



Strictly embargoed until 00:01 4th February 2010

Parliamentary Reception Rewards Hard Working Communities

A Parliamentary Reception, hosted by Bruce Crawford MSP, took place at the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday 3rd February to celebrate the Beautiful Scotland campaign, and to reward volunteers from across Scotland who worked tirelessly throughout 2009 to improve the quality of their local environments.

Representatives from Scottish community groups were treated to a drinks and canapé reception in recognition of their success in achieving an award in the Beautiful Scotland campaign in 2009. Roseanna Cunningham, Minister for the Environment, gave a heartfelt thank you to all present, and spoke about the benefits the Beautiful Scotland campaign brings to communities the length and breadth of Scotland.

The Beautiful Scotland campaign has been successful in transforming communities of all sizes throughout Scotland for over 43 years. Both the main Beautiful Scotland campaign, and its non competitive section for communities starting out, involve groups improving the attractiveness, cleanliness and sustainability of their town, city or village, and bring a sense of pride to local areas.

Minister for the Environment, Roseanna Cunningham, said, "Last year around 300 communities worked to improve their local areas through the Beautiful Scotland campaign, improving their local environments and developing a real sense of community spirit.

"The Scottish Government is committed to creating a greener Scotland but we cannot do it alone. The Beautiful Scotland awards show that community action can make a difference and I'd encourage other towns and villages the length and breadth of Scotland to sign up and get involved."

Keep Scotland Beautiful is an operating name of Environmental Campaigns (Scotland).
Scottish Charity Number SC030332

Keith Jackson, chair of the Beautiful Scotland Advisory Group said, "There is no better activity for increasing community spirit, than improving your local environment and not only does it enhance these places for those that live, work and visit the community, it is also good fun and healthy. The campaigns address many issues other than floral enhancement and these include environmental responsibility, such as recycling and biodiversity. This means that it appeals to a cross section of residents and we are now witnessing a great interest in this kind of community action, not only in the main campaign of Beautiful Scotland, but also in the Neighbourhood Awards.

"This is all the more important today and for the foreseeable future, as public spending is under pressure and local authorities are having to make savings across the board, including the maintenance and development of community green space.

"I continue to admire the initiatives, imagination and commitment of the volunteers of the communities that participate in these campaigns and I look forward to Beautiful Scotland continuing to grow steadily and the communities of Scotland being respected, both nationally and internationally, for the manner in which they care for their environment".

Rena Whyte, member of the Beautiful Scotland 'Flourishing Forth' group, said of being involved in the campaign, "Through working towards the targets of Beautiful Scotland we have strived to improve and enhance our wee village. Cross-generational working through involving the local Primary School children and other groups and members of the community has been rewarding. Our relevant business plan ensures sustainability as proven by our success in winning The Jim Murdie Sustainability Award in 2009. This success has spread throughout the community giving a feel good factor for our future. The Beautiful Scotland scheme allows us to be aware of the environmental achievements of other villages and towns and this knowledge and the networking gained through it bodes well for Scotland's future.

Beautiful Scotland would like to invite YOU to join the Beautiful Scotland campaign 2010 – Scotland needs more volunteer groups to help improve local communities, so check out the Beautiful Scotland website <http://www.beautifulscotland.org/> and sign up by contacting Anne Strachan, Beautiful Scotland Co-ordinator on 01786 477 171 or emailing beautifulscotland@ksbscotland.org.uk TODAY!!!!

- Ends -

For further information please contact:

Juliette Camburn on 01786 468 796 or e-mail juliette.camburn@ksbscotland.org.uk

Please visit <http://news.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/BeautifulScotland.asp> for fast facts, images, and the latest Beautiful Scotland press releases.

Notes for Editors

- Beautiful Scotland is a programme of [Keep Scotland Beautiful](#) (KSB), one of Scotland's leading environmental charities, administering anti-litter campaigns under the Keep Scotland Tidy slogan along with the People and Places, Blue Flag and Eco-Schools environment programmes, Waste Aware Scotland, Sustainable Scotland Network, Climate Challenge Fund and Going Carbon Neutral Stirling campaign.
- [Beautiful Scotland](#) is an independent campaign working for the improvement of local environments and has been successful in transforming communities of all sizes throughout Scotland during its 43 year existence.
- In the main Beautiful Scotland campaign, there are 12 categories based on electoral roll population size, ranging from Clachan (villages with a population under 100) to City (population 100,001 and over). Judges travel the country in pairs to assess the efforts of each group.
- 71 communities from the length and breadth of Scotland entered the 2009 campaign.
- A medal system was introduced in 2008 to ensure that, providing communities meet the Beautiful Scotland objectives, their efforts are rewarded.
- Neighbourhood Awards (soon to be re-launched as 'It's Your Neighbourhood') are part of the Beautiful Scotland campaign and are funded by the Scottish Government, Keep Scotland Beautiful and The Royal Horticultural Society/Britain in Bloom.
- It's Your Neighbourhood is non-competitive i.e. the judges will not judge one community against another or announce a winner. Instead the scheme recognises that communities are just starting out and each will approach the needs of their local areas very differently.
- In 2009, 68 Neighbourhood Award groups from across Scotland were rewarded for their hard work.
- The Neighbourhood Awards were first piloted in 2003 in conjunction with The Royal Horticultural Society. The first year of Neighbourhood Awards in Scotland was 2005. The popularity of the scheme has been such that it has been revised and improved for 2010 and will be re-launched as 'It's Your Neighbourhood' to better reflect the diverse activities being carried out across the country.
- Last year, hundreds of thousands of people from villages, towns and cities benefited from an improvement in the quality of their local environment as a result of communities' participation in the Beautiful Scotland & Neighbourhood Award campaigns. Local businesses also benefited from the increased volume of tourists and visitors going to see the improvements for themselves.