

Beadnell Community Volunteers. January 2024

In February 2023 we discussed working with the local community to develop a new feature in St Ebbas Way. This used an abandoned dinghy and was planted with herbs, similar to the one on the Bullring. The work involved many adults and children and was supported by local businesses.

A plaque was bought for The Chatterly seating area in Longstone Close and an official opening was held in May.

Last year's income allowed Beadnell Community Volunteers (BCV) to agree to support the repair and reinstatement of the church weathervane and to provide an additional Fish Box planter at St Ebbas. We also helped the WI with the cost of installation of a projector to enable them to show films and maximise the hire of the WI Hall. We have increased the supports for the conifers on the Bullring and bought a new flag for the flagpole.

Unfortunately a lack of volunteers didn't allow us to celebrate the Coronation with a Street Party similar to the one we held last year for the Jubilee.

We were also disappointed that a lack of interest locally, and nationally, led to the proposed Alternative Flower Show being cancelled too.

We held 2 very successful Car Boot Sales in May. As usual with at least 13 different volunteers which are needed to complete the 18 different tasks vital before, during or after the event. We also introduced a new 'Sum up' machine which was very popular and allowed visitors to pay for their cakes etc. electronically. The weather held fair, and the August Car Boot Sale was a record breaker with 35 pitches taken.

There was a disappointing turnout of volunteers to help weed the Lonnen and other public areas. BCV are now paying to have some areas trimmed. We have also decided to go back to paying for the village planters to be restocked twice a year rather than just in the Spring. Whilst volunteers can grow plants to donate, fewer people are now available to do so and the results are very dependent on the weather.

Beadnell In Bloom occasionally struggled to find a full team of volunteers to water the planters this year due to illness, holidays, and other commitments. A decision was also taken to hand back the maintenance of the verge behind Beadnell Hall wall, at The Haven, to Northumberland County Council. This is again due to a lack of voluntary help.

It was hoped that the What's On list which used to be produced and circulated pre Covid could be repeated in 2023 but it was decided to leave that until 2024 and look at the idea again.

A new Facebook page has been set up to keep people informed about the work of Beadnell Community Volunteers and Beadnell in Bloom. This already has over 80 followers and hopefully will attract more volunteers and encourage new ideas for projects.

We lost many special people during 2023. Some, like Jim Williamson, have been associated with Beadnell Community Volunteers since its foundation 13 years ago. Some like Jeff Bell-Taylor were there whenever they were asked to help out, or they came to events, and were part of our local community. We will miss them all.

The Stall on the Wall remains as popular as ever with visitors and residents and it raised a record amount in 2023. It is a tremendous commitment by those who run it day in day out, rain or shine.

This year's Switch on of the Christmas Lights was probably the most popular yet. The church was full to overflowing, the RNLI attended and carried out the actual switch on and there were many people in the WI afterwards. A couple of holidaymakers who had attended the Switch on last year had booked up for the same weekend this year as they enjoyed it so much.

The Switch on and raffle involved 9 different BCV volunteers and there were many more involved from the WI and the Church. Once again, the 3 groups came together to provide enjoyment for the whole village.

There are so many thanks to give,

To the Steering group who met 6 times during the year.

To Katherine Grant for her work and dedication for Beadnell in Bloom

To Colin Brunt for his ongoing recording and reporting of our accounts. Most of our income has to be counted and sorted into money bags, and that's without finding a bank branch within 30 miles to deposit the money. For the Christmas Lights and all else he does in the village.

To Caroline Coley for being our efficient Secretary for the past 3 years. We will miss her at our meetings and her support throughout the year.

To Peter and Joyce Jenkinson for the many posters, signs, mince pies and all the other work they undertake all year round.

To Christine and the much-missed Jim Williamson for all their support with Car Boot Sales and produce for the Stall on the Wall.

To the many people who bake and provide goods for the stalls at the Car Boot Sales. The Cake Stall alone raised over £400 at the August Car Boot Sale with the produce being enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

To the volunteers who help erect the marquee and the Christmas Lights

To Beadnell Parish Council for their generous grant and, this year, allowing BCV to post information on the Community pages of their website.

Ongoing thanks are also due to Craig Mellor at Annstead Farm for allowing us to store our Christmas Lights and other items and the other support he and his family provide. And to Len Smith for use of his vehicle.

And especially to all the tourists and residents who support Stall on the Wall and the Car Boot Sales throughout the year.

Future Plans –

- BCV have already agreed to support any plans to improve and extend the footpath up to Swinhoe and, in theory, the renovation of the playground from next year.
- We are keen to welcome and involve new residents of The Kilns and will be discussing with them the most suitable type of event.
- BCV and BIB are always keen to hear suggestions for improvements to the village and events we can hold.

Beadnell in Bloom 2023

This year it has been mainly “business as usual” for Beadnell in Bloom.

We took out the winter planting from our own displays and from The Craster Arms at the end of May, saved what we could for re-use (bulbs and evergreens) and sold on or composted the rest. It was good to have a couple of new volunteers from The Wamses to help with this activity. Hobberlaw planted up for the Summer at the start of June at a cost of £1,034. Everyone seemed happy with how they looked. We would like to put some permanent structure in the Planters to give a greater sense of height – anyone with ideas of something fitting, weather-proof and robust please contact me.

During the early spring, at St Ebba’s Way, we built a frame and filled it with gravel then sited a boat (the St Ebba) which was planted with herbs and strawberries. With regular watering and weeding by the local residents this was an attractive feature all through the summer. The bulbs planted in the autumn of 2022 provided a great show in the spring and will be even better in spring 2024. Hand weeding of the bulbs by residents has allowed us to try a herbicide-free year in St Ebba’s Way; thank you to the NCC grounds team for helping us to do that.

In October we did the same removal of plants from our own displays and The Craster Arms then planted up with bulbs, bellis daisies, evergreens and wallflowers. It all looked pretty good until Storm Babet whipped in from the North Sea about 24 hours after the last plant went in! The mild, wet weather so far has helped most of the plants to recover and only a few have needed total replacement.

Having left The Lonnen to its own devices for a couple of years we planted a lot of new bulbs in October; the inspiration for this was a desire to remember the major contribution made by Jim Williamson. About 20 people took part on the day, including Jim's family, and we all look forward to seeing how it turns out next year.

The regular Fish Box, Bed and Planter adopters continued to do a great job of looking after their plants throughout the year; we are really grateful for this consistent help. The contributions of Joan and Gordon Brown who run the Stall on the Wall are significant; not only do they sell a lot of plants for us, but the takings also add a lot to our coffers. Growing from seed and over-wintering plants saved from The Craster Arms also has a big positive impact on our finances.

Beadnell in Bloom Projects for 2024 include:

- Another boat bed at St Ebba's Way – this time concentrating on food for pollinators, birds and butterflies.
- A permanent feature to go in each Planter to give height and impact.
- Adding painted stones to the Bench Beds to prevent damage by the mowers and clumsy pedestrians!
- Spending an additional £1,000 on winter planting

Contact Us

Chair - Jennifer Hall.

Secretary – Vacant

Treasurer – Colin Brunt

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