



The active working groups of KCFC (listed below) continued to promote the company's charitable objectives throughout the year

**All Killearn Archive - Peter Smith**

### **Members of Group**

The current membership of AKA is Nancy Bailey (Secretary), Robert Hunter, Heather McArthur, Hilary McGregor, Gill Smith (Treasurer), Peter Smith (Acting Chairman), Duncan Clark, Morna Knottenbelt and Jenny Wilks. Other volunteers would be very welcome.

### **Activities in the year to September 2023**

Various members have continued with their research into those who served in the two World Wars and life in the village at the time. Work abstracting data from the 1871 census is almost complete but there are still some problems due to the poor quality of the transcription available. One of our members spent time in the Mitchell Library and was able to obtain copies of the 1921 census together with some valuation rolls. Work will be needed to abstract the data into usable forms which will take some time. We had been unable to ascertain a link between Thomas Mackie, one of the soldiers remembered on our War Memorial, and Killearn. A potential link to a Killearn family has now been found within the library records.

We continue to receive occasional donations to our collection and have gained documents from The Monday Club and the Boys' Brigade. In addition a large family bible and related documents, belonging to John Bishop of Auchineden, which were donated to the Kirk, have been passed to AKA for safe keeping.

As we build up the records we hold locally we have been able to respond to a number of queries this year. We received a request for help from the Carr family whose ancestors lived on Killearn from the late 1800s. One of the family, Robert Carr, is listed on our war memorial as a casualty of WWI. Members of the family, who now live in South Africa, visited Killearn in December and we were able to provide them with information from our records and show them locations linked to the family and family graves in the old graveyard. There is an unmarked Carr grave which the family were unaware of and they are now considering adding a new stone to mark it.

A second request was received, via the Heritage Trail, for information on the Bonteins of Balglass. We were able to provide some information from the material we hold and photographs of the two large grave markers relating to the family which are now in the Old Kirk. We received a reply from the enquirer to say the information had added to his knowledge and asking to use the photographs in an article he was preparing.



Jeremy Gunn from the USA contacted KCFC looking for information on the Gunn family in Killearn. We were able to give him details of a brother and sister who lived in Boquhan in the 1800s and are interred in the old cemetery.

An unusual request came from Canada relating to the memorial tankard presented to Robert Ure in Killearn on August 8<sup>th</sup> 1919. This was one of the tankards presented by the Killearn villagers to men who served, and survived, World War I. The tankard had found its way into the possession of a WWII Canadian officer possibly acquired when he visited his grandmother in Dundee during the war. It had been altered by having an additional metal section attached to cover most of the original inscription, with the exception of the words "Killearn Aug. 1919", and was accompanied by an invitation to Private Robert Ure and lady to attend a supper, presentation and dance in Killearn Hall on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> August 1919. We were able to provide information about Robert Ure and established that the tankard was probably initially intended for another person and had been altered to allow a change in the inscription.

A short talk was given to the Drymen and District Local History Society outlining the development of the Black Bull Inn from single storey building to its closure as The Killearn Hotel.

AKA again laid a wreath at the War Memorial in memory of Killearn men who died in the two World wars during the annual Remembrance Service.

In the course of the year the group has continued to support the Killearn Courier by submitting articles, based on the results of our research and the items held in the archive, in each edition.

### **Colourful Killearn (including Killearn Wildflower Group) - Mike Gray**

It was with great sadness that we received the recent news of the death of our Chairman, Jimmy Henderson. He has been a passionate long-term friend, supporter and benefactor of Colourful Killearn, right from the earliest days. He will be greatly missed!

This year has given us the twin challenges of drought and chickweed. Alleviating one has led to proliferation of the other! However, the number of appreciative comments from residents on the results has been gratifying and made it all worthwhile.

Looking at our activities in detail:

Containers – our annual spring display of dwarf daffodils was disappointing. A good proportion of the bulbs rotted off without showing any growth leaving a rather sparse. On the positive side though, the pansies that we put in to supplement them in February have



been amazing. They have flowered right through the summer and are still complementing the bacopa, lobelia and begonias even now.

We have made good use of a generous donation from Killearn Courier to replace temporary planters at Well Green and the Health Centre entrance with smaller versions of our half-barrels. These have been permanently planted with perennials and small shrubs, which will hopefully improve as the years go by. The money also stretched to allow some signs to be printed to attribute ownership and maintenance of our various planting schemes to CK.

Work parties – two gatherings were held during the year to tidy up the four beds opposite the Co-op, along with other public spaces that CK have “adopted”.

Christmas Tree – generously donated again by Edenmill Christmas trees and put up by our volunteers. One of the most shapely we've had in recent years!

Wildflowers – the succession of perennials continues in the patches already planted. There is a predominance of Knapweed at the Glebe, but the area at the side of the sports pavilion is being crowded out by nettles. We will undertake some work in autumn to restore a more balanced distribution of plants.

