

Holmehill Ltd (Holmehill Community Buyout Group) **Chair's report for Annual General Meeting 4 June 2009**

It is now four and a half years since our **Holmehill Community Buyout Group** came into being. We still have a clear long term objective as a group to take the Hill into community control for the benefit of the both the residents of, and visitors to, Dunblane. Meantime, however, we continue to be an active, well supported group, and I am pleased to be able to summarise our many activities and enterprises over the past year, and particularly to thank all those who have contributed to the success of these.

At last year's AGM we were pleased to welcome Libby Hughes and Ian Macleod as new Board Members. We also decided to move to a new schedule of bimonthly rather than monthly meetings, and to hold meetings on different days of the week rather than always on the same day of the week. This seems to have worked well, and all our meetings continue to be well attended by both members and non-members, all contributing in various ways. I am particularly grateful to Steve for continuing his sterling work as group **Secretary**, never failing to get papers out in time and deal with correspondence efficiently. We also continue to be grateful to Scottish Churches House for hosting our meetings and being so accommodating, and we wish them well in the refurbishment programme which is currently underway.

Our **web site** continues to be a great asset to us as a group, and I am very grateful to Grant for keeping this up to date. Grant also used his considerable expertise to enable people to donate to our funds through the website.

As in the past, we were involved in a variety of events and endeavours throughout the year, all aimed at encouraging visitors to appreciate and enjoy Holmehill. First up was our second **Holmehill Family Funday** last August. As before, Steve masterminded the organisation of this, ably assisted by Katie, Malcolm, Dave, and many others, and the day went really well, with over 200 visitors wowed by giant creepy crawlies, birds of prey and a family concert. It was great that we were able to work closely and effectively with other community groups in the town, in particular the Dunblane Council of Churches and the Dunblane Development Trust. Many thanks go to all who contributed to the day's success. Planning for this coming August's event is already well under way – and it is already officially listed in the 'What's On' guide to Stirling.

For **Christmas**, we decided to produce a **card** this year instead of a calendar. This sold well, and stocks remain which we can sell this year. Grateful thanks are due to David, who again managed to secure a table and sell packs at the Victoria Halls charity cards event, and to many others who sold cards on behalf of the group. Building on the success of the 2008 **calendar**, we are now planning a **2010** one with images of Holmehill as well as other aspects of Dunblane. We have offered £20 for photos submitted which make it into the new calendar, and there is still time for budding photographers to submit images for consideration.

Lorraine, Malcolm and Rosemary have all worked hard to gather reminiscences, stories and photos about Holmehill for the **Oral History Project**, and have now reached the stage where there is sufficient material to put together as a small

booklet - which is sure to generate considerable interest locally once completed. Local historian, Fiona Watson, of Stirling University, was very impressed by this recently, and has offered further suggestions to develop the project. Many thanks to all involved in this very worthwhile and interesting project.

In January our group was invited to contribute ideas to the developing **Community Plan** for Dunblane. Several of us attended a brainstorming event at the Braeport Centre and succeeded in getting Holmehill well and truly on the local agenda. Alan Tuffs, the community facilitator, also came to talk to some group members later and find out more about our aims and objectives.

Meantime, a sub group involving Libby, Alison and Phil has been meeting regularly since the winter to take forward the proposed **Dunblane greenspaces walks leaflet**. They have been busy drafting ideas and text, consulting other groups in Dunblane and fundraising. On the latter task, I am pleased to say that we have been offered sponsorship from Dunblane Hydro and also a grant from SNH, so are hopefully well on the way to getting the leaflet produced in time for the Funday in August. Thanks are also due to David for having made the initial approach to the Hydro regarding sponsorship.

Spring meant another early morning for all those involved in our second **Dawn Chorus walk** on Holmehill and the Laighills, followed by a cooked breakfast in the Braeport for the early birds. Chris and Rhys lead the groups and we are very grateful for their time and expertise in what is rapidly becoming an annual event in Dunblane. Thanks go to them as well as to Debbie, Libby, Tim, Katie, Malcolm and Phil for contributing to the success of the morning. Chris has also been a regular visitor to Holmehill over the past months and his wildlife blogs provide a fascinating insight into the variety of life living on the Hill. Continuing on the wildlife theme, a bat event is now being planned for September.

As before, we put up our invaluable marquee at **Fling by the River**, and in almost tropical temperatures attracted many inside to make badges, read about the Oral History Project and buy **special key rings** with the Holmehill logo made by Grant. Thanks are due to him for his efforts, as well as to Dave for organising and putting up the marquee, and Alison, Libby and Malcolm for making the day such a success.

Other significant achievements during the past year include the successful **registration of the Braeport Centre** – a key asset to Holmehill, and something we are very keen to support. This was taken forward by the DDT with considerable technical support from Steve. We have also continued to liaise with Stirling Council over the installation of new core paths **signs for Holmehill**, and we hope it won't be too long before they are in place.

So, altogether, I feel it has been a very successful year for the group. We have plenty of ideas for the year to come – including a fungi flurry (sorry Steve!), a Tree event, a lighting extravaganza, a music fundraiser, and another Halloween event, so I look forward to another interesting year ahead. It remains for me to thank all of you who have supported the group in so many ways over the past year and very much hope that you will continue to be involved with Holmehill in the year ahead.

Caroline Crawford, Chair 2008/2009.