



LINLITHGOW

Judges' Portfolio for
Beautiful Scotland 2021
CATEGORY OF ENTRY: MEDIUM TOWN



Assembled members and volunteers of Burgh Beautiful Linlithgow at the Burgh Halls steps, before the pandemic.

Our aim: 'To make our town a cleaner, brighter, more welcoming place for residents and visitors, fostering community involvement, civic pride and tourism'.

Burgh Beautiful Linlithgow is part of Linlithgow Burgh Trust. Linlithgow Burgh Trust is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) – Scottish Charity Number SCo47211.

CONTENTS

Royal Burgh of Linlithgow	1
Burgh Beautiful	1
Section A – Horticultural Achievement	2
Section B – Environmental Responsibility	6
Section C – Community Engagement	8
Finance	10
Plans for the Future	11
Acknowledgements	11
List of Appendices	11



Linlithgow Loch and Palace. The silhouette of Linlithgow Palace and St Michael's Parish Church, with its modern spire, form an iconic silhouette, adopted as the logo for the Burgh Beautiful campaign.



Open-air, socially-distanced Burgh Beautiful Committee meeting at our Clarendon base, 20 August 2020.



Colourful planters and hanging baskets at Linlithgow Cross, July 2020.

INTRODUCTION

The Royal Burgh of Linlithgow – 'Kinde to Strangers'

- Historic town, made a Royal Burgh in 1389; birthplace of Mary Queen of Scots in 1542 and the traditional county town of West Lothian
- The town's heraldic images of St Michael slaying the dragon and of a black hunting dog (which gave rise to the local legend of the 'Black Bitch') can be seen in many places around the town, including two new bronze sculptures installed within the last two years
- Linlithgow Palace ruins and the surrounding Peel (one of Scotland's two Royal Parks) are managed by Historic Environment Scotland
- The town is mainly a popular dormitory town but with a thriving industrial/business estate and large electronics factory on the outskirts
- Tourism is of increasing importance and the activities of Burgh Beautiful seek to encourage more visitors
- Railway, M9 motorway and airport make Linlithgow highly accessible
- The town supports a notably wide variety of clubs, societies and voluntary organisations
- The town's population rose from 4,570 in 1951 to 13,370 in 2001, since when there has been a slight decline (13,260 in 2016).

Burgh Beautiful Linlithgow

- Established in 2004, with a Committee of 7 members but normally meetings are open to all volunteers who want to attend. Reporting to the Committee are seven working groups dealing with business liaison, our Clarendon base, competitions, environmental responsibility, planting, online media and youth
- Since 2011, the campaign has operated from a base in the grounds of Clarendon House on ground leased from West Lothian Council
- Burgh Beautiful is represented, either formally or informally, on Linlithgow's Community Council, the Town Management Group, Linlithgow Planning Forum and Linlithgow Civic Trust
- We have participated in Beautiful Scotland and Britain in Bloom since 2009, the highlights of which have been winning the coveted Rose Bowl, the Scottish Premier Award, in 2011 and the 'Town' category in the UK Britain in Bloom finals in 2018
- We responded positively to West Lothian Council's complete cessation of involvement in floral displays and high-amenity grass cutting as from 2015-16 with our 'Bye Bye' campaign, leading to a doubling of both sponsorship money and the number of volunteers
- Similarly, last year, we were able to provide nearly all of our usual floral displays and planting activities, whilst working within all the virus-related regulations and guidelines; for 2021, all our displays are being provided as normal, with upgrading to some of our permanent beds
- Over the past three years, we have implemented a major programme of public art, funded by a wide variety of sources and involving two of Scotland's most eminent sculptors, and are actively pursuing tree planting in both urban and rural locations
- Burgh Beautiful is supported by around 100 registered volunteers, helpers from around 15 other groups and around 130 financial sponsors
- Since March 2017, Burgh Beautiful has formed part of Linlithgow Burgh Trust, a Scottish charitable incorporated organisation (SCIO), and can draw on the support of its nearly 200 individual trust members.

Discretionary Awards

Burgh Beautiful is applying for the following Discretionary Awards for 2021:

- Community Horticulture
- Visit Scotland Award for Tourism.

Our work in relation to the 2021 Beautiful Scotland theme – Climate and Nature Friendly – is highlighted in green text on the following pages.



