

THE
DARVEL
BULLETIN

Lace Anniversary

Darvel Voice

Waterlip

DIG at 25



We've been told to tell ye this spring...



The Community Action Plan has been published as a summary pamphlet, reflecting notable progress in implementing improvements from the previous plan. Interest in developing the new plan has waned somewhat, but this Bulletin reviews significant achievements and outlines new improvements identified through community consultation. Voluntary groups and organisations, alongside East Ayrshire Council and Ayrshire Roads Alliance, will work together to implement feasible projects.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of power looms being introduced to the Valley by Alexander Morton of Darvel in 1876. To celebrate this historic milestone, a range of commemorative events are planned, starting with an evening of local stories and song at the Town Hall on Friday 24 April.

It is also the 25th anniversary of the Darvel Improvement Group (DIG). The Bulletin features a profile on two longstanding DIG members, Maureen Ross and Joyce Morton, highlighting the group's important contributions. Looking ahead, DIG has begun securing funding for an exciting restoration project to replace the Fleming memorial in Hastings Square.

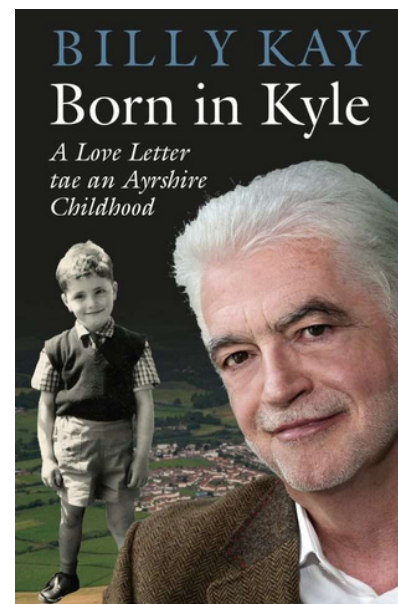
The Waterlip Improvement Scheme is nearly complete, with solar stud uplighting installed, an information board, and new access to the bench at the East Main Street end. An article details the improvements made over the scheme's five years.

The Darvel Bulletin is now available in three formats: printed copies at local outlets, an online downloadable file, and the innovative Bulletin blog, also accessible via the website. Darvel Bulletin – Darvel

2026 is set to be another busy year, with an expanded range of events and activities aiming to engage and delight Darvel residents. The Community Calendar provides details of all local happenings, with a more informative online version available on the Discover Darvel website: <https://discoverdarvel.com/community-calendar/>

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LACE



our 150 year heritage

The Valley Lace Festival

2026 marks the 150th anniversary of the introduction of power looms in the Irvine Valley in 1876 by Alexander Morton, who was born and bred in Darvel and this changed dramatically the fortunes of the valley towns especially Darvel and Newmilns. Darvel in particular benefitted and became the world's leading manufacturer of lace - and remained so until the latter part of the 20th century with the rise of manufacturing in the Far East.

Darvel will feature a range of lace related activity during the course of the year and we kick off our year of celebrating this anniversary with an evening of stories and songs with Billy Kay and Robin Stapleton

24 April: Born in Kyle - an evening of stories and songs with Billy Kay and Robyn Stapleton

11 May: The Lace Trail - a lace themed valley walk from Darvel to Newmilns as part of this year's Walkfest

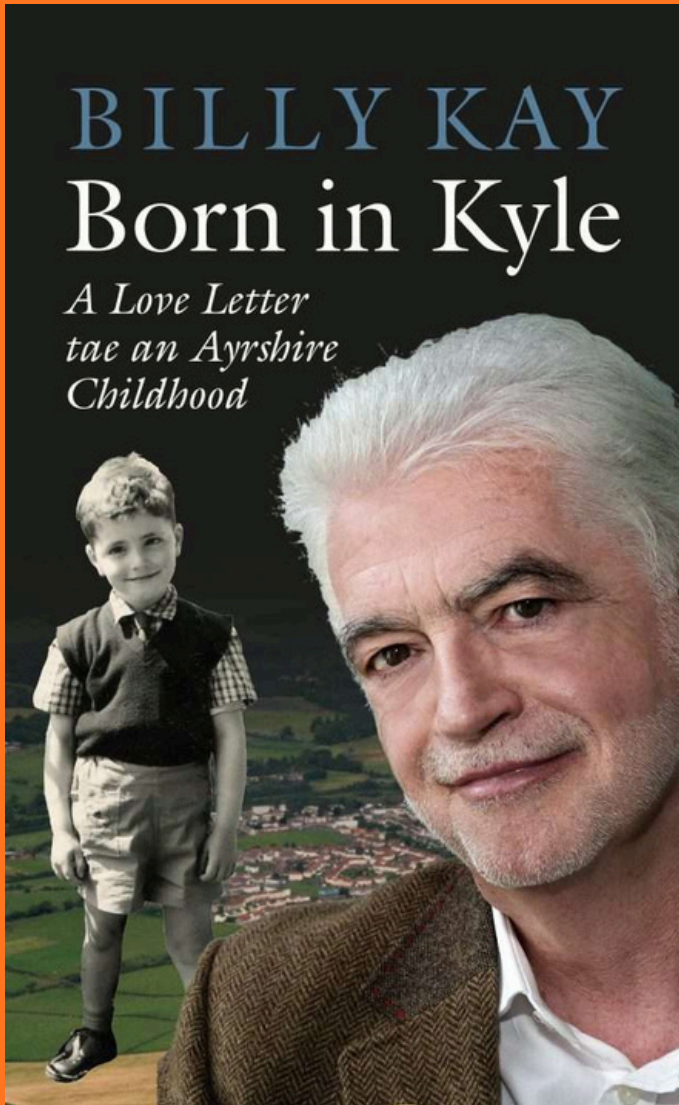
20 June: Darvel Gala Day - the clock is turned back to the halcyon days of the Darvel Lace Queen celebrations, with the crowning of a Darvel Lace Queen ...and King.

7-10 October: Lace Exhibition - The highlight of the year will be a Lace Exhibition held in Darvel Town Hall supported by East Ayrshire Leisure. In addition to information boards, photographic collages, films, artefacts and pamphlets, workshops and school visits will be arranged during the four day exhibition.

10 October: The Warp and the Weft - The culmination of our Lace Exhibition is an evening "conversation" - The Warp and the Weft - all about the lace industry in the Valley and the current work still going on at MYB Textiles and Haddow, Aird & Crerar. Chaired by local celebrity, Billy Kay this will feature a number of local characters sharing memories, anecdotes and insight.

Born in Kyle

A Love Letter tae An Ayrshire Childhood



With Billy Kay and Robyn Stapleton
7pm, Friday 24th April
Darvel Town Hall

£10*
entry

*"O aw the airts the wind can blaw, I
dearly like the West."*

In his memoir of growing up in Ayrshire, Billy Kay refers to this song as an Ayrshire anthem, one of many by Burns which gave people their strong Scottish identity. Here, Billy is joined by one of the country's finest exponents of Scots song, Robyn Stapleton, from Galloway in a celebration of the rich culture of Ayrshire and its weaving traditions. Billy will talk about the language, history, folklore and literature of his home in the Irvine Valley and read passages in a powerful, resonant Scots that is shot through with a sense of belonging...and a sense of humour! Robyn will grace the audience with songs like The Shuttle Rins, The Lass o Patie's Mill and O Aw the Airts.



A very special evening of story and song in
celebration
of **Lace 150** and the weaving traditions of
the Irvine Valley.

*Tickets available online through Discover Darvel
<https://discoverdarvel.com/born-in-kyle/>
or Thistle Du florist, Darvel



Signed copies of Billy's book will be available on the night - payable by cash or Bacs transfer only.

Click [here](https://www.edinburghmusicreview.com/reviews/945t2b14s4pwudkak0205uyeet6gjy) to read a review of Born in Kyle in the Edinburgh Music Review
<https://www.edinburghmusicreview.com/reviews/945t2b14s4pwudkak0205uyeet6gjy>

Darvel's Voice

The Community Action Plan is an important document that takes account of the views of the Darvel community in determining how best we can move forward over the next few years. Following last year's extensive consultation, East Ayrshire Council has now published the Action Plan and a formal launch was held on 11th March. Copies of the full plan and a summary pamphlet were distributed at the launch and the full plan is available from Darvel Library and summary pamphlets are also available in local shops and the library. It is important for us all to have a look at what we collectively we can do to continue our work to make Darvel a better place in which to live and to visit.

Can we work together to achieve the improvements identified in the plan?...you bet we can. So it is over to us in tandem with our partner organisations to begin to make inroads to achieve the aspirations of the Community Action Plan.

