

TRUST NEWS

APRIL 2005

The newsletter of DUNBLANE DEVELOPMENT TRUST

To keep costs down, we have continued to keep the content short and simple and restricted ourselves to text only. For comments about this publication or for more detail, please contact us through our website www.dunblaneweb.co.uk or write to us using the address at the end of this newsletter. We would be very grateful if you could let us know if you are happy with what we are doing or if you want any changes made to further editions. Like the Trust itself, this is your newsletter, so please help us meet your needs.

CHAIRMAN'S PARTING COMMENTS

This is the last time that I will be writing an article for Trust News as my membership of the Trust is soon to end. Heather and I have now moved to Bridge of Allan, where we have found our ideal retirement house and are rapidly settling in very nicely. Although we were very sorry to leave Dunblane, where we could not find what we were looking for, Heather and I are delighted that we did not have to move far away and will be able to keep in touch with our home town for the last 22 years. As covered in our rules, I can continue as a Member of the Trust to the end my membership year, June 2005, and the Board are content for me to continue as Chairman until then. I am, however, delighted to be able to report that Bryan Grieve will be succeeding me as Chairman. We all know what a magnificent job he has done with the Environment and as he is now putting his own succession plans in place, we are underway with the handover process, which we expect to be seamless.

I will take this opportunity to take stock of what has been achieved and leave you with some parting thoughts.

Firstly, let me get my only negative comment out of the way. It has been disappointing that despite the very appreciative response we have had from the community for the work of the Trust, insufficient people have been prepared to step forward for positions of leadership. We can all be very grateful to Bryan Grieve who has led the Environment Group so ably and even more grateful that he is now prepared to step forward and take on the Chairmanship of the Trust. We can also all be very grateful to James Campbell (Co. Secretary), Fiona Conboy (Treasurer) and Terence O'Byrne (Administration Director) who have all contributed so much to provide the organisational core behind all that we do. Without Maggie Gorman offering to take on the role of Braeport Director we would not have been able to retain some local control over this important community amenity. John Seddon is taking a special interest in the future of Holmehill, Tom Smith is taking a lead role in matters relating to footpaths and parking and is also participating on a working party on the possible development of our Health Centre, Ian Dalglish and other Directors are participating with the Community Council on Planning matters and all Directors are making other valuable contributions to the Trust's development and its impact on our community. But why have we been unable to get volunteers to take on more activities in support of the Local Economy and Community Development? These are potentially important areas of development for our community, but they are now largely "on hold" until someone steps forward to take them on. One or 2 hours per week would be enough time commitment to make a real contribution, so if you think you might be able to help, please make contact.

Now let me get to the cheerier comments. We are of course delighted that Trust membership has grown so well and that there continues to be a steady stream of new member applications every month. Without our members, nothing would have been achieved to date and we would have no further improvement actions in the pipeline. Our target for this coming year is still to grow membership to over 500 and this should be achievable if we keep spreading the word to our friends, neighbours and relatives. The Trust has also been successful in raising the money it has required so far to pay for core costs such as insurance, stationery and other essential expenditures and to provide funds for improvement projects. We need to keep the momentum going in improving our environment and delivering whatever other community improvements we can and this requires a good income stream. Please continue to help if you can by making direct contributions and identifying others that might be able to help. The Trust is a registered charity and many companies have budgets for supporting charities. Private legacies can also be a good source. A nice big windfall from one or two sources would make an instant difference, but all contributions, however small, are welcome. Finally, I wish the Trust and its Members all the best for the future and I thank you all for the encouragement and support you have given me during my term in office. I have thoroughly enjoyed the challenge and feel proud to have been part of the success.

Mike Seal.

CHANGE OF REGISTERED OFFICE.

With the departure of Mike Seal, we could no longer use his house as our registered address. With the agreement of Stirling Council, the Board has approved a move to: **The Braeport Centre, Braeport, Dunblane. FK15 0AT.**

There are no other changes to any of our contact details.

As from May 2005, the meetings of the Board will be held at the Braeport Centre and it is hoped that our relationship with this important community amenity will progressively develop, with associated improvements in its appearance and community value.

ENVIRONMENT GROUP, INCLUDING DUNBLANE IN BLOOM.

The Environment Group has been working hard over the winter to prepare various areas for the "Beautiful Scotland in Bloom" competition, which we are entering again this year. The success of last year by winning the "Best New Entrant" category has spurred the group on to achieve even higher standards and improve the open spaces and entrances into Dunblane.

