Registered SCIO: SC049387

GREENER PEEBLES

Trustees' Annual Report 2023-2024



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Welcome

As Chair of our cherished community garden I would like to thank all the team for all their hard work and dedication, not to mention the wonderful volunteers, Board members, funders and of course the parents and children who attend our sessions. The contributions of our team sustain our garden and enrich our community in countless ways.

Our garden thrives on the tireless efforts of everyone! It takes a community to keep the garden growing and our space has people of all ages attending on a regular basis, which is what makes it such a special place.

Greener Peebles has celebrated it's 10 year anniversary and lots of awards again this year, which is a testament to the organisation and everyone involved. Our garden continues to flourish thanks to our incredible team and supporters. Our sessions and skills-shares continue to attract people from all walks of life and I am so grateful to everyone taking part.

Lets look forward to many more seasons of growth in our beautiful garden.



Kirsty Kondol
Chair, Board of Charity Trustees



Foreword

As always, I'd like begin my reflection on this year by thanking our exceptional volunteer and staff team for another very successful year in the community garden. Our team do an amazing job, sowing seeds, caring for plants, digging, weeding, harvesting - whatever the weather! – they are out there caring for our cherished garden space.
We have plenty of practical achievements to note – adding another storage shed, cold frame, and upgrading our watering system, to name just a few.

Our garden is so much more than just the food we grow. When I hear people say they "couldn't imagine their lives without the garden" it is extremely heartwarming, and shows the intangible social value of our garden. Looking over our photographs, quotes and feedback from volunteers featured in this report, it is clear to see the positive impact our garden brings to our community. I know I speak for everyone involved when I give our volunteers a round of applause for all their efforts!

10 Year Anniversary

Celebrating our 10 year anniversary has been a milestone achievement for our group. When Greener Peebles first took on the space it was an empty lawn, which over the years we have transformed into a thriving growing space.

Now, we have over 30 community growing spaces, and features spaces, including:

The "Barn"	Storage Sheds	Willow Tunnel
Yurt + woodburner stove	Composting Bays	Fruit Bushes
Walk in Netting Cage	Composting Toilet	Community Orchard
Herb Garden	Seating Areas	Flower Areas
Cold Frame	Peace Garden	40 Leased Growing Spaces



Over 10 years our garden has also touched the lives of so many people. When the garden began, we started with a handful of enthusiastic volunteers, planning the garden layout, and landscaping the very first growing spaces. Over the years, we have attracted more people, volunteer retention is high, and our activities, events and services have expanded so we now reach around 500 people per year.

The intergenerational aspect of the garden is particularly well praised, and what I personally see as a great strength of our projects. Our early years and family sessions, Grow Babies and Grow Kids introduces the very youngest and their families to gardening. We witness so much joy at these sessions. We have engagement with the local schools and youth groups, and it is a pleasure to see the energy of pupils responding to being outdoors and getting stuck into the practical tasks.

Then, of course, adults of all ages and abilities take part in activities, and we must give a special mention to our dedicated retired volunteers. We have a number of particularly dedicated volunteers (you know who you are!) who give their time during volunteer sessions, and also outwith, by joining one of "teams" of volunteers who help to tend to the garden is various ways. Thank you!

2023 Projects

This year, we have enjoyed Year 2 of our Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing project "Growing Community Wellbeing" and I'm delighted we have secured this funding for another year. The new project "Greener Wellbeing" will expand on the first 2 years, and enable us to run a variety of practical outdoor wellbeing activities over the summer, in addition to our regular volunteering activities.
Further information on our work this year - and awards we won! – is included in this report. I feel very inspired by the efforts of all our volunteers at the time of our 10 year anniversary, and I look forward to the years to come.
THANK YOU to all our garden users and supporters for another eventful year in 2024!



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: Dorothy Orr / Nichole Dow
Community Growing Coordinators: Heather Mackay, Helen Copley, Rachel Kerr, Lau Brown
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: Richard McDowell
Secretary: Ellie Clarke
Non-Office Bearing Trustee: Kristina Lewis

In May 2023 we welcomed new staff member Lau Brown to the roles of Garden Assistant and Grow Kids leader. Lau also works as a gardener for private households and so they bring a wealth of valuable knowledge to the community garden, as well as a keen interest in supporting garden volunteers and young families to enjoy learning how to grow food. In October Lau became a Community Growing Coordinator.

