



Firrhill News

Produced by the Parent Council

February 2017

Green Flag Award

In December Firrhill gained the Eco School's prestigious Green Flag Award. Mrs Barley, Lead Eco teacher, said "It's fantastic!" Environmental issues are covered throughout the curriculum but a lot of additional work has been done in order to achieve this award including: book reuse; plastic bottle recycling; litter picking; reducing energy use and improving the school grounds.

Pupils, staff and parents created a school meadow, the Celebration Garden, the Anne Frank Garden and the Pond Garden. These encourage biodiversity through the provision of nest boxes, log piles and bird feeders. Pupils have enjoyed helping with planting and garden maintenance. New picnic benches have been provided by the Parent Council and PTA. Recently the school took part in Energy Awareness fortnight. The Eco Committee ran a competition and awarded certificates to our most energy aware staff members. Well done Mr Beard, Ms Murphy, Miss Howells and Mrs Sharp

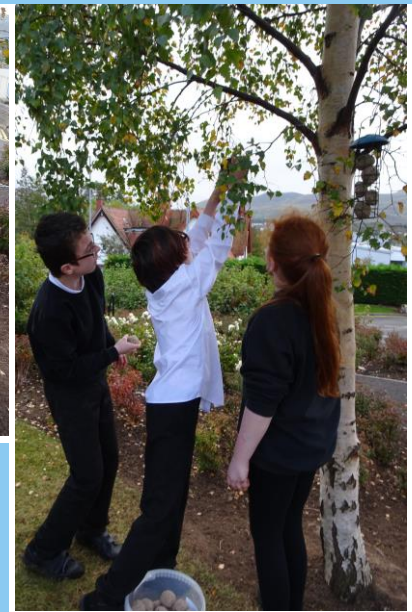


Mr Hamilton Head Teacher said "This represents a tremendous achievement for all those involved"

Bird Feeders

In the autumn some new bird feeders and two tit nest boxes were placed in the trees near the Anne Frank Garden. A bird bath was also added to the garden as birds need a supply of water for drinking and bathing.

Pupil volunteers regularly refill the fat ball feeders. Already magpies, crows and jackdaws have been seen feeding. If squirrels become a problem, squirrel proof feeders will be required.



Thanks to Mrs Ridley for donating the bird bath and to the Parent Council for funding the bird food

Hyacinth Bulb Planting

On Wednesday 14th September some S1 pupils from Mrs Watson's art class helped Mrs Hargest, parent, to plant some early indoor flowering Delft Blue hyacinth bulbs. The pupils wore gloves in case of allergy and planted three bulbs in each pot. The bulb fibre was damp but not too wet. The pots were then put in a cold dark place (a garage) for 10-12 weeks to encourage them to grow and flower early.



Thanks to the Parent Council for funding the bulbs and fibre



Mrs Watson Art teacher said "the pupils seemed to really enjoy their gardening session"

When the shoots were 3 cm high they were brought indoors and placed in a warm room until the flowers started to develop. *The hyacinths were mostly sold at the Christmas Concert and Dance Show to raise funds for school eco work.*



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The School Meadow

The school meadow, situated to the rear of the building by Design and Technology, was created in May 2013 as part of the Urban Pollinator project. Unfortunately during 2016 due to the building works it has, along with the Pond Garden, been mostly out of bounds.

Although very successful in its first year as an annual meadow (photo right), it has since then become a mixture of annuals and perennials with dock, thistles and broom. It was tending to become very grassy, so yellow rattle (also known as a vampire plant because it feeds off grass) was recently added.



Thanks to the PTA for funding the yellow rattle

The meadow provides a wildlife corridor and contributes to increasing biodiversity in the school grounds. Nectar provides food for insects. Birds feed on the insects, worms and flower seed heads. The meadow is cut every autumn; the cuttings are then left for a couple of weeks to allow seeds to fall before being removed. Meadows work best where the soil quality is poor and patches of bare earth are exposed.

Other local meadows which have recently been created include Spylaw Park, Harrison Park and a meadow in the Pentlands by Dregghorn Woods.



Picnic Bench

The Environment Group, aware of the need for more outdoor seating, was delighted that the PTA responded to their request to fund a new picnic bench. Two previous picnic benches were funded by the Parent Council.

If a fourth picnic bench could be added to this area near the school entrance, it would create a fantastic outdoor classroom.



The Environment Group is one of the Parent Council's Working Groups. The next meeting is on Monday 6th February at 7.00pm in the school library and the following meeting is on Monday 8th May - all welcome

Thanks to the PTA for funding this new picnic bench so that pupils can sit outside together during breaks and lunchtimes.



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Book Swap



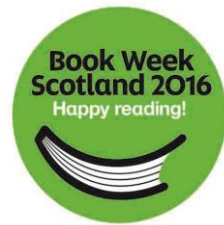
On 21st and 22nd November members of the Environment Group and school librarian Mrs Shauna Dickson ran Firrhill's 4th annual book swap and give-away event as part of Book Week Scotland. Pupils were invited to bring a book to swap or simply to select a book to take home and read. The school library added some donated books to its collection and a few books were placed on the staff room book swap shelf. This is a great way to reuse books. Please donate books to Carolyn Hargest 07726 922723 for the next event.



