

Ferry Attractive

Breaking News: As we go to print, we have just heard that Queensferry councillor, George Grubb, has been elected Edinburgh's Lord Provost. Brilliant news, George. Many congratulations from GreenFerry. (PS: You may need some new headwear!)

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Everyone's a winner!

Well, here we are again, bringing you news and behind-the-scenes stories of all that goes on (environmentally speaking) in South Queensferry. (OK, well maybe not all, but we try our best.)



It's hard to believe that GreenFerry started only two years ago – it seems as if we've been here forever – planning and delivering new garden areas, hanging baskets, flowers for the High Street, tools, information, and support to other groups. We hope you're noticing the difference. In fact, there's so much going on now, we've had to increase the size of our newsletter, and must thank Agilent Technologies for sponsoring it.

Queensferry is lucky enough to have five environmental groups working to make this a better place to live. All schools are now busily improving their grounds, and teachers are working hard to make children more aware of the importance of the environment. Even our nursery children are joining in, and we've a fine collection of retired people who regularly help us. We've also had our best ever support financially from our community (see our massive thank-you list at the end). Thank you all for believing in us, and for wanting to make a difference.



And what a year we've just had. In the summer, Queensferry in Bloom put together a folio of all the work which the environmental groups, residents, businesses and other organisations were up to. All this was submitted for the "Keep Scotland Beautiful Competition" and, for the third year in a row, Queensferry was awarded "Best Urban Village" in the Edinburgh area. How brilliant is that?

Inspired, GreenFerry went on to enter Queensferry for the Calor Gas Scottish Community of the Year 2006 and our community was runner-up in the environment section, beating over 100 entries. Another triumph. (Look out for our plaque on the Kilt Shop wall at the Boathouse Steps.)



So we must say a huge 'thank-you' to everyone who turned out at short notice (sorry about that) on that day in September, to fill the Priory Church with displays, videos, posters, and photographs, each showing the enormous contribution local people make.

GreenFerry put together a powerpoint presentation which introduced our community and outlined a typical year in Queensferry's calendar. Picture after picture showed people (that's you) enjoying community events such as the Raft Race, the RNLI open day, Ferry Fair Week, the Mosaic Project, Arts Festival, Fair Trade Events, Jubilee FM, Vision for Queensferry, the Christmas Pageant, the Loony Dook, and much more.



The judges then saw all the environmental work -- people of all ages (that's you again) voluntarily picking up litter, planting up tubs and flowerboxes, improving the village's gardens, planting up woodland areas, sweeping the High Street, and getting involved in recycling projects. Afterwards, the judges toured the various stalls and talked directly to those involved – including school children who showed off their work and were a credit to their schools.

It was a pleasure, a real pleasure, to hear people talk about what it was like to live in the South Queensferry area, and hear how generously they gave up their time to help others. I had a lump in my throat at the end. What a community.

Joyce Faulkner
GreenFerry

GreenFerry News

Hanging baskets, tubs and flowers

Very soon now, the High Street will burst into its usual colour. We've 56 hanging baskets on order, and many tubs, planters and flowerboxes to get ready on the Terraces, Scotmid and other areas. Planting Day is June 3 at 10am. Meet at the Police Station.

Hill Court

Last year, Vision for Queensferry identified Hill Court (flats at the bottom of the Loan) as an area which residents thought deserved improving. So we added this area to our projects. We painted the railings, and prepared flowerboxes. We will put tubs of flowers by the new bin store, and we plan to improve the planting around the new seat. We have also written to the council to ask about sprucing up the dismal lock-ups, and work on those is to begin soon. All this is to support residents there who already make a wonderful effort to improve the balconies.

Scotstoun

Another area we'd like to see improved is the Scotstoun shops. Last year, we assured residents that we'd not leave them out. So we're starting off there with two giant tubs of flowers.

Dalmeny Bench

With the help of a small grant from Age Concern Scotland, GreenFerry achieved their final target of £750 earlier this year for a new bench seat at Dalmeny. We then consulted local people for suggestions as to the best location for it. All being well, the bench should be installed later in the summer.