In September we said a fond farewell to Heather Mackay. Heather joined Peebles CAN as a staff member early in 2020 after taking part in Grow Kids sessions with her children. Heather's 'can do' attitude and her welcoming and enthusiastic nature helped to grow our volunteer base and to ensure Grow Kids continued to develop as a self-sustaining programme. We thank Heather for all she brought to the organisation, and wish her all the very best for the future. We look forward to continuing to see her at garden events.

We encourage our volunteers and those wishing to show their support for the garden to become members of Greener Peebles. They can currently do this for free, and are then able to vote at any Special Members Meetings that may be called. On 31st March 2024 we had 18 members.

What We Do

Activities

526 people took part in our community garden activities in 2023- 2024

108 volunteer sessions
140 Grow Kids sessions
30 Grow Babies sessions
3 community meals at our garden
18 Skill Shares
2 uniformed group sessions
7 Sing Kids sessions
8 garden hires

Impact

- Promoting **healthy lifestyles** – outdoor activity, connecting with nature, food security, growing and eating local produce without the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides.
- Improving mental health and **wellbeing**, reducing social isolation, increasing **peer support**.
- Raising awareness of **local climate action** through community growing, waste reduction and encouraging 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
Dementia Friendly Tweeddale
Scottish Borders Council: Community Learning and Development, Social Health and Care, Adult Learning, and Unpaid Work Team
Abundant Borders
Scottish Borders Climate Action Network
Pollinators Along the Tweed
Alchemy Film and Arts













Our Projects

Our largest project in 2023-2024 was Year 2 of **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 core activities, we wanted to offer more opportunities for members of our local community to engage in discussions that would help them understand and improve their mental health, and to continue to address stigmas which are a barrier to discussing mental health. We partnered again with Health in Mind to deliver four more Skill Shares dedicated to topics of wellbeing.

We also invited our regular and new volunteers to complete our wellbeing survey again, and once again the findings show the positive impact of our activities as a result being outdoors and connecting with others. We have secured another year of funding for this project and look forward to welcoming new partners and introducing new activities to our local community to support individuals and families with their wellbeing.







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

Growing Community Wellbeing Survey data collated in February 2024, 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 – 83%
- More involved in something meaningful in my community – 82%
- My connection to my local community has improved – 78%
- The amount of contact I have with different groups of people (such as people of different ages (intergenerational activities), backgrounds and lifestyle) has improved – 73%
- I feel I am contributing more to my community – 73%
- My ability to make new friends in my local community has improved – 66%
- The amount of contact I have with people who have similar interests to me has improved – 68%
- The number of opportunities I have to learn new skills has increased – 70%
- More connected to the natural environment – 71%
- I have more opportunity to be physically active – 68%
- My ability to access to fresh food has improved – 66%
- More able to share my experience, skills and knowledge with others – 71%
- My ability to make healthy choices for my body has improved – 61%
- The amount of time I spend outdoors and in nature has increased – 65%
- I feel more supported to try new activities – 64%
- My sense of pride about my achievements has increased – 57%
- I find it easier to connect to the present moment, without worrying about the past or the future – 52%







Community Garden Highlights

As always the garden has had an extremely successful year growing a delightful abundance of fresh fruit and vegetables for our fantastic community. Our harvests this year continued into November.

Running two drop-in volunteer sessions per week, and five early years groups, it's no wonder we are super productive! This year in the garden we put in a new storage shed, cold frame (perfect for settling our gentle seedlings before planting out) and new raised beds (specifically for those tricky to grow carrots and asparagus!). Grow Kids also gained a unique growing space, the Great Ship Grow Kids will attract attention and admiration for it's bright flag, flowers and strawberries. Pretty and yummy!

At the end of 2022 we finished our herb garden extension, and not to neglect the original walled herb garden, in early 2023 we gave this space some TLC, removing all our old tyre planters and give the bed a fresh new wooden border. The "spiral" design is now fully planted, and will be a special sensory place to enjoy for many years.







