

Chair's report 2007

GreenFerry Trust has now established itself firmly in the community as an active and successful environmental group.

Calor Gas Scottish Community of the Year Competition

This was easily the high spot of the GreenFerry year. We entered South Queensferry into the Calor Gas Scottish Community of the Year 2006, and came in runner-up in the environment section, beating over 100 entries from all over Scotland. This success is due, of course, to all the environmental activities going on locally, which Queensferry people have come to appreciate. In November, four members of GreenFerry attended the Calor Gas award ceremony at the Edinburgh Conference Centre, to collect the prize -- a large cast iron plaque for the village. This will be displayed in the High Street.

Best Urban Village

For the third year in a row, Queensferry won the title of "Best Urban Village" in the Keep Edinburgh Growing Competition – once again thanks to the efforts of all the local environmental groups, as well as residents and traders. We feel we are working well in partnership with other groups to bring such accolades to Queensferry.

The High Street project

The High Street is still the centre of attraction for residents and visitors to South Queensferry, and we extended our work there this year in various ways this year.

Summer

The automatic watering system was extended at each end of the High Street to include The Anchor Inn and Mario's chip shop at one end, and Nipper's Nursery and neighbouring shops at the other.

This meant that the hanging baskets were increased from 40 to almost 60, and this made a significant visual impact.

We could not get quarter barrel planters to add to those on the Terrace and so we asked our local DIY man, Kenny Sinclair, to create simple wooden troughs. This gave Mid-Terrace flower boxes at varying heights, and proved an unexpected success.

Thanks to all residents and traders who 'adopted' a tub or flowerbox and kept it well watered. Our 'helpers' in that area now number 14 and include the car park attendant, Alan, who keeps the planters at Scotmid and the Heath Centre.

We did not have Brewery Close down as one of our projects, but when the builder there went bust and the gardens were left rather naked, we felt we had to step in to help. We organised compost (donated by Scottish Water), and donated plants. Working with Brewery Close residents, we began to develop and improve the gardens to the side of that public walkway, and this work will continue.

Winter

Our winter planting in October was well-organised by our 'design expert' Jeana Gorman, and well supported by the community who turned out to help with the planting. This provided some welcome colour in the village throughout in the winter months, and caused a good-hearted "stirring" at times as locals debated the merits and de-merits of what we fondly came to call our "controversial" (ornamental) cabbages.

Christmas Trees

We had long harboured the idea that our brackets might be replaced with a new type to accommodate Christmas trees, and working with Paul Hart (Alba Kilts) and Jean Winning (JW Physiotherapy) we assisted in replacing the brackets there and at the Boathouse steps. Many thanks to Graham Clarkson who had a hand in the design of these, and to Dalmeny Metals for making them up. Six Christmas trees were fitted this year and we will likely continue to replace brackets as traders wish.

Christmas Lights Posts

Three GreenFerry members, Andrea and Phil Howe, and Jim McIntosh were responsible for decorating the featureless concrete bases of the street Christmas tree lights. The Holly and the Ivy – and a few other bits of greenery -- did make a difference, and their work was much appreciated.

Schools

Most of our work this year has centred on the High School. Two GreenFerry members, Jeana and June, have been working with the eco-school committee there with a view to designing gardens which the older children can make use of. This work may include seating, installing a greenhouse, and growing organic produce. We would like to thank staff at the High School for taking such an interest in their surrounds. The new head teacher, Robert Birch, is keen to make links with the community and we look forward to being involved in further projects.

Community Tools and Insurance

Last year, we began a stock of community tools with a small grant from the Chestnut Fund. This year, we added to that with a small grant from B&Q which was used to buy two wheelbarrows, trowels, forks, secateurs and bird-feeders. We were also offered old/rusty tools which we were happy to take. Now we welcome such donations, especially now that we have a retired member of the community (Rupert Crowe) who has willingly taken on the task of sharpening and maintaining the tools for us.

Of course, tools need to be stored and we are grateful to Graham Clarkson and Jim McIntosh who constructed the Ikea shelving in our storage unit at Hill Court. This made a considerable difference to our store, and means we can find our way much more easily.

Via BTCV, volunteers are insured with Zurich Insurance. This policy covers the activities of all the other environmental groups. For example, all CleanFerry events and Ferry Glen litter picks are now insured via Greenferry's insurance cover.

Painting Parties

It was becoming obvious that painting the railings was always going to be 'low priority' in the council's work schedule and so, after much letter-writing and some gentle persuasion, Greenferry managed to extract the necessary paint and materials and a small team of volunteers began to paint the railings from Hill Court to West Terrace. This work progressed well through October and November and stopped over the winter. It will continue again in the spring as we work our way east towards the other Terraces. Thanks to Danny Murphy, who led this project with great enthusiasm. We now have plans to work in partnership with the council to spruce up the yellow gritting bins in the spring.

Jute Bags

All our jute shopping bags were sold (100) and £100 profit from this was put into the Dalmeny Seat Fund.

Dalmeny Seat Fund

Fund-raising for the Dalmeny seat projects has been slow but steady. To date, with the sale of jute bags, we have raised almost £200, which has now been set aside to return a bench to the village green and assist the elderly members of the community on their trips to the post office and village shop. We hope now to secure a grant this year to speed this project along and have the bench in place by the early summer.

Community Bikes

As a small-scale experiment, we are starting to collect second-hand bikes with a view to loaning these free to the community. It remains to be seen if/how this project will develop. It is in the early stages.

Community Involvement

We can only do what we do, of course, with the support of our community, and we are very pleased that we are able to rustle up help when we need it from various sources for planting days. Our volunteers come from all age groups and attract a significant number of older/retired people whose help is much appreciated.

Traders also continue to support GreenFerry by sponsoring their own hanging baskets, and/or watering the tubs and flowerboxes near them. And residents contribute there too. To date we have 14 "waterers" who look after tubs and boxes.

Publicity/PR

We see publicity as important to the group. It makes people aware of what we do, and we benefit in turn from continued encouragement and appreciation from our community.

The Queensferry Gazette has been very supportive, advertising all of our projects in their diary pages, and in some cases running full-scale stories for us.

Queensferry Business Association produced a booklet, *Essential Queensferry*, about Queensferry. Both GreenFerry and CleanFerry featured in it.

We also wrote articles in the *Ferry Fair Programme*, and we were interviewed for *Jubilee FM Community Television*.

A London-based magazine, *Green Places*, aimed landscape architects, ran a feature about GreenFerry on their community page.

Our newsletter, *Ferry Attractive* has a distribution of 1000 and carries news of all local environmental projects. This is a popular read and useful way for us to raise awareness of local environmental projects.

Our own mailing list now numbers over 200.

E-ferry, Queensferry's new electronic news network, now reaches 120 and we also use this network to publicise all our group's activities.

In the summer we again took stalls at the Hopetoun House Open Day, the Raft Race, and Newton's fun day. We were pleased to be able to display our projects and gather new members and we will use these events as opportunities to raise the group's profile.

Apart from these, we prepared and gave formal presentations about our work to the City of Edinburgh Council, Rotary, Forth Estuary Forum, Castle Rock Sheltered Housing and the High School.

Finally, we were recently invited to stage an awards ceremony at the Orocco Pier, and we are in the process of organising this now.

Video Project

We secured a grant for £5000 for top-quality recording equipment, and began the process of recording local 'green' events for the year. This will allow us to create a DVD of all activities going on locally and will hopefully make it easier to get grant funding in future.

Website

Thanks to our treasurer and computer expert, Andrea Howe, our website <http://www.greenferry.org.uk> is now well developed. Here outsiders can view all our projects in photographs, and read the minutes from our meetings. Andrea also made up GreenFerry thank-you cards and ensured that we said thank-you properly to all those who have helped us.

Parade

In August, we once more celebrated the end of the summer by taking part in the Ferry Fair parade. Thanks are due to our artistic director, June Jansen, who designs and creates all our costumes with the help of her daughter and local school children. This is both a fun event and an opportunity to remind the community of GreenFerry's presence.

Financial support

Agilent Technologies continues to sponsor our newsletter which we are very grateful for. Membership money from our first year brought in £600; now it brings us nearly £1000. We are extremely grateful to the 'friends' of GreenFerry for this additional boost to our funds which makes a real difference to the work we can do.

Apart from the newsletter, we have been well supported by local groups, businesses and organisations. In particular we would like to thank:

- City of Edinburgh Council
- Sportsman Events
- The Staghead
- Watchman Alarms
- Orocco Pier
- "Joyce and Jim" for busking
- Rotary
- Castle Rock Sheltered Housing
- St Margaret's Lodge
- Dalmeny Art Club
- Tom Thumb Nursery
- Queensferry Parish Guild
- Dalmeny Estate
- Tesco and Scotmid Supermarkets
- Picnic Coffee Shop

And a few special individuals also deserve a special mention:

Iain Andrews (Barrels)
Ged Casey (Barrel linings)
Kenny Sinclair (Fixings and DIY)
George Heriot (brackets)
Alexis Dow (Additional fund-raising and litter-picking)

...not forgetting all our volunteers, of course. We could not do any of this without your support.

Memberships and Training

GreenFerry holds memberships, affiliations, or links via its members to a number of organisations:

- Scottish Natural Heritage
- The Woodland Trust
- The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
- Community Woodlands Association
- Edinburgh Greenspace Trust
- Green Spaces
- Volunteer Development Scotland
- Forth Estuary Forum
- RSPB
- The Bumblebee Conservation Trust

This has given us access to a whole network of useful information and interesting journals, as well as access to conferences and free or low-cost training. (We encourage GreenFerry members to attend short training courses to extend their expertise.)

Support for other groups

This year, we worked with **Queensferry in Bloom**, buying plants and helping to improve the tubs at the Council offices. We also supplied tools for the garden project at Dalmeny Station and some GreenFerry members turned out to help there too.

A small GreenFerry sub-committee now oversees the work of **CleanFerry** which includes clean-ups right through the winter, autumn beach clean-ups, the High Street sweep, and Poop Scoop week. CleanFerry activities during Poop Scoop Week now feature in Keep Scotland Beautiful's latest publicity leaflets, distributed nationally.

GreenFerry members also attend **Ferry Glen** meetings and take an interest in projects there. We supplied tools for bluebell planting in the autumn and provide equipment for litter-picking.

We also have good links too with **Echline Community Woodland**, helping out there too, and look forward to helping them celebrate 15 years of that woodland's existence in June.

Future Planning

Planning has already begun for the summer. We called a public meeting in January, and were pleased to see three new people attend to share their ideas. Together, we planned the colour scheme for the High Street and put together some preliminary designs planting small public areas. We are currently awaiting the results of a grant application for sustainable planting for the following areas:

- The police station garden
- Morrison Gardens
- Brewery Close
- Scotstoun Shopping Centre
- BT Exchange

When these projects get properly underway, we plan to involve the people who live nearby so that we can foster a sense of pride and ownership. And, we have great hopes of engaging our teenagers in a special project. Watch this space.

Conclusion

We started out in GreenFerry to:

- improve the environment in and around South Queensferry;
- involve the whole community in environmental projects;
- develop a collection of experience which others could call on;
- publish an environmental newsletter; and
- support the work of other local environmental groups.

GreenFerry committee members and volunteers have worked extremely hard to achieve this. I scarcely know where to begin to thank them (and their families) all for the hours they have put in and the good humour with which they have approached sometimes quite daunting tasks.

And we are, of course, pleased to welcome anyone who wishes to join our band of merry people. One thing is guaranteed – we will have fun, and the work we do is immensely rewarding.

Joyce Faulkner
Chair