



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 2025

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 1921 census is in progress. An original copy of the 1974-75 valuation roll which was donated to the Archive is still awaiting digitisation. The properties in the earlier rolls were listed by owner but in the 1974-75 version the properties are listed by address.

The contents of the book case, which is located in the corridor area between the Garden Room and the Games Room, have been added to over the year. The periodical publications from the Scottish Local History Forum and The British Association for Local History, provided by Drymen and District Local History Society, are added soon after publication. The back copies, and current copies, of the magazines provide a generally available information source. During the year we have also added a number of reference books on Scottish history mainly donated by the Drymen Society.

We have added some replica World War Registration Cards, ration cards and a cook book to the display cabinets together with a Blane Valley Railway mug produced by the Balfron Heritage Group. We recently included in our display the Lorimer Bridge Shield, on loan from Killearn Bridge Club who won it this year. Additional items added to our collection for safe keeping, but not on display, include the Presidents' chain of office from the now disbanded Speakers' Club, a series of postcards of Killearn donated by Carol Hemfrey, and photographs related to the Paul Trust.

As we build up the records we hold locally we are increasingly able to respond to queries relating to past life in Killearn. During the year we received a query from Nancy McClure of Tallahassee, USA, forwarded from the Heritage Group, looking for information on the early life of Rev. Archibald Maclay. He was born in Killearn in 1776 and became a well known minister in USA. We were able to confirm he was born in Killearn and provide some information on his immediate ancestors and his life in Scotland before he emigrated to America with his family. We also provided them with more information about the Killearn properties linked to the family, most of which no longer exist, based on the information now available from the AKA resources. In addition we supplied a copy of the Killearn book. When



confirming receiving the book Nancy said it will be placed in the historic McLay House museum where it will be available to browse or borrow.

One member of the group gave a short talk about the proposed Finnich Toll New Town to Drymen and District Local History Society at their AGM.

AKA again provided a wreath at the War Memorial in memory of Killearn men who died in the two World Wars during the annual Remembrance Service. Members of the group secure the wreaths to the memorial each year after the service. This year it has again been necessary to re-secured some the wreaths on more than one occasion following damage by strong winds.

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.

Peter Smith, AKA Convenor

Colourful Killearn (including Killearn Wildflower Group) - Mike Gray

The Scottish weather is always going to throw challenges in the way of gardeners and this year was certainly no exception. However, there is a plant for every condition and situation – this year it has been lobelia! Appreciative comments from residents on the results of our labours has been gratifying and made it all worthwhile.

Looking at our activities in more detail:

Containers – half-barrels large and small, wall-top troughs plus larger planters have been bursting with flowers! Daffodils, pansies and primula were followed by non-stop (literally!) red and white begonias, lobelia and bacopa, some liking the conditions better than others but all performing with a bit of encouragement. Repeated damage by cars on the planters at the surgery car park has forced us to rearrange the distribution slightly, leaving a gap for unofficial egress direct onto Station Road. This seems to have fixed the problem.

Work parties – during the year, in addition to barrels and troughs, we have been working on...

...The War Memorial – the pollinator friendly plants have mostly established well, despite being regularly browsed by deer. Snowdrops for next spring have been added to the fenceline and extra shrubs are slowly being planted around the Memorial itself, gradually being extended along the access path. In the meantime gaps were again filled with red & white begonias.



Christmas Tree – generously donated again by Edenmill Christmas trees, put up by our volunteers and powered from the Kirk. Another beautiful tree!

Paul Memorial Bed – situated on Kirk land, beside the Village Hall kitchen steps (although not strictly part of our “estate”), we have done a fair bit of remedial work, removing brambles, thinning/shaping shrubs and cutting back rampant crocosmia. An embedded wasp nest did cause some consternation!

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

Donations from individual residents and supporters

Killearn Trust

Edenmill Christmas Trees

Killearn Co-op for hosting collection tins

KCHS Annual Show for hosting our plant stall

We ended the year with a balance of £1350, which is sufficient to fund activities at normal levels for at least the next year, with a reserve for completing replacing rotten barrels and further developing the War Memorial.

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. Our five priorities are:

- 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 community e-bikes are regularly used with three day and one week hires proving most popular. Availability is generally good; residents are encouraged to check availability and book online. The bikes are maintained by Country Cycles with the hire fee covering these costs.