Town entrance barrels, Edinburgh Road, August 2020 - the main town entrance signs were designed by a member of Linlithgow Civic Trust/Burgh Beautiful.



The Serpentine Bed between the High Street and Linlithgow Loch – a simple begonia and verbena display with a ‘wow’ factor, August 2019. This was the only floral display (apart from in the station) that we could not provide in 2020.



Flowers for pollinators, Vennel bed, August 2020.

SECTION A – HORTICULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT

- Two sets of 124 hanging baskets, 86 planters/barrels and 3 new ‘beehive’ planters/‘flower towers’ for year-round display
- Programme to replace rotting wooden barrels with steel planters completed in 2021 with 12 new planters in the town’s western outskirts; barrels remaining in station and outside Star & Garter Hotel
- ‘Whole town and whole-year’ approach, including flower beds in peripheral areas and new planters at town entrances; nearly all planting & maintenance is undertaken by Burgh Beautiful volunteers
- Yellow-based colour theme for spring; red/pink/purple in summer
- 35 beds (16 ex-Council) of mixed shrubs, perennials and annuals. 30 of these beds are entirely or predominantly permanent planting
- Innovative approach to the design of bedding displays with more adventurous selections of summer and permanent plants
- 2021 renewal of planting at Low Port Roundabout (**see Appendix 3**)
- **Vennel Bed with current theme of ‘flowers for pollinators’**
- New rockery garden at the top of Station Road
- **Wildflower areas at canal ramp, Highfield Avenue, Learmonth Gardens, Rosemount Park and Beechwood Park; five orchard sites**
- Watering of hanging baskets/planters/key beds and contextual grass cutting done by contractor; other watering by volunteers from nearby taps
- Falkirk Road residents maintain wide grass verge in front of their houses as Council grass cutting deemed to be of insufficient quality
- Green spaces include the Peel (which provides the setting for Linlithgow Palace and Loch), Rosemount Park, recently-upgraded Douglas Park and Learmonth Gardens (**see Appendix 1**)
- Masses of bulbs in bloom can be found throughout the town every spring, especially by the canal, on verges and at town entrances
- Linlithgow is notable for its communal garden activity, particularly around the town centre flats between Water Yett and St Ninian’s Road; other examples can be found at Dovecot Park in Springfield and Riverside Court (Linlithgow Bridge), with a new initiative at New Well Wynd
- **Linlithgow & District Allotments, to the east of the town by the Union Canal, has 75 plots in high demand**
- **First Step cultivates a vegetable patch at Longcroft Hall/has planted in spring 2021 a mini orchard of 4 apple trees, donated by Burgh Beautiful.**

SUMMER 2020



Learmonth Gardens, July 2020.



Preparing to planting a 'beehive' planter, May 2020.



Summer hanging baskets, July 2020.



Hanging baskets in the polytunnel, waiting for installation, May 2020.



Planting 'beehive' planter for winter/spring, Low Port, October 2019.



'Beehive' planter at West Port, April 2021.



Barrels, 'beehive' planter and hanging baskets, looking west along the High Street, July 2020.



Flower beds at the entrance to the Springfield Area, July 2020,



New 'flower tower' at Linlithgow Bridge, July 2020.

WINTER/SPRING 2020-21



Spring flowers at Learmonth Gardens, many of them recycled, April 2021



Violas, daffodils and polyanthus in barrels in front of the Star & Garter Hotel, April 2021.



Winter hanging baskets ready for installation, September 2020.



Winter/spring hanging baskets, April 2021.



New planters at Linlithgow Bridge, April 2021.



Uplifting snowdrops, March 2020.



Snowdrop planting, March 2021.



Winter/spring planting at the Burgh Halls and in the High Street, April 2021.



PERMANENT PLANTING



Preparation of new bed by the 'Black Bitch' statue, to include three John Downie crab apple trees, August and October 2020.



Binny Plants herbaceous bed by the Katie Wearie statue at West Port, July 2020.



'Spiky' high-impact bed at Blackness Road, on the town's eastern outskirts, July 2020.



New rockery bed near station, August 2020.



Planting of iris and marsh marigold, Rosemount Park, March 2021.



A riot of spring colour at the heather bed on Blackness Road, March 2021.



