

SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Name of Function:</u>	Operations
<u>Date:</u>	29 April 2022
<u>Title of Update:</u>	Environmental Services Highlights 21/22
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UPDATE:

Environmental Services 2021/2022

This report is to advise Committee of Environmental Services highlights and the progress and success of their 2021/2022 campaigns and initiatives.

RHS Community Awards 2021

Aberdeen received the top award 'Outstanding' in the Green Solution category for our Working Wetlands, Working with Wildlife & Nature submission, creating more green space for nature

<https://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/news/oct-2021/scottish-entrants-recognised-by-rhs-as-community-gardening-superstars/>

We also received the 'Achievement' Award for Craster, in the Nourishing Your Community Awards. This project is working with schools to grow their own food.

The awards link in some way to the Council's green space / food growing ambitions and show the service to be on the right track locally and nationally.

Green Flags

The Green Flag Award scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world. Aberdeen had 7 sites awarded with Green Flags in 2021. This is most we have ever achieved -

- Duthie Park, Green Heritage award

- Hazlehead Park
- Seaton Park
- Johnston Gardens
- Victoria Park
- Slopefield Allotments
- Garthdee Field Allotments

Aberdeen is the first local authority in Scotland to have an allotment site awarded with a Green Flag. We have 2!

It is a tremendous achievement to be awarded Green Flags. There have been obvious challenges these last two years year but despite this, our parks and green spaces continue to be beautiful, well maintained, and accessible to everyone.

The awards recognise and reward the hard work of staff, Friends groups and the many volunteers who help in our parks.

Keep Scotland Beautiful - Beautiful Scotland

Aberdeen's campaign, Aberdeen Communities Together is a 365-day campaign involving a wide range of people from within local communities. The overall aim is to ensure that the communities come together with the goal of enhancing their surroundings and creating a better environment.

We include all the inspiring and fantastic work done across the city by both our own staff and the many in bloom partners and volunteers.

Aberdeen won a Gold Medal for the city but more significantly the service also won the Wright Award for Sustainability. This is for our work on wetlands, woodlands and wildlife. All this work aligns to the ACC Climate Plan.

In addition to running our own campaign we will also support in every way we can the in-bloom community groups that run their own campaigns, i.e. Cove, Bucksburn, Culter and Powis.

As part of the Beautiful Scotland, Its Your Neighbourhood initiative, Environmental Services supports many community groups and volunteers in their community green space / environmental projects. Aberdeen continues to lead the way in this initiative, and we had 28 Its Your Neighbourhood groups involved in 21/22. More than any other Scottish council.

Across the city our work with community partnerships continue to grow. The service now has more than 150 collaborations in place including volunteers, communities, businesses, schools, third organisations and companies. Thousands of volunteer hours spent in Aberdeen's parks and green spaces.

Keep Scotland Beautiful Beach Awards 2021

2021 saw Aberdeen retain its Seaside Award. This was the 13th year in a row that our beach has been recognised and awarded in this way.

This is a fantastic achievement and recognises and celebrates all the hard work of our staff and the many volunteers who help care for the beach.

The Beach Awards are administered by Keep Scotland Beautiful and started in 1993. The awards aim to celebrate all of Scotland's beaches and coastal communities whilst driving up the environmental standards around our coastline.

Awarded beaches demonstrate excellent beach management and environmental best practice ensuring the maintenance of high standards.

Queen's Green Canopy Champion City

Thousands of trees have been planted in Aberdeen as part of a nation-wide initiative to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

The Queen's Green Canopy is a unique tree planting initiative which invites people from across the United Kingdom to 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee' to create a legacy in honour of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee and Aberdeen has been selected as one of the initiative's Champion Cities. The Champion City programme has been launched to celebrate some of the nation's outstanding cities which have trees as a central part of their plans for green spaces.

Being a Champion City is a great honour as we are one of only 20 cities across the whole of the UK to be awarded this.

In Aberdeen, there has been a programme of tree planting throughout the 21/22 season which includes:

- Planting up Fernielea open space with 8000 trees and shrubs. Our Queens Green Canopy premier site and launch. Very successful consultation undertaken in March which saw overwhelming support for planting trees in the area. Planting completed early April 2022.
- Street tree planting for 2021/22 aligned to Queen's Green Canopy. 500 street trees planted across city. Planting has been ongoing since January and completed in April 2022.
- 70 oak trees have been made available to our schools and community groups for planting. Good response with 40 groups already signed up and planted.
- All our formal parks (Duthie Park, Hazlehead Park, Victoria Park etc) have planted a Queen's Green Canopy tree.
- Queen's Green Canopy as very much a headline in our Beautiful Scotland campaign for 2022. To be included throughout tour and campaign.

