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Carron Valley & District Newsletter

Issue 43, Aug'25

What Next?

SO, NOW THAT THE NEW Community hall build is reaching the end of phase 1, fitting it out ready to host meetings and groups (phase 2) will be the focus of the hall management group. During the Flower & Produce Show you will be able to have a wee look round, perhaps thinking how you might use it for something you had in mind.

Getting to this point provides tangible evidence of what can be done with the Restricted Fund. As that fund accumulates again into the future, we will be seeking your ideas for the next project.

Keeping the ball rolling in the VRG while a big project has been going on, has been a credit to the trustee directors who have carried on with their particular areas of expertise throughout the year. You'll see some of that output in the following pages. However, they are doing that shorthanded. There is a vacancy on the Board just now and will be others later so, if you have a particular skill-set that would benefit the Community, please send your details to : chair@valleyrenewables.co.uk . You need to be a good listener first and foremost. After that, you'll find your niche. If you know anything about book-keeping, fund raising, project management, or would like to be the next young trainee trustee director, please get in touch to chat over possibilities. We all had to learn as we went along. So what about it?

Flower & Produce Show & BBQ

9TH AUGUST AT THE EVENT SPACE IN CARRON VALLEY

- 9am-11am : Setting up
11am : Coffee break for all the helpers
11am-12noon: Registration and arranging your flowers and produce
12noon-1pm : Judging
1pm < : BBQ, chat and socialising
3pm < : Sale of remaining flowers and produce in aid of Strathcarron Hospice.

The FLS / Scottish Water Ranger and accomplices will be present throughout the afternoon with a variety of interesting activities, plus Shirley Paterson will be in attendance to discuss any household Energy Efficiency matters you may have. PC Lynne Goldie, our community police person, will also be around and is happy to have her ears bent about any matters of concern in the Community. For those who need some exercise, some Bannockburn Rugby club folk will be there too.

The Carron Valley Growers will have some of their produce on sale so bring cash. Also there will be a chance to speak to our admin person Helen about any VRG or Community Council issues, and Hilary Rawlinson about our Local Place Plan.

All the while we'll be serenaded by music from Willie Crawford, Gus and Alison Spankie.

At 11.00, 1.30 and 3 o'clock there will be conducted tours of the new hall to give you a preview of the layout and facilities to help you visualise future uses.

This is a good time to thank all the expert judges and the volunteers, without whose help none of this would happen. It's very much appreciated.

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Community Bio Blitz

OUR SPRING COMMUNITY Woodland bioblitz took place in May and as always it's great to see the new growth emerging to enjoy the calmer weather. The summer bioblitz will be at **11am on Aug 9th** - meet at the event space and make sure you have iNaturalist on your phone!

During the flower and produce show, Adam and Esther will be running some iNaturalist demonstrations so you can have a go at using the app and see what exciting nature we have documented so far. Recording nature sightings regularly helps us to monitor the general health of the woodland and support good management of our activities there.

Please come through and join the bioblitz and learn more! EB



So, calling all youngsters and perhaps a parent as well, come and learn how to use iNaturalist on 9th August so that you can then either join in the ¼ly Bioblitz sessions with confidence around the community Woodland, or become the nature surveyor for your own nearby area. Let's get a good idea of what we've got all around us.

Email Changes

IT HAPPENS ALL the time, something goes haywire with your email system, or you change over to something else and you have to change to a new one. But remember that, if you expect communications from us, we need the correct email for you.



Pomona Apple Day + on 25th Oct

I hope you will be at the official opening of the new Community Hall and Pomona Day 2025.

Our new community hall is going to be a great asset to the area, where, until now, we have had no meeting space, no hall, no school, no church and no pub. The hall will be available for use by community groups and events. A small group of VRG residents have worked tirelessly through funding, red tape and organisation and the official opening will be on the morning of Saturday 25th October, followed by our usual exceptionally good barbecue.

In the afternoon, the apple scatter and apple crusher will be available to juice your fruit for drinking on the day or to take away in your own containers. Please bring apples (or pears) washed and cut up to speed up the process.

Lynsey Payne, apple expert, will be on hand to help identify any mystery varieties and to advise on varieties to plant, care of the trees and any bugs and diseases. Keep the doctor at bay! Eat more apples and come to Pomona Day Plus! CP



Woodland Notes

SUMMER IS A REST PERIOD for the amazing volunteers who come out in all weathers to help at the maintenance and Woodfuel days. It's wonderful to hear the craic and laughter of folk sharing time to work together.