Darvel has a fine track record in recent years of our local organisations with support from East Ayrshire Council and our Irvine Valley councillors working together to make a difference and the challenge for the next few years is for this to continue. Our Bulletin, together with the Darvel Strategy Group will continue to monitor and report upon progress being made. Darvel & District Community Council has endorsed the main content of the report at its January meeting when the lead of the Steering Group, George Gardner, provided a summary of the draft plan and responded to a number of important questions that were asked. The Community Council together with organisations such as DART, Sports Darvel and DIG will have important parts to play in taking the key issues in the plan forward. However if we want to achieve the improvements that we would all want to see, then everyone in our community can contribute, in however small a way.



The 2026-2031 Darvel & Priestland Community Action Plan is our third and builds upon the successes of the previous two plans and the priorities and actions contained within them. To remind you, it involved extensive consultation through online questionnaires, ballots, surveys, public meetings and paper versions of the questionnaires.

The Steering Group which managed the process comprised representatives of community groups and organisations. The analysis of the information was undertaken by East Ayrshire's Vibrant Communities, now part of Ayrshire Leisure and one of the aims was to review and update the Place Plan for our community.

The Action Plan charts in some detail a variety of steps that can be made over the next 5 years to improve the town and the community. Some are dependent on our local authorities - East Ayrshire Council, Ayrshire Leisure and Ayrshire Roads Alliance, but others are much more dependent on what can be done by our own local groups and organisations. Here are some of the priority issues identified by the community to be addressed. It is a joint effort to make improvements that we would all want to see. It is also important to appreciate that some of the identified priorities, while strongly endorsed through the consultation, might simply not be practical.

- Improve the condition of roads and pavements
- Introduce effective traffic management (speed restrictions and parking)
- Increase frequency of Sunday bus services
- Revitalise Hastings Square (housing facades and the Fleming Memorial)
- Continue improvements to Morton Park (inclusive play, lighting, paths and provision of trees and shrubs)
- Investigate the establishment a community hub
- Address the poor condition of frontages along Main Street
- Implement planned improvements to Darvel Town Hall (accessibility, internal layout and facilities, external facade)
- Provide public toilets
- Pursue plans for the introduction of community sport facility at Jamieson Road factories site
- Continue efforts to reduce anti social behaviour, including dog fouling and littering
- Improve community cohesion with additional group activity
- Establish positive links with Newmilns and Galston
- Celebrate the history and heritage of the town - Loudoun Hill Battles, Darvel's Lace Industry, Sir Alexander Fleming
- Investigate the possibility of establishing a visitor centre for the Valley
- Increase range of events in the town building upon those already established
- Continue to promote events that can increase the footfall of the town
- Identify appropriate development for the site of the demolished tenements in East Main Street
- Review the layout and condition of the small East Main St square
- Provide additional activities for young people including their involvement in event provision
- Extend the range of community activities - music, sports, arts and crafts

A challenge - yes - but the community of Darvel has proved itself to be up to the task of delivering improvements that have been identified in the Community Action Plan. Some steps have already been taken to begin to address these priorities and we can look back over the past five years to determine if we have actually made a difference. Then decide for yourself.

Have We Made A Difference?



There has been a significant number of improvements that Darvel has seen during the past five years. And this has been in addition to the ongoing activities such as the stern work of the Darvel Improvement Group in maintaining community gardens, planters hanging baskets and the well loved Rose Garden, and the continued provision of quality music by the Darvel Music Company.

Key priorities of the 2020-2025 plan were challenging and included some major infrastructure improvements and a widening range of community activities. However the Darvel community, with the support of various funding sources has made significant progress. During the course of the plan, the Darvel Strategy Group produced an annual report on the implementation of the priorities identified in the plan to keep in the community informed of progress being made.

But judge for yourself...

Perhaps the most obvious change has been the demolition of the former co-operative buildings and their replacement with the **Corner Development**. Its construction was delayed by Covid Pandemic, but its impact has been staggering and led to the development being awarded the prestigious My Place Award by the Scottish Civic Trust in 2023..



The Corner has very quickly established itself as a hub for the community and a **wide range of community activities** and events have now been staged: the monthly markets, the annual cycling event - Darvelo, regular musical and children's activities and the list is growing. with other community organisations, Darvel Primary, East Ayrshire Council departments and even political parties taking advantage of the facility.



A second major priority of the previous plan was the repurposing of the **Turf Hotel** which had fallen into significant disrepair since its closure. The premises have now been transformed into dwellings and another eyesore was removed.



Other improvements along Main Street have included the repainting of the houses in **Hastings Square**, the repurposing of the closed **Horseshoe bar** as a new veterinary premises for the valley, the **shop front improvements** made to the Black Bull, Thistle Du and the Universal chinese carry out. Most recently the **derelict tenements** in East Main Street have been demolished and the remaining tenement building has been completely refurbished



And there's more...

The third key priority identified was the demolition of the derelict **Jamieson Road Factories** and the redevelopment of the site. While that has not yet been fully achieved, Darvel Community Trust (Sports Darvel) now has ownership of the site and are preparing plans for its redevelopment as a sports facility following extensive consultation with the community

Darvel has also witnessed improvements that have been made to **Morton Park**. The major improvement here has been the replacement of the sand pit with a toddler' soft play area. Other changes have included the provision of additional trees and picnic benches and replacement soft surfacing below the play equipment.

In terms of "movement", East Ayrshire Leisure implemented significant improvements to the popular **Loudoun Hill path**. Similarly, funding accessed over several years by DART for the **Waterlip** allowed improvements to be made by replacement of the fence along the bank of the Glen Water, reinforcing the river banks of the Irvine which were in danger of undercutting, and the resurfacing of the entire pathway.

In terms of transport we were pleased that the **bus timetable** of four buses per hour was reinstated and a small section of the Main Sreet has a 20mph limit imposed.

Sports Darvel have continue to develop their facilities at the **Sports hall** and continue to rebuild membership after the hiatus of the covid pandemic, and Darvel certainly rose to the changes presented during the pandemic, with over 90 volunteers providing support for the more vulnerable members of the community during that time.

Darvel's **history and heritage** has remained an important issue for our community. In 2023 we celebrated the 150th anniversary of Darvel gaining burgh status with an exhibition and the creation of the Darvel Timeline. Steps were taken to digitiise much of the material located in the heritage museum and last year we saw the unveiling of the very impressive Fleming mural, which has gained national and international attention.

There was also a response to the call for greater communications in the town. A number of social media platforms and websites have been established, and the Darvel Bulletin provides a regular update on activities and articles of local interest. In response to a call for an increase in voluntary activity a number of new community groups have been formed.






VALLEY WALKFEST



**22ND VALLEY WALKFEST
8-11 MAY 2026**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US VIA EMAIL OR SOCIAL MEDIA:

✉ valleywalkfest@gmail.com

 [/ValleyWalkFest](https://www.facebook.com/ValleyWalkFest)



COME AND JOIN OUR LOCAL WALKS FOR ALL AGES & ABILITIES

WalkFest is back and it's bigger than ever!

The **22nd annual Valley WalkFest** is back—and it's bigger than ever!

Get ready to walk, slide, and cycle your way through the Irvine Valley with a packed programme of activities, from family-friendly scavenger hunts and E-bike rides to tubing at the Newmilns snowsports centre. Across the weekend, 18 events will take place, covering an estimated 155 miles of walking, cycling and even climbing, all showcasing the fantastic routes and facilities our Valley has to offer.

This year is especially meaningful as we extend the festival to four days in celebration of the 150th anniversary of Alexander Morton's mechanised lace looms. To mark the occasion, we're introducing The Lace Trail—a commemorative walk from Darvel to Newmilns that explores the rich history of lace in the Valley. The walk includes a rare guided tour of the Morton, Young and Borland factory, the world's last remaining patterned lace from original Nottingham Lace Looms. We are incredibly grateful to the MYB team for welcoming us into their working mill.

While walking is at the heart of the festival, Valley WalkFest is about much more than that. It's about community—bringing people together, celebrating local resources, and encouraging everyone to get active in whatever way suits them. Over the four days, events will take place throughout Darvel, Newmilns and Galston. Highlights include:

- Family fun youth club hosted by Sports Darvel
- Free health "MOT" from the East Ayrshire Vibrant Communities CHAT Health Check team
- Nordic walking and digital navigation workshops with Gillian's Walks
- Bat-detection at dusk along the River Irvine with the EALT countryside rangers
- Ski taster sessions at PEAK Park
- E-bike rides with bikes available to borrow from CycleStation
- A guided walk around the grounds of Loudoun Castle & Kirk—our most popular event to date

And that's just a glimpse of what's in store. Full event details will be available on our social media channels and in our festival brochure, so be sure to follow us on Facebook or pick up a copy when they're released.

The Valley WalkFest has thrived thanks to the dedication of our volunteer organisers, walk leaders, sponsors, and the wider community. Their knowledge of the local area and its history is invaluable—far richer than anything you'll find on a map—and we are deeply grateful for their continued support.

