

Bridgend Inspiring Growth (BIG) Farmhouse Renovation Project Annual Report June 2016



Ownership of Bridgend Farmhouse

Six years ago we began inquiring into the community ownership and renovation of Bridgend Farmhouse. After many years and an enormous amount of volunteer effort, on September 24th 2015, the City of Edinburgh Council agreed to transfer ownership of the site to BIG for nil cost! All the work, passion, vision and support finally paid off, and thanks to the support of the council, our members, and the Big Lottery, we can now go about creating a 'Centre for Learning, Eating and Exercise' at the farmhouse. Ownership arrangements ensure that the site must



continue to be used for these purposes in the future, and cannot be sold off for private gain. Therefore it belongs to and can be run by everyone who becomes a member of BIG, and will continue to do indefinitely. It's been an incredible success, and will enable the project to create sustainable services, job and training opportunities, and affordable unique facilities for people in the surrounding communities.

Grants and Fundraising

I think it'd be fair to say we've had a successful year fundraising. In October 2015 we found out that our (nearly 900 page long!) application to the Big Lottery Growing Community Assets fund for £1million was successful! This was of course an incredible result and means that finally we can go ahead with the plans as we have all dreamt of for years. We have also received funding and support to continue the weekly drop-in and carry out a range of other community development projects from; One City Trust; City of Edinburgh Council Health and Social-Care; Foundation Scotland; Craigmillar/Portobello Neighbourhood Partnership; Scotmid Co-op; Liberton/Gilmerton Neighbourhood Partnership; and individual donations. We have a small amount left to fundraise the final amount for the farmhouse community workshops.

If you can help with this or would like to donate please let us know.

Design and Build plans



Things are moving quickly forward now with the design and build plans. Results from the various consultations and discussions over the past two years have helped to shape the final plans for the renovation of the farmhouse and build of four community workshops. The farmhouse will contain; a training kitchen and cafe; four toilets (including shower and disabled access); an education, exhibition and events room; meeting room/office space; wash room; and a lift. The

four new build community workshops will be built on the East side, and will be; a DIY workshop; Arts/Crafts workshop; Bike hire and repair; and storage and materials space. They will enable a whole range of exciting opportunities to link in with the Craigmillar Castle Park. These workshops will be covered in charred timber cladding which will be offered as a community workshop programme for people to become involved with in 2017. In front and behind will be two green-spaces. One garden for growing fruit, veg, and herbs for the kitchen, and the offer at the front for picnics, events, and demonstration beds. *To find out more or to see the plans in detail, or take part in further discussion over the internal design and features please let us know.*

Project Development Team

In 2015 we continued working with a very committed and professional project management team who helped us to achieve ownership and Big Lottery funding. We would like to offer a huge thanks to Sandra MacAskill (CaskieCo), Darla Eno and Yasmin Ali, for all their work towards this. Whilst that team have now moved on from this work, they are all still closely linked to the project and to continue to help out voluntarily in different ways. Recently we are delighted to announce the appointment of Graham Harper as our Build Project Manager for the next stage of the process. Coming in with a wealth of experience and knowledge of the construction industry and the charitable sector (previously CEO of Care and Repair) we are very lucky to have him on board and look forward to working with him going forward with the renovation.

Community Drop-In

This has now been running at the farmhouse every Sunday 11-3pm since November 15th 2014 (bar a few weeks off each Christmas time). Anyone is welcome to come and join and help with the renovation. There has been great participation with an average of 12 people there each week, but over 150 people participating at different times. We have been clearing out the inside, building compost bays, clearing away buddleia and weeds, developing a mood and wildlife garden, painting, fixing the fence, and lots more. There have been a series of successful workshops and activities including; Wood workshop; stone-wall restoration; foraging and wild plants; natural cosmetics; gardening; DIY; composting; bench restoration; cycle maintenance session; rocket-stove building; raised-bed building; stool-making, and more...!



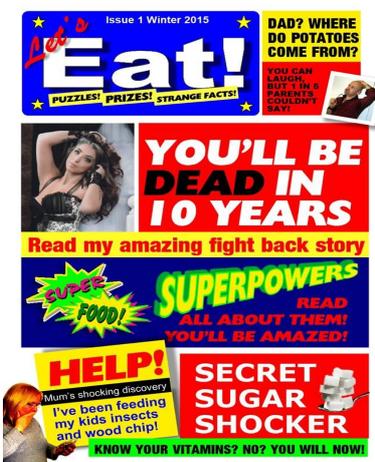
This will be continuing throughout the next year as well so come down any week to drop-in and get involved. It is open for your ideas and projects, and we will encourage and support any things you would like to work in, if we can. Over the next year we will be moving out of the farmhouse as we make way for construction so the focus will be on the outside spaces, including the front and back garden and the surrounding barns. We would like to create a thriving wildlife area which will help encourage many different species, and host bees on site at some point in the future. We also would like to build more garden sculpture, have an outdoor kitchen and wood storage area, create more signage, build a fence, continue rebuilding the wall; and much more. With thanks to Hilary Morrison, Darla Eno, Richard Whitson, for running these sessions, and our core volunteers – Mike, Andrew, John, Roman, Mark, Doogi, Louis, Jon, and all the others!

