

TAKE A PRIDE IN P&K ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Note from the Chair...

Issue 4 - February 2023

Time does indeed move very quickly, and it is a great honour to be back in the Chair, an unbelievable 10 years on. Somebody said 'The more things change the more they are the same' and that for me sums up my experience since taking over from Bill Ronald. Take a Pride are still that driving force for environmental enhancement in communities that are loved by their volunteers. I am delighted to see some of the same faces that have made me feel as welcome in 2023 as they did in 2013, and to meet some new faces. This blend of people builds sustainability into our volunteer network as well as delivering projects that are truly transformational.

I love that we have grown in ambition over the years working as a team with Jenny and Elspeth who nudge us forward and provide insight and advice as required. To return just as the Alyth Burn Side renovation reached completion and have an opportunity to reflect on visiting relatives there with my grandparents many years ago, it was inspiring to see what an impact could be delivered by volunteers. And that is only one of many projects we have delivered over recent years. At the heart of our work are our ideas and enthusiasm; developing these ideas, making them attractive to funders and never giving up is indeed a trait that we share.

I have a great pride in what our communities have achieved to date; living in Scotlandwell, I am surrounded by communities that have embraced Take a Pride. As I make my way up to Perth driving through Kinnesswood, Glenfarg and Bridge of Earn the changes that have been made over time are very visible, communities of volunteers making a difference for us all.

Being a Bloomer is definitely good for you and I look forward to playing my part in the next steps for the Take a Pride in Perth and Kinross Association.



Karen McDonnell



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Farewells

Thank you to Bill Ronald

An important part of the proceedings at our 2022 AGM was to say a big thank you to our out-going Chairman, Bill Ronald. Bill has been in this blooming business for over 30 years and we were thrilled when he agreed to join us as Chairman of the Take A Pride in Perth and Kinross Association back in 2017. This wasn't his first time with the Association as Bill was very much instrumental in its inception back in 1998 when he was Head of Outdoor Services with Perth and Kinross Council. Bill and my predecessor, Euna Scott, whom many of you know well, came up with this amazing idea to form a charitable arm of the already successful bloom campaign in Perth and Kinross. This brave and bold idea enabled bloom groups to realise their plans for more ambitious projects which required significant fundraising, landscape design, project management and the engagement of contractors to implement their projects. Early projects included Pitlochry Railway Station Armoury Park, Errol Cistern Green, North Inch Wetlands, Alyth War Memorial Gardens, Blackford Entrance Feature and Comrie Boulevard to name but a few. Bill served on the Association as Treasurer for four years from 2002. He stepped down from the Association in 2006 which coincided with his retirement from PKC. But bloom was in Bill's blood and he set up the national award winning group Coupar Angus Pride of Place in his own village.

Over the five years of his Chairmanship, Bill proved to be an incredibly capable Chairman. His knowledge and expertise are exceptional and his attention to detail ensured the success of the projects delivered during this time. Between 2017 and 2022 we saw the successful competition of Auchterarder Garrie's Corner, and Bridge of Earn's Brickhall Community Garden. Kinnesswood in Bloom's Benarty View was completed in 2019 and Kinross in Bloom's refurbishment of the Crosswell Fountain was completed in the summer of 2020 which was an amazing achievement in the midst of the pandemic. Up in Highland Perthshire, Pitlochry in Bloom's Wildlife Garden on Atholl Road is establishing well and Abernethy's Heritage Garden is a fantastic achievement. Undoubtedly the most ambitious project undertaken by the Association since the Scotlandwell Wash House in 2012 is the Alyth Burn Side renovation which has dramatically improved the appearance and access for the benefit of the local

community and visitors. Officially opened in July 2022 it was a fitting finale for Bill.

We are in very good hands though, fear not. Our new Chair, Karen McDonnell, from Scotlandwell in Bloom, is no stranger to the Take A Pride in Perth and Kinross Association. Karen became a trustee back in 2005, and became Chairman in 2006 until 2009 and again in 2012 and 2013. Karen, like Bill, has amazing skills and experience to share with us all and we very much look forward to working on our current projects together.

Jenny Williams - Perth & Kinross Council



Bill Ronald

In Memory

It is with great sadness that we said goodbye to three of our long standing friends in bloom.

Judy Pirie from Auchterarder Bloom Association and Iain Todd from Kinross in Bloom both passed away in October. We also lost Jenny Gill from Stanley in Bloom in December.

