

TAKE A PRIDE IN P&K ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Note from the Chair...

Issue 3 - Spring 2022

After the long Winter months, Spring always lifts my spirits – bright and colourful Tulips, floriferous Cherries and myriad Bluebells in Oak woodlands all act as a tonic to the soul. We are so fortunate to be living in the 'Big Tree Country' when our 200,000 acres of spectacular trees and woodlands burst into leaf each Spring. My favourites are the Larches with their light green, soft and needle-like leaves. Take a trip to Dunkeld and Birnam to see them at their best.

Now that we have returned to a sort of 'normality' following the pandemic, the wonderful 'family' of Bloom Groups in Perth and Kinross will be able to continue to care for and enhance our precious natural environment. I love the saying "Gardening and nature adds years to your life and life to your years". But then, Bloom Group volunteers have long known about the physical and mental health benefits that come with the regular tasks that have to be carried out to keep our gardens and greenspaces looking their best. I know you will be especially busy in your work parties with grass cutting, litter picking, weeding, planting and nurturing your plug plants for your summer floral displays. I hope you are able to return to working with your local schoolchildren now that the Covid restrictions have been relaxed. The youngsters are the future of our special bloom campaign. If you are able, please enter the national Bloom competitions. They act as a great incentive for communities to pull together and achieve an enhanced 'Pride of Place'.

I was reading that Keep Scotland Beautiful have published their 2022 manifesto in which they call on local government to involve, support, and empower communities and young people to take actions toward a cleaner, greener and more sustainable Scotland. Their three main goals are combating climate change, tackling litter and waste and protecting and enhancing the places we care for. We should play our part, so I would therefore encourage all Bloom groups to participate in the Queen's Green Canopy initiative and plant, in the autumn, as many trees as possible in your local community. The Council's excellent Community

Greenspace team are able to advise on appropriate tree species and location.

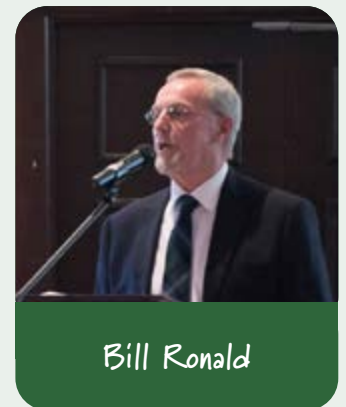
Enjoy reading the excellent articles in this newsletter, I certainly did. A BIG thank-you to everyone who contributed. There is sound advice from the Alyth in Bloom group on the planning and successful implementation of a 'major' improvement project; Sonia Simmers, Chair of Abernethy in Bloom, looks back at a difficult year – what they achieved, despite the pandemic restrictions, is very impressive. With the support of the Association, they are now undertaking an exciting Heritage Garden project; Norma Smith's report on Kinnesswood in Bloom's year-long activities also illustrates what can be achieved in difficult circumstances; the Newsletter articles submitted by Ardoch in Bloom, Comrie in Colour and St Fillans in Bloom, clearly illustrate the diverse range of projects that can be undertaken by groups of local volunteers, with the support of our unique Association. Thanks go to Marion Mitchell, Marie Donnelly, Audrey Gavigan and Geoff Hardman-Carter for their inspiring contributions.

If you are in the early stages of planning an improvement project, please have a read of our simple, step-by-step Project Development Guide. It is an important part of the 'support package' we are able to provide to member Groups. You will find the Guide and more information on our website:

www.prideinperthshire.co.uk/get-involved/

Enjoy your 'Bloom' work and have fun whilst you are volunteering.

Yours in Bloom
Bill Ronald



Abernethy in Bloom

A Look Back At The Last 12 Months

The past year was once again affected by the Covid pandemic as restrictions on social meetings and gatherings were still in place, however we carried on as best we could to keep the village well-maintained and colourful, with our main priority being the upkeep and enhancement of Nurse Peattie's garden.

