



Inspiring Innellan Portfolio

Coastal Village

Beautiful Scotland 2021



Introduction

The coastal village of Innellan lies four miles south of Dunoon on the Cowal Peninsula. It stretches for two and a half miles along the shore and has varied terrain over two shorter 'tiers' that head inland.

From an early huddle of farms high on the hillside to a thriving Victorian village built for rich Glasgow merchants, through the "Doon the Watter" and later the American years, Innellan's history is diverse and interesting. Combined with the geographical features that give Innellan its topographical charm and the relatively sheltered location on the Clyde coast, the current residents oversee the wealthy heritage we proudly own today.

The focus for our Beautiful Scotland entry this year will take in some of the main areas we have been concerned with since our original entry in 2018 and will give an insight into the variation of landscapes which makes up Innellan.

Despite inevitable difficulties due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, Inspiring Innellan has continued to thrive and build on previous notable successes.

New areas have been highlighted for special attention, but not at the expense of previous areas, which continue to receive the maintenance required.

Large numbers of volunteers working together have been replaced by smaller work parties and individual efforts. Dog walkers pick up litter, people weed outside their garden walls and some donate time and money so that the sum of all these smaller efforts is magnified.

Now that the Sunday work parties are up and running again there are always many volunteers including those offering to supply soup, sandwiches and pancakes to feed the hungry which in turn encourages volunteers to return.

Inspiring Innellan's Constitution sets out the principles which guide our operations and our dedicated team continues to generate interesting ideas which we are desperate to put into practice when conditions allow. As a community, Innellan is second to none and is raring to go back to the variety of social events which ran so successfully in the past – and will do so again!

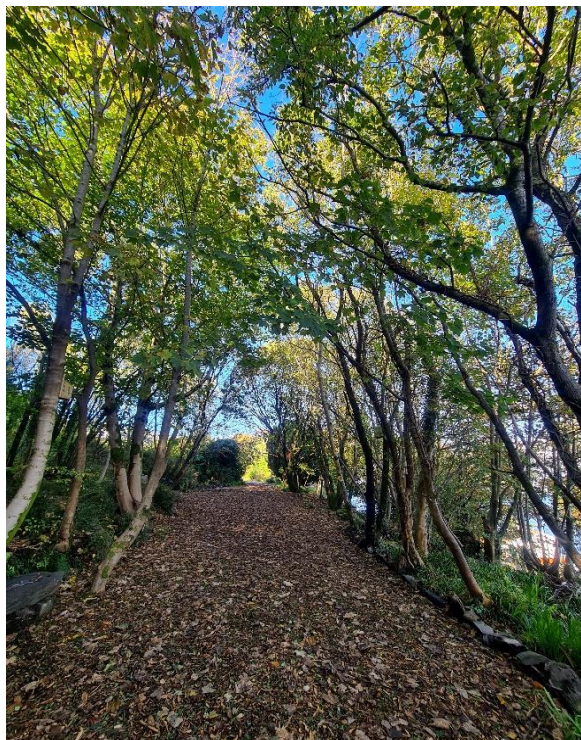


Inspiring
Innellan
through the
seasons



Horticulture

In July 2020 Inspiring Innellan lost our 'head gardener', Dick Holgate, to Motor Neuron Disease. This was a devastating blow to the group as he was always cheerful, very knowledgeable, caring and friendly. He worked enthusiastically to help make Inspiring Innellan the great group it is today. Hopefully, he is now looking down with approval at our efforts to ensure his legacy continues.



Innellan is a lovely village with its appeal in its natural beauty rather than the 'municipal park' look. The overriding aim of Inspiring Innellan's horticultural endeavours is to keep the natural look through careful, though sometimes radical, tidying and to maintain a bright, colourful aspect to the village. The length and height of the village can make this a daunting task. By focussing on new areas while maintaining those which have already been 'improved' it is hoped that in time the whole village will benefit from our efforts.

The only thing we really aim to eradicate is Japanese Knotweed and this is being done with the help of a knowledgeable volunteer who does the work and pays for any chemicals involved. We do not resort to chemical use unless absolutely necessary. Japanese Knotweed is deemed to be one such necessity. Success is apparent at the Yellow Chipped Road and Cluniter and these areas will be monitored to ensure successful eradication.