Their passion, enthusiasm, good humour and friendship will be much missed by us all. They all have left lasting legacies in their communities and our thoughts are with their families at this time.

Feldy in Flower

Celebrating the Platinum Jubilee

Feldy in Flower received a lovely write up in the Perthshire Advertiser about the Queen's Jubilee planted boat created at the East entrance to town. Planted by Jim and Margaret Adams, it looked fantastic and made a great impact as people drove in and out of town.

The group have recently had a wreath stand fitted just inside the memorial garden near the memorial archway at the Lower Birks. The addition of the wreath stand has been welcomed as "a great idea" by local councillor John Duff, as this will help to avoid wreaths being run over by residents and "attended" to by dogs! The wreath stand was used for the first time following November's Remembrance service to great effect. The wreath stand and summer watering is funded by Griffin and Calliachar Community Fund (SSE).

It has been another great year for the visual impact of the baskets and area planting, and our waterers kept the areas looking great even with the roasting weather we had. We have had fantastic feedback from residents and visitors about the planting around town.

Feldy in Flower ended the year with their Christmas meal - many thanks to the Aberfeldy Bowling Club for hosting us and to Mariutz and Dagmara from the The Tay for doing the catering.

We are looking forward to getting stuck in this year with winter planting already sorted, baskets taken down and the group progressing plans for planting this year.



by Ellen McBride, Feldy in Flower



Comrie in Colour

Reinvigorating the War Memorial

Comrie in Colour are progressing with our exciting plans to reinvigorate the War Memorial Garden.

A public consultation was held at Cultybraggan Camp on the 3rd October which gave interested village residents a chance to view the proposed plans and put any queries, or give feedback, to representatives from TPPKA, Comrie in Colour and Chris Palmer Associates (who was responsible for drawing up the plans).

The proposals will ensure a lower maintenance approach to managing the site whilst enhancing the aesthetics of the space. Renewed planting will feature pollinator friendly species and increase biodiversity, including the removal of the heavy evergreen shrub beds flanking the paths and introducing an 'avenue' of trees. This will avoid the current situation where the narrow grass strip between the borders and path (which gets sprayed rather than mown) provides a poor aesthetic on the route to the Memorial. The trees will be in a simple setting of grass, but with bark mulch circles around their bases.

The new planting theme will have autumn colour interest to have good impact on Armistice Day, incorporating Sorbus Majestic Flame and Amelanchier lamarkii which will both provide good red autumn colour.

The proposal also sets out to improve access, particularly for people needing wheelchair or barrier free access. We wish to retain the existing main path from the stepped access, but intend to introduce a

new path from the maintenance gate access where there are no steps. We have also proposed a new path from the War Memorial, north to an improved setting for the Second Lieutenant John Manson Craig memorial stone. We would also like to realise an enlarged paved area gathering space in front of the War Memorial where the two paths cross.

In addition we are proposing to relocate the existing benches so they face the war memorial and allow visitors to enjoy the spectacular borrowed landscape of the garden offered by the surrounding vistas.

There was unanimous support for the project especially regarding the improved access paths and better inclusion of the John Craig Memorial stone.

We have also received very positive backing from the Comrie Development Trust, Community Council, War Memorial Committee and our ward councillors Rhonda Brock, Stewart Donaldson and Noah Khogali.

Thanks to all mentioned for their support and encouragement.

The next step is securing funding for the work and, if successful, Comrie in Colour volunteers look forward to maintaining what promises to be an attractive and peaceful green space central to the village and its history.

