

Officers CHAIRMAN ALAN WATTERSON
SECRETARY IAIN CLARKSON
TREASURER JEFF LEGGE

HOW IT ALL STARTED

I'M FROM SANDBANK ORIGINALLY, WHICH IS JUST OUTSIDE DUNOON, AND RETURNED TO THE AREA IN DECEMBER OF 2003.

I HAD LIVED IN MANCHESTER FOR THE PREVIOUS 45 YEARS AND ENJOYED HAVING THE FACILITY OF AN ALLOTMENT FOR THE LAST 10 YEARS I LIVED IN MANCHESTER.

WHEN MY WIFE AND I MOVED TO DUNOON I PRESUMED THAT THERE WOULD BE AN ALLOTMENT FACILITY WITHIN THE AREA, BUT FOUND OUT VERY QUICKLY THAT NO SUCH FACILITY WAS AVAILABLE FOR THE RESIDENTS, WHICH I FOUND UNBELIEVABLE AS THERE APPEARED TO BE LOTS OF LAND AROUND THAT WOULD MAKE IDEAL ALLOTMENTS.

THE STORY SO FAR BACK IN DECEMBER OF 2004 I DECIDED TO PUT AN ADVERT IN OUR LOCAL PAPER TO SEE IF ANYBODY WAS INTERESTED IN HAVING AN ALLOTMENT.

FROM THIS I FORMED DUNOON AND DISTRICT ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION THE FIRST MEETING TOOK PLACE IN FEBRUARY 2005. 10 PEOPLE ATTENDED, ALL FROM VARIOUS WALKS OF LIFE AND WITH VARYING GARDENING ABILITY'S, RANGING FROM COMPLETE BEGINNERS TO RETIRED ESTATE GARDENERS, BUT WE ALL HAD ONE THING IN COMMON, ,Ä¶,Ä¶.

,Ä¶,Ä¶,Ä¶,Ä¶.**WE ALL WANTED ALLOTMENTS IN DUNOON!** WE NOW HAVE 35 INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS AND HAVE THE SUPPORT OF A NUMBER OF AGENCY'S, INCLUDING THE HELP PROJECT WHICH CATERS FOR THE NEEDS OF THE 16 - 25 YEAR OLDS, THE LOCAL HOUSING DEPT. AND BOTH LOCAL JUNIOR SCHOOLS HAVE GIVEN US LETTERS OF SUPPORT, AS HAVE OTHER LOCAL GROUPS WHO SEE THE BENEFIT OF HAVING ALLOTMENTS IN THE AREA. WE HAVE BROUGHT TOGETHER A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO ARE WILLING TO GIVE UP A LOT OF TIME AND EFFORT TO HOPEFULLY GIVE DUNOON SOMETHING THAT HAS BEEN SADLY LACKING FOR A LONG TIME, ,Ä¶,Ä¶,Ä¶,Ä¶,Ä¶**ALLOTMENTS.** WE REQUESTED AN ALLOTMENT FACILITY FOR THE DUNOON AREA TO THE CHIEF EXEC. OF ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL AT THE BEGINNING OF MAY 2005. THIS WAS PASSED ONTO THE LEGAL DEPT. AND WE RECEIVED AN ANSWER SAYING THAT THEY DO NOT THINK ANY SUITABLE LAND WAS AVAILABLE, BUT, THEY WOULD RESEARCH THE MATTER AND GET BACK TO MYSELF WITH ANY POSSIBLE SITES THAT HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED..... WE ARE STILL WAITING! I WORK AS A COMMUNITY WARDEN IN DUNOON AND SEE A LOT OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE NO FOCUS IN LIFE AND JUST GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF EVERY DAY LIFE, A LOT END UP ON DRUGS OR DRINKING WHICH BECOMES THE ONLY WAY FOR THEM TO DULL THE PAIN OF NOTHING TO DO AND NOWHERE TO GO.

WE INTEND TO GET AS MANY CHILDREN INTERESTED IN GARDENING AS POSSIBLE IN THE AREA AND GIVE THEM AN INTEREST, IF NOT A CAREER. AND I THINK A & B COUNCIL SHOULD SHOW THAT THEY ARE FULLY BEHIND THE IDEA OF HAVING ALLOTMENTS ALSO, AND INSTEAD OF FIRE FIGHTING THE PROBLEMS, LOOK AT THE REASONS WHY THESE PROBLEMS ARE CREATED AND SEE THAT ALLOTMENTS CAN BE BENEFICIAL IN SOLVING A LOT OF THEM.

