



BIODIVERSITY AND ECOLOGY GROUP

Newsletter

Issue 3 2022

Summer 2022





In this issue:

In this, our third newsletter, we provide updates on the progress of our phase 1 and 2 projects, how our bird boxes are providing successful nesting sites along with news of further success on the funding front plus much more. Also, in this issue we provide the latest news on how our possible partnership with Buglife (Scotland) is progressing and their plans for the golf course if successful in their grant application for Lottery funding.

Initial phase 1 project progress

The initial rough area adjacent to the 7th hole planted with wild-flower meadow seed in April 2021 finally came good and provided a riot of colour in July and August and anyone visiting the meadow couldn't help but hear the constant buzz from bees and other insects feeding on the multitude of nectar rich flowers. Many golf club members, visitors and local walkers provided our group with some very positive feedback. We received over 300 complimentary comments on a local social media site with many members of the public then coming up to the golf course specifically to take photographs of the wild flowers and to see the spectacular views over the meadow and down to Peebles.



Full details of all the plants growing in the image above can be obtained using the following link: <https://www.scotiaseeds.co.uk/shop/mg5-meadow-mix/>



Phase 2 project progress

Our second project involved clearing a section of stream that runs between the 5th and 7th tees down through a wooded area. The aim was to plant up the banks with primulas and daffodils but before this could be achieved a lot of hard work was needed in clearing away all the overhanging branches, removing some smaller trees and getting the choked stream dredged out. This will eventually enable easier access along the burn sides for both local and visiting walkers plus providing a fine unrestricted view from the upper end of the stream down toward Peebles.

As this particular project was conceived by Peebles Golf Club member Andrew Thomson it has been suitably named as “**Andy’s Alley**”.



Christine Bruce, Betty Scott, and David McKean
Clearing Andy's Alley September 2021



John Cairns, Val McKean, David McKean, Betty Scott, Andrew Thomson, Denise Richardson and Christine Bruce, clearing the branches from 'Andy's Alley' September 2021

We are indebted to Steve Borthwick and his green keeping staff for their continued support and on this occasion for carrying out the dredging for us especially as it was a particularly busy time for them. The successful dredging enabled us to get on with planting out the primula plants and allowed the plants to become well established prior to the spring.



We received funding of £250 from Action Earth (volunteering matters) which provided our group with nearly 500 plants and on reporting our work back at the end of the grant period they were suitably enough impressed to showcase our project on their website.



Before



After



Fundraising latest



We are delighted to have received sponsorship from a Peebles golf club member Paul Sewell. Paul Sewell's Company "PLS" has supplied our Biodiversity Group plus the Peebles Golf Club gardening team with £650.00 worth of gloves and equipment. This equipment is very much needed and enables volunteers who may not have their own equipment to come along and take part and we are indebted to Paul for this very generous donation.

In addition, Paul is also providing:

- **Enhanced discount on footwear for volunteers.**
- **15% Discount for all club members on production of a Peebles Golf Club membership card.**

Full details of all the complete range available can be found at the following web site:

www.pls-shop.co.uk

Bonnie Peebles Plus.

The local community volunteer group "Bonnie Peebles Plus" (headed by John Falla) who provide many of the colourful flowering plants around the town every year donated several thousand daffodil bulbs along with a number of polyanthus plants to us. These were being cleared from the many sites around the town that benefit from the group's plantings to enable new bedding plants to be set out. All these were distributed around the golf course with the majority adding to the Primulas along the aforementioned streamside. Look out for a grand show along this stretch of stream in the spring time. Many thanks to John and the rest of Bonnie Peebles Plus volunteers for this welcome contribution.

Peebles Community Trust.

The Peebles Community Trust oversee our finances and Alex Wilson at the Trust also provides excellent guidance and advice on grant applications and possible funding opportunities. Currently we are waiting to hear the result from a grant application put forward to the Community Enhancement Fund on our behalf. This is for a battery powered commercial strimmer which will be an essential piece of equipment if we are to maintain the areas planted out and keep areas clear for walkers. Fingers crossed for a positive outcome.



Additional projects

Never one to rest on her laurels, our Chairlady Val McKean continues to gently persuade/coerce volunteers to take part in a wide range of other plantings and projects and the following additional projects were undertaken and completed in the last 12 months.

Bug Hotels:



Helen Kelly, David McKean, Neil McIntyre, Charlie Kelly, Alison Harvey, Val McKean (not in photo)
Bug house completed 7th February 2021

The first of what we hope will be several bug hotels, was built and installed in February. Our thanks to Charlie and Helen Kelly for building and delivering our very first one.

Two additional Bug boxes were donated via Rick Martin from Peebles Sainsbury's store and his daughter Ellie kindly agreed to come along to the golf course and install them.



Ellie Martin, Denise Richardson and Andrew Thompson helping to put bug boxes on the golf course. Bug boxes were donated by Rick Martin local Sainsbury's store manager. 12th April 2022



Additional projects cont.

For the Future

One of Val's long-term visions is for Peebles Golf Club to have a carpet of bluebells through its woods and to this end, several thousand native bluebell seeds were distributed in the woods between the 9th and 11th fairways. The preparation of the ground took a lot of effort before the sowing could be carried out as you can see from the image below.



Brian Robson, Andrew Thompson, Diana and Ken Morrison and David McKean
Preparing an area under the trees at the left side of 9th fairway
17th October 2121

This however will take about 5 years to finally produce a carpet of colour but eventually we will have our very own bluebell wood and one which will rival any of the other local ones and hopefully this may even attract visitors to the course and maybe even spend some time and money in our underused clubhouse.