In the Spring of 2021 we had a wonderful display from the pansies, polyanthus and bulbs throughout the village and it was such a welcome splash of colour.

With an easing of restrictions over the Summer months we were able to get together with the Cubs & Beavers to have a tidy up and weed in the Sensory Garden. We also planted some of last year's daffodil and tulip bulbs there.

With the exception of hanging baskets, we managed to plant up all of the village containers and we had a lovely display over the Summer. Once again, it was a huge task for our watering team to keep everything hydrated and looking its best.

Many admiring comments were received from locals and visitors alike and we were also given a Certificate of Recognition from Beautiful Scotland to acknowledge our hard work in these uncertain times.

We were also approached to submit an entry for a new category of Discretionary Award from the RHS. We showcased Nurse Peattie's garden and were delighted to be chosen as the winner. Such an accolade for the Group and another certificate to add to our collection!

Maintenance at Nurse Peattie's continued throughout the year and extra bark chippings were laid on the lower level as a weed suppressant. A couple of our

memorial benches had to be replaced this year, largely due to age and weather conditions. These were kindly donated by the local community and will be maintained by In Bloom to keep them in good condition. We have also re-laid the "caterpillar trail" of painted and decorated stones underneath one of the benches as a more permanent home for them, serving as a reminder of the Pandemic in years to come.

At the end of 2021, restrictions on gatherings were still in place and so our usual Christmas event had once again to be scaled down. The tree was kindly donated by Branston and erected in its usual place together with the Nativity Scene put together by the community. All the lights were strung up, containers and tubs decorated - and we were ready for the "switch-on". Although it was a low-key event, we still provided some mulled wine and festive eats for those who turned out on the night. The village was ready for some sparkle and cheer!

Our next big project is of course the new Heritage Garden with Phase 1 of the construction starting last month which includes hard landscaping, paths and soft landscaping. Phase 2 will include the replica mini-tower, timber seats, interpretation boards and lighting - the final bit of fundraising is underway. Everyone has been very supportive of this exciting new project and we are currently finalising the planting plan for the garden with an aim to make it as low maintenance as possible whilst still creating the 'heritage' feel that we are after. The aim is for completion by the end of Summer.

by Sonia Simmers, Chair of Abernethy in Bloom

- 1) Memorial seats beside Nurse Peattie's bike.
- 2) RHS Parks and Green Spaces Award Certificate.
- 3) View from pavement of Nurse Peattie's Garden and planters.
- 4) Progress to date with the Heritage Garden.



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Alyth in Bloom

Renovation of Alyth Burn Side

Towards the end of 2017, a design for the refurbishment of Market Square in Alyth was finalised. The adjacent burn side was a jungle of head-high bamboo, originally planted to reduce maintenance, a good idea, but one that had been allowed to get out of control.

So, on the 1st November 2017, a group of five people sat round a table and said “We have to do something about the burn side.” The question was “What?”

Through discussions within Alyth in Bloom and with the community at large, a proposal evolved to lay a pathway along the burn side, a pathway which would allow the built heritage of the town to be admired by residents and visitors alike. “I think we might be able to get a CECF Grant for this” said an advisor from PKC Greenspace - and so the project was born.

The concept was to dig out the bamboo, back fill with hardcore, lay paving to match that in the Market Square, erect protective railings, plant a few trees, install some planters and benches - job done. Simple.

Well!

Four years and £155,000 later, having had to repair a crumbling burn retention wall, having experienced a flood that washed out recently laid hardcore, having survived a global pandemic that stopped work for several months and having suffered the resultant cost increases and material shortages, the job is done. A lot of work by many, but worth the effort, the path is now well used and appreciated by all.

What have we learned in the past 4 years?

Early into the project, we were told by the same PKC Greenspace advisor - “This will take longer than you think it should and will cost more than you think it should”. Correct on both counts. Patience and persistence are essential.

We needed to know the answer, to see in our minds what the end product was going to be, to keep our focus on that end product.

Think ahead, know what needs to be done, when.