With the gradual removal of tubes and stakes from the more established saplings, the area around the path is now beginning to look like a woodland. Now it's full of birdsong, buzzing with pollinators, and by now the dragon and damsel flies will be flitting around the pond margins. I spotted lots of wild raspas around and very tasty were the few I tried.

The new Community Hall sits well near the pond and will be even more settled in once the vegetation has re-established.

Late Summer / Autumn events at the woodland are planned for the following dates. The Community Hall will be used as a pop-in for tea and a banter, soup and a bun on the volunteer days. Even more enticement, if you needed it, to get involved. DB

Woodland Events

HERE'S WHAT IS COMING UP.

Aug 9: Flower & Produce Show & BBQ

Sept 13: Wood fuel plus grass seeding around the hall

Oct 11: Wood fuel plus tube removal

Oct 25: POMONA apple day & Hall official opening

Nov 8: Wood fuel plus Sitka bashing

Dec 6: Xmas Trees and maintenance

There will be something for everyone to do regardless of ability. The more the merrier.

Investment Fund

THE CURRENT VALUE of the investment fund is £158,183 after drawings of £332,900 for the Community Hall.

Increase in value over the last 12 months is 7.6%. Estimated annual income is £4,474. RF

Community Hall

WE ARE ON TRACK FOR COMPLETION and handover of the Community Hall on Thurs 7th Aug. The external cladding and roof are on, doors and windows are in; the solar PV, battery storage, water treatment plant, roller shutters, vinyl floors, wall finishes, and decorating are all in place, and the kitchen and bathrooms are ready for fit out. Externally, the accessible parking bays and fencing are complete. CCTV and paving around the building is under way and the finishes to road and car parking will follow.

Snagging and sign-off by Building Control is awaited. A familiarisation session on the operation of the building is being arranged for our volunteers. The operating and housekeeping arrangements for the Hall are being worked up by the Management Team; the Hall website and online booking system are set up and will become fully operational in early August. Preparation and seeding of areas around the hall and car park will be undertaken by our volunteers in September.

After almost 10 years in the making and by investment of some of our Restricted Fund income, we at last have a bespoke hall and meeting place for the Community. There is space for up to 40 in the main hall, a fully fitted catering kitchen, two toilets (one accessible with baby changing), and an entrance lobby with seating and coat hooks. It is available for use by groups, households, family groups and individuals in the Community at a modest charge to help defray the running costs. Use by groups and individuals out with the Community will be at a commercial charge rate, and subject to vetting.

The hall will not be in use for the Flower & Produce Show on Sat 9th August. However, there will be tours of the facilities at 11.00, 1.30 and 3 o'clock for those interested in seeing the hall at first hand, or who are thinking about booking its use for a group or a family party. A formal opening of the Hall for the Community with funders and supporters is being arranged for the morning of Sat 25th Oct as a preliminary to the Pomona Apple Day and BBQ event.

The Community Hall will have its own website www.carronvalleyhall.org with a link to the booking site. If you are interested in joining the Management Team or helping with any aspect of the Hall, please contact chair@valleyrenewables.co.uk.

Now we have a home for our Community - let's make the most of it!

