



Colourful Kilmacolm

Chairman's Report to the 3rd AGM

Cargill Centre, Kilmacolm

Monday 11 May 2015

Unsurprisingly, Annual General Meetings take place annually, but we are different. It is just six months since we were last here, having reorganised our official dates, but of course from now on AGMs will be held at yearly intervals.

In these six months the committee has met three times to review progress and to plan ahead.

Our autumn bulb planting produced results in January and February: snowdrops followed by crocus at the two lay-bys, and crocus on the little patch of grass on Lochwinnoch Road. Earlier this year, from our own funds, we bought some more snowdrops 'in the green' to supplement the planting, and we intend adding more crocus in autumn.

Sourcing funding is never off the agenda. As well as the 3 year grant from Inverclyde Council which we reported on last November, we applied for and were successful in obtaining funding from two further sources.

Firstly, a grant of £530 from Awards for All, i.e. Lottery Fund, to purchase a planter for the garden area at Market Place. Our bid had the title 'Brightening a neglected corner', the planter was ordered in February, delivered at the end of March and immediately planted up with a mixture of plants that we had available. It will be at least partly replanted for summer. Secondly, from the same supplier we ordered two half-barrels made of a rot-proof composition which will be sited either side of the bench at the Time Capsule. They will be put in place in the not too distant future when we do the summer planting. These half-barrels were financed by a £250 grant from the Community Grants scheme run in conjunction with Keep Scotland Beautiful. Or to put it another way, they were paid for by folk buying Tesco bags at 5p a time. By placing our order before the end of February we were able to benefit from a 10% discount. Both types of planter were supplied by Amberol and have reservoirs to reduce the frequency of watering.

Last November I reported that the spent bulbs from the Piazza were replanted at Market Place and in the border at the Time Capsule. The Market Place ones have struggled a bit, although some have flowered despite the conditions, but the Time Capsule border had a great show of Tête à Tête daffodils.

The Piazza displays performed well over winter and much more successfully than the previous year. We had a problem with the planter near the library as it failed to drain properly, with the result that by the end of winter the plants were all but floating and the bulbs had turned to mush. The plants were salvaged and many were reused for the new Market Place planter. We think we have identified what caused the problem and

will be able to avoid it in future. We - and many here - have been busy emptying the planters, with the replacements due to be delivered on Thursday morning; a nursery visit to choose plants is scheduled for a week today and planting up of all our containers will take place shortly thereafter.

We have been in touch with Inverclyde Council regarding the slope at the Pullman Diner and as a result we have their permission to plant it up. On three mornings last month some of our members tackled the clearing of the stones, pieces of concrete and weeds – with great enthusiasm, I have to say - and already many local people have remarked what an improvement there is. This site is another chance for Colourful Kilmacolm to make an impact and for our work to be noticed. We envisage, as far as possible, drifts of the same plant or ones with similar habit, interspersed with bulbs, some shrubs and small trees. It is a large expanse, requiring a lot of plants, but we hope to be able to reuse some of our own as well as surplus from members' gardens, as suggested at last year's AGM. The acer offered by Ruth and Bill Lamont had been intended for the Market Place planter, but on delivery it was obvious that the planter was not large enough, so the acer has been planted on the Pullman slope and should look good as you view it from the pavement above. If you are dividing plants this spring, do keep some for us. We expect to be planting up at the Pullman over the next week or two, so now would be the ideal time to pass them on. I have already had some plants handed in and offers of more.

Once again the album with photos of all these projects and activities plus press articles is available this evening, as well as a slide show on the laptop.

It has always been our hope that as we developed, more and more of the community would become involved. Often it is little things that make a difference, like Anne McGregor allowing us to use her outside tap, and Wild Rose allowing us to fill up watering cans in their shop. We have also had a generous donation from the Pullman Diner. Many thanks are due to all these. Within the last two weeks we have had two further approaches. One was from a local care home regarding sponsorship in return for publicity, and the other – so recent that this is news to most of the committee - a request from one of the local schools to provide a judge for a gardening competition. It does seem that we are becoming a recognised part of the local scene.

After a full two years it has become evident how useful the lock-up garage has been for storing our equipment and bags of compost, some temporarily, some longer term, and so I want to take this opportunity to thank Pat Amos for its use. We shall write to Pat expressing our thanks. Unfortunately, just yesterday I received a message from Pat to say that she would soon be needing it again for her own use, so we will be seeking an alternative. Once again Norrie Johnstone has been a good help with his truck and Jean Douglas and Rosemary Biggart have overwintered fuchsia plants – with more success I have to say than some committee members.

I would also again like to thank Edwin Fisher for so willingly inspecting our accounts – twice within a year.

And on your behalf I thank members of the committee for their time and their support, and in particular our office bearers, Diane, our secretary and provider of sustenance for the workers, Lucy, our minute secretary and Alistair, our treasurer for all that they do.

Thank you to all our members and to you for coming along this evening. As Brian Taylor used to say at the end of his Big Debate on Radio Scotland, give yourselves a round of applause.