Biodiversity

We are always keen to improve biodiversity in the garden, supporting our community to take small steps to protecting and promoting our wildlife. This year we grew a new "polyculture/companion planting bed" which drew lots of attention and produced an abundance of runner beans, courgette, nasturtiums, calendula, borage, sunflowers and red orach. Not only is companion planting visually stunning, but it also provides for a range of pollinators, and it is extremely beneficial for soil health to have a variety of plants growing, rather than having a growing space which contains only one type of plant.

In the wider garden, a reduction in grass cutting (No Mow May!) has seen our greenspace be awash with sunny dandelions and other wild spring flowers including the cuckoo flower; white and red dead-nettles; jack in the hedge and daisies. These have been enjoyed by many garden visitors - the insect variety most importantly. We've been observing many insects that we saw very few of in the garden this time last year, such as peacock, red admiral and orange tip butterflies, solitary bees and many more.

We had 3 lovely sessions in partnership with Buglife Scotland, part of Pollintors Along the Tweed, leading "strolls around the garden" to identify and learn about pollinators Charlotte also taught our Grow Kids to make plant pot homes for bees from clay and sand, and hoverfly lagoons using small metal pails filled with organic matter and covered in water to take home. Thank you for these fun, informative sessions all about our insect friends!







Remembering Together

We hosted a "Remembering Together" session, as part of a series led by artists Katherina Radeva and Alister Lownie, who facilitated a gentle and engaging discussion about Covid-19 and the lockdowns, encouraging us to share our experiences of that time, and how it continues to affect us now. Many of those involved highlighted the importance of the community garden in helping them through that challenging period. The project spans the Scottish Borders and will conclude with the creation of a unique tartan, using the colours selected by participants of the project to honour our memories and experiences of Covid-19.



The Kiltwalk

We participated in our annual fundraiser; The Kiltwalk – volunteers Dorothy and Callum stepped up and marched out, taking on the Mighty Strider Challenge in Edinburgh. They smashed their target and raised over £1,000 for Greener Peebles. This money enabled the garden to purchase a new electric mower and electric strimmer. Along with our new portable solar panel and battery charger, this means our grass cutting team will be powered by renewable energy! What an incredible legacy, thank you Dorothy and Callum!





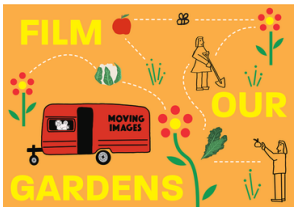
Film Our Gardens

During the summer we teamed up with Alchemy Film and Arts and Connecting Threads as part of a Borders-wide project to film our community gardens. We were thrilled to be one of the five gardens featured in the film.

Three skill share sessions supported volunteers to actively observe the garden plants and wildlife, leading to the filming of a “bee’s-eye view” of the garden, following the themes of drawing and filming, sound and filming, and filming. Thank you to all of our volunteers who took part. Their lovely drawings were bound together into a book we keep in the yurt, and their films were edited to form part of the delightful film.

After the first session, CGC Helen told us: 'Some of us brand new to drawing, some coming back to it after a while - all put at ease by Jules' gentle and playful guidance to mark making. Mostly we drew, and then we started filming, with each of us shooting a 30 second film. We were encouraged to continue our drawings as the plants change over time, and we're really looking forward to returning for sound recording and filming at the next sessions. It was an eye opening and truly mindful way to connect with the garden...a different way to the usual busyness that can happen when gardening. Stopping to properly look, appreciating the wonder and beauty of nature and how we respond to it. The rain came just at the end of our session and some of us embraced it, allowing it to run onto our drawings.’

You can watch the film here: https://vimeo.com/883212111









10th Anniversary Celebration













In September we held a celebration event to mark 10 years of the community garden. Every place tells a story, and the journey of this community food growing and sharing space in the middle of the town is a story of vision, hard work and community spirit. We thank all those who have given their time, ideas, experience, muscle and enthusiasm over the last 10 years to make the garden what it is today – a valuable, welcoming and enriching greenspace in the middle of the town for all to enjoy.

The event got off to a great start with the Where's the One? drummers, who always get us in the mood to party! Local caterers Food Punks created a delicious lunch of barbequed veg, salads, and apple crumble, all made with ingredients from the garden. Portnawack & the Woo provided magical musical entertainment, the Food Foundation made three wonderful cakes, and we rounded off the event with some very enjoyable circle dancing with Gillian Limb and friends before we got down to the business end of the day with our AGM. Thank you to all performers, partners, and everyone who came, and we look forward to the next 10 years and the developments they will bring!













