



# PROVOST'S REPORT

For the period covering: 3 February 2020 – 13  
September 2020

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 attended various events throughout North Ayrshire.

## ***Irvine Lasses Founders' Celebration, Irvine Townhouse, 6 February***

On 6 February, I was invited to officially open the exhibition in Irvine Townhouse marking Irvine Lasses Burns Club's 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Entertainment was provided by Ayrshire Fiddle and we heard from a variety of speakers on the night. I was delighted to attend and show my support for all the excellent work that is carried out in our local communities.

## ***Kilwinning Burns Club Burns Supper, Nethermains Institute, Kilwinning, 7 February***

On 7 February, I was a guest of Kilwinning Burn Club at their annual celebration which took place in Nethermains Institute, Kilwinning. The event was a great success and my congratulations go out to the organisers. Events like these take place every year throughout North Ayrshire celebrating the birth of our National Bard, Robert Burns.

## ***Chinese New Year Celebration, Loon Fung Restaurant, Glasgow, 10 February***

I attended a Chinese New Year Celebration in Glasgow on 10 February, which was hosted by the Association of Chinese Entrepreneurs in Scotland and the Kut O Benevolent Society. This event gave me the opportunity to show our support to the Chinese community as well as promoting North Ayrshire to a wider audience.

## ***Reception hosted by Consul General of Japan, Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh, 20 February***

On 20 February, the Consul General of Japan hosted a reception in the Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh on the 60th Birthday of the Emperor of Japan. Among the guests were MPs, MSPs, Lord Provosts and Provosts from throughout Scotland.

### ***Diamond Wedding Anniversary, Mr and Mrs Smith, Irvine, 21 February***

As Provost it is my duty to acknowledge special anniversaries and birthdays namely Diamond Weddings and 100<sup>th</sup> Birthdays. I attend various celebrations throughout North Ayrshire along with a representative of the Ayrshire and Arran Lieutenancy. On 21 February Mr and Mrs Smith from Irvine celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary in the Riverside Lodge Hotel. I was delighted to be able to visit them and pass on my congratulations on behalf of North Ayrshire Council.

### ***Cordiners' Burns Supper, Heckling Shed, Irvine, 21 February***

Continuing the Robert Burns celebrations I attended a Burns Supper on the evening of 21 February in the Heckling Shed, Irvine where Robert Burns worked in 1781. The event was hosted by the Cordiners Trade and was a fitting tribute to Burns and his connection to Irvine.

### ***Visit to Fullarton Guild, Fullarton Church, Irvine, 24 February***

I was guest speaker at the Fullarton Guild on 24 February in Fullarton Church. I am always pleased to be able to visit various community groups and organisations and highlight the exceptional work they carry out and the important role they play in their local community.

### ***Fairtrade Fortnight Photocall, Cunninghame House, 27 February***

On 27 February, I attended a photocall to help raise awareness of Fairtrade products and the people who supply them. For two weeks every year, thousands of individuals, businesses and community organisations come together to highlight Fairtrade.

### ***Irvine Seagate Rotary Sportsman's Dinner, Fullarton Community Hub, Irvine, 28 February***

Irvine Seagate Rotary's annual Sportsman's dinner was held in the Fullarton Community Hub on 28 February. Representatives from several local organisations attended this entertaining event, which I was a guest at. The event was arranged by volunteers and is another example of the vibrant communities we have here in North Ayrshire.

### ***WW100 Exhibition, Irvine Townhouse, 2 March***

On 2 March, I officially opened the WW100 Exhibition at Irvine Townhouse. WW100 Scotland was set up by the Scottish Government and aims to inform people about Scotland's contribution to World War One and help them discover the effects the war had on their local communities and its lasting impact on life in Scotland today. This unique exhibition, consisted of original print artworks created by young people aged 14+ mounted onto 100 plinths, that telling the stories of people and events from World War One. The plinths fitted together to form an abstract outline of a map of Scotland. From acts of heroism on the battlefield to naval tragedies, from thousands of workers in factories at home to brave members of the hospitals at the Western Front, this exhibition shares a wide range of stories.

### ***PoppyScotland International Women's Day, Welfare Centre, Kilmarnock, 6 March***

I attended PoppyScotland's International Women's Day event in Kilmarnock on 6 March. The event celebrated the achievements of women in the Armed Forces community. Whether this is serving/reservists, veterans, or spouses, women are pivotal to the diversity and strength of our Armed Forces.

### ***Ayrshire Chamber Annual Dinner, Trump Turnberry, 6 March***

I was a guest at the Ayrshire Chamber Annual Dinner which was held in Trump Turnberry on 6 March. This is a key event for the Ayrshire business community and it was a great opportunity for me to meet various businesses based in North Ayrshire.

### ***Ayrshire Association of Burns Clubs Schools Competition, Irvine Royal Academy, 7 March***

Ayrshire Association of Burns Club held their annual schools' competition in Irvine Royal Academy on 7 March. The competition was very successful with many entrants from throughout Ayrshire. I was only too delighted to attend and present the prizes.

