

GREENER HUNTLY

WINTER 2024

AB54

5

NOT ONLY GRASSROOT

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY
PROJECT AT THE HUNTLY MEADOWS



8

JOIN OUR CHAT

HAVE A VOICE WHEN IT COMES TO
NATURE

11

THE
POWER OF
NATURE

HOW TO
JOIN

13

contents

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hey!

Welcome to our first online newsletter. We have a lot to share with you!

Established in 2022, the Huntly Greenspace Collective set out to work towards a fair, green future for Huntly. Now we are ready to start our work in the AB54 area.

We invite everyone in the community to join us in nurturing our green spaces - for people and for nature. Our work is rooted in conversation and collaboration, and the Huntly Greenspace Collective draws strength from our members' diverse skills such as healing in nature, outdoor sports, soil health, heritage seeds, food growing, nature-based learning, and regeneration. The more people who join, the richer our collective knowledge becomes. We can't wait to hear from you!

You can listen in, participate, or even lead projects that interest you. You decide how much and when to engage. We welcome everyone that shares our vision of a greener Huntly and AB54 - community groups, initiatives, businesses - so that together we can shape green spaces that benefit all. You might even be both a business owner and an individual that wants a greener future. We understand that people are complex and we like you to bring both, no - all, sides of you when joining our conversation.

Our role is to get to know you so we truly understand your needs. This allows us to help your ideas and initiatives grow. We support each other by sharing resources and matching support where it's needed. This keeps our projects dynamic, always evolving to reflect our community. There are no membership fees. Just bring your ideas, and help us grow together.

Katrina

Co Director

go to page 13

Join us online!
You choose how
much or how
little time you
can spend.



Artistic interpretation for a concept design of a rewilding project for one of our clients' crofts. We can provide consultation, design, landscaping and maintenance for your green space. From garden, to croft, to farm, and to public space...





NOT ONLY GRASSROOT

But from the soil up

In spring 2025, we will kick things off with FREE workshops and resources that can help anyone become a citizen scientist. Together, we can then survey the Huntly Meadows. It is a fantastic opportunity to connect, to learn, and to take local action to better our environment.

The value of these green spaces extends beyond the biodiversity that they hold.

This new community project, **from the soil up**, will help us paint a detailed picture of the potential of our public green spaces. Looking closely at all things wildlife, soil life, plants, habitat and people.

All over the world we are quickly realising that biodiversity can - for the largest part - restore itself given the conditions are right. Our first step is therefore to understand these conditions. So we know what to expect and if and how we need to give nature a helping hand. Natural regeneration is

already well underway in many green spaces in Huntly. The value of these green spaces extends beyond the biodiversity that they hold. They can improve the wellbeing of people on many levels, both directly and indirectly. It is now up to us to let nature lead, while adding subtle, meaningful touches that align with the community needs and that further boost biodiversity.

Our overarching community project Greener Huntly sprouted from “[Huntly: A Campus for learning and play](#)” (2021). This plan reflects the vision of the Huntly community for the regeneration of the town, including its green spaces. One outcome is the desire to rewild the meadows with a focus on biodiversity, learning, sports, recreation and well-being. The document calls for community-led projects to take the lead on this. In answer, the Huntly Greenspace Collective was set up by a group of local volunteers and green businesses to ensure we have all the tools needed to realise this vision.

Huntly has many green spaces full with diversity and possible habitats. Our first workshops will focus on the Huntly Meadows. In the ongoing Just Transition Community Project, one out of the three key priorities for a just, green future proposed was the greenspace in Huntly, with the meadows and its “wildflower greens” being placed firmly on the

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map by the pupils of the Gordon Schools. The pupils voiced that nature is important in Huntly because “it makes people feel happy and calm, because Huntly is quite natural, but there is more pollution than there needs to be and because children do better when they have natural places to go and play”. We could not agree more.

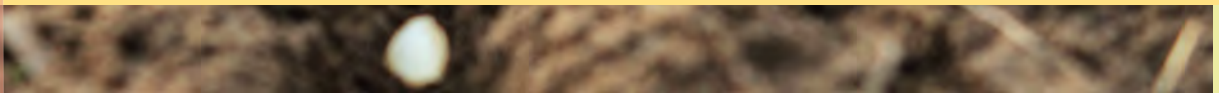
We have been getting support from [Firstport](#) helping us set up the collective. From the Soil up has been awarded with funding to deliver the workshops for free by the [Neighbourhood Ecosystem Fund](#) from Inspiring Scotland.

