



Ardoch in Bloom

Cock and Hen Wall Restoration

CASE
STUDY



Background

The southern approach to Braco features an ancient stone wall which had fallen into a sad state of disrepair. Appearing on original Ordnance Survey maps dating back to the 19th Century, the wall uses a unique construction style known as “Cock and Hen” due to the unusually positioned cope stones along the top of the wall.

The route of the wall forms part of a Visit Scotland designated tourist route, as well as bordering an area of land used by locals to walk, picnic and enjoy nature. The wall was dangerous in places, and several unofficial paths had been formed through gaps in the wall.

Previously the group had carried out improvements to a 50m section of the wall at the Braco cemetery entrance, but had ambitions to restore the remaining 165m of wall to its former glory. By undertaking the full rebuild and repair of this historic wall the group hoped to enhance the approach to the village and invoke a sense of community pride.

Preparatory Work

Prior to beginning work on the project a consultation exercise was undertaken to assess public opinion and gather feedback. This included providing updates on the Ardoch in Bloom Facebook page and speaking to residents about the project proposals.

A substantial increase in community pride was observed after the previous restoration work was completed, which demonstrated community support for the remainder of the wall to be restored.

Additional support for the project was gathered from local organisations including Braco and Greenloaning Community Council, and written support was received from local Councillors.

The landowner Blackford Farms granted permission for the project to go ahead, and before work took place planning permission was sought and granted, and a comprehensive tendering exercise ensured best value for money.



The wall before

Project Timeline



Project Activity

The four distinct phases of project activity contributed to the successful delivery of this ambitious project which improved the appearance of the southern entrance to Braco and enhanced access to the area of land used by locals to walk, picnic and enjoy nature.

Phase 1 (November 2022)

Tree Surgery

Over the years a number of Sycamore and Ash trees had become overgrown, with their roots encroached into the structure of the wall, and branches overhanging the adjacent pavement and busy A road. Two Sycamore trees were felled and some lower branches from the neighbouring Ash trees were removed by a licensed tree surgeon.

Phase 2 (April 2023)

Site Clearance

Before beginning work on the restoration of the wall the contractor scraped a 1m strip along the length of the rear of the wall to remove a significant amount of soil and accumulated material. This revealed a quantity of suitable buried walling stone, including many 'hen' stones for the cope. A scrape was also carried out on the pavement side of the wall to remove accumulated grit and leaf litter, revealing an additional width of pavement for use by pedestrians.

As the pavement was not able to be used by pedestrians while work was being carried out, an existing pathway at the rear of the wall was upgraded to provide a safe, traffic free path.

Phase 3 (May 2023)

Wall Restoration and Repair

The 165m section of wall was dismantled, restored and rebuilt by local stonemason Struan Donaldson and his team. During the process a wren's nest was discovered in the wall; construction was paused until the chicks had flown the nest, and then the team created a permanent recess in the wall structure to allow the nesting space to be used again in the future.

The "unofficial" gaps in the walls were incorporated into the rebuild, with two purpose built openings - complete with pedestrian safety railings - created to allow easy access to the greenspace at the rear of the wall.

The project also saw the construction of a decorative cairn to commemorate the build, and a time capsule has been buried on the site filled with treasures and memories from Braco Primary School pupils, local groups and individuals.

Phase 4 (May 2023)

Path Creation

To complete the project a new path was created leading from one of the official openings in the wall to the road leading to the new cemetery; this was previously a well used walking route, but due to the lack of suitable surface often became muddy and unpassable in wet weather.

An official opening for the wall was held in October 2023 which was well attended by local residents and project partners.





Hard at work



The finished product



New path and safety railings



Work in progress



Wren's nest



Official opening

Lessons Learned

Previous projects delivered by the group have been much smaller in scale which meant we could project manage and fundraise ourselves. The size of this project required us to look for assistance and advice outside our group. We are indebted to the professional consultants who helped, especially in regard to project management and fundraising.

Lesson 1 - “If you don’t ask, you don’t get”. What seemed a much needed but insurmountable task was made possible by initially engaging with Perth and Kinross Council’s Community Greenspace team, with special thanks to Elspeth Bruce for all of her knowledge and guidance.

Lesson 2 - the project promoted Ardoch in Bloom to a wider audience within the area. It also raised the profile of local contractors who worked on the project, including stonemason Struan Donaldson, who we cannot thank enough for his team’s consideration and expertise.

Project Benefits

The Cock and Hen Wall Restoration project realised a host of benefits for both the local community and visitors to the area:

- Enhanced and protected the built environment by improving the appearance of the area in an aesthetically pleasing and sympathetic manner.
- Preserved a key community landmark which has substantive built heritage importance and protected its existence for future generations.
- Provided safe access to the greenspace at the rear of the wall, used by locals to walk, picnic and enjoy nature.



Commemorative cairn



The restoration of this historic wall is a major milestone for our community and is a testament to the hard work and dedication of everyone involved. The wall is now in better condition than ever before, and it will be a lasting reminder of our village’s rich history.

Alan Mitchell
Chair of Ardoch in Bloom

Funders and Stakeholders

The Cock and Hen Wall Restoration project could not have been realised without the generous support of the following funders:

- Scottish Landfill Communities Fund
- Ardoch Development Trust
- Perth & Kinross Council Community Environment Challenge Fund
- Arnold Clark Foundation
- Ardoch in Bloom
- Take A Pride in Perth & Kinross Association

Ardoch in Bloom would also like to thank the landowner Blackford Farms who granted permission for the project to take place, as well as the following Perth & Kinross Council departments who provided technical support and expertise throughout the project:

- Community Greenspace
- Planning
- Roads

Total Project Cost

£68,808

For further information about the **Cock and Hen Wall Restoration project** or the **Take a Pride in Perth and Kinross Association** please email info@prideinperthshire.co.uk