



Lasswade District Civic Society

Newsletter

AUTUMN 2020

Chairman's Report

As with all organisations, the last six months have been very difficult for the Society. We have been unable to hold any members' meetings or other events and our monthly Committee meetings have only been possible using our new-found technology skills and Zoom! Our poster competition in our anti-litter campaign was halted by school closures and we were unable to hold the AGM.



All of this has, of course, been necessary to keep all of us safe, but lockdown was not easy for anyone and, as I write, there are signs of a resurgence in COVID-19 cases in Midlothian and

elsewhere in Scotland, so the easing of restrictions and a return to some sort of normality still seems a long way off.

Your Society has not, however, been inactive. We have launched the new website, and I would encourage you to have a look at it and to provide photographs of Lasswade or any other contribution you can, as the website is one of the spaces that will attract potential visitors to our lovely village

and the surrounding area, and much-needed income to local businesses. You will also see in this Newsletter details of our scheduled litter-picks and garden clean-ups, which can make such a difference to the appearance of the village. Appropriate social distancing will, of course, be observed.

As you will know from previous Newsletters and e-mail communications, we are very keen that as many Members as possible take advantage of the ability to pay subscriptions by Standing Order. Fewer and fewer of us now have cash handy to pay our subs directly to the Area Reps when they call and, at the moment, such calls are not possible anyway, so can I please encourage you to take a few minutes to complete the Standing Order Form and send it to your bank or, if you have telephone or internet banking, to set up the annual payment. You can, of course, if you prefer, send a cheque to the Society at ...Address to be added

We will resume members' activities as soon as we can and will communicate these by e-mail, with details also on the website and our Facebook page. Please use these facilities to keep in touch about any matters of concern in our community and please, do keep safe in these challenging times.

George Clark, Chairman

Secretary's Report

Although there have been enormous changes to the way we live our lives since the publication of the last Newsletter, thankfully, much remains the same. There is a long tradition of Public Service amongst Members of the Society. Many have been active in their local communities and it has been admirable the way that people have supported neighbours, family and friends through lockdown. It is wonderful to see the expression of community spirit throughout Lasswade.

Members continue to volunteer on national helplines, commit time to befriending by telephone on behalf of major Charities, organise WhatsApp groups to keep people informed and connected, whilst supporting those who must continue to shield. I would also like to thank those who have continued to litter pick in their local areas and care for the Community Garden. People have commented favourably on the work Members have done to improve the appearance of our local environment.

We have organised dates for a Community Garden Clear-up and Litter Pick. They will feel a little different but it will be good to meet up again, even if we have to bring our own cake!

The work of the Society has carried on through lockdown. Our commute time to Committee Meetings has been slashed,

as we, like the rest of the country embrace Zoom. I am glad that Members have continued to ask questions and share concerns with us.

Keith takes a forensic and measured approach to Planning Applications and like the previous incumbents of the post of Planning Officer, he brings clarity and understanding to a complex brief. We are in the process of arranging to meet with various Councillors to discuss their approach, in a general sense to Planning Applications. This may take time to organise but if you have any general questions, you would like answered, please get in touch with me at dequinceyrose@aol.com

As our last Photographic Competition was such a success, it was decided to launch another one. The closing date will be 1st January 2021. We have an Article by Wendy Macmillan, complete with photographs to inspire you, entitled Nature during Lockdown in Lasswade. It would be wonderful to see your photographic record of this time but feel free to submit any images, which reflect life in Lasswade. A big thank you to our Kevock Members for providing the photos.

We look forward to receiving your entries.

Best wishes
Rosemary Mackay, Secretary

A Little Nature During Lockdown in the Kevock Area

As I sit at my window, I can hear the plaintive cry of the buzzardling! Very early on, before all the leaves were on the trees, I noticed the buzzards attending to a large nest in one of our sycamore trees. As the leaves filled in it became harder to see what was going on but in due course the hungry cry of "feed me, feed me" filled the air. Evidence of hunting success comes in a pile of scattered feathers and an occasional bloody bone. One hears a thud on the window pane and the remaining imprint of a splayed pigeon tells of its panic attempt at escape as the buzzard swoops for its kill.

We heard the cuckoo but had no sightings. We heard the sharp cry of the European jay and saw the occasional flash of blue. We suspected the jays may be nesting somewhere and amazingly one day a whole family turned up at the feeding station - two adults and two babies. Leslie snapped a photo.



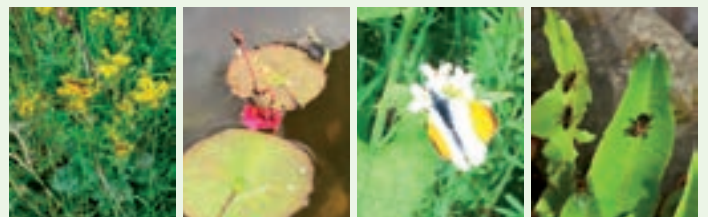
In my own garden I watched the woodpeckers clean and prepare their nesting hole in the huge silver trunk of the dying birch tree. Then came the unmistakable noise of young calling for food and the relentless too-ing and fro-ing of the faithful adults bringing tasty bites to their young. The little heads started popping out and the noise increased but so also did the danger of the ever-present magpies. Sadly, for my little family, the magpie had woodpecker for breakfast one morning and all fell silent. However, others in the neighbourhood have photographic evidence of several successful woodpecker families. The swallows and swifts have also been in evidence this year and we have one known nesting site in the area. They will soon be gathering in the skies to travel south again.



