

BLANE VALLEY BULLETIN

The Strathblane Community Council News Sheet May 2021 No 84



Tribute to Murray O'Donnell

The numbers who gathered to witness Murray O'Donnell's final journey reflected the immense affection and respect in which he was held in our community. Murray, who passed away in May, aged 77, has been so central to life in Strathblane for so long that it is hard to imagine the place without him.

Poet, performer, dramatist, historian, bowler, mason, Santa, mechanic, family man, friend in need. The list goes on. If this was not a "man o'pairs", there never was one. A larger than life character, he could natter for Scotland. And yet, paradoxically, it was his listening ear and the quiet, thoughtful kindness he showed to those in any sort of difficulty that marked him out as a special person.

Community was at the heart of what Murray held dear. He was joint founder and long-time president of Strathblane Heritage Society, cheerfully cajoling would-be speakers and tirelessly researching all aspects of local history.

He also revelled in the fun and fellowship of Strathblane Bowling Club, serving in a variety of roles, including president. Though no mean bowler himself, occasional bouncing drives could both terrorise opponents and distress greenkeepers.

For more than half a century Murray was an active mason with Lodge Buchanan Killearn No.1419.

Like many brilliant performers, Murray never considered himself a thespian, yet frequently stole the show as dame in the village panto,

often extravagantly extemporising to the bewilderment of his young co-stars. He also wrote and performed in serious plays, including one recalling the fatal explosion at Blanefield Printworks in 1864. And though his humorous poems are fondly remembered, he also had a passion for Old Scots.

Murray loved Burns and frequently performed the Bard's work both locally and further afield. His electrifying Tam O'Shanter was legendary and, though already unwell, his final performance at the Blane Valley Burns Supper last year was, in every sense, an Immortal Memory.

Though he lived at a number of local addresses, his life ended in the same street where it began: Ballewan Crescent. The youngest of four, he was born there in 1943 to Winifred and Charles O'Donnell, whose grandfather had been born in Donegal but moved to Edenkiln in the 1860s.

A pupil at Blanefield School and Balforn High, Murray left at 15 to take up a motor mechanic's apprenticeship. He met Ruby Hutton at a dance at Killearn Hospital. (His chat-up line – "I'll have the first and last dance, please" – was admirably succinct for a man inclined to verbosity.) They married in Strathblane in 1964.

The bulk of his working life was spent at Alexanders Bus Garage at Burnbrae, where he rose to be charge hand mechanic. Later he ran Lomond View Garage at Gartocharn before finding a new career as night care officer at the Church of Scotland-run Ballikinrain School for troubled boys, where his ability to listen without judgment won him many young friends.

Murray loved children and children loved Murray. His and Ruby's own four – Alice, Susan, Murray and Alan – were followed by six grandchildren and, a special joy, great granddaughter wee Ruby, aged two. At Strathblane Primary he often took the role of Santa and for a time drove the school taxi.

The O'Donnell family would like to thank members of the community for their help and support during Murray's final illness and for all the wonderful tributes received in recent days. An evening in his memory is planned when rules permit. Anne Balfour

The Blane Valley Bulletin is published by Strathblane Community Council and distributed to all households in our community council area by a group of volunteers accountable to the Community Council.

Contact us at contact@strathblanec.org.uk

Strathblane Community Council May Update

From Chair Julie Hutchison

Julie Hutchison (JH) acknowledged the huge debt of gratitude that the Community Council (CC) owes to Pam Campbell, who is leaving Stirling Council (SC), for all help over the years.

JH reported that she had contacted SC about the damage done to grass verges in the village. SC will address this as soon as resources are available.

Loch Lomond Fisheries had suggested a date in May for clearing the riverbank but we agreed to postpone this to give people more time to volunteer.

The owners of the Carbeth Inn attended the meeting to update the CC on future plans.

Thomas Graham Library

Margaret Vass reported that Thomas Graham Library Ltd is in discussion with SC regarding running costs for the new library.