This festival is truly community-led and community-driven, bringing together local talent, passion, and expertise. Our 22nd Valley WalkFest is shaping up to be our best yet, so lace up your boots, dust off your walking poles, and we'll see you there.



Hub @ the Corner

Following Verve's closure last year, DART looked into the possibility of creating a community hub in the former Verve premises immediately opposite The Corner. In January DART reached an agreement to lease the premises initially for a period of two years but with the longer term goal of purchasing the premises. DART does not have the facility or the resources to have the premises open on a full time basis at present, but it will provide an essential adjunct to The Corner, offering additional storage and most importantly toilet provision when events are being held in The Corner.

The establishment of a **Hub @ The Corner**, in whatever form it might take, is also a response to an improvement identified by the community in the new Community Action Plan.

This year will be a learning year as we work with the community in determining how best the hub can be used. As a starter, steps have already been taken to provide a facility that will offer residents opportunities through the provision of a working space and workshops to develop skills in a variety of creative art and craft activities. In addition, there will be a linkage of the Corner hub with this focus on art and craft, The Corner where there can be open air demonstrations and music performances and with the support of DART, work generated in the hub can be published on the Discover Darvel website. We have termed this **A Creative Ecosystem**.



A GIFT WHICH KEEPS ON GIVING

It has been long since realised that one of the best gifts you can give is the gift of education, giving self esteem, a purpose and the possibility of self improvement. Other than the basic education, most had to be paid for, anyone with a thirst for knowledge relied on libraries and furtherance of education was generally thanks to these institutes.

Let us look back over the last three centuries in the upper valley of the River Irvine to examine how the residents of the communities of Darvel, Galston and Newmilns were supported in difficult times and in the quest for knowledge.

Landowners were charged with the duty of looking after the less fortunate of the community, although some being more benevolent than others. Funding was generally available through the churches for those in need, it wasn't easy to get it. It was thoroughly means tested before the Kirk Session would agree to offer any kind of relief and failing that, there was the workhouse or 'Poor House'. The workhouse was the last resort and designed to make things difficult for people to deter them from relying in public assistance. Information on some claimants can be found in the 'Poor Registers'.

First of all, the Kirk Session would contact relatives and failing that, all parishes the claimant had been in, asking for them to take responsibility. A dark veil of shame hung over anyone in such dire straits that they had to 'go on the parish'. With no welfare or pension service, it wasn't unusual to find professional men, such as dentists or doctors listed amongst the occupants of the 'Poor House'.

An extract from the Newmilns Kirk Session records dated 1935:

The Mod^r laid before the Session a letter from the Rev^d M^cLeishman of Govan regarding the Widow of Andrew Gilchrist who had gone to that Parish from Darvel and had died of fever before he had been a year in that Parish. As she has four children and on the eve of being confined again the Session authorise the Clerk to answer the said letter and to say that the pound advanced to her by Govan Parish will be repaid by our Carrier at Murdochs E Nile Street on presenting a receipt and to request the Kirk Session of Govan to give her 2/- weekly which will be paid by the Carrier as above at the end of every three months.

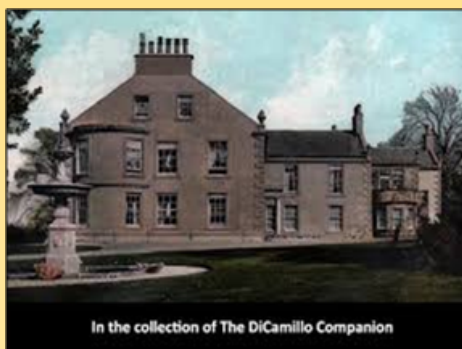
The major **heritors** did take on larger projects though. John, 4th Earl of Loudoun developed Darvel from a hamlet to a village (now a town). Although granting 'fues' (a form of land lease) was common practice, it allowed houses and cottage industries to be built. The annual 'feu duty' was also a means of income for Loudoun Estate. He's also known to have brought back trees and seeds from America. John, 5th Earl of Loudoun (also referred to as the Father of Agriculture) developed roads, hedges, marking out fields where the only indication before had been a burn or ridge or some other notable landmark and improvement to farms, making Loudoun one of the most advanced parishes in the country for agriculture.

Another of the biggest heritors was Martha Brown of Lanfine. Martha, the last of a line of the Brown family, gifted the Browns Institutes to Darvel, Newmilns and Galston (the building everyone recognised as Balmoral Mill), were all gifted to the towns.

As 'working men's institutes'. It would appear that Miss Brown recognised the need for wellbeing in men, and to be given an opportunity for an education, to read books and have a social life. All three Institutes have been sold into private ownership.



Browns Institute, Darvel



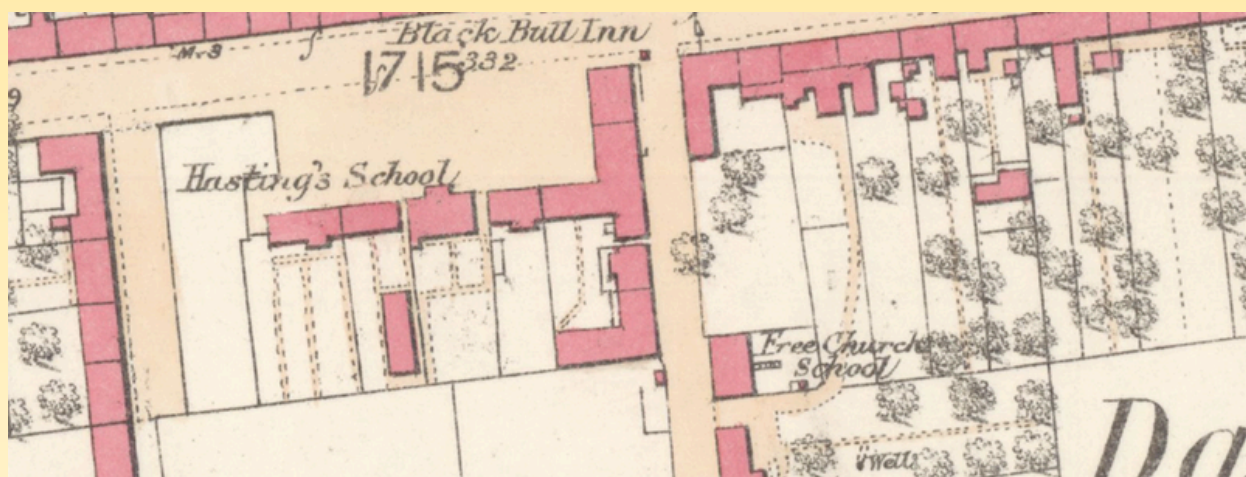
Browns Institute, Newmilns



Browns Institute, Galston

Miss Scott of Cessnock founded a Sunday School

The Hastings family of Loudoun Castle maintained schools in Darvel and Alton. Edith Maud Rawling-Hastings built a school in Hastings Square, where the Darvel Church now stands. It was later transferred to the Loudoun School Board.(circa 1877)



Lady Flora's school was built in Newmilns (now sheltered housing). The Trustees of Lady Flora's Institute were insistent that it should still remain as a benefit to the town.

The Bessie Roxburgh bequest to provide a fund for use in the community, is still in force today.

Alexander Mair of Richarton, a merchant in Darvel, founded the Mair's School in Ranoldcoup Road, Darvel. This was sold some years ago to be transformed into a private dwelling.

The Mair and Miss Annie Smith Mair Bequests — Newmilns Bequest by Members of the Mair family of Newmilns (not to be confused with Alexander Mair of Darvel), for the Charitable/educational aid and relief of residents of Newmilns and Greenholm. The Legacy is still listed among East Ayrshire Council's Educational and Charitable Trusts today.

Alexander Morton also a benefactor, gifted Morton Park to Darvel on the understanding that it would remain a public park open to everyone for perpetuity.

William Morton, a native of Newmilns, a successful businessman in Birmingham, gifted Morton Hall to Newmilns.

Charles Blair Esq. Of Longhouse, Galston , gifted a free school and £1000 to provide clothing for the children.

Several emigrants who left for other countries also endowed small bequests to local communities. Times have changed and the modern welfare state is responsible for looking after the 'poor'. For most folks, gone are the days of starvation as it was. There are new threats which have been brought in by the modern world. Could we survive without phones, cars, washing machines etc. as well as food? Most of all, could we survive self sufficiency?

East Ayrshire Council hold a list of bequests for Darvel and the Irvine Valley, some relatively minor, just a few pounds to support widows and orphans or a small amount to care for war memorials. However a significant amount of the land and buildings gifted have been sold by the council. I wonder what our benefactors would think today if they knew the gifts bestowed on the towns have been sold to private owners.

Will there always be someone around to be our benefactor?



