

# Carron Valley & District

Valley Renewables Group Development Trust & Community Council Newsletter

Issue 23 / Aug 2020

## On the Bright Side

Whilst life has not returned to your normal, and may not for quite some time yet, we have a way of coping that enables us to get by, or to find new opportunities. What has been very evident is the way in which members of the Community have stepped up to the mark to help each other out, to volunteer to fetch and carry, to be there to listen when folk needed someone to talk to, and lots more besides. So 'Well Done' to all for their contributions.

Many individuals might see their only hope of getting back to 'normal' is the availability of a C-19 vaccine. However, in the meantime there is a new test around that we've heard of: -

*"Take a glass and pour a decent measure of your favourite tippie, then check if you can smell it. If you can, you're half way there. Then drink it and, if you can taste it, then its fair to say you're currently free of the virus. Then, just to be sure, try a few more times to confirm you're virus-free. However, you may well have to repeat that next morning as you'll probably have developed a headache, which can also be one of the symptoms!!"*

Hmmm!

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## From the Chair of the Community Council

The Community Council would like to thank all those generous folks who have helped the community during these last few months. Many of you have been volunteers, including members of the CC, shopping and delivering food to those less well placed to get about. In addition, the CC has been instrumental in increased litter removal by Stirling Council, as well as increased police presence in the Valley. The CC asked all three relevant Stirling Councillors to reconsider the new bin collection system, sadly without effect. We are also currently trying to get a traffic survey undertaken to provide evidence for a petition to lower the speed limit through the valley. The CC has established communication links with Clan Ranald, which we hope will improve relations between residents and the Trust. Together with the VRG, we are investigating community benefit from the Shelloch Windfarm, and are acting as a link between Tilhill Forestry and the community with an emphasis on safety during timber removal.

During the lockdown and for the foreseeable future, CC meetings are on Zoom to which any residents are welcome. Just use the links outlined on the Carron Valley Connections Facebook page. Meetings are normally on the first Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm.

PH

# More about Refuse

## Hotbin Composting

As novice gardeners Malcolm and I had no idea about composting, except we thought it would be messy and smelly! After reading an article in a gardening magazine, we heard about Hotbin Composting and thought we would give it a try.

Our aim was to divert waste from ending up in landfill and, given the proposed changes to waste services in Stirling, we thought this could help reduce what goes in the rubbish bin. So, what goes in? Virtually everything from the kitchen including fruit and vegetable peelings, banana skins, tea bags, coffee grounds and crushed eggshells. Garden waste, particularly weeds, soft pruning and old cut flowers all rot down quickly as well.

The bin takes up very little space and we have experienced no unpleasant smells or vermin problems. It is sad to say but we are quite enjoying it. CS



## Events Coming Up

The following Community volunteer days will take place as socially distanced activities.

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Sat 12th Sept            | E-bike Day - Pre-booking essential - Details on the Carron Valley Connections F/B pg |
| Sun 13th Sept            | Tree planting event, to involve “Carbon Footprint” volunteers - just turn up.        |
| Sat 19th / Sun 20th Sept | Wood Fuel Weekend - C-19 restrictions allowing - Pre- booking essential.             |
| Sat 17th Oct             | Pomona Apple Tree Day - Postponed for a while.                                       |
| Sun 25th Oct             | Tree Pruning / Planting - Just turn up.  |

## Re Wood Fuel Days 19th & 20th Sept

The weekend is for permanent residents of Carron Valley & District Community Council area ONLY. Unlike previously, **pre-booking is essential** for those collecting or receiving logs or lengths and helping on the day. Options:

- A: Collection of split logs - For Community households who have booked a slot to collect logs.
- B: Delivery of logs - For Community households who need assistance, a volunteer will make a delivery of logs.
- C: Delivery of 2m log lengths - For Community households who request a delivery of 2m log lengths.

If you want to be involved either for a portion of the logs or to volunteer to help at the weekend **please sign up** online at the links below or complete and return the enclosed form :

Option A - collection of split logs—

<https://calendly.com/cv-woodland/community-wood-fuel-option-a-collect-logs>

Option B - delivery of split logs to those who need assistance or don't have transport—

<https://calendly.com/cv-woodland/community-wood-fuel-option-b-delivery-of-split-logs>

Option C - delivery of 2m lengths—

<https://calendly.com/cv-woodland/community-wood-fuel-option-c-delivery-2m-lengths>

# Falck Student Support Scheme



“Are you a Student considering a career in the renewable energy sector, or a business looking to upskill / reskill your workforce in sustainable energy. To request financial support, apply before 11th Sept’20”.