Apple Day

We could not have hoped for a more enjoyable and successful first Apple Day in the community garden on 27th October, especially since it had been rescheduled due to Storm Babet - a huge thank you to everyone who joined us! Our contributors were varied and many: everyone who donated apples, Ian Copley with his fabulous apple press (and for helping us use ours for the first time too!), Connecting Threads: Tweed River Culture who rounded off this summer's brilliant Film Our Gardens project with continuous film screenings in Kerry and Fraser's Moving Images Cinema Caravan; one of our volunteers Catriona Gibson who turned the Barn into a bijou art gallery for the afternoon. Mollie's Melodies and Franziska and her Stories joined forces to lead two delightful interactive performances in the cosy yurt, kindly funded by the Scottish International Storytelling Fund. We had a lot of fun chopping, scratting (or rather, popping apples in the scratter!), pressing, and then sharing approximately 140L of delicious fresh apple juice full of immune-boosting Vitamin C with our enthusiastic participants. Some of the pomace was taken away to be used in baking, the rest was composted. The event was a real highlight of 2023!

















Winter Warming Workshops

It is clear our garden thrives during the summer months! We want to continue this momentum all year round, but we are aware that during the colder months there are less activities, not only within the garden, but also the wider community, and getting out to socialise and take part can be more challenging.

This year we ran a series of winter workshops, based on feedback from our regular volunteers, and aiming to attract new people into our garden. Directed by our Community Growing Coordinator Helen, this "Winter Warming" programme of activities made use of our cosy yurt in the winter months. Every session featured an element which connects people to the natural world, for example, going for a walk to forage, using natural items for craft, or herbs for remedies. Some were practical and others more discursive, inspiring and educating on topics including biodiversity and sustainability.











Registered SCIO: SC049387

GREENER PEEBLES

WINTER WARMING WORKSHOPS

Join us in the friendly community garden & cosy yurt for gentle paced crafting, nature connection & one-off wellbeing sessions for adults.
***All welcome** ~ particularly suited to anyone living with chronic illness/pain, disability or other limiting conditions.*




NOVEMBER

23rd, 12.30-3pm ~ *'The Biodiverse Winter Garden' with ecologist Apithanny Bourne*

27th, 1.30-2.45pm ~ *Botanical Clay Decorations*




DECEMBER

7th, 1.30-2.45pm ~ *Winter Lanterns*

11th, 2-4pm ~ *Festive Greetings Cards & Origami Boxes*

19th, 1.30-2.45pm ~ *Mini Festive Wreaths*

JANUARY

11th, 1.30-3.30pm ~ *Nature Weaving with Elisa Smith*

18th, 1-2.30pm ~ *Fire Cider, A Herbal Folk Remedy*

26th, 11-12.30pm~ *Birds in our Winter Gardens*




FEBRUARY

1st, time tbc ~ *Imbolc Storytelling with Katy Swift*

9th, 1-2pm ~ *'Singing the Spring In' with Lau Brown*

29th, 12.30-2pm ~ *End of project Celebration & Community Meal*




Further details about workshops, accessibility and booking can be found here: www.greenerpeebles.org *(scroll to bottom of web page)*

To book now, please email helen@greenerpeebles.org

FREE OF CHARGE • PLACES LIMITED • BOOKING ESSENTIAL

Scottish Borders Council

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Winter

The Winter of 2023/24 brought some challenging weather. While our activity programme was full, we occasionally had to cancel sessions due to bad weather, and particularly storms. One such storm even lost us our polytunnel! Not to be deterred, we are taking this set-back in our stride and have exciting plans for a new growing space - see "Looking Ahead"...



Warm Spaces

We concluded the winter of 2023 and spring 2024 with a "Warm Spaces" project, led by Lau. Supported by Borders Community Action, we provided a space over the cold months for community activities in our cosy yurt with wood-burner stove.
Activities included: Painting... Drawing... Knitting... Crochet... Tea drinking... and Chatting!



Easter Treasure Hunt

It feels like a long wait for spring; when Rachel puts on our Easter Treasure Hunt we know we must nearly be there! A fun family event, welcoming the children in for a "hunt" around the garden, peeping for a pot, collecting compost, sourcing a stone, and finally seeking out a seed. Children painted their plant label and took home a pot ready for the window, to water and watch it grow.