Agnes M Wilson

Yorkshire Burns Supper

A friend told Agnes he celebrated Burn's Night with roast beef and Yorkshire pudding. Agnes felt obliged to respond

Yorkshire puddin' sic a disgrace
It's awe puffed up wi empty space
It has nae hurdies for a knife to slash
That is a scunner.
The knife cuts in but whar's the meat
Steamin' entrails, ye canna beat
Jist made wi' floor an' eggs an' mulk
it is nae winner.
Whit man can strive to earn the sillar
wi' a wee bit dough and no much filler
If that's a' there is tae eat
We'll dae a runner
Yorkshire, ye can keep yer fayre
whilst we head back to bonny Ayr
Tae fill oor bellies, we'll have oor share
so gie us a haggis.

darvélo

the Corner

Big Cycling & Fun Day

16
May

<https://discoverdarvel.com/darvelo/>

Hi everybody, we are back for our fourth year running. **Darvélo 26** promises to be something extra special. Building on the success of the previous three years, our team of volunteers has organised a great line up all things cycling **plus** ...amazing fun stuff for the kids, live music all afternoon, street food and a bar.

Let's take the cycling bit first...

There are four cycle rides this year.

1. **Long Ride** (Sportive), 10:00am. A thrilling 90km ride for those who are more energetic. An exciting route devised by John McCracken of Loudoun Road Club takes in lots of stunning scenery.

<https://discoverdarvel.com/darvelo/>

2. **Mountainbike Intro Ride**, 10:15am. An easy introduction to mountainbiking. A 12km guided trail ride up through Lanfine woods.

<https://cyclestation.org.uk/introduction-to-mountain-biking-at-darvelo/>

3. **Short Ride**, 10:30am. A 40km guided ride out of the Irvine Valley. A nice easy pace on quiet scenic roads.

<http://www.cycleayrshire.co.uk/calendar.php>

4. **Family Ride**, 10:45am. A short fun filled family ride down the riverside road to Galston and back. This is a guided tour by CycleStation. <https://cyclestation.org.uk/darvelo-family-ride-2026/>

All four rides depart from The Corner, Darvel on Sat 16th May

Free bike maintenance by CycleStation, e-bikes, kids bikes, All Ability Cycles, cycle merchandise, cycle yoga, Spin Bikes and much more.

Kids stuff: face painting, puppet theatre, tricks and games.

Street food: tasty hot and cold grub including Burgers, Wraps, Bacon Rolls, Coffee, Cakes and Ice Cream.

Plus there will be a licensed bar in the afternoon.

Live music: headlined by the Dughoose Ska Band, who are guaranteed to get you up on your feet. Music kicks off in the afternoon with two terrific local bands - The Heeby Jeebies and The 77 Affair.

See you all on... **Saturday 16th May**

For up to date information go to: <https://discoverdarvel.com/darvelo/>

Loudoun Road Club

DarVelo 26 Sportive

Saturday May 16th 2026

90km of quiet roads

Food stop at Nether Lethame Farm

Only £20

Sign-Up at
<https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/events/details/331475/DarVelo-26>

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

CYCLESTATION

Bike Hire | Sales | Service & Training Workshop

DART

darvélo
2026



We are off again in 2026. Look out for us at the top level of the Corner at the April market, although we have already had one successful sale at the other corner - the corner of Mairs Road and Burnbank Street. Over the past two years we have raised funds that have gone towards various community projects - continuing the publication of copies of the Darvel Bulletin, maintenance costs for the Corner planters and support for Darvelo. The support of this venture is very much appreciated and many thanks to everyone.

So.....what will be on sale at the April Market? Well, to mention just a few:

Tomato seedlings

Pepper plants

Ground cover plants

Geraniums

Fuchsias

Lavendar

Rosemary

*Perennials (including
geum and carnations+*

Annuals



25 YEARS
of the
DARVEL IMPROVEMENT GROUP (DIG)



Maureen Ross



Joyce Morton

In this article, we focus on two of the leading lights in DIG to give us insight into what DIG is all about and how these two women in particular along with their fellow DIG members have contributed so massively to improving many aspects of Darvel life. We will share some of the challenges faced by a small town like Darvel in doing this and highlight how wonderfully well people like Maureen Ross and Joyce Morton have done in achieving all they have. Those who know them personally will not be surprised to hear that they are the first to say that many others have made enormous contributions to DIG over the 25 years and it is a team effort, but for now this is their story.

But first...WHO or WHAT is DIG? *(In words and numbers)*

The Bulletin ran a feature on DIG in the Winter 2024/5 edition and a more detailed account of DIG can be found there. For those less familiar with the town, DIG is a group which evolved from the Darvel and District Community Council (which still thrives). Following the Millennium celebrations, members of the DDCC, including Maureen, felt that more could be done to improve things in Darvel, especially environmental issues, public areas and social gatherings. Maureen, who is from Darvel, recalls speaking to others at the time about her frustration that things seemed to be going downhill in Darvel and saying "Look at that rose garden down at the park. Its in a hell of a mess! I remember when I was a wee girl and the park, which even had a putting green, was kept in prefect condition by a Council employee called Mr Scade. You wouldn't have put a foot on his rose bed. He'd have taken your head off!"

So, following a meeting which was held in the town hall and had a huge turn out, DIG, which is an entirely voluntary group, was formed as a special type of limited company which could better attract funding to make desired improvements in Darvel.

The Numbers:

- (1) Approximately 20 major projects have been undertaken by DIG over its 25 years.
- (2) Around 50 people volunteer in DIG year by year.
- (3) 5-10 social events are run by DIG each year.
- (4) Money raised to fund projects: an awful lot!

Some of the bigger projects: (1) The Rose Garden at Morton Park. (2) the two 'welcome' gardens at each end of Darvel. (3) The heritage museum in the Town Hall (4) The Toll Gate garden.

Some of the events: (1) Annual Cafe Day. (2) Annual Xmas Fair. (3) Annual Easter Egg Hunt. (4) Quiz nights.

SO WHERE DO MAUREEN AND JOYCE COME INTO THIS?

Maureen has been part of DIG since the start and is their Chairperson at present, having been Secretary for many years before that. Joyce is an incomer to the Valley (only 48 years here!) and has now been Secretary for many years. As in most small enterprises though, these titles do not do justice to the many different tasks office holders end up doing, ranging from organising a team to weed one of the gardens, to actually helping weeding them, to applying for grant funding, to meeting Council officials, to writing up minutes of meetings late at night..... and so it goes on

SO WHY DID THEY VOLUNTEER AND WHAT DO THEY GET OUT OF IT?

Joyce has a particular interest in the environment and joined DIG wanting to make an impact in that respect. And so it proved to be! Originally from Kilmarnock, she recalls hearing about DIG and saying to her friend "Why don't we join this environment group?" She wanted "to do something for the town and get involved rather than sit back and expect others to act. As time went on, she found that it is particularly satisfying having success in "winning" grants from the various funders towards projects. She finds it a real thrill to be awarded a significant grant which can turn a project from a dream into reality! It's worth emphasising that not one penny of all funds passing through DIG's bank goes to any DIG members, who give hours of their time on a completely voluntary basis.





Maureen reckons that the Rose Garden is her most satisfying achievement with DIG as she was one of the main creators and contributors to this project. "I just feel its mine" were her words! It is part of Morton Park and although a separate garden for many years, was left untended by the Council through lack of available funds. Maureen and other DIG members managed to successfully raise sufficient funds to completely renovate this area into an expertly designed and maintained space that would be a credit to any town. Fundraising included encouraging local people to "Buy a rose" and have a plaque in the garden, often dedicated to a loved one. Both Maureen and Joyce are mindful of the health benefits for themselves of involvement with others in the community and the importance of keeping an active mind as the years go on! They have both got to know a lot of people. This, they say, has been one of the rewards of their involvement in DIG.

THE TYPE OF CHALLENGES FACED BY MAUREEN AND JOYCE

Readers may be aware that the Alexander Morton memorial in Darvel's main Hastings Square is badly in need of renovation and DIG decided to take on this task. Joyce describes this as DIG's "biggest project to date". One of the first steps involved finding out who owns the small garden area where the Memorial sits. As with many such projects, funders will only commit money where the local group such as DIG owns or leases the land in question. Everyone assumed it must belong to the Council. After all, it is known it was originally located at Glen Brig and a well known former local Councillor, known for his forthright manner, firstly told his "boys" to renovate it and then years later, when it was again run down, told them to relocate it to Hastings Square. Job done - changed days!

So Joyce and Maureen investigate. They are advised that the Earl of Loudoun owns the land at the square. The present Earl lives in Australia. Nice man but turns out he doesn't own it, but the Loudoun Estate does. Lawyers involved. Some four years later, just before Xmas 2025, the land is finally transferred to DIG. Joyce and Maureen uncork the champagne, especially as this coincides with a significant amount of grant money becoming available to DIG, again through Joyce's hard work making numerous applications.

