

Prudential Grass Roots

Supporting communities to improve their local environment



CASE STUDY

Old Piggery Allotments, Dundee, Scotland

A community group in Hilltown, Dundee, spent many years trying to develop a community garden in a neglected green space in their area. With the support of Prudential Grass Roots, the nearby Prudential-owned Wellgate Centre and BTCV, their dream has become a reality.

With the help of BTCV Scotland and with funding from Grass Roots, the major challenge of clearing the land ready for transformation was the first sign for the Old Piggery Committee that their vision of a peaceful and inspiring green space, to be shared by the community, was starting to take shape.

The Hilltown project is a new type of partnership: between Prudential Grass Roots and a BTCV Green Gym. The BTCV Green Gym programme has been running since 1998 and aims to combine physical activity with practical conservation work. Green Gym offers an alternative way of keeping fit for local people whilst they improve the green spaces in their area. It is a free resource for the community, which brings people from different backgrounds together on local environment projects, creating new friendships.

"The funding has really given the project a kick start and without BTCV Green Gym we wouldn't have got this far. It has given us a push for the long-term project and shown how we can work with other partners to achieve what we want."

COMMITTEE MEMBER, THE OLD PIGGERY GARDEN GROUP

Prudential Grass Roots was launched in 2001. It is run by BTCV, the UK's leading practical conservation charity, and funded by Prudential plc.

The programme is helping to drive regeneration for people and wildlife in communities around shopping centres and business parks throughout the UK, invested in by Prudential plc and managed by PRUIM.



Restoring community pride

Hilltown, Dundee



Hilltown is one of the oldest parts of Dundee and retains a unique character that local people are proud of. The area differs from other regeneration priority areas both physically and demographically. The effects of the decline of traditional industry are visible here as Hilltown was once a bustling place, economically driven by the manufacturing of jute. It provided affordable housing for many of the mill workers but now is mainly a residential area with a shopping concourse in the centre.

Although the Old Piggery Allotments have not been completely abandoned over the years, interest in taking up plots has been dwindling. With this new project, local people can get involved in the up-keep of a garden without having the commitment of a whole allotment of their own. It is hoped that the new community garden will inspire people to make more of their local green spaces – and be the beginning of a renewed interest in the Old Piggery – as well as growing their own food.

The project was brought to life by the commitment of the Castlebeck volunteers, the Old Piggery Committee, the Wellgate Centre, and the Green Gym, all of which comprise of people from the wider Dundee community who saw the potential in this piece of neglected green space. Through co-operation and enthusiasm, they were able to achieve

support from Prudential Grass Roots in order to fulfil their ambition.

Castlebeck is a leading provider of specialist healthcare and rehabilitation services for adults with learning disabilities, significant challenging behaviour and complex needs. Through working with BTCV Green Gym, the Castlebeck volunteers have gained new skills and experiences and many expressed a real desire to continue and work in the gardening field.

“The relationship between all involved here at the Dundee Green Gym project is a perfect example of solid partnership working between the private and voluntary sectors and is a good model for future projects.”

PETER BLACKBURN, BTCV SCOTLAND CENTRAL SERVICES MANAGER

Sharing skills for community benefit

Hilltown, Dundee



When work began the volunteers had a big challenge on their hands. They had to remove weed-ridden piles of glass, bricks and remains of old furniture from the site. But their determination to make the area safer and greener for everyone carried them through the tidying-up stage, and the emergence of a clear area of grass gave them the blank canvas they had always dreamt about so that gardening could begin. Weekly Green Gym sessions removing fly-tipped rubbish evolved into

"I am very pleased to have come along to support the volunteers today. There has been a lot done already and I would be pleased to visit again and see how the Old Piggery site progresses."

JOE FITZPATRICK, MEMBER SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

digging sessions to prepare the earth for planting and to create walkways between flower beds. The group will also be building a tool store and preparing detailed designs of how the garden will look.

Although some of the volunteers involved were allotment keepers already, before this project started, many of the volunteers had little experience of growing plants or knew what a healthy garden needs to keep going. Through the Green Gym sessions, many of them learnt valuable new skills, to the extent that one of them is now pursuing gardening as a career.

A launch event took place in March 2008 attended by local VIPs, including the Lord Provost and local MSP, all the volunteers and representatives from The Wellgate Centre and BTCV. The highlight of the event was the awards handed out by the Lord Provost to each of the volunteers, recognising their hard work on the project. The event was further enhanced by the planting of the first flower beds to add colour and new life to a piece of land once completely under-utilised and polluted by fly-tipping.

Through the partnership between Prudential, The Wellgate Centre, the Green Gym and other allotment holders, the new garden is expected to flourish rapidly and include everyone's idea of what a peaceful community garden should be like.

Creating a sustainable future

Hilltown, Dundee

Achievements

- Site clearance of large amounts of fly-tipped waste
- Perimeter fence erected around site
- Site prepared for planting
- Garden designs in development
- Launch event attended by volunteers, BTCV staff and local VIPs
- Press coverage including 5 articles in local newspapers, 4 broadcasts on local radio and 1 broadcast on STV, equivalent to £5,517 in advertising value
- Planting of spring bulbs and flowers to brighten the site while further plans are being developed.

Project costs

£10,000 of funding from Prudential Grass Roots covered all project costs:

- Staff costs – 20 days including 12 days project delivery and 8 days development – £4000
- Training costs including Green Gym leadership training for staff and Volunteer Officer £500
- Vehicle Costs £400
- Project running and equipment £750
- Evaluation and wider area development £2400
- Administrative costs £200
- Volunteer costs including training £750
- Publicity, including materials, banner, launch and completion events £1000

Total £10,000

“The funding provided for the Dundee Green Gym and what the volunteers have accomplished really shows what can be achieved if people are given the opportunity. As the Wellgate Centre is at the heart of the community, we always try to be more than just a shopping destination.”

JOHN MORTON, CENTRE MANAGER, WELLGATE SHOPPING CENTRE

Project partners

Wellgate Centre • Prudential plc • BTCV • Dundee Green Gym • Community Generation Fund and Dundee City Council • Old Piggery Committee • Castlebeck Group

Contact us

PRUPIM: 020 7548 6729

Wellgate Shopping Centre: 01382 225454

BTCV Head Office: 01302 388 883

BTCV Scotland: 01786 479 697

www.prupim.com

www.btcv.org