The lockdown has enabled us to hear, and have time to see, so much more of nature's spring and summer activity. Our feeders have been attended by numerous species of bird including bullfinches, green finches, chaffinches, robins, blue tits, great tits, coal tits and busy long-tailed tits. The nuthatch, the greater spotted woodpecker, the goldfinch and of course dunnocks, blackbirds, thrushes, robins and wrens and probably many more. Have you heard the black-cap sing? It is like a nightingale. The greedy wood pigeons are ever in evidence and the crows and magpies take their opportunities ... as do the squirrels.



When lockdown struck we created a WhatsApp nature group in this little enclave and it has been thrilling to read and view some wonderful pictures of all the things which folk have noticed going on in the area. Dating damselflies, beautiful butterflies, sunbathing snails (upside down in the pond), exotic moths, caterpillars, bees, bumblebees (*Bombus*) and wasps have all been noted. The caterpillars of the exotic cinnabar moth love the prolific ragwort and many have been seen this year gorging on this weed.



We have, of course, had many sightings of the local roe deer that have bred well this season. They love the dainty delights of the gardens in Kevock Road and Green Lane and teach their young where to come!



With clearer, less polluted skies and the early quietness of virtually no traffic, it has been a wonderful time to enjoy nature in all its variety. I hope you too have had the

opportunity to observe some of these things, together with all the plant life with which we are surrounded. The sunrise and sunset, the moon in all her stages, the morning star (Venus), other planets and the milkyway together with sunny days and cloudy days and the rainbow after the rain are all here for us to enjoy. This is an amazing world in which we live!



Litter in Lasswade an on-going issue

I would like once again, to thank all of those Members who make regular litter picks along roads in Lasswade. They improve our environment and many people comment on their commitment to their community.

Covid19 has halted, for the moment at least, the strategies that we were pursuing to change the behaviour of those that feel it is acceptable to dispense of their detritus along the roadsides of Lasswade. We will invite pupils, again, next year to produce anti-litter Posters. There will be prizes and a number of these Posters will be displayed in the local McDonald's Restaurant. The Manager kindly agreed to show their work and we were in discussions with him about promoting reusable dishes and cups in order to reduce the amount of litter produced. Other fast Food Outlets will be encouraged to engage with our campaign.

We were also considering contacting local businesses to discuss ways of discouraging their van drivers from disgorging litter from their vehicles. It was suggested that we might produce stickers to be placed on the dashboard reminding drivers to bag it and bin it. It was also suggested that we might produce stickers for the outside of vehicles saying that

Community Garden Clear-up

One of our last garden clear-ups before lockdown. The three of us and Rosemary our photographer before we retired to Luci's for some rather good coffee and cake. There had been around ten of us sprucing up the garden. Thanks to everyone who came along and worked so hard.



the business supported 'A litter free Lasswade'.

If you are interested in joining the LDCS Litter Sub-Group or have ideas to contribute please get in touch with Rosemary at dequinceyrose@aol.com

Latest recruit to our litter campaign

Ruby is showing commitment to the cause by volunteering as our newest recruit to the litter campaign. She normally specialises in collecting sticks whilst out walking but appears to have become much more aware of the impact of litter on our environment during lockdown!



life during lockdown in Lasswade



life before lockdown in Lasswade



Dates for your Diary

Unfortunately the current Covid 19 restrictions have curtailed opportunities for us to meet indoors or on organised Walks. We can still get together to Litter Pick and Garden, as long as social distancing is observed. There will be combined Garden Clear-ups and Litter Picks on **Wednesday 7th October & Wednesday 14th October 2-4pm.**

We will meet at the Community Garden and if you would like to garden please bring gloves and tools. If you would like to litter pick please bring gloves. Disposable gloves, litter pickers and black bags will be provided. We plan to provide coffee, tea and biscuits but we know that you may wish to bring your own. I do hope you can join us.

Thanks to all of those who came along on Wednesday 23rd September and made such difference to the Garden which had become quite overgrown.

A special thanks to The Laird and Dog for providing us all with complimentary teas and coffees. This was a very welcome and unexpected gesture. Many thanks it was much appreciated!!



Lasswade and District Civic Society Photographic Competition 2020

2020 always had the potential for being a vintage year, although few could have guessed the way that it would achieve notoriety. Lockdown as you can see from Wendy's piece, has inspired our Members to capture the bio-diversity of our local area on film. Many took their cameras with them on their daily exercise and have created a record of life in this most memorable of times. It would be a testament to this period to create an archive of images on our Website.

The Competition is not limited to lockdown and we were delighted with the range and quality of photographs that were submitted to the Competition we held in 2018.

Please forward all entries to dequinceyrose@aol.com

By entering the Competition you give the Society the right to reproduce and to exhibit your images but not to profit from their use.

There will be a 1st Prize of £100 and a second and third prize of £20 each.



The closing date for entries is Friday 1st January 2021.

We look forward to receiving your entries!



Subscriptions 2020/2021 - Please consider a Standing Order

Thank you to all members who have paid their subs for last year which were due in by the end of January 2020! In these Covid-19 days, now may be the time to consider a Standing Order if you have not already set one up so cash does not need to be handled (although this still remains an option). You can do this yourself if you do on-line banking or, alternatively, you can ask your Bank to do this for you. Our details are:

Name of Account: **Lasswade & District Civic Society**

Sort Code: **80-17-42 (Bank of Scotland)**

Account No: **00427753**

Amount: **£3.00 Single £5.00 Joint**

Date to Pay: **31 January**

Frequency: **Annually**

Reference: **YOUR SURNAME AND INITIAL(S)**

Please do check your SO details and make any alterations if necessary. One of our members has set up a Monthly Standing Order and I do not appear to have contact details. Would that person please contact me at dequinceyrose@aol.com so I can repay overpaid monies. Thank you!

If you wish to continue paying by cash, your Rep will be round to collect this probably some time in February or early March. Please do have your money ready for them when they come.