New, larger planters have been put in position along the length of the Shore Road at the suggestion of our 2019 judges. These give more visual impact when bright, cheery flowers such as corn marigold, calendula and nasturtiums are at their height. Colour throughout the year is the aim but devastating winds and howling rain can put paid to that! Throughout 2020 the amazing sight of some of the colourful planters cheered up many!



Numerous planters are maintained along the two and a half miles of the Shore Road. Several volunteers have come forward to plant up and maintain those near their homes, greatly appreciated especially during dry spells. The aim for the planters is to have year-round interest with a mixture of perennial plants, bulbs and bedding plants for colour. Plants in all areas are chosen for their wildlife appeal too so that we avoid those with double flowers or which are of dubious interest to pollinators.



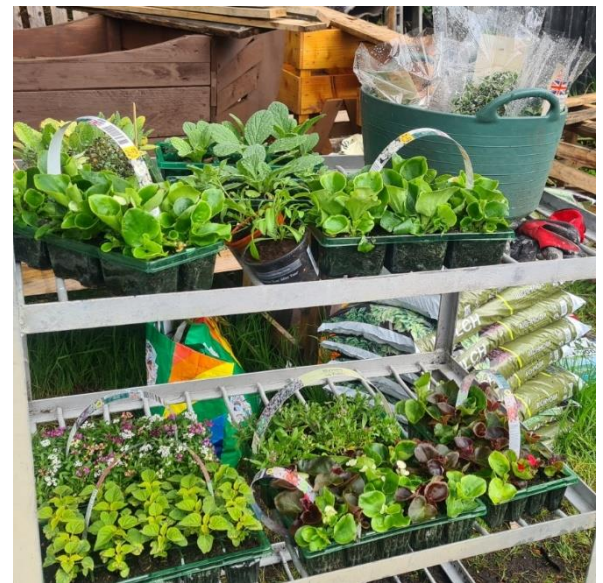


Maintaining areas such as Cluniter is really the remit of Argyll and Bute Council but, in reality, Inspiring Innellan has taken over the task to ensure that visitors and locals alike enjoy a well-maintained environment.

Inspiring Innellan has spent a few hundred pounds on new plants in 2021. As the vast majority are perennials this is seen as an investment for the future as less time and effort will be needed in planting each year. Only plants from reliable sources are used with the main suppliers being The Tree Shop near Inveraray and Cardwell Nursery at Lunderston Bay. Both suppliers are recommended in the excellent book 'Garden Plants for Scotland' by Cox and Curtis-Machin. Many more plants have been brought on from seed this year. This



can be time consuming but gives a variety of plants at affordable prices. Plug plants are sourced from reliable on-line companies as bedding is seen as necessary for additional colour. Morrisons supermarket also benefits from the buying compulsion of some of Inspiring Innellan's volunteers! We are experimenting with peat-free compost but the jury is still out on that one, we will review this at the end of the growing season.



A large variety of wild flowers has been grown from seed. These include foxgloves, scabious, teasel, wild carrot, trefoil, ox-eye daisy, viper's bugloss and much more. Seed is mainly sourced from Scotia Seeds which we have found to be reliable in the past. Several small pollinating areas have now been established and hopefully self-seeding will be evident in years to come. Since we cleared one area in particular near the Yellow Chipped Road, foxgloves have become very abundant and put on a wonderful display.

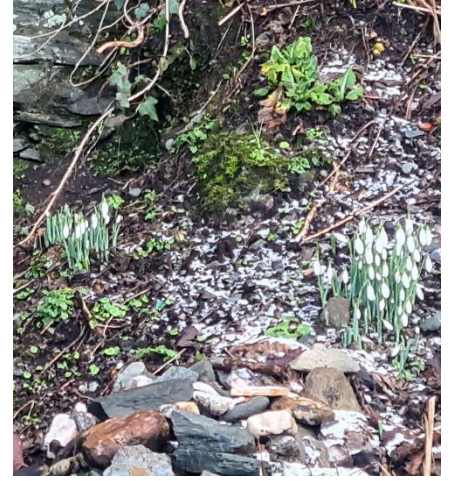


Native trees, hedging plants and heathers have also been bought in 2020 and 2021 for planting mainly at the Yellow Chipped Road. These include Hazel, Rowan and Crab Apple, more than a few heathers and approx thirty each of hawthorn and dog rose bushes. All appear to be growing well and will replace some of the overgrown vegetation which has had to be removed.

