



**FIFE COAST &
COUNTRYSIDE TRUST**



Fife Coast and Countryside Trust Annual Report

for year ending 31st March 2023



The Fife Coast and Countryside Trust is an independent charity working with partners for a healthy environment that supports wellbeing and sustains the balance between people and nature.

Spread across more than 65 sites, FCCT maintains the Fife Coastal Path, Fife Pilgrim Way, the Lomond Hills Regional Park, local nature reserves, and award-winning beaches. The organisation has its headquarters at Harbourmaster's House in Dysart.

Mission Statement

Connecting Environment and People

Vision

We lead in the care of Fife's outdoors. Working together with you, we create a healthier environment that supports wellbeing and sustains the balance between people and the natural world.



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Welcome

A message from Stephen Carter, OBE Chairman of Fife Coast and Countryside Trust (FCCT) for the year ending 31st March 2023.

It is with great pleasure that I once again welcome you to FCCT's Annual Report. We have had another year packed with activity as we push on with our mission of connecting environment and people.

Alongside all the work on the ground that you can read about in this report, this year saw the team and Board of FCCT refresh our strategic plan to take us through to 2025. The dramatic changes in the world in recent years necessitated a dynamic approach to planning and delivery by the Trust, and this is proving to be serving us well. We identified three Strategic Focus Areas for the organisation. To consolidate, diversify, and specialise. These priorities provide high level guidance that ties together all activity carried out by FCCT.

We have intentionally avoided growth as a strategic aim, electing to consolidate our existing activities. This allows us to ensure that we align with our value of remaining agile in all our activities, and pro-active in using the resources available to us ahead of any growth.

Diversification, particularly in terms of our funding, is essential to ensuring that FCCT is resilient in the face of a rapidly changing world. Beyond funding, embracing diversity in our activities supports our values of being inclusive, fair, and respectful to all.

Our drive to specialise recognises our aspiration to lead. But in leading, we are determined that we are knowledgeable, and information led, taking wise decisions in the work we do for Fife.

I am always struck by the exemplary engagement of our volunteer Directors on the Board who give so generously of their time attending meetings, reading large volumes of material in preparation, and are full of carefully considered and helpful input.



Our FCCT Senior Leadership Team are working to develop an inclusive culture, bringing staff and Board together in building plans for both the present and the future.

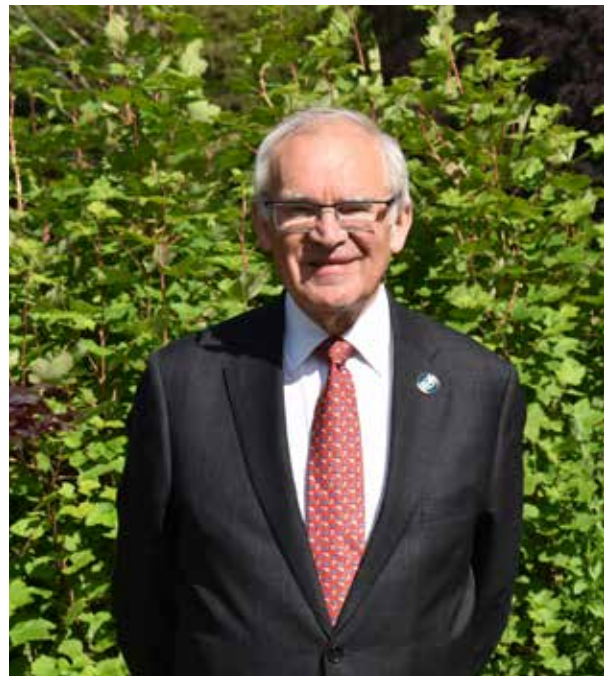
Of course, so much of what we do would not be possible without Fife Council support. This year, we have been fortunate in receiving additional financial support once again despite significant financial pressures on the Local Authority. I am extremely grateful for the time given to understanding the work of FCCT by our political leaders and Officers in Fife Council. The additional support shows their commitment to providing a healthier outdoor environment for all who live in and visit Fife to enjoy.

A word of thanks must go to our volunteers. This year has seen FCCT able to return to more regular scheduled volunteering activities and you have come out in great numbers! Thank you!

The backing we receive from communities up and down Fife is wonderful to see and provides such valuable support, not only in achieving our Mission but to our hard-working teams as they pursue their objectives. We very much appreciate and value your enthusiasm so willingly given.

