



Brighten up Kirkconnel Beautiful Scotland 2024



Horticulture :

October 2023 : Winter Bedding displays



October 2023 : Daffodil planting with the ARC Members



February 2024 :

The Large bed at the Car Park was in need of an overdue face lift. All the Shrubs were dug out & re-planted at the War Memorial garden. A mixture of Pollinating Herbaceous Shrubs will be Planted in the Spring.



April 2024 : Spring Flower Displays



March 2024 :

We were surprised & delighted to find out we had been awarded a “Caley Award” from the Royal Horticultural Society for our contribution to gardening & horticulture in Scotland. Group members attended the Ceremony at the Botanic Garden on 19th March.



April 2024 :Preparing areas at Mavisbank Park for sowing Wildflower Seeds.



April 2024 :

There was an abandoned piece of ground adjacent to the Miners Memorial garden built on a slope. We decided to try & brighten up this neglected piece of ground by firstly raking up all the old twigs & branches that had fallen from the Trees & planting the Nasturtium seeds collected from last Years crop followed by a covering of our re-cycled Compost. This project is a totally re-cycled one & the cost was zero.



April 2024 :

We cleared the large flowered bed at the Main Street car a few Months ago to enable us to give the bed a complete face lift. A variety of sustainable pollinating shrubs was selected such as Penstemon, Salvia, Verbascum, Echinops, Campanula. These shrubs will bring a lovely Variety of colour as well as attracting our wildlife.



May 2024 :

War Memorial : We replenished the Bark Mulch on the Herbaceous beds surrounding the War Memorial garden, this took 35 bags to complete but has given the garden a whole new fresh look.



May 2024:

We supplied the P3 Class at Kelloholm Primary School with a variety of Plants for growing in their Polytunnel & some of our group members Went along to assist planting them.



May 2024 :

This Year marks the groups 20th Anniversary. To commemorate this a Tree Sorbus (Aria - Lutescens) was planted at Polveoch White. Attractive blooms in Spring will be succeeded by Red berries in Autumn will be appreciated by many species of garden birds. Jessie Anderson & Gary Hughes as two of the groups founder members had the honour of planting it.



May 2024 :



Up until 2022 we had 3 tiered ring planters at Polveoch, there were replaced last Year with new Wooden boxes. This Year we decided to bring these out of retirement & fit them into our largest Containers in that area to give these containers added height & a better visual impact.

May 2024:

The War Memorial garden is planted with sustainable Shrubs which are well established these were initially planted in 2017 with occasional replacements when required. at present these are looking stunning just an abundance of various colours.



May 2024 :

The Brownie group who have already made Their own re-cycled Compost from last Years Crop it was now time to plant up their Containers. Pollinating annuals such as Cosmos, Calandula & Echiums were grown from seed & planted in their Containers.



June 2024 :

Our annual bedding plant order was supplied as always from Heathhall Garden Centre, Dumfries. Over the Years we have built up a great working relationship with them & always receive a very generous 20% discount on our order, this Years Order amounted to £2,962.48 with £592.49 Discount received. Buying our plants in a ready to plant size reduces our Carbon footprint.



September 2023:

The Brownie group starting the Re-cycling process with the finished annual bedding Plants, this Compost will be used in their Containers they fill each Year within Mavisbank Park.



February 2024 :

The Brownie group making Bird Feeders.
These were made from the inside of label
Rolls (Supplied by a local Manufacturer)
They were then coated in Peanut butter &
The seed rolled over them. The feeders were
Then hung on the Trees at Mavisbank Park.



March 2024 :

Our annual Springcleanscotland event took place on Saturday 16th March. This as always was organized By our group & the Community Council.
The event was a huge success & very well supported by members of the Community along with the Brownie Rainbow & the Girl guide groups who brought along their Parents. Refreshments afterwards were provided By the Community Council. Over 40 bags of Litter were collected.



April 2024 :

The Brownie group riddling their Compost that they started making last Autumn from the annual bedding plants. This Compost gets used in the containers they plant up at Mavisbank park. This always serves as a good educational project as it allows them to learn about the full cycle of making your own Compost.



May 2024 : A local resident who runs a Liv-Has given us unlimited access to Organic horse manure. We have applied a layer of this To all our Flower containers followed by a top Up of Peat Free Compost, this form of natural Feeding is full of vital nutrients such as Nitrogen, Phosphorus & Potassium which the Plants will benefit from.

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Local Identity :

Kirkconnel is an Ex Mining Village in the Upper Nithsdale area of Dumfries & Galloway. with a population of 700. The neighbouring Village Kelloholm has a population of 1500 although Practically joined Kelloholm is technically a separate Village.