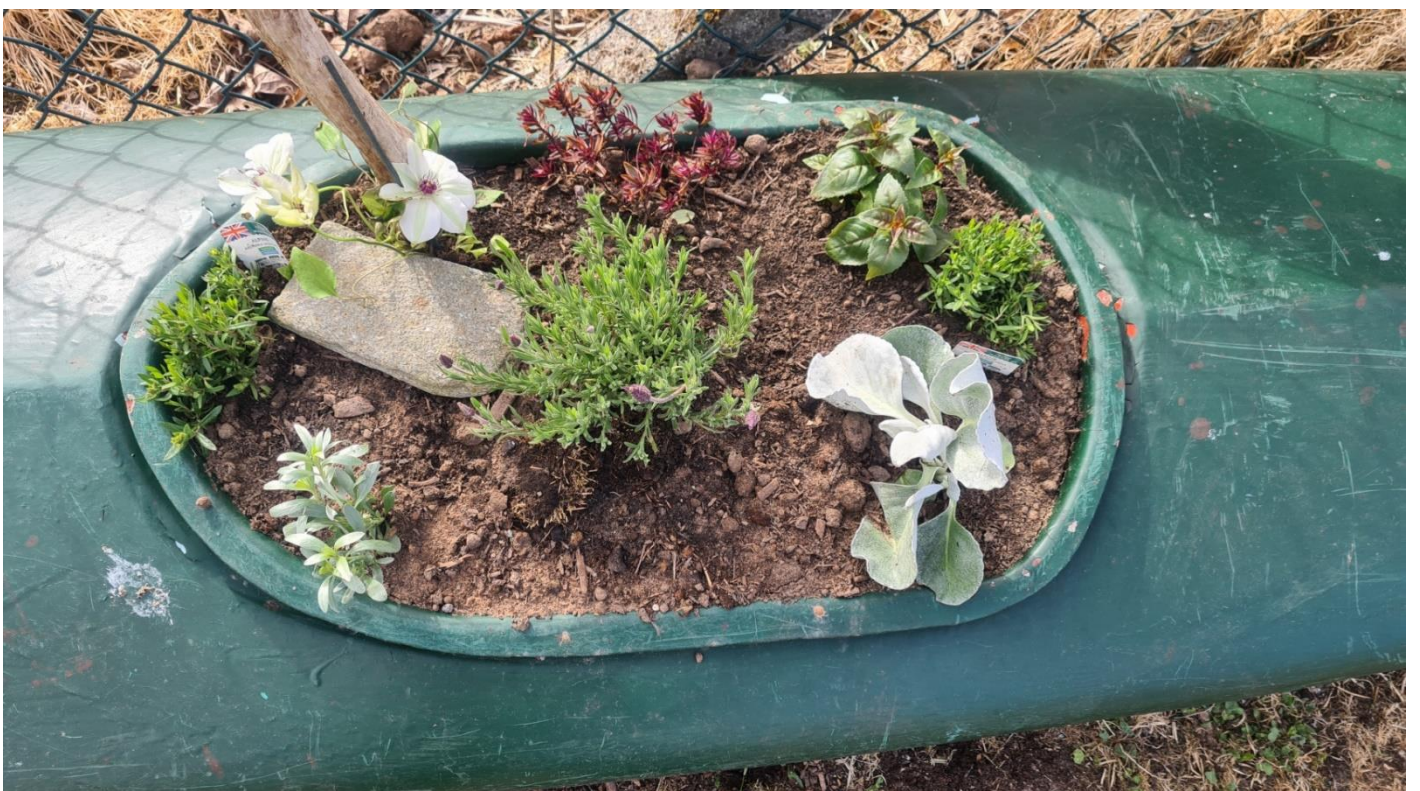




Many bulbs have been planted around the village over the years Inspiring Innellan has taken part in Beautiful Scotland. Each year sees more spring colour when the crocuses, snowdrops, bluebells and daffodils come into bloom. This autumn we are planning buying daffodils in greater quantities and encouraging villagers to plant them outside their homes so that next spring will see Innellan turning yellow!