Gardens projects

At the end of the financial year, we squeezed in a late grant request asking for money to improve a few dull green spaces we had our eye on. Success. Work began first on the Police Station. Staff there helped us uproot the old shrubbery, and plant anew. Then we moved on from there up to Morison Gardens, knocked a few doors, and asked residents there to help us. Soon the railings were painted, new bark put down, old stuff ripped out, plans drawn up to put in something special. After that we'll be off to Walker Drive, and one or two other areas besides. Thank you to GreenFerry members, Jeana Gorman and June Jansen, for their hard work in planning and leading the garden projects.

Painting Parties

Painting railings is one of those jobs which always seemed to be low priority for the council but rather than watch the railings rust through, GreenFerry asked for the paint and we set about painting the town ourselves. This project is supervised by Danny Murphy (Scotmid's butcher) who leads a small team on his afternoon off (currently Tuesdays). Later on, we'll repaint the gritting bins.

Christmas Trees

As an experiment, we designed new brackets which would hold Christmas trees as well as hanging baskets. We tried out six at the Boathouse Steps and they looked lovely. We hope now to get a grant to replace them all right down the High Street.



Freecycle

One person's junk is another's treasure. That's the principle of Freecycle -- a network of people who pass on (free) items they have finished with. Graham Clarkson, a keen GreenFerry supporter, took on the task of setting up a local freecycle group which was immediately successful. To join, go to the website and follow the directions there:

http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/Freecycle_Queensferry/join

Tree planting

Our local Scout group contacted GreenFerry with a view to planting 100 trees and taking on other planting projects as a way of celebrating their centenary. We pointed them in the direction of the Woodland Trust who supplied the trees, and the Scouts themselves did the planting. Trees were planted in every school, including the High School, and in other areas. Well done all.

Tools

Late in the summer, we had a call from an elderly resident, a retired engineer. Heavy work was out of the question, he said, but could he possibly look after our tools for us? Yes, please. Rupert Crowe has now transformed our tools' store. A good man to know. Our stock of community tools, incidentally, has now grown and tools are available for borrowing. A full list will be on our website shortly. We are also pleased to accept old tools for our community projects, if you happen to be clearing out.

Castle Rock Sheltered Housing

One day, in GreenFerry headquarters (aka Picnic Coffee Shop) an elderly customer (Rose Minto) told us how she missed having her own little garden to look after. Three weeks later and with permission from Castle Rock Sheltered Housing, she now has. That's our Jeana and June again. They even took Rose to the garden centre to choose the plants.

Publicity

No sooner had we won the Calor Gas Award than we were featured in a glossy magazine, *Green Places*, for landscape architects. We were also asked to give presentations to Forth Estuary Forum, and to write about our community work in various journals. A student has also made GreenFerry the subject of her master's dissertation. Andrea Howe, our treasurer, maintains our website with photographs so you can easily see our projects in action: <http://www.greenferry.org.uk>

Awards

We wanted to say 'thank you' to all those who support us, to give them all a pat on the back, and to arrange for them to share their ideas. The Orocco Pier kindly offered to host an event for us, MP John Barrett agreed to present our awards, Dan Davison, a resident and (very keen) member of "litter-pickers anonymous" was guest of honour, and, at the end of March, around 60 people enjoyed the first ever GreenFerry Awards Ceremony.

Eco Schools

As part of Queensferry High School's ECO-School programme an adventurous regeneration project is underway at the east end of the school which will create a chill-out garden area for all staff and students to enjoy. The school's craft and design department has been busy preparing new metal planters which will be filled with green and blue grasses and phormiums. Having created a truly relaxing setting the next step is to allow people to enjoy it to the full by creating a seating area for both staff and pupils. GreenFerry members have enjoyed working with teachers and pupils on this project. Sadly, some member of staff are retiring this year but we cannot let you go without telling you much we have appreciated your enthusiasm, your energy, and your willingness to contribute your time to improving the school environment.

Echline Community Woodland

15th Birthday Celebrations!

