

Case Study

Levenmouth Academy

Levenmouth Academy in Fife is a fantastic example of Learning for Sustainability (LfS) in action, reducing the impact of climate change through creative practical solutions across campus, involving students in environmental campaigns, and supporting outdoor learning through, for example, the John Muir award and qualifications in Environmental Science and Rural Skills.

Duncan Zuill, who is a Pupil Support teacher and the school's EIS representative, leads the project. The main focus of change across the campus has been to agree a reduction in mowing and associated maintenance with the local authority, creating 'scruffy spots', no-mow slopes, and larger, peripheral areas that allow nature to flourish.

Creating variety and interest within the school grounds, these changes support biodiversity and help mitigate the effects of climate change through carbon capture, creating shelter belts, moderating temperature, and reducing wind speed.



Following the discovery of bats in trees on a five-acre area of unused playing field to the rear of the school, the space has been reclaimed for nature. Minimal maintenance, as well as tree, orchard, and willow planting, has resulted in the development of a biodiverse space. In 2019, the project became a charity and since then Bat's Wood has continued to support Learning for Sustainability at Levenmouth Academy.

“Rural Skills students are out here most days”, says Duncan, “the plan for the site is constantly in development. Whilst there have been dedicated planting projects, we also trial ideas and respond to the environment, for example monitoring rainfall and redirecting water to reduce flooding in one area whilst creating areas for standing water in another. We’re helping to accelerate biodiversity restoration, but also being responsive in our approach.”

Reducing the need for tractor mowing across the whole school campus has a positive impact on the associated carbon emissions. The no mow areas are agreed with the authority maintenance team in advance, with the unmaintained areas also helping to create windbreaks between the school grounds and the surrounding housing estate.

Although Levenmouth Academy is leading the way in Fife by re-wilding school grounds to support biodiversity and mitigate climate change, Fife Council have recently undertaken a public consultation with local communities about making changes to mowing regimes in public greenspaces across the authority.





“It’s hugely important that schools respond to the Climate Emergency in whatever ways they can”, says Duncan when asked about what advice he would offer other schools. “Teachers have to create real school improvements by helping nature play its part in tackling climate change, enhancing biodiversity, and supporting student and community connection and empathy with the natural world.”

Find more information about Levenmouth Academy’s ‘scruffy spots’ at scruffyspots.org.uk, as well as in [this information video](#) made by pupils.

Learn more about Bat’s Wood charity at batswood.org.uk, and read about Fife Council’s work on grasslands at fife.gov.uk.