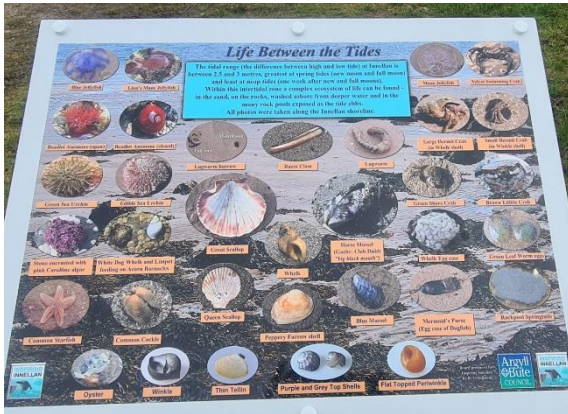


To summarise, our stance on horticulture is to remove/prune unsightly vegetation and replace as necessary with more suitable items for sustainability and wildlife needs. We will continue to source plants carefully and care for them while they are establishing by feeding and pruning as necessary. A wide range of plants will be planted to suit the dozen or so sites we are presently trying to improve in the hope that the year-round interest will be of benefit to the villagers of Innellan and also the all-important wildlife which abounds locally.

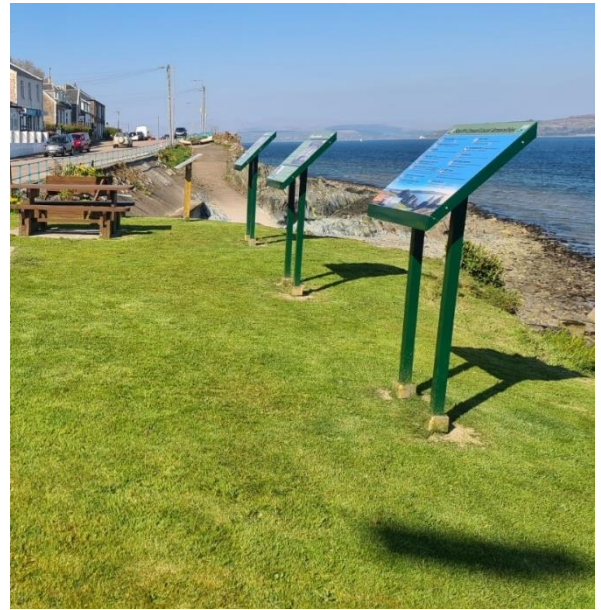


Environmental responsibility

A grant from HIE and the co-operation of South Cowal Community Council and Toward Sailing Club helped Inspiring Innellan erect new information signs at the Village Green. These signs highlight some of the interesting features of Innellan, with further information on view around the Village Hall and Secret Bay. More signs are planned for the Yellow Chipped Road so that Innellan's history is clearly set out.



Similarly, there are new signs highlighting such topics as Seashore Life, Birds of the Shore, Seals and Shells at various points of the shore. These were bought with the help of a grant from Argyll and Bute Council and form part of a nature trail which will be developed further in the near future.



An interesting stone bench is tucked away at the Velvet Path high up near to where the village originated. It was badly in need of a good clean so last year, Scarlett, our youngest volunteer, persuaded her mother to help clean the bench so that walkers could have somewhere to rest.



The seasonal community art project, The Vikings is a great local attraction and provides an interesting insight into another phase of Innellan's history. There is evidence that Vikings came to Innellan. The last Viking battle on Scottish soil was fought at Largs, diagonally across the Clyde from Innellan!

Living in an area which boasts red squirrels, seals, hedgehogs, otters, roe deer and pine martens brings about a responsibility towards the natural environment. The Yellow Chipped Road is now being referred to by some as Innellan's Nature Reserve as it is there where our efforts to help wildlife are most evident.



By recycling pallets, a bug hotel was constructed then filled with an array of twigs, stones, wood etc by local children. We'll be watching to see who checks in to our 'des res'!



Our planting policy is that it should be pollinator friendly whether the plants are in pots or in the ground. Wildflowers are now coming back annually and in 2021 we have planted various sizes of plots where nature can 'do her thing' with a little help from us.



The wildlife friendly Yard has a quiet, secluded spot specifically planted with wildlife in mind. Here we have seen mining bees, treecreepers, wrens, bullfinches and robins. Birds are nestling in the ivy too.