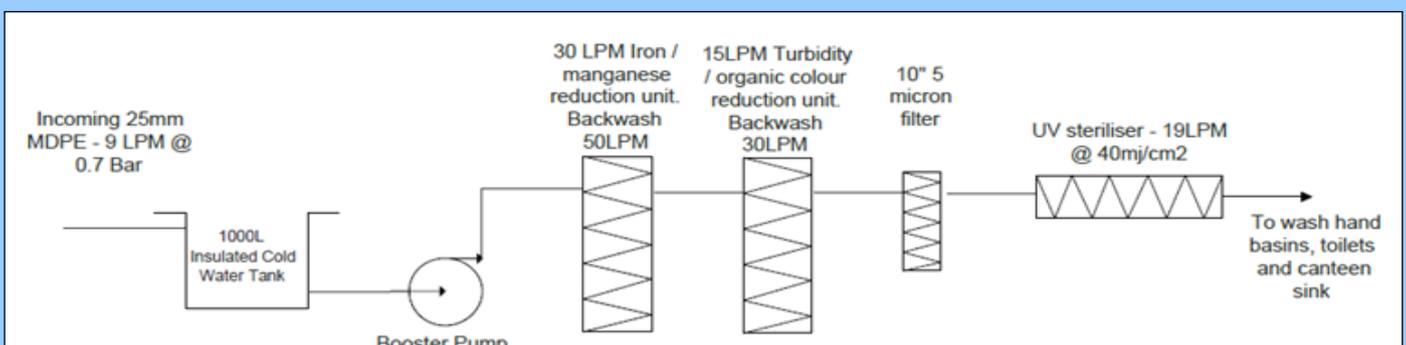
RF

For the Techy Geeks Amongst You

THE HALL ISN'T ON A MAINS water supply and so, rather than pay a small fortune to bring it from the main road, across the stream and bridge, along the track and in, to have that installed, we opted to treat the supply that was nearby.

For those who like to know how things work, below is a diagrammatic impression of the process the water feed to the hall goes through to make it drinkable and the way all that looks in the treatment cupboard.

The water supply to the hall is not the fastest in the world so hopefully 50 folk won't want to use the toilets in quick succession. Use the water sparingly and things will be fine.



Sorry to Drone On!

WE'VE BEEN HEARING a lot about drones recently in the news. They seem to be the latest development in military technology and are a relatively low-cost gadget capable of delivering high levels of devastation.



They have also become one of the latest 'must have' pieces of kit for some and, while they can be used in many extremely useful ways, e.g. farming, property maintenance, archaeology, etc, unfortunately they are also being used inconsiderately if not illegally. It's sad to hear that local residents have been getting buzzed by drones and there is some suspicion that they are being used to 'case the joint' in advance of burglaries.

Of course, it may be that some drone owning individuals aren't aware that there are rules associated with ownership. In the UK, whether you need a license to fly a drone depends on the drone's weight and how you plan to use it. If the drone weighs less than 250g and isn't used for commercial purposes, you typically don't need a license, **but you do need to register it and get an Operator ID**. For drones heavier than 250g or for commercial use, **you'll need a Flyer ID and may need additional licenses** or authorisations. You can find all the rules and regs here:

<https://register-drones.caa.co.uk/drone-code/where-you-can-fly>.

If you are adversely affected by inconsiderate or illegal drone use, contact the police on 101.

North Third Litter Picks

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE who's joined the monthly litter picks at North Third. From tents and boats to socks, crocs and nail clippers!! We've found it all along the shoreline unfortunately. Thanks to the helping hands of Stirling Scouts, neighbours, Carron Valley residents and even 4-legged friends, we've collected 38 bags of litter through the summer as well as a lot of glass, sharps and disposable BBQs.



The litter picks help keep the site tidy, shows pride in the area, protect wildlife from harm, and hopefully encourage visitors to respect the reservoir a bit more.

The last North Third litter pick for the summer will be on Friday 8th August 10am-1230, meeting at the wooden bridge SW of the reservoir. Sign up via Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/north-third-litter-pick-tickets-1342403317459>

Hope to see you there. HR



Fabric First

IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING doing a major restructuring of your household's energy system, like installing a heat pump, covering the roof with solar panels, or having battery storage, you will be wasting your money if you haven't improved the **fabric** of your property **first**. Things like sorting cracks and leaks, guttering and other damage and cutting out drafts can be done for a fraction of the cost of the big things, and will make a huge difference to the heat, that you've spent a fortune generating, from escaping. After that insulation and double glazing will stop another lot of heat escaping. Then on to the wish-list of other improvements to make the big changes. Each stage will make your property feel a bit warmer and cost a bit less to heat. Small, medium and larger Energy Efficiency grants will help, on top of Home Energy Scotland ones.

The Digital Switchover

HERE'S YET ANOTHER service that's changing. By the end of 2025, most landline phone services in the UK will be moved off the traditional copper-wire network and onto digital connections that use broadband – the internet.



The change – known as the digital switchover – will affect everyone. However, for people who rely on landlines to stay safe, the impact could be serious if the right steps are not taken in time. This includes especially:

- Older adults and vulnerable people using telecare devices (like fall alarms)
- Homes without broadband or mobile coverage
- People who rely on landlines during power cuts

What Should You Do?

- Check with your phone provider to see if your current setup is compatible.
- If you use a telecare device (care alarms, pendants, or fall detectors) contact your provider to ensure it will still work.
- Ask about battery backup options in case of power cuts.

Please help friends, family, or neighbours who may need support with the change.