### ***Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships Reception, William McIlvaney Campus, Kilmarnock, 8 March***

I attended a reception on 8 March in William McIlvaney Campus Kilmarnock, hosted by the Provost of East Ayrshire Council and The Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships. Schools from throughout Scotland competed at the event with some excellent performances.

### ***Diamond Wedding Anniversary, Mr and Mrs Kerr, Irvine, 10 March***

Mr and Mrs Kerr of Irvine celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on 10 March. It was a pleasure to be able to visit Mr and Mrs Kerr on their special day and offer my congratulations on behalf of the Council.

### ***Ayrshire Music Festival Piping Event, Stanley Primary School, Ardrossan, 14 March***

On 14 March, I attended a piping event in Stanley Primary School, Ardrossan. The event was part of the Ayrshire Music Festival and arranged by Caledonian Piping Club. The event was very well attended, and my congratulations go to the organisers for arranging the event and for their commitment in developing traditional music in North Ayrshire.

### ***Covid 19***

As the global pandemic started to make its mark throughout Scotland and the world many of our annual events and activities were either cancelled or rescheduled. The fantastic efforts of our staff and people throughout North Ayrshire continue as we keep our communities safe and well and provide support to many sectors as we come to terms with a 'new normal'. The resilience of volunteers continues to be nothing short of remarkable and my heartfelt thanks go out to every one of them. In July, I attended virtual visits to our Community Hubs with the Leader of the Council and was able to pass on my thanks directly to some of those amazing people. My thoughts go out to all those who have been affected by Coronavirus.

### ***John Galt Day, 2 May***

In recent years, renewed interest has been shown in one of Scotland's "forgotten" literary figures, 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 is credited with being the first socio-political author to comment on society in the post Agrarian and Industrial Revolution era, but was much more than a literary figure. For John Galt was also an entrepreneur who opened up 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, in order 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.

### ***VE Day, 8 May***

8<sup>th</sup> May was the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day. This year's significant anniversary was to have been commemorated with events across the UK but the pandemic meant that most public events were cancelled.

I was disappointed that we were unable to gather together and pay homage to the men and women who gave so much for the generations which followed. Millions of them paid the ultimate price and we cannot forget their sacrifice. Even though we could not gather to publicly honour them, we paid tribute from our own homes by taking part in the Nation's Toast to the Heroes. It was a chance for us to reflect on what they went through 75 years ago and how – even despite the current lockdown – we are very fortunate today and continue to owe them a colossal debt of gratitude.

I pay tribute to the many groups in North Ayrshire and farther afield who had planned events to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day. It's a pity that we will not be able to share our appreciation in person but their dedication and commitment to mark the occasion will not be for nothing. I'm sure we will get the chance at some point soon to come together and pay our respects collectively.

Thanks to North Ayrshire Council's Heritage and Cultural Services who helped commemorate VE Day 75 online and for the opportunity to send a special message on this special day.

### ***Armed Forces Day, 27 June***

On 27 June, I raised the Armed Forces Day Flag at Cunninghame House. Armed Forces Day gives us all the chance to show our support to those men and women who make up our Armed Forces community. This day is celebrated nationally.

### ***Irvine Burns Club, Founder's Day, 2 June***

Irvine Burns Club, founded in 1826, hold a Founders' Day event in June each year. The organisers were reluctant to cancel this annual celebration and thought to do a 'virtual' celebration instead. I was delighted to take part in the celebration from the comfort of my own home. Not only was the event a great success, many people took part that wouldn't normally be able to, this included Henry Cairney, President of Robert Burns Association of North America, Brian Goldie, President of Robert Burns World Federation, Andrew O'Hagan, author and George Masson son of Past President Charles Masson and now resident in Atlanta, Georgia. David Burns, President of Irvine Burns Club hosted the event.

### ***VJ Day, Saltcoats and Stevenston, 15 August***

I visited the war memorials in Saltcoats and Stevenston to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VJ Day, on 15 August. VJ Day marks the surrender of Japan and the end of the Second World War.

### ***Marymass Festival, Irvine, 13- 24 August***

This year's Marymass Festival took place from 13 – 24 August. Irvine Carter's Society and the Marymass Festival Committee staged the event online via Facebook and in doing so managed to reach out to over 130,000 people. As well as an alternative online opening ceremony, many events and features took place including interviews and coverage from past Festivals, flower show, live music, exhibitions, virtual tours and so much more. I was delighted to officially acknowledge the start of the Festival and take part in a special feature with the Captain of the Carters' Danny Kerr, on the history of Seagate Castle. A host of people were involved this year in delivering these events, largely volunteers. The Festival was certainly missed, however the online events were a great success with definite opportunities to develop the Festival programme to a wider audience in future years.

### ***Merchant Navy Day, 3 September***

On 3 September, we took part in Merchant Navy Day by flying the Red Ensign outside Cunninghame House. This is to honour Seafarers past and present who have served their country over the years and I was only too delighted to take part.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Clarkson".

Councillor Ian Clarkson  
**Provost North Ayrshire Council**