It will be fifteen years since the Community Woodland was planted at Echline, in November 1992, when over two hundred local people turned out to plant over thirteen hundred native trees and shrubs in what was then a farmland field. Young and old planted the tiny trees, known as 'whips', which were tenderly cared for and weeded for the first five years.

Today, the woodland is well established with trees as tall as houses thriving and large crowns of Spring leaves with a myriad of insects making their home in this new habitat, alongside several species of bird, woodland plants and even hedgehogs and bats.

A modest group of volunteers, working under the auspices of woodland owner, Queensferry and District Community Council, takes the time to manage the woodland. This involves clearing litter, planting additional trees and wildflowers, weeding, trimming and grass strimming. Every year a Forestry expert visits us to assess the woodland and offer advice as necessary.



To celebrate the fifteen years milestone, an anniversary event is planned for the woodland. This will take place on **Saturday, 2 June, from 10am - 3pm**. The list of activities going on that day will include:

- **Storytelling**
- **Music**
- **Mini-beast safari**
- **Face-painting**
- **Nature Treasure Trail**

Refreshments will also be available. All welcome, particularly children (supervised, please), but grown-ups who helped by planting 'their' tree all that time ago may want to come along and see just what has happened since then.

The original video of the planting day will be shown on-site, so you can come and see yourself as you were on that sunny, autumn day back in 1992.

For more information, or if you would like to be involved in the woodland's management, contact ECW Co-ordinator, Jim Steele (Phone: 07850194502).



Still confused about who's who?

Here's a quick reminder of who's who. The two woodland groups (Echline and Friends of the Ferry Glen) concentrate on those two areas. CleanFerry is a sub-group of GreenFerry, and is a litter-picking group which operates mostly in winter. GreenFerry does all things environmental, all year round – from baskets, flowerboxes, tubs and gardens to recycling, painting railings, and street art. (We interpret the environment very broadly!) We also aim to educate our community on green issues, and support the schools and other groups in their projects. Queensferry in Bloom enters the village into the Keep Scotland Beautiful competition, and does some planting projects of its own. They are particularly interested in sustainable planting, and recently planted up a garden area at Dalmeny Station.

Friends of the Ferry Glen

After an extremely successful fund-raising weekend in the spring, Friends of the Ferry Glen are delighted to report that work begins again in the next few weeks to restore the bridge and walkway. In addition, a new set of steps will be put in which link the path of the upper back brae (below the bowling green) with the cyclepath lower down.



Meantime, events in the glen continue through the summer.

A storytelling event is planned for 23rd July and look out for the surveying of Japanese Knotweed.

Litter-picking continues on a regular basis every second Monday, and, for the present at least, there does seem to be less litter than previously was the case.

You can follow the activities of the Ferry Glen Group by visiting their website: <http://www.ferryglen.org.uk>

Enjoy the bluebells, and keep your eye on the bird-boxes.

CleanFerry

CleanFerry has had a very successful year with 10 clean-up events taking place through a very mild winter. The dumping of the free newspapers became an issue for us, so we began a campaign about this in the local press. We wrote to the paper deliverers, and to their parents, and asked residents to phone when their papers did not arrive. This brought swift results, and hopefully has put a stop to this problem.



"Litter-pickers Anonymous" now numbers over 50 people who carry on litter-picking on their own throughout the summer, adopting an area near them. This is a marvelous way to show you care for your community, and we do appreciate it.

A new event for us was a joint clean-up with Kirkliston. Starting at each end of the cyclepath, volunteers worked towards the middle to meet up for a "party on the path". This event was supported by a grant from CSV Action Earth and Transport Initiative Edinburgh. Kirkliston are now hoping to form a litter-picking group like ours.

Finally, we held two successful beach clean-ups in the autumn, and CleanFerry also now features in Keep Scotland Beautiful's leaflets about dog fouling. KSB were most impressed by CleanFerry's antics during Poop Scoop Week, which involved a doggy costume, a megaphone, and the distribution of free poop bags.



Notes From a Park Ranger

As part of the City of Edinburgh Council's restructuring, I was fortunate, as new park ranger, to have Queensferry and Kirkliston allocated as my 'patch'. My role is to help look after the parks and green spaces in the area, and to encourage people to use and appreciate them.