As anyone with a knowledge of this will confirm, it takes skill and dedication to convince funders to send the money your way. A proven track record and a good relationship with funders and Council officials takes time and many hours of work to build. These parties will no doubt have been impressed that Joyce and Maureen had, for instance, already appointed an architect to manage the project at a time when they still needed ownership and funds! Talk about keeping all the balls in the air at once!

All funds received by DIG are for the use of the Community only and whilst large amounts of cash can be received at times, this soon gets used for its intended purpose so the DIG bank account, as often happens with voluntary organisations, sees feast and famine. This can be a real worry for office bearers as it is not always possible to estimate exact costs accurately and unforeseen costs can arise too. There have been times when Maureen and Joyce and fellow DIG members have thought that they might have to use their personal savings to meet such costs but so far they have managed to avoid that. It is a mark of their dedication that they even think that way!

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?

It may not be obvious to those not involved, but a number of Darvel's projects cost tens or even hundreds of thousands of pounds. Some residents may understandably feel that such funds would be better spent on say roads or care homes but as ever, it is not that simple in reality. The funds obtained by DIG and other groups in Darvel come from a mixture of sources such as charities, wind farm projects (which are required to donate as a condition of their planning permission), central government funds given to Councils to distribute for certain specified projects and so on. There is intense competition from competing voluntary groups for such limited funds.

The days when local councils would run all local improvement projects are long gone. Local Authorities are under immense financial pressure and as we all know, often struggle to maintain basic amenities. Any funds which come to local groups like DIG from the Council are usually already ring fenced for specific purposes; such funds often come from external sources such as central government for distribution by the Council.

THE FUTURE FOR DIG

Both Maureen and Joyce expressed the view that people in Darvel have been very supportive of all DIG's efforts over the last quarter of a century. This helps make all DIG members' efforts worthwhile. Whilst the Alexander Fleming memorial is the latest big project, there will be more in future. The regular social events and ongoing requirement to look after existing gardens all need continuing help from volunteers. Help from anyone in the community is always welcome whether young or old. Even small contributions such as weeding or helping set things up for events like the Cafe Day can make a huge difference. As Maureen and Joyce put it: "A thing that takes 2 hours to do with 3 people helping only takes 1 hour with 6 people."

Not everyone is willing or able to make such a huge commitment to their community as Maureen and Joyce but it is their shining lights which help attract so many others to play their part in keeping Darvel such a good place to live.

This article was compiled by Ken Mair

RENOVATING *the* FLEMING MEMORIAL



“When I woke up just after dawn on 28 September 1928, I certainly didn’t plan to revolutionise all medicine by discovering the world’s first antibiotic, or bacteria killer, but I guess that is exactly what I did”

Alexander Fleming’s discovery of penicillin transformed medical science, saving millions of lives and laying the foundation for modern antibiotics. Born in Darvel in 1881, his name is now recognised as one of the most important people worldwide.

The existing Memorial in Hastings Square, erected by public subscription in the 1950s, is falling into disrepair and does not adequately reflect Fleming’s importance to Darvel and the world.

The 100th anniversary of Fleming’s discovery of penicillin will be celebrated globally on 28 September 2028. Darvel Improvement Group has been working for several years to develop a new and fitting Memorial Area to commemorate this occasion.

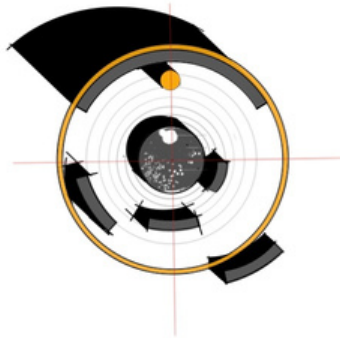
DIG finally obtained ownership of the area from Loudoun Estates in December 2025. We were absolutely delighted that we were successful in securing £200,000 from East Ayrshire's allocation of the UK Government's Pride in Place Impact Fund (PiPIF). East Ayrshire is one of just eight local authorities in Scotland to receive this capital funding, which is to be used specifically to create, restore and enhance spaces of community value. Thanks to this support, we’ll be able to replace the existing Sir Alexander Fleming Memorial in Hastings Square, creating a place that local people can be proud of now and for years to come.

While the final cost of the memorial is still to be confirmed, should it exceed the PiPIF award, the project will be responsible for securing match funding to ensure final delivery.



The Fleming Memorial

explained...



The concept for the memorial seeks to reflect the Local and International dimensions of **Sir Alexander Fleming**, the man and his discovery of the world's first antibiotic - Penicillin.

Local...

- The existing bronze bust of Fleming will be refurbished and mounted on a new stone pedestal re-orientated to face his birthplace - Lochfield Farm. The height of the bust will be set at Fleming's actual height reflecting his humility as a common man, rather than an elevated individual.
- The four stone seats are carved out of local whinstone...as was Fleming's birthplace.
- An outer ring of river washed pebbles will be from the Glen Water - where Fleming guddled for trout and played as a child.

Discovery...

- Central to the design is a stone representation of the Petri Dish containing Fleming's discovery of Penicillium (which he later called Penicillin) and its attack on bacteria. Everything radiates out from this source reflecting the international impact of his discovery.

International...

- The stone paving surrounding the central petri dish will be made of seven concentric rings. Each ring represents one of the world's seven Continents, all of which have been dramatically impacted by Penicillin saving millions of lives throughout the world.

Transformation...

- Whilst the central Petri Dish reflects the impact within Fleming's laboratory, the overall memorial represents the Petri Dish at a global level. In other words the central Petri Dish becomes the antibiotic and the four whinstone seats represent the threat of bacteria of different types set within a global context. The rogue bacterium (whinstone seat) positioned outwith the protective pebble ring reflects Fleming's own prediction that not all bacteria can be contained through antibiotics. As such the overall memorial is transformational.

Conclusion...

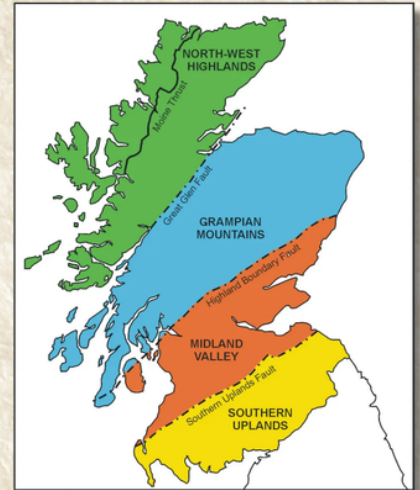
- This is not just a memorial ...but a piece of storytelling art, a sculpture which seeks to reflect the depth and vision of a local man with international status. A Nobel prizewinner.

A LONG LONG TIME AGO.....

A long long time ago in the land that is now Central Scotland, there was a period of really unbelievable happenings. Volcanoes burst forth flooding the land with lava and the skies darkened with clouds of volcanic ash. The landscape changed forever. It seems hard to picture the scene now, but that is what did happen and it was the result of the Earth's crust being stretched.

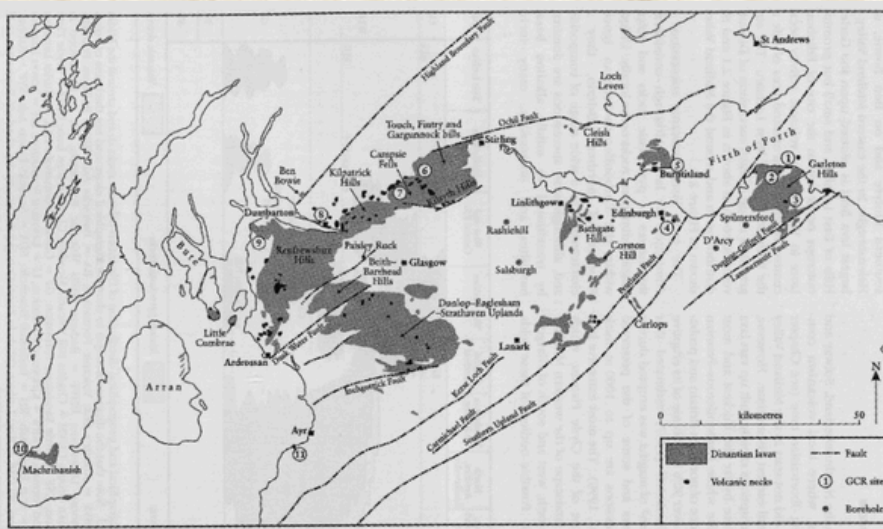
Stretched you say, what do you mean? How is the crust of the Earth stretched and how does that form volcanoes and what has that got to do with Darvel?