Attracting contracts, investment, and funding is one of the many things we do as a collective. To make sure that you have a voice where this money flows and how it is spent, join our online conversation, it is open for anyone! Go to page 13 to find out how.



We want to empower people through learning old and new skills, fit for a greener future.

We support the Huntly Seed Bank, giving away free seeds. And together we are learning about how to save our own seeds at our Strathbogie Seed Collective.



PEOPLE FOR NATURE:

Join our chat

We want everyone to have a voice when it comes to our green spaces, because nature affects everyone.



Greener Huntly is a social - so not for **personal** profit - limited company. Us founding directors, Abigail and me (Katrina), are self-employed in land-based sectors. Doing what we can for the environment by choosing sustainable methods. But our ambition is bigger, and at times distracting. We want to do more for nature and for the community. More than we can achieve as individual businesses. So we decided to set up a collective that works towards a greener

Huntly. Because we believe in the power of working together.

The Huntly Town Team asked, and you answered. Huntly wanted better green spaces and reap the benefits that they can provide. Wellbeing, sports and recreation, learning, and play. We are inspired by your vision and want to take action to make it happen. The question is. How?

Huntly is often described as an out of the way, rural market town with an empty town centre. But there is lots bubbling right under the surface. Go for a walk and you see signs leading you to the Huntly Edible trail for example, encouraging you to “take a bite on the

side". Such arts and community projects, hosted by the many active community groups such as Networks of Wellbeing, Gordon Rural Action, and Huntly Development Trust, provide food for thought. In particular Deveron Project's The Town in the Garden project looked into green space, communities, nature, and a fair future on a local level.

Over time, the projects and the work are sparking change little and small, from within the community. Inspired by this, we started learning about the possibilities. What can green spaces actually, tangible, bring to the community? And how can you achieve this? One thing was for sure. We wanted to develop something lasting, working with the community. We do not want to realise **our** ideas, we want to set up something that allows everyone to bring forth **their** knowledge, ideas, and interest.. And we want to deeply listen to the community and what they want and need, now and in the future.

There is one thing desperately needed though. As is always the case with such things. We need money to do any work in the green spaces of Huntly. Besides money, resources such as time, tools, and more time, are also absolutely necessary. And this is where community wealth comes into play. So let's talk money.

In all we do as a collective, we want to build community wealth and ensure that this wealth goes to the places the community wants to see it. To us, that meant we need to be able to trade. So instead of setting up a community group or charity, we set up a business. More specifically a collective. One that is open to anyone from the community including other land based businesses.

We believe in keeping the pound circulating within our community. By working together and supporting the creation and growth of green and fair local businesses, we aim to ensure that profits stay here, rather than flowing to distant corporations. Fair pay for these businesses and comprehensive support are central to our purpose.

Everything we own is owned by our members. And anyone can become a member simply by joining our conversation (see page 13). This includes businesses and initiatives.

As our collective grows, so will opportunities for meaningful employment. These jobs will offer flexibility, fair wages, and supportive working conditions. We're already writing a business plan to set this in motion, with guidance from Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action.

For us, price isn't the only factor when choosing products and services. Our member businesses adhere to high standards in environmental sustainability, fair employment practices, and local sourcing. We apply these same principles when seeking external suppliers, ensuring our decisions align with our values.

And finally, the green spaces. Every asset we have access to, including land, is used to maximise benefits for both the community and the environment. What particular benefits we focus on depends on what our members tell us. So becoming part of our chat gives you the power to shape a greener future for Huntly.



We offer bespoke services, tailored to your needs. And we can do that because we can tap into the local skills and knoweldge that we have in the area. We can match our member businesses with you, helping you make your own green space even greener.

NATURE FOR PEOPLE:

The power of nature

Did you know that for nature to benefit you, you don't even have to actually go there?

Definitely do go though, there is so much to gain. But here is a little insight into some of the things that nature, when well looked after, can do for you while you are lounging on your sofa.

When nature is in balance, it helps purify the air, water, and soil we depend on.

Plants act like a sponge, helping to prevent both flash floods and drought.

Healthy ecosystems support pollinators like bees and butterflies, which are essential for our food supply.



Trees and green spaces provide cooling effects, reducing the “heat island” effect in towns and cities.

Diverse plant life creates habitats for wildlife, which strengthens the overall health and resilience of the ecosystem.

Exposure to nearby nature, even indirectly,

has been shown to reduce stress and improve mental well-being.