Sing Kids

Over the winter months, a new group was held in the yurt - Sing Kids! Led by Community Growing Coordinator Lau, our young musicians had a go with guitars, ukuleles, drums, shakers and bells, all whilst singing nursery rhymes and short songs.

Every session we had a short story (Lau's favourite was The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson!) and we would have a go at making all the different sounds that go with the story.

Of course, a cup of tea and a chat by the fire was a staple of every session. It's important to hydrate your vocal chords!

We had a go at making instruments out of household items too. Rainmakers out of Pringles tubes, tinfoil and rice, gongs out of turkey trays and pipe cleaners, shakers out of glass jars, small sticks, pinecones and lentils...to name a few!

Thank you to all of the sing kids and parents who came along to the block!



Grow Kids

This summer, 2023, in response to high demand from our community, Grow Kids reached lofty new heights – running for the first time ever 4 sessions per week! That's a lot of little helping hands! Since its beginning, Grow Kids has been a remarkable success, thank you to fantastic leaders Helen and Lau, who have both taken the little ones under their wings, and offer a range of fun activities.

The Grow Kids always amaze me with how quickly they pick up tricky tasks such as root cuttings, pricking out and potting up.

The Grow Kids love to munch on lettuce and chives in the garden and it's often said how they would never try these foods at home. Even when they aren't a huge fan of the veggie in the end, they're always up for giving it a try.

This year Grow Kids have...
- Weeded, dug over, raked, and barrowed
- Collected and sown seeds
- Planted, harvested (and taste tested!) – peas, beans, cosmos, dahlias, sweet peas, rubber beans, French beans, beetroot, lettuce, radishes, to name but a few!
- Made their own Grow Kids salve using calendula, chamomile and rose as well as raw rose hip syrup to drink warm during the cold sessions - all from scratch.
- Made and drunk herb tea! ...a cuppa in the yurt in the winter months, or sipping mint tea in the shade on sunny days has been a big hit.
- Taken part in many seasonal nature-based craft activities through the colder months, such as botanical clay decorations, festive wreaths, printing with apples, making pine cone bird feeders, spring bulb treasure hunt, flower and leaf pressing and winter lanterns!

For all our families who come out, rain or shine, to grow our garden and bring your sunshine THANK YOU!






Our Grow Kids families say:

"You know every time we walk past the garden, he points and wants to come in!"

"Did you know you can eat wood sorrel too and it is like the sorrel here?" 3 year old GK, whose Mum said that on the back of trying and loving the cultivated sorrel growing in the garden and the conversation we had around it, that she wanted to try the wild one too!

"He had a really difficult morning before we came and it's so lovely to see him doing so well now in the fresh air."

"He was so delighted to see a woodlouse. He has a plastic one at home but had never seen a real one until today"








Grow Babies

The second year of Grow Babies continues to bring us joy as we invite families and our new tiniest friends into the garden.

This year in the garden the babies and their families have taken part in a variety of sensory and exploratory activities, including .... themed treasure baskets, seasonal sensory play (pumpkins and apples), water play, musical instruments, ice bowl, and herbal crafts.
Highlights of the year include the 'Grow Babies Salve'. Families picked dandelion, chamomile, calendula and rose flowers, infused them in oil to make into family friendly salve with beeswax to take home. The fresh herbal teas, and rosehip syrup are always well praised by participants for being freshly made with our garden produce.
In the colder months, everyone got cosy in the yurt to create mini festive wreaths, gather and press flowers/leaves, and for a music session.

As Grow Babies entered it's second year, we experienced the first of many special moments to come (we hope!)... The first Grow Baby 'graduates' moving on to Grow Kids! It is so heartwarming to welcome the families and babies who joined us during the very first days and months of their lives, to continue building their relationship with the community garden. It is very special seeing our "Grow Babies" become "Grow Kids" and we hope their early learning in the garden inspires many more years of happy growing.













