IFLI Management and Maintenance Fund Award Report

Zetland Park Community Orchard

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In 2018, the Friends of Zetland Park were awarded funding from Inner Forth Landscape Initiative to plant a community orchard of apple trees in Zetland Park. The newly formed orchard soon became a loved part of the park and the local community benefited from the fruit that the trees produced. Sadly not all the original trees that were planted survived and others were subjected to vandalism. In March 2019, with support from Dig It Falkirk, the Zetland Park Regeneration Project ran a free community orchard maintenance workshop which provided training for volunteers in how to care for the orchard. At the workshop all the trees were pruned, mulched and tree guards were installed. At this time it was also identified that:

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- There was a desire from other members of the community to take part in another orchard maintenance workshop so that they could learn the skills to volunteer in the community orchard
- Volunteers would benefit from having access to a tool library which would allow them to help maintain the orchard (if they did not have their own tools)
- The orchard would benefit from the replacement of the now missing trees
- The existing tree would benefit from the application of a slow release fertiliser/mulching
- To support the pollination of the fruit trees it would be beneficial to plant pollinating plants

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Photos 1: Tree blossom (April 2019) , Photo 3: Autumn maintenance workshop (March 2019) , Photo 9: Orchard (August 2019)

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The IFLI Funded Project:

In late 2019, the Zetland Park Project was awarded a grant totalling £1,920 to support the delivery of the above mentioned required works.

At the start of March 2020, on a sunny Saturday morning, a free community orchard maintenance workshop was held at the park. There were 10 people in attendance. The workshop covered:

- **Tree health assessments**
- **Spring pruning techniques:** All the existing trees were pruned, crossed and damaged branches were removed. The new tool library (which included gloves, secateurs, loopers and cleaning material) was used by the attendees
- **Other maintenance tasks:** This covered mulching of trees and fertilising
- **Tree planting:** The 12 new apple trees were planted and fertilised
- **Pollinating plants:** New beds of pollinating plants which included Hebes, Echinaceas, Thymus, Origanums, Asters and Geraniums were planted in the orchard.

It was amazing to see the transformation of the orchard during the three hours of the workshop. The plan, following the workshop was to have another sessions to complete the work that there was not time to finish. This including the removal of the grass from the new plant beds, the planting of the remaining plants, the fertilisation of the original trees, the mulching of all of the trees and the installation of tree guards around the new trees.

Unfortunately before this could be organised Covid-19 restrictions were put in place, however once these are lifted the remaining jobs will be undertaken.

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Photos 4-7: Orchard workshop (March 2020), Photo 8: Delivery of plants, Photo 9: Community orchard after workshop (March 2020)

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