

Cromwell Harbour Medical Practice
Lauderdale Medical Practice
Whitesands Medical Practice

Dunbar Medical Centre
Queen's Road
Dunbar
EH42 1EE

14th February 2025

To whom it may concern,

Belhaven Community Garden

The three general practices at Dunbar Medical Centre (Cromwell Harbour, Lauderdale and Whitesands Medical Practices) together serve over 14,000 patients across the Dunbar area, and collectively support the transfer of the Belhaven Community Garden into community ownership.

Belhaven Community Garden is an essential greenspace that has brought great benefits for the health and wellbeing of local people over the past thirteen years. The importance and many therapeutic benefits and positive outcomes for both mental and physical health of community gardens is recognised in [NHS Lothian's Greenspace and Health Strategy](#) which we whole-heartedly endorse.

The [NHS Scotland climate emergency and sustainability strategy: 2022-2026](#) spells out that the climate and ecological emergency is also a health emergency and valuing, protecting and managing our greenspace will become ever more crucial in supporting the strong, healthy and resilient communities that we need.

Bringing the garden into community ownership will secure this valuable community resource for the long-term and will open up many new opportunities for further therapeutic activities with diverse groups across the community and, for example, for the development of social prescribing for individuals. It will also be in line with the original bequest which gifted the land for local health benefit.

We look forward to deepening our relationship and collaboration with Belhaven Community Garden in future.

Yours faithfully,



Dr John Hardman

On behalf of :-
Cromwell Harbour Medical Practice
Lauderdale Medical Practice
Whitesands Medical Practice



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

October 2024

To whom this may concern,

Letter of support for Belhaven Community Garden Community Buy-Out

I am writing to you to give my full support to the community buy-out of Belhaven Community Garden (BCG).

Taking the Belhaven Community Garden into community ownership will protect a well-established and much-loved community space from development. Having previously been on the edge of town, the garden it is now surrounded by new housing which makes preserving this green site even more imperative from an ecological and social perspective.

The BCG is a vital outdoor space for community health and wellbeing, learning new skills around food growing, tool use, composting, pruning, scything, beekeeping, and path maintenance, and a place where community members can come and meet other residents in a productive and beneficial way. Many newcomers to the area find the BCG first, striking up new friendships and connections which makes them feel welcome and included in the community. This aspect of community building is essential in a rapidly growing community as it promotes cohesion and personal wellbeing.

For 12 years already, the BCG has been run by a group of committed volunteers who have a track record of recruiting members, communicating the needs of the garden and the group to maintain the site effectively. Gardening and food growing to promote an active outdoor lifestyle helps keep volunteers fit and well and connected. This delivers key policy objectives of East Lothian Council and the Scottish Government.

Community ownership would provide the security to secure land tenure enabling this group to continue the events, activities and skills-building that take place in the garden, as well as open up new opportunities.



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

The BCG has a programme of garden outreach which is having a positive impact across the community. The Beehive Garden at Dunbar Nursery, The Green Team (adults with learning difficulties), The Pledgehog Project and the project at Belhaven Brewery were all set up and are supported by the BCG and our volunteers. All of these projects would be left unsupported if the BCG were to be lost.

Moreover, the BCG is well-connected with partnerships throughout the community. It supplies apples and preserves to the Community Carrot for sale. They work with the Ridge to deliver the Rural Skills programme for school students. The Dunbar Shed works with the BCG to provide skills when required. They are growing a tree nursery for the Dunbar Woodland Group. The Community Cook uses the BCG over the summer for outdoor cooking classes. Belhaven Church's kids' clubs use the garden as a venue for their summer programme. The Dementia Carers group visited the garden. The beavers, cubs and guides do their gardening badges in the garden every year as well as apple pressing activities in autumn.

Belhaven Community Garden has a clear significance for the local community. Keeping the garden in community hands aligns with the Scottish Government's commitment to focus on building mental health and wellbeing capacity in local communities across Scotland. It is a fantastic example of non-medical, community models of support and provides the kind of holistic services that challenge the negative determinants of health and wellbeing.

It would be a huge loss if the site was sold off for another use.

I am delighted to give my full support.

Yours sincerely,

Paul McLennan
Member of Scottish Parliament for East Lothian



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

To whom it may concern

Letter of Support for Belhaven Community Garden Asset Transfer Request

I am writing as one of the local Members of the Scottish Parliament covering the Dunbar area to express my strong support for Sustaining Dunbar's asset transfer request to bring the existing Belhaven Community Garden, located in the grounds of Belhaven Hospital, into full community ownership and control.

