

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

KILMACOLM CIVIC TRUST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 30th April 2025

WELCOME

Good Evening Everybody. It is very good to see you all. I hope you enjoyed Angela's talk and demonstration. Personally, I found it fascinating to hear about how the materials are prepared and used, and to actually see the process of creating the lovely things that Angela makes.

Before I give you my Report, here are the Apologies that we have received from members who have been unable to attend.

Secretary (Douglas Robin) to provide info.

Our KCT Executive Committee

As always, the members of your Committee have put in many many hours of their time on your behalf over the past 12 months.

Our Constitution allows for a Committee of 17. I said last year that in 2019 there were only 11, which made life difficult if several committee members were away. However, by dint of a successful recruiting campaign, by the middle of 2023 we managed to raise that to 16 which was excellent.

But, our numbers are falling again. At present, we are down to 14, but at the conclusion of this meeting, we shall be down to 12 : because **Louise Eadie and Kitty Walker**, who have been on the Committee for many years, and have done some wonderful work on different projects, told me 2 months ago that they wish to stand down with effect from today's AGM.

We need to build our numbers up again. But, we need our new 'recruits' to be young – ideally, in the age group late 40s to late 60s. Why? Because 4 of us are now over 80, and we are not going to go on forever! Please, if you know anyone who is in the 'young' category, and think that they would be good, and active, Committee members, do try and persuade them to join the Committee. Or, if any of **you** would like to join the Committee please let me, or Douglas Robin (our KCT Secretary) know.

Just as a reminder: Our Constitution states that our Aims and Objectives are:

- To stimulate public interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of the parish, its villages and the surrounding countryside.
- To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of public amenities and places of historic interest.
- To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in the area.

And we achieve this by:

- Reviewing critically all newly submitted development and planning Applications and submitting comment on them to Inverclyde Council, or, if they are for **major Energy Developments, we submit our comment** directly to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit – which is based in Glasgow at Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw.
- We Review proposals for the development of public amenities.
- We develop initiatives to promote the heritage and history of the area.
- We maintain and add new items to the KCT Archive of the parish (more of this shortly).
- Several years ago, we started a library of audio-visual recordings by Local Residents of their, and their forebears' lives in the area (Jim Hood has already given you a quick update on what we have achieved so far).

- We support and assist members with specific issues, for example:
 - An attempt last year by a small group of people to persuade Inverclyde Council to have Overton Drive (which is a private road leading to Overton House) re-designated as a public road.
 - Applications for large numbers of Wind Turbines – such as Corlic Hill, for which the aspiration was 16 turbines; but as a result of our comments the number was reduced to 8)
 - A **very** recent Application to construct a 400MW BESS on land South of Auchentiber Road, immediately to the East of Auchentiber Bridge and just 350m West of “High Mathernock” Farmhouse and farm buildings on Auchentiber Rd. The chosen site is immediately adjacent to an Application submitted 2 years ago, **and Approved by the Scottish Government last year** to construct a **700MW BESS** site, on land South of Auchentiber Road, and **just West of Auchentiber Bridge**. We wrote to the Scottish Govt in 2023 stating that we OBJECTED to the 700MW site because it would destroy the aesthetic appearance of that lovely part of the countryside and suggested that there is a much better, **and very discrete site in Dead Ground NE of the Devol Electricity Substation**, but were over-ruled by the Govt. **On Monday of this week, we submitted a very carefully crafted Letter of OBJECTION direct to the Scottish Govt objecting to the site chosen for this additional 400MW** site. If you are interested, you will see the sites displayed on the Easel at the rear of this room, near the drinks table.

Applications are normally submitted to Inverclyde Council by residents or businesses in Kilmacolm, Quarriers Village and farmers in the surrounding countryside. They are generally Applications to alter existing houses, construct new houses or outbuildings, tree felling or surgery, creation of new farm roads or new farm buildings.

By the end of the 2024 Calendar year we had considered **36**. We supported 30 of them, we were Neutral on 1 of them, and **OBJECTED** to 5 of them. IC REFUSED Planning Permission for 3 of the 5 but over-ruled us on the other 2 and Granted Planning permission for them.

Since 1st January 2025, **we have considered a further 10 Applications.**

We keep pressing Inverclyde Council to do something about the provision of ADDITIONAL PARKING in Kilmacolm and have made suggestions about where it should be. The Council has finally recognised that there really is a need. They state that they have now conducted feasibility studies, but have NO MONEY.

KILMACOLM CIVIC TRUST VISION FOR KILMACOLM

Every time Inverclyde Council reviews its Local Development Plan for its whole Area of responsibility, and starts work on preparing a new one, we have submitted our “KCT Vision for Kilmacolm” to Inverclyde Council to inform them on how we, the KCT, would like to see Kilmacolm, Quarriers and the local Countryside develop and what improvements are needed. In my time in the KCT Committee we sent them our “Vision” to help them prepare their Local Development Plans for 2014, and 2019. We also sent them our ‘Vision for the 2024 LDP’. However, there was a hiatus **over the 2019 LDP** because the Scottish Govt rejected the part of it that deals with housing as a consequence of lobbying by large Housing Development Companies who claimed that not enough land was being provided for them to build on in Scotland. That aspect of the 2019 LDP and 2024 LDP has never been resolved and the Council has had to cobble together an Interim solution to deal with it.

The Scottish Govt has now had a re-think and last year issued a Formal Instruction to all Local Councils in Scotland that Planning in their areas is

in future to be devolved to Local Communities, and that these Communities must involve their local populations in the production and submission of their own 'Place Plans' to their Superior Administrative Councils for consideration when they prepare future Formal Local Development Plans for submission to the Scottish Govt for approval.