Falck Renewables is delighted to announce the launch of the **third year of its Support Scheme for Renewable Energy Studies/Training** and hope this will encourage young people to consider studying a course related to renewable energy. More information on the scheme and how to apply is also available at this link - <http://community.falckrenewables.eu/2020/07/13/falck-renewables-support-scheme-for-sustainable-energy-studies-2020/>

## Falck C-19 Emergency Fund Update

VRG is conscious that, as well as health and material concerns arising from this pandemic, as a consequence some in our community may be facing financial hardship. Thanks to a generous donation from Falck Renewables who operate Earlsburn and Kingsburn windfarms, and Stirling Council, the VRG is able to offer a grant of up to £100 to households who are facing such hardship. Applications will be considered anonymously by a sub-group of Directors and their decision will be final. Further applications may be considered for continuing need.

In addition, the VRG is offering a single payment of £100 to each household with a child or children under 18 years of age, to be used for their benefit during this crisis.

The following are examples of relevant hardship that have occurred since March 1st : ..... have been made unemployed; are self-employed and not been able to trade; are still furloughed; are over 70 and finding things hard; are having to care for someone and bearing additional costs; have a child/children in the house who could benefit from extra support for care and welfare; are suffering with financial difficulties (briefly explain); are having connectivity difficulties and lack of hardware..... etc.

Grants will be paid by cheque and a receipt required for our records. If you wish to apply for either or both grants please complete the form and send it to the Valley Renewables Group Secretary, 2 Buckieburn, Carron Bridge, Denny, Stirlingshire FK6 5JJ, or email to: - [info@valleyrenewables.co.uk](mailto:info@valleyrenewables.co.uk). The application form is available on the VRG website at: - [www.valleyrenewables.co.uk](http://www.valleyrenewables.co.uk). IM

Two distributions have now been made to households. 45 grants have been given and 12 small prizes to the photo competition winners. A total of £4,680 has been distributed so far, leaving £1,986 in the fund. Further hardship applications are now invited. The administration of the fund was met from a small grant from Stirling Council. RF

## Another New-comer

Kai Verel was born on the 15th May to proud parents Kelly and James Verel and a very proud big sister Evie who is 4.



# Our Community Woodland

Bit by bit our woodland is taking shape. New paths around the pond and trees planted, 3 benches placed in attractive locations, and an accessible viewing platform at the edge.

The next chance to volunteer to do stuff is Sun 13th Sept and this time it's tree planting. No need to book this time, just turn up - waterproofs, chunky footwear and protective gloves at the ready.

On Sun 9th Aug a wee group of intrepid residents carried out some pruning work along a path line in the wood between the river and the track; less chance of getting 'one in the eye' now. It's a lovely wander.

Those of you who spotted a few ducks appearing in the pond, may not have realised that they were probably domestic ducks, and not used to finding their own food. So unfortunately they were



gradually starving. But no worries, this was quickly rectified by a couple of local residents who 'encouraged' them into a trailer to be transported to their new farm home, where they have settled in once more to domesticated bliss.

Of course we hope that the pond will be adopted, even if temporarily, by some wild ducks, geese or other water fowl, in due course.

The current 3 year plan for the woodland is coming to an end. It doesn't seem as long ago as that! A new 3-year budget and plan are being drawn up and, once approved by the VRG Board and the Community Council, it will be presented at the next VRG AGM.

# Our Legacy Fund—An Update

In the last newsletter, we reported on the process of appointing an Investment Manager, agreeing our attitude to risk and ethics, investment timescale and returns, and the amount we would invest on behalf of our community.

On 17th April we transferred £350,000 into our Investment Fund with Brewin Dolphin. The fund value now stands at £358,030 (10/08/20), having increased in value by 2.35% since inception.

All the income from the fund will be reinvested, together with any funds we consider surplus to our budget requirements. The aim is to build a legacy fund that can provide an income for the community when wind farm benefits end.

RF

# Great Local Produce





# Falck Photographic Competition

Courtesy of Falck Renewables C-19 relief grant, we included a photographic competition in our package of measures. Here are the photos that were selected category winners: - Youth Joint Winners