The most exciting thing about Queensferry is the outstanding community spirit, the enthusiasm, and friendliness which I have found here.

If you would like to know more about our future plans, I would be happy to hear from you. Or, if you see me around please do stop for a chat, I don't bite – well, not after lunch anyway.

Contact: Iwan Thomas, Park Ranger
Phone - 07990 787026 Email - park.ranger1@btconnect.com

Note: We are now recruiting volunteer Tree Wardens in the area. This involves a wide range of activities such as identifying notable trees and tree planting. It is a great way to get outdoors and better appreciate your surroundings. Full training is provided for anyone interested. Contact Alan Mitchell on 0131 469 3677.

E-ferry

Last September, e-ferry was launched as an internet news network for the village. This is a way of getting news of what's going on in the town pop right into your e-mail box. And if you have an event you want to advertise you can easily send it round. To join, send an e-mail to:

E-ferry-subscribe@yahoogroups.co.uk

Mosaic project

GreenFerry fully supports the Mosaic Project which is attracting all kinds of excitement from all who have seen it. When this project is completed, Queensferry will have a 60-foot mosaic for the library wall. Here's your well-known musical duo, Joyce and Jim, with their section on the Priory Church, in the making.



Show your support

Every year at this time we ask the community to help us by making a donation to Greenferry funds. If you like what we do, and you'd like to support your community, please fill in our form and become a Friend. Many thanks.

Finally, special thanks to:

Agilent Technologies, Castle Rock Sheltered Housing, City of Edinburgh Council, Dalmeny Art Club, Dalmeny Estate, Dalmeny Metals, Ian Andrews (Coopercraft), Jamie Dunnett, Joyce and Jim, Jubilee FM, Line Dancers, Orocco Pier, Picnic Coffee Shop, Queensferry Parish Guild, Queensferry Gazette, Queensferry Businesses, Rotary Club South Queensferry, Schools (ALL of them), Scotmid and Tesco's Supermarkets, Scottish Water, Kenny Sinclair, Sportsman Events, St Margaret's Lodge, The Staghead, Tom Thumb Nursery, Watchman Alarms, anyone we missed out, and, of course, local people who support us in many more ways than we can tell you here.

Poet's Corner

Seems we just can't stop people writing about how wonderful South Queensferry is:

St Margaret's Secret

Drive over the Forth, and on to Auld Reekie,
The Castle, the Gardens and Palace,
They dazzle at first, I wouldn't deny,
But may I remark, without malice:

You're missing a gem; you're passing it by,
Disdainful (and blind), sadly snooty,
Tucked under the bridge, by its harbour and Hawes,
To praise it is clearly my duty.

This gem is serene, its streets decked with green,
Its people so friendly and couthy,
And pub, and hotel, and café, and Inn,
Will banish your thirst, if you're drouthy.

But you're not the first to discover this spot,
Believe me, I've witnesses many,
Take my word, do not doubt, they are world renowned,
I'll wager a pound to a penny.

Here's one :

when at night, as I wander abroad,
And pass by the Inn called the Hawes,
A voice whispers softly, an echo replies,
R.L.S. from the past bids me pause:

"I've sailed the wide seas, and explored the Wild West,
And kidnapped my thoughts in some stories,
Samoa was lovely, and France was a joy,
But one place beat them all with its glories:

How can I forget that delightful wee town,
With its churches, its harbour, its Vennel?
As long as the Scots cherish peace and good friends,
The children, the women, and men'll

Sing praises aloud, to this Eden by Forth,
Its bridges, its kirks and Marina,
Though Paris and Venice have treasures as well,
On balance I'm certainly keener

To return here one day and reside in this spot,
Treasure Island abandoned behind me,
To buy Plewland House and the Priory Church
And there all my readers may find me.

My ghost will rejoice -- no, it won't scare them off,
It will say I'm at peace and quite merry.
That I've calmed my distress, and put it to rest,
In that haven, that heaven - - - Queensferry."

Jim McIntosh.