Blanefield Thistle

SC has increased the land rent for the football pavilion in the George V Park from £1 per year to £150 per year. If Blanefield Thistle is unable to pay this charge the pavilion will have to be demolished. The CC has written to SC to complain.

Elected Member's Report

Following the elections on May 6th we have a new councillor, Jane Hutchison. Councillors Davies and Berrill will integrate our new councillor into their programme of attendance at CC meetings.

Membership

The Community Council is still short of two members, although we have a resident who has expressed interest in joining us. If you are interested in joining the CC please get in touch on contact@strathblanec.org.uk

Strathblane Wildlife Sanctuary

Anyone walking along the railway track path next to the football pitch in the village will have already seen major changes to the horse's field next to the track. The riding arena has been re-located to a site at the top of the hill and the landowner, Edward Pickard, has kindly agreed to lease the old site to a newly formed group, the Strathblane Wildlife Sanctuary. Presently a committee of a dozen or so locals, with varying skills from hydrologists, environmentalists and teachers etc. hope to involve as many other members of the community as possible in transforming this site into a wildlife refuge.

One of the first steps was to present to the SCDT. We are now an official group under the umbrella of the SCDT, which will make it much easier to seek funds from various charities such as the Woodland Trust. We are also considering approaching local businesses, which might consider us for carbon offsetting.

We have been drafting a Business Plan to present to potential donors, and all going well, we intend to start planting trees and hedges this autumn. Meanwhile this summer we will be investigating the drainage mystery of the pond – how to retain the water during dry periods, so as to turn it into a permanent wetland habitat. We may need to line it or even puddle it (a clay lining).

The cleared site will take on a ragged appearance over the summer, once the grazing horses are removed and a crop of weeds appears. Later in the autumn a sea of plastic tubes should emerge as we start the tree-planting. A wildflower area is planned as well. This is a long term project, so please be patient for any dramatic changes in the landscape! We intend to involve as many volunteers as possible, especially school children, with many opportunities for learning and also projects under the Duke of Edinburgh and John Muir Award schemes. Opportunities to be involved will be publicised, as and when, through social media and the BVB. Meanwhile any queries or offers to help can be addressed to Philip Graves at 07826 424442.

Strathblanefield Help Line – We're still here!

A reminder to the village that the Strathblanefield Volunteers are still available to help you; whether you are shielding for Covid or kept in by the snow and ice. We can help you with your grocery shopping, picking up prescriptions etc, or just a friendly voice on the phone

We can help you get set up with Skype/Zoom etc so you can stay in touch with your family

Blanefield: Kate – 07801 372 588 Netherblane: Janice – 07952 823 509 or Isabel – 07759 204842

Kirkhouse: Elsie – 07843 491 324, Ann – 01360 770 816 or Jacque – 01360 770 764, Southview Kim- 07771 653520

Please don't struggle – give us a call today:

Have you considered Sponsoring an issue of the Bulletin? Businesses & Community Groups can include an advertising flyer which goes to every household (free of charge when you sponsor an issue). More details from CC at contact@strathblanec.org.uk

Strathblane Library - Doors Opening 8th July

Hello, we are DELIGHTED that we finally have a date for opening our doors, although, like royalty, we will be by appointment only to begin with.

From 8th July the opening hours we have now will also be hours our lovely wee library will be open for browsing and choosing your own titles to take home!- That may seem a long way off but, for now, although we can't yet welcome you back into the building our 'Select & Collect' service continues to run

Contact us to organise the collection of books and DVDs. Food waste bags, dog poo bags and hearing aid batteries can also be collected by appointment. For further information & to book a pick up slot contact:

01360 770737 or strathblanelibrary@stirling.gov.uk.

Pick up slots are available on Mondays & Fridays 10-4, Thursdays 2-6pm & Sat 10-12.

