

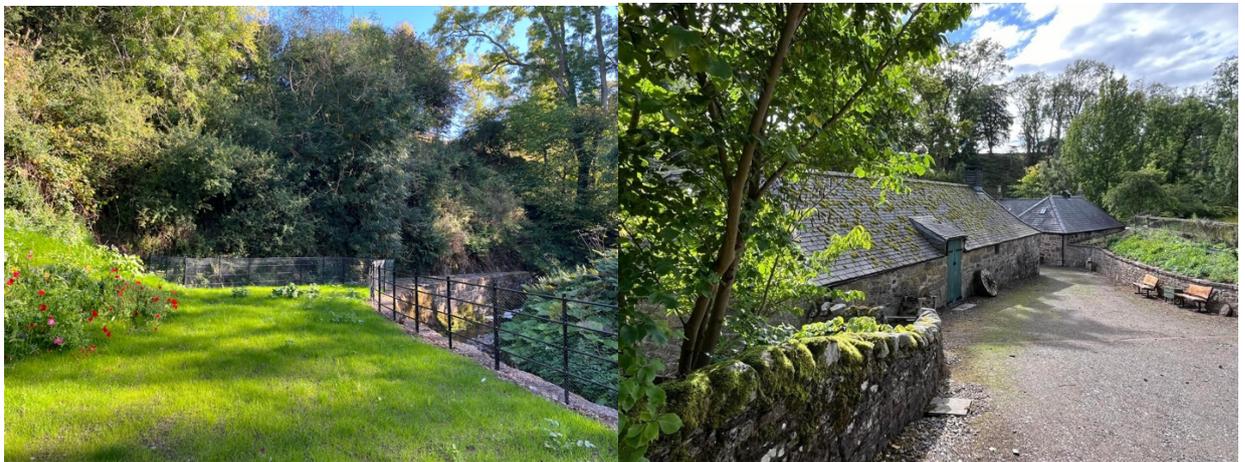
## Newsletter Autumn 2024

The year has fairly spun round at the Mill of Benholm! It is not long over a year since the Mill of Benholm Enterprise submitted the application for the Community Asset Transfer for the Mill from Aberdeenshire Council. A relatively short time ago but so much has happened! So, in case you haven't made it down to visit the Mill yet, a quick catch up:

Last Autumn, with a "License to Occupy" secured, the volunteers embarked on clearing the overgrowth around the Mill and fallen branches from paths and a start was made to make the access to the Mill of Benholm safe again. Our volunteers worked relentlessly through the cold and wet winter months to achieve this and completed this task end of spring 2024. We would like to take the opportunity to thank all our volunteers who made this possible. The images are telling the story even better than words...







**It was in the dreich days of February when Mary McCaffrey arrived to establish the Mill of Benholm Gardening Group. She arrived to this...**

**Hard to believe that just a little over six month ago the garden looked like this**



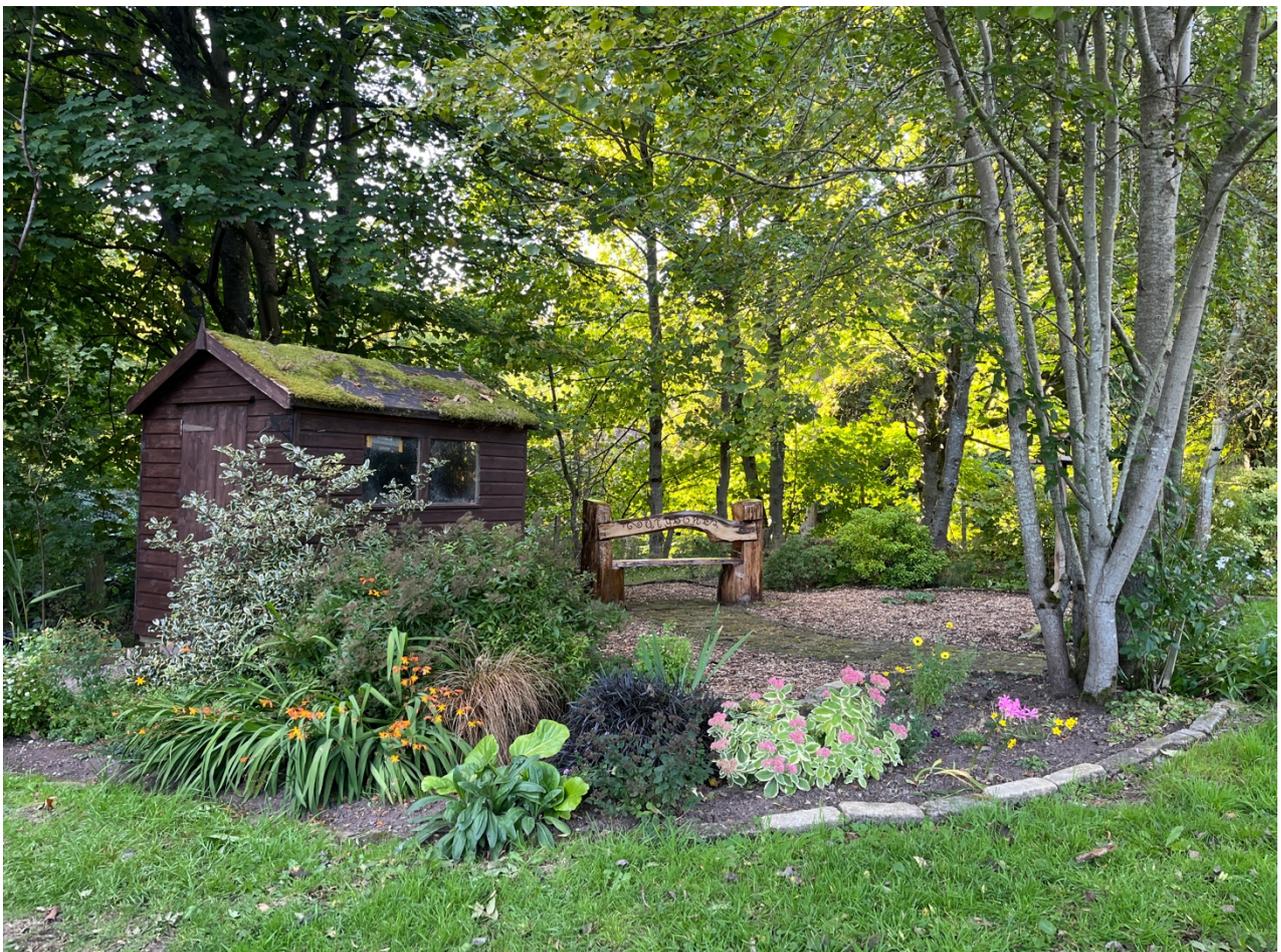
**But not long until the Gardening Group achieved the unachievable...**