Thanks to parents G Jardine and C Hargest, who organised Firrhill's Book Swap event



Many thanks to all those who donated books 😊





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Gold Duke of Edinburgh Practice Expedition

From Wednesday 28th to Friday 30th September twelve Firrhill S6 pupils completed their Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award practice expedition, supported by staff members Mr Boyd and Mr MacIntosh. They walked in the Braemar area covering a total distance of over 30 miles. The weather was wet and windy but with some sunny spells, also it was very cold during the night. The pupils walked in small groups carrying full packs. They wild camped in the hills next to highland burns and cooked supper such as pasta and couscous on camp stoves. Many lessons were learnt about expeditions in mountainous country. All the pupils were pleased and relieved to have completed their practice expedition and they can now prepare for their qualifying expedition in Kintail in June.



Thanks to our team of staff for organising this practice expedition



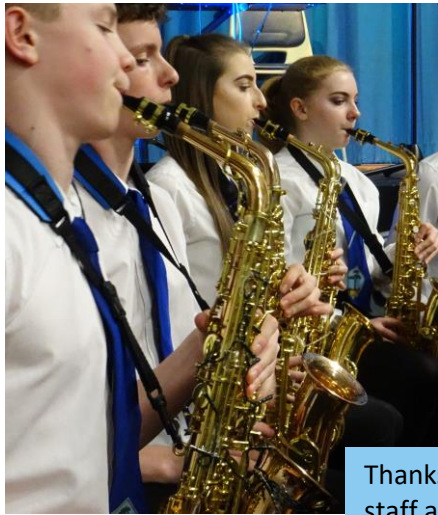


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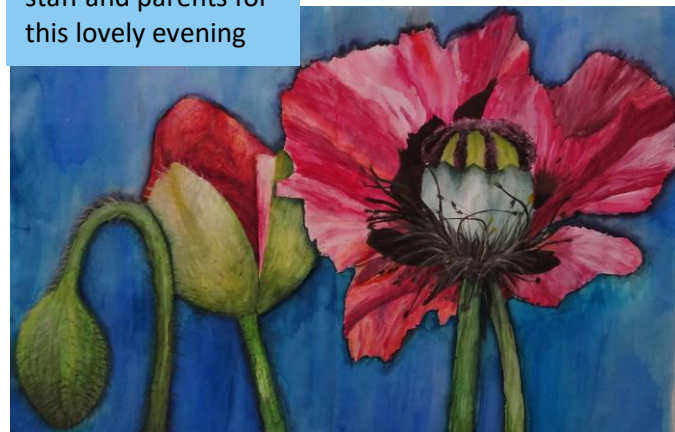
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Christmas Concert



Thanks to the pupils, staff and parents for this lovely evening

The Christmas Concert on December 13th featured many pupils plus a debut performance by the staff choir. In the foyer before the concert there was music, art work on display and stalls selling PTA raffle tickets, Christmas cards, hyacinth bulbs, and fund raising for the Vietnam trip.





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Schools' Fashion Event

On Monday 14th November Mrs Graham accompanied a group of senior students to the National Museum of Scotland's new fashion gallery to take part in the very first schools' fashion event. Students had the chance to meet the fashion gallery's curator and hear about her work, and saw a presentation by young designer Lucy Simpson. Students then took part in four different practical fashion workshops before coming back together for a presentation on courses and careers in the fashion industry.



The students enjoyed this interesting educational trip





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Oxgangs Chanter and Drumming Club



On Tuesday 22nd November as part of the Firrhill Pipe Band Club activities, new chanter and drumming classes started at Oxgangs Primary School with chanter teacher Patricia Rudolf von Rohr and drumming teacher Caroline Flockhart. Classes are on Tuesdays 3.25-3.55pm, aimed at P3-7. More after school drumming and chanter classes are planned to start on Mondays.

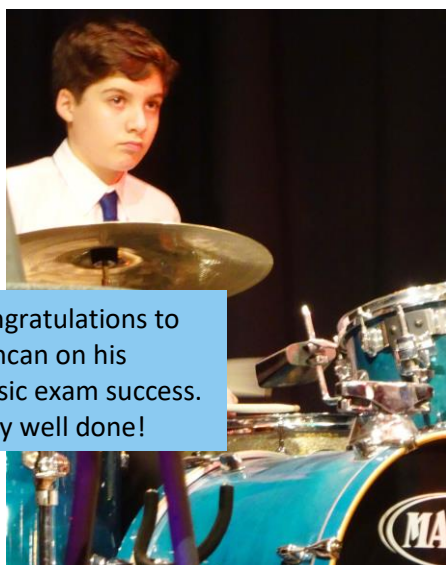
Firrhill High School has chanter/pipes classes for P3-S6 on Mondays after school and Thursday lunchtimes. Snare drumming classes are held on Wednesday lunchtimes.



For more information email carolyn.hargest@btconnect.com

Drum Kit Exam Success

Duncan Walker S2 recently passed his grade 8 drum kit music performance exam with merit (Rockschool grade system).



Congratulations to Duncan on his music exam success. Very well done!

Micaela Walker, Duncan's mum, says "This is the hardest exam and is usually not sat on this instrument until the first few years studying music at college. I have been informed that there are less than 100 kids in the country under the age of 15 that have passed this exam. As you can imagine we are very proud of Duncan and the hard work he has put in to achieve this.

Duncan started playing when he was six, after it was suggested to us that he should try out the instrument by a retired music teacher.

The music teacher spotted his talent for rhythm and coordination when he was only three! After a bit of persuasion (I mean what parent would really want a drum kit in the house?) we bought him a kit, and with the help of his outstanding teacher Mr David Jeans, he is now playing at a professional level. In 2016 he took on his first pupil teaching the drum kit and is hoping to add a few more pupils in 2017".