I understand that the Community Garden was established in 2012 when Sustaining Dunbar took over management of the grounds of Belhaven Hospital and established a 2.5 acre garden and orchard under the auspices of the NHS Lothian Community Gardens Steering Group. Since its establishment, the group of volunteers involved in the garden's development have transformed it into a thriving community garden contributing wide-ranging public health and other benefits for a wide range of individuals and local groups.

I recently visited the garden to see first hand the significant progress that has been made over the last 12 years. I understand that the garden's community uses currently include a **therapeutic space, a growing space, a learning space, and a biodiverse space**. All of these dedicated spaces provide their own benefits and contribute to the wellbeing of the local community.

From my discussions with the team that runs the garden, I also know that they have plans to expand the current activities to reach even more people. In order to achieve this they intend to work in line with existing plans and policies, including the Community Empowerment Act, the NHS Lothian Greenspace Strategy, the East Lothian Plan, the East Lothian Climate Change Strategy, the East Lothian Community Wealth Building Charter and the Dunbar Local Place Plan.

In conclusion, I believe that Sustaining Dunbar and the volunteers who run the Community Garden have more than proved their commitment to continuing to develop it as a valuable, productive and well-used community space. Therefore, I fully support the bid to bring the garden into community ownership and hope this will be able to take place as quickly as possible.

Yours Faithfully

Martin Whitfield MSP
South Scotland



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my full support for the transfer of Belhaven Community Garden into community ownership. The garden has been a valuable asset to the community for over a decade, offering a vital space for relaxation, growing, learning, and enhancing biodiversity in the town.

The garden's contribution to public health and well-being cannot be overstated. It has brought together individuals of all ages and backgrounds, fostering a sense of community and providing opportunities for people to engage with nature in a meaningful way. Losing this space would be a significant blow to those who have benefited from its presence.

With the closure of Belhaven Hospital, it is crucial that this space is protected. Community ownership will ensure that the garden continues to provide its many health and social benefits to local residents. I strongly believe that preserving this space aligns with the original vision for the land and will allow the team to expand its positive impact across the community in any way they see fit.

Thank you for considering this and please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Hoy MSP
South Scotland Region

To whom it may concern,

Belhaven Community Garden Asset Transfer

I am writing to offer my support for Belhaven Community Garden (BCG) and the campaign for the transfer into community ownership.

BCG has been a tremendous asset for over a decade; offering a vital space for mental health, growing, learning, and enhancing biodiversity in the town. BCG's contribution to public health and well-being in general cannot be overstated. The garden has brought together individuals of all ages and backgrounds, fostering a sense of community and providing opportunities for people to engage with nature in a meaningful way. I have been personally involved in the garden having ploughed part of the field when it first started.

I have seen first hand the difference this garden has made to peoples lives along with the friendship and mental health benefits it provides !

Losing the garden would be devastating to those who benefit from its presence. It would also be a major opportunity loss for future generations.

Community ownership will ensure that the garden continues to provide its many health and social benefits to local residents. It is crucial that this space is protected. Almost 20 years since the area was designated for housing the environment has significantly changed, the garden being an essential area of green amongst surrounding development. Transferring ownership will give the garden much needed security and an opportunity for developing their ambitious plans.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Donna Collins".

Donna Collins
Councillor
East Lothian Council

A Vision for Belhaven – final report

Background

After the decision was taken to close Belhaven Hospital, I was asked by Dunbar Community Council to look to establish a community vision for what could replace it. It was clear there was a lot of concern about future service provision as well as what the site itself might be used for.

In order to understand what the community views were, I reached out to the community councils in the ward and to Dunbar & East Linton Area Partnership as formally constituted representative groups. Representatives from 3 of the community councils and the Vice Chair of DELAP joined me over the last year in a journey to discover what options there were and to engage directly with NHS and ELC to understand next steps across various strategic planning projects and consider if and how the community could influence the future of the site.

Evidence

Much of the time over the last year has been spent exploring the landscape of opportunities to influence strategic planning and presenting arguments to both NHS and ELC, based on information that has been made available to these representative groups through their local surveying and place plans.

Communities, through their representative community councils, have submitted Local Place Plans to ELC as part of developing the next iteration of the Local Development Plan – a strategic document that informs future land use and priorities for future development over the next 10 years or so. These consultations have been extensive and give ELC a very clear steer on what the priorities and wishes of communities are.

DELAP has also made use of these local area plans to shape their own priorities and categorise clearly where they can seek to influence and where they can take action as a community partnership.

A little before I was asked to lead this process, Sustaining Dunbar's Community Garden group launched a bid to obtain their part of the hospital grounds through Community Asset Transfer with NHS Lothian.

While the Local Place Plans are predominantly about the space around us, a lot of service ideas and concerns were also picked up. These plans were also developing at the same time as East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership was undertaking a significant review of Provision of Older Peoples Services (POPS), which most closely links to the closure of Belhaven hospital itself.

