

# PARK LIFE

Community Greenspace Newsletter - West Lothian

December 2011

**Welcome** to the first ever West Lothian Greenspace Newsletter. After many years of egging you all on to do stuff for a greenspace near you, we thought it would be nice to share what some folks have been doing, to prove you're not alone! It's fantastic to see what's happening out there. Big thanks to you all for your hard work, including the folks we haven't managed to write about this time around. What could be better than getting some fresh air, having a laugh with your friends and neighbours and making the place where you live look nicer? If you're not involved yet - go on, you know you want to!

## Howden Green Gym

The BTCV Green Gym at Howden Walled Garden got well underway this year. Volunteers have worked in the garden since November 2009, when they started clearing out the hugely overgrown shrubbery.

In Spring 2011, the hard work they put in over 2010 was obvious; with lots of things bursting into life, the historic garden really started to flourish again.

The stone seats are now finished (despite some vandalism) and they're looking fab. Various plants that went in last year have come into their own, and we had a fantastic new round of planting thanks to funding from B SkyB and Dobbies.

A lot of vegetables were planted this year, with a good crop of peas and cabbages among other things.

The Green Gym is for anyone who wants to get more active, improve your health, meet new people, learn new skills or have the satisfaction of making your surroundings look good.

**We run on Tuesdays throughout the year from 10am to 1pm. Everyone's welcome!**

We also run some special programmes in the garden for local schools. This year, some groups from Toronto Primary and Cedarbank explored the garden, grew veggies and gained their John Muir Awards too.



**To get involved or for more info, contact Chris Peach at BTCV on 0131 442 4930.**

## Craigshill Greenspace



After helping with park improvements, this year the Craigshill Greenspace group organised an event in Almond Park to show what it can offer. Activities included a fun dog show, dog agility course, kite making and flying, a fun run, scavenger hunt, bike skills course, BBQ, acoustic music, stalls and lots more!

The group also took part in a national research project with Greenspace Scotland and won a Council award!

**The next park event will be in April 2012. If you'd like to help, check out the group's Facebook page 'Almond Park' or contact Becky on 01506 776542 or [becky.plunkett@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:becky.plunkett@westlothian.gov.uk)**

## Froggy Park

'Friends of the Froggy' in Dedridge now have a design for a new, improved bike track! It was displayed at a very exciting park event in Bike Week at the end of June, alongside a



temporary pump-track (pictured) and a huge airbag for the brave to practice their stunts. Next steps: build the track, have more events, improve the pond and the paths, and much more...

**If you want to help out in any way, check out the Facebook page 'Dedridge Froggy' or contact Becky on 01506 776542.**

## Dedridge Environment Ecology Project

DEEP has had HUGE success over the last few years! They've raised a lot of money, restored the woodland and the big pond near the Lanthorn Centre, created a nature trail and a sculpture trail and they've received lots of awards.

All the local schools use the pond and woodland for school studies and

this contributes towards their EcoSchools Green Flags.

The group now have bigger plans ahead and are looking to recruit more volunteers...

**For info, contact Wilma Shearer at [wilma37@btopenworld.com](mailto:wilma37@btopenworld.com) or phone 01506 416667**



## West Lothian disAbled Ramblers

West Lothian disAbled Ramblers love getting out and about to enjoy Scotland's natural surroundings and to gather for a chat and a picnic.

They have over 40 members from across central Scotland, Fife and Dundee and have a fleet of 16 scooters for use by members.

The group organise and run 12 rambles each season (April to October) in different places. Past rambles include Pollok Park, Rouken Glen, Lochore Meadows and Almondell and Calderwood Country Park.

They welcome people with all kinds of disability to become a member and anyone can join as a helper.

They're especially keen for volunteer guides, helpers and drivers to assist on ramble days.



**If you would like to join, or help out in any way, please contact Billy McKay at [baslm2000@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:baslm2000@yahoo.co.uk) or phone 07521 320680.**

Thanks to the following people for the use of your photos: Anna Dennis, Mid Calder Camera Club, Amy Hickman, DEEP, Avril Kerr, West Lothian disAbled Ramblers and Ezme Boyd.

## Ageing Well - Changing Lifestyles



Ageing Well promotes physical and mental wellbeing for the over 50's in West Lothian.

The Environmental Group offers a different style of activity, for people interested in the local environment.

The group meets monthly and has a wide and varied programme, which they plan at the end of each year.

Past activities have included: guided walks, a fungal foray with the Woodland Trust, tree pruning at Hopetoun House (see picture) and a visit to Jupiter Urban Wildlife Centre.

**If you're interested in joining please contact Avril Kerr, Ageing Well Coordinator, on 07768 090 008.**

## Whitburn Schools Green Gym

This year's Green Gym in Whitburn involved three local secondary schools in a 28-week project at Blaeberryhill Park. Pupils from Whitburn Academy, Burnhouse School and St Kentigern's Academy worked hard to remove derelict fencing, cut back vegetation, collect litter, plant bulbs and wildflowers and try some shelter-building (see pic).

As well as helping to improve the park, gaining new skills and having fun, the experience also led to pupils being more aware of park issues and discussions with other park users.

At the end of the programme, council Depute Chief Executive Gordon Ford (now retired) shared some inspiring words of



encouragement and presented participants with certificates and John Muir Discovery Awards at a celebration event in Whitburn Community Centre.

**For advice on greenspace projects for young people in your area, contact Becky on 01506 776542.**



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