

## The Dunbar Primary School Gardening Club

### Lunchtime Gardening Club 2008 - 2009

The Gardening Club for pupils was established in the autumn of 2008, when a group of keen P5 pupils wanted learn about growing plants and vegetables.

The Gardening Club is currently operated by P5-7 pupils and a core group of committed parents, actively supported by the school's Janitorial Team and Management Team. We are encouraging more parents, grandparents and keen gardeners to become involved. As the number of parents involved grows, we hope to extend the lunchtime gardening sessions to other year groups. The Nursery Unit is currently developing its Gardening Club and we hope that as more pupils, parents and teachers become involved, we can maintain the developing plots and beds to a high standard.

### Work undertaken 2009 - 2010

Our objectives last year were to rejuvenate these three plots so that pupils could further enjoy the outdoor learning experiences offered by this fantastic environment. Weather permitting, P5 and P6 pupils worked outside during Thursday lunchtimes, growing their own vegetables and flowering plants and some of these were sold at the 2010 School Fair and £75 was raised.

- **Plot 1 – Maritime Garden:** A beautiful donated wooden boat sits on the bank of shingle, and native coastal species will be planted amongst the cobbles in spring 2011. Currently the boat has been removed to Torness Power Station whose joiners have volunteered to remove and replace all the rotten wood, fit a self-draining wooden floor and a folding mast, as well as adding seating shelves around the inside edges of the boat. They will then paint it and their sign-writer will paint on the new name, once the P5 and P6 pupils have chosen it. We hope that then pupils from throughout the school will get creative and make sails and bunting and other maritime inspired materials to decorate this area. The boat will be used as an outdoor reading space and we hope to establish a programme of visiting local people who work / have worked on the coast or at sea, to talk about their work, experiences and to tell stories. Ultimately we would like the garden and school to become a venue for the Scottish International Storytelling Festival that happens annually in October.
- **Plot 2 – 6 raised beds:** A variety of vegetables have been planted in these plots over the years, mainly by P1 and P2 pupils.
- **Plot 3 – flower bed:** The third plot was used to store the excess topsoil from the maritime garden plot and a flowering plant design is currently being developed by P5 and P6 pupils.
- **Picnic tables, tool sheds and compost bins:** Three compost bins and three picnic tables, a tool store, and a shed have recently been bought and constructed.

### Donations of materials and practical support

1. A wooden traditional boat, half a wooden boat, and a dinghy were donated to the garden.
2. Crew from the RNLI Lifeboat and Sea cadets delivered these boats.
3. Lafarge donated 6 tonnes of rock to use as infill in the maritime garden plot.
4. Thomson's Lorries donated the use of a lorry and 2 staff to deliver this rock.
5. Haddington Plant Hire donated the use of a track barrow to transfer the rock from the delivery point in the school grounds to the maritime garden plot.
6. One of the lorry drivers, a parent, volunteered to drive the track barrow.
7. A group of eight parents volunteered to dig out tonnes of soil and back fill it with the donated rock, as well as constructing the 3 picnic benches and 3 compost bins.
8. Tynninghame Sawmill provided the pressure treated wood to construct the 6 raised beds and gave us a generous discount.
9. Border aggregates donated 2 tonnes of cobbles and pebbles, from the Moray Firth (worth ~ £250) and delivered from the storage depot on the Isle of Arran. (The Lancashire company owner's grandchildren attend Dunbar PS)
10. Haddington Plant Hire donated the use of a track barrow to transfer the 3 bags of cobbles and pebbles from the delivery point in the school grounds to the maritime garden plot.

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11. A group of four mums and some super keen pupils volunteered to transfer the cobbles and pebbles from the bags into the plot.
12. As a result of appeal posters put up around the town, local businesses and residents have donated compost, seed trays, plant pots, seeds and plants, including Home Hardware, Crafty Stenhouse Plants and the Rural Institute.
13. Smeatons Garden Centre donated a variety of plants, after a visit from P1 pupils and Mrs Clark.
14. The support of the Balfour Beatty Joinery Team at the Torness Power Station has just been secured (Nov 2010) who will undertake all the renovation work required for the wooden boat.
15. The Countryside Ranger, Laura Douglas, has worked tirelessly with us throughout the year and helped generate the wider business support we've achieved so far.
16. The Janitorial Team at the school have been extremely supportive and Mr Robertson, the Janitor, has constructed 4 of the 6 raised beds.
17. The school's Management Team and teachers have enthusiastically supported the project and two Depute heads (Mrs Clark and Mr Mackenzie) have been out working in the garden with the P5 & 6's on Thursday lunchtimes.
18. This club and this project would not exist without the enthusiastic and dedicated interest and practical help of the P5 & 6 pupils and the core group of five parents who come in on Thursday lunchtimes to work with the P5 & 6 pupils and at other times to undertake general maintenance work.