History :

The name Kirkconnel comes from the Church of Kirkconnel. The Church site is one of the oldest In Southern Scotland with archaeological remains dating to the 9th Century.

The early Church & settlement were situated at the foot of the Kirkland hill.

A Celtic cross erected in 1880 by the Duke of Buccleuch marks the burial place of St Conal.

Mining :

Kirkconnel had several Colliery's in the area, Fauldhead situated in the Village was the largest During its peak Years it employed over 1000 men. A separate brickworks also worked within Fauldhead today these bricks are very difficult to find.

Fauldhead closed in 1968 & after this the population started to dwindle with many families Re-locating south to find employment at other Colliery's during Fauldheads peak Years the Population between the two Villages stood around 6000.

Heritage :

We as a group in conjunction with the Community Council continue to ensure our Mining Heritage is not forgotten.

The Miners Memorial was erected in 1984 by Dumfries & Galloway Council & has all the names Of all the local Miners who tragically lost their lives due to accidents at the various Colliery's

We take full responsibility for the upkeep & maintenance of the surrounding garden.

In 2017 we received funding to get an interpretation board made highlighting the history of Fauldhead & the base is made from actual bricks made there.



The Development trust got hand made pit bogies made bearing the names of the local Colliery's these are situated at various locations throughout the Village which we fill with Flowers each Year.



Local Identity :

The Poet Alexander Anderson (1845-1909) who's most famous one was "Cuddle doon" was born in Kirkconnel & is buried in St Conals Churchyard. A memorial garden is situated opposite St Conals Church. We got an Interpretation board made highlighting his life which is Erected at the garden entrance. The garden is maintained solely by local Resident Mrs Jessie Anderson .



Kirkconnel Parish Heritage Society :

The Society was founded in 1997 & over the Years has gone from strength to strength. Inside they have an excellent database of catalogued photo albums & various pieces of Memorabilia all relating to our Mining Heritage.

The Society also publish a Monthly Paper The KKS News which Prints all the Monthly activities relating to our Community.

They also have a Community Minibus which runs day trips at Various times throughout the Year, this bus can also be hired out.

Over the last few months the Society Committee have replaced all The Interpretation boards which highlight our Heritage & the various Walks available.



Community :

September 2023 : We were very proud to have won the Community Involvement Trophy. We took along the Trophy to show all the Community groups who played a part in helping us achieve this accolade.



The ARC Members pictured with the Community Involvement Trophy



Jessie Anderson one of our former group Members
Now solely maintains the Alexander Anderson Memorial
Garden. Jessie buys in Plug Plants & grows the rest from
Seed & the garden is an absolute credit to her.
Jessie popped along to get her picture taken with the
Community Involvement Trophy.



The Brownie group with the Trophy & Certificate

November 2023 :



Showcasing our Awards & Certificates
We won in 2023 in the Heritage Society
Window for the Community to enjoy.

November 2023 :

The annual Christmas lights switch on organized by the Community Council is always a very Well supported event. All young Children in the Village receive a free gift from Santa & get free Rides on the Fairground. This event also gives the various Community groups a chance to make Some much needed funding with a variety of stalls for their individual causes. We had a Tombola stall & raised £266.



MAY 2024 :

A member of the Community (who wishes to remain anonymous) made & donated a Wooden Train to us who we have named "Percy" this is a welcome addition to our floral containers. Our previous Train (Thomas) came to the end of his life in 2022 & was greatly missed especially by the kids who will now be delighted by the arrival of Percy.



(May 2024)



(June 2024)

May 2024 :

The Community Council in conjunction with Dumfries & Galloway Council got our Best Small Village signs updated.



May 2024:

A local resident hand made this of our Group members celebrating our success At last Years Beautiful Scotland Competition This was donated to the Heritage Society.



Kirkconnel is a very close knit Community & has a real sense of Community spirit.
We as a group are a very Community minded group & actively involve all sectors of the Community in our activities.
(A selection of images highlighting this over the past Year)



Social Media :

We have a Facebook page which attracts a large interest & has nearly 1000 followers. This page also attracts a huge Interest from people who Were brought up in the Village & have re-located elsewhere who really love To see the changes we have Made to the visual appearance of the Village.

**Funding & Support :**

Over the last Year we have received the following funding :

£300—Mrs M Leary

£250—Community Council

£2,500—Upper Nithsdale Community Trust

Future Plans :

A selection of Trees was gifted from Dumfries Prison
These will be planted by the Pupils at the Primary School
In the Autumn.

The Primary School are currently getting raised beds erected in the School grounds
Next Year we will be assisting them growing Vegetables.