Lack of confidence in cycling on the road is a key barrier so we have trained eight ride leaders who act as Bike Buddies, accompanying people on rides. There is capacity to undertake more



rides, so residents are encouraged to complete the online request form. A buddy will then be in touch.

We organised several Dr Bike events in partnership with Recycle-a-Bike. Bike checks proved very popular with a constant flow of people dropping in to have their bikes inspected and minor repairs undertaken. Bike maintenance classes were also well received. We are keen to encourage bike donations (enabling bikes to be refurbished and re-loved) and were delighted to exceed our 100 target, with 131 bikes having been donated to date. We were invited to join Recycle-a-bike's 20th Anniversary celebrations, a very special occasion celebrating an impressive achievement; the charity has built over 30,000 recycled bikes.

We were successful in securing additional funding from Cycling Scotland to erect a Cycling Killearn information panel outside the village hall. This was designed to complement the Heritage Trail panels and provides information on local routes. It also helps raise awareness of Cycling Killearn, along with other promotional activities including a stall at Killearn Horticultural Show, flyers, articles, website (www.cycling-killearn.org) and social media (@CyclingKillearn).

The lack of safe cycling infrastructure is a major barrier. Cycling Killearn is therefore working with the Killearn Paths Group, seeking to develop the local active travel infrastructure. Unfortunately, limited progress has been made over the last year due to changes in the funding system (see www.killearnactivetravel.blog). So, we have focused our efforts on building relationships with neighbouring villages' paths groups hoping that together we can achieve greater influence.

The Cycling Killearn project is led by 3 volunteers (Beth Lang, Carol Murray & Sarah Deas) supported by a wider group of volunteers who help lead rides, provide event support and oversee website development.

Fireworks - Graeme Fraser

The 2024 display took place on the 3d of November 2024. This was a Sunday evening event for the first time in recent years. The cost of having the display on a Saturday is approximately twice that of a Sunday or Friday evening. In addition, it has been the subject of over 100% inflation since 2023. This is a primary reason for choosing the Sunday.

The preparation work on a Saturday allows us to take advantage of a day when particularly our younger volunteers don't have work commitments. This is especially important as the manual effort in the building of the bonfire is quite demanding.

The management of crowd numbers has been given high priority recently as we try to strike a balance between getting the turnout we require to remain financially viable and not entering territory where crowd control becomes a matter of concern.



We have reduced the geographical scope of our promotion concentrating on Killearn, Balfron, Drymen and Strathblane where our promotional brochure is distributed by local youth organisations. We make cash donations to each of them in return for their providing this service. The management of social media is also crucial to not overextending our reach, but this can understandably be challenging.

For the first time in 2025 we are proposing making use of a short temporary closure authority we have for Station Road. We have had concerns that spectator safety is compromised by traffic passing the top section of the road and anticipate that we will implement this change in November.

The Sunday option was very successful last year and indeed we raised more from our cash collection than in any previous occasion. We would therefore like to thank all who made donations from the very small to the extremely generous. We are also trying to introduce practical means by which spectators can donate using tap and pay technology as we become a more cashless society.

The financial realities as costs have increased will become more key to the decisions on whether to continue with this long-standing village activity. Please therefore stress with friends and family how important your donations will be to the continuation of this widely enjoyed evening of spectacle.

Lastly thankyou to all our volunteers who so willingly give their time to make it possible for the Fireworks Display to be enjoyed by the several thousand folks who attend every year.

Killearn Courier – Peter Wilks

The Courier has had another successful year, all three editions making a profit from advertising and extra sales, allowing the group to make small charitable donations. This year we have supported two local enterprises, the Thursday Club and the Natural History Project. We have had a few changes to the group: Brenda Pell has retired completely from the group and her contribution will be greatly missed. Nancy Bailey has decided to pass the copy editing of all the articles to another group member, Christine Howe. We would thank Nancy for the excellent work in keeping us all to the style guide and ensuring that the Courier has a remarkably small number of typos. Our editor, Ian Dickie, has had to move to Edinburgh for family reasons, but will continue editing the magazine remotely. Robert Hancock has joined as our cub and is already making an impact. We continue to get good reports from both our readers and our advertisers.

Killearn Heritage Trail – Nick Hawkins

The Heritage Trail's natural history project, 'Wild About Killearn', culminated and was launched in April this year.



