

CORSTORPHINE HILL LNR COMMUNITY WALLED GARDEN

MANAGEMENT PLAN 2021-2024 (updated 2022)

Corstorphine Hill Community Walled Garden (“The Walled Garden”) is owned by the City of Edinburgh Council Parks Greenspace and Cemeteries department and lies within Corstorphine Hill Local Nature Reserve. It is managed and maintained by a group of enthusiastic and hard working local people called the Friends of Corstorphine Hill. This plan provides information on the garden and is a forward looking document to guide management of the garden, use resources effectively and promote the natural heritage, ecological value and educational facility of Corstorphine Hill Community Walled Garden.

The active Friends Group not only manages, maintains and develops the Community Walled Garden but actively assists the City of Edinburgh Council Natural Heritage Officers in the wider context of the garden as part of the Corstorphine Hill Local Nature Reserve . The City of Edinburgh Council Forestry and Natural Heritage Service manages 15 countryside parks across Edinburgh and the Pentland Hills Regional Park with an emphasis on the conservation of their natural, cultural and historical interests.

The Friends of Corstorphine Hill rely on membership subscriptions, donations, grants from a range of organisations and assistance from the City of Edinburgh Council. The Friends maintain the nearby Corstorphine Hill Tower, which is opened regularly to the public and generates income through donations which helps with the running and upkeep of the Garden.

This Management Plan is produced by the Friends of Corstorphine Hill to guide the management of Corstorphine Hill Community Walled Garden. It supersedes previous management strategies. This revised document covers the period 2021 to 2024. It will be updated annually.

Wider Policy Context

The creation of this management plan has taken into consideration a range of different policies to reflect the complex nature of greenspace management. The national and local policies which influence this document include health, biodiversity, sustainable development, and social inclusion. The City of Edinburgh Council web site provides the most current information. www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20064/parks and green spaces

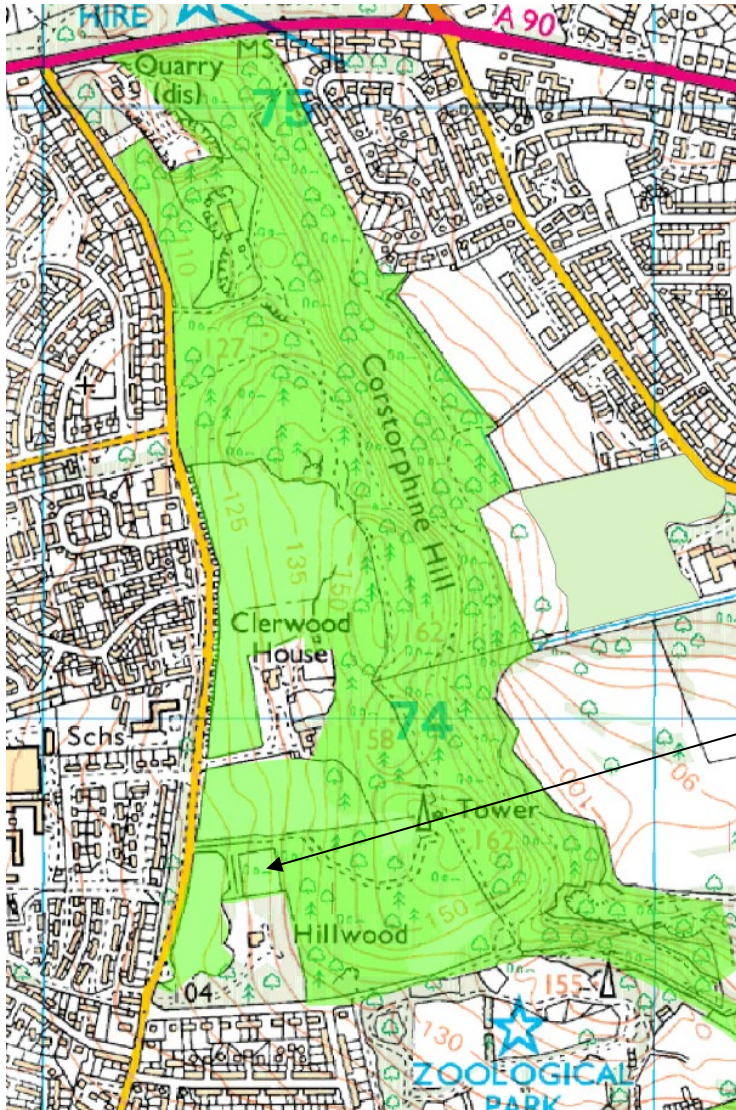
In particular, it should be read in the context of the Corstorphine Hill Local Nature Reserve Management Plan 2017 – 2026.