Take difficult decisions early. There are many ways of solving a problem, ignoring it is NOT one of them.

Communication at all stages of the project is essential. You cannot over-communicate. Using all available media vehicles, keep as many people as possible aware of what is going on at each and every stage. Even then, be prepared to be amazed at the apparent apathy and lack of knowledge about the project within the community.

Last, but by no means least, work in a team where each has a well-defined role. This project would never have happened had it not been for TPPKA. TPPKA ran the project, managed the project, helped raise the funds, organised the contractors, gave guidance and provided advice. We of Alyth in Bloom were the customers and the link to the community.

by the members of Alyth in Bloom

- 1) Before - September 2017.
- 2) Digging out the bamboo - July 2020.
- 3) Shoring up the wall - July 2020.
- 4) Flood - August 2020.
- 5) Wall shored and hardcore relaid - September 2020.
- 6) The finished article - October 2021.



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Ardoch in Bloom

Restoring the 'Cock and Hen' Stone Wall

This story goes back to 2018 when Ardoch in Bloom decided that a project to greatly improve the area around the New Cemetery in Braco was just the thing to keep us occupied. Prior to our group becoming involved we were aware the old Ardoch Estate driveway, which also led to the cemetery, was in a dreadful state and full of pot holes. Local family visitors to the cemetery were becoming increasingly distressed about this situation. In addition the original estate lodge house was in an unsafe, dilapidated condition and surrounded by an unattractive protective barrier.

Our group looked at the parkland around the cemetery entrance and decided that our first project should be a tidy up of this area which comprised a small fairly open coniferous woodland alongside an open area completely covered in rosebay willowherb. On the positive side the snowdrops are a delight in springtime and one of our volunteers spent many hours creating informal paths in the snowdrop area.

The group gathered on occasion to collect fallen wood and had various bonfires which made a huge difference. We obtained young seedling trees and involved our local school children in planting them. Things continued to improve when the landowner (Blackford Farms) decided to demolish the old lodge and the Council resurfaced the driveway. We contracted a stonemason to rebuild and repair the wall at the entrance area and for approximately 30 metres towards the village. Following this we bought sleepers to create a raised bed at the entrance in which we planted shrubs. The old area had been transformed and local residents were delighted.

The success of Phase 1 inspired us to continue with further improvement to the wall itself. The wall runs from the New Cemetery in Braco into the village and at present is in a dreadful condition. Parts are missing completely and it is our intention to rebuild and repair the full length of the wall which is approximately 165 metres long. Braco is on a tourist route to Crieff and beyond, and the current dilapidated state of the wall gives a very poor impression to visitors.

The wall itself is built using a 'Cock and Hen' design whereby coping stones are placed vertically on top and give a distinctive appearance. The theory is that this style of construction provides excellent protection from the weather but as our wall is a fair age, time has caught up with it.

Over the years informal paths have been created in the area adjacent to the wall and with Covid lockdowns footfall has increased significantly. The plan is to create two new openings in the wall to enable walkers to have easy and safe access. We are currently working on an improvement to the drainage of the path which runs parallel to the wall which leads from the village directly down to the cemetery. An information board will also be installed to provide information about the local area and nearby walking routes.

We look forward with anticipation to the completion of Phase 2.

by Marion Mitchell, Treasurer of Ardoch in Bloom

- 1) The restored wall at the cemetery entrance with distinctive Cock and Hen coping.
- 2) Raised beds made from old railway sleepers.
- 3) The dilapidated state of the rest of the wall.



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Comrie in Colour

Reinvigorating the War Memorial

Like most Bloom groups we have had a difficult two years trying to keep our village green spaces weed free and colourful despite fewer volunteers and restrictive working practices. During this time, we reduced our container planting and concentrated on rejuvenating various borders and planted areas, introducing more shrubs, perennials and bulbs where possible. This meant we could reduce our watering regime and were less reliant on annual plants for displays. Thankfully 2022 is looking more positive and we have an interesting new project planned with the help of TPPKA.

