Green light for the Hermitage of Braid community wildlife garden

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As a result of a successful partnership working with the Friends of the Hermitage of Braid, the project will see the creation of a wildlife garden within the late 17th-century walled garden that slopes south from the restored “Doocot”. It will provide native habitats for bumblebees, moths and butterflies and will also be used as an interpretation and model garden for visitors to enjoy and get involved in its upkeep.

The garden will be made as accessible as is possible to all groups of users including an area with raised beds to accommodate groups with physical disabilities. The project will increase community engagement by involving local volunteer groups. It will also be sustainable as well as providing a valuable resource for outdoor learning, learning new skills/craft, tool use and much more.

Colin McLean, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland, said: “The Heritage Lottery Fund is delighted to support a project which will stimulate people’s interest in nature. Through the creation of the Hermitage of Braid community wildlife garden the community will learn new skills, discover new passions and play their part as custodians of our wonderful natural heritage.”

The CEC Countryside Ranger Service is responsible for the conservation of the wildlife and natural resources in 11 Natural Heritage Parks in Edinburgh. This small enthusiastic team aims to engage with community groups and volunteers in the creation of this very special wildlife garden. Participants will be able to explore and learn about traditional crafts such as wattle weaving, dry-stone dyking, using lime mortar to repoint historical walls and will also get involved in the planting of thousands of native wildflower plugs to encourage wildlife!

The CEC Countryside Ranger Service will also offer wildlife identification trainings to help record insects such as bumblebees and butterflies which will benefit greatly from the creation of this garden. For the creative minds, workshops will be organised to learn about creative writing, wooden sculptures and much more so as to create original pieces for future visitors to enjoy.

The CEC Countryside Ranger Service has just been awarded the Investing In Volunteers award (IIV), making this achievement even more special as it is now the first Countryside Ranger Service in Scotland to receive such an award!

Jessica Morgado, Countryside Ranger in charge of the volunteer service, said: “Volunteering has always been associated with our profession and this UK quality standard award now demonstrates that we provide a quality volunteer service to those who wish to join us. The Hermitage community wildlife garden project is a good example of what’s on offer for volunteers to get involved in the care of our Edinburgh Natural Heritage sites.”

Carolyn Clark, Scottish Natural Heritage’s Edinburgh officer, said: “We are pleased to support this new project. The community garden will be a great opportunity for those who want to get their hands dirty, let their creative sides out or who just want a beautiful, quiet space to sit in.”

Notes to editors

The CEC Countryside Ranger Service is responsible for the conservation of the wildlife and natural resources in 11 Natural Heritage parks in Edinburgh. It does this through conservation management work, education with schools and community groups, creating opportunities for volunteers to participate in conservation work and wildlife surveys, staging interpretive events and guided walks. It manages visitor centres at the Hermitage of Braid and Cammo Estate www.edinburgh.gov.uk/countrysiderangers

This Friends' group was formed over 13 years ago with the aim of supporting the City of Edinburgh Countryside Ranger Service, with the never ending task of maintenance for the Hermitage of Braid and Blackford Hill Local Nature Reserve. We have members in some 200 households in the vicinity. Work days include Spring cleans, burn clean ups and balsam bashing. In addition we have undertaken a successful bird feeding programme next to Hermitage House. Colourful quarterly newsletters are produced to keep members informed and if you would like to know more visit the Friends' website or contact enquiries@fohb.org.

Investing In Volunteers Award website to learn more about the awards programme.

Scottish Natural Heritage is the Government's adviser on all aspects of nature and landscape across Scotland. Our role is to help everyone understand, value and enjoy Scotland's nature now and in the future. For more information go to the Scottish Natural Heritage website.

Further information

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