By March every kind of seed was in any kind of pots and the garden has flourished grown and flourished ever since. Recently a shed has been installed at the Mill of Benholm car park to sell off vegetables and fruits, accompanied by a table for selling plants.

The Mill of Benholm Gardening Group meets every Tuesday morning from 10am until 1pm and every Saturday afternoon from 1pm until 4pm. This will continue through the winter.

And as the group hasn't had enough on their plate (spade), the memorial garden has been beautifully restored too. A plaque with the text of the original plaque in memory of Alyson will go up soon.



Thank you again to all volunteers who have helped to take the Mill of Benholm out of its decade long hibernation and turned it back into a loved place to be loved again. This has been community effort at its best.

**From the community for the community and visitors**

The Mill of Benholm is fortunate to have such strong support from the community and such a strong group of enthusiastic volunteers. Volunteer workdays at the Mill are fortnightly on Saturday afternoons from 1pm until 4pm and as with the gardening group will continue through the winter. The next Volunteer Workday is on Saturday the 12<sup>th</sup> of October.

The gargantuan effort of all volunteers have made it possible to have had the official Handover Ceremony of the Mill from Aberdeenshire Council to the Mill of Benholm Enterprise on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June this year with over 150 visitors attending and even more important, it made it possible to open the Mill since June every Saturday and Sunday from 1pm until 4pm to visitors and have the grounds open all the time to be enjoyed by the community and visitors alike.

But let's go back a wee bit again, the Community Asset Transfer Request was granted by Aberdeenshire Council Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee in January 2024 and then in record time the missives were concluded and on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April the Mill of Benholm Enterprise became the legal owner of the Mill of Benholm. During the License to Work, not only was the site made safe and accessible and the overgrown vegetation cut back, but our electrician was also at the Mill to test and repair the electrical installation and it is safe to use again, our plumber replaced the missing hot water tank and missing plumbing connection to ensure working toilets and water. Also, the pumps moving the wastewater from the septic tank overflow to the reed bed for final filtration were unusable and needed to be replaced. All this were done and the toilets are now in working order.

All this made it possible to invite the volunteers from SPAB (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings) on site to clear the lade. During the day Owen Bushell, millwright and SPAB Fellow gave tours through the Mill and talked everyone through the fascinating workings of this unique Mill and the milling process employed at Benholm. The volunteers shovelled literally tons of silt from the lade, thus allowing water back into the pond from the Castle Burn and for any repairs to the lade to be assessed. It was a great and muddy day.



During the summer work focused more on improving the Mill and grounds. More areas were tidied up, guttering and fences have been painted, new benches appeared, beautifully crafted by our volunteers. Many of the old signs found a new role as seat or backrest. New grass was sown and wildflowers planted.

The Gardening Group claimed more and more ground back and was building additional vegetable beds, all done with reclaimed or donated timber. Peas, broad beans, carrots, sweetcorn, tomatoes, garlic, peppers, chillies, cabbage and many other varieties enjoyed the unique microclimate at the Mill and the organic approach to gardening.

The size of the Mill of Benholm Grounds shows in the number of paths needed to be cut. Someone had to be out constantly with a strimmer during the summer to keep the paths clear.



