



Brighten up Kirkconnel Beautiful Scotland 2025



Introduction :



Kirkconnel is an Ex Mining Village in the Dumfries & Galloway Region. It has a Population of 700. The Neighbouring Village Kelloholm has a population of 1500, although Practically joined Kelloholm is technically a Separate Village.

Mining : Kirkconnel had several Mines in the area. Fauldhead was the largest one in Dumfriesshire Employing over 1000 men during its peak Years. Fauldhead was Nationalised after WW2, previous Owners were J McConnell & Bairds of Dalmellington. A separate Brickworks also worked within Fauldhead Today these Bricks are very hard too find. After Fauldhead closed in 1968 the Population of the Villages declined, during the peak Years the Population Between Kirkconnel & Kelloholm stood at over 6000.



History : The name Kirkconnel comes from the Church of St Conal, 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.



October 2024 :

We received surplus Trees from a project HMP Dumfries were working on & invited the P6 Class at Kelloholm Primary School to come along & assist us planting them.



February 2025 :

Making a start on the new Season with some general tidying up & Pruning the Herbaceous shrubs.



February 2025 :

The Produce in the Edible bed was starting to look a bit tired so we completely emptied the bed & applied Organic Horse manure to feed the soil until the Spring when new produce will be planted.

April 2025 :

Spring is in the air !



April 2025 :

We acquired a selection of free well established Roses these were pruned back prior to planting these were placed in two of the existing beds at Polveoch with organic Horse Manure used for feeding.



May 2025 :

Last Year we used our retired round Planters to Increase the height of the Large Street boxes at each end of Polveoch to give greater impact. This Year we have used the remaining ones (with a few size adjustments) & applied an additional level to each Street box. Organic Horse Manure was applied for feeding topped up with Peat free Compost.



May 2025:

War Memorial Competition

In conjunction with the Community Council we entered the annual Competition run by Dumfries & Galloway Council & were awarded 2nd place along with a very highly Commended certificate. The Community Council take responsibility for getting the actual Monument cleaned each year & we take sole responsibility for maintaining the surrounding Garden which is mainly planted with a variety of sustainable shrubs to give Year round appeal.



May 2025 :

Getting the Edible bed prepared with new Top soil before the new produce was planted. Potato's Leeks,Celery & a variety of herbs have all been added this Year along with Nasturtiums & Calendula which are edible & will bring some added colour.



May 2025 :

The Brownie group planting up their Containers in Mavisbank Park which are filled with the Compost they made from last Years bedding plants.Pollinating plants such as Calendula's & Echium's were used.



May 2025 :

Our Annual bedding plant order was again supplied by Heathhall Garden Centre in Dumfries. Over the Years we have established a great working relationship with them & always receive A generous 20% discount on the order & 10% discount on any other purchases we buy throughout the Year. This Years bedding plant cost £2,800 (with our 20% already deducted from this total. Buying ready to use plants also reduces our Carbon footprint.



May 2025 :

Getting the many Railing baskets filled up
These always receive a huge positive response
From the local residents & passers by & create a
Lovely colourful impression when entering the Village.



June 2025 :

We invited along some of the Members of the ARC
To come along & help fill up some of the Containers
At Mavisbank Park working with the ARC members
Is always a special time which we really all enjoy doing.



Sustainable Planting :

We have a wide range of Sustainable Shrubs located at the War Memorial Garden, Polveoch & the garden at the Miners Memorial.

This Sustainable planting gives a lot of scope for variety, colours, & gives Year long interest & it again reduces our carbon footprint by reducing the amount of watering required.

It is also beneficial for attracting our Pollinators.



Alexander Anderson Memorial Garden :

Our former Vice Chair of the group Mrs Jessie Anderson Solely maintains this garden & it is an absolute credit to her. Jessie brings on a lot of the plants from plugs, this Year she has went for a mixture of Annuals & Sustainable plants.



Polveoch :

Polveoch is a large green area owned by the DGHP they take responsibility for the Grass cutting & We have sole responsibility for the variety of planted beds & large street boxes. We have created a varied interest ranging from Sustainable planting, Rose beds, Annuals, Alpines.



Train Station :

The Girl Guides group have taken sole responsibility for the Planters at the Station & are working with Scotrail on the "Adopt a station " scheme. Currently it is a work in progress With a lot of future plans on the horizon with a piece of waste Ground over the fence from the Northbound platform where Raised beds have been put in place. And they have also included A Pit Bogie in keeping with our Mining Heritage.



2025 Floral Displays :



September 2024 :

The Brownie group starting the Re-cycling Process using the finished annual bedding Plants for next Years Compost. This Compost Will be used for the Containers they fill each Year at Mavisbank Park with Pollinating Plants.



February 2025:

The aftermath of Storm Eowyn left many broken Tree branches lying in Mavisbank Park. We previously had some Wishing well planters that had reached the end of their life so we kept the slated roof parts & created small Insect branch piles from the broken Tree branches & located them in the Park.



April 2025 :

Our annual Springcleanscotland event run in partnership with the Community Council took Place on Saturday 12th April. This event is always well supported by the wider Community. The Youth groups such as the Brownies & the Girl Guides & some of their parents joined in Along with all ages of the Community, over 20 bags of litter was collected on the day & as always refreshments after the event were provided by the Community Council.



