

Since our last AGM at the end of October 2019 life has changed considerably for all of us. Many of the events which are normally staples in our community calendar vanished under lockdown restrictions, with the hall itself being closed.

We have, however, secured funding from An Suidhe Wind Farm for 2 different projects, one last year and one within the last few weeks. We have funding to install 3 pieces 'green gym' equipment. Final placing has yet to be decided on, but is likely to be in the area near the playpark. The project is on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The funders are aware of this and we are allowed to hold the funds over until we can use them. The second, most recent, award will allow us to carry out external painting and essential repairs to the Village Hall. We are very grateful to Lynda Syed for completing the application forms for us.

Returning to 2019, David and Cindy organised a Hallowe'en party for the village children and the annual Christmas Dinner for our more senior residents was again held very successfully. The Hall also played host to the bowls, craft club, tai chi, Friday fitness class, quiz nights, family bingo and a couple of film nights.

We joined together to celebrate the contribution of Rev Dr Roddy McLeod to our community by planting a flowering cherry tree. A plaque commemorating the event is now in place.

Early in 2020, as we know, the country went in to Lockdown. This effectively meant the hall needed to be closed, as to try to follow all the regulations regarding distancing and cleaning would have been unrealistic. We still managed to hold some events in a different way.

Instead of a Craft Day in the hall we had a craft event in people's gardens. This was well supported, with many families taking part who had not been part of the previous year's event.

The village website, www.furnace-argyll.org, has now been completely revamped and updated and we would encourage everyone to visit it and share it around. We hope to keep it fairly constantly updated, with photos of village events and news from various groups. This relies on the people associated with groups like the bowls, the church, the school etc sending us information and everyone sending us photos or suggestions which can be added. The SCIO would particularly like to thank Ruth Tott for the enormous amount of work she did on this project.

Most recently we managed to have a socially distanced Christmas event with our lights switch on at the hall still taking place despite social distancing and masks. Many people in the village also participated in our Christmas window decorating event and walking around the village showed us all the sparkle and colour we have come to associate with Christmas. It was lovely to see so many people joining in.

We hope that 2021 will allow us to return to a more normal way of life and that events such as coffee mornings, exercise classes, the craft day and Gala Weekend will all be able to make an appearance. We will continue to closely follow government recommendations and hope to bring the hall back into use as soon as it becomes feasible.