

Chair's Report (March 2009)

When I sit down to prepare for GreenFerry's AGM, I usually look at the previous year's report, and consider whether or not we actually achieved all we had hoped to. Well, last year, we had many plans -- happily, most of them completed; some not. But before we come to those, let me deal first, with our "core" activities -- the hanging baskets and planters.

Hanging baskets

We ordered 50 hanging baskets last year -- four less than the year before, and we expect this number to go down again as some business, sadly, have had to close. However, I would like to thank those businesses who *are* still able support us and do their bit to contribute to the attractiveness of the High Street. (Each business pays for their own individual basket while GreenFerry pays for their watering systems to be switched on and checked. This arrangement seems to work well and we will continue to do this as long as we can afford it.

Planters/Containers

GreenFerry maintains 76 containers around the village and we have another six waiting to be installed, possibly at West Terrace. We completely re-planted the two Alpine planters outside the Priory Church. Local shop-keepers, businesses, employees and residents do their bit to keep all the tubs and containers well watered. Thank you.

In November, Jeana, and Brenda (from Beautiful Queensferry) chose the colour scheme for the summer (2009). The colours are predominantly yellow and gold to mark the golden anniversary of Tom and Lyla Martin who have, for many years, have been active members of the community. (Tom is chairman of Queensferry Community Council; Lyla was a stalwart member of the History Group for many years.)

And, once again, I want to thank Andrea and Jeana for their time spent planning and organising our planting days. The simple addition of numbers to our street boxes, and a more detailed street plan, helped to make the operation go more smoothly. The two planting days a year are now firmly established as "events" in our calendar, and the whole community enjoys the show of flowers.

02 Energy-Saving Project

GreenFerry normally takes a publicity stall at the Hopetoun Open Day in order to make contact with some of the national green groups throughout Scotland. This is how we came to hear about an energy-saving scheme organised by 02 (the phone people). Using GreenFerry's mailing list, Joyce was able to put together a grant application in three days to meet their deadline, 02 approved the application soon after, and 12 local households were able to benefit from free cavity-wall insulation, free loft insulation and other energy-saving measures.

Freecycle

Freecycle Queensferry members have increased again, by almost another 100, to 663. Graham Clarkson is extremely diligent in keeping track of all the activity there, and deserves our grateful thanks and appreciation for the work he does every single day, to keep this going. There is much more going on in the background to this scheme than you may imagine. Thanks Graham.

GreenFerry Website

Our treasurer Andrea, claims she enjoys building websites as “recreation” and continues to upload our photographs. The time she spends on this ensures a steady building of the website and gives a good photographic impression of what we do. Thank you Andrea, for the hours you put into this. Our website is at: <http://www.greenferry.org.uk>

Ferry Fair

We had a smaller presence at the Ferry Fair this year, but we are grateful to June for keeping the show (literally) on the road. The Ferry Fair is a good event at which to generate publicity, and we will continue to turn out for it – even if I have to carry our banner down the street on my own!

Fund-raising

Apart from grants, our funds are generated mostly from our newsletter sponsored by Agilent Technologies, and “Joyce and Jim” busking in both local supermarkets (Tesco’s and Scotmid). Sportsman Events and local groups such as “Caledonia Kickers” (line dancers) also boosted our funds. However, we cannot rely on these, and in this time of “credit crunch” we may now have to look to organising other fund-raising events.

Tools

With donations from the Queensferry High School, Waste Aware, and Action Earth, we were able to buy 20 additional litter-pickers, 2 long litter-pickers, 6 hoops, and a “street-master” -- a new design of litter-picker which we are (literally) road-testing. Our tools and equipment have been put to good use particularly during the BIG litter clean-up, and in the Ferry Glen.

Publicity/Links/Networking

It is important to us to work in partnership with other groups and individuals. Our mailing list grows every year and is a particularly good way of getting information round quickly. As well as this, our annual newsletter continues to be an effective way of bringing news of our projects to the wider community.

We have also benefited from a recent connection with the “Almond Neighbourhood Partnership - Environment and Heritage Working Group” – a joint working group between the council and local volunteers. And we are very grateful to our Park Ranger, Iwan Thomas, who has done much to support the work of all the environmental groups.

Princess Anne visit

Lord Provost George Grubb arranged for Princess Anne to visit Queensferry in January, which she did. Members of GreenFerry and other environmental groups met the princess at the Priory church and showed her a collection of photographs which illustrate the work we do. I understand she was suitably impressed. Thank you to Jeana and June for setting up our display boards.

Now for an update on those plans we had last year...

East Terrace

Last year, we said we would extend the “High Street” project to East Terrace, and this we did. With a small grant from the Parks and Gardens Capital Programme, we organised a planting project there. Under the direction of Jeana, volunteers and residents planted up around 30 window boxes which were placed either on the railings or residents’ window sills. That was a remarkable day with over 25 residents turning out to help and included a team of local plasterers who gave up their valuable drinking time at the Anchor Inn to help us plant and carry the boxes. (There is a good account of this, with photographs, on our website).

Priory Garden

Last year we said we would look at some of the “dull areas” around the Priory Church which were in need a facelift. We hoped to work with the council to do some replanting. Now we have much grander plans. We are working with a local, landscape architect, Barbara Mitchell, and members of the Priory Church to draw up plans to improve the entire grounds. This could well be a ten-year plan, and, if successful, would constitute our biggest project to date. It is both exciting and daunting, but, then, we like a challenge.

Rosebery Court

Alas, after many attempts, it proved too difficult for the Young Rotary (Interact) members to organise a planting project for this area so this project has been abandoned for the time being. However, we are confident that we can find projects the young people *can* take part in, if not organise

Ferry Fringe Arts Festival

The Ferry Fringe Arts Festival did not take place last year, and so there was no longer a need for an outdoor environment arts project.

Next year

Apart from our usual projects, we expect the Priory Garden will take up much of our time. And, since this is a longer-term, large and exciting project, we expect to spend the initial stages engaging with the congregation and various user groups regarding any planned developments -- in other words, planning.

We are also looking at the possibility of planting a Wild Meadow.

Our Park Ranger, Iwan Thomas, has an idea to clean-up and develop the area we call the “Hopetoun Wildlife Site” with a mountain-bike track. Again this is in the early stages but we are happy to support this project.

June (our secretary) has highlighted George IV Park as an area we might also take an interest in.

We are also investigating an idea for allotments (very early stages).

Finally, we may organise an event or information evening in the autumn, to promote recycling.

CleanFerry

CleanFerry (a sub-group of GreenFerry) is largely managed by Joyce Faulkner (that's me) with the support of local volunteers and other anti-litter "enthusiasts" who keep me going.

The BIG litter-clear-up, jointly organised with Iain Jamison (Community Neighbourhood Action Unit) and Iwan Thomas (Park Ranger), had to be postponed in February, due to bad weather. However, two teams refused to be cancelled, went out in the snow (!) and picked up around 20 bags between them. That's what we call dedication.

A new member, Grant Sangster, also gave us much-needed support when he took over our graffiti list, and regularly updated it with reported sites. Through this, council workers were able to locate and clear more sites than usual, and this work is on-going. We hope the graffiti team will return in the week of our re-scheduled BIG clean-up (3-5 April).

We had a whopping 911 people signed up when the BIG clean-up was cancelled and we are confident, with the few extra weeks to prepare, this will exceed 1000. *The Body Shop* (Princes Street Branch) has also offered to send a staff team.

Meantime, CleanFerry's own litter teams continue to be active. We had additional clean-ups at Hopetoun Wildlife Site, Ferrymuir, and the Port Edgar Marina (which was a new venture for us, organised by Barbara Agnew, and particularly successful in engaging new volunteers from the Sea Cadets and Scouts.)

"Litter-pickers anonymous" has grown to over 60. This is a group of individual volunteers who go out in their own time and pick up litter in an area near them. Thanks and well done to all. It seems we have turned litter-picking into something of a local pastime.

Beachwatch

We did not take part in the official BeachWatch 2008 but, using our equipment, Dalmeny Primary held a successful clean-up with (over 80 people) of the beach at Barnbogle Castle, on the Dalmeny Estate. This is proving a more manageable task now since regular cleaning keeps the litter down, and the barbecue afterwards makes it a very sociable event.

Logo

Some people are still confused about the various groups. (I had to smile when someone referred to us as "CleanFerry in Bloom") So it may be time to think about creating a single group identity.

Finally, I could not end this report without thanking most sincerely all our volunteer helpers, and most especially the GreenFerry committee. They are an extremely positive and inspiring bunch of people who work extremely hard, and who have become, over the years, my very good friends. Thank you (and your families) for everything you do.

Joyce Faulkner
GreenFerry Chair
March 2009