I hope you will enjoy this report and encourage you to join us in realising our vision of creating a healthier environment in Fife that supports wellbeing and sustains the balance between people and the natural world.

My final, though not least thanks go to our CEO, Jeremy Harris, our dedicated Senior Management and all our employees for their dedication and willingness to go the extra mile in order to make our aspirations become reality.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Carter'.

Stephen Carter, OBE
Chairman
29th August, 2023



CEO's Vision

The contents of this report are not only a credit to the wonderful team at FCCT, but also to the communities of Fife and the many volunteers who regularly engage with the organisation. From the Board of Directors to the young person who plants a tree in their local park or the group of friends who get together to organise a litter pick, your role in our achievements deserves recognition.

Last year, we focussed as an organisation on establishing our Mission and Vision and setting agreed values that would underpin all that we do. This year, we have taken these and built on them in delivering a plan for us to work to in the coming years.

What we have developed at FCCT strikes the balance well. We have fixed our sights on a future for Fife's outdoors that will benefit all and have been explicit on the shared values that will support our journey. Laying out a structure for the Trust that provides us a vehicle with all the right parts to take us where we believe we should go.

As you will see through this report, our activities are wide ranging – not only in terms of the places we care for in Fife, but also in the subject matter and specialisms that exist among the 50 or so people that make up FCCT.

We are organised into four distinct but complementary departments. Our Operations, and Conservation and Engagement teams, focus efforts on the delivery of services and engagement with communities across Fife. They are predominantly external in focus, and the majority of what they deliver is driven and largely funded by a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Fife Council. It is worth noting however that each of these departments routinely delivers over and above this agreement.

The smooth functioning of the organisation is made possible by the Support Services team. They underpin all of FCCT's delivery as well as ensuring effective communications, transparent governance, and high-integrity financial and operational reporting.

FCCT also invests in a small development arm that secures funding to build capacity in human resource and financial terms for the wider organisation. This part of the organisation holds responsibility for exploring innovative ways of resourcing the delivery of our Mission and Vision.



Each of these teams is guided by a shared purpose and populated with incredible individuals committed to what FCCT is trying to achieve.

I am immensely grateful to our Board of Directors, led so capably by our Chair, Stephen Carter. This year saw some new faces on our Board, and while we will miss those who have moved on, it has been excellent to gather fresh perspectives on what we are doing, and see how readily our Mission, Vision, and Values are adopted.

Also, some staff have chosen to move on to take up new challenges, while new team members have joined us. I have been pleased by how using our values through the recruitment process has found people who seem to fit in so quickly and drive FCCT forward.

Of course, none of this past year would have been possible without our close working relationship with Fife Council and their involvement in helping us achieve our objectives. It is a model that appears to work well for FCCT and Fife Council and delivers excellent and tangible benefits to Fife's communities as well as those who choose to visit this wonderful corner of Scotland.



We are also extremely grateful for the support offered by many other organisations through the year including those represented on our Board of Directors. While there are too many to list here, each of these partnerships means a great deal to FCCT and widens our perspectives. You will also read in these pages of new and exciting partnerships that have taken shape over the year – I for one am excited to see where these will take us in the coming months.

We strongly believe that it is only by working together that we can realise our shared vision. Establishing and nurturing real connections with each other and the world around us holds the key to the best future for Fife's outdoors and we welcome you to join us on our journey there.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Harris'.

Jeremy Harris, CEO

Governance

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report) Year Ended 2022 Organisational Structure.

Fife Coast and Countryside Trust balances the delivery of high-quality countryside services and outdoor recreation with preserving the natural environment and beautiful landscapes found in Fife. Despite a scarcity of funding, FCCT delivers multiple services, maintains many sites, and manages projects across all of Fife. Diversifying our revenue streams continues to underpin our strategy and approach despite our fundamental belief that the countryside should be free for everyone to access. We have dual accountability to Companies House and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and are governed by a Board of Directors. This accountability necessitates and underlines the need for strong governance throughout FCCT.

The full Board meets quarterly, with the Chief Executive Officer, Chair, and Vice Chairs meeting regularly between Board and committee meetings. The Board of Directors is the governing authority of FCCT and takes ultimate responsibility for the Trust's adherence to sound and ethical practices and standards. The Board oversees a simple and transparent corporate Vision and Mission that underpin a Strategy ensuring that all business decisions and judgements are made with reasonable care, skill and diligence and are solely driven by business needs. The Board of Directors receive no remuneration from FCCT for their involvement and give of their time and effort voluntarily.