- Theme for our School Garden Competition is Queens Jubilee. Excellent response from schools across Aberdeen with winners selected from Cornhill, Loirston and Quarryhill. Beds to be planted in May.
- Clean Up Aberdeen to be linked ie clean up our woodlands. To be included through 2022 campaign. Specific woodland clean up event for later in 2022.
- Queen's Green Canopy aligned as part of our tree planting programme to Aberdeen City Council's Climate Plan and Spaces for Nature work. Work has already started on this.
- We are to launch our own tree nursery at Hazlehead in 2022. Growing our own Queen's Green Canopy trees for years to come!
- We aim to plant a legacy tree at Hazlehead Park later in 2022 as part of the Queens Jubilee celebration.

Further initiatives and projects are planned for the 2022/23 season.

Further information on The Queen's Green Canopy is available at the [The Queen's Green Canopy webpage](#).

Woodside Wee Forest

The first Wee Forest has been planted in Aberdeen thanks to the joint efforts of Aberdeen City Council's Environmental Services team, NatureScot, and pupils and staff of Woodside Primary School.

The Woodside Wee Forest will join a group of 20 such forests across Scotland which are being planted.

Led by NatureScot, the programme aims to give people the opportunity to help tackle the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss by creating and caring for their own forest in their own neighbourhood.

To create each forest, around 600 native trees will be planted by "Wee Foresters" in an area the size of a tennis court. Volunteer keeper teams will look after the forests over the long term and schools will use the forests for outdoor learning.

The 600 plants, which include alder, cherry, Scots pine, crab apple, holly, juniper, elder, willow, oak, rowan, and hazel trees along with dog roses, broom, gorse, blaeberry, heather, hawthorn, and blackthorn, have been planted by staff and pupils in a grassy area across Clifton Road from the school with help from the City Council's Countryside Rangers.

Pupils contributed many fantastic designs for the project and the overall winner demonstrated excellent design principals which will fit the Wee Forest ideals.

The trees, shrubs, and wildflowers will start small but will grow into a beautiful place for nature and people in the Woodside area

Woodside Primary School created a fantastic film to accompany the launch of the wee Forest.

<https://youtu.be/9jVHbuanSRI>

This is a fantastic project, and it is thanks to the efforts of everyone involved that generations to come will enjoy the benefits of these native trees which have been planted in this green space.

Clean Up Aberdeen 2021

Clean Up Aberdeen is part of Keep Scotland Beautiful's national mass-engagement campaign Clean Up Scotland.

Clean Up Scotland aims to involve one million people in action against litter and mess. It is a national coalition of organisations and people from all places and backgrounds who want Scotland to shine and work towards making Scotland the cleanest country in Europe.

Clean Up Aberdeen continues to be a success. 2021 saw a record number of clean ups, 496, completed with over 2000 volunteers involved.

Since January 2021, 450 litter picking tongs have been distributed to our brilliant clean up champions. These have been given to individuals and their friends, families and small groups, exercise groups, community centres, child minders, schools, and businesses. We now have more individual volunteers helping to keep the city clean than ever before.

Aberdeen City Council is fully committed to supporting both the local and national campaigns.

Aberdeen Crematorium

Aberdeen Crematorium has been selected by the Federation of Burial and Crematorium Authorities (FBCA) to become a Centre of Excellence offering specialist training to Crematorium Technicians from other Crematoria.

The staff and working practices at Aberdeen Crematorium are held in high regard through the industry and this is a chance for Aberdeen to share best practice and train technicians from other areas of Scotland.

Aberdeen Crematorium will become the 3rd Centre of Excellence Training Centre in Scotland. Training began in April 2022.

This invitation demonstrates the positive impacts that have been achieved over recent years and recognises the work that the entire team has done to improve the delivery of service at Aberdeen Crematorium.

It also comes on the back of the Crematorium Team being crowned Team of The Year in Aberdeen City Council's 2021 Star Awards. Achieved while operating within the restrictions of the pandemic.