

Community Wildlife Garden planned for Hermitage




A new community wildlife garden is set to be built in the Hermitage of Braid and Blackford Hill Local Nature Reserve after The City of Edinburgh Council Countryside Ranger Service received £50,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

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.”

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 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 Countryside Ranger Service has just been awarded the Investing In Volunteers award (IIV), and is the first 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.”