Engagement with Agencies

All of this culminated in a meeting at the end of 2024 with community representatives, NHS Lothian, Health and Social Care Partnership and East Lothian Council. Community representatives set out their concerns and hopes that Belhaven site could be reprocisioned to meet some of the emerging requests.

As previously reported to Community Councils, this meeting concluded there was no scope at all for either NHS Lothian or East Lothian Council, to redevelop the site for any purpose given the lack of capital resources and the pressure on revenue resources. Even if capital were available, the pressure on revenue budgets is such that it would not be feasible to staff any specific local facility in terms of health professionals.

However, it was clear that NHS Lothian have a responsibility to the Scottish Government, through the disposal of the site, to balance the financial return for the site with consideration of wider community

benefit. Also established during that meeting was that disposal of the part of the site with the buildings on it, is not being progressed until the Community Asset Transfer of the Community Garden site is resolved. This remains the case today.

A further discussion was held in January with Health & Social Care to explore some of the priorities around identified service needs and how the POPS review is proceeding. These discussions need to continue through the consultation processes and planning H&SCP has in place and will enable the Community Councils and DELAP, as well as wider community groups to take part further. It was clear during discussion, that the priorities coming through community councils and DELAP are aligned with views expressed through the POPS review.

Conclusions

It is reassuring to know the community engagement and coproduction approach is not picking up different issues for Dunbar area and furthermore that officers within the H&SCP are looking to ensure the community needs are being met across the county as effectively as possible.

While the future of the site is up in the air, hopefully there will be a positive outcome for the Community Garden which will in turn influence the extent to which the rest of the site can be developed. The community's continued promotion of their priorities through Local Place Plans and the further engagement on the Local Development Plan are crucial to seeking to ensure the site is reprocisioned for a need that the community would welcome.

I acknowledge this work hasn't engaged the wider community at large, broadly focused on researching opportunities and gathering existing evidence from community engagement. It was the intention, should we have any meaningful opportunities going forward, to hold discussions with residents to shape the ask of a potential replacement facility. Given there is clearly no scope for public sector development, I feel it would be inappropriate to raise expectations by hosting a public consultation, especially as the ongoing POPS, Local Development Plan and Place Plans are designed to engage meaningfully with communities.

Recommendations

Going forward I believe there are some actions we can each undertake:

- As a ward councillor, I will continue to engage with community groups and any individual who has any particular views, in order to shape my own perspective on any future strategic plans that impact the Belhaven hospital site.
- As the announcement to close Belhaven occurred after the community councils had engaged the community at large to shape their Local Place Plan, each Community Council may wish to consider if they have sufficient evidence of what the community would like to see as the priorities for redevelopment of the site.
- As individual community residents, we can all make sure to participate in as much of the local development plan process as remains. If you want to follow that process, please visit https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210547/planning_and_building_standards/12726/ldp2_and_local_place_plans

Councillor Lyn Jardine

ljardine1@eastlothian.gov.uk

West Barns Community Council

14th July 2024

To Whom It May Concern

Belhaven Community Garden :Request for Asset Transfer

West Barns Community Council discussed the situation of Belhaven Community Garden at their meeting on 27th June 2024. Members fully support the request for a Community Asset Transfer of the land to Sustaining Dunbar for the use of Belhaven Community Garden.

Members have been saddened by the decision of East Lothian Integrated Joint Board on 28th March 2024 to close the Belhaven Hospital site without full public consultation.

Members note that the Belhaven Community Garden is a component of the NHS Lothian Green Strategy.

Members note that the importance of the Community Garden was given representation at the Integrated Impact Assessment Meeting in February 2024. This noted that the garden was used for community growing for individuals with benefit for the Community Carrot shop and the community as well as for the therapeutic benefit of those with physical and mental health needs and to combat loneliness in the community.

It is noted that Belhaven Community Garden has been established for over 12 years and that its loss would be a significant impact on the community in terms of greenspace amenity and biodiversity.

Members therefore ask for Belhaven Community Garden to be given approval for continuation on the Belhaven Hospital site by Lothian NHS Board

Andrew Ashton



Chair

West Barns Community Council

Support for Community Ownership of Belhaven Community Garden from Dunpender Community Council

Dear Board of NHS Lothian,

Dunpender Community Council covers East Linton, Whitekirk, Tynninghame and outlying settlements. It is in the Dunbar and East Linton Ward. Several residents of the Community Council area are involved in Belhaven Community Garden (BCG), as volunteers, participants in BCG events, or/and borrowers of BCG equipment.

The Community Council regard Belhaven Community Garden as a very important community asset. For twelve years it has provided important benefits to the community in three distinct, but interrelated, ways.