To find out more visit the Digital Poverty Alliance Guide which is working with national and local partners to ensure no one is left behind. They exist to help you understand what is changing, what to check, and where to turn for support. Read their https://digitalpovertyalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Digital-Switchover-Factsheet_Carers-and-Support-Workers.pdf here. Whether you are an individual, a carer, or a support worker, they can help you stay connected through the Digital Switchover and beyond.

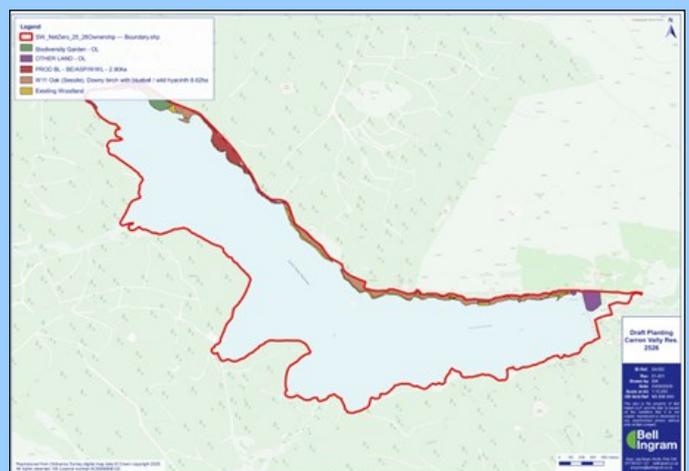
Scottish Water - Native Woodland Planting

AS PART OF THEIR NET ZERO commitments, Scottish Water has a programme of native woodland planting for all their reservoir and waste treatment sites.

In a bid to recreate natural habitats which have been lost over recent centuries, these woodlands will include native broadleaf trees such as Oak, Alder, Hawthorn, Rowan and Birch which are planted across the land in an irregular pattern in contrast to the more traditional rows found in commercial forests.

Many of the projects included in our programme are situated at reservoirs, where woodland creation will help contribute to the health of soils, improving soil moisture, depth and quality and the resilience of the landscape. This will not only ensure that the trees are not impacting on water resources, but it will also help protect the water quality at those reservoirs still used as drinking water sources.

At Carron Valley Reservoir, the scheme will involve over 11 hectares of land running along the northern shore of the reservoir, as illustrated in the attached map. It is anticipated that the planting will take place at the end of 2025 and will involve some ground cultivation using an excavator to create the best environment for the saplings, as well as hand sifting. The saplings will be planted with tree shelters and stakes.



At Faughlin Reservoir, the plans will involve 2.16 hectares of land around the edge of the reservoir, as illustrated in the attached map. It is anticipated that the planting will take place at the end of 2025 and will involve a team of planters hand sifting the soil to create a better condition for the saplings, before planting the trees with tree shelters and stakes. JR

Cut Costs and Save Carbon



WANT TO CUT COSTS and save on carbon? Come and chat with our experts at your local rugby club about the latest green tech and how you can make your home more energy efficient. As part of Scottish Gas's commitment to Energising a greener, fairer future, they have teamed up with Scottish Rugby Union for a greener Scotland. To find out more about the event and other opportunities to save money visit the website here - <https://www.britishgas.co.uk/about-us/partnerships/roadshows.html> - or just head to - Stirling County Rugby Football Club, Causewayhead Rd, Stirling, FK9 5AP, 15th August, 12pm - 5pm.

Tha Gaelic Math

Gaelic For Adults

Online Classes

Monday Beginners (A1):

6.30- 8pm

15/9/25—6/10 or

27/10/25—1/12/25

Tuesday Post Beginners (A2/B1):

6.30- 8pm

16/9 - 2/12/25

For more details of cost and to book a place [email us](#).

Learningandemployability@stirling.gov.uk



CC & Local Place Plan

AS WE INDICATED in the last newsletter, Maureen Berry has left the Community Council. James Gormley has kindly volunteered to join the Community Council and will be co-opted at the next meeting.

