

Voting begins today on community growing project



Grow Wild is a project set up to transform a local community in Scotland and now the public can vote to decide who wins.

From today, people in Livingston can go online at vote.growwilduk.com to vote for their local community growing project, Frog Pond Rises.

A much-loved pond and park area might undergo a transformation through wetland creation and the design of a wild flower structure by Higher Design pupils at James Young High School. It is being led by West Lothian Council in conjunction with James Young High School, Friends of the Froggy and Central Scotland Forest Trust.

Grow Wild will award £100,000 in funding to one of three projects throughout Scotland, which also include a disused sewage works in Barrhead and a community garden in Greenock. The transformed site will be completed next spring. The Scottish Grow Wild campaign is supported by the Big Lottery Fund and led by the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, working in partnership with greenspace scotland and Youth Scotland.

Grow Wild focusses on areas in need of regeneration in order to bring colour to local communities and drive community spirit. The campaign encourages organisations to reclaim underused spaces for nature and for local people.

In particular Grow Wild aims to engage young people by providing opportunities to take direct action and transform local green space, showcasing their drive and creativity to

the benefit of the local community.

These special Grow Wild projects are one part of the overall UK campaign that aims to inspire three million people to take direct action for UK native plants. Over the next three years, one million seed-sowing kits will be distributed through Grow Wild partners, with the particular aim of reaching young people, aged 12 -25, and new audiences who wouldn't usually engage with environmental or community projects.

The Scottish pathfinder project is the first to go ahead in the UK, with the sites in England, Wales and Ireland following in 2015 and 2016.

Mark Leishman, design and technology teacher at James Young's High School, said: "5th and 6th year pupils studying Higher Product Design at the James Young High School have enjoyed developing a range of design proposals for the Froggy pond. It has really caught their imagination and motivated many of them to give up a lot of their spare time.

"Working with professional architects, engineers and landscapers for West Lothian council and other external agencies such as Arup has been a fantastic opportunity for all pupils. All design work from over 30 pupils was appreciated by everyone involved."

Big Lottery Fund Scotland Chair, Maureen McGinn, said, "Grow Wild is bringing communities together to transform unused or neglected urban sites and gardens with wild flowers. It's a great chance for people to get back to their green roots and bring more life and colour to the places where they live. The vote is open now, so please visit the website and get voting for your favourite site."

Andrew Ormston, Grow Wild Scottish partnerships, said: "People across Scotland have the opportunity to decide which of these imaginative and engaging projects win £100 000 funding to

transform under-used areas in their local communities. I have been particularly impressed with the range of community involvement in the design and planning of each site.

“Community projects such as these help to improve community relationships, give younger people better access to outdoor space with benefits to health and wellbeing, as well enabling people to enjoy seeing wild flowers in urban areas.”

Voting runs from 14 October to 3 November.