Community Development Projects:



In addition to the weekly drop-in we have maintained our community development projects. Our aim is to ensure that before any work has even begun on site we are raising awareness of the farmhouse renovation, ensuring a wide range of people have been able to influence the designs and programme ideas, developing a strong, inclusive and diverse community around the project, and providing projects that help address health and wealth inequalities. These have all been run by our wonderful

community development worker, Hilary Morrison. A selection of the different projects that have run over the last year include:



'Come Dine wi' us' Training Cafe at Sandy's Community Centre, in partnership with Adult Learning Link. 8 BME participants took part in a cooking training course, with all gaining a minimum of 1 qualification, and some gaining 3 (REHIS Food Hygiene, REHIS Food Nutrition, SQA in Working With Others). As a team they then ran an open free cafe at Sandy's Community Centre over 20 weeks, serving 25 local people each week a three course meal, as well as a special christmas dinner. Not only that but they worked together on researching nutrition and produced their very own booklet all about food, nutrition and health! Hundreds of copies were distributed around Craigmillar for free. It's an amazing booklet and well worth a read. To order a copy please let us know.

- ! **Crisis (UK national homelessness charity) DIY Group.** Members worked together to plan and build a new stone and brick outdoor Barbecue on site.
- ! **Arts and Crafts Group with Local Area Co-ordination.** Participants worked on various projects which have been used in various events – such as ceramic trays for scones, cement sculpted paving slabs, decoration for the farmhouse and garden, and more.
- ! **Liberton High Cooking Group** – cooking with over 20 young people for their 'Living on a Budget' week.
- ! **Volunteer placement for Duke of Edinburgh** for a teenager from Craigmillar.



Partnerships:

- ! **Skillspath** – Kitchen and Cafe and Gardening Group
- ! **Edinburgh Tool Library**. - Donations and help for DIY project and drop-in.
- ! **SEDA Build** – Bothy Build
- ! **Craigour Health Flat**;
- ! **Castle Project**;
- ! **RSPB**
- ! **Dirty Weekenders conservation society**
- ! **Crisis**;
- ! **Local Area Co-ordination team**,
- ! **Adult Learning Link**;
- ! **Sandy's Community Centre**;
- ! **Power of Food Festival**;
- ! **Newington Library**;
- ! **Carr Gomm**;
- ! **Tree-Ditions**;
- ! **Grassroots Remedies**: herbal/foraging- to support both their and our work



Bothy Build



This year also welcomes an exciting new addition to the project – The Bothy Build! As part of the Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design 2016, SEDA Build have teamed up with BIG to run a community-led design and build of our very own bothy! Following on from a design day in January at the farmhouse (in which nearly 40 people attended), designs, ideas and plans have been put together for an outdoor classroom/gathering/performance type space

to go in the large barn on the West side, next to Old Dalkeith Road. It will be a self-sustaining building, with a woodburner, solar panel electricity and rainwater harvesting. The Build will give trained placement opportunities, whilst also hosting various community open days, and the weekly Sunday drop-in, to ensure all that would like can learn the skills and take part in the build. This is intended to happy over the summer, between late July and September. We are can't wait for it to start! More details to follow soon.

For this SEDABuild and BIG are offering 16 volunteers the chance to go on a study trip to other ecological designed buildings, to look at strawbale, mudhuts and cob. This will be on July 9th. If you would like a place please contact Arleen.sedabuild@gmail.com ASAP.

Community Share Issue

Over the past couple of years we have been discussing and consulting over the possibility of having a community share issue. This would allow you to own a share in Bridgend Farmhouse. It involves setting up of a second organisation, a community benefit society, that would run one specific element of the project, e.g. the BIG farmhouse community workshops, and any products or services created from the workshops. Shares could be purchased from anywhere between £20 and £20'000, whilst everyone would get one vote and a equal democratic say in decisions. Investment raised would allow the workshop build to go ahead and raise funds for future activities, whilst ensuring you have ownership, and could help to direct the vision for the workshops. The money you invest could then be

withdrawn again the future when you need it after a certain time period. We are going to be working on this within the next year and hope to launch it soon. *If you are interested in investing or becoming a shareholder or helping to set this up and run the workshops please let us know ASAP.*

The even BIG(ger) Ceilidh (January 2016)

Following on from our first successful fundraising and celebratory Ceilidh in January 2015, we hosting a Burns Night and BIG Ceilidh (in the wee hall) at the Richmond Church in Craigmillar on January 23rd 2016. This was organised by the Ceilidh Collective, and we offer a huge thanks to Robin and all of his team, as well as the Big volunteers that did so much for this. We had completely sold out before the night, and managed to serve a full



Burns supper to over 120 people, alongside a whole host of performances, a superb 'Ode to the Haggis' from Stan Reeves, and some great music and dancing thanks to the Robert Fish Band. We also raised money from the raffle and all the donations which has gone towards continuing the weekly drop-in.

