



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"

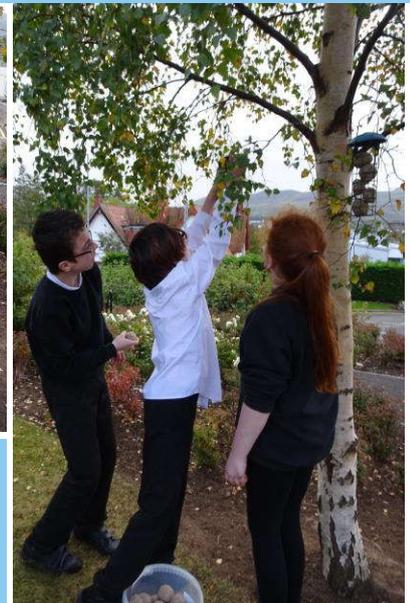
Bird Feeders

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 Dreghorn 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.