WE HAVE BEEN LED DOWN MANY DEAD END ROADS WITH THE COUNCIL AND COUNCILLORS IN A VAIN ATTEMPT TO DISCOURAGE US, THEY HAVE FAILED. ONE COUNCILLOR WHO HAD PROVIDED US WITH A LETTER OF SUPPORT HAD STATED THAT BECAUSE HE PROVIDED US WITH THIS LETTER HE COULD NOT REPRESENT US IN OUR QUEST FOR ALLOTMENTS, AS HE HAD SHOWN AN INTEREST AND THEREFORE WAS NOT ALLOWED TO SPEAK ON OUR BEHALF, AND THIS IS MINUTED IN AN AREA COMMITTEE MEETING WHERE HE LEFT THE MEETING WHILST ALLOTMENTS WERE SPOKEN ABOUT.

I POINTED OUT TO HIM THAT THAT IS WHAT HE IS A COUNCILLOR FOR, AND HE NOW ACCEPTS THAT HE CAN REPRESENT US. THIS COUNCILLOR IS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE ARGYLL AND BUTE LOCAL BIO-DIVERSITY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. A & B COUNCILS LEGAL DEPT. STATED IN THEIR REPORT THAT THE FUNDING SHOULD BE SOURCED FROM THE QUALITY OF LIFE FUND, AND YET, WHEN THE STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE MADE A DECISION ON WHERE THE FUNDING SHOULD COME FROM THEY DECIDED TO GET IT FROM THE AREA CAPITAL RECEIPTS FUND, WHICH IS EMPTY!!AND THEY KNEW THIS. WE WERE ALSO INFORMED IN JANUARY 2006 THAT THE AREA CORPORATE SERVICES MANAGER WOULD TAKE THE SOLE LEAD ROLE ON PROGRESSING THE MATTER, WERE WE ON OUR WAY?

NO, HE DECIDED TO ANNOUNCE IN MARCH THAT HE WAS TAKING EARLY RETIREMENT IN APRIL 2006. A NEW MANAGER IS IN PLACE NOW, BUT WE ARE STILL WAITING FOR A MEETING WITH HER. WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO GET COUNCILS AND COUNCILLORS TO PROVIDE AND SUPPORT ALLOTMENTS, A LOT MORE THAN THE ALLOTMENTS SCOTLAND ACT AS IT STANDS AT THE MOMENT, AS WE HAVE TRIED FOR THE PAST 15 MONTHS TO GET THEM TO LISTEN TO US, AND ACT ON OUR REQUEST, AND STILL WE WAIT. WE HAVE LOOKED AT MEANS OF OBTAINING FUNDING AND FOUND THAT IT IS A MINEFIELD, BUT COUNCILS HAVE PEOPLE EMPLOYED AS

EXTERNAL FUNDING OFFICERS, AND YET WHEN WE HAVE REQUESTED INFORMATION ON THIS WE GET NO HELP FROM THEM, WHY? WE HAVE HIGHLIGHTED VARIOUS SITES THAT WE THINK MIGHT BE SUITABLE BUT NOT ONCE HAVE THE COUNCIL GIVE US ANY HOPE ON BEING OFFERED ONE. WE HAVE SURVIVED TOTALLY ON OUR OWN FUNDS, OBTAINED FROM THE MEMBERS AND A LOT FROM MY OWN POCKET, AS I BELIEVE STRONGLY THAT ALLOTMENTS CAN AND WILL SOLVE A LOT OF THE PROBLEMS THAT ARE PREVALENT IN DUNOON TODAY. I THANK YOU ALL FOR LISTENING AND HOPE THAT I HAVE NOT BORED YOU TOO MUCH WITH MY SPEECH AND HOPE THAT NEXT YEAR I CAN COME BACK AND GIVE YOU ALL THE GOOD NEWS THAT WE HAVE A FLOURISHING ALLOTMENT SITE IN DUNOON. THANK YOU. ALAN WATTERSON

CHAIRPERSON

DUNOON DISTRICT ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION