

Friends of Dollar Park
Annual General Meeting 31st July 2018
Chairman's Report

I would like to start this years report with a little self indulgence.

Towards the end of last year a meeting was held with the Cyrenians, who oversee the Walled Garden, and it was discussed that it would be super if we could reinstate the floral clock back to its rightful place at the entrance to the park.

I for my sins, stated that I had planted the floral clock in 1968 nearing the end of my gardening apprenticeship with the former Falkirk Town Council and latter designed and oversaw the planting during the 70, 80 and 90's. It was agreed that I would take on the role of designing the clock and sourcing the specialist carpet bedding plants, while other would concentrate on fund raising to pay for the mechanism to enable the hands to function.

The floral clock in Princess Street Gardens is the only other one in Scotland. In the early part of the year I had a number of meetings with Edinburgh Councils parks officers and they agreed to grow and supply the specialist plant material.

Clocks in the past were always themed and it was fortuitous that this year it was the Cyrenians 50th anniversary so that solved that problem.

Work commenced mid June on the planting using Community Service personal, who look after the walled garden, with a view to training them up in specific horticultural skills.

The return of the floral clock has been well received by the general public with well over 400 likes and numerous complementary comments on Facebook.

From my own point of view it was exactly fifty years to the month that I last planted the clock and here I was planting it again, who would have thought, and I must admit it gave me a great deal of personal satisfaction.

However I was not a one man band and I have to thank the team for all their sterling work, Lynda and Ruth from the Cyrenians, Falkirk Rotary re ongoing fund raising incentives, bedding plant/ carpet bedding Edinburgh Council/ Klondyke Garden Centre, the Criminal Justice Services, our own Friends, and my best fiend John Fraser, who also planted the clock in the sixties, for his input.

Unfortunately we were unable to raise sufficient funding to install the mechamsiun for this year, fund raising incentives are ongoing and our biggest contributor to date has been The Robert Barr Charitable Trust £5000 thanks to friend Robert Menzies securing the monies

The other major work in the park is the commencement of the refurbishment of Arnotdale House. The project is to provide accommodation for the Cyrenians work to deliver community service orders alongside the provision of a café, community meeting rooms, changing facilities and our long awaited toilet facilities. It will be a positive step forward for the use of the building and will compliment the work that has been undertaking in restoring the walled garden and the refurbishment of the tennis courts.

As part of the project the car parking area has been completely re vamped and this has made a great deal of difference to the problems experienced in the past.

The Dollar Park Walled Garden Steering Group set up to oversee the development and planting of the garden as it evolves over time continues to meet and I have attended a number of meetings over the year and find it an extremely good forum to oversee the continuing development of the garden

The Council has set up a working party to look at a extension to the War Memorial to incorporate an additional 1650 name, our vice chair Morris

Robb represents the Friends, MR has been actively designing the extension and a Friends Group has been set up to look at funding.

Our major project for the coming year is the refurbishment of the Dovecote. Meetings have taken place with the Council; ZM Architects have cost the restoration at 124K, which includes the outbuildings we presume. At this price it is difficult to see the Council funding the work. Alternatives will have to be explored.

In conclusion I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow committee members and external organizations for their support and time given over the year.

Leslie Pryde

Chairman Friends of Dollar Park