We, the KCT and the Kilmacolm Community Council formed a small joint group last September (2024) to be briefed by Inverclyde Council on how this could be done and achieved. We have since held more exploratory meetings with the professional assistance of Edward Taylor of "Taylor Architecture and Urbanism" in Edinburgh, whom we invited to come and brief us on the production of Local Place Plans. This led to agreement that we should form a joint "Steering Group" with nominated representatives from the KCT, the KCC and Quarriers Village and that the KCT would fund the whole project. Subsequently, it was agreed that the nominated representatives should be:

- Chair of the Place Plan Group: Chairman KCT (me).
- Specialist Adviser: Edward Taylor (Director Taylor Architecture and Urbanism).
- Inverclyde Council Planning Policy Team Representatives:
 - Katrine Dean (IC PP Team Leader) and Margaret Pickett (IC PP team Senior Planner)
- Kilmacolm & Quarriers Community Council
 - John Spence (Chair); and Johanne Davis
- Kilmacolm Civic Trust
 - Graeme Andrew, Hazel McAvoy, Scott McFie, Douglas Martin, Liam McMillan (Quarriers rep)

It was also agreed that the first FORMAL "Steering Group" Meeting should be at **7pm on Tuesday 1st April 2025**; and that Ed

Taylor should open the meeting with a briefing on what we need to do and how.

The meeting was very successful. Ed gave extremely clear advice. He also got us to form into 4 groups round the table, gave each group a large 'Street Plan' Map of Kilmacolm and Quarriers and instructed each individual in each group to identify with different coloured pens, different areas which he had outlined in black, to indicate where they personally considered new housing should be built, could possibly be built, should not be built, and then explain to the whole group the logic for their markings. He then explained that that is the way that local communities help to discuss and create their local Place Plan.

The outcome was that Ed Taylor undertook to liaise with Inverclyde Council Planners to provide accurate demographic facts and figures and more mapping and policy guidance; that it was necessary to have another "Full Steering Group" meeting in May; that the public should be invited to participate actively in a public Place Plan Briefing and Discussion and Map Marking Exercise **in June 2025**; and that the Kilmacolm Community Council would use and exploit all possible media outlets to publicise the event.

The agreed date for the next "Full Steering Group" Meeting is Wed 14th May 2025.

Inverclyde Council require us to submit the Kilmacolm/Quarriers Place Plan to them by 31st July 2025.

Now a few brief words on recently approved Major Housing developments.

You will all know that the Vulture Developers have been circling round Kilmacolm and Quarriers for over the past few years; and that with the assistance and advice of Douglas Martin who put us in touch with a firm called DLBP Ltd in London, we successfully fought off: **Gladman**

Developments Ltd who applied to build 125 houses at Knapps/North Denniston; **Taylor Wimpey** 100 houses on land known as Planetreeyetts, on the left of Finlaystone Rd as one leaves Kilmacolm; **CALA Homes (West)** who wanted to build 100 houses on Land Behind The former police Station.

We have also had a very long battle with **MacTaggart and Mickel** who **applied in 2022 to build 78 houses** on Land West of Quarry Drive (i.e: The land between the roundabout on Wateryetts Drive and the Cemetery. We objected strongly. Alas, Inverclyde Council GRANTED Planning Permission in Principle. Despite an Appeal to the Scottish Govt against that decision by the Kilmacolm Residents' Association (who lost their Appeal), and an attempt by the KRA to buy from Inverclyde Council the land behind the bus stop at the roundabout and thus prevent Inverclyde Council from selling it to MacT & M to allow them access to the site for the development, Inverclyde Council have succeeded in working through the Legal processes of selling that 'entry point' land to MacT&M. The latest on that development is that late last year, MacT&M submitted a Formal Application to IC with detailed drawings for all the houses, and ground layout and Services. **WE the KCT**, examined them very carefully and concluded that the designs are awful: match-box dwellings, far too close together, taken from a catalogue, with no references to any of the existing styles of architecture in Kilmacolm. We OBJECTED to Inverclyde Council and told them to instruct MacT&M to think again and submit, new, quality designs that are more acceptable.

I shall now dwell briefly on Derrick Russell's ARCHIVIST'S REPORT

As you know, our Archivist DERRICK RUSSELL, is unable to attend the AGM this evening. However he has asked me to read out to you two pieces of information:

Item 1. [A statement about the Archive](#): The KCT continues to manage its extensive archive of some 7000 items, **making it available to all on-line**. We are also willing to receive new items from any individual.

Recently, after the sad death of long-term Kilmacolm resident Mrs Elizabeth McEwan, aged 95, we have been given some very interesting items including

- The first ever issue of the Kilmacolm Advertiser (Sept 1900)
- School photographs from 1928; Chess Club information (1960s); Girl Guides 21st anniversary (1938) items
- And a considerable collection of items relating to the Civil Defence Corps and the WRVS, including ribbons, badges and medals."

Although Mrs McEwan's registered name is 'Elizabeth' she was known to her friends as "Elma". She was a long-term member of the Kilmacolm Bowling Club, and her husband, who died some years ago, was the local Barber. Does anybody know where Elma's / Elizabeth's husband conducted his barber's business ?

Item 2.

The second item is that Derrick would like you to know that he will post an up-to-date written Report on the 'On-line' Archive on the KCT Web-site within the next two or three weeks.

**That's the Lot from me.
I shall now hand over to John Hunter, your Treasurer.**