The Memorial Garden in Comrie was designed around the War Memorial (built in 1921). It is an attractive, peaceful area, central to the village with far reaching views to the surrounding hills. However, in recent years it has become a bit tired looking, with over mature shrubs and trees, and self-seeded plants crowding out the borders, resulting in the garden losing some of its original symmetry. The purpose of the project will be to simplify and clean up the borders and also create a hard edge to the avenue thereby throwing more focus onto the War Memorial itself. The border behind the memorial will also be redesigned to create a more interesting backdrop and contain more pollinator friendly plants and shrubs. New benches will enable visitors to sit and absorb the peaceful, contemplative surroundings.

An additional memorial was installed within the garden in 2017. This was in memory of Second Lieutenant John Manson Craig, 1/4th Battalion the Royal Scots Fusiliers, a Comrie man who was awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery in World War I. This memorial, in consultation with his family,

will be given a stronger sense of place within the setting using some appropriate planting. An information board will also be installed to signpost visitors to other areas of historical and educational interest around the village, the most important and well known being Cultybraggan Camp.

This complex was built in 1941 as Prisoner of War Camp No 21 and is one of the most complete of its kind remaining in the UK. It is therefore of huge interest to historical groups, visitors and schools. It housed category A prisoners including some of the most committed and fanatical Nazi prisoners of war. One of those prisoners, Heinrich Steinmeyer, was so transformed by the beautiful countryside and kindness of the Comrie people that when he died in 2013 he bequeathed £385,000 to the village. Comrie in Colour were delighted to receive a donation from this fund to purchase a much-needed replacement for our old work truck. Many of the Nissan huts in Cultybraggan are now utilised by various local businesses and there is a large, very active allotment society. We are lucky to have a large polytunnel and space for our truck at the camp therefore we get to enjoy working from an incredibly scenic and interesting location.

We now look forward to a busy and active year with the help of TPPKA. I know the pleasure we gain from working with plants and friends will more than make up for the inevitable backache along the way.

by Marie Donnelly, Chair of Comrie in Colour

- 1) The War Memorial.
- 2) Lieutenant John Manson Craig's memorial.
- 3) The Memorial Garden - a peaceful, contemplative space.



Kinnesswood in Bloom

Another Busy Year

Despite the restrictions and winter season, there has been plenty going on in Kinnesswood. The school finally got the shed in place and John is working hard building shelves and fitting it out before the equipment is moved in. We recently had a meeting after school with the teacher in charge of outdoor activities and were able to tick off those which were completed and point out other tasks for the children's learning missions. It made such a difference to talk in person and demonstrate some tasks - remote gardening is difficult (but not impossible!) We have previously made short videos to show the children what to do, as well as allocating tasks which Kinnesswood in Bloom can do after school hours. It's great to see how well the polytunnel (polycrub from Shetland) is standing after the recent gales.

Thanks to funding we received recently from the Climate Festival, we now have a compost tumbler. It did take several hours to build but is now ready to go and we will be leaving laminated instructions for the staff and pupils to follow. The children are choosing vegetable and flower seeds to plant in the raised beds and polytunnel.

More funding came from the Community Investment Fund and we now await delivery of a trolley mounted powered waterer. Since there is no water supply in the school grounds except for a water butt, this will

make life much easier for everyone, especially in the polytunnel. We first saw one of these being used by another group in the Beautiful Scotland newsletter and thought "we need one of those!"

Our big coral reef went to COP 26 and hopefully has been passed on to a school or care home. The small one was revamped and installed in the bus shelter along with the other art work. We continue to recycle batteries, stamps and glasses but are now collecting blister packs rather than ink cartridges as they were too difficult to recycle.

The bus shelter also became a pop up shop recently when a local lady had some road safety bits and pieces to recycle. Torches, scrapers and chamois proved to be very popular and everything went in a week. It made a change from a pop up vegetable box.

We are starting to plan our Saturday work parties and look forward to meeting up soon.