Members of the project team researched and compiled commentaries on 150 different species that are either of special interest or fairly common in our area. These were categorised into five different, local habitats: Garden, Woodland, Farmland, Moorland and Waterside and are illustrated by beautiful graphic representations – produced by our web developer, Martin Winter. All this content (except the Woodland habitat which is still work-in-progress) is available on the KHT website; <https://killearnheritage.org.uk/habitats/> The website is designed as a useful reference and information point for the village, its residents and visitors and has already been enjoyed by Killearn Primary School pupils. The site was launched at an Open Day in the Village Hall at the end of April 2025 followed, the next evening, by a showing of Maramedia's film "Wildheart" and a discussion of topical natural history subjects.

Community engagement activities continue:

- Members of the group took each class from the Killearn Primary School on a nature walk to one of the five habitats
- Nigel Pope led another 'Dawn Chorus Bird Walk', down on the West Highland Way
- Martin Culshaw ran a third moth-trapping and identification session
- Robert Dunn and Chris Bell, are leading Natural History Photography Workshops.

The Killearn Heritage Trail and 'Wild About Killearn' are most grateful to the Killearn Courier for funding its website development and – together with the Killearn Beer Festival and the Killearn Horticultural Society – the project launch.

Killearn Village Hall – Fiona Rennie

Control of finances and trying to move towards a balanced budget remain a sharp focus for us all at the Village Hall – our deficit this year was just over £10,000 – [income approx. £73,00 and costs approx. £83,000] but this was inline with budget and an improvement on last year – with thanks to all who have supported us. Wedding bookings continue to improve and we are optimistic about the growth and are budgeting this year for further reduction in the deficit to approx. £6,700.

Income from activities

We were pleased to have 13 weddings in the hall in the year to 31-Jul-25 and hoping for at least a couple more in this coming year. These bookings help to provide a strong base for the finances. We are working hard on promoting weddings and working with Sarah and the team at Kitchen Window to develop our partnership to help support weddings when customers choose that option. The Kitchen Window brand is growing and we're really pleased to see a wider scope of events and functions happening in the hall. We've also boosted our own social media presence for weddings and are seeing positive results from that.



It is our regular customers and the stream of kids' parties and weekend functions that are at the core of hall activities and huge thanks to all of you who continue to support us – either by running classes / events or by coming along to take part. Thanks to Monday Club, Yasmin – Dancercise, Lynda – dancing, Sarah-yoga, Sue, Linda- Pilates, Ben, Sue and Anne and their badminton friends, Cubs & Scouts, Line Dancing, Sonic Den, the Foot Clinic and Ear Clinic, Town Break, the Home Education Hub, Stirling Carers, Little Buds Music, Dancing with Julie, Mother Nurture, Trad Music, Bridge Club and others ... there is something for everyone we hope.

Events

In addition to our regular hall activities – we're always excited to be hosting other local community events.

- Thanks again to the staff and children at Killearn Primary School for their support for the Advent Window – it is becoming a lovely pre-Christmas activity with the opening night carols and fundraising.
- The Country Market has established more of a following and big thanks to Megan who works very hard with local stall holders to bring a variety of offerings.
- With thanks to the CoOp and the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund - we were pleased to offer again the 'Warm Space' in the Garden Room – supported by a happy band of volunteers to serve tea and home-made cakes – its always lovely to see the spirits rise on a Sunday afternoon as regulars and occasional visitors come and enjoy some company. It is always a warm and very friendly space and we're looking to grow the reach this year.
- The Spring Tea Party is now becoming an annual event and a hugely rewarding day for volunteers and over 100 attendees alike and thanks to all of our local businesses who donated to the prize draw. We were excited to get a double page spread in the Stirling Observer too with the photos reflecting the smiles from the day.
- Annual events including the Horti Show and the Fireworks also help to bring the community to the hall and to create that community experience.

Managing Costs

Our costs are still a challenge but we've focused on monitoring gas / electricity usage and looking at ways in which we can be more efficient in keeping the hall warm when needed ! We received a grant from Stirling Council which funded blinds for the Garden Room – helping to keep the heat in in the colder weather ! We've used local suppliers to help us with repairs during the year – repairing leaks and water damage and trying harder to keep the work within the community.

We've also been applying for funding to try and landscape the grounds at the front of the garden room – looking out to Loch Lomond and the hills beyond. We weren't successful with initial attempts – but are continuing to look at options as there is no doubt that the area could be more welcoming and could become more of a community space.