We hope to continue with the Local Place Plan and your last chance to contribute will be at the Flower and Produce Show. Someone will be there to discuss any contributions you have to make. At present replies to the postal questionnaire stress the wonderful character and scenery of the valley but also demand action on the roads. Please join in with your thoughts. PH

Grants Update



GRANT AMOUNTS FOR the new financial year are:

E-bike	< £500
Student Bursary	< £500
Children & Young People	< £250
Warm Up / Costs Down	< £200
Get the Valley Growing	< £500 (large), < £250 (small)
Energy Efficiency	< £2000

Due to staff holidays, applications will not be processed until the beginning of August and, with the exception of one of the grants, will be on a first come first served basis. Energy Efficiency applications will be open only to those who did not receive such a grant in the 1st July'24 to 30th June'25 period. Details of the new grant schemes are on the VRG website - www.valleyrenewables.co.uk.

Community Grants for projects with the potential to benefit the whole community will remain at < £5000 for small projects. Large projects of over £5000 will be considered. This funding comes from the Earlsburn / Kingsburn (Nadara) windfarm community benefit fund which is limited to projects of a Community wide nature.

The VRG trustee directors acknowledge that they don't have a monopoly on knowing what grants should be offered towards, or at what level. Decisions are reached after much listening, researching and discussion but we know they won't suit everyone. So, if you have a suggestion for a new grant, or a different way of administering the schemes, that is both allowed by the grant donors and the VRG articles, please let us know. Contact a VRG trustee director or email:

admin@valleyrenewables.co.uk.

Old Gardening Tools?

DO YOU HAVE ANY unwanted garden equipment? Or are you a community group looking for some? Forth Environment Link (FEL) is aiming to play matchmaker, and team up your old tools with a new home.



Get in touch with FEL Scotland to register interest and to get the ball rolling on collecting and delivering spades, rakes, and hoes, etc. Let them know what you've got to go at -

climate@FELScotland.org.

Postal Votes



IT IS HIGHLY LIKELY that many of you have postal votes when it comes to an election of any sort. Remember that they need to be renewed every 3 years. A reminder should come through to you but, if it doesn't, you can find all the information on

<https://www.saa.gov.uk/central/howto/>

It is very handy and saves you missing out on voting if you are going to be away.

Energy Efficiency Project

OUR ENERGY EFFICIENCY GRANT SCHEME reopened on August 1st. A change to this grant has been made for this financial year and will be limited to those residents who did not receive a grant in our last financial year.

We are pleased to announce that Shirley Paterson of Nextenergy along with Ronan McGirr, an architect from Fine Designs Limited, will be in attendance at our Flower & Produce Show on August 9th. Many of you will be acquainted with Shirley who carried out EPC+ surveys on 62 of our houses. She and Ronan have also been delivering an advisory service to those who have received an EPC+ rating in D and E bands. Several dwellings in our community have not yet received an EPC+ rating. If you have questions regarding energy improvements, this is an opportunity to obtain information on the topic. We all need to lower our emissions and for many this is difficult both technically and financially, so please make the most of our experts' knowledge to point you to grant support.

Remember Home Energy Scotland can provide much higher grant support than we are able to from VRG. You can claim up to £7500 for eligible projects and also apply for an interest-free loan. This grant support is available for each energy efficiency project.

JS

Dog (Owner) Issues

MOST RECENTLY THERE have been a number of serious incidents reported in the Carron Valley area involving dangerously out of control dogs on Forestry & Land Scotland land. Several members of the public have encountered aggressive dogs off a lead, with no effective recall. In one incident, a family with young children were surrounded by a pack of dogs displaying aggressive behaviour and the handler was unable to recall the dogs and was visibly struggling with the dog they had on the lead. Another incident a cyclist on a forestry track sustained a dog bite. These encounters are understandably distressing and present a risk to public safety.

More alarmingly, a recent case of livestock worrying resulted in the deaths of several sheep, with others requiring to be euthanased due to the severity of their injuries. This is a deeply upsetting and entirely preventable situation. On these occasions the incidents were reported to the police and local officers have requested that members of the public report any incidents to allow officers to build a profile, in the instance that the same dogs are involved in several incidents within the area.

Due to the rural nature of Carron Valley, these incidents can be difficult to witness or respond to quickly. Isolated areas and limited foot traffic mean incidents may go unnoticed with regards to livestock worrying. It is especially important for local residents, walkers, cyclists and farmers to remain vigilant and report concerns promptly. Looking out for one another and sharing information is vital in helping keep our countryside safe for people and animals alike.

We remind all dog owners that it is a legal requirement to maintain control of their animals at all times, particularly around livestock and in public outdoor areas. What you can do:

- > Keep dogs on a lead near livestock or in open areas where control cannot be guaranteed.
- > Report any incidents of aggressive or out of control dogs to Police Scotland via 101, or 999 in an emergency.
- > If you have witnessed any recent incidents in the Carron Valley area, or have any relevant information, please report it to the authorities, referencing the location.