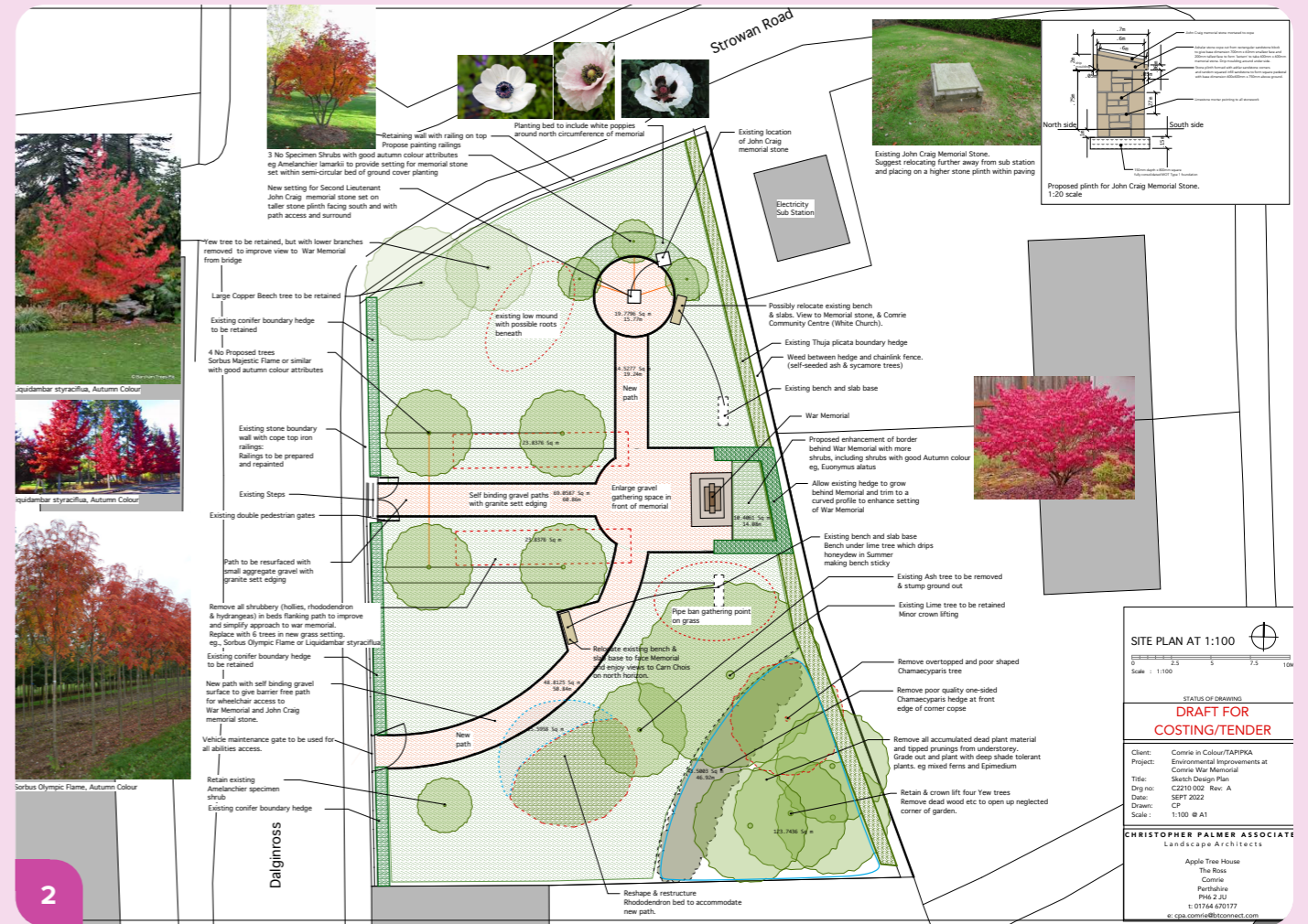
by Marie Donnelly, Chair of Comrie in Colour

Key to Pictures

- 1) The garden in its current state.
- 2) The proposed plans for the regeneration of the War Memorial garden.
- 3) Attendees at the Community Consultation event at Cultybraggan Camp.



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Abernethy in Bloom

Heritage Garden Update

In the Spring newsletter we were excited to report that Phase One of the Abernethy Heritage Garden (walls, paths, seating and planting) had just begun. This initial stage is now nearing completion and we are hoping that Spring 2023 will see a riot of colour in blossom and bulbs as our initial planting makes its debut. Things have not gone exactly to schedule or to plan but when do they ever? This glorious summer produced cement hard soil and had we managed to plant when we first intended we would have needed pickaxes as well as watering morning, noon and night. Somehow the soil still managed to grow and sustain a wilderness of supersize weeds! People sitting in the sunshine on the lovely new seats were somewhat perplexed by their first sight of the garden. However, by mid-September it started to rain and the ground yielded... we cleared the weeds by dint of backbreaking digging and began to plant up our various heritage beds.

