

SKILLS EXCHANGE SCIO NEWSLETTER

# LET'S GROW GETS OFF THE GROUND!

One of the things many people came to realise during lockdown was the enormous benefit felt by being out in the fresh air, surrounded by nature. Fittingly, as lockdown was eased, SES' brand new, South Lanarkshire -wide project, 'Let's Grow' finally got off the ground at the start of September.

At the project's East Kilbride base, we were unable to access the David Livingstone Birthplace Project in Blantyre at this time, but we were given the opportunity of using the home of SES - The Village Centre - to start the practical work experience element of the course. Thanks to Joanne Gray (Centre Manager), we assessed what could be done around the site.



This is how it looked before we started:



And the final result: after pruning back the epicormic growth then sanding and oiling the bench, this is now a lovely perch from which to admire the borders and listen to the birds.

The Village Centre, and its grounds, are used by a multitude of service users and members of the public so ensuring the grounds look at their absolute best was the squad's priority: doing so safely was equally important. After becoming acquainted with an array of garden tools and how to use them safely, the squad set to work.

One of the first jobs was pruning epicormic growth from the large, mature trees in the grounds. One of these, a large holly, had so much excess growth from the base that sitting on the bench below it had become impossible. This is an area used by young children as well as adults and is well-loved.



Working hard in the Village Centre Gardens

Our most recent task was helping rescue some houseplants brought in by a member of SES staff. The squad were shown how to mix bespoke compost for both the cacti and weeping fig (after first problem solving by creating a makeshift potting bench!). Then, after being shown how, the squad divided the cacti into smaller pots and the weeping fig was divided in two and both parts re-potted. The end result has brought some welcome greenery into the SES office!

The squad tidied up other areas of the garden by removing brambles and ivy as well as weeding. The borders were dug over and hoed and Spring-flowering daffodil bulbs were planted. The main walkways around the centre were swept clear of fallen leaves each day to minimise slip risks in the damper weather.



Getting stuck into replanting



Kirsty and her squad members!

I would like to thank all of the squad members for their cooperation, hard work and good humour which has been noted by those who use the Centre and see the result of their efforts. Their commitment to team work during our time at the Village Centre is a fantastic start to this new project and I look forward to developing everyone's skills further once we are on site in Blantyre. Watch this space for future updates!

Kirsty Haldane