Looking at a map of Scotland today there are three distinct areas - the Highlands (Grampians and North West), the Central Lowlands or Midland Valley and the Southern Uplands. Two major fractures mark the boundaries of Central Scotland separating the lowlands of central Scotland from the Grampian Highlands to the north and the Southern Uplands - yes you guessed it - to the south. It is a feature known as a Rift Valley and the fractures are known as the Highland Boundary Fault and the Southern Uplands Fault. But there are many more fractures or faults in the area. There is another major fault - the Great Glen Fault which separates the Grampian Highlands from the North West Highlands, but that is another story.



How is the crust of the Earth stretched you might ask and what forces within the earth can cause the stretching? Is this a reality or some form of mystical storyline that might feature in a futuristic science fiction film? Did it feature in Lord of the Rings? Read on.....

Below the very thin layer of the Earth's crust which is a bit like the skin of an apple is the mantle and the slowly moving currents within the molten rocks of the earth's mantle causes the movement of the crust's tectonic plates. The movement of the plates create fractures and faults and the result, molten rock from the mantle was forced up through the fractures to emerge in major volcanoes at the surface. Huge amounts of molten rock also known as magma were then spilled over the surface of the land.



When did this happen?

Well it was not exactly yesterday. We need to go back 340 million years to the early part of the Carboniferous period - the Dinantian. The map lets you see where the remains of these extensive lava flows can now be seen, and remember that erosion has removed a lot of the lava rock. What the map also shows is the location of volcanic necks - the remains of the volcanoes, Just look at how many there were - a huge number.

The remnants of these ancient volcanoes are now represented by distinctive features, volcanic plugs that include Arthur's Seat, Dumbarton Rock, Drumgoyne hill in the Campsie Fells and of course Loudoun Hill, so we have established a link to Darvel.

Try to picture the scene as these volcanoes broke through the surface as it was at that time and caused mayhem on the surface and in the skies with vast amounts of lava, ash and gas. It would not have been a pleasant scene and for the creatures that existed on the land and in shallow seas, quite devastating.



Back in the Carboniferous times Scotland was located in a tropical zone with shallow warm seas, land areas covered with forest and mangroves, The tropical vegetation and the mangroves would eventually form the coal deposits which fired the industrial revolution - and much exploitation in Ayrshire: in Galston and Newmilns there was a significant number of coal mines, perhaps another story for our Bulletin. On land it was amphibians that dominated with some early reptiles beginning to merge. In the warm shallow seas there was a plethora of shellfish, fish and algae. All would have faced the challenge of survival.

They could not exactly have easily moved elsewhere, there was no real escape, so the impact was devastating for those close to the volcanic vents which had come to dominate the landscape of the time. And yet the very volcanic vents that dominated the skylines of Central Scotland 340 million years ago still feature in the landscapes of today.

Loudoun Hill and many of the basalt rocks that we find in the surrounding hills give testimony to a time of upheaval that has impacted on our present day landscape.

Darvel is firmly on the geological map of Scotland.



CYCLE STATION

MEET THE TEAM AT CYCLE STATION...

ALAN VASS - OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Alan oversees the day-to-day running of Cycle Station and takes great pride in operating a business within his local town. He is also a cycle trainer for Balance Buddies every Saturday morning and helps facilitate the Bike Bus for Darvel Primary School, encouraging young riders to travel actively. Alan enjoys working closely with the local community and promoting active travel throughout the Irvine Valley. In his spare time, he enjoys mountain biking.



DEREK BEATON - LEAD MECHANIC

Derek leads the workshop at Cycle Station and brings a lifelong passion for cycling to his role. A keen mountain biker himself, Derek strives for excellence in maintaining and repairing bikes to the highest standard. Alongside his workshop role, he is also a cycle trainer for Balance Buddies and a lead rider for the Darvel Primary Bike Bus. Derek enjoys supporting the local community and helping ensure cyclists ride safely and confidently throughout the valley.



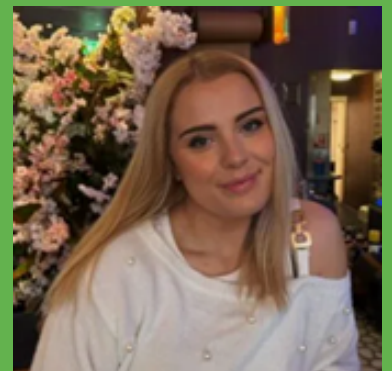
CAITLIN VASS - CYCLE TRAINER & SHOP ASSISTANT

Caitlin is our head shop assistant and plays a key role in managing bike hire and supporting the workshop with maintenance. She is also a cycle trainer and enjoys helping children develop their cycling skills and confidence. Caitlin enjoys meeting new people through the shop and spends much of her spare time mountain biking.



CHARLOTTE NEDELCU - CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE & BRAND MANAGER

Charlotte joined Cycle Station in November 2025 and is responsible for social media, customer experience, marketing, and brand development. She enjoys working locally and building connections with other businesses through collaborations and partnerships. Working within the cycling and tourism sector, Charlotte is passionate about encouraging visitors to explore the Irvine Valley through Cycle Station's bike hire services. In her spare time, Charlotte enjoys walking and spending time with her family.



JESSICA IRELAND - CYCLE TRAINER

Jessica is the newest member of the Cycle Station team. She is passionate about helping young riders learn to cycle and enjoys teaching children new skills. Jessica was already a familiar face at Cycle Station before joining the team, often taking part in our mountain biking trail days. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with animals as well as playing badminton and swimming.



A Busy Season is approaching here at Cycle Station

Cycle Station is looking forward to a busy and exciting April, with a range of fun, community cycling sessions planned over the Easter period.

We begin with an Introduction to Mountain Biking session at Whitelee perfect for anyone wanting to build confidence riding off-road.

On 11th April we're hosting two free community rides – a Family Ride and a Ladies Ride, offering relaxed and welcoming opportunities to get out cycling together.

For those looking for more adventure, we're running full-day Mountain Biking trips on 17th April and 25th April (Glentress), as well as a free E-Bike Ride on 18th April.

These sessions are all about getting the community outdoors, building confidence on bikes and enjoying the fantastic cycling routes around the Irvine Valley.

With exciting events like **Darvélo** and more led rides coming up later in the season, it's shaping up to be a great year for cycling locally.

Bookings are now open and spaces will fill quickly, you can book your place on our website at cyclestation.org.uk.

As always thank you for the continued support from our community.



SPORTS

DARVEL

The SportsDarvel Centre has now had a bit of a facelift with new roofs and wall cladding having been erected. The new 'Ocean Blue' roofs and cladding have brightened up the appearance of the Centre and Trustees are developing plans on how the remaining brickwork and Portakabins can also be improved.

The demolition of the abandoned factory site has commenced and should take 3/4 months. The work started on the Green Street side with the smaller factory unit being tackled first by removing the rear walls and dismantling the roof.

The Council has committed to transferring the cleared site to Trust ownership and the Trust is also seeking to gain ownership of the Centre and existing site rather than lease it as at present.

Further plans will be developed for the use of this cleared site and the existing football pitch area with the ultimate aim of securing the long term viability and sustainability of the Centre/sites so that facilities, equipment and services can continue to be provided for the benefit of all the Community.



Within the Centre itself the area underneath the mezzanine floor is being developed and a new lift to allow disabled/limited mobility access has been installed. Improvements have also been made to the heating within the Centre and this has increased our utility costs but we are developing plans to have solar panels installed to help reduce/eliminate these costs. Plans are also progressing to lay new more modern floors underneath the mezzanine and in the main hall area.

Gym memberships and activities/classes within the Centre continue to expand and be developed to meet the needs of all members of the Community – young and not so young and fit and not so fit. Have a look at our daily/weekly programme and you will be most welcome to join in classes /activities that may suit you and your family/friends.

THE WATERLIP: A GOOD NEWS STORY

The Waterlip is a much loved riverside walk from East Main Street in Darvel along the banks of the Glen Water and the River Irvine to Ranoldcoup Road. However wear and tear over many years had resulted in a walkway which was in poor condition - broken path surface, seats that had deteriorated and fencing in a very poor condition. In addition there were several locations where the Irvine was in danger of undercutting the path.

In 2020 a plan was devised by DART to address these issues.

A series of improvements were made over the next 5 years and almost all were funded by grants acquired by DART culminating in the final stage in the improvement programme with the installation of solar stud uplighting earlier this year.

Here is a brief description of the various improvements to the Waterlip which have been made.