Community safety is everyone's responsibility. Let's work together to promote responsible enjoyment of the outdoors in our lovely area.

GB



Our Elected Representatives



Evelyn Tweed MSP evelyn.tweed.msp@parliament.scot 01786 235 255; Chris Kane MP chris.kane.mp@parliament.uk 01786 652 345; Cllr Neil Benny bennyn@stirling.gov.uk 01786 233 124; Cllr Scott Farmer farmers@stirling.gov.uk 01786 233 131; Cllr Jen Preston prestonj@stirling.gov.uk 01786 233 126.

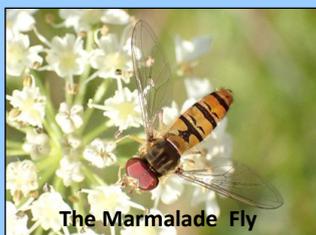
Fly of the Month

THE MARMALADE FLY

IN JUNE BY FAR THE commonest hoverfly on the flowers in your garden or hedgerow would have been the Common Banded Hoverfly. I only saw one or two Marmalade Flies each day. Then on July 12th I saw 20, on the 17th, 75 and by the 19th the Hogweed and Meadowsweet on my usual morning walk seemed to be full of Marmalade Flies with over 200. Where had they suddenly all come from?



Common Banded Hover Fly



The Marmalade Fly

Several species of hoverfly are very similar to the Common Banded Hoverfly, however the Marmalade Fly is the only species with alternating broad and very narrow black bands on an orange, marmalade coloured, abdomen making them easily identified.

The interesting thing about the Marmalade Fly is that, unlike the Common Banded Hoverfly, they can't survive a British winter, other than a very few in sheltered places, like someone's greenhouse, hence the few I saw in June. The vast majority spend the winter down near the Mediterranean! Then in early spring the newly hatched adults fly several hundred miles north, fatten up on pollen and nectar of the early spring flowers, and lay eggs. The larvae then prey on greenfly and other small insects and, perhaps a month or so after arriving, the next generation repeats the process to find the flowers and insects of the later spring further north. It may take three or four generations for the population to reach Scotland by the middle of July. Once refuelled on nectar and pollen they will lay eggs, and their offspring will play an important role in controlling the greenfly in our gardens and countryside. Then in September, the next generation of adults will fly back south, possibly in a single generation.

Recipe of the Month

TABOULEH - Great middle eastern dish to have with a barbeque or with a steak or fish. You decide the quantities.

Bulgar wheat	Firm tomatoes
Cucumber	Red onion
Olive oil	Chopped mixed herbs
Lemon juice	Seasoning
Chicken or vegetable stock	



Soak Bulgar wheat in chicken or vegetable stock until just covered, then cover with a T-towel or cling film until all absorbed. When cool, lightly mix with finger tips until the grains are separated (as you would with cous-cous), until flowing through. Mix with quite a lot of lemon juice and olive oil (you should taste both) and see it glisten.

As the bulgar wheat is soaking, peel the tomatoes (quite a lot), core and chop finely. Slice the cucumber in half down the centre, scoop out the seeds with a tea spoon then chop as finely as possible. Chop the red onion as finely as possible.

Mix the cucumber, tomatoes, red onion and bulgar wheat together. Add seasoning to taste. Then add chopped mixed herbs. All together it's very refreshing with a bowl of fresh Greek yogurt on the side.

KS

CVDCC

All welcome 19.30-20.30. Meetings will recommence from the 2nd Tues. in September at the Community Hall, and monthly thereafter up to December. Any permanent residents are very welcome.

To comment or attend contact:

cvdcc.sec@gmail.com.

Grants Paid

BETWEEN: 01/7 & 30/6/25

8 Student Bursaries	£4,000
22 Young Person's	£5,501
23 Energy Efficiency	£41,145
16 Get the Valley Growing	£5,458
3 E Bikes	£1,499
21 Warm Up / Costs Down	£3,699
5 Community Groups	£2,331
69 TOTAL	£63,633

Contact Us

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VRG admin and information:
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07765 295 282

Visit us on the web at:
www.valleyrenewables.co.uk
or Carron Valley Connections
private Facebook group

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Remember - Flower & Produce Show & BBQ - 9th August