First is its social role, since it provides a welcoming green space to volunteers and to the wider public, creating a site for people to meet and take part in many different events. It has become a supportive environment for socially vulnerable adults, for instance those with learning difficulties and refugees, and several benefit from horticultural therapy.

Second it contributes to a more resilient, local, participatory food system. It is a growing space for vegetables and fruit which supplies fresh, local, organic food to those who garden there and to the local community owned grocer, Community Carrot. The informal sharing of organic growing skills and intermittent formal courses are very valuable in addressing the deficit of horticultural expertise in the community. The provision of much sought-after allotments allows individuals to gain skills in growing their own vegetables and minimises the food chain and food waste.

Third, BCG has combined sustainable food production with the enhancement of biodiversity, planting native hedges, establishing wild flower meadows, and creating habitat for hedgehogs, other small mammals and invertebrates. This has created a haven for wildlife.

BCG is widely regarded as one of the most successful community initiatives in Dunbar and an example for other groups to learn from.

The process of applying for a community asset transfer is being led by Sustaining Dunbar which has initiated and sustained many local initiatives which have transformed the Ward. They are widely supported in Belhaven, West Barns, Dunbar, and the Dunpender area in their attempts to successfully complete a community asset transfer, having now collected over 1000 signatures. Their aims for the Garden include:

- to create new opportunities for people to develop employability skills and train in specific skills for regenerative land management and organic food growing
- to enable further opportunities for food growing, outdoor physical activity, enhancing people's wellbeing and further building community cohesion
- to help people to develop deeper connections to nature
- to continue work to further develop the greenspace to support biodiversity.

Our recently completed Dunpender Community Action and Local Place Plan highlights the need for increased and enhanced green spaces, more allotment provision, and enhanced biodiversity. We are therefore strongly supportive of an organisation in our Ward that directly contributes to all three.

The demise of such a successful project would be an enormous loss in terms of: community cohesion; local people's mental health; access to land to grow, and learn about the cultivation of, fruit and vegetables; and biodiversity, with all the steps the garden has taken over the years to support nature. Furthermore, given the level of community support for the Garden, it has the potential to deliver even more. We therefore urge you to seriously consider Sustaining Dunbar's application for a community asset transfer.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Wight

on behalf of Dunpender Community Council.





DUNBAR
COMMUNITY
COUNCIL

To whom it may concern

BELHAVEN COMMUNITY GARDEN

REQUEST FOR ASSET TRANSFER TO COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

Dunbar Community Council has actively supported the work of Belhaven Community Garden since its inception in 2012. In that time, it has developed from a small sensory garden, for all to enjoy, to the established community garden it is today with planting of all types, largely focused on food production.

The team of volunteers and garden users reaches every socio-economic and age grouping and the benefits to all in respect of mental and physical wellbeing are patent.

Dunbar Community Council fully supports the application for a community asset transfer of the garden grounds to community ownership.

P.A. Swan

Pippa Swan
Chair
Dunbar Community Council

10th September 2024



DUNBAR
COMMUNITY
COUNCIL

dunbarcommunitycouncil@gmail.com

www.dunbarcommunitycouncil.org.uk

DUNBAR & EAST LINTON AREA PARTNERSHIP

9th September 2024

To whom it may concern:

Belhaven Community Garden

Dunbar & East Linton Area Partnership brings together the four communities of Dunbar, West Barns, East Linton and East Lammermuir. We are all conscious of the importance of green space and are very supportive of the request to transfer Belhaven Community Garden into community ownership.

Sustaining Dunbar is a Community Development Trust that has managed this garden successfully for twelve years, providing huge educational and health benefits to our community. The level of volunteer commitment to this project over twelve years has been truly wonderful to witness, and the feed-back from those who have benefited, from the very young to the very old, is testament to the importance of this garden to the community.

The land was gifted to the community to support public health and, while we are sad to see the NHS withdraw from this site for financial reasons, we are equally excited at the prospect that the Belhaven Community Garden will still be able to provide green therapy provided the land is returned to community ownership.

Allison Cosgrove
Chair – Dunbar & East Linton Area Partnership



Christine Rednall
HEAD TEACHER

West Barns Primary School
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20 September 2024

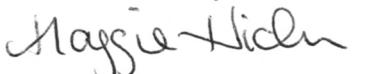
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Over the years, children from West Barns Primary School have visited Belhaven Community Gardens as a learning space. We have been involved in planting, harvesting, cooking and in using the area as a therapeutic space when younger children had the opportunity to meet with older patients at Belhaven Hospital. The BCG offers a different type of environment for children to experience. To illustrate the learning potential, I can describe a visit we made:

Pupils from P1/2 were invited to take part in the apple harvest. We walked from school and were met by volunteers at the poly tunnel. We looked at, identified and tasted some of the variety of produce growing there and in the raised beds. The children then collected apples which were transformed into apple juice before their eyes. They enjoyed the fresh produce, gaining understanding of the possibilities to grow food locally and the impact of food journeys. After, we explored the rest of the garden, spending most time in the "wildish" area around the fruit trees. The grass had been left to grow and small pathways had been cut amongst it. The children loved the experience of playing, running and hiding within the grass, feeling enclosed, noticing insects and inventing their own games. This was a unique experience for them within a managed yet natural feeling environment. Their enthusiasm was obvious and many said they would return with their parents. Some children recounted the memory of this visit to me, five years later.