Burgh Beautiful hydrangea bed in the SW outskirts of town, August 2020.



Battle of Linlithgow Bridge memorial, garden maintained by Burgh Beautiful, July 2020.

COMMUNITY GARDENING



Dianne Lamont's community garden in St Ninian's Way, August 2019.



Water Yett community garden where sterling efforts over the years by Eileen Murray and her team have now been supplemented by a group of Burgh Beautiful volunteers, July 2020.



A form of community gardening at the residential barges on the Union Canal, March 2021.



Water Yett garden in April 2021.



Bed formerly kept by local resident, Peter Common, now by Burgh Beautiful volunteers, April 2021.



A bit of community gardening above the High Street traffic, April 2021.



Audrey Simpson's community garden behind the St Ninian's Road flats, May and July 2020.



Community garden at Dovecot Park in the Springfield area, maintenance of which is led by Kirsten Lamb, August 2019.



New community garden at New Well Wynd, the responsibility of Kathryn Welch, May 2020.

SECTION B – ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

B1. Local Identity and Pride of Place

- Promotion and installation in 2018, 2019 and 2020 of three bronze sculptures with complementary hard landscaping, coordinated street furniture, planting and interpretation boards (**see Appendix 9**)
- Carmelite Friary – 2021 upgrading including seating and new interpretation board, coordinated by Linlithgow Civic Trust (**see Appendix 10**)
- Heritage Trails fully described in Linlithgow Visitor Guide of which 20,000 copies are printed and distributed annually
- Organisation of Perambulation of the Marches event and accompanying leaflet to encourage exploration of local heritage
- Heritage publications on the history of the Royal Burgh (**Appendix 14**)
- Battle of Linlithgow Bridge commemorated with a garden designed and maintained by Burgh Beautiful members
- The Physic Garden at the Health Centre, maintained by a Burgh Beautiful member, (**see Appendix 4**)
- Important contribution of the Linlithgow Union Canal Society which maintains its own museum, floral features, etc
- Heritage lighting has replaced standard lampposts throughout the town centre, most recently the whole length of the High Street
- Screening of gap sites and displays in windows of vacant shops.



Statue of Dudley the Cat at the Union Canal Basin, April 2021.



'Black Bitch' sculpture, High Street, unveiled in January 2020, the first of the two 'civic insignia' statues.



Statue of St Michael, the second 'civic insignia' sculptures, installed in November 2020.



Battle of Linlithgow commemoration garden, April 2021.



Community action to highlight vacant High Street gap site, April 2021.

B2. Natural Environment

- Creation of new woodland (Triangle Wood) at the west end of town and new tree planting at Learmonth Gardens and Rosemount Park, the latter forming an arboretum of varied tree species (**see Appendix 7**)
- Involvement in major Street Trees project (**see Appendix 8**)
- Ongoing nature conservation and wildlife projects including upgrading neglected ground at Doomsdale, Falkirk Road/Highfield Avenue, Union Canal Cycle Ramp (**see Appendix 5**), Boghall and in part of Learmonth Gardens; the Young Offenders Institution Polmont has agreed to make bird boxes for us to install at Doomsdale; we have undertaken to talk to the inmates about our work



Tree planting at Triangle Wood, November 2020.



Tree planting, Learmonth Gardens, September 2019.



New tree plaque in the Rosemount Park arboretum, April 2021.



Wildflowers managed by Burgh Beautiful, Falkirk Road, May 2020.



New interpretation board provided by West Lothian Council at Canal Ramp wildflower meadow, Feb 2021.



Wildflower verge maintained by a Burgh Beautiful member, September 2020. We are working with CALA Homes to provide a replacement if affected by development proposals.

Right: Burgh Beautiful litter pick, March 2020

Far right: West Lothian Litter Pickers in action, April 2021.

