

TAKE A PRIDE IN P&K ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Note from the Chair...

Issue 1 - Autumn 2020

I'm sure you will agree that it has been a challenging and worrying year for us all. But us 'Bloomers' are made of sturdy stuff and I have read and heard of many uplifting stories of how our strong community spirit has come to the fore during these unprecedented times.

Since March, the global pandemic of coronavirus Covid-19 has meant that member groups have had to cancel much of their usual voluntary work sessions, yet, in my travels around our area, I have seen many colourful and cheerful floral displays and litter free communities. A sincere thank you and well done to everyone who brightened our lives through their efforts. But don't just take my word for it, please read the articles provided by Rosemary in Alyth and Norma in Kinnesswood as excellent examples of what I mean.

Contractors were not able to undertake planned work on a number of our projects, therefore anticipated expenditure has been delayed. All grant bodies who have provided funds for the projects were notified of delays and are understanding of the situation. However, I'm pleased to say that the renovation of Crosswell Fountain in Kinross was successfully completed and thankfully, progress is now being made on three of our projects in Alyth, Blairgowrie and Pitlochry.

Our Trustees' Committee meetings were suspended and the Annual General Meeting, normally held in April or May, had to be postponed. Our Annual Report and the Annual Accounts were prepared and independently examined, subsequently approved by OSCR and then published on the Association's website.

For the 22 years that the unique Take a Pride in Perthshire Association has been in existence, a total of approximately £2 million has been raised for, and invested in, environmental improvement projects across the length and breadth of Perth and Kinross. The Association continues to be financially viable and to enjoy the active involvement of volunteers from 48 community-based environment groups in Perth & Kinross.



When member groups initiate local environmental projects, the Association provides, on request, project management services, including the all-important fundraising. If you have a project in mind for your local community but are somewhat apprehensive about planning and managing a project, please don't hesitate to contact our Project Development Adviser, Kirsten Mathison, who will be more than happy to help you develop your project. Her contact details are shown elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Yours in Bloom

Bill Ronald



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Alyth in Bloom Update

What a strange time it has been since Covid-19 arrived! We have all had to adapt to the restrictions on our lives and Alyth in Bloom is no different. Formal meetings were suspended and members just met to carry out planting and maintenance work in a socially distanced way.

The Spring planting resulted in beds and planters providing a beautiful show of colour over the summer months. The creation of a garden at the top of Toutie Street was very satisfying. A mixed hedge was established, 20 tons of topsoil were raked to create an area for grass, which grew well thanks to clement weather conditions, and a rowan tree and some shrubs were planted. It has provided a tranquil, pretty place to sit and contemplate. It is also intended to provide an information board with details about the history of Alyth.

The Covid-19 restrictions made it impossible to hold the normal garden competition, when judges would be visiting gardens, so it was decided to try an on-line competition instead. Competitors sent in digital photos of their gardens during a set period, then the competition closed and the photos were displayed anonymously on the Alyth in Bloom Facebook page, where people could vote for their favourites. It proved very successful with approximately 2400 votes received over all three categories - best border, best container and best garden. If needs be, it will certainly be considered again.

The biggest project involving the group has been the renovation of the western side of the burn. Due to the Covid-19 lockdown, the start of this was delayed

Alyth in Bloom

by Rosemary Langston - Secretary

from March to July, when digging out of the bamboo began. However, this revealed the poor state of the wall and remedial work was initiated, work which, sadly, ultimately required the removal of the old cherry trees which were also damaging the wall. The progress came to an abrupt halt with the flood of August 12th when the burn burst its banks and washed away about 50% of the hardcore which had been poured in as a base for future paving. It seemed to be one step forwards and two steps back! Work recommenced and we look forward to the new trees being planted next Spring, once the hard-landscaping work to match the Square has been completed. Alyth in Bloom will decide on suitable planters, bench seats and an information board.

Covid-19 restrictions meant that PKC has been unable to fulfil all of its commitments regarding tending planted areas, Alyth in Bloom has volunteered to clear and plant up around the two war memorials in Alyth, with PKC supplying the plants. The beds have been cleared and some of the primulas replanted, with the rest of the plants due to be delivered imminently. The war memorials will present a tidy picture for Remembrance Day.

It has been a busy period in spite of restrictions - the weeds will always grow, the plants will always need tending and the grass will always need cutting, which means Alyth in Bloom will never be short of work!