I see the community garden as a valuable resource which is within walking distance of our schools and nurseries, and provides a way to engage with environmental issues which affect us all.

Yours faithfully



Maggie Nicolson
Class Teacher



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Headteacher
J Johnstone

Depute Headteacher
E Offer

Depute Headteacher
R Maxton

Depute Headteacher
I Davies (Acting)

Belhaven Community Garden - A Valuable Community Asset

The Dunbar Grammar School management team supports the transfer of the Belhaven Community Garden into Community Ownership.

The Belhaven Community Garden (BCG) has benefitted Dunbar Grammar School students over the past 4 years in the following opportunities:

- The Beehive Garden work experience placements for DGS students on the Childcare Course. This project is a BCG outreach food growing and garden project which has created a new garden for Dunbar nursery children. DGS students use this space to run activities for the nursery children and bring the Childcare Course to life by having real interaction with youngsters aged between 3-4 years old. This has been running since 2022 and has funding to run for another academic year.
- The Rural Skills college course which was set up and run by the Ridge but hosted at the BCG for a third of the year. This ran from 2021-2024
- The Intergenerational Buddying Project 'Belhaven Buddies'. This was a supported volunteering opportunity run by Sustaining Dunbar which DGS students took part in on Friday afternoons. Young volunteers ran activities and events for the residents of Belhaven Hospital nursing home 'Blossom House'. This project was set up as a Garden Outreach Project with the aim of bringing generations together and facilitating time in the garden for them. This ran from 2022 until the hospital closed in 2024. It now runs at the Day Centre in Dunbar.
- Duke of Edinburgh Saturday Volunteering. Over the last 5 years the BCG has offered volunteering opportunities to students who are completing the Bronze or Silver DofE Awards. They volunteer 2-4pm on Saturdays with our adult group. This is ongoing.
- Youth Philanthropy Award. In 2022, two DGS students won £3,000 for the BCG for their work on presenting the health and wellbeing benefits of the garden for our adult volunteers.

The future of Belhaven Community Garden will also enable further collaboration for DGS students and opportunities for outdoor activities and courses. This is a local and valuable asset for the school.

Signed:

John Johnstone
Head Teacher

Date: 06 September 2024



EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

DUNBAR PRIMARY SCHOOL

JOHN MUIR CAMPUS

LAMMERMOIR CRESCENT

DUNBAR

EAST LOTHIAN EH42 1DG

Telephone : 01368 863773

E-mail: dunbar.ps@dunbarprimary.elcschool.org.uk

Headteacher: Mrs J Mackinnon

17/09/24

Support for the transfer of Belhaven Community Garden into Community Ownership.

The Dunbar Primary School Headteacher supports the transfer of the Belhaven Community Garden into Community Ownership.

Belhaven Community Garden inspired the creation of the Beehive Garden for Dunbar Nursery children. In 2021, plans were drawn up between Sustaining Dunbar and Dunbar Primary School to transform the area of land alongside the nursery's temporary unit into a food growing and garden project to enable nursery children to have access to a nature garden. The support given to the Beehive Garden by Belhaven Community Garden volunteers is ongoing as well as sharing tools, skills and knowledge and seedlings.

In addition to that, the Beehive Garden provides a valuable place for work experience placements for DGS students on the Childcare Course. DGS students use this space to run activities for the nursery children and bring their Childcare Course to life by having real interaction with youngsters aged between 3-4 years old. This has been running since 2022.

Jacqui MacKinnon

Head Teacher

3 July 2024

To whom it may concern

Belhaven Hospital Community Garden – an invaluable community asset

I am writing in response to the alarming news that Belhaven Hospital Community Garden is under threat.

In 2012-14, The Ridge (a community charity serving over 400 local people annually through provision of support and training) worked with Sustaining Dunbar to design, deliver and run a community garden in the grounds of Belhaven hospital. We created a beautiful and productive space, enjoyed by hospital residents and staff alongside members of the community, in particular those struggling with mental and physical health and those looking to gain skills. It quickly became an important hub for learning, for social connection and individual wellbeing, and as a local source of cheap, fresh and healthy food for those struggling to feed themselves and their families in difficult economic times.