New wildflower meadows created by West Lothian Council at Rosemount Park and Beechwood Park

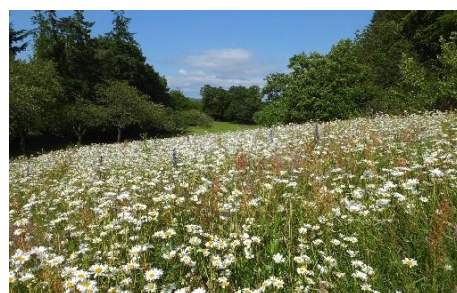
- Varied habitats around Linlithgow Loch (SSSI) are managed by Historic Environment Scotland with statutory and volunteer help
- The Canal, the River Avon, etc provide corridors for wildlife
- New wall-side fruit trees in Learmonth Gardens (see **Appendix 1**) and adoption and improvement in 2020 of three public orchards initially provided by the former Transition Linlithgow
- New community orchard at Broomyhill Place (see **Appendix 6**)
- New Hopetoun Gardens (garden centre) maintains its wildlife-friendly bed; planting schemes by Burgh Beautiful make special provision for bee-friendly content.

B3. Environmental Quality and Resources

- Major litter-picking initiative by West Lothian litter pickers in early 2021 with 464 bags of rubbish collected between January and early May by 26 pickers (see location map provided)
- Other litter picks organised in association with local organisations such as the Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange and Linlithgow Angling Club
- Burgh Beautiful grows what plants it can for winter bedding, but most bedding plants are supplied by Pentland Plants, a local grower
- Polyanthus from winter/spring planting are recycled for the following year, being kept over the summer at our Clarendon base
- Bulbs are dried and re-used; water is collected in butts from roofs; we have compost bays made from recycled pallets
- Peat-free compost used exclusively, except for summer hanging baskets
- The Community Payback scheme is utilised for smartening up the public realm, including painting street furniture and dealing with weeds.



Wildflower meadow maintained by Burgh Beautiful at the canal cycle ramp, June 2020.



Wildflower meadow at Rosemount Park (West Lothian Council), June 2020.

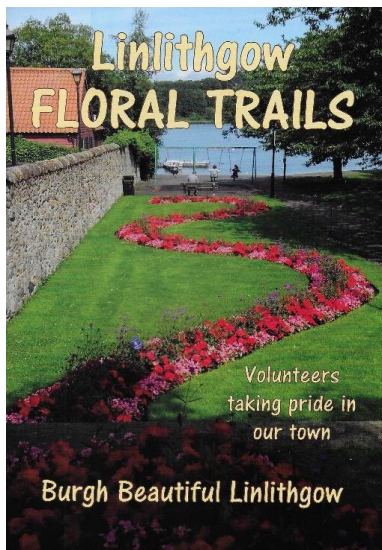


Orchard tree planting by Linlithgow Loch, June 2020.



Linlithgow Primary School pupils scattering KSB wildflower seed bombs, April 2021.





Cover of our 'Floral Trails booklet (2020 edition).



Almost-completed climate change mosaic by the pupils of Low Port Primary School, May 2021.



One of three Duke of Edinburgh award students taken on by Burgh Beautiful helping with the removal of redundant plastic tree guards which had been strangling trees at the former CEMEX site on the western outskirts of Linlithgow, February 2021.

SECTION C – COMMUNITY

C1. Year Round Activity and Future Commitment

- All our normal running costs are now funded by the local community (including businesses, local organisations, families and individuals)
- Although income from fund-raising events has been adversely affected by the pandemic, revenue from sponsorships is buoyant and thus our activities are likely to be fully funded for the foreseeable future
- We have around 100 volunteers regularly involved in 'hands-on' work although we could do with more help for administrative work
- Volunteers either work on their own displays or participate in communal activity such as on regular 'hit squad' days to tackle bigger tasks
- Our Clarendon base provides an excellent resource for the development of the group's activities (see **Appendix 11**)
- We have been able to sustain our hands-on activities throughout the pandemic, working in accordance with relevant Government rules and advice; our year-round calendar of activities over the past two years is listed in **Appendix 12**.



Our Autumn Fair, last held in September 2019, combines fund-raising with increasing awareness and participation by all ages.