Pink Flower but doggy got in the way / James Brooker



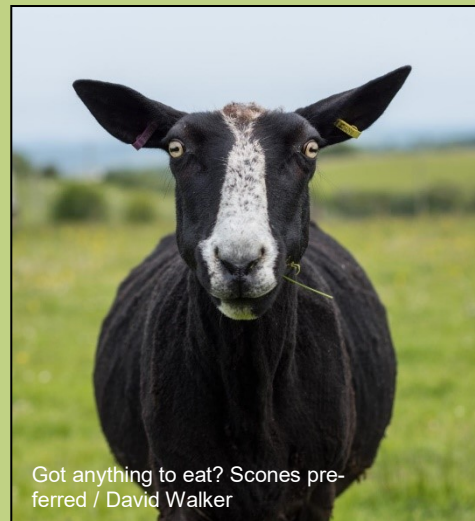
Season's Colours / Brooke Willgerod

Adult Lockdown Humorous



Carron Valley Palm Tree / Bruce Bayne

Adult Seasonal Humorous



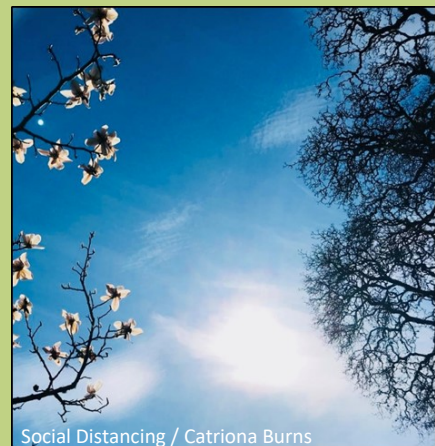
Got anything to eat? Scones preferred / David Walker

Adult Seasonal



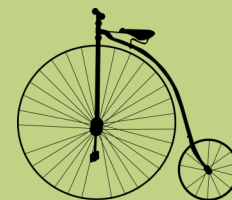
Red squirrel kit's first venture out / Nicolas Giridair

Adult Lockdown



Social Distancing / Catriona Burns

# CEE-VEE-EEE-BEE-GEE Update



(The Carron Valley Electric Bike Group)

Want to try out an electric bike? Thought they were OK but probably not for you? Too expensive – worried about battery life – wondering how to take the plunge?

Come to the Carron Valley Community Woodland between 10am and 3pm on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September and we will have a range of electric bikes for you to try – for free! Go for a cycle on the forest track on the south side of the reservoir or the tarmac road on the north side and experience the delights of e-biking. We will also have knowledgeable e-bike users who live in the Carron Valley and can give handy advice on how to decide what sort of bike to get, battery life and the things they learnt about how to get the best out of an e-bike.

And if you think they are too expensive you should be eligible for a VRG small grant of £500 to help “green” your lifestyle and we also have some limited additional Falck funding of £6,000 to promote the use of e-bikes by community residents. We will also have a resident on hand who converted an existing bike to an e-bike simply by investing in a £500 kit and some quality time in his shed.

We intend to hold this event in a Covid-safe manner – so please bring your own cycle helmet, hand sanitiser and dress appropriately for the weather. Email [info@valleyrenewables.co.uk](mailto:info@valleyrenewables.co.uk) and advise how many adults and how many children will be in your group and when you wish to come to try the e-bikes. If possible please provide a range of times – depending on demand we will either have 30min or 60min slots for using the e-bikes. We also ask that you return with 5 minutes to spare so we can sanitise the bikes and check all is well before it gets taken out again.

BW

## 2 New Hips, an ebike and Lockdown



Covid and lockdown; what to do having just been told by my orthopaedic consultant to get fully active again following bilateral hip replacements at the end of 2019. I had the answer in my e-bike (partially funded by VRG) which, complete with panniers, was soon put to good use. 2 trips a week from Carron Valley to Fintry for milk, easily fitting 6 litres in the panniers! Taking a circular route via Crow Road and back over the Tak Ma Doon – the joy of the climbs being easy on an e-bike. Saturday ride to Denny for the paper and back via North Third for 24 miles of hilly riding. I have gone out whatever the weather and that self-discipline has paid off as I checked the mileage covered = 960 miles! I have not used a car so saved around £100 on fuel, and the new hips are stronger – it's a win win.

SS

## Convert Your Old Bike

We're all encouraged to cycle. It's good for your health, it gets you out and about without emitting nasty toxic fumes and it gets you into our beautiful countryside. And with today's technology it doesn't need so much puff, especially going up our hills. Battery powered assistance is transforming cycling, it still allows you to exercise but importantly to the level you want and can manage. Electric bikes can be expensive; there are a number of grant schemes to help with the cost including VRG household grants. Another way to reduce the cost and use good re-'cycling' practice is to upgrade an existing bike with a kit. This is what I did. I had a perfectly good bike but wanted the benefits of assisted power. A kit costs around £500 and does need some basic technical savvy. The company I used offered as many live technician-to-customer WhatsApp video calls to ensure successful application. It's great!