The planting for the Heritage Garden is designed to reflect and complement the story of Abernethy through the ages. This will be told on the information boards being produced with the help of our local museum and old photos from village life which form part of Phase Two of the garden's development. From the Iron Age to the Romans, to the importance of the Church in Medieval times, to farming life and local industry more recently - the choice of trees, shrubs and flowering plants helps illustrate the daily world of our village.

Abernethy in Bloom is sourcing much of the planting from the village itself. People have been growing from seed, taking cuttings or donating plants which have been successful in their own gardens. Whilst it will take some time for the Heritage Garden to mature, we hope this collaborative approach will create an immediate connection and a feeling of pride.

Close to the northern boundary wall a range of fruit trees (apple, plum, medlar, greengage, crab apple) underplanted with healing herbs aim to provide interest from blossom to harvest. This area will also include a Raspberry patch to represent one of the village's former major industries - donated and planted by one of the village's last commercial raspberry growers. The trees are also part of Abernethy's contribution to the late Queen's Green Canopy Platinum Jubilee project.

In the shady area in front of the western boundary wall native hedging will encourage bird life together with a range of shrubs. All will be underplanted with Spring and Autumn bulbs. Native trees (Rowan and Holly) appropriate in height and size to the garden are being planted as focal points.

We have also been gifted various old farming implements, including a small plough which will provide a centrepiece to a wildflower area which will feature those wildflowers which still grow plentifully around the village throughout the year (primroses, cowslips, harebells, water avens, sweet cicely, meadowsweet, prunella, poppy, violets, wild rocket).

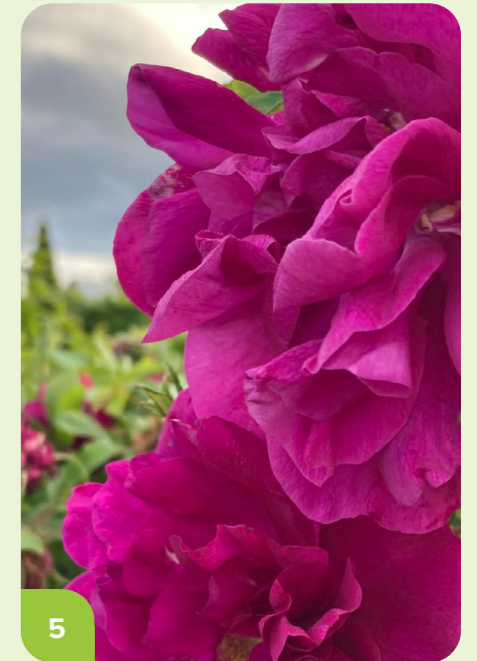
The third and largest bed has old-fashioned roses with white Madonna Lilies, Irises, Alchemilla, Peonies, Hollyhocks, Foxgloves, white and pink Valerian to create a fragrant colourful area reminiscent we hope of a monastic cloister.

It is still very much a work in progress but by the time Phase Two is completed in late Spring, Abernethy will have a new haven for everyone to enjoy. Please come and visit!

by Caroline Boyle, Abernethy in Bloom

Key to Pictures

- 1) Looking up to the central seating area with medieval bed on left and fruit trees on right.
- 2) Fruit trees planted.
- 3) Gooseberry bushes added to the orchard.
- 4) No weeds left - Sonia Simmers hard at work!
- 5) Rose Roseraie de L'Hay
- 6) Salmon sculpture donation from a local farmer.
- 7) Elspeth Bruce lends a hand.



Kinnesswood in Bloom

Taking Part in "Beautiful Scotland"

Kinnesswood in Bloom have been taking part in various competitions for a number of years, the local best village competition, Take a Pride in Perthshire and Beautiful Scotland. We also took part in Britain in Bloom, once a few years ago then digitally in 2021 during lockdown.

We have been quite successful over the years, regularly winning the Best Village in Kinross-shire, many awards in the Perth and Kinross competition and winners in Beautiful Scotland. The elusive Gold was finally won a few years ago and we have managed to maintain that standard.

For anyone else wanting to show off their village, they should look at the Beautiful Scotland website for guidance. Perth and Kinross have their own standards but they very much follow the same guidelines these days.

We maintain about 8 community garden areas in the village and work on them in a rolling programme, mostly with Saturday work parties but more often in the summer and nightly the week before the judges are to arrive! Each has a different focus with planting of heathers, lavender, shrubs, tubs, bedding plants and bulbs. The school has vegetables as well as a polytunnel and border areas. There is more emphasis these days on sustainable planting.