C2. Communication, Education and Awareness

Burgh Beautiful promotes its activities through a full range of media (see **Appendix 13** for a list of printed articles):

- News features and small notices in the Linlithgow Gazette, the town's own weekly commercial newspaper (around 40 in 2019-21)
- Regular articles in the six-weekly Black Bitch community magazine which is distributed free to all households in the town
- Our pages on the Linlithgow Burgh Trust website – <http://lbt.scot/burgh-beautiful> and <https://www.lbt.scot/public-art>
- Burgh Beautiful on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/Burgh-Beautiful-Linlithgow-1414107768847882/>
- Publications, especially our free 'Linlithgow Floral Trails' (latest edition 2020) which encourages exploration and are distributed to 16 public buildings and places of tourist interest
- Pull-up banners on show at events and in public buildings
- Occasional talks to community organisations; judging at the allotments
- Burgh Beautiful has strong links with all the local mainstream primary schools, particularly in relation to our mosaics project. Unfortunately the planned display of the mosaics at The Vennel has had to be abandoned due to delays caused by the virus-related restrictions but alternative display arrangements are being actively pursued
- Before the lockdowns, Linlithgow Academy participated in our fund-raising greetings card initiative



Burgh Beautiful volunteers at a reception in London, having been nominated for the Community Volunteer Rail Award recognising their work at the station. September 2019.



Flower bed maintained by the Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange, April 2021.



Example of business floral display, High Street, August 2019.



Tulips, part of a substantial donation of bulbs by Sainsbury's, Learmonth Gardens, April 2021.

- It is hoped that our Children's Gardening Competition (for individuals, groups and schools), last run in 2019, can be resumed in future years.
- A group of Guides normally looks after a floral display in the High Street and Scouts are involved in our activities from time to time (including litter picks by Beaver Scouts)
- 142 Brownies have so far passed their Gardeners Badge through working in their garden, and the girls have donated all the plants
- In 2021, three Duke of Edinburgh Award students have been involved in Burgh Beautiful activities.

C3. Support and Funding

- For details of funding, please refer to the 'Finance' section on the following page.
- At least 16 local voluntary organisations and numerous businesses are directly involved with activities which augment those of Burgh Beautiful (see **Appendix 15**)
- Particularly notable are the contributions from the new One Linlithgow BID and Pubwatch, while ScotRail funds station planting
- Rotary Clubs of Linlithgow Grange and Linlithgow & Bo'ness either sponsor beds or maintain their own displays
- Many High Street shops and commercial premises are adorned with hanging baskets, window boxes and tubs
- There continues to be direct planting involvement by local garden centres: New Hopetoun Gardens and Binny Plants



Rotary sponsorship of flower beds at Low Port - This display of begonias made the best of plants provided as part of a reinstated order, August 2020.



Working with Fairtrade – a promotional 'caterpillar' of painted pebbles at the Vennel Bed for Fairtrade Fortnight, February-March 2021.



Floral displays by the Linlithgow Union Canal Society (LUCS), August 2019 and April 2021.



Burgh Beautiful plant sale, 5 June 2021.



High Street planter, sponsored by the business in the background, April 2021.



Making of fund-raising holly balls, November 2019.



Fund-raising stall at the town's Advent Fayre, 30 November 2019.



A display in the polytunnel of fund-raising holly wreaths made by Burgh Beautiful volunteers, December 2020.

Finance

- Severe West Lothian Council cutbacks back in 2016 presented challenges but were overcome through our award-winning 'Bye-Bye' campaign which attracted sufficient funding and volunteers to take over nearly all the Council's floral displays
- Charitable status since March 2017 as part of Linlithgow Burgh Trust allows Gift Aid money to be claimed and widens access to grant aid
- Expenditure for normal activities (excluding special projects) is guided by an annual budget of around £27,000.
- Sponsorships of our floral displays from 131 individuals, businesses and organisations (2020-21 total - £16,002.43 (some £3,000 above target) plus Gift Aid proceeds of about £2,317.50) (**see Appendix 16**)
- Tree sponsorships have brought in £920 in 2020-21
- £2,500 is received annually from One Linlithgow BID to cover the cost of watering hanging baskets
- ScotRail fully funds our planting at the Railway Station
- Councillors' disbursements totalling £1,400 were received in 2020-21
- Bequest received from Anne Walker Godfrey- £11,585.64 – which is to be used for projects rather than routine activities.
- Our public art projects were funded by Linlithgow & Town Management Group, Linlithgow Town Centre BID, legacies, the Scottish Government's Town Centre Fund, Linlithgow Burgh Trust, Scottish Landfill Communities Fund, National Lottery Community Fund, Edinburgh Airport Community Fund, West Lothian Council (arts grant), Tesco Bags of Help, Rotary Club of Linlithgow & Bo'ness, Court of the Deacons of the Royal Burgh of Linlithgow, customers of Platform Three and the proceeds of two 'crowdfunding' campaigns (**see Appendix 9**). Removal of an unsightly telegraph pole as part of the 'Dudley' cat sculpture project was regarded as a contribution in kind from BT Openreach worth approximately £10,000.
- Other capital projects received funding from the Scottish Government's Town Centre Fund and the Linlithgow & Town Management Group.