We have had great feedback on 'Select & Collect': '*fantastic service*' and '*I've read and enjoyed books I would not have picked for myself*' - so if you haven't used it, give it a try. Information on how to join the library, using 'Select & Collect', and accessing e-books & e-resources can be found at: <https://www.stirling.gov.uk/libraries-archives/>

Please note, at the current time, while we cannot offer a full service of; photocopying, printing, scanning, we will do our best to help out if you urgently need any of these three services. Please just ring us to find out how best to get this done. Best wishes Beth & Lynne

Strathblane Community Development Trust - Update

Just a quick update this month with hopefully exciting news on the library next month.

We are making slow progress with Stirling Council to agree the operating model and lease with the Council for the new library. We are still waiting to hear about the planning application and have submitted the building warrant application. A less than best price application for the land has also been submitted to the Council.

The heritage boards on the Gary Wright Way have been completed and much admired.

We are also waiting to hear if we have been successful in our funding application for a community development officer to help us and the community take forward more projects to enhance our community.

Did you know that since the development trust was incorporated in 2008 we have raised £626,196 for projects in this community not counting the library. If we add in the library we are at £1.5 million.

Please become a member . Details are on our website www.strathblane.online

<p>STIRLING COUNCIL Councillor's Surgeries are not taking place at present but the local councillors can still be contacted by email. Report Faults at info@stirling.gov.uk or 01786 404040 Updates at www.stirling.gov.uk</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">GET IN TOUCH SCC Email at contact@strathblanec.org.uk or via our website at www.strathblanec.org.uk Your Community Councillors Julie Hutchison 770791 Andrew Thompson 770838 Eleanor Balfour 07742 278214 Philip Graves 07826 424442 Grace Edmonds 770800 John Gray 771031 Kate Ramsden 07801 372588 Evelyn Macdougall 770757 Craig Melville 0780 301798 Additional Sources — Community website: www.strathblane.online Library; Noticeboards; Shops; Local weekly press; & the Facebook Strathblanefield Page.</p>
<p>Strathblane Community Development Trust Email: scdt@strathblane.online Website: www.strathblane.online We deliver projects with grant funding to enhance the village. Please consider joining if you aren't already a member.</p>	<p>Enquiries and Bookings Contacts Edmonstone hall Kim Jones via info@edmonstonehall.co.uk. The Village Club Check schedule at www.villageclub1911.orgemail strathblanevc@gmail.com</p>

Shut Out Scammers

During May Police Scotland are running an online campaign to raise the public's awareness of the dangers of Rogue Traders who turn up uninvited on the doorstep – also known as Cold Callers. These people go to great lengths to appear legitimate with professional looking credentials and put pressure on householders by saying that their special deal is only available on that day or that urgent work needs to be done on the house or garden.

The police have devised five signposts to help you.

Close the door on uninvited callers. It is your home and you should not let anyone in unless you feel comfortable.

Take time to think before making a decision.

Research - Get at least 3 quotes.

Verify that the caller is genuine.

Report suspicious behaviour to **@policescotland** and scams to **@advicedot scot**

The best advice is do not deal with cold callers and instead find local traders who have been vetted by Trading Standards at <https://approvedtrader.scot>

Village Club hall AGM - Wednesday 30th June 7pm

Please come and support us in the "COVID friendly and socially distanced" main hall to hear about our forthcoming plans and ideas for the year ahead.

We are looking forward to re-opening in line with any necessary restrictions, and hopefully we will be busy with classes, parties and gatherings very soon.

Our Village Club hall has been at the heart of the community for over 100 years. It is important that we keep it alive for future generations and ensure its survival for another century!

If you have never been inside this beautiful building, then please come along to see the great facilities that it offers.

Look forward to seeing you!

Edmonstone Hall AGM - Tuesday 22nd June 8pm

All villagers are welcome to join our AGM. As we have planned to conduct it by Zoom this may limit numbers so if you wish to sign in, please contact Kim Jones via info@edmonstonehall.co.uk as soon as possible. First come first served.

Our call to arms was very successful as we have two new members of the Management Committee. Many thanks to Fiona Nicoll and Callum Roberts for volunteering as many hands make light work in the maintenance of these community facilities.

The Hall has opened up as allowed by government guidance and we look forward to welcoming new customers and old friends alike.