



PROVOST'S REPORT

For the period covering: 22 March – 30 May 2021

The attached report gives a summary and brief details to Council, of meetings and events attended by the Provost of North Ayrshire Council, Councillor Ian Clarkson.



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Since the last meeting of the Council I have taken part in several events, including:

National Day of Reflection, 23 March

I was honoured to lead the tributes when North Ayrshire joined the rest of the country in a day to remember those who have lost their lives during the pandemic. Tuesday, 23 March, marked the one-year anniversary of lockdown and the country came together at 12 noon to collectively pause for a minute's silence.

Council staff were encouraged to mark this act of remembrance, while the flags at Cunninghame House were flown at half-mast.

We lit up Saltcoats Town Hall and the Portal in a symbol of respect and solidarity to all those who have suffered over the last year.

The day was spearheaded by Marie Curie, with dozens of organisations supporting the day, including British Red Cross, Girlguiding, Jo Cox Foundation, RVS, The Scouts and Together.

My heart goes out to those who have lost a loved one during the pandemic. Let us also hope and pray, that after all the uncertainty of the past year, we can look forward to the time when we can meet our family and loved ones again in a safe environment.

Irvine Burns Club Zoom Gathering, 28 April & 19 May

Irvine Burns Club continue to host monthly events online, which are becoming increasingly popular and far-reaching. On 28 April, I took part in their latest event where among other items, Dr Craig Lamont of Glasgow University's Centre for Robert Burns Studies spoke on "Georgian Glasgow and its role in the life of Robert Burns". On 19 May, there was a talk by Professor Kirsten McCue and performances from local musicians.

John Galt Day, 2 May

John Galt who was born in Irvine on 2 May 1779 and died in Greenock on 11 April 1839. Writing in Scots and in English, Galt was much more than a literary figure. For John Galt was also an entrepreneur who opened parts of Western Ontario and funded the city of Guelph in what was known as Upper Canada.



Irvine Burns Club, of which Galt became its first Honorary Member in 1828, are members of the John Galt Society. I would normally take part in a wreath laying ceremony, on the day of John Galt's birth. Instead, to mark the occasion, I recorded a special message on social media, noting this special day and sent greetings to the people of Guelph, Canada.

International Fibromyalgia Day, 12 May

I was happy to support a request from Fibro Friends United, who are based in Irvine, to mark International Fibromyalgia Day on 12 May, by lighting up the Portal and Saltcoats Town Hall.

Fibromyalgia is a syndrome which impacts the central nervous system where trauma is a central factor in the development. The syndrome is often very misunderstood due to the presenting symptoms fluctuating and the person not generally showing visible signs of disability. The syndrome is highly debilitating and affects physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and occupational aspects of daily living.

Refurbishment of Marress House, Irvine, 20 May

Refurbishment of Marress House in Irvine is getting under way for a new, state-of-the-art Early Years Centre and professional learning and development facility in a building which will also facilitate the relocation of the Council's concierge centre.

I was delighted to officially mark the beginning of the construction phase of this development at a special ground-breaking ceremony held on 20 May.

The vacant tax office will be transformed into an Early Years Centre (ELC) including outdoor play areas and a professional learning and development facility to support the roll out of the expansion of 1140 hours early years and childcare. The £3.82 million project will accommodate 42 three to five-year-olds and 21 two to three-year-olds on the ground level and a new ELC professional learning facility on the upper mezzanine floor.

Opening Session of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 22 May

On 22 May, I took part in the opening session of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. This year the high-profile event was online, and Rt Hon Lord Wallace became Moderator succeeding Very Rev Dr. Martin Fair. The General Assembly is a significant event in the Church of Scotland Calendar where commissioners to the Assembly examine the work and laws of the Church and make decisions which affect its future. His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge who is Her Majesty's Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland gave a speech at the Opening Session.

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Provost North Ayrshire Council