The garden is an established haven of biodiversity, with organic growing principles encouraging insects and other wildlife and a diversity of plants flourishing. It is a vital counterbalance to the large scale destruction of precious habitat across the railway tracks as new housing which has sprung up across farmland and wild places. It is an essential plank in our local efforts to attain Net Zero.

New homes are needed, but for our community (including new residents) to thrive, we depend upon green lung spaces within the town, with all their vital impacts on health and wellbeing. The Ridge works with those struggling with mental health issues, and we see firsthand the powerful impact of a connection with nature which gardening has. The Belhaven garden has enormous impact on the wellbeing of many people, with potential to develop further programmes, to meet the needs of our expanded population.

The site has enormous value as a unique educational space. The Ridge (an SQA Centre) uses the garden to deliver accredited training, including for marginalised young people not engaging with/often not attending school, many of them Looked-After and Accommodated, for whom the Council struggles to find ways to meet its statutory obligations re provision of education. Post-Covid, this cohort has further increased, and we have found the outdoor, low pressure setting to be a uniquely engaging learning opportunity. For some, it is the only activity they ARE engaging with, an essential key to gradually expanding towards healthier and happier futures.

The Belhaven garden is a invaluable community asset, which I urge you to take all possible measures to protect for current and future generations, for people, for place and for planet.

Yours faithfully

Kate Darrah DL
Managing Director, The Ridge SCIO



The Dunbar Area Christian Youth Project (DACYP) supports a Community Asset Transfer for Belhaven Community Garden. DACYP held a successful Holiday Club for Primary School aged children at BCG in the summer of 2022, enjoying the benefits of meeting in a safe and beautiful outdoor space. We have been able to visit the gardens with groups of vulnerable young people that we have worked with in Dunbar Primary School, and we are currently planning to feature a visit to the gardens as part of our summer walking activities.

There is real potential for further beneficial activities with youngsters there through collaboration between DACYP and BCG Volunteers if the site can be kept in Community ownership.

Richard Taylor
Youth Worker - DACYP

E-mail:dunbaryouthworker@btinternet.com



Dunbar Dementia Network SCIO

Seapoint, Woodbush, Dunbar EH42 1HB

Tel: 01368865228

Charity no: SC048264

2nd July 2024

To whom it may concern,

Dunbar Dementia Carers Support Group has enjoyed several group visits to Belhaven Community Garden for an enjoyable afternoon session in a lovely local setting. Individual Carers and people living with Dementia have also enjoyed accessing the garden at other times too. Because of problems with the water supply over the last 18 months we have been disappointed to be unable to arrange group visits:- members enjoy the natural beauty there, strolling around the grounds and sharing their gardening memories.

Dunbar Dementia Carer's Group hopes Belhaven Community Garden can be kept in Community Ownership so that members of the group can access all its benefits into the future.

Lorna Bunney

Co-ordinator of Dunbar Dementia Carers Support Group

Email: dunbardementianetwork@gmail.com



WILDER OUTDOOR EDUCATION CIC

Belhaven Surf Centre

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www.wilderoutdooreducation.co.uk

25th June 2024

LETTER IN SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER OF BELHAVEN COMMUNITY GARDEN.

To whom it may concern:

Wilder Outdoor Education CIC would like to express strong support for a community asset transfer of the Belhaven community garden. Prior to running Wilder, I was a local primary teacher for 12 years who visited and used the gardens as both an educational and health and wellbeing resource for my pupils. Dunbar's population has significantly increased in recent years and I strongly believe there is a need to safeguard pockets of greenspace for the benefit of the community to support biodiversity, sustainability and health and wellbeing. It seems absurd to consider removing such a well established community garden at a time when research overwhelmingly supports the benefits of access to greenspace projects and when there are multiple construction sites currently around Dunbar that are impacting on community/wildlife spaces.

I know that the garden supports a wide range of community groups, schools and organisations and projects like these should be encouraged, supported and championed.

I hope that you will listen and strongly consider the needs of the wider Dunbar community.

Yours sincerely,

Diane Christopherson



27/6/24

Belhaven Community Garden, Community Asset Transfer.

Dunbar Shed wish to give you their support in your effort to achieve ownership of Belhaven Community Garden.

Over the years we have been involved in many joint projects with you including the hedgehog homes, coppicing the hazel and willow, even the large John Muir marionette has a skeleton made from your willow.

We have shared tools when available and have several members who are also garden members.

The garden has brought us together with the community gardener, the Belhaven Brewery and the Busy Bee Nursery where we have made articles for the children together with BCG.