NS



# Clanranald Events Calendar



Planned events vents coming up in the next wee while: -

15th / 16th Aug: Jacobites and Redcoats

19th / 20th Sep: Vikings and Saxons

30th / 31st Oct: Halloween Monster Mash



## Communications

We are interested to know how best to get in touch with each other. Sticking stamps on letters and stuffing envelopes is a bit laborious and takes time. However, if that's how you'd like to receive stuff, that's fine. The website seems to us to be a key repository of information for everyone and, together with social media and email, should have most situations covered. However, without wishing to pre-judge what you might think, we have enclosed a survey with this mailing to give you a chance to say what you think. It can also be done online via SurveyMonkey here <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/H5YMMH2>. We look forward to your responses.

## Project Development Officer

A part-time post is being advertised for a suitably qualified person to engage with Community residents, assist in the development of projects particularly related to the grant schemes, and to explore new Community projects, amongst other things. The full spec, details and forms may be found on our website at: -

<http://www.valleyrenewables.co.uk/development-officer-vacancy/>

Applications must be in by 28th Aug.

## Our Elected Representatives

Here's how to contact the folk who represent Carron Valley and District in the UK, Scottish and local governments. Don't let them think everything's fine for you, if it isn't. They can't guess what the problems are, so tell them. I'm sure they would like your ideas for improvements as well I'm sure, even a pat on the back and a 'well done' wouldn't go amiss.

|                        |  |               |
|------------------------|--|---------------|
| Bruce Crawford MSP     | <a href="mailto:bruce.crawford.msp@parliament.scot">bruce.crawford.msp@parliament.scot</a> | 01786 471 899 |
| Alyn Smith MP          | <a href="mailto:alyn.smith.mp@parliament.uk">alyn.smith.mp@parliament.uk</a>               | 0207 219 3000 |
| Cllr Christine Simpson | <a href="mailto:simpsonc@stirling.gov.uk">simpsonc@stirling.gov.uk</a>                     | 01786 233 126 |
| Cllr Scott Farmer      | <a href="mailto:farmers@stirling.gov.uk">farmers@stirling.gov.uk</a>                       | 01786 233 131 |
| Cllr Neil Benny        | <a href="mailto:bennyn@stirling.gov.uk">bennyn@stirling.gov.uk</a>                         | 01786 233 124 |

# Pomona Fruit Tree Project



We are now waiting for the wonderful trees and fruit bushes to give us back the fruit, but we are already enjoying the early varieties. The early strawberries have been eaten and the late flowering plants are well on the way to giving an extended season.

It looks like another good year for apples, though some early varieties were hit by a hard late frost in April.

Because of C-19, regrettably we have had to cancel the Pomona Apple Day on 17<sup>th</sup> Oct, but it is still possible for us to order further fruit trees and bushes from Andrew Lear, Apple Tree Man. If you would like trees or bushes, please email [christine-puckering0@gmail.com](mailto:christine-puckering0@gmail.com) and list:

- which fruit
- early or late variety
- size (small, medium or large will be on different root stocks)

We can then check with Andrew what he has available and when he will have them ready.

C&S

## Leave No Trace

This lovely photo over North Third fortunately doesn't reveal the volumes of rubbish that thoughtless visitors to the area have been leaving over the duration of the C-19 period. None of you needs to be reminded of what's been going on.



A non resident friend and some of her pals who run and cycle around the area have taken upon themselves to do a clean up fairly regularly. They have now removed 5½ van loads of stuff - tents, bedding, single use BBQs, clothing, uneaten food and drink, a never ending pile of bottles and cans, ridiculous amounts of wet wipes, camping chairs, the frame of a gazebo, a vehicle battery, takeaway wrappers, etc, etc. They have also had to try and extinguish a fire which was smouldering in the peat around the roots of several lovely Scots pines out on the island. If you want to join in the next clear-up, look out for information on our Facebook page.

One of the issues we sometimes have is knowing what is allowed and what is not, eg. camping, parking, fire lighting, etc, especially if we are thinking of challenging someone about behaviour. Have a look at the following sites for the legal situation and for advice on good practice: -

<https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/>

<https://Int.org/why/7-principles/>

## Small Grants

### Year to Date:

44 Household grants = £19,784.58

10 Young Person's grants = £2,554.40

10 Student Bursary grants = £5,000.00

Total = £27,338.98

### Ten Years of Small Grants:

10/11 = £324                      15/16 = £14,936

11/12 = £2,500                    16/17 = £27,992

12/13 = £2,7512                  17/18 = £14,709

13/14 = £6,482                    18/19 = £15,975

14/15 = £10,581                  19/20 = £27,339

Total = £123,571

## Contact Us

Give us a call for more information:

Secretary:

Barbara Wilson

01324 822 717

[info@valleyrenewables.co.uk](mailto:info@valleyrenewables.co.uk)

Visit us on the web at:- <http://www.valleyrenewables.co.uk>

Or

[Carron Valley Connections on our Facebook group](#)

Edited by: Margaret Porter