Innellan is a tidy village on the whole with no major vandalism or graffiti issues. Dog walkers are good at picking up litter so that beaches and streets are basically clean. Poo bags are placed at a couple of spots and posters have been designed and put up to encourage everyone to keep Innellan tidy. Recycling is encouraged and many of our raised beds are made of recycled wood from donated pallets and roofing tile crates handed in regularly to the Yard. We have a second recycled shed in the yard now as well as our composting bins which are made of recycled wood. We make and use our own compost and leaf mould and are given donations of horse manure whenever we want it. Water butts are in use at Cluniter and in the Yard. Even chippings are recycled as we receive regular donations of wood chips from a local tree surgeon. Great for topping up the Yellow Chipped Road!



Paint bought with donations is helping to brighten the Shore Road. The railings are cleaned, undercoated and painted in 'Innellan Blue', a colour which was once a favourite with the Victorians – a suitable choice for an old Victorian village.

Community participation

The Coronavirus Pandemic had a devastating effect on the planned activities for 2020. A long list of activities had to be cancelled when lockdown hit. It is still not clear when we will be able to fully start up again but in the meantime we are adhering to guidelines with regard to any events held.



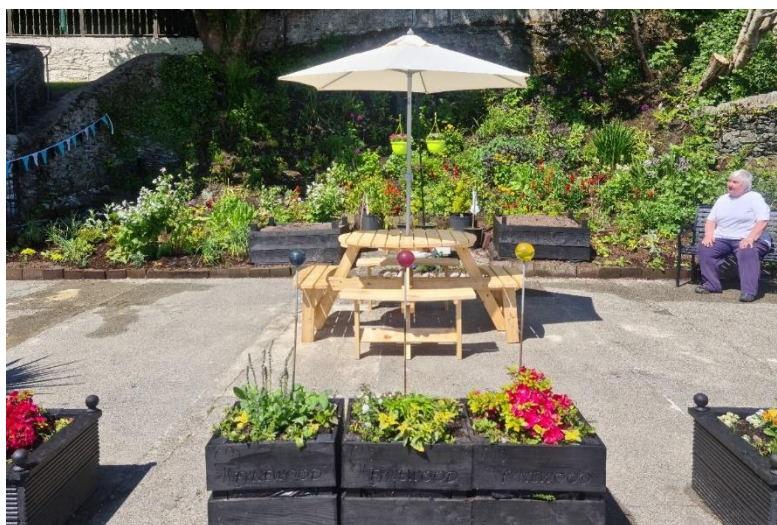
At the beginning of 2020 we helped with the Bruan Christmas Lights when they raised money for Barbara's Wildlife Rescue. We did the same in Dec 2020 when the money raised was given to Inspiring Innellan.



We worked with the Village Hall in both 2019 and 2020 when we organized the Christmas Lights which brightened up the village.

At the end of May a picnic bench and table was unveiled at the Slippery Slope in memory of our much loved 'Head Gardener', Dick Holgate. This was donated by his family who watched while Scarlett, our youngest volunteer and great buddy of Dick, planted a weeping cherry tree in his honour. Other youngsters planted a second tree which is in memory of all those who were affected by the Covid Pandemic.

At the same time a Captain Tom Rose was placed at the entrance to the village hall in tribute to all who helped in those dark days.



'Snowdrop in the green' events in both 2020 and 2021 helped us to raise money. This has been a popular event for a few years and this year we sold over two and a half thousand bulbs for local planting. We had some left over in both years to plant around the village.

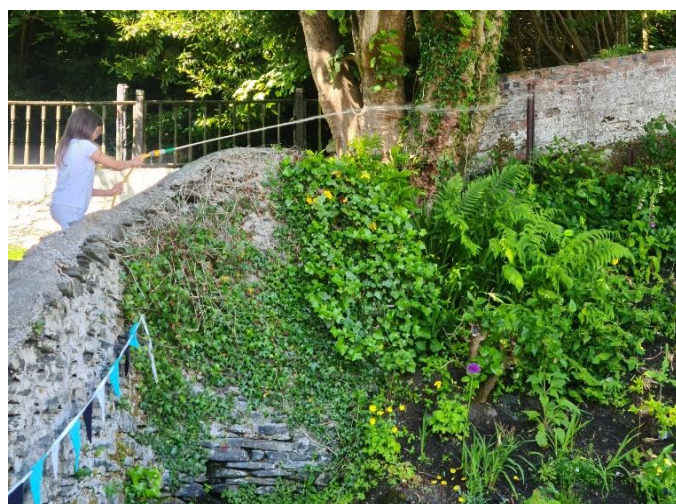
- In Jan 2020 Inspiring Innellan started up a Gardening Club at the request of several villagers. It will start up again as soon as possible as it was a very popular social activity.
- A beach clean took place just prior to lockdown, another is planned for July.
- At the beginning of June a plant sale was held in the garden of Bruan to raise funds for Inspiring Innellan.
- The Open Gardens Weekend will start again when possible as it was also an event which was growing in popularity but has had to be cancelled for the last two years.