The roundabout at the Queen Victoria School will soon be fully landscaped, with the help of a grant from Cala Homes, to give a nice north entrance into Dunblane. The small corner garden at Bogside will also be refurbished with a larger planting area, a new path and a commemorative seat which is being donated by a local resident. The old flower beds at Smithy Loan have been refurbished by dividing the large bed into three smaller ones, building dry stone walls, with new paths and a commemorative seat again donated by a local resident. The Fourways roundabout is looked after by the Council but since we started making significant contributions, its standard is much improved. The Childrens Memorial Garden is looked after by us. The banks outside the golf club and the police station have been planted with 2500 wild flower plants and should give a very nice wild flower show during the year. Two new beds at the junction of Stirling Road and the B8033 have been created with cleared areas for annual bedding plants. We will be placing 24 new half barrels between the Stirling Road junction and the Claredon Place roundabout at various points to improve the entrance from the south of Dunblane. The town centre will again have 25 half barrels at various points around the High Street and the High Street roundabout will again be planted out with annual bedding. The improvements to the entrance to the Laighills and to the Memorial gardens, together with the management of the Haining bank will continue again this year.

Competition : we would like to invite all town centre shops, businesses, churches, etc. to participate in a "Dunblane in Bloom" competition, by putting out a hanging basket or some kind of floral decoration. The DDT will award prizes for different categories and we hope to expand the competition to all of Dunblane in future years.

I hope our efforts are pleasing to the eye and should you wish to join us on our Sunday or midweek work parties, please contact Bryan Grieve on 823112 or Sandy Mackay on 822765.

In conclusion :- I would like to thank Mike Seal our Chairman, for all his efforts and support over the last few years, without whom the Development Trust would not exist today, all at the Trust wish Mike and Heather many happy years in Bridge of Allan.

Bryan Grieve, Director of Environment.

HOLME HILL

The importance of this important space at the very heart of Dunblane has been recognised for a long time and its protection and potential development as a community amenity is identified in the Community Plan for Dunblane, 2003. When the land came to the market with a development tag on it, a local Action Group formed and the Trust got immediately involved. The Board then decided that the Trust should be the organisational vehicle to mount a community buy-out bid and an application to the Scottish Executive was quickly compiled. The application was not accepted because of two matters relating to the precise wording of our Memorandum and Articles of Association. To change these requires a General Meeting to be called with a minimum of 21 days notice given to all Members which effectively meant around a month of delay, bearing in mind the need to produce and distribute the notices, book the meeting place, etc. Because the land was already on the market, we were already classified as a late application and, after consultation with the Scottish Executive, it was decided that it would be quicker and more certain if the Action Group formed a new charitable company and made its own application. Consequently, this is what is happening. If you are not already involved and want more details, contact John Seddon via the website or at our new address.

COMMUNITY PATHS

The Development Trust in co-operation with the Civic Society has continued to provide Stirling Council with regular updates on the state of our community paths. A group of 14 volunteer Path Inspectors, led by Trust Director Tom Smith, reports at three monthly intervals on the path furniture and general accessibility of the 8 Dunblane country paths. Some of the paths suffer greatly from the local weather (Wharry Burn Bridge!!) and financial restrictions further constrain what can be done in reality. But the group has worked well with Countryside Services and we believe that our reports are being acted upon and given every consideration.

The recent Land Reform Act requires Stirling Council to prepare a 'core path plan' and to establish a local Access Forum in order to assert, protect and keep open all routes by which access rights might be exercised. The Trust intends to play a part in this.

PARKING IN DUNBLANE

Under the auspices of the Community Council the Development Trust led a small working group to again review parking in our town. The working group was widely representative with 2 community councillors, 2 Trust directors and 2 local traders. The final report was presented to the main parent bodies and to our Stirling Councillors before being submitted to Stirling Council Transport department. In brief it is recommended that the dual carriageway parking be extended, that Millrow be redesigned to eliminate the wasted space and to offer some parking space to shorter term shoppers, that parking time restrictions in the town be rationalised, that sign posting be improved to encourage longer term parking out of the town centre on to the B8033 and that parking restrictions should be enforced without resorting to meters, in the centre of town.

Improvements in parking do not occur quickly. The problem has been debated on a regular basis in Dunblane and this report should help keep the issue firmly in the minds of the planners. We will continue to nag.

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