Income from other normal fund-raising activities such as can collections, garden events and our Autumn Fair, has not been possible owing to virus-related restrictions, but other sources of income during 2020-21 have been:

- Manufacture and sale of 28 holly wreaths, etc – net profit of £608.53
- Sale of plants in 2020 (without Plant sale event) – £3,368.52
- Proceeds of 2021 Plant Sale on 5 June (and related sales) – £1,627.60
- 50 % proceeds from sale of paintings by E W MacGregor – £110 to date
- Sale of jam made by Burgh Beautiful member - £41.50.



One of three paintings by Elaine Woo MacGregor who kindly donated 50% of the sales proceeds to Burgh Beautiful, July 2020.



Station planting financed by ScotRail, August 2019.



The Autumn Fair, a great social, publicity, educational and fund-raising event, September 2019.



Duke of Edinburgh Award student with bags of litter that he had collected, October 2020.



Rose Garden behind the Burgh Halls to be upgraded through cooperation between two community groups formed for that purpose, August 2020.



Vegetable barrels at the Vennel, planted by local Scouts, August 2019.

Plans for the Future

- Maintain/increase volunteers numbers; continue with our events programme and collaboration with other groups of all ages
- Resume normal social/fund-raising activity as soon as possible, particularly our Autumn Fair, participation in Linlithgow's Advent Fayre, can collecting and open gardens events
- Sustain the number of baskets, beds, barrels and tubs but where necessary/desirable, diversify plantings to reduce maintenance/costs
- Continue to consider new and innovative floral displays
- Consider a slight increase in number of High Street hanging baskets as advocated by the Linlithgow & Town Management Group
- Rose Garden/Peace Garden groups to work together to improve gardens behind the Burgh Halls
- Replace central/dot plants on a rolling programme
- Strengthen planting of irises/marsh marigolds at Rosemount Park
- Revamp flower bed at Braehead Road/Moray Drive
- Encourage more public displays of vegetable growing
- Oversee implementation of Street Trees Project, funded by Scottish Government's Town Centre Fund
- Support local volunteers with regard to wildlife verge/hedge at Deanburn
- Resume past links with local schools and secure permanent display of childrens' mosaics
- Sustain involvement with Duke of Edinburgh awards students
- Maintain pressure to upgrade the Station Road area; help to seek permanent solutions to the problem of High Street gap sites
- Work with the One Linlithgow BID to increase floral enhancement of the High Street
- Seek more help with administrative tasks.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks indeed to all who have helped Burgh Beautiful over the past years, whether as volunteers, sponsors, donors, community gardeners or representatives of community groups or businesses – too many to list here! Special thanks to all the individuals involved in the preparation of this portfolio, particularly the many who have provided images.

Appendices

1. Learmonth Gardens (Sections A, B1, B2, C1, C2)
2. Burgh Beautiful Summer Annuals Table 2018 (Section A)
3. Renewal of Permanent Planting at Low Port Roundabout
4. The Physic Garden by the Health Centre (Sections A, C2)
5. Wildflower Meadow at the Cycle Ramp (Sections B2, C2)
6. Broomyhill Community Orchard (Section B2)
7. Rosemount Park Arboretum and Triangle Wood (Section B2)
8. Street Trees Project (Sections B1, B2, B3)
9. Public Art Projects (Sections B1, C2, C3)
10. Carmelite Friary Project (Section B1)
11. Burgh Beautiful Workbase at Clarendon (Sections A, B3, C1)
12. Year-Round Calendar of Activities, 2020-21 (Section C1)
13. Press Articles and Publicity, 2019-21 (Section C2)
14. Local Heritage and Communication (Sections B1, C2)
15. Local Organisations working with Burgh Beautiful, 2020-21 (Section C3)
16. List of Sponsors, 2020-21 (Section C3).