Opening every weekend since June, the Mill of Benholm attracted a steady flow of visitors, whether they visited the Mill for the first time, or whether they were already well acquainted with the Mill, all of them could enjoy the new car park funded by the Aberdeenshire Area Committee Coastal Communities Fund and the NESFLAG Coastal Communities Challenge Fund.



It was genuinely one of the greatest pleasures of the summer to meet all the visitors and show them around, especially those with heart warming memories and connections to the Mill of Benholm in the past and who shared with us their memories of this lovely place in years gone by.

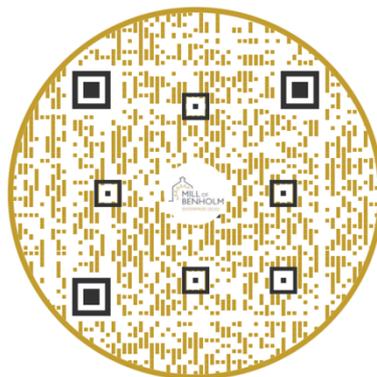
We hope all of our visitors will make many return visits.

To help spreading the word we are now with a new profile on Tripadvisor, so if you visited the Mill of Benholm this year, please use the QR code below to leave a review and tell everyone who doesn't know the Mill yet all about it.



September 22nd saw us welcome over 300 people to celebrate our Fruit and Harvest Festival at the Mill to showcase the produce of the Mill's Garden and Heritage Orchard with its guest sheep, as well as some of the finest produce from the local area. For the first time the Mill of Benholm took part in the Provenance Festival to promote local food. It was a fantastic day, the stallholders did well, and the visitors were treated to a sample of the very fine foods which are produced in our vicinity. We shall build on this to benefit both the producer and consumer. Those who were not lucky enough to get a pulled pork sandwich were adequately catered for with a diverse abundance of cake! As it was also the Doors Open Day tours showed visitors through the Mill, even in areas normally not accessible for the public.

A mix of varieties of apples from the Heritage Orchard were freshly pressed to make the best apple juice I have ever tasted. If you have a juicer, or you just want some apples, they will be in the Honesty Shed at the car park on a regular basis this Autumn. It was wonderful to see the Mill being enjoyed by so many visitors. Donations from the car park, collection boxes, raffle and stallholders on the day came to £756.07 for the Mill of Benholm. Thanks to all those who so generously donated. If you would like to make a donation you can do so on the Mill of Benholm website [www.millofbenholm.scot](http://www.millofbenholm.scot) or with QR code below.



**The Mill of Benholm needs your ongoing support**

As the nights draw in, there is still much to do outdoors, also the Gardening Group has plans to occupy one space or another during some of the darker and colder days to come, to do some crafting.

Precisely what gets crafted and out of what depends on who comes and what they do. We have some sheep's wool and some willow so if you have any ideas and/or skills, please get in touch with Mary via [secretary@millofbenholm.scot](mailto:secretary@millofbenholm.scot)

**The nitty gritty:**

Looking forward the general plan is to carry out refurbishments on a project by project basis as funding, materials and manpower allow. Funding Applications have and are being made for the café, Assessment of the mill mechanism and repairs, clearance of the pond, enhancing the event area beside the Mill Dam, lights from the car park to the Mill to allow access after the daylight has disappeared, and a few other projects .Fingers crossed!

We have already had some success in this area, hence the extended car park and handsome new signage. There has been a steady flow of donations at the car park, from visitors and overnight motorhomes, not to mention the fabulous plant and veg stall; all gratefully received, Thank you.

Funding for installation of a bike shed and e-bike hire facilities have also already been granted.

Fundamentally it's Make and Mend until funding comes in so if you or your business is sitting on a pile of spare wood and a big bag of screws you should carefully stand up before giving us a shout. Any contribution you can make by way of donations, materials, time or expertise is always much appreciated.

And we unfortunately cannot say it often enough, please support the Mill of Benholm with your donations. The Mill and the community will be grateful!

Furthermore, we have finally signed a twenty-year lease for the Mill Brae Wood. We would like to thank David Alexander of Brotherton Estate to make this possible.

**A few dates for the diary**

**John Wilkinson will be sketching and painting at the Mill every weekend in October, please visit the Mill and him during this time for a chat with the artist.**

**Sunday the 27<sup>th</sup> of October**

**Halloween at the Mill, an afternoon (mostly) for children with fancy dress, apple dookin' and more... Come and get spooky at the Mill, if you dare**

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> of November, Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> of November**

**Exhibition of paintings by John Wilkinson ion the Mill**

**And we might have a culinary surprise**

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> of November, Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> of November**

**Exhibition of paintings by John Wilkinson ion the Mill**

**And we might have a culinary surprise**

**Sunday the 24<sup>th</sup> of November**

**Christmas Market at the Mill**

**Stalls, Food and Entertainment indoors and outdoors, it will be a great day**

**Sunday, the 8<sup>th</sup> of December**

**Christmas at Benholm**

**Annual Christmas Concert and Carols in Benholm Kirk, together with Historic Churches Scotland, Lathallan School and Johnshaven Primary School**

**See you all at these events, volunteer workdays, at the Mill or in the garden**