We have been stunned and delighted by the fantastic level of community support that we have received. We are confident that by building on this success and working closely with the developing Dunbar in Bloom Group, Sustaining Dunbar and the Dunbar Allotments, that we will generate ongoing active, practical and financial support for this exciting, visual and appealing project. We intend to encourage family involvement in the school gardens, growing flowers, fruit and vegetables. We are also building strong links with the local gardening centres (Crafty Stenhouse Plants, Smeatons & Merryhatton) and hope to extend this further.

### Plans for 2010 – 2011

Pupils that have been involved since P5 wished to continue to gardening so this year we are operating the Thursday lunchtime gardening club with two sets of pupils: P5 and P6 pupils will work on the three plots in the central garden (Frances Soutar will take the lead) and P7 pupils will create new beds and planting at the front of the school (Dee Davison will take the lead). Due to the limited number of volunteer adults able to come in on Thursday lunchtimes, we are alternating these two groups, so each meets fortnightly.

- **P7 Legacy Garden at the school entrance, funded by a Civic Pride Award of £1,500** We will be creating new planting and beds at the entrance to Dunbar Primary School, to soften the boundary of the school and to create a colourful, themed and welcoming area at the entrance to the school.

We had been intending to construct angled beds here but we realised that we could use boats from North Berwick Harbour that had been damaged by the spring storms. The Harbour Master kindly agreed and George Purvess from Oldhame Farm organised the donation and delivery of four plastic dinghies in August 2010, so we can now create a "flotilla of four flower beds".

As the Lighthouse Board is celebrating the centenary of the Bell Rock Lighthouse in 2010, and this area of East Lothian has many special lighthouses, we have decided to use lighthouses as the first theme in creating the new beds. P7 pupils will design these flower beds and will be encouraged to include some fruit and vegetables within the beds, so that they are functional as well as decorative.

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An application was made to East Lothian Council's Civic Pride fund in March 2010 for £1,500 and this was awarded In April 2010.

- **Artist in Residence** We intend to apply for separate arts funding to bring in an artist in residence to work with pupils creating new art works with a lighthouse theme. We hope to build a modular lighthouse, with each class within a year group involved in creating a module. These would be stacked and connected to 'build' the lighthouse and we hope that the Lighthouse Board will provide a working light and a Lighthouse Engineer to fit it.

Money from the Civic Pride fund will be used to purchase marine ply and paint. Local artists will help us design giant lighthouses and the Balfour Beatty Joinery Team have kindly agreed to cut these out. Pupils will then paint and decorate the lighthouses and these will be mounted on the outside of the school fencing as decorative hoardings.

- **Central Garden's 3 plots – P5 & P6 pupils** As this will be the last year that P5-6 pupils will be on the campus, this area of the internal garden will be their legacy to the school. It will be planted and pupils will design the planting. We met with East Lothian Council's Amenity staff (Andrew Hogarth and Gordon Whitelaw) and Biodiversity Officer (Stuart Macpherson) to discuss planting ideas. We are considering using American prairie plants, inspired by John Muir. They have provided us with a list of herbaceous perennials, *Echinacea*, *Rudbeckia* etc., which are relatively low maintenance. In order not to block the view of the boat, dwarf varieties would be chosen. However, the longer term plan may be to allocate this bed for a new set of raised beds that could be used by P3 pupils.

### Long term plans

- We hope that our gardening projects in the current school will inspire the local community to become involved in designing, creating and maintaining gardens in the new P4-7 primary school campus at Hallhill.
- To plant cordoned fruit trees along the south-facing sandstone wall behind the picnic tables.
- To plant low-growing, mound-forming scented shrubs along some of the paths / grass edges e.g. lavender, rosemary and the Christmas box.
- To plant clump forming grasses, with a variety of colours, heights and textures to create a maze-style installation.
- In the longer term, we would like the school to become the hub of a wider gardening community that will encourage plant and product (fruit and veg') sharing. For example, P4-7 pupils could co-ordinate the picking of fruit from the school gardens (both campuses) and other gardens in the town. These could be used within the school (Healthy Snack and school dinners), as well as being donated to local old peoples' homes etc. Vegetables, fruit and fruit products (jams and chutneys) could be sold to raise funds for the school.
- A network of keen gardeners in the town could share surplus plants, created when growing plants from seed, propagating plants, splitting plants and re-designing gardens etc. and these could be shared with other gardeners. Products such as home-generated compost as well as crops of fruit and vegetables could also be shared
- In a wider context, we hope that the planting that will be created by the Gardening Club pupils will inspire the wider community and encourage other groups to take on planting schemes throughout Dunbar so that our town's annual planting can eventually be as attractive as North Berwick.