Thanks to all of the team

And all of this couldn't / wouldn't happen without a huge effort from the KVH Operations Committee – very heartfelt thanks to Ado, Brian, Geraldine, Graeme, Iain, Joanna, Mike & Peter for all of their hard work, support and commitment. We're also very grateful to Kate Bowie and Paul Searle who are working with us to help support our wedding promotions through social media and the website.

200th anniversary

And finally – the hall will be celebrating its 200th birthday in 2026 and we're looking forwarding to celebrating the occasion – with plans being discussed and ideas very welcome.

Paths Group

A huge thank you to the Paths Group volunteers for helping provide accessible and enjoyable routes around the village, whilst preserving the environment and being considerate of residents and landowners.

Team: We really appreciate the immense efforts from Mike Gray and Caroline Carrick who have now chosen to step back. Welcome to those volunteers who joined us, many of whom are listed below. Our new group members have already made a big impact between them and include: Craig Forbes (Treasurer), Russell Cottle (Maintenance Lead) and Marie-Claire Parker (Secretary).

Maintenance: Activities earlier in the year included path border clearing and removal of Himalayan Balsam. With the permission of the landowner, sympathetic remedial works were undertaken in May to the core Access Path between 69 and 71 Main St. Thanks to support from the private landowners, Scottish Water, MacColl and Stokes and KCFC, this popular route is now firm under foot as we go into winter. Particular thanks are due to the volunteers who's contributions made it all possible: Peter, Patrick, Craig, Stephen, Fiona, Russell, Barry, Sarah, Stuart, Amanda, Euan, Craig, Tim, Graeme, Nick, Mark, Bob, Euan and Frank.

Projects: Considerable effort went into planning, stakeholder engagement, communications and acquisition of preliminary funding for the proposed path routes from Killearn to Balfron and to the new housing development. Unfortunately, recent developments at local authority level mean funding for further activities remains unclear and the team continues to lobby Stirling Council in collaboration with the Paths Groups in surrounding villages.

Sustainable Killearn - Frank Deas

The last year has seen steady activity both locally within the village and collaboratively with our neighbouring villages. There has also been strong activity from other parts of KCFC which contributes to the overall vision of a more Sustainable Killearn.



Within the village, Jane Owens, Catherine O'halloran and Kim Gallagher have organised regular monthly meetings in the Garden Room of the Village Hall. The "Wee Green Social" events covered a range of sustainability topics. Speakers have included Recycle4Stirling, Transition Stirling, the Climate Reality Project and Home Energy Scotland. The audience have the chance to get an expert overview of a key topic before an informal Q and A session.

While we were unsuccessful in bidding for a grant from the Climate Engagement Fund, energy remained a priority for the multi village collaboration. We were fortunate to get support from the University of Strathclyde to conduct an online survey across the villages testing residents understanding of Energy Retrofit and any perceived barriers and concerns. The final report provided a richer understanding of the potential opportunities for work on energy and will be helpful in attracting future funding.

The collaboration between the villages is now formalised through the creation of South West Stirling Climate Action Network (SWScan). This was given approval to be a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) by OSCR. Membership initially focused on key organisations in the respective villages. Currently the community councils in Strathblane, Killearn, Balfron, Buchlyvie, Kippen and Drymen are all members. KCFC is a member as are the development trusts in Drymen, Strathblane and Fintry. The main catchment of the network will be the learning community based around Balfron High School and its associated feeder Primary Schools. It is anticipated that the Eco club at the High School will be part of the network. Recently the considerable focus has been on the drafting of a climate action orientated Local Place Plan on behalf of the six member community councils.

In other areas of KCFC; the work on the Natural Heritage Trail (and Wild About Killearn and associated moth trapping and dawn chorus events) has been important in promoting ecological sustainability, while the Paths Group and Cycling Killearn have made progress on Active Travel though networking with the paths groups in neighbouring villages.

Woodland Cemetery – Peter Wilks

The state of the green oak seats has been causing some concern and the group asked a local expert to assess them. His report stated that the deterioration was due to too much sapwood being included when the tree was planked. He recommended that as it was cosmetic and did not undermine the integrity of the seats that no action was the best solution as treating them with oil or a preservative would not improve the situation. Thanks to pushing by Frank Deas, it is likely that Stirling Council will allow the rather ugly fence to be replaced by a beech hedge. The group's website page continues to be the first port of call for people searching for a green burial and enquiries have to be redirected to Stirling Council.