- Replacement of the fence along the Glen Water Section which was in a dangerous condition funded by SOLWEC
- Installation of gabions along Irvine riverbank to limit erosion
- Resurfacing of the western section of the Waterlip from Ranoldcoup Road to the Cemetery corner, funding from the Place Based Investment Fund
- Replacement of seating on the banks of the Irvine by East Ayrshire Council
- Replacement of the fence adjacent to the fields by the local landowner
- Resurfacing of the eastern section of the Waterlip from the cemetery corner to East Main St and provision of safety railing. This was made possible by funding secured by DART from East Ayrshire Council and SOLWEC
- provision of solar stud uplighting to enhance safety and aesthetics
- Creation of a new path to the bench at the top of the walk (to be completed)

The response to the solar lights installation has been quite overwhelming. In addition to the many comments of folks who use the path regularly there have been over 400 positive responses on our social media platforms. Another extremely successful project.





Project partners: DART and Cycle Station

Location: Waterlip Pathway, Darvel

Funding supported by: Walking Scotland



Case Study: The Waterlip Pathway - Solar Lighting, Darvel

Project Overview

Located in Darvel, East Ayrshire, within the scenic Irvine Valley, the Waterlip Pathway is a key traffic-free walking and cycling route connecting residents to schools, shops, parks and community facilities. The Waterlip Pathway Solar Lighting Project has delivered a major improvement in safety, accessibility and year-round usability by installing solar-powered LED delineation studs along the route.

This project represents a national milestone - the first installation of Solarlite Path in Scotland and currently the longest SolarLite Path installation in the UK, covering an impressive 750 metres. Funded by Walking Scotland, with match funding from Clearview Intelligence, the initiative enhances visibility while protecting the natural riverside environment.

The scheme builds on previous investment in resurfacing the pathway and responds directly to priorities identified through the Darvel and Priestland Community Action Plan, reflecting strong community-led planning and delivery.

The Challenge

Despite being a popular and essential active travel route, use of the Waterlip Pathway was significantly limited during darker evenings and early mornings. Local residents expressed concerns about personal safety, visibility, and confidence during autumn and winter, restricting walking and cycling for commuting, school travel, and recreation.

Traditional street lighting was ruled out due to high installation and maintenance costs, potential environmental impacts, and concerns about wildlife disturbance along the river corridor. A sustainable, low-impact solution was required to improve safety while preserving the area's natural character.

The Solution

The project installed Solarlite P solar-powered LED path studs, supplied by Clearview Intelligence, along the 750m length of the Waterlip Pathway. These innovative ground-level lights provide 360-degree route delineation, improving visibility without generating upward light spill.

Key features include:

- Solar-powered operation, requiring no mains electricity.
- Up to 240 hours of illumination from a single day's charge.
- No upward light spill, protecting wildlife and the night sky
- Robust, weather-resistant construction with an expected lifespan of up to eight years.
- No trenching or cabling, reducing disruption and installation impact.



This proven technology has already demonstrated success on other active travel routes in the Irvine Valley, including the Chris Hoy Cycle Route and the Strath Path, providing confidence in its effectiveness for Darvel.



Case Study: The Waterlip Pathway Solar Lighting, Darvel

Community-Led Delivery

The project was developed and delivered by DART, in partnership with Cycle Station, a local not-for-profit organisation promoting walking and cycling across the Irvine Valley.

Community involvement played a central role throughout the project lifecycle:

- The need for improved lighting was identified through local consultation
- Community partners contributed to project design and delivery
- Cycle Station incorporated the upgraded route into led rides and school bike bus initiatives

This collaborative approach ensured the project met local needs while fostering strong community ownership and pride.

Environmental Benefits

The Solarlite Path installation demonstrates how safety improvements can be delivered without compromising environmental sustainability:

- Zero operational carbon emissions
- Minimal disturbance to wildlife, due to ground-level lighting and no upward light spill
- No excavation or cabling, protecting the riverbank and surrounding habitat

The project preserves the natural riverside setting while improving safety and accessibility.

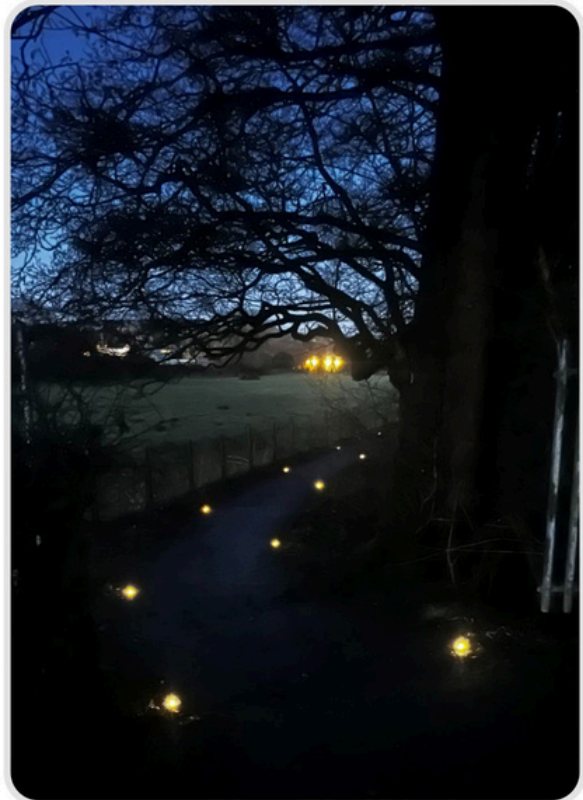
Maintenance and Sustainability

The lighting system is designed to be low-maintenance and self-sufficient, with routine visual inspections carried out by local partners and volunteers. Its durability and solar-powered operation ensure long-term value, minimal ongoing costs, and continued community stewardship.

Looking Ahead

The success of the Waterlip Pathway project provides a scalable model for future improvements across Darvel and the wider region. Plans are underway to extend similar solar lighting along the Morton Park riverbank path, further strengthening local walking and cycling routes.

This project demonstrates how small-scale, community-led initiatives can deliver lasting improvements in safety, accessibility, environmental sustainability, and quality of life in rural towns.



Outcomes and Impact

Feedback following installation has been highly positive, both on-site and across social media. The project has already delivered measurable benefits, including:

- **Improved safety and confidence**, encouraging use during darker hours
- **Increased year-round access**, supporting commuting, school travel, and recreation
- **Enhanced active travel opportunities**, including expanded bike bus and led ride programmes
- **Reduced reliance on car journeys**, supporting healthier and more sustainable travel choices

The Waterlip Pathway now serves as a reliable, inclusive and well-lit link within Darvel's growing active travel network.

www.clearview-intelligence.com

t: +44 (0)1908 088008 e: info@clearview-intelligence.com

Head Office: Aurora House, Deltic Avenue, Rooksley, Milton Keynes, MK13 8LW

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01560323380



Articles for the Bulletin

If you have any articles or items that you would like published in the Darvel Bulletin then please contact georgegardner50@googlemail.com
Continuation of The Bulletin depends of community input.

Universal

Chinese Carry Out

Chinese & European Meals To Take Away

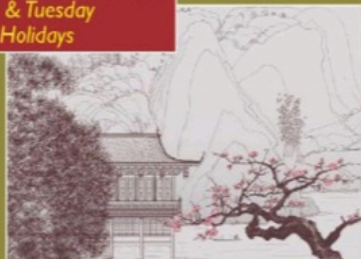
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The Darvel bulletin is an A4 booklet, published quarterly with information on upcoming events, historical information, features on local people, and many more interesting articles about Darvel and surrounding areas.

It has circulation on 5 separate Facebook pages -

The Corner – Discover Darvel – DDCC – Dawn to Dusk - Darvel Chat

There are also 120 paper copies distributed via local shops for those who don't have internet access.

1 off advertising costs for 1 issue are as follows -

Annual advertising costs for 4 issues are as follows -

¼ page - £25

¼ page - £80

½ page - £40

½ page - £128

Full page - £75

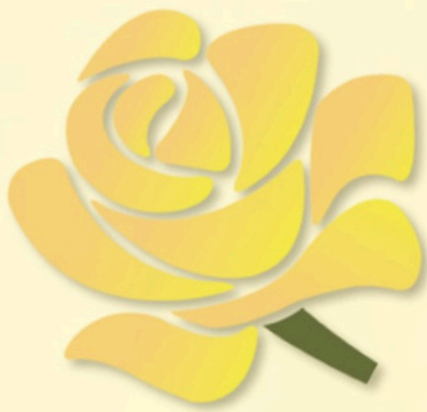
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Darvel Snippets...