If the service buildings are included in the transfer then we would like to discuss how they might be used including the possibility that the Dunbar Shed could possibly be accommodated there in the future.

All the best in your enterprise

Bob Fleet

Chair.

Community Carrot Ltd
43 High Street
Dunbar
EH42 1EW

27.06.2024

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in strong support of Belhaven Garden being taken into Community Ownership. This support is based on my own positive experiences in the garden, and of seeing the value it has to the wider community who use it as a space for social connection, teaching and learning, mental and physical health support, recreation and exercise, and growing and eating fresh produce.

I have been given the free use of Belhaven Community Garden for four years, and in that time have run many outdoor food and fire cooking sessions for children aged 3 - 12. During these sessions the children and I walk through the gardens talking about the fruits, vegetables and herbs that we see, tasting and trying them, and picking ingredients for our cooking. Many children who have narrow dietary horizons willingly try new things under these circumstances, and I have had much feedback from parents that their children are now happy to eat new foods as a result of being in this environment and seeing it grow.

There are almost no spaces locally where children can have this experience. The garden is an extremely valuable resource for teaching about healthy lifestyles, where our food comes, getting people of all ages outside and connected to growing and nature. My sessions have welcomed children who are neurodivergent, are growing up in foster care or who have food avoidance disorder: the garden is a calming space where everyone can enjoy being outside and encounter new things in a no-pressure environment.

This summer I am running five more sessions for 25 children. There is currently nowhere else that these could happen, certainly nowhere with the wealth of fresh growing produce that these gardens offer. Without Belhaven Community Garden these kinds of learning opportunities would be unavailable to children.

Yours sincerely,
Hannah Ewan
Community Food Outreach & Communications Lead, Community Carrot
Funded by The National Lottery Community Fund

Community Carrot
43 high street
Dunbar
EH42 1EW
25/6/24



To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of the Belhaven community gardens being taken into community ownership.

I believe strongly that this is an essential asset for the community and should be protected as such.

I am a co-manager of a local wholefoods greengrocers based in Dunbar and as a community owned shop we have a strong relationship with the gardens that has existed since the begining of the gardens development.

The benefits are wide ranging and for the shop are key to cementing a sense of community.

- we buy produce from the gardens
- grown by local volunteers
- giving fullfiling work that brings people together
- sold in our high street shop to locals and visitors
- saving food miles
- promotes local sustainability
- grown organically promoting use of less chemicals
- educates people on local varieties
- provides a calm space in nature for local people
- helps protect the areas biodiversity

It is a highly valued place and space for over 12 years and would be a great loss to all if it were not protected to further grow and develop and enhance the life of the community.

Kind regards
Jo Gibson

Community Carrot
Green grocer and whole foods shop



Support Letter- Community Asset Transfer to Belhaven Community Garden

2nd July 2024

To whom it may concern,

East Lothian Horizons has recently been involved in supporting two refugee families, identified by UNHCR as needing sanctuary here, to settle in Dunbar. Belhaven Community Garden has been a place of welcome and inclusion for these families, giving them the opportunity to volunteer alongside others in a natural environment and share in the organic produce. BCG has helped reduce their social isolation, practice their English and learn new skills, all in a beautiful and therapeutic environment.

East Lothian Horizons strongly supports Belhaven Community Garden's application for a Community Asset Transfer, wanting to ensure this invaluable resource is maintained for current and future refugee families.

Niki Fallowfield
Email: fallowfieldniki@gmail.com

Team Lead for East Lothian Horizon Community Refugee Sponsorship.

East Lothian Climate Hub

NHS Lothian

East Lothian Climate Hub
www.eastlothianclimatehub.org

6th November 2024

Supporting Community Ownership of Belhaven Community Garden

Dear Board of NHS Lothian

East Lothian Climate Hub is one of over 24 Climate Hubs funded by the Scottish Government to support and drive local action to mitigate and adapt to the climate and nature crises.

Belhaven Community Garden is one of East Lothian's most inspirational community gardens, delivering huge benefits both to the local community and to nature. Set up in 2012, it has been a fantastic asset to the local community, providing a welcoming green space to both volunteers to the garden and the wider public, providing a site for people to connect and take part in many different events, being a growing space which has not only supplied local food to those who garden there but also the local community owned retailer, and creating a haven for wildlife. It is often cited as a key success story within East Lothian, and one for other groups to learn from.

As such its loss would be immense in the face of the climate, nature, and cost of living crises in terms of people's mental health locally; access to land to grow and learn about how to grow food locally; impact on biodiversity with all the steps the garden has taken over the years to support nature; and community cohesion.