Airlie Street Hall



Boer War Memorial Garden



Alyth Burn Side - During



Toutie Street Garden

Kinnesswood in Bloom Update

Kinnesswood in Bloom (KiB) has been busy over the last few months, continuing to maintain areas in the village and taking forward a couple of new projects. During the initial weeks of lockdown, when we were staying home and doing very little, Norma dressed 6 of our little figures as essential workers. These were the postman, binman, farm worker, nurse, teacher and shopworker. The school got involved by setting homework for the pupils to write about these figures and some of this was also displayed beside the figures.

After the lockdown was eased a little, we were able to work in socially distanced couples and small groups to maintain the gardens of the village. At first, it seemed a strange way of working but everyone soon got used to it. We are really proud of how everyone has come together to keep the village looking as good as it usually does when our judges visit.

One of our members, Rory, used to be an engineer who travelled all over the world. In his retirement he became involved with KiB as well as Bikeworks, a Social Enterprise that collects donated bikes and re-manufactures them to support local community charities. During lockdown, Rory had the time to completely renovate an old agricultural cart which was not in good shape. It had been donated to our group a number of years ago and was part of a tribute to the farming links of the community.

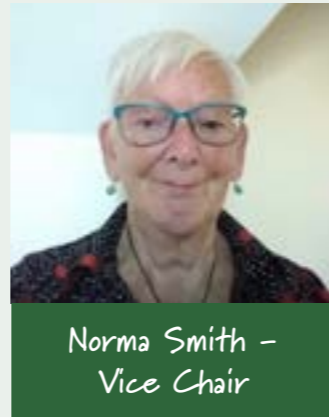
Rory stripped the cart down to the metalwork and ordered new treated wood. It was truly our own "Repair Shop" project. In his workshop he treated and painted the metalwork and renovated the cart tyres. Once DIY deliveries resumed, he was able to buy wood for the cart body and renovate it back to the original. Painting completed the cart to look as good as new as you can see from the photo. KiB received money from Portmoak Festival to complete the project. It is now back on the edge of the agricultural fields in colourful splendour. Plants were saved from the original structure and it has now been replanted. Our next step will be to commission an interpretation board to describe the links which the village has to the farming landscape.



KiB members John and Pat kept the school looking good in lockdown and it must have cheered up the staff and pupils to such a colourful array of flowers. At the moment volunteers are not allowed in schools, however we were contacted by the headteacher and met staff after school to look at jobs which could be done by the children at this time of year. We were asked to make short videos for each class so that we maintain contact with them – another example of adapting to the 'new normal' situation! Instructions were filmed for jobs like harvesting the raised beds, cutting back the willow, clearing round the pond, planning a new orchard as well as the crafts.

Cooking is not allowed so unfortunately there will be no strawberry jam or soup making in school this year. One class however wanted to make lavender bags and so lavender from "Lavender Walk" as well as suitable fabric has been handed in. They are also completing a tin can challenge in school. The cans will be painted by the children and then filled with bulb fibre and bulbs.

It's wonderful to be included in the distance learning and to have the new children recognise us as they walk home from school. We have seen their progress on the school twitter feed and have even seen one family make use of the school harvest.



Norma Smith - Vice Chair



Social Distancing!



Essential Worker - Nurse



Essential Worker - Binman



Refurbished Cart

Project Development Advisor Update

As the Association's Project Development Adviser, I work closely with Groups to help develop their environmental improvement ideas and turn them into successful projects that make a real difference to the local community.

At first it can seem a daunting prospect to take on a project, especially if it is out with your Group's comfort zone or if you haven't tackled a larger scale project before. With support and encouragement from the Association it need not be an insurmountable task. On behalf of the Association, I can offer help with project management and planning, liaising with stakeholders and fundraising applications. The project remains yours throughout but having the support of the Association can make the process easier to navigate. We have plenty of examples of excellent projects that have been delivered by Groups across Perth & Kinross with the help of the Association and we are gradually building up a series of case studies on our website; please do take a look.

On the website you will also find a Project Application Form and helpful Guidance Notes. You can contact me by email kirsten@nickisouterassociates.co.uk or by phone **07762 828098**.

As Bill mentioned in his 'Note from the Chair', please do get in touch with me. We can chat through your initial ideas and we can work together to develop it into a project plan, or if you have already got the ball rolling there are perhaps other ways the Association can support your Group to enhance your project. I look forward to hearing from you.