Hope spring is in the air with you too.

by Norma Smith, Vice Chair of Kinnesswood in Bloom

- 1) The compost tumbler ready to use.
- 2) The polytunnel and raised beds.
- 3) Our knitted coral reef travelled to COP 26.
- 4) Mary Queen of Scots in front of Loch Leven Castle - the models will tour the village at end of May.
- 5) Norma Smith (L) and Fiona Drysdale (R) holding the model of Eve Muirhead with crochet bouquet and gold medal.
- 6) Lots growing inside the polytunnel.



St Fillans in Bloom

Returning 'Still' to Loch Earn

The picturesque village of St Fillans nestles on the shores of Loch Earn, at the western edge of Perth & Kinross. In 2014 Andrew Low, the then owner of the Four Seasons Hotel in St Fillans, commissioned an art sculpture from environmental artist Rob Mulholland. The resulting statue, named 'Still', was quietly installed in front of the hotel, in the shallow foreshore waters of the Loch. The striking artwork, with Loch Earn and hills beyond as its' spectacular backdrop, immediately connected with its audience and soon attracted critical acclaim from both locals and visitors alike. The 3-metre-high figure rising out of the water became a landmark feature and a destination point for tourists and photographers from all corners of the UK and internationally. The public took ownership of the sculpture, often expressing their thoughts and emotional connection to the art in personal messages to the artist. It has also featured in thousands of press and media platforms around the world.

“ My concept was to create a sculpture that symbolised the physical and spiritual relationship between humans and the natural world. The figure is purposefully passive and contained in form and stance reflecting the awe and power of nature and yet can be interpreted as standing stoically symbolising the human struggle to interact with nature and the elements. 'Still' investigates the fundamental aspects of self-awareness and our connection with ourselves and our natural world. ”

Rob Mulholland

When the hotel changed ownership in 2017, 'Still' was not part of the transaction and so the sculpture was taken to a private location. However, both the owner and the artist agreed that the original location of 'Still' was an integral part of the art and so a way of returning the statue to Loch Earn was sought. In order that the installation would have a more permanent future, it was decided that the villagers of St Fillans would try to raise enough money to buy the sculpture and re-instate it for the community and the benefit of the wider public. The 'St Fillans in Bloom' group took on this challenge on behalf of the village and applied for help from the Take a Pride in Perth & Kinross Association to project manage and source funding. The Association kindly responded positively and have already been instrumental in gaining planning approval for the project. With their help and expertise, we are now in the process of seeking the funding to realise our vision of bringing 'Still' home.

