning

Wellbeing: Food and Mood





Community Meals and Pick Your Own

To be able to offer at least four community meals a year is another important aspect of our work. The act of sharing a meal together in the garden helps build resilience within the local community. We work with our local charity catering partners, Food Punks and The Food Foundation, and where possible they use some produce from the garden in the meal.

Our Pick Your Own events create the opportunity to encourage the wider community to come and experience the garden and harvest their own fresh fruit and vegetables to take home to feed themselves and their families. Everyone who comes enjoys the wholesome satisfaction that results from taking part in this activity with others.



Pick Your Own Event



Friday 16th September 3-4pm

Greener Peebles Community Garden, behind Victoria Park Centre,
Kingsmeadows Road, EH45 9BH

Come and pick your own fruit, vegetables and herbs
from the Community Garden.

We expect the following produce to be ready for harvest:
apples, spinach, chard, beetroot, potatoes, onions,
beans, a variety of herbs and more!

How it works:-

1. Bring a container or bag.
2. Pick the fruit and vegetables signposted 'Ready to Harvest'.
3. Pay what you can afford - cash donations only please, no change will be given.
4. Enjoy your freshly picked food!

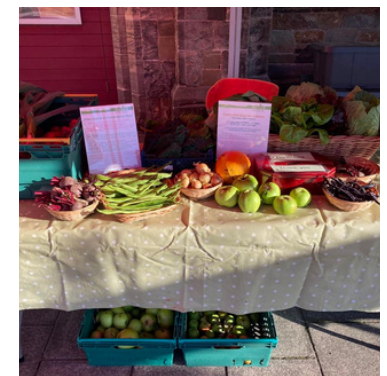




Community Links

Community Events

We have a limited but valuable outreach remit which we carry out with great pleasure. It is at events such as the Saturday Market, The Bridge Christmas Market, and the Peebles High School Support Hub, that we have the opportunity to connect with more members of our community and offer our support, be that through recruiting volunteers who will benefit from all the garden has to offer, or offering freshly harvested locally grown produce for their dinner table. Even the local theatre quiz is a chance for us to promote the garden - in fancy dress of course!



From Peebles to Helensburgh and Lewis

Greener Peebles has inspired those who have worked in the garden and moved away to establish new community gardens in those places.

Jess McLean

Greener Peebles is such an inspirational garden, I really enjoyed working in it, on the projects it runs, and with the staff and fabulous volunteers. They were full of exciting new ideas and created a fabulous garden to span the interests of all ages.

I was sad to leave Greener Peebles to relocate to Rhu, Helensburgh, but I took ideas and inspiration with me and with the help and input of my new local community in Rhu, and Nichole and Rachel of Greener Peebles, I applied for and was awarded National Lottery Community Funding and The Edible Garden at Rhu Hall was formed!

The Edible Garden has received great support from the local community: we have a men's construction group who undertake the handy work such as erecting a new polytunnel and repairing the old garden shed; a gardening group; and we are soon to start our own Grow Kids, a copy of Greener Peebles, but when it works so successfully why not copy it! Thank you Greener Peebles.



Christopher Smail

The Hebridean Community Garden is a new horticultural project on the Isle of Lewis. It was founded in 2020 as the first community garden on the community-owned Galson Estate. The project has continued to grow since then – it currently operates three polycrubs; a sensory garden to promote mental health and wellbeing; an outdoor classroom for environmental education and a series of wheelchair-accessible raised beds.

The garden runs its own honesty box through the summer months – with fresh vegetables, flowers and herbs going directly to the community. We also lead workshops with primary schools in the area; donate excess produce to a local food bank and collaborate with health and wellbeing charities on the island to promote gardening as a therapeutic resource. All of this is made possible by our generous funders – whose names and details can be found on our website.

Its project manager is Christopher Smail – he is from Peeblesshire and was previously a volunteer and staff member at the Greener Peebles community garden:

“I learned so much from time at Greener Peebles and its ground-breaking community garden at Victoria Park. It is such a valuable resource for the Peebles community and watching the space grow and mature over the years was a wonderful experience. The staff and volunteers were always so dedicated and innovative in the ways that they sought to engage to community in different facets of horticulture.”



Images credit: Fiona Rennie

Thank You to Our Funders

Funding is an ongoing challenge for small third sector groups like Greener Peebles. We have been successful in securing funding for the coming year 2023-2024, and will continue to be optimistic and make every effort to renew our funding year on year.

We are generating a small income through leasing out plots to the community, Grow Kids sessions, and sale of produce. Our future plans to generate more income include continuing our garden hire initiative, with support from a programme we've been taking part in this year called 'Steps to Sustainability', funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and delivered by Social Enterprise Academy. These are small but important steps, and we will continue to look for opportunities to sustain our work financially.

We are extremely grateful to the following organisations and individuals who funded our work in 2022-2023:

The Scottish Government
The National Lottery
Museums and Galleries Fund
Robertson Trust
Bank of Scotland
Scottish Borders Council
Cattanach

The McCarthy & Stone Charitable Foundation
Groundwork UK
The Green Action Trust



Income & Expenditure

Income:

Funders £84,263

Donations £888

Fundraising £1,128

Services/Grow Kids/Market £7,066

TOTAL £93,345

Expenditure:

Staff £66,478

Direct Costs/Subcontractors £17,677

Overheads £25,474

Depreciation £1,890

TOTAL £111,519



Thank You to Our Volunteers and Partners

Greener Peebles trustees and staff would like to say a huge thank you to all of our volunteers and partners who give their time and work so hard to make our community garden a friendly, supportive and productive place to be.

