



Colourful Kilmacolm

Chairman's Report to the 7th AGM

Cargill Centre, Kilmacolm

Monday 6 May 2019

In search of a theme for this summary of activities since last AGM, I read over the minutes of our five committee meetings, checking, incidentally, with some relief, that we had satisfied the requirements of our constitution, which says we should hold at least four committee meetings per year. Having done that, I was no closer to finding a theme, other than 'More of the same'. Perhaps that is not such a bad thing, suggesting as it does that we have a system and procedures that work. On the other hand, you may have some suggestions and ideas for us, which we would be glad to hear later on.

So, more or less in the order in which events occurred, here is a run-down of the year. Some of last year's bulbs were replanted at the Pullman area, some were passed on to Kilmacolm Primary School for their new garden and to St Columba's Senior School; three of us helped the children of Duchal Nursery School replant daffodils along the front of their building – and to our relief they flowered very well this spring – and the remainder went to the Tennis Club. I can see Kilmacolm soon becoming the daffodil capital of Inverclyde. And while talking of bulbs, we had our first showing of snowdrops at Market Place, and I know from past experience they will multiply rapidly.

Summer displays were similar to previous years, although at the piazza we added antirrhinums for the first time and they proved very colourful and long-lasting, although a little taller than we had anticipated, so that for a time they hid the begonias behind them.

In June we took part in the Flower Festival in St Columba Church and were very pleased to be given pride of place in the vestibule. Particular thanks must go to Lynda Bradley who masterminded our contribution with efficiency and enthusiasm.

About this time there was a lot in the press about new regulations regarding data protection, and we realised that we would have to adapt our documentation to take account of the changes and avoid running the risk of incurring fines. With expert advice from Lorna Skinner our membership form was amended and a Privacy Notice drawn up, a copy of which was issued to all members.

In August we had our visit from the assessor for It's Your Neighbourhood. He walked round all our sites, photographed displays and seemed impressed with our commitment. When we received our report we had improved by two more points, but that was still not quite enough to get us into the top grade, and as I mentioned a year ago, I think the top grade is out of our reach, simply because of what our remit is here in Kilmacolm. We are not into community gardens, taking over more

derelict land, helping folk grow their own vegetables, organising litter picks or campaigning against dog fouling, all of which, and more, groups throughout Scotland are doing. Our situation is different. Some of these activities are being done locally by others, some are not necessary. As a result, we decided to come out of the scheme altogether. I don't regret our years taking part, but it will also be a relief to be able to do our own thing, without someone looking over our shoulder.

Last autumn about 200 more crocuses were planted on Lochwinnoch Road, to make up for those disturbed when Virgin was working there. That grassy area will never look great, but the crocuses help for a short while at least.

Our helpers from the Explorer Scouts continued to come out over the winter months to tidy up, especially at Market Place, where leaf gathering is quite a task, and they will help out over the summer whenever available. They are particularly useful for clambering up to the top of the Pullman slope, being just a little younger than our average member.

The saga of the planter formerly outside the library has reached a conclusion, even if not the one we would have preferred. It is now situated at the top of the steps on the right of the Cargill Centre. Unfortunately it is immediately behind the railings that are the preferred position for banners advertising events in the village, so it is sometimes difficult to spot it. My thanks go to Robert Woodrow who worked with me to empty it, move it, and refill it.

We also had a drainage problem with one of the half barrels at the Time Capsule, and the planter at Market Place. At one point both had bulbs sitting in a few inches of water. Robert and I have solved the problem with the barrel meantime and we will keep an eye on the planter at Market Place.

Each spring we have had the same arrangement of King Alfred and Tête à Tête daffodils, but last autumn we decided to be bold and try something different, hence the planters with hyacinths and Minnow daffodils. It seems to have worked and makes a nice contrast to the others. All the bulbs have gone over now, perhaps somewhat sooner than in previous years, probably as a result of the relatively dry spring weather. These things are difficult to time.

We would like to see the pavement bordering the Pullman slope improved and have been in touch with Inverclyde Council, but it appears that it is not their responsibility, though whose it is is not clear. If a solution presents itself we will see what can be done.

I have mentioned three of our committee, Lynda, Lorna and Robert, but I would like to thank all of the committee for their unstinting support and encouragement. We are a good mix of brain and brawn, although it is fair to say an additional helping of brawn would be welcome. They have all contributed much, each adding their own slant to our discussions. Liz, our secretary, and Alistair, our treasurer, have continued to fulfil their roles most conscientiously. On your behalf I thank them all.

I would also like to acknowledge the financial contribution made by Inverclyde Council and the support and encouragement given to us by Councillor David Wilson. We have again submitted a grant request for the coming year.

I finish with some dates: look out for us at next Saturday's Agricultural Show where we will have a stall, and for the volunteer gardeners: Monday 20th May, removal of bulbs, Wednesday 22nd May, replanting for summer.

Summer, isn't that a nice note to finish on? As always, thank you so much from the committee and myself for coming along this evening and for your support throughout the year.