We take great pride in the heritage of the village and have written a book about its history as well as commissioning three interpretation boards, a listening post and a piece of music called "The Loan to the Hill". We work closely with the school pupils and they have produced some excellent work over the years including a book about local poet Michael Bruce and a CD interviewing local folk - some of us "Bloomers" even made it onto the CD! This year was the Year of Stories and our little figures were dressed as local characters from Mary Queen of Scots to a monk from St Serfs Island and Alexander Buchan, a famous meteorologist.

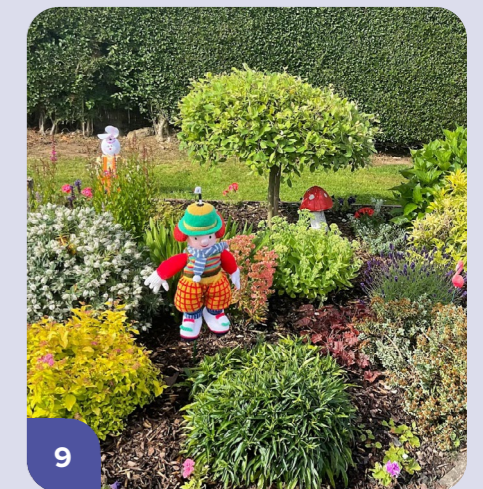
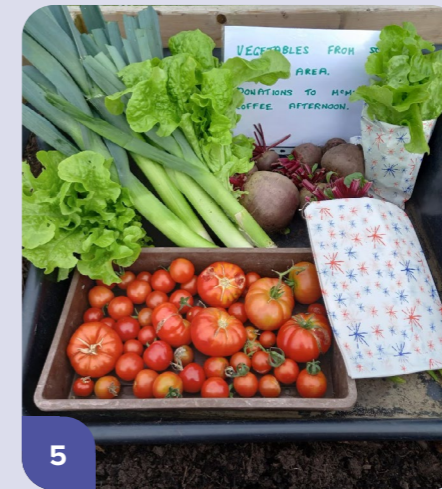
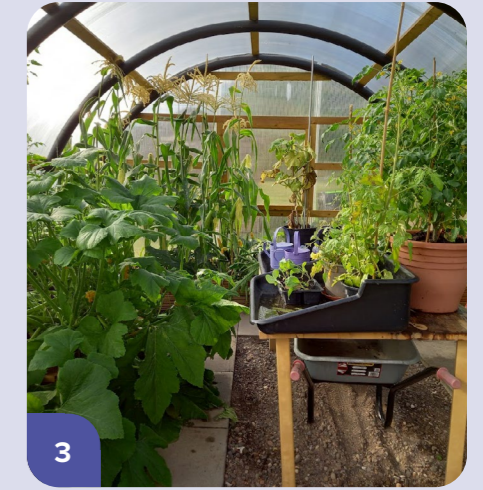
Last year the school had an environmental day with volunteers from the children welcoming parents and

other villagers to the school playground. They had set up about eight stations showcasing their work, polytunnel, raised beds, willow, a mini orchard, rain garden, pond and amphibian ladders. Kinnesswood in Bloom volunteers worked alongside the pupils. When the judges came we asked for volunteers to show the judges around and the children were amazing, making sure they didn't miss anything on their tour. We have already used peat free compost in the school but are gradually changing elsewhere in the village. This year we ordered a load of mushroom compost which is easy to use and works out very cheap.

Community participation is important in any project. We like to keep in touch by writing a monthly article in the Kinross newsletter, regular updates on our Facebook page and delivering a postcard every year to showcase our work and ask for financial support. We do receive great support from villagers, both financially and in the comments on our Facebook page. We hold monthly meetings to discuss future plans and keep our own members informed. Most of the year we have a Saturday work party which moves around the village to keep all the areas looking good. It's important to have a variety of skills in the group, someone to keep on top of jobs needing done, someone to act as chair or treasurer or secretary, keeping the Facebook page up to date, finding funding and working with the school. These folk don't have to be gardeners, just supportive of the group.

