

Kilmacolm Community Council

Chair's Annual Report 2020

We are in strange times at the present moment with severe curtailment of movement and the need to isolate from each other because of Covid -19. This resulted in us having to cancel some Community Council meetings in March and April. However, modern technology means that we are able to meet over the airwaves in order to carry on with our necessary duties.

This year has seen a number of Community Council meetings not being quorate and has resulted in us just meeting the minimum requirements for holding council meetings.

This year has been characterised as a year of defending our Greenbelt from persistent planning applications by developers. Chief among these were Gladman (Scotland) Limited who, having been refused permission for an application at the Knapps and North Denniston, then submitted an application for North Denniston only by claiming that it was a different red line area. This application was subject to a pre-determination meeting in June in the large hall of St Columba Church at which the Chair spoke on behalf of the village against the application. Gladman did not attend the meeting, showing no respect for the village. The application was refused planning permission and once again Gladman appealed and it was placed in the hands of a Reporter. The reporter refused permission and we are now awaiting their next move

The village centre projects fund was fully utilised and a number of projects were commissioned and some were completed. Two major projects involving the Old Kirk are still ongoing. The churchyard project is nearing completion and we await the invoices for it. The Pilgrim Pathway project in the Old Kirk Manse is still to be progressed but this is being held up by the proposed union of the Old Kirk with St Columba Church.

The residential units and other commercial unit associated with the old institute building are still to be completed and are an eyesore in the village centre conservation area.

The Police Scotland dedicated team for Kilmacolm attended the monthly meetings and reported on the crime statistics for Kilmacolm. Over the past year there have been 61 reported crimes in Kilmacolm: one dog attack on sheep; a social media communication offence; eight acts of vandalism; two bicycle thefts; six acts of shoplifting; three domestic assaults; two serious assaults; ten Road Traffic Act offences; two breaches of the peace; five frauds; three housebreakings; one underage drinking; one online fraud; three thefts from a motor vehicle; one setting illegal wildlife trap; three common assaults; one drink driving offence; one dangerous dog offence; two thefts; one misuse of drugs and one extortion.

The Community Council Sponsored Community Clean-up in March was cancelled because of the Covid-19 outbreak and lockdown rules.

The Community Council considered 51 planning applications during the year and raised only one objection.

The new local plan was launched in August and immediately several developers challenged it and it was placed in the hands of a government appointed Reporter. The outcome of the report was good for the village in that it upheld the view that there was no requirement for the village to release any Greenbelt land for residential development. However, this outcome was appealed and it is undergoing a judicial review. We await the outcome.

The Kilmacolm Community Council continues to support the Defibrillator on the wall of the Doctors' Surgery in the village square. Training sessions were held in the Kilmacolm New Community Centre and Morven has volunteered to conduct some more when lockdown is over.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Community Council for all their hard work over the past year which was made especially difficult by the constant bombardment of planning applications by various developers. In particular I would thank David Goddard for his 12 years as Secretary. He has kept us on the straight and narrow over that time and we will miss his expertise, knowledge and hard work behind the scenes. I am sure that he will be around to pass on some of his knowledge to Andrew Brewer.