For the year ending 31st March 2023, The Board of Directors was made up by the following members:

Mr S Carter OBE (Chairman, Chair of HR & Remuneration Committee)
Mr B Rollo Retired July 2022
Ms S Roberts (Vice Chair, Chair of Communications & Fundraising Committee)
Dr R Close (Treasurer, Chair Audit and Finance Committee) Retired December 2022
Mr J Simpson
Ms J Miller OBE (Vice Chair)
Ms R McInroy
Mr P Teale
Ms C Warburton
Cllr J Wincott (Fife Council Member) Replaced after May 2022 Local Council Elections
Cllr L Holt (Fife Council Member) Retired at May 2022 Local Council Elections
Cllr W Porteous (Fife Council Member) Retired at May 2022 Local Council Elections
Cllr K Caldwell (Fife Council Member) Replaced after May 2022 Local Council Elections
Cllr J Leslie (Fife Council Member)
Cllr F Corps (Fife Council Member)
Cllr C Davidson (Fife Council Member)
Cllr B Goodall (Fife Council Member)
Neil McCormick (NHS Fife appointed December 2022)
Sheila Boardman (Treasurer, Chair Audit and Finance Committee) Appointed March 2023
Sarah Lonie Appointed March 2023

The day-to-day management of FCCT is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer Mr Jeremy Harris, who is not a Director or Trustee of the charity and who is supported by a Senior Management Team. Three Committees are established by the Board to support both the work and governance of FCCT. In accordance with the Articles of Association, all Committees comprise a minimum of three Board members and are supported regularly by professional services in the form of financial expertise provided by Colin McCulloch (Patterson Boyd) and legal support from Burness Paul LLP.

The Audit and Finance Committee is responsible for reviewing and providing guidance on FCCT's financial matters. Specifically, the Committee oversees internal controls, independent audit, and financial analysis for the organisation including:

- To monitor the integrity of the financial statements;
- To review FCCT's internal controls, internal audit, compliance, and risk management systems;
- To receive and discuss the external auditor's report including any issues and recommendations; and
- To review and monitor the external auditor's independence and objectivity and the effectiveness of the audit process, while taking into consideration all relevant professional and regulatory requirements.

The HR & Remuneration Committee provides oversight and support while monitoring the implementation of FCCT's Human Resources framework reporting to the Board any matters it considers where action or improvement is needed. This Committee has the following specific tasks and responsibilities:

- To assist the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities regarding the oversight of human resources and remunerations issues;
- To ensure that the HR & Remuneration arrangements support the strategic aims of the FCCT; and
- To enable the recruitment, motivation and retention of staff while complying with the requirements of legislative and governing bodies.

The Communication and Fundraising Committee provides strategic guidance in support of the visibility of FCCT and considers matters related to funding and fundraising. In particular, the Committee shall:

- Support external communications including website, social media, newsletters, publications, press and traditional media;
- Identify and support areas of strategic focus (whether geographic or demographic) for FCCT's community engagement activities;
- Provide any necessary oversight of internal communications including technologies and methods of internal communication and associated FCCT policies (including telephone and IT), reporting and record keeping, and matters relating to confidentiality and data protection;
- Provide oversight of risk management particularly as this pertains to reputational risk;
- Support and provide input to fundraising activities including the identification and review of opportunities, the setting of targets, and tracking of progress against such targets;
- And consider the development of revenue generating activities and projects as is appropriate.

Board Members

Induction, support, and learning underpins the work of our Board and Committees. They ensure that members have all the information they need to fulfil their roles. They also create a more level playing field for all members, ensuring that they can carry out their duties effectively.

FCCT has a handbook for new Directors and the CEO and Chair of the Board meet with those considering joining the FCCT Board to provide further information. Specific training is made available to all Board Directors and further training and mentoring is made available to Directors as and when required. FCCT ensures that all Directors have a subscription to Governance Magazine to support their awareness of current practices and any legislative changes. Fife Council is the sole member of the Limited Company and as such retains the final authority on the appointment of Directors to the Board of FCCT. Recommendations for new appointments are submitted to Fife Council by a nominations committee.