Funds – all this work is funded by our own fund-raising efforts from plant sales & generous donations & support from local residents, organisations and businesses. We would particularly acknowledge the following:

- Killearn Trust
- Killearn Courier
- Edenmill Christmas Trees
- Killearn Co-op for hosting collection tins
- Oakwood Garden Centre
- KCHS Annual Show for hosting our plant stall

We ended the year with a balance of just over £1200, which is sufficient to fund activities at normal levels for the next year, with a reserve for replacing rotten barrels.

It is worth acknowledging here, with great appreciation, that subsequent to the year end CK was nominated as one of the local beneficiaries of Killearn Open Gardens Day, receiving an incredible donation of £1200, which will allow us to bring even more colour to Killearn!

Finally, huge appreciation is due to all our volunteers who keep everything looking fantastic, often at either the cost of backache from lugging water around in periods of drought or the risk of pneumonia from the cold & wet! Thanks to you all – you know who you are!!



### **Cycling Killearn - Sarah Deas**

Cycling Killearn aims to promote cycling for local journeys, pleasure and enhanced wellbeing. The project was initiated in Feb23 by engaging a group of masters students from Strathclyde University to research residents' interest in cycling, their perceived barriers and how these might be overcome. These findings provided a robust base from which we developed our Action Plan. This sets out 5 priorities:

- Establishing an inclusive, supportive cycling community
- Promoting use of community e-bikes
- Organising cycle training, led rides, buddies and route maps
- Arranging Bike maintenance workshops and bike checks
- Championing safe cycling infrastructure

The project is led by 3 volunteers, supported by a wider group of volunteers who help lead rides, provide event support and oversee website development. The project took over responsibility for the community ebikes, funded by Energy Savings Trust. During 2022/3 funding was secured from Cycling Scotland to support training, events, bike equipment and promotional materials. Stirling Council also funded 3 cycling events.

Communications play an important role in seeking to establish an inclusive, supportive cycling community. We are taking a multi-channel approach including events, social media, posters & flyers, Courier and our mailing list. A Cycling Killearn website is in development, due to go live in the autumn.

We have doubled ebike hires over the first 6 months. Three hire options have been introduced (3 day, week or month) in order to offer greater flexibility and usage. An online booking system is now available making the booking easier and automating administrative processes. We have started to develop a bank of resources available for borrowing.

Lack of confidence in cycling on the road was identified by the research as a key barrier. To help address this we have trained 8 ride leaders who will act as Bike Buddies, accompanying people on rides. We plan to also provide training sessions for residents. Local route maps are being promoted.

A lack of maintenance knowledge and skills were identified as key issues. In response, we organised several bike check and maintenance events, in partnership with Recycle-a-Bike, FEL Scotland and Country Cycles. These were all very well attended. We also encourage bike donations (enabling bikes to be refurbished and re-loved) with 17 bikes being donated at our July event.



The lack of safe cycling infrastructure was identified as a major barrier. We will use our voice to champion for safe cycling facilities. We are members of the community advisory group for the Killearn Active Travel project. And, we plan to actively engage with the Local Place Plan process. An early success has been securing Stirling Council's commitment to erect 10 bike racks at the Village Hall and Tennis Club.

An application has been submitted for Cycling Scotland's 'Cycling Friendly Community' silver award - securing this will be a moment for celebration.

### **Fireworks - Graeme Fraser**

The 2022 Fireworks Display was an undoubted success raising a larger sum from advertising and, on the night donations. than in previous years.

Our concerns regarding the move from cash to contactless payments therefore proved not to have the impact we feared. It is nevertheless an ongoing issue for all charity fund raising as on the spot electronic donation collection is expensive and more time consuming than throwing cash into a bucket.

The issues of anti-social behaviour while still occurring were not of undue concern to the police and probably reflected our reducing the reach of our promotional activity. Striking the correct balance between attracting a crowd which will generate sufficient income to cover our costs will still be important in ensuring our continuity.

We have planned to encourage online giving this year hopefully without compromising the on the night collection.

This year's display will cost significantly more than historically as a result of huge inflation in the price of the fireworks themselves. Indeed, next year is likely to bring further pressure in this respect.

Our enthusiastic volunteers have made a huge effort to ensure once again this year that the evening proves to be as enjoyable as ever and deserve our thanks for giving the community the opportunity to have a great experience in a safe predictable and exciting fashion.

We sincerely hope that the ever-increasing regulatory demands and financial pressures will not prejudice our ability to deliver this event to you all next year.

### **Killearn Heritage Trail – Nick Hawkins**



The Trail itself continues to be well used with both locals and visitors studying the boards and looking at the website. The information on paths around the area attracts regular on-line traffic.