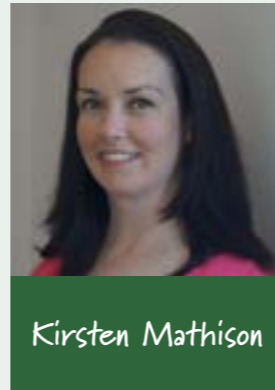
Project Update

The impacts of Covid-19 have certainly brought added challenges this year however, patience and persistence are attributes our Groups have in bucket loads! Things are now picking up again and work is getting back on track. As with all projects, partnership working is key to the success of Bloom Group projects and we continue to work with various teams within Perth & Kinross Council, local interest groups, funding bodies and communities.

Read on to get a flavour of the 'live' projects The Association is currently involved with.

Blairgowrie "Ruby Renovations" (Blairgowrie and Rattray in Bloom)

To mark its 40th Anniversary, the local group has planned a number of projects, the main one being the refurbishment of Coronation Corner in Blairgowrie. Designs for the site have been agreed and tender documents prepared for the works. The plans will see the site being made fully accessible with attractive planting schemes providing year-round colour and interest. An interpretation panel will describe the site's 'colourful' history! The project fell victim to Covid-19 and was put 'on hold', with work finally commencing on site on 12 October 2020. Funds totalling £41,000 have been secured for the project.



Kirsten Mathison

Pitlochry Wildlife Garden (Pitlochry in Bloom)

With designs having been agreed following public consultation and funds totalling £35,000 have been secured, the contract was awarded for the renewal of the old Wildlife Garden in Pitlochry. Plans include the rejuvenation the different wildlife habitats to enhance biodiversity and to make the space an inviting place for people to visit. Work on site was due to start in March 2020 but was postponed to 12th October 2020 due to Covid-19.

Alyth Burnside Enhancement (Alyth in Bloom)

Design proposals have been finalised following community consultation, for this exciting and ambitious landscape improvement project at Alyth Burnside. Over £120,000 of funds have been secured and Phase 1 of the works have finally been completed which includes the preparatory works of site clearance, tree felling, masonry work on the burnside wall, and preparing the sub-base for the paved surface. Work was postponed due to 'lockdown' and once underway again, local flooding washed away much of what had recently been achieved. Remedial works have since been completed. Tender documents have been prepared for Phase 2 of the project which includes the hard landscaping of a new riverside path and seating areas, fitting burnside railings, and tree planting. Phase 3 will see art works, bench seating, an interpretation board and a listening post being installed.

Abernethy Heritage Garden (Abernethy in Bloom)

Design proposals for the development of an imaginative community garden at the prominent Hatton Road site have been agreed following public consultation. The garden will facilitate physical access and usage for all and will also provide information regarding the history and heritage of the village. Estimated costs for the project are in the region of £82,000 of which we have raised half of that amount. A phased approach to this project is being considered whilst remaining funding is sought.

Kinross Renovation of Crosswell Fountain (Kinross in Bloom)

The 19th Century C Listed fountain was structurally in good condition but required some conservation and stabilisation works. Funds totalling £24,000 were secured for the project. A specialist masonry contract was awarded in February 2020 for the works, which started on site in March. The nature of the work meant that it could proceed safely during the 'lockdown' period with a single mason working in isolation. The project will ensure that part of the core-built heritage of Kinross will be preserved for future generations. An Interpretation Board has been designed and manufactured and its location has been agreed close to the fountain. An application for Advertising Consent (planning permission) has been submitted by the Community Council on behalf of Kinross in Bloom.



Blairgowrie Coronation Corner - Before



Crosswell Fountain - After



Pitlochry Wildlife Garden - Before



Alyth Burnside Enhancement - During

Who We Are

The *Take A Pride in Perthshire Campaign* began in 1993 in order to encourage and support local communities to establish constituted Bloom Groups who wished to carry out environmental enhancement projects in their towns and villages.

The Association was formed as an 'umbrella' organisation for the growing number of Bloom Groups in 1998, and we continue to provide support to help you deliver the Campaign - quite literally at a 'grass roots level' - in your local community.

Whilst our formal name remains the *Take a Pride in Perthshire Association*, we are now known as the *Take A Pride in Perth & Kinross Association* in recognition of the excellent contribution of groups in Kinross-shire.

This newsletter brings you up to date with the Groups' varied campaign activities as well as projects that involve direct support from the Association.

Visit **our website** to find out more.



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