



## CSGN CASE STUDY:

# CUMNOCK MEMORY GARDEN

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

This partnership project set out to design and deliver a dementia-friendly outdoor space for use by the local community of Cumnock, East Ayrshire.

Delivered over two phases between 2022 and 2024, the concept came from Cumnock Action Plan's recognition of the area's ageing population and a need for safe and welcoming outdoor space for older people and groups to use.

The garden provides a valuable environment with different spaces that can be used for a range of art, exercise and social activities – all in a stimulating outdoor setting that complements the community's existing indoor amenities.

## INTRODUCTION

Local community group Cumnock Action Plan identified the need for a dementia-friendly space, given Cumnock's ageing population with more than 25% over 60 years old. It is estimated that dementia affects one in 14 people over 65 and one in six over 80 in the UK.

A dementia-friendly garden would enable those living with dementia to access the outdoors safely, in a space specially designed to meet their needs, while also catering for other groups in the community.

While there were already a small number of clubs and organisations in Cumnock that catered for the elderly, most of these were based indoors, in community centres or care home settings.

The ability to deliver activities safely outside in a natural environment was identified as something that could provide multiple benefits to quality of life and mental and physical health and wellbeing.

In addition to local people's needs, the project has also met a need to improve habitat for wildlife and help to address the area's (and Scotland's) decline in biodiversity. This wider need led to the inclusion of mixed planting and a wildflower meadow in the design.





Phase 2: Sensory planting, colourful benches and central pagoda

## PROJECT OUTPUTS & BENEFITS

The project has delivered multiple benefits for the community, particularly those with physical or mental health issues. People can now enjoy a welcoming and safe outdoor space in which to relax, exercise or meet.

The site has paths that are fully accessible, catering for those with impaired mobility. The inclusion of dementia-friendly features such as colourful planting and wildflower meadow, provides sensory cues as tools for reminiscence, creating a familiar, relaxing space. It also provides habitat and forage for pollinators and other wildlife.

Coloured benches have been installed, which support navigation of the site by those with dementia. A series of dementia-friendly exercise posts provide simple exercises to keep users active, happy and healthy in older age.

The three granite sculptures were inspired by the stories and recollections of the people of Cumnock, providing a lasting connection to the community's past.

## CSGN & NPF OUTCOMES

In delivering CSGN outcomes, the project also contributes to several outcomes within Scotland's National Performance Framework.

- **Environment:** an area of greenspace has been enhanced with greater biodiversity value, supporting a variety of habitats.
- **Communities:** an attractive, inclusive, and safe space has been created with the local community's involvement, for use by all.
- **Health:** improved access to an enriching environment mean more people are spending time outdoors, taking exercise and enjoying nature, This delivers multiple mental and physical wellbeing benefits.

## PARTNERS & FUNDERS

The two phases were managed by Green Action Trust, working in partnership with Cumnock Action Plan, and East Ayrshire Council, among other supporting funding partners.

Phase 1 was supported by Life Changes Trust, Awards for All, EB Scotland, East Ayrshire Council's Renewable Energy Fund, Corra Foundation, Shire Housing Association and the Mushroom Trust.

Phase 2 was supported by East Ayrshire Council Place Based Investment Programme, East Ayrshire Council Renewable Energy Fund, Scottish Government, Scottish Landfill Communities Fund, and Council of Voluntary Organisations (East Ayrshire) Ltd.



Phase 1: before



Phase 1: after