The KHT project is promoted through leaflets at visitor attractions and hospitality outlets; talks to local groups; and oral history interviews with elderly residents of Killearn who have lived all, or nearly all, their lives in the village – published in the Courier and then on the website. <https://killearnheritage.org.uk/>

However, the major development in 2022-23 is the initiation of the Killearn Natural History project – building a new section of the KHT website looking at flora and fauna in the area and relating it to local habitats. A strong Steering Group has been assembled made up of experts, specialists and enthusiasts that live in the village, to create a guide to species that are particularly common here, of special interest or have fascinating stories. It is not designed to be a comprehensive field guide – such as those produced by agencies such as the RSPB – but to inform people about our local plants and wildlife and their relationship with our built and natural environment.

As part of this project a number of community events have been or are being organised: a Dawn Chorus Bird Walk, A Bat Watch Night, A Moth Trapping event, a talk by Maramedia on their 'Scotland – the New Wild' BBC TV series and engagement with Killearn Primary School.

### **Killearn Village Hall – Fiona Rennie**

We have had some special moments in the Village Hall this year and a huge thanks is due to all of the Operations Committee - to Ado, Brian, Geraldine, Graeme, Joanna, Mike & Peter for all of their hard work, support and commitment.

We partnered again with Killearn Primary School to support the Advent Windows activities and held a special launch night on 1<sup>st</sup> Dec. with singing of carols, switching on of lights and a Christmas Fair to raise funds for the school.

We completed the works on the hall tower – replacing the roof just in time to let Santa come in at Christmas through the new hatch !

We launched the Killearn Warm Space in January '23 – offering our older / more isolated population - friendly faces and a warm smile at the Village Hall on weekend afternoons – the space became synonymous with scrabble, jigsaw, dominoes, tea drinking activities on a Sunday afternoon through January – April and we're hoping that we can continue the concept this winter too.



We were excited to see the return of a Burns Night Party at the hall – run by the newly formed events group within KCFC and we are hoping to work more with the group to provide further opportunities for events.

We celebrated the coronation of King Charles with a Coronation Tea Party at the hall – bringing together those old enough to remember the Queen’s coronation in 1953 to help them share stories and to create new memories. We were very pleased that the Lord Lieutenant Alan Simpson accepted an invitation to join us at the tea party and Alan brought with him some words from the new King and Queen and stories for those in the hall of his experiences the previous day at Westminster Abbey.

And wrestling came to the Village Hall ... a chance to see a wrestling ring inside the hall and to experience the showmanship and family friendly entertainment.

On the financial side .. Its been a tough year at the Village Hall – and we are looking at another tough year this coming year too ..

After many years running weddings at Killearn Village Hall – the Three Sisters – Nichola, Gillian and Linsey gave us notice last November that they were looking to move away from the wedding business in order to focus on their wholesale cake business. The final Three Sisters’ wedding was held in the Village Hall on 16<sup>th</sup> Sept. and we’d like to record our huge thanks to the Sisters – we know that we’ll still see them popping in / out of Killearn – and want to wish them all of the very best with their growing cake business.

We’re excited now to be working with Sarah and The Kitchen Window to offer weddings at the Village Hall but recognise that it will take time to build back up the wedding pipeline to help to secure future financial sustainability.

As budgeted - our income levels dropped in ‘22-’23 and costs have increased significantly – our year end position at 31 July ’23 showed income of £69k vs costs of £81k and thus a net loss of £12k – and although this was offset by a £10k surplus in the year to end July ’22 – we are conscious that we will have to work hard / differently and will need the support of the community to help sustain activity levels and keep a handle on rising costs through ‘23 – ‘24.

### **Sustainable Killearn- Frank Deas**

Outlines for a revived Sustainable Killearn operating model were launched at the AGM in 2022.

Early in January, Killearn hosted an inter-village discussion with colleagues from Drymen, Aberfoyle, Gartmore, Strathblane, Croftamie, Balfroon and Kippen to discuss mutual climate change and sustainability and how an anticipated Climate Change Hub funded by



Scottish Government might help us tackle them. It is hoped that an announcement on the new Hub will be made in October. In the ensuing months Killearn has been contributing to the bid process and helping develop a local, group West Stirling Settlements (WSS), to facilitate collaboration and knowledge share in this space.

Later in January Sustainable Killearn had a well attended Meet Up in the Village Hall. Twenty eight people with a range of knowledge and experience in sustainability helped develop and refine the operating model.

In April, a SWISH (sustainable clothes swap event) was held in the village hall. A number of volunteers made sure everyone had a great evening and 237 items of clothing found new homes amongst the 50 or so participants.

Within the village there has been limited recent direct activity, with focus on building the networks with other villages (WSS, Neighbourfood West Stirlingshire) and with wider Stirling groups, (Transition Stirling, FEL Scotland)

Additionally, sustainability activities have been carried out by other groups and organisations. Examples include all the achievements of Cycling Killearn and the village work on Active Travel. October will see some inaugural inter village apple pressing events. These will provide a great learning ground for the concept of a virtual orchard for Stirling.

The anticipated focus for the next few months will be the progression of this orchard project and development of a website for Sustainable Killearn. The latter should provide key information for the village and act as a strong foundation for a range of localised sustainability activities in 2024.