In October 2022 we finally received word of how well we had done. Kinnesswood got a Gold, Best small village in Scotland and a discretionary award for Working with Children. We were so pleased that all the hard work had paid off. Not everyone wants to enter competitions and there are now non judged categories which take off the pressure but give recognition to the groups. Well done all the villages in Perth and Kinross who do so well to make this such a lovely area.

by Norma Smith, Vice Chair of Kinnesswood in Bloom



Key to Pictures

1) Raised beds and polytunnel at the school. 2) Shelagh shows off sweetcorn. 3) Inside the polytunnel. 4) The judges are given a conducted tour. 5) Surplus vegetables in the bus shelter. 6) The cart. 7) Borders at the school maintained by Kinnesswood in Bloom. 8) The judges having a seat at Benarty View. 9) The Tot's Garden.

Alyth in Bloom

Official Opening of Alyth Burn Side

In July last year Alyth in Bloom celebrated the official opening of the revitalised Alyth Burn Side.

The Burn Side improvement project was an ambitious and exciting community-led initiative to transform and improve the appearance, access and biodiversity of the burn side at Pitnacree Street in Alyth.

Initiated by Alyth in Bloom volunteers in 2017, in partnership with the Take a Pride in Perth and Kinross Association and the Local Authority's Community Greenspace Team, the project has delivered a robust programme of planning, fundraising, community consultation and engagement.

Previously the site was overgrown with head-high bamboo and there was no suitable pedestrian path, forcing people to walk along the road.

Five years later the site has been transformed into a scenic and fully accessible area that has vastly improved the look of the burn side, as well as creating a safe pedestrian pathway. In addition to the ground works, the area has been further enhanced by the planting of ten new trees, the installation of a listening post and an information board, seating and floral display planters, with the finishing touch of a unique stained glass and timber sculpture by local artist Lesley Garside. The landscape architect, Chris Palmer, produced the designs, specifications, costings and contract documents for the project.

A member of Alyth in Bloom said: "We are thrilled the Burn Side has been officially opened – this marks the end of a real labour of love. Although we always knew this project was going to be a huge undertaking, we also had to contend with some unexpected challenges including having to repair a crumbling burn retention wall, coping with a flood that washed out recently laid hardcore, and dealing with the effects of a global pandemic that stopped work for several months and resulted in cost increases and material shortages."

The group was aided by the 'Take a Pride in Perth and Kinross Association' who provided project management support and helped to fundraise over £155,000 from a range of generous funders, including the Scottish Landfill Community Trust, SSE Drumderg, Perth and Kinross Council, Alyth Development Trust, Tesco, Thomson Charitable Trust and Airlie Estates. Alyth in Bloom also carried out fundraising activities and were generously supported by the local community.

Bill Ronald, who chaired the Association during the life of the project, was given the honour of 'cutting the ribbon' at the official opening ceremony. He said: "Having been closely involved with this challenging project over the last five years, I'm delighted that the Burn Side is now officially open – this is one of the most ambitious projects the Association has supported and its success is thanks to the hard work, commitment and perseverance of the Alyth in Bloom volunteers."

Key to Pictures

- 1) Crowds gather ahead of the official opening.
- 2) Lesley Garside's stained glass and timber sculpture.
- 3) Bill Ronald cuts the ribbon with Karin Donaldson (L) and Tam Thomson (R) from Alyth in Bloom.



Live Project Update

TPPKA is currently supporting 7 bloom groups across Perth and Kinross with project management and fundraising support to help with their exciting projects.

If you have an idea for a project in your community please do not hesitate to get in touch by emailing info@prideinperthshire.co.uk

Abernethy in Bloom *Heritage Garden*

Phase 2 of the project is about to begin to install information boards, lighting and a solar-powered listening post

Ardoch in Bloom *Cock and Hen Wall Restoration*

Tender returns have been received and a contractor is due to be appointed shortly

Blair Atholl in Bloom *Village Hall Nature Garden*

Plans for the garden are being drawn up ready for a community consultation

Comrie in Colour *War Memorial Garden Regeneration*

Plans for the proposed garden design have been shared with the community and fundraising is underway

Pride in Meigle *Village Gateway Entrance Enhancement*

Plans for the proposed landscaping and entrance feature have been drawn up and shared with the group for feedback

Scotlandwell in Bloom *Well and Wash House Repairs*

Work is progressing on identifying all project elements and approaching local contractors who may wish to bid for work

St Fillans in Bloom *Reinstating 'Still' in Loch Earn*

Fundraising is now complete - the next step is to relocate the sculpture to the artist's studio where it can be strengthened



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