Sustaining Dunbar, which is driving the efforts to apply for a community asset transfer, has an excellent track record in initiating and sustaining many local initiatives which have transformed the local community. They have a huge level of support amongst the community within Belhaven, West Barns, Dunbar, and wider afield to successfully

complete a community asset transfer with over 1000 signatures now collected. In being able to retain the garden their aims would include:

- Continued work to further develop the greenspace to support biodiversity
- Create new opportunities for people to develop employability skills and train in specific skills for regenerative land management and organic food growing
- Help people to develop deeper connections to nature
- Enable further opportunities for food growing, outdoor physical activity, enhancing people's wellbeing and further building community cohesion

As the East Lothian Climate Hub we are deeply aware of the need to increase our county's green spaces both for local food and for biodiversity, as well as build local skills in our communities for resilience in the future in the face of the impacts of climate change.

To lose an existing, highly successful project which delivers all of this and has the potential to deliver even more, would be incredibly detrimental.

As such, we urge you to seriously consider the application of Sustaining Dunbar for a community asset transfer with all the benefits that it would bring, and in light of the Scottish Government's Net Zero commitments.

Yours

Jo Gibb, Tess Humble and Bobby Pembleton
East Lothian Climate Hub

Endorsed by East Lothian Climate Action Network members including Haddington Community Woodlands



Dunbar and East Linton Health and Wellbeing Group

14th July 2024

To Whom It May Concern

Belhaven Community Garden :Request for Asset Transfer

Dunbar and East Linton Ward Health and Wellbeing Group discussed the situation of Belhaven Community Garden at their meeting on 3rd July 2024. Members fully support the request for a Community Asset Transfer of the land to Sustaining Dunbar for the use of Belhaven Community Garden.

Members have been saddened by the decision of East Lothian Integrated Joint Board on 28th March 2024 to close the Belhaven Hospital site without full public consultation.

Members note that the Belhaven Community Garden is a component of the NHS Lothian Green Strategy.

Members note that the importance of the Community Garden was given representation at the Integrated Impact Assessment Meeting in February 2024. This noted that the garden was used for community growing , for the benefit of the Community Carrot shop and the community as a whole as well as for the therapeutic benefit of those with physical and mental health needs.

It is noted that Belhaven Community Garden has been established for over 12 years and that its loss would be a significant impact on the community in terms of greenspace amenity and biodiversity.

Members therefore ask for Belhaven Community Garden to be given approval for continuation on the Belhaven Hospital site by Lothian NHS Board

Jacquie Bell



Chair

Dunbar and East Linton Ward Health and Wellbeing Group



Saturday 20th July 2024

9 Meikle Park Road

Dunbar

East Lothian

EH42 1XD

Support for Belhaven Community Garden being taken into community ownership

On behalf of the Dunbar Pledgehog Project, I would like to show my support for Belhaven Community Garden being taken into community ownership. Belhaven Community Garden is a much loved and extremely important space for the community and nature. It provides a place for people to meet and share their passion for gardening and for novice gardeners to learn new skills-benefitting physical and mental health.

The garden has become a haven for nature to flourish, with trees, wildflower meadows, native plants and hedging as well as an extensive dead hedge-all providing important habitats for all sorts of local wildlife. The Pledgehog Project has been using a night-time camera to monitor hedgehogs in the garden and has proved that they are using this natural area. This is a very important outcome as hedgehogs are now classed as 'at risk of extinction in the UK' and the project plans to continue to make improvements to the habitat in the garden to benefit this endangered species, hopefully helping to increase Dunbar's hedgehog population over time.

The garden also provides perfect opportunities to showcase wildlife gardening and encourages people to replicate this in their own outdoor spaces throughout Dunbar. It would be a true loss to our community if the garden wasn't to survive and there is such potential to use this area for many new projects in future years and I hope (personally and on behalf of the Dunbar Pledgehog Project) that community ownership is successful.

Jen Walker

tr@mayera.net
to bcg

25 Sept 2024, 12:05 (1 day ago)

Dear BCG,

I moved to Dunbar fairly recently and seeing there is a large established community garden was one of the big draws for me settling here.

At a time when councils all over the UK are planting (fruit) trees, it would be a travesty to give over a mature orchard to private development, so I hope this is not under consideration.

I have observed the teenagers of the Tree Scheme housing estate and the grammar school crossing through the community garden and think it important that youth are casually exposed to food production as well as to open cherished community spaces.

Additionally, with a large new housing development with few community spaces just south of the train line, I feel that it is important to safeguard any space that has the possibility of integrating communities and inviting those who might else suffer ill health from loneliness.

I myself have mobility issues, and trying to walk as far as the community garden has been a goal in working towards strength and capacity when otherwise I might not have dared to stretch myself to try to get much beyond the vicinity of my home.

Kind regards,
A. Mayer

15 Hazel Court, Dunbar, EH42 1PS