Skill Shares

In 2023-24 we hosted 18 Skill Shares:



Herb Planting
Film Our Gardens: Drawing
Wellbeing: Exercise
Film Our Gardens: Sound
Wellbeing: Gratitude and Positive Psychology
Film Our Gardens: Filming
Greek Taster
Wellbeing: Resilience
Wellbeing: Breathing



Chutney Making
Willow Stars
Foliage Foray
Winter Wreaths
Willow Tunnel Maintenance
Crochet
Apple Tree Pruning
Willow Splitting
Seed Sowing







Community Meals and Pick Your Own

We enjoy welcoming the wider community into the garden and host regular community events. We are always grateful to our super partners - Tweeddale Youth Action "Food Punks" and our neighbours The Food Foundation - who provided the fantastic catering this year.



In 2023 the garden hosted:

6 x community events with a variety of themes:

- Pollinators and biodiversity
- Greener Peebles 10 Years Anniversary Celebration
- Harvest Celebration
- Community Apple Day
- Community Picnic with Interest Link
- Spring Seed Swap



2 x Pick Your Own produce days
1 x Saturday Market stall



Garden Gifts!

We've used our events this year to sell new tote bags with the Greener Peebles logo.

We launched a Greener Peebles recipe books featuring recipes from our volunteers and partners, with an emphasis on cooking with produce grown in the community garden.

Look out at our events for a chance to pick up your gifts!

Our Volunteers Say

"The garden really is a home from home."

'I can garden at home, but it's the social interaction I need, that's why it's good for me to come here.'

"Thank you so much for organising the community meal yesterday! We love the garden so much, we couldn't imagine our lives without it now."

"I had a really difficult morning before we came and it's so lovely now to be in the fresh air."

"Such a great variety of sessions. I want to come to them all!"

"I haven't been able to attend other groups because of my anxiety but this is different somehow."

"Things like this make a big difference to me."

"It's so amazing to have the opportunity to access growing space that's so affordable – thank you so much."

"Informative and inspiring session with lots of practical tips."

"This place has honestly saved my sanity."





"I'm new to Peebles and don't know many people. I'm a carer to family members. This clay art has been the best thing for a driech afternoon. Helen is a warm and encouraging instructor. I haven't done much in the creative line for the longest time and I can't believe how much I've enjoyed the whole process. It has brought me a lot of joy in what has otherwise been a difficult year in many ways. Thank you so much for running the workshops! I look forward to attending more in future and actually getting started to volunteer in the garden too! Thank you so much."

"I really enjoyed making the fire cider in a group setting. It was nice to have a chat and help each other. It felt very connecting, working with the herbs together, and learning about different herbs from different people. Helen was clear, informative, and patient when delivering the session, taking time to listen to everyone's contributions. I enjoyed that the session didn't feel rushed, and we could take our time to enjoy the process. I learnt a lot! I would love to have more herbal workshops on the future in the garden, it felt so empowering and nourishing to connect in this way, with plants and people."

"Thank you for the time to do the wreath making, it was so relaxing, I enjoyed it and also meeting new people was lovely."

"Excellent talk – very useful information and garden tips on biodiversity, given in a very fun and friendly way."

"I hadn't realised the extent of the positive effect it (the garden) has been having on my mental health until recently when I couldn't come for a few weeks and then realised I was feeling low because I've gotten so used to the regular sessions outdoors."





Community Links

Community Events

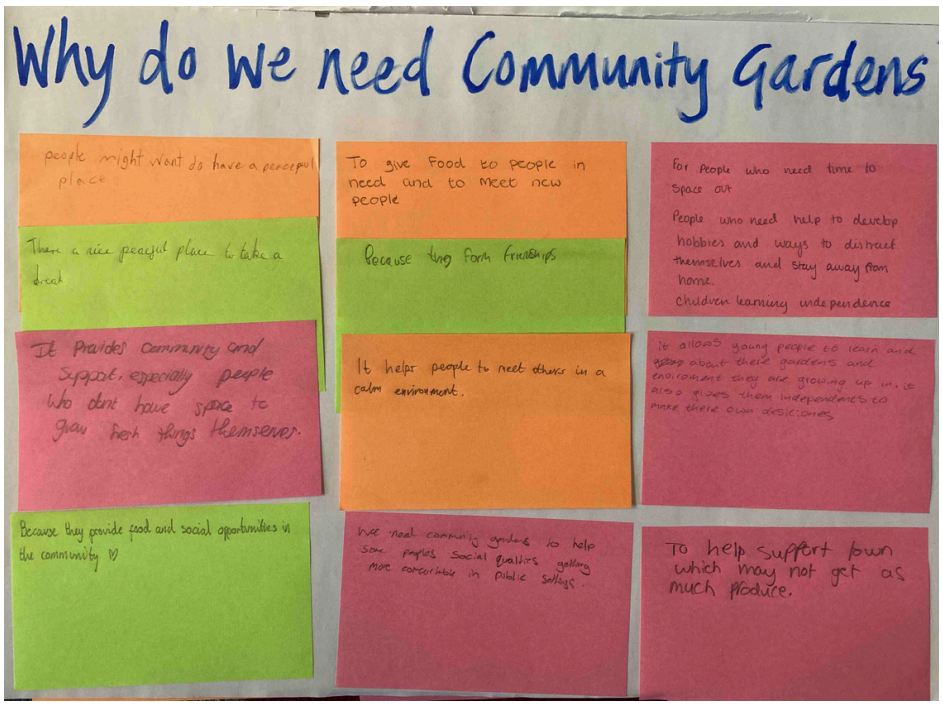
As always, we were out and about in our community and attended the following events:

Tweed Green Fayre
Haystoun Gardens
Peebles Market
Peebles Horticultural Show (won three prizes!)
2x Peebles High School showcase events

Thank you for all the invites to these events and the warm support from our community when we attend.

At one of the showcase events at Peebles High School, Rachel invited pupils to add their comments by post-it note in answer to the question "Why do we need community gardens?" Responses were insightful, recognising not only the benefit of fresh food, but also comments about wellbeing and socialising with others. Thank you Peebles High School!





Awards

We are so pleased and delighted to have been recognised at the following local awards. Thank you to the organisations who have celebrated us, it feels wonderful be recognised in such a positive light.



Awards Won in 2023 –

"Best Volunteering Group" awarded by Volunteer Centre Borders

GOLD Winner of "Cultivating Communities" awarded by Scottish Borders Council Greener Gateway Awards (second year running)

GOLD Winner "Community Garden" Peebles in Bloom "Community Garden"

"GOLD Winner of "Best veggie creature creations" to "Grow Kids" from Peebles Horticultural Society. Creations pictured below with Grow Kids Leader Helen.





Garden Hire

Following on from the exciting opportunity in 2022 to participate in the Steps to Sustainability training course, we launched our Garden Hire initiative. This involved some investment and TLC to the yurt, including new lights to improve visibility, a ramp to enable wheelchair access to the Barn/yurt, upgrading part of the flooring, purchasing games, and sundries to improve the space.

We put together a marketing leaflet and priced our spaces competitively, from research with other local spaces for hire. This is a brand new endeavour for our team, and we hope will be an excellent addition to our services.

In 2023 we had seven Garden Hire bookings, ranging from Grow Kids birthday parties, to family gatherings and group meetings. We look forward to continuing to develop this initiative into future years.

Feedback given:

"Our team had a great picnic lunch to celebrate volunteers week.... Reasonably priced for such a lovely venue and really accommodating staff."

"Thank you so much for this wonderful community service, it is tremendous and all the guests of the birthday party were impressed and delighted with the space."





Registered SCIO: SC049387

GREENER PEEBLES

Community Garden Hire



Situated behind the Victoria Park Centre on Kingsmeadows Road, the garden and its facilities are available to hire for activities and events. Book your gathering or organised activities for family, friends & community.



The Garden

~ Sensory edible and herb gardens
~ Variety of Seating Areas
~ Open grassy space for activities ~ Community Orchard
~ Living Willow Tunnel ~ Compost Toilet
~ Swing ~ Sandpit ~ Fairy Doors Trail
~ Optional gazebo



The Barn

~ Wide doors overlooking garden.
~ Sheltered space
~ Seats 8-10



The Yurt

~ Unique, atmospheric private shelter
~ Stove available in colder months
~ Seats 6-8

By hiring the garden space you are supporting a local charity. **Greener Peebles** provides volunteering opportunities for all, community food growing and practical skill development such as horticulture and green crafts.





Grow Kids Party Package!

~ **"Grow Kids"** party for ages 2 – 10 yrs.

A memorable outdoor experience to celebrate your child's birthday with plenty of space for outdoor activities, and a small seasonal treat from the garden.

