

Growing at Gilmerton

Newsletter April 2021

Dear friends of Growing at Gilmerton,
Greetings from the Steering Group. This is our first newsletter of the year and we hope it finds you well and enjoying the warmth and longer days of Spring, with all the promise and positivity it brings...



We have very much missed seeing our usual volunteers who have been unable to attend due to Covid 19 restrictions, and are really happy that we are now able to resume normal (socially distant) [volunteer sessions](#) on Mondays and Thursdays.

Our small local team has been keeping on top of things over the winter and early spring, mostly working independently, and the lovely March weather allowed us to catch up on essential tasks in the garden before the really cold snap early this month. We have also been meeting regularly online to plan and organise. Although there have been fewer people in the garden, the spring hellebores, pulmonarias and bulbs have been buzzing with activity as the first bumblebees and honey bees emerge. Small tortoiseshell, tortoiseshell, orange tips and peacock butterflies have also been making a very welcome appearance.

Big news this Spring...

We have had Planning Permission granted for our proposed Craft Shelter, which, once built, will allow us to host willow weaving and other workshops. More details below with drawings and a link to our fundraising page.

We also applied for and received a fantastic grant of £1750 from the Community Climate Asset Fund for funds to purchase various tools and equipment including two large troughs for soaking willow, a small rechargeable chainsaw, a large barrow, trailer and willow weaving and hand tools.



These have all now been purchased and should make several activities in the garden much easier, whilst helping us to realise our goals of sustainability, education, increasing biodiversity, and improving the health and wellbeing of participants and visitors.

The chainsaw has already been put to good use in harvesting the willow, some of which we have been using to create plant supports, cloches, wind baffles, and a very impressive living willow dome structure inside the birch circle. The soaking troughs and many of the tools will be employed when we are able to put on willow weaving workshops later in the year. Other tools and equipment will be used on a more general basis as we maintain and improve the garden.



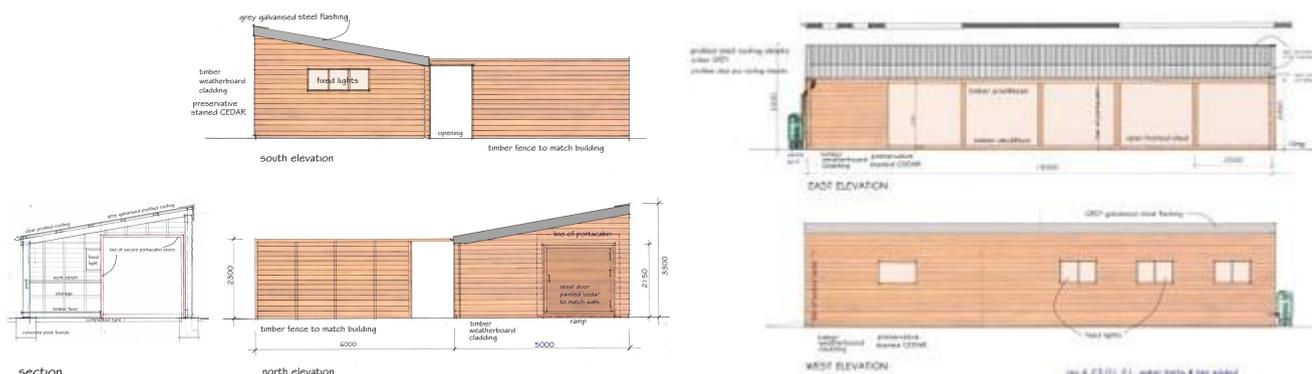
Funds from our successful (and Covid restriction friendly!) Open Day last August were used to purchase plants for a new Hornbeam and Beech hedge which was planted up over the winter. This was designed to add structure to the garden and provide a much needed windbreak to the orchard.

The big apple trees against the wall have been pruned, as have the the smaller espaliers, stepovers, and ballerinas that surround the flower garden.

Veg beds have been prepared, sown and planted with a variety of food crops, including a new asparagus bed with some very kindly donated crowns, and a new bed of lovely Aura potatoes. Salads have been doing well in the polytunnel throughout the winter but are coming to their end now and will be making way for tomatoes and cucumbers, and the comfrey plants for our homemade plant food are coming up strongly outside.

Lots of weeding and mulching has been undertaken in the flower garden, the forest garden, and also in the shrub border, along with spring pruning. We are currently mapping the flower garden and are planning to purchase plant labels to assist volunteers and provide better information to visitors.

Craft Building Project...



We are very grateful to David Robinson for drawing up plans for this project. These were submitted for Planning Permission and were approved this March. The shelter will be built around an existing tool store and when complete will provide a great covered space within the garden for hosting willow weaving and other workshops, as well as providing an open space for socially distanced meetings such as Quakers or Zen groups.

We aim to offer workshops to develop creativity in horticultural crafts, reskilling people in traditional, useful crafts which help to promote self sufficiency and use of locally sourced materials - supplied from the garden as much as possible.

Willow weaving, fabric dyeing (using plants from our Dyer's garden), and Beekeeping are our primary subjects, but there is scope for more such as drawing, painting, sculpture, working with living willow, horticulture.....

All workshops will be provided in line with the social and educational aims of the charity, and would also act as a source of revenue to enable us to continue.

However, first we need to build it, and for that we need to raise funds. A local builder has provided us with a quote of £17,000. He is keen to use many of the materials that have already been sourced or salvaged for the project to help keep our costs low and keep the project as sustainable as possible.

If anyone knows of local businesses that may be interested in donating, or relevant grants, please could you get in touch at enquiries@growingatgilmerton.org or through [Facebook](#). Or if you would like to contribute personally please visit the [donations](#) page on our website. All contributions, however small, are very gratefully received, and we will keep everyone updated with our progress via our regular quarterly newsletters, updates on the [website](#) and through our [Facebook](#) page.

Thank you so much for your continued interest in this evolving project,

Happy Spring from all at

Growing at Gilmerton

'Growing Matters' (SCIO SC047568)

