

North Berwick in Bloom annual report for AGM 2021

"We are all in this together" was our motto for 2021 once again.



The Christmas coffee morning for NBIB volunteers took place in the Glen Golf club in December 2020 where 24 volunteers enjoyed coffee, scones and wonderful views over the Firth of Forth. The Christmas jumper competition was won jointly by Julie who had embroidered her own design, and Ian who had customised his with a string of fairy lights. Little did we guess that this would be our last meeting together as Christmas was once again cancelled for everyone and we all went back into lockdown. It's hard to believe but the photos we took remind us that after Christmas we worked alone and wore masks in public for several months.

The Christmas pallet at the Abbey church brought some cheer with its display of a miniature forest complete with church, village and fairy lights. The back board was lit by yet more lights, and we enjoyed it so much we kept it going for the next few weeks until the batteries ran out. Cathy replaced the miniature churches with pots of snowdrops, then other spring bulbs, until we had a mass of daffodils in support of Marie Curie daffodil day in March.

The Tulip festival in April was a great success with wonderful displays all over the town. For the second year, it had to be 'virtual' although we did get a printed supply of Rosie's excellent leaflet so that they could be distributed to volunteer groups and household friends of NBIB.

Relaxing of regulations in May meant that more volunteers could come out for Monday morning sessions, and we soon had our usual team busy at work planting seeds, potting up, propagating, cleaning, filling noticeboards and painting benches. We teamed up with the Gardening club for a plant sale at the end of May and gave away all the tulip bulbs in return for donations.

Other tasks included replacing 33 rotten barrels at the station with new recycled plastic ones which had reservoirs to reduce watering. Just one of many measures that we are taking to be careful of our natural resources and look after our environment. We were privileged to be nominated by NISA as their charity of the year and were rewarded with a large donation in recognition of services to mental health which funded the station planters. Traffic calming measures installed in our Narrow High Street in 2020 included 15 ugly wooden boxes to safeguard the pavements for pedestrians. The NB Business Association arranged to have them painted bright blue and we filled them with miniature bulbs and bedding plants. These were replaced with herbs and vegetables in the summer, and Christine painted story boards which told people about the plants.

The Fishbox challenge and sunflower competition were displayed in the Abbey churchyard beside the pallet and prizes and certificates awarded by the Gardening club. The youngest entrant was 4 years old and delighted with his prize! Other projects included planters at the harbour in conjunction with the harbour trust and a flower bed to celebrate the 100-year anniversary of NB Brownies.

The original wooden handcart that had once belonged to a local NB painting and decorating firm stood outside the lodge for many years but unfortunately rotted away and had to be completely restored. The new one was a work of art and proudly replaced the old one, with new paint and lettering and a special plaque thanking Archie who had carried out the restoration.

The hanging baskets came back after an enforced absence in 2020 and we were able to organise several watering teams to look after them. Richard, Martin, Allen, Alex, Julie, Richard Anita and Paul were out in the town long before everyone else was up every morning making sure that the planters and baskets always looked their best. The judges visit took place in July on a beautiful day with the town looking sparkling. We were assisted by many groups and individuals who helped in the background or met with the judges. We were very touched by the enormous enthusiasm and support that we received from so many of them.

The rest of the year passed quickly, with Fringe by the Sea providing 10 days of celebrations focussed round a magnificent striped 'Big Top' tent. By a happy coincidence, our field of cornfield annuals coordinated perfectly and brought a real festival feel to proceedings.

We were delighted to be awarded a gold medal by the judges in October and this truly was an award for the whole town. We have received so much recognition and financial support from everyone throughout the year it has been a huge privilege to be part of NB in Bloom. We have had many new volunteers joining us in the past year who have added their talents and enthusiasm to the core team. The one thing that hasn't changed is our pleasure in being part of this group who work together every Monday morning, and at the end of each session, enjoy a cup of tea and chat in the car park (with many thanks to Anna!)

We would like to thank all the following groups for their support throughout the last year and we look forward to their help and assistance with our nomination for the Britain in Bloom finals 2022.

East Lothian Council Amenity Team, North Berwick Community Council, North Berwick Trust Ltd, The Area Partnership, North Berwick Golf Club, Stella Moffat Trust, The Glen Golf Club, The Harbour Trust, The Scottish Seabird Centre, NISA North Berwick, North Berwick Rotary, North Berwick Bass Rocketeers, The Coop North Berwick, Zitto's Wine Bar, The Lobster Shack, No 10, North Berwick Brownies, North Berwick Business Association,

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