



# TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by

Karen McDonnell, Chairman

*Karen McDonnell*

1<sup>st</sup> June 2024

## **1. Aims of the Association**

1.1 Aims: The Take a Pride in Perthshire Association was established in 1998 as a charity registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). Its aims are to enhance the environment, foster community spirit and encourage public participation in improvement projects, across Perth & Kinross, that deliver public benefit. Its charitable objectives (below) are set by OSCR in line with Scottish Charity legislation

### **1.2 Charitable objectives:**

- To improve the environment and quality of life throughout the Perth & Kinross Local Authority area, by supporting and enabling voluntary Environment “in Bloom” Groups in their work to protect, care for and enhance their local natural, horticultural, cultural and built environment and heritage.
- To advance the education of the public by supporting and encouraging educational initiatives concerning the local environment and other related issues and by providing lifelong learning about the natural environment through environmental campaigns and sustainable improvement projects.
- To advance community development by fostering community spirit and pride of place by encouraging public participation for the achievement of these and other related purposes.

In furtherance of the above charitable purposes the organisation will:

- Enhance local amenities and facilities through environmental campaigns and improvement projects.
- Support community initiatives and social causes through fundraising and charitable work.

## **2. Structure, Governance and Management**

2.1 The Association’s governing document is a constitution, drawn up in 1998 and regularly reviewed, most recently in June 2024.

2.2 Membership of the Association is open to representatives from all ‘In Bloom’ groups in the Perth and Kinross area. An Annual General Meeting, which is open to all member groups, is held in the first quarter of the financial year (April, May or June).

2.3 The governing body is a Committee of Trustees, appointed at the AGM from its member organisations and Perth & Kinross Council. The Committee met 4 times during 2023-24.

Individual Trustees also take on advisory roles for active projects being undertaken by local groups

2.4 Financial Management: as specified in the Constitution, all funds are applied in accordance with the Objectives of the Association and monies not required for immediate purposes are held in a 12-month Fixed-term Savings Account. The Treasurer, at the Annual General Meeting, submits accounts of the Income and Expenditure and of the Balance Sheet at the end of the financial year (31<sup>st</sup> March). These accounts are independently scrutinised within the provisions of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. The Accounts and Statements of Balances for April 2023 to March 2024 are presented to the members at the AGM in the Treasurer's Report.

2.5 List of Trustees 2022-23: Chairman: Karen McDonnell (Scotlandwell in Bloom); Secretary: Caroline Boyle (Abernethy in Bloom); Treasurer: Monica Straughan. Other Trustees: Perth & Kinross Council representative) – Jenny Williams until December 2023, then Susan Whyte; Susan Crawford (Muthill in Bloom); Norma Smith (Kinnesswood in Bloom); Elspeth Bruce (PKC); Barry Starck (Pride In Meigle 2015); Willie Wilson (Viewlands Venture). Advisers: Charlie Hardman (Project Development Adviser); Lorna Sharp (Independent Examiner)

2.6 Trustee Remuneration: The Trustees all act on a voluntary basis and no remunerations are paid.

2.7 Project Development Advisers: A project development service is provided by Nicki Souter Associates (NSA), a locally based company. The Association's contract with NSA was renewed in March 2024 for a further two-year period.

### **3. Achievements and performance 2023/24**

When member groups initiate local environmental projects, the Association provides, on request, project management services, including the all-important fundraising. During the year 2023-24 the following projects were undertaken by member groups in partnership with the Association:

#### **3.1 Projects under development:**

- **Abernethy Heritage Garden (Abernethy in Bloom)** This imaginative project is well underway and has greatly enhanced a previously unused grassy area by the main road through the village. Clearance, construction and planting during 2023 has

transformed the site with feature walls, accessible paths, seating, sculptural features and signage that reflects the history and heritage of Abernethy. Funding was raised to cover the project cost of £85,800. The project was nearing completion at 31 March 2023 and an official opening ceremony arranged for June 2024.

- **Alyth Boer War Memorial Plaza (Alyth in Bloom)**

The Boer War Memorial in Alyth is adjacent to the busy market square in an area that also includes a historic water fountain, a raised planting area and other features. Alyth in Bloom applied to the Association for help in improving the area. The Trustees approved the project in November 2023 and the initial stages of planning and fundraising were underway by March 2024.

- **Blair Atholl Village Hall Nature Garden**

The rear garden of the Village Hall had fallen into a state of neglect. Blair Atholl in Bloom wants to transform it into a vibrant outdoor space that can be used by the community, in particular the under-5s who attend the mother and toddler group in the hall. Designs are being drawn up by a landscape architect and fundraising is now underway.