Composting station :

We have five Compost bins situated at the rear of the ARC Premises. All Summer bedding plants at the end of the season are put into the bins to make the following Years Compost.



May 2025 :

Each Year we get the Brownie group to assist us in the process of making next Years Compost & to serve as an educational purpose we get them to sieve the prepared compost for using in their Containers which are planted up with Pollinating plants this enables them to learn about the full cycle of making your own Compost.



May 2025:

We made good use of the crops of Nettles growing in Mavisbank Park by making our own Organic Fertilizer from them.

This Fertilizer is 100% Environmentally friendly & is rich in Nutrients such as Nitrogen Potassium & Phosphorus, it is also beneficial for the Soil.



Compost :

Along with our own re-cycled home made Compost we also use a Peat Free mixture. We have unlimited supply to Organic Horse Manure where a layer is added to each Container for feeding topped up with either of our Two mixtures.



Re-cycling plant pots :

We Re-cycled our used Plant pots by crushing them & inserting them in the bottom of our Containers Which will give good drainage & reduce the amount Of Compost we use.



Collecting Rain Water :

We have a few Water butts located at various Positions around the Village, these are kept with the Lids off to enable them to fill up with rain water. One of the butts behind the Cabin has been inserted Into the drop pipe for collecting the water



All Weeding is done by hand with no Chemical Weed Killers used that are Harmful to the environment.



Bio-diversity :

Mavisbank park is a natural environment to encourage our wildlife.

We have the Bugs Hotel,

The local Mens Shed group made bird boxes.

Insect Piles.

All containers are filled with Pollinating plants

River Nith flows at the bottom end.



Local Identity :

Kirkconnel has a strong Mining Heritage which between our group & the Heritage Society Continue to honour.

Miners Memorial :

This was erected in 1984 to honour the lives of the men who were tragically killed.

In 2017 we received funding to get an Interpretation board Made highlighting the History of Fauldhead Colliery & Brickworks, the base of which is made with actual Kirkconnel bricks. Fauldhead closed in 1968 & was the Largest Colliery in the area during its peak Years it Employed over 1000 Miners.



The Heritage Society has a vast collection of Photographs & memorabilia relating to Fauldhead.

The Community Council has also donated various Mining related flower Containers which We fill each year ranging from Pit Bogies & a Miners wheel. The Bogies all bear the names of All the Collieries in the area.



Alexander Anderson (Poet)

Poet Alexander Anderson (1845—1909) was born in Kirkconnel & is buried in Kirkconnel Church Yard. His most famous one was “Cuddle doon”

A Memorial garden is adjacent to Kirkconnel Parish Church.

We applied for funding a few Years ago for an Interpretation board highlighting his life, this board is placed at the garden entrance. The garden is tended by resident Mrs Jessie Anderson.



Kirkconnel Parish Heritage Society

The Heritage Society is very much a hub of the Community. Founded in 1997 it has a vast collection catalogued photo Albums & lots of bits & pieces everything Heritage related. They also run our local Monthly newspaper known locally As “The Wee Paper” they have a Community Mini bus Which is available for hire & also organize Day Trips. Photo copying, Invitations, Posters can also be produced via them.

Currently they have bought the adjacent empty building Next door (Former Newsagents shop) & have plans for this



Community :

The Heritage society decorated their Window
To celebrate us winning a Gold Medal at
Last Years Competition



Christmas Lights switch on :

This annual event brings the whole Community together & is very much a Community event. Run by the Community Council, after the Gala Queen switches the lights on the event officially Starts where all Community groups have the opportunity to hire stalls & make funding for their Own particular cause. (The Brighten up group raffled a food hamper) All School children get unlimited access for the fairground rides in attendance & receive a free gift from "Santa"



Community involvement :

We as the Brighten up Kirkconnel group are a very Community minded group & actively encourage all sectors of our Community to become involved in our work, we are very fortunate That many other groups, individual members are more than willing to become involved. We also have a very good working relationship with the Community Council & Heritage Society. (The Following pictures will highlight all Community involvement)



Community :

We have a very successful Gala Week each Year, run by a very dedicated Gala Committee who Pull out all the stops to ensure a week of enjoyment for all ages although the main emphasis is The Younger generation. After a fun filled action packed week with various attractions ranging From a Talent Show, Pet. show, Prize Bingo, Firework display the climax of the Week is the main Gala day where a hugely popular parade takes place with many local groups take part in their Decorated floats. The grand finale of the Week is the Crowning of the Gala Queen. They also hold a Garden Competition where most Years one of our own Committee members Judge it for them.



Funding & Support :

Over the last Year we have received Financial support from
The following.

Upper Nithsdale Community Trust : £2,400.00

(Funding Application for bedding plant order)

Hiddleston Family : £800.00

(Proceeds from their late Mothers Funeral Collection)

Mrs M Leary : £300.00

(Local resident who runs charity Bingo`s & gives all proceeds to various Community groups)

Crown Inn Sanquhar : £80.00

Dumfries & Galloway Council : £1,500.00

(Community Council submitted this Application on our behalf)



Social Media :

We have a Facebook page which attracts interest from all over the world & has over 1k followers, this page gets regularly updated & has 1000`s pictures going back 10 Years.



(Screen Cover for the page)