Additional projects cont.

Several areas have been planted up with daffodil and narcissi.



These areas should continue to expand over the coming years giving bright spring colour around the course.

Some of the steeper tee fronts have been planted up with crocus bulbs notably on the 6th, 15th and 16th medal tees.

These should give a good display in very early spring and the blooms should be over well ahead of the need for routine grass cutting. These will provide a much needed early season food source for bees and other insects. Hopefully the crows that pecked at the bulbs this year will not continue to do so.



Crocus planting at the 16th tee box 17th November 2021
David McKean planting helped by Neil McIntyre, Alan Salsman and Val McKean

We are indebted to the help from over 30 golf club members and local volunteers



So, many thanks to all of you who continue to support us

Going forward, the planting work will be quickly overtaken by the maintenance tasks in keeping these areas in good order and we will continue to need help from volunteers if the long-term objectives are to remain a success. If you would like to be part of our project, please get in touch. The tasks tend to be well spread out over the year in concentrated spurts of work and you can turn up as often or a little as you like. Details of how to get in touch are on the last page.



Buglife Scotland

Buglife Scotland are keen to get involved with our Group's aims of increasing Biodiversity. Following a site visit from their conservation officer they have drawn up plans to create a number of habitats around the golf course. The potential partnership with Buglife (Scotland) to provide 5 years funding for biodiversity projects at Peebles Golf Club is still ongoing however their plans have now been submitted for National Lottery funding and the final decision on this is expected in the next few months

A number of areas around the golf course were identified as having good potential for further wildflower meadows including the possibility of a wetland meadow next to the 12th tee area and these plans have been approved by Peebles Golf Club board following assurances from BEG that the maintenance of any new planted areas would be funded by BEG for the ten-year period.

For those of you unfamiliar with BugLife (Scotland) the following may help explain who they are and what they do.

Buglife Scotland has been protecting invertebrates and habitats for over ten years. Through their projects they have engaged with thousands of people from across Scotland to raise awareness of invertebrates and how we can help them.

Scotland supports a diverse variety of habitats from montane, to **vegetated shingle**, to **grassland**. These **habitats** are home to a number of unique species of invertebrate, many of which rely on Scotland as their stronghold in the UK and even globally. There are thought to be over 24,000 species of invertebrate in Scotland!

Buglife has achieved many successes in Scotland so far, including:

- the development and implementation of '**A Strategy for Scottish Invertebrate Conservation**';
- rediscovering rare species and finding new species, including, the **Bordered Brown Lacewing** rediscovered at Holyrood Park and Bridge of Muchalls, **Pond Mud Snail** at a pond in Falkirk and at **Red Moss at Balerno**, the **Ten-spotted Pot Beetle** at Black Wood of Rannoch, and more;
- mapping our first Scottish B-Lines along the **John Muir Way**;
- restoring and protecting over 210 hectare of rare lowland raised bog habitat in **Slamannan**;
- running citizen science surveys for **oil beetles**, **glow worms**, wood ants and more;
- helping to develop and deliver the **Scottish Pollinator Strategy**.



Bird Box update

Over the winter the installation of the remaining 35 bird boxes supplied by the members of the Peebles and District Men's Shed was completed and these were distributed widely across the golf course. It was hoped that the boxes would provide roosting shelters for birds over the winter and thus increase the possibility of them being used for nesting in the spring.

The boxes are suitable for a wide variety of birds from small to large and we are indebted to the local ornithology expert R Stuart Craig for help and advice on siting these.

The boxes seem to be succeeding with several reports of bird activity in and around a number of the boxes. Certainly, the ones suitable for blue tits are being occupied although until all the boxes are cleaned out in the autumn, we won't know the full extent of occupancy for other species.

We hope to attract a number other birds' species such as Tree creeper, Nuthatch and Blue Jay all of which are present in the surrounding woodland and eventually it is intend to also put up some owl boxes in a few of the larger mature trees



Interested in getting involved?

If you are interested in helping clean out the nest boxes and gathering information on which ones have been occupied to help in any future survey work please get in touch. You can register your interest using the contact information on the following page.



Bats:



We also have been provided with a small number of bat boxes which have also been donated by members of the Peebles and District Men's Shed and we will be putting these in place shortly.



BEG newsletter update, issue # 3



Information links

Becoming a Member or volunteer

Peebles golf club (PGC) have kindly given us our own page on their web site, you can find all our current information on that page at: <https://www.peeblesgolfclub.com/biodiversity>

You can request more information from the group using the email: peeblesbeg@gmail.com

As a constituted group, we need to ensure we have a formal process in place for new members and new volunteers, just so we know who is who, it only includes your name and email, no other details are held. Membership is open to anyone in Peeblesshire and beyond, to apply to become either a group member or volunteer and its free to join, please email: peeblesbeg@gmail.com

Partnership Organisations

The following is a list of the organisations we have links to or have worked closely with

Buglife (Scotland)	https://www.buglife.org.uk/get-involved/near-me/buglife-scotland/
PCT	https://www.peeblescommunity.org/
The Bridge	https://onlineborders.org.uk/community/thebridge
The Men's Shed	https://peeblesmensshed.co.uk/
PGC	https://www.peeblesgolfclub.com/
Action Earth Volunteering matters	www.volunteeringmatters.org.uk/actionearth