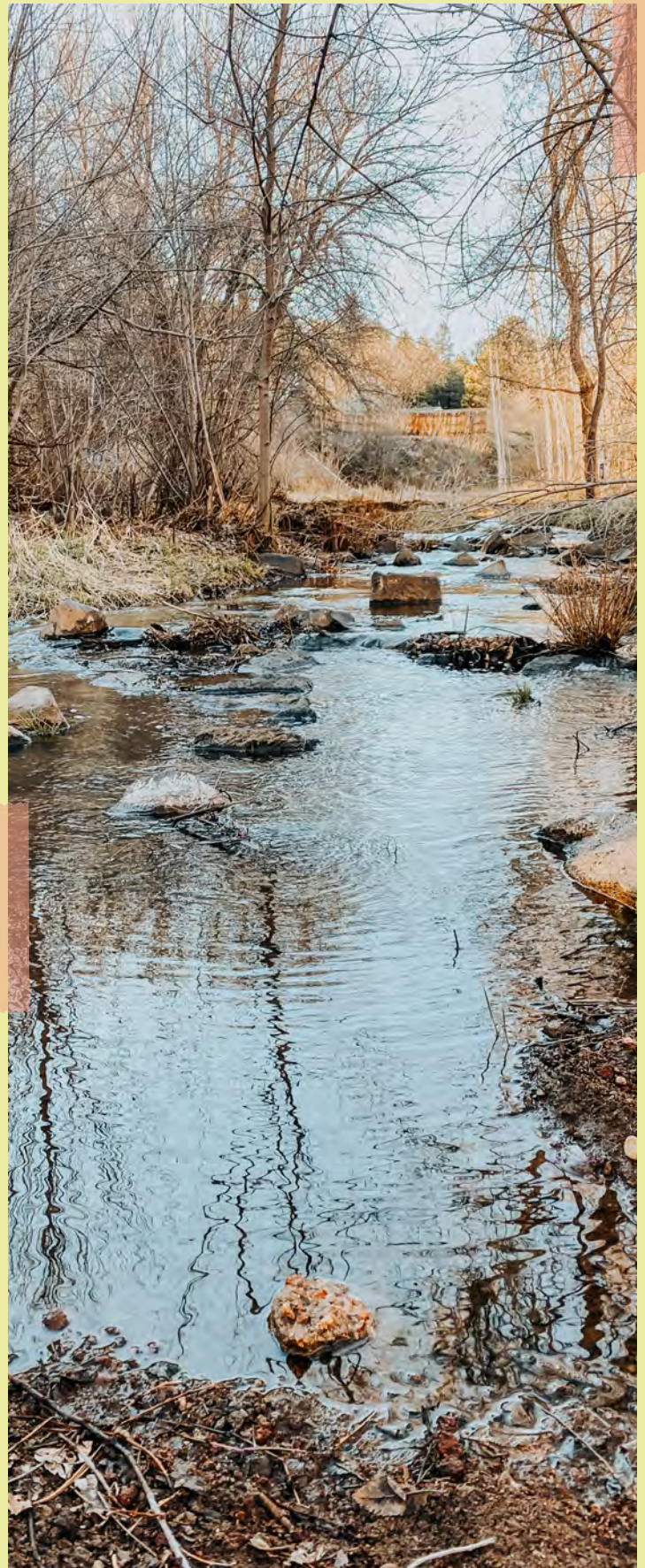
Well-balanced natural spaces capture and store carbon, helping to mitigate climate change impacts.

Trees and plants help reduce noise pollution by acting as natural sound barriers.

A healthy natural environment supports our quality of life in countless ways, even when we're not directly in it. Nature works quietly in the background

Natural areas improve local biodiversity, which keeps pests and invasive species in check, reducing the need for pesticides.

A healthy natural environment supports our quality of life in countless ways, even when we're not directly in it. Nature works quietly in the background, but its impact is powerful and far-reaching. Now imagine going for a walk in nature, or getting your hands dirty and helping us care for nature... pretty powerful indeed.



How to join our chat

Only wanting to listen in? Follow us on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#), or subscribe to our email newsletter by emailing Katrina at greenerhuntly@gmail.com.

Want to join the conversation? We use Google Chat, Google Drive and Google calendar to work together online, in our own time. You choose when, on what topics, and how much you want to get involved. We can only add you to our community if you have a google account.

Do you have a google account? Then email your name and google username (email) to greenerhuntly@gmail.com. We will add you to our shared space, and send you a welcome letter.

If you don't have a google account already, please first make a google account [here](#), then email us the username (email).

We are looking forward to welcoming you online!