~1 hour of "Grow Kids" structured activities, led by Greener Peebles staff member

~1 hour free play in the garden

Bring your own party food & games

Garden Hirers Say:

"The process of booking was incredibly straightforward, and a very positive experience, thank you!"

"Thank you so much for this wonderful community service, it is tremendous and all the guests were impressed and delighted with the space."

To find out more please see our **website**:
www.greenerpeebles.org
or contact us:
email: *info@greenerpeebles.org*
phone: *07380 167086*

This initiative has been developed with support from:

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ACADEMY
One becomes many

Cam aboot wi help fae | Made possible with
Heritage Fund

Looking Ahead

After a strong year in 2023 we look forward to another year of growing in 2024. Our planning for 2024 includes...

Upgrading our Tunnel

2024 started with a bump in the night – storm Gerrit swept across the garden, and pulled the polythene off our large polytunnel! The polytunnel has served us well for 10 years, and unfortunately despite our efforts, the polythene cannot be repaired.
Not to be deterred, we begin 2024 with a fresh goal – to raised over £11,000 for a upgrade to a polycarbonate tunnel design!
A covered space is essential to growing the great varieties of food we enjoy growing our Scottish garden. Upgrading our covered growing space to a polythene tunnel design will be positive, as using panels rather than polythene is more durable against weather conditions, and features more efficient heat insulation, extending the growing season into the colder months.

Thank you polytunnel for your bounty of harvests, warmth in the summer and shelter in the winter... goodbye old friend!





Greener Wellbeing Project

With our new "Greener Wellbeing" project in the garden we are excited to expand our partnership work this year and welcome new groups into the garden. We are passionate about the benefits our activities offer, and this year will be using our popular themed events as partnership opportunities to work with local groups.

School Growing

We are thrilled to be back out in the local schools; not one, not two, but three! Peebles High School, Halyrude Primary and Kingsland Primary are rolling up their sleeves to begin a 3 year partnership. The Greener Peebles team will lead a growing project in each school, in their own environment. Every school is unique, and our local schools all have different assets, the High School has allotments and a greenhouse, Halyrude has raised beds, and Kingsland have raised growing spaces and a polytunnel.
We are very pleased to support the pupils and teachers at each school develop their own food growing programmes in what we are sure will be fruitful long term partnership.



Peebles High School



Kingsland Primary School



Halyrude Primary School

Transition to Remote Working

It has not been a year without challenges, and one difficulty was the loss of our office space when the building was repurposed. Space which is affordable for third sector groups is becoming increasingly difficult to find. We have decided to roll with the times and become a completely remote working organisation, also supporting us to make saving on our overheads.

Income & Expenditure

Income: £128,790
Funders: £120,306
Donations: £2109
Services: "Grow Kids", Produce, Plotholders: £6375

Expenditure: £84,790
Staffing costs: £56,924
Direct project costs: £16,101
Overheads: £11,040
Depreciation: £725

Notes:
For this financial year 2023-24, a significant amount of grant funding (£44,000) has been raised in advance of next financial year, and is ring-fenced for project delivery 2024-2025, including funds going towards the purchase of our new polycarbonate tunnel.







Thank You to Our Funders

Our financial stability feels fairly good, as we have secured three grants of multi-year funding. Having these opportunities is a great boost, as it gives us a foundation of stability. 2025 is off to a good start, with no changes expected to our activities.
Nonetheless, fundraising to cover operational costs remains to be a pressing process every year. Most grants are for 12 months or less, and it is a challenge for all charitable groups to continuously need to seek funding for essential expenditures.
Each year we reflect on our ability to generate our own small income streams. Grow Kids is a huge success, we have expanded in 2023 to run four groups per week. In addition, 2023 has been piloting our new Garden Hire initiative.
Thank you to all the local individuals, families and groups who are supporting these endeavours, which are small steps to making the garden sustainable, and with the desires of our community at its core.

Thank you to Our Funders

We are extremely grateful to the following grant funders who supported our work in 2023-2024. We are dependant on streaming multiple grants which all have a significant contribution to the work we do. Thank you for your support which has enabled the successes of the past year.

Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing
National Lottery: Community
Robertson Trust
Cattanach Trust
Steps for Sustainability
Scottish Borders Council: Neighbourhood Support Fund
Community Led Local Development
Borders Community Action "Warm Spaces"
Tesco Stronger Starts

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.