Objectives and Activities

The objectives of FCCT are wholly charitable. They are defined in the Articles of Association and are:

- To provide recreational facilities, and organise recreational activities, primarily within the local authority area of Fife Council (the Operating Area), with such facilities/activities being made available to members of the public at large with the object of improving their conditions of life, including (without prejudice to that generality) promoting and improving access to the countryside within the Operating Area, and through providing, developing, and improving the facilities which support access to the countryside and the wildlife within the Operating Area;
- To advance education, primarily within the Operating Area, including through encouraging public access to the countryside, and its wildlife, which shall include the provision of interpretative centres, signage, and other methods of conveying information;
- To advance environmental protection and/or improvement through the conservation, preservation and general improvement of the countryside and the landscape within the Operating Area and through securing the sustainable use, management and enjoyment of the countryside and the landscape within the Operating Area;
- To advance heritage and/or culture within the Operating Area;
- To advance citizenship and/or community development, within the Operating Area;
- To promote, establish, operate, and/or support other similar schemes and projects which further charitable purposes.

Under the Articles of Association, FCCT has the power to invest any funds which are not immediately required for the Trust's activities in such investments as may be considered appropriate.

Risk Statement

FCCT takes a dynamic approach to managing risks associated with our operations and activities. Risks are captured in a Risk Register and appropriate mitigation identified and implemented on a case-by-case basis. Given the unprecedented impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic, FCCT undertook a detailed review of our approach to risk management which is now complete.

Several Board members and members of the Management team have attended training, and a revised Master Risk Matrix produced along with a guidance document in support of the implementation of FCCT's approach to risk management.

Financial Review

Trustees' Responsibilities Statement

The trustees, who are also directors for the purposes of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, for that period.

- In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:
- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.

Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Auditor Statement as to disclose to our auditors

Each of the persons who is a director at the date of approval of this report confirms that:

- So far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditor is unaware;
- They have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as a director to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditor is aware of that information; and
- The auditor is deemed to have been re-appointed in accordance with section 487 of the Companies Act 2006.

Small Company Provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

The trustees' annual report (incorporating the directors' report) was approved on 29th August 2023 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



S Carter, OBE
Chairman

Independent Auditor's Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Fife Coast and Countryside Trust (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the statement of financial activities (including income and expenditure account), statement of financial position, statement of cash flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- Give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- Have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- Have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions Relating to Going Concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- The information given in the trustees' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- The trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on Which we are Required to Report by Exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- Adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- The financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- Certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- The trustees were not entitled to take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the directors' report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees (who are also the directors for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and under the Companies Act 2006 and report in accordance with the Acts and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

Based on our understanding of the charity and industry, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to breaches of UK regulations and prohibited business practices, and we considered that the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006. We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override controls), and determined that the principal risks were related to the potential posting of inappropriate journal entries to manipulate financial results and management bias in accounting estimates.

Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

- Enquiry of management and those charged with governance around actual and potential litigation and claims.
- Reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance including the Board.
- Evaluation and testing of the operating effectiveness of management's controls designed to prevent and detect irregularities.

- Identifying and testing journal entries based on risk criteria.
- Designing audit procedures to incorporate unpredictability around the nature, timing or extent of our testing.
- Testing transactions entered into outside of normal course of business.
- Investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.
- Reviewed accounting estimates for evidence of bias.
- Performed analytical review and sample testing of income.
- Agreed financial statement disclosures to supporting documentation.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above. We are less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that are not closely related to events and transactions reflected in the financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the charity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



Craig Wallace B.Acc. (Hons) F.C.C.A. (Senior Statutory Auditor)

For and on behalf of
 PB Audit Limited
 Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditor
 18 North Street
 Glenrothes
 Fife
 KY7 5NA

PB Audit Limited is eligible to act as auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Statement of Financial Activities
(including income and expenditure account)
Year Ended 31 March 2023

	Note	2023		2022	
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
		£	£	£	£
Income and endowments					
Donations and legacies	5	6,496	2,700	9,196	20,942
Charitable activities	6	1,102	2,246,018	2,247,120	1,888,033
Other trading activities	7	-	29,575	29,575	10,180
Investment income	8	13,665	2	13,667	4,258
Other income	9	-	9,443	9,443	798
Total Income		<u>21,263</u>	<u>2,287,738</u>	<u>2,309,001</u>	<u>1,924,211</u>
Expenditure					
Expenditure on raising funds:					
Costs of raising donations and legacies	10	-	30,666	30,666	19,836
Cost of other trading activities	11	-	2,758	2,758	5,493
Investment management costs	12	4,792	-	4,792	857
Expenditure on charitable activities	13,14	5,400	2,301,346	2,306,746	2,487,361
Total expenditure		<u>10,192</u>	<u>2,334,770</u>	<u>2,344,962</u>	<u>2,513,547</u>
Net expenditure		<u>11,071</u>	<u>(47,032)</u>	<u>(35,961)</u>	<u>(589,336)</u>
Transfers between funds		(104,219)	104,219	-	-
Other recognised gains and losses					
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes		473,000	-	473,000	801,000
Gains/(loss) on investment assets		(43,060)	-	(43,060)	(49,096)
Net movement in funds		<u>336,792</u>	<u>57,187</u>	<u>393,979</u>	<u>162,568</u>
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		<u>521,937</u>	<u>435,297</u>	<u>957,234</u>	<u>794,666</u>
Total funds carried forward		<u>858,729</u>	<u>492,484</u>	<u>1,351,213</u>	<u>957,234</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Statement of Financial Position 31 March 2023