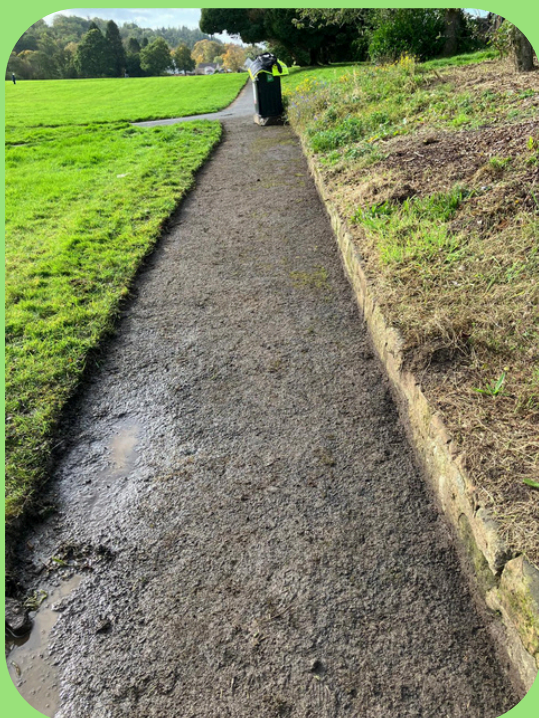
Morton Park Path Upgrade

In our winter bulletin we highlighted the work that had started on widening of the paths in the park. The work has now been completed and the difference is remarkable.

Photographs below show quite clearly the extent of the widening, and indeed clearing a path that we had completely forgotten about



This was identified last year as a priority in our community consultation for improvements to Morton Park. A huge vote of thanks go to the Community Benefits Team who soldiered on frequently in adverse weather to get the job done.



Matt Richmond Annual Outing (Darvel Old Folks Trip)

Wednesday 17 June 2026

The Matt Richmond Annual Outing, known for years as the Darvel Old Folks Trip, has been running for over 100 years, continuing without interruption through two world wars - only COVID-19 put a stop to it for three years.

We're now back up and running and, in the last three years, we've had two afternoon trips to Largs and one to Callander, all very much enjoyed. This year we are venturing to Moffat on Wednesday 17 June with high tea at the Radstone Hotel near Larkhall, not quite a new destination but one that we haven't been to for a while, so looking forward to that.

The trip is open to anyone residing in Darvel aged 70 or over. If you haven't been before and would like to go, please get in touch with any member of the committee or phone 07500963231.

If you've been on the trip before, we'll be delivering an invitation to you sometime in May, in plenty of time for the trip.

Hoping for the same good weather as the last three years!



LATE NEWS : MORTON PARK



In the Winter Bulletin we reported that an application had been submitted to the Scottish Action Fund for further improvements to Morton Park. These improvements took full account of the comments and ideas that had come from several consultations, and most recently the Darvel's Voice consultation for the Darvel & Priestland Community Action Plan.

The application for the grant was a joint effort of DART working with the Council's Greener Communities, and a sum of almost £40,000 has been allocated to enable the following improvements to be made.

- An inclusive wheelspin (pictured) that would be located centrally within the children's play area. This involves purchase of the wheelspin, ground preparation to accommodate the item and the building of aarmac path to provide ease of access for wheelchairs.
- Solar uplighting studs (similar to those recently installed along the Waterlip path) to be installed on the path that runs alongside the riverbank together with a section along the Mattha Burn.
- The creaion of an avenue of trees- local native species and possibly flowering cherry - planted along the path stretching from the Rose Garden down to the riverbank. This may need to be done in two stages, dpending on the number of trees that can be purchased and planted from the rersouces available.



There will be a "Friends of Morton Park" stall at the gala day in June and you will have the opportunity to find out more and perhaps add some further ideas on improvements to the park

the Corner



the Corner

Market



25 April
10am-2pm

It's the first Corner Market of the year with all of your favourite traders returning for the third year.

Come along early so that you are not disappointed

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the Corner 2026

* April 25th - 10 till 2

* May 23rd- 10 till 2

* June 27th- 10 till 2

SUMMER BREAK

* August 22nd- 10 till 2

* Sept 26th- 10 till 2

* Oct 30th - Halloween
Friday evening special

* Nov 27th - Christmas
Friday evening
spectacular

DART



20-Year Service Award for Kerry Ann!



uge congratulations to Kerry Ann (41) on achieving her 20 year service award at Tesco in Kilmarnock! Kerry Ann initially started work at Tesco as a bag packer in 2005 after

her Dad's best friend spoke to the manager on her behalf. She progressed to the grocery department before Occupational Health supported her with a move to the checkouts, where she continues to work 16hrs per week. Kerry Ann is very customer orientated and loves the customer interaction. Her colleagues are very supportive and helpful and she has a lot of friends through work. She was very proud and emotional when she was awarded her badge, certificate, chocolates and flowers



“She was very proud and emotional when she was awarded her badge, certificate, chocolates and flowers at her checkout, which had been decorated with balloons to celebrate the occasion”.

at her checkout, which had been decorated with balloons to celebrate the occasion. She travels to work independently from her family home on two buses taking 45minutes between them and her dad brings her home at the end of her shifts. Kerry Ann finds her job rewarding and it has given her real independence, as well as a paycheque every month! She advises that, for other adults with WS starting work, they should ask for help rather than struggle, say if they are unhappy with anything and ask lots of questions! Kerry Ann now has her sights set on achieving her 25 year award!

Kerry Ann has also been a member of CentreStage, Kilmarnock for 19 years - they

support a group of people with additional needs with singing, dancing and performance skills. It is a big part of Kerry Ann's life and has really helped with her confidence. They perform in several shows a year with Kerry Ann singing solo for 2-3 numbers per show. Kerry Ann has an amazing mentor and says that their recent 80's musical was the best show that they had ever done.

WOW - WELL DONE, KERRY ANNI!
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR SERVICE AWARD
AND BEING SUCH A STAR WITH CENTRESTAGE!

Darvel Snippets...



Hugh Maxwell - Photographer

Some wonderful news to share! Many local people follow my page directly now so they will already know that one of my images titled 'Golden Ripples' was shortlisted by the Expert judge in the final 'Open' category of the International Amateur Photographer of the Year 2025 competition, APOY, run by Amateur Photographer Magazine. Normally I just enter the landscape category but I thought I'd also enter a few images into the final round of this competition.



Raymie Swann - Photographer

Another superb wildlife photograph from Raymie. A male Grey Heron spends time at the riverbank



#raymiePhoto

PROBUS CLUB OF LOUDOUN



Gentlemen, are you retired and looking for a new venture? If so, read on.

We are a friendly group of retired gentlemen who are looking for new members.

Where: The Wee Train, Galston

When: 12pm on the first Thursday of the month We enjoy a lovely lunch with a varied choice of good food and are entertained by guest speakers talking about different and interesting topics.

Where: Various Places

When: the third Thursday of the month We visit a variety of local businesses, stately homes, museums and many more.

If you would like to join us or would like more information, please contact:



President, Ian Pollock
01560 320732

Secretary, Bill Walker
01560 320672

What's on in Darvel this year...



Friday 6 February	Valentine Quiz Night, 7-9pm	DIG
Friday 20 March	Music & Cake, 2-4pm	Bowling Club
Sunday 29 March	Easter Egg Hunt	Lanfine, DIG
Wednesday 8 April	Kidzone, 11-2pm	The Corner
Saturday 18 April	Simple Minds/Deacon Blue Tribute	Town Hall, DMC
Friday 24 April	"Born in Kyle" with Billy Kay	Town Hall, DART
Saturday 25 April	Corner Market, 10-2pm	The Corner, DART
Saturday 25 April	Blast Off - Live Music 6-9pm	The Corner, DART
Friday 8 - Monday 11 May	Walkfest	Valley Walkfest
Saturday 16 May	Darvélo Cycling Festival	The Corner
Saturday 23 May	Corner Market, 10-2pm	The Corner, DART
Saturday 13 June	Café Day in the Square	DIG
Saturday 17 June	Matt Richmond Annual Outing	Phone 07500 963231
Saturday 20 June	Darvel Gala	DART
Saturday 27 June	Corner Market, 10-2pm	DART
Saturday 22 August	Corner Market, 10-2pm	DART
Friday 28 August	Music & Cake, 2-4pm	Bowling Club
Friday 4 September	Flower Show	Darvel Horticultural Society
Friday 25 September	Music & Cake, 2-4pm	Bowling Club
Saturday 26 September	Corner Market, 10-2pm	DART
Wednesday 7 - Saturday 10 October	Lace Festival Exhibition	Town Hall, DART
Saturday 10 October	The Warp & the Weft "Conversation"	Town Hall, DART
Wednesday 14 October	Kidzone, 11-2pm	The Corner
Friday 23 October	Halloween Market, 4-8pm	The Corner, DART
Friday 30 October	Music & Cake, 2-4pm	Bowling Club
Saturday 14 November	Christmas Fayre	Town Hall, DIG
Friday 27 November	Corner Christmas Market, 5-9pm	The Corner, DART
Saturday 28 November	Music & Cake, 2-4pm	Bowling Club
Friday 11 December	Music & Cake, 2-4pm	Bowling Club

Discover Darvel Community Calendar



West End Garden



WWW.DISCOVERDARVEL.COM