Legal Compliance

In 1994, Corstorphine Hill (including the then derelict Walled Garden) was declared a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) with the support of the local community. LNR designation is put forward for approval by the local authority in consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). A LNR is a place of special local natural interest, set up to protect nature, and for people to enjoy and appreciate. As a Local Nature Reserve is a statutory declaration under Local Agenda 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, it is a very clear signal to a local community of the local authority's commitment to nature conservation (SNH, 2007).

The walled garden is public open space owned by the City of Edinburgh Council, is within a Local Nature Reserve, recorded Listed Wildlife Site, an Urban Wildlife Site, a Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Site and Green Belt. Development of the garden was subject to Planning Authority approval and consent was obtained in 2001. The area has

been in council ownership since 1927. The Friends of Corstorphine Hill have a letter of comfort detailing an allowance to maintain and develop the garden alongside Parks Officers.



Location of Community Walled Garden within Corstorphine Hill LNR

Site Information

	Description
National Grid Reference	NT 205 743
Ownership	The City of Edinburgh Council, Place, Parks Greenspace and Cemeteries, Forestry and Natural Heritage
Main contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Kyles, Natural Heritage Officer, David.Kyles@edinburgh.gov.uk Inverleith Farmhouse, Inverleith Park, 5 Arboretum Place, Edinburgh, EH3 5NY - 0131 529 2421 / 0131 311 7078 - 07917 174 503 - http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20064/parks_and_green_spaces Ritchie Fraser, Community Parks Officer, North West Locality, * West Pilton gardens, Edinburgh, 0131 529 5050 • Peter Taylor, Secretary, Friends of Corstorphine Hill, pstay@blueyonder.co.uk Tel: 0131 336 1628
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local community • Corstorphine Community Council and other adjacent Community Councils • Corstorphine Heritage Trust • Local shops and businesses • Local schools/libraries • Forest Kindergarten • The Hub/Rannoch Centre • Local hotels and guesthouses
Summary of main uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green space woodland walk and community garden • Leisure activities such as informal play, bird watching and community gardening • Source for site information, interpretation and historical reference • Picnics and seating • Organised events especially involving the local community (guided walks, talks and presentations) • Educational activities

The Area

The recreational value of the area for the users of Corstorphine Hill LNR, citizens of and visitors to Edinburgh is immense, especially for those living in the adjacent community areas of Corstorphine, Drum Brae, Clermiston, Blackhall, Murrayfield and Saughtonhall.

The garden provides an essential space in the heart of Corstorphine Hill LNR. The situation of the garden within the LNR provides users with a healthy recreational area. The design provides ample seating throughout and can provide shelter from the prevailing wind and is accessible to all. The site is particularly welcoming for family groups as it is enclosed, secure and well-behaved dogs are welcomed.

Corstorphine Hill is the largest and perhaps the most valuable of Edinburgh's urban woodlands. It is the Council's second largest property in terms of area and forms a prominent feature of the City's skyline. Generally woodland cover in the Edinburgh City Council area averages only 6% of land area, with most woodlands being small, fragmented areas, mostly privately owned, which do not cater for the public. The significance of a large, accessible area of continuous woodland with the microcosm that is the Community Walled Garden in a highly populated area cannot be overstated.

A Brief History

Hillwood House was built in 1872 and was home to the MacKinnon family who were reputed to have received the recipe for *Drambuie* from Bonnie Prince Charlie. The MacKinnons then made their fortune from this and the house became corporate headquarters for the Drambuie Liqueur Company around this time. Edinburgh Corporation purchased the property in 1935 and then sold it on in 1968. Prior to 1935 it is believed that the walled garden was worked as a kitchen garden supplying the house with vegetables, herbs and fruit. Around the time of the 2nd World War many green areas in the City of Edinburgh were turned over for production of staple foodstuffs. It is presumed that the walled garden associated with Hillwood House was put to the same use. Thereafter the house and grounds fell into a state of disrepair and neglect for a period of approximately 50 years.

With the establishment of the Friends of Corstorphine Hill in 1999, the local community became involved in progressing Corstorphine Hill for the benefits of all users and all wildlife. With a practically minded approach, the Friends became interested in transforming the Walled Garden area back into something like it once was. With this in mind, the City of Edinburgh Council was approached with the idea and gave full support. Funding was sought from a variety of sources, one of the most successful partners being the BBC's Beechgrove Garden team. This work created the layout of the present garden.