		2023		2022
	Note	£	£	£
Fixed Assets				
Tangible fixed assets	20		261,291	100,460
Investments	21		543,541	594,264
			804,832	694,724
 Current Assets				
Stocks	22	5,886		5,346
Debtors	23	458,591		355,472
Cash at bank and in hand		407,528		753,313
			872,005	1,114,131
 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	 24	 325,624		 378,621
Net Current Assets			546,381	735,510
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities			1,351,213	1,430,234
Net Assets Excluding Defined Benefit Pension Plan Liability			1,351,213	1,430,234
Defined benefit pension plan liability	26		–	473,000
Net Assets Including Defined Benefit Pension Plan Liability			1,351,213	957,234
 Funds of the Charity				
Restricted funds			492,484	435,297
Unrestricted funds:				
Defined benefit pension reserve		–		(473,000)
Other unrestricted income funds		858,729		994,937
Total unrestricted funds			858,729	521,937
Total charity funds	27		1,351,213	957,234

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

These financial statements were approved by the board of trustees and authorised for issue 29th August, and are signed off on behalf of the board by:



S Carter, OBE
Chairman

Statement of Cash Flows Year Ended 31 March 2023

	2023 £	2022 £
Cash Flows from Operating Activities		
Net expenditure	(35,961)	(589,336)
<i>Adjustments for:</i>		
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	50,984	51,516
Other interest receivable and similar income	(13,667)	(4,258)
Interest payable and similar charges	–	21,000
Gains on disposal of tangible fixed assets	–	(798)
Accrued expenses/(income)	3,252	(20,845)
Actuarial gain/loss on defined benefit pension scheme	–	801,000
<i>Changes in:</i>		
Stocks	(540)	1,361
Trade and other debtors	(103,119)	(276,141)
Trade and other creditors	(56,249)	122,012
Provisions and employee benefits	–	(413,000)
Cash generated from operations	(155,300)	(307,489)
Interest paid	–	(21,000)
Interest received	13,667	4,258
Net cash used in operating activities	(141,633)	(324,231)
Cash Flows from Investing Activities		
Purchase of tangible assets	(212,957)	(65,359)
Proceeds from sale of tangible assets	1,142	3,838
Purchases of other investments	(166,295)	(703,672)
Proceeds from sale of other investments	173,958	60,338
Net cash used in investing activities	(204,152)	(704,855)
Net Decrease in Cash and Cash Equivalents	(345,785)	(1,029,086)
Cash and Cash Equivalents at Beginning of Year	753,313	1,782,399
Cash and Cash Equivalents at End of Year	407,528	753,313



Fife Coast and Countryside Trust

Who we are and what we do....

Support Services

Support Services is the backbone of the Trust and the link between departments. It is based in Harbourmaster's House and includes finance, human resources, administration, data and communications. This function allows work processes to operate seamlessly and enables departments to focus on their team's responsibilities. In the past year we have recruited an Administration Assistant who supports the Pitcairn team, an Executive Assistant and created the new Communications Officer role to support the Communications Manager. We use a range of media and channels to effectively communicate internally and externally, including social media, online newsletters, printed literature and our website.

Litter and Facilities Team

The Litter and Facilities team is responsible for keeping the sites we manage clean and welcoming for residents and visitors to Fife. The service is delivered by a flexible, locally committed workforce who work well with the residents, visitors, communities, and partners by enabling people to do more for themselves.

The team operates out of 3 strategically based sites at East Fife (Guardbridge), Central Fife (Pitcairn Centre) and West Fife (Kinghorn toilet block) and provides a cleansing and maintenance service 7 days per week, 52 weeks of the year