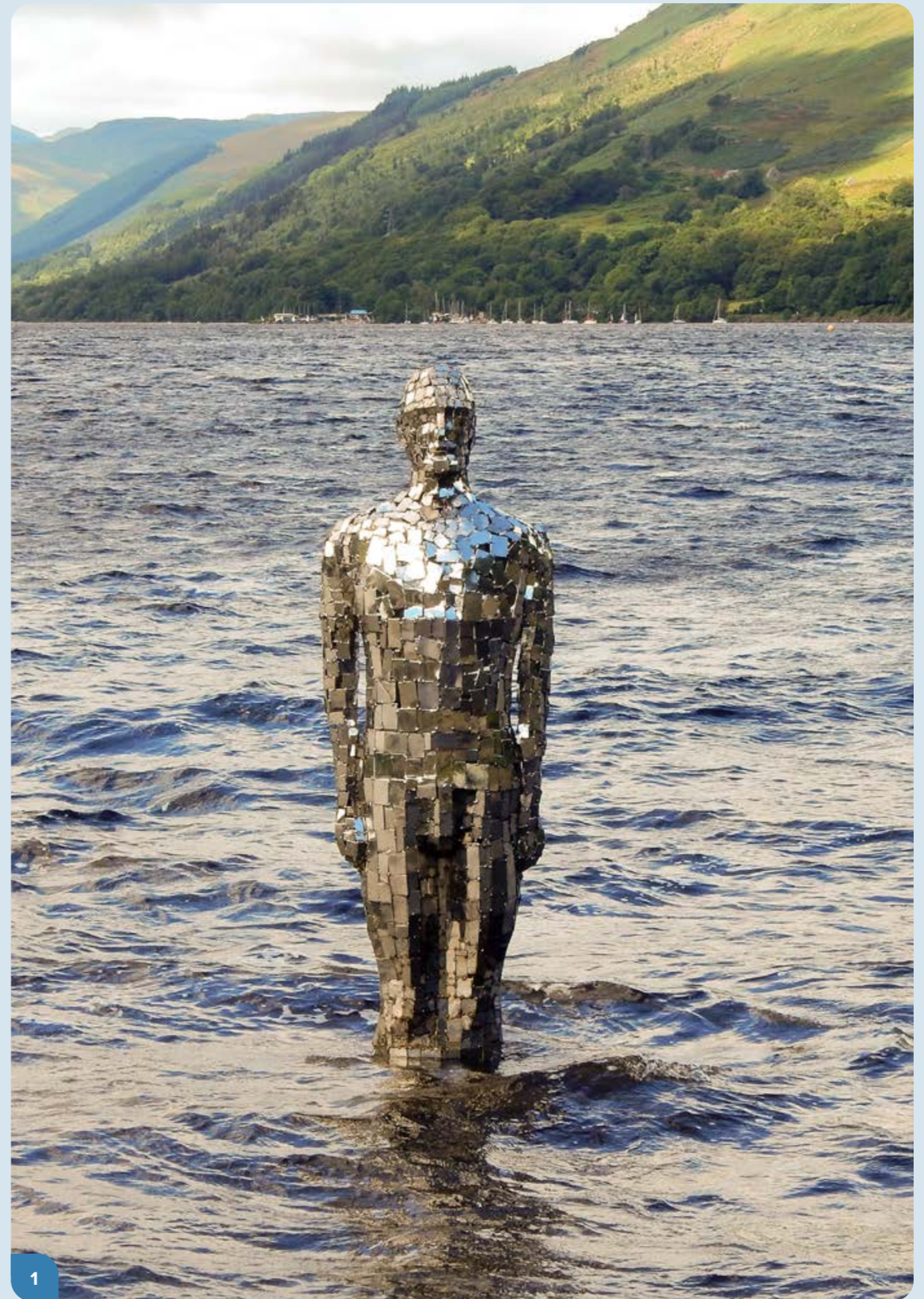
Given the very difficult times we have all been through over the last 2 years, the return of 'Still', one of Scotland's most popular sculptures and of significant cultural heritage, will be a welcome and positive sign, bringing joy and well-being to all who view this masterpiece over the years to come.

“ Art washes from the soul the dust of everyday life. ”

Pablo Picasso

by Audrey Glavigan (Treasurer) and Geoff Hardman-Carter of St Fillans in Bloom

1) 'Still' in-situ in Loch Earn before it was removed in 2017.



TPPKA Project Map

See What Project Activity is Going On Across Perth & Kinross

If you have a project you would like to progress please email info@prideinperthshire.co.uk and our Project Development Advisor will be delighted to discuss your plans.



Project Development Guide

TPPKA has produced a helpful step-by-step **Project Development Guide** for groups who are thinking about starting a project. The document takes you through the entire process from initial thinking to project completion.

Amongst other information it includes sections on planning & preparation; developing your ideas and design; permissions and legal issues; and costs and

fundraising. It is intended to give a realistic impression of what to expect along the way as you bring your plans to life and suggests ways to measure its success on completion.

You can download a copy from the Take a Pride in Perth and Kinross Association website at www.prideinperthshire.co.uk

Take a Pride in Perth and Kinross Association



Project Development Guide



Welcome



Initial Thinking



Planning & Preparation



Developing Your Project & Design



Permissions & Legal Issues



Costs



Fundraising



Contractors



Measuring Success



Contact Us



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