- **Comrie War Memorial Garden (Comrie in Colour)** Improvement plans for the garden at the war memorial will provide a lower maintenance approach to managing the site whilst enhancing biodiversity, improving the aesthetics and renewing paths and seating areas. Comrie has a rich military history which will be reflected in the garden. Designs for the refurbishment have been approved, fundraising is well underway and it is hoped that work will get underway in the summer of 2024.

- **Kinnesswood Michael Bruce Cottage Garden (Kinnesswood in Bloom)**

Kinross-shire poet Michael Bruce was born in Kinnesswood in 1746. The cottage where he was born is now managed by the Michael Bruce Trust, and volunteers from Kinnesswood in Bloom help maintain the garden. This new project aims to rejuvenate the upper garden, making it a low-maintenance, wildlife friendly space with seating and a central feature, useful and attractive for visitors and locals alike. Planning and fundraising are now underway.

- **Meigle Village Entrance (Pride in Meigle 2015)**

Pride in Meigle 2015 volunteers are keen to enhance a grassy area at the north-western entrance to the village incorporating a community garden, drystone walls and a large stone containing a 'Welcome to Meigle' sign, designed to reflect the village's Pictish history. Uncertainties about ownership of the site have caused delays but these have been resolved and it is hoped that work can commence in 2024.

- **Scone Mercat Cross Restoration (Scone in Bloom)**

The historic Mercat Cross in New Scone is in poor condition and surrounded by Heras fencing. Scone in Bloom applied to the Association for a project in two phases – the first to restore and conserve the cross, the second to landscape the surrounding garden area to enhance the aesthetics, the biodiversity and information provision at the site. The project was approved by the Trustees in November 2023 and the initial stages of planning and fundraising were underway by March 2024.

- **Scotlandwell Wash House (Scotlandwell in Bloom)**

This project has been delayed by a number of issues, including clarifying ownership of parts of the site. Letters of support have been received and contractors sought to undertake the works.

- **St Fillans – 'Still' Sculpture (St Fillans in Bloom)** The 'Still' sculpture was created by Scottish sculptor and environmental artist Rob Mulholland and stood in the waters of Loch Earn until 2017. St Fillans in Bloom has purchased the statue and has been granted planning permission to reinstate it in the Loch. Fund raising is almost complete but the statue cannot be installed until a new, robust base is in place. Structural engineers have been commissioned to design the base and it is hoped the installation can happen during 2024.

#### **4.2 Completed projects:**

- **Ardoch/Braco Wall Restoration (Ardoch in Bloom)** The Southern approach to Braco features an historic 'Cock and Hen' dry stone wall, approximately 200m in length, linking the local new cemetery to the village of Braco. The wall had fallen into disrepair and Ardoch in Bloom had already improved a 50-metre stretch as Phase 1 of the restoration. The group approached the Association to help them undertake Phase 2, which involved restoring a further stretch of wall and improving a

public footpath to the cemetery. A total of £ 71k was raised and the project was completed in good time, with an official opening ceremony held in October 2024.

## **5 Chairman's Message**

Being Chairman of this Association is such a privilege. Hundreds of enthusiastic volunteers work hard in communities across Perth & Kinross, and we can help them make things happen on the ground by providing advice on fundraising, project management and sharing knowledge and experience.

In August, we held a celebration event to mark our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we were delighted that it proved extremely popular with volunteers from many of our local member groups. Over 100 attendees enjoyed a lovely day in the grounds of the magnificent Drummond Castle, and I was pleased that we were able to thank them for their dedication and hard work. They make a huge difference to our county, and we can be truly proud of Perth and Kinross as a result!

I am also very proud of the partnership we have with Perth and Kinross Council's Community Greenspace Team who provide support to each group and help them to bring out the best in their communities. It would be remiss of me not to give a special mention to Jenny Willams, who retired from her role of Greenspace team leader at the end of 2023. I know I can speak on behalf of the whole 'in Bloom' community wishing her a wonderful retirement and thanking her for the amazing support she provided to so many of us over the years. You will be missed, Jenny!

I would also like to welcome Susan Whyte who has taken over from Jenny in the Greenspace Team, and as the PKC representative on our committee. I very much look forward to working with you, Susan.

The Treasurer's Report has confirmed that we continue to be financially viable, and the preceding paragraphs of this report highlight some of the brilliant projects that we are working on with local member groups. A huge thank you to you all.

I sincerely thank my fellow Trustees for making it easy for me and of course for their commitment and enthusiasm.

***Karen McDonnell***

**Chair, Take a Pride in Perthshire Association**