Other Events

There have also been a range of other community events we have held over the past year, with some great celebrations for all! These have included:

- ! Power of Food Festival– June 2015
- ! Forest Fun Day – Summer 2015
- ! Bridgend Bonfire Night – November 2015
- ! Xmas Fair – December 2015
- ! Bothy Design Day – January 2016
- ! Disability Audit/Check-up of Craigmillar Castle Park – April 2016
- ! Open Day and AGM – June 2016



Artist in Residence

In 2015 we announced our first 'artist-in-residence' Grace Pow. Grace, a local artist and illustrator, who showed great enthusiasm for the farmhouse and project, has worked with various groups and members, and also painted our farmhouse mural inside the farmhouse, as well as designing our postcards and contributing to craft groups and to events like the Christmas Fair. This year she is very busy finishing her final year at the Edinburgh College of Art and hopes to return soon.

Documentary

Over the last year, John Nowak, of the BIG members and local residents been doing lots of work to record and document what has been happening with the project. He has already created three fantastic different films, all included below. He has also gathered a range of photos and testimonials, and is currently gathering history and stories of the past of Bridgend Farmhouse through interviews with the Darlings (previous owners) and the Binnie's (owners before that). More to follow over the next year!

Video Links:

Sunday drop-in at Bridgend Farmhouse 2015

! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xODs4rV4TWc>

The BIG Farmhouse Renovation Project

! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xODs4rV4TWc>

'Come Dine wi' us' Cafe Project 2015

! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1m00FZSDcc0>

University Placements

We have continued our collaboration with the University of Edinburgh this year, again linking up with some very talented and knowledgeable students. Willeke and Cameron, from the GeoSciences department, have been working with us since January as part of their outreach project to develop resources, designs and information around Bees which can be used in the future to host a Beehive somewhere on site. They have created a 'Bee-inventing the wheel': Bridgend Bee Garden Design, panels and educational guidebook. All will be available on our website and we hope to utilise next year once renovation work is complete. We have also been offered bees and a hive, and expert support to maintain it, next year, which we hope will all tie in together. Thanks for all your hard work Willeke and Cameron!

Heritage

In March 2016 Rubicon Heritage carried out an Archaeological dig on site, digging three trenches, and carrying out a building recording. This was following on from the great work done previously by the Greater Liberton Heritage Project who had discovered the history of Bridgend Chapel on site. During the new digs and recording in March no new finds of any significance were found.

The Year ahead...

In addition to the Bothy Build, the renovation and the on-going drop-in there will be a range of other exciting events, groups and projects over the next year. Already confirmed are:

- ! Bio-Blitz with RSPB and Power of Food Festival Feast (19th June)
- ! Bench-Building workshop and installation in park (26th June)
- ! Natural Cosmetics Girls Group (12-25 year olds) – Summer 2016
- ! Forest Skills Workshops (12-25 year olds) – Summer 2016
- ! Sandy's Cooking Group and Cafe – Autumn 2016
- ! RSPB & Dirty Weekenders Young Roots Project – Autumn 2016
- ! Timber charring and cladding of BIG workshops – Spring 2017

Become a member of BIG.

It is very easy to become a **member** and **support** of BIG. Anyone that lives within the Gilmerton/Inch community council or Craigmillar Community council wards can become a BIG member, or if you live outside those areas you can become an official supporter. It is free and you have to just complete a membership form and submit to our secretary. You will get an invite to and vote at the AGM, and can stand to be on the committee if you want. You will also get invites for all the events. We will not bombard you with letters or emails, but will ensure you are kept up to date with what's happening, and have the opportunity to take part.

If you are interested contact us on the details below for a membership form

For more information:

- ⤴ www.bridgendfarmhouse.org.uk
- ⤴ Facebook: Bridgend Farmhouse
- ⤴ Email: bridgendfarmhse@gmail.com

We would like to thank all our volunteers, members, partners and friends for all your continued support, time and help over the past year. We look forward to a successful next year moving forward with the renovation.



I joined the Bridgend farmhouse restoration project when researching different communities based around my local area. I then attended on a Sunday at the beginning of summer and quickly noticed the importance and impact that the farmhouse made toward the local community. Not only was I surprised how many projects were on the go such as wall building and traditional stool building that gave myself and the local area a strong sense of belonging, I also noticed how much the project was needed benefiting many people from all walks of life. My enthusiasm for the project is very strong as my experience from the whole team and the farmhouse's future is strong having many practical, innovative and fundamental ideas that will benefit the local community greatly keeping an important part of Edinburgh's history alive. I have great passion for the farmhouse and cannot express how important it means for many people. I really do look forward to its future to further support Edinburgh's local communities." Jamie – Volunteer with BIG

Bridgend Inspiring Growth is a Scottish Registered Charity No SCO42769