Future events planned for July/August/September

- Butterfly release with local children (We gave one family some caterpillars to rear and share with their friends. When they become butterflies we will release them.)
- Tree Planting with children
- Seed planting/picnic with children
- Pub Quiz in Royal Bar
- Beach Clean
- Geology Day with local expert - Pebble Beach Day for everyone

Longer term

- Resumption of social events in the village hall - coffee mornings, quiz, bingo, beetle drive etc
- Resumption of gardening club
- Gardens of Innellan visits resumed
- Working with Community Shop (Lido) to help create a Green Map for cyclists and walkers
- Helping Lido with the horticultural side of their outdoor area refurbishment eg raised beds



Communication, Education and Awareness

Our Facebook page is extremely popular and is updated regularly with text and photographs of our week-by-week activities. It has a following of well over 600 people from all over the world and is an important means through which we communicate ideas and information with our community.

Find us at [facebook.com/inspiringinnellan](https://www.facebook.com/inspiringinnellan) for all our latest news



Communication with the school has been at a standstill during the Pandemic as the school has actively discouraged all visits to help stop the spread of the virus. The Nursery children did visit the Bruan Christmas Lights late one afternoon when all was quiet and had a great time but participation with the school had to be halted.

Individual children have helped in other ways as detailed above but not to the extent anticipated. We look forward to reversing this trend as the Pandemic permits.

With regard to children, we have provided two areas for play and both these are growing in



popularity. At Cluniter two tree swings are in constant demand and a tyre climb is available for the more energetic. Items such as spades and pails, bats and balls and Frisbees have been put out for children's use too.

An adventure play area with a rope swing at the Yellow Chipped Road is also a great place for hide and seek and, with evidence of den building it's clear we have created an all-important natural play environment for children. A great result as there is a definite lack of space for free play in the village.



The bicycle repair stand was a joint initiative with TSC and SCCC. SCCC applied for the grant from Argyll and Bute Council. Inspiring Innellan cleared the area (known as the Village Green) and moved some large planters to accommodate the stand. It has been well received by cyclists as it holds a pump and special tools for on-the-spot repairs.



Finance



Inspiring Innellan has been maintaining benches and picnic tables in various locations and it seems that every time a seat is placed someone comes along to sit on it. As they are so popular Inspiring Innellan is increasing the number considerably this year.

Two benches have been donated for the Yellow Chipped Road and one large picnic bench for the Slippery Slope. Both of these are in memory of loved ones. Four others will be mounted on paving stones and placed at Sandy Beach to compensate for some which have to be scrapped. These were bought with money given from the Burnamakiman Hydro Scheme operated by South Cowal Community Council. More money from this scheme was given towards the upkeep of the Village Hall Garden area which Inspiring Innellan maintains. This will go towards repainting two benches and also provide top soil and plants for the planters located there. This is a useful source of funding which can be applied for annually and shows the value of working with partners.



With money received from the Water Board as compensation for messing up some planters and benches, we were able to tidy up an area on the shore road in 2020. Extra red chippings were laid and helped to show off the planters which we also maintain here.

Working with others

Where possible during the Pandemic, Inspiring Innellan has worked with local groups as detailed above. In a small village it makes sense to work with other groups with similar aims and this will be Inspiring Innellan's aim for the future.

Sustainable social plans

We will continue to raise money with local support through our social plans (eg quiz nights, coffee mornings) which will, hopefully, be up and running again soon. Small, but useful, amounts of money will continue to be applied for from local funders and Bruan Christmas Lights will support our efforts again this year.

Funding sources

£1820: Bruan Christmas Lights

£1500: Bicycle Repair Stand - working with South Cowal Community Council and Toward Sailing Club

£1500: Cash donations - large and small

£1200: Plant Sales (2)

£1000: Signs at 'Village Green' - working with South Cowal Community Council and Toward Sailing Club

£ 500: Argyll and Bute Council - Nature Trail Signs

£ 300: Water Board - Chippings