

BIODIVERSITY

Communications Toolkit

Allie's Garden

Lead and partner organisations

- Friends of Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum

Aims and objectives

To use Allie's Garden as a space for biodiversity education

Target audience

- Schools
- Local community

Background

Friends of Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum wanted to improve the museum grounds, including the half-acre site which lay behind the museum. It was agreed to design a biodiversity garden in this area.

The garden is named after Allie R Maclaurin of Stirling Homesteads, where biodiversity conservation and sustainability were practised in the early 20th century. Allie was an avid gardener and lifelong Friend of the Smith.

Summary of activity

The Friends formed a partnership with Forth Environmental Link (FEL) and secured funding to implement a programme of activities in Allie's Garden. Events include environmental workshops, schools workshops and activities for children during holiday periods. Some events are designed to coincide with key dates, such as national days and many are delivered in partnership with other agencies, including WWF.

Various events have contributed to the development of long-lasting resources, including a visitor's guide to the garden, a teacher's pack offering ideas for the classroom and an event template, which can be used as a model for future events.

The Friends use targeted media relations to promote opportunities at the museum and garden and tie-in events with what pupils are studying in local schools.

The Friends have a membership of approximately 800 and membership fees help to fund activity, while larger projects are funded via grant applications.

Outcomes

Allie's Garden has become a popular space in the community. The garden has hosted bridal photos, golden anniversary celebrations and recently, someone asked to hold their wedding there.

It's also:

- a place to breathe where people can take time out from their busy lives
- a place to play with a mini labyrinth, willow tunnel, giant xylophone pipes and musical wood
- a place to learn and create for schools and other groups
- a place to meet and share for people to relax and perhaps play with the outdoor chess set
- an outdoor art gallery with wonderful sculpture, mosaic and drystone work
- a centre for delivery of a successful, year-long series of popular nature-based workshops

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The Friends have ideas for how they can develop and use the space further, including art workshops and offering it as a space for other organisations to use, e.g. Girl Guides to achieve badges.

Further information

Friends of the Smith
The Membership Secretary
Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum
Dumbarton Road
Stirling
FK8 2RQ