	Description
Overview	The garden is 4810m ² .The garden is made up of grass areas, formally planted areas, informally planted areas whindust paths throughout, a composting area, a wetland area and tools/materials storage facilities.
Boundaries	North boundary – Corstorphine Hill LNR (Tower/mast access lane). East Boundary – Corstorphine Hill LNR South Boundary – Hillwood House West Boundary – Corstorphine Hill LNR
Topography, drainage and soils	The soil is brown earth loam, the whole site is west facing and sloping. Due to the underlying strata of mudstone, sandstone and the protruding dolerite sill, some of the soils are thin in places with evidence of glacial activity. With previous uses as allotments and a working kitchen garden, the nutrient levels remain quite high, if variable in some areas. All leaf litter and green waste is composted further enhancing nutrient availability. Due to the lie of the land and the relatively free draining soil, the area drains well, some of which is harnessed in the wetland/marsh area at the bottom (north west) of the garden.
Woodland and trees	The garden had been completely neglected for about half a century when the Friends decided to take on the project of clearing and replanting it. All subsequent planting has taken place since 2001.
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seating- 2 x picnic benches, 8 x seats, hexagonal seat • Accessible paths throughout consisting of hardcore base dusted with red whin • Garden plan mounted on sandstone cairn • Weatherproof information board • Information leaflet dispenser • Stone built storage facility(2004), Tools Shed and more recent (2012) Metal Shed for machinery. • Utilities area • Water butts(3)
Significant features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double wrought iron gate at entrance point, hexagonal central seating area, raised decking around bog garden, carved memorial bench for the late Chairman and driving force of FOCH, Eddie Price (2013).

Aims

1. To create and maintain an attractive and interesting garden, while improving and increasing the habitats and biodiversity within the garden.
2. To monitor and improve Health and Safety aspects for the benefit of visitors and gardeners.
3. To promote local community involvement in all aspects of the site.
4. To encourage more visitors to the garden.
5. To promote study and educational environmental opportunities for visitors.
6. To broaden the garden's accessibility and appeal.

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WORK PLAN

UPDATED FOR 2022

A: FABRIC AND EQUIPMENT

1. Routine maintenance of petrol mowers and strimmer
2. Secure storage and training in use; invasive species control equipment
3. General path and decking maintenance, disposal of refuse
4. Maintenance of timber and metal seating
5. Manage and operate rota for gate opening and locking on a daily basis.
6. Installation and Maintenance of signs at gate, Green Flag pole, directional signs and Notice Board.
7. Monitor condition of stone perimeter wall, initiating work as required.
8. Monitor condition of wooden decking, initiating work as required.
9. Maintenance of buildings (3) and water butts

B: PLANTING AND GARDEN WORK

1. Ensure regular mowing of grass areas
2. Weeding and tidying of planted areas
3. Removal of winter 'brown' and other debris as required
4. Mulching of shrubs as selected
5. Further planting of climbers, south facing wall (west section) and west facing wall.
6. Maintain group of hamamelis mollis shrubs (for winter colour esp.) in herbaceous border (NE quarter) and add further shrubs for winter colour.
7. Prune dogwood 'hedge' in Spring and rose hedge as required (W side).
8. Refresh 'herb/sensory' area (E of carved bench)
9. Maintenance and development of bog garden area.
10. Maintain recent triangular bed and planting of dry stone wall adjacent to gate.
11. Maintain and extend planting of shady south east corner with shade tolerant plants and ferns.
12. Prune shrubs seasonally as necessary.
13. Planting of various new shrubs of interest especially in south-facing north plot.
14. Further development of "Tower" bed area.
15. Retain informal areas for natural regeneration and wildflowers, strimming seasonally.

16. Continue production and use of compost and mulching materials.
17. Plant with bees, butterflies and birds in mind.
18. Maintain the informal hibernaculum.

C: OTHER ACTIVITIES

1. Continue and renew provision of information about plants.
2. Maintain information about the Garden on FOCH web site.
3. Keep Information Notice Board up to date.

D: PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Review role of Walled Garden as a “visitor centre” for the Hill.
2. Offer of specific area to local primary school to clear, plant and maintain.
3. Small plot for use of Forest Kindergarten.
4. Renewal of path edging and renewal as necessary, resurfacing of downslopes by CEC
5. Improve contents of sensory garden
6. Try out studs on boardwalk

Finance

Expenditure on plant purchases and other items is met from FOCH funds.

Grants will continue to be sought as required from a range of sources for major projects..

Monitoring & Reviewing

An online survey and a questionnaire on site operated by the CEC's Parks and Greenspace Service is in place for the city's parks and gardens which includes Corstorphine Hill. The Green Flag system provides an independent assessment. See the CEC web site and the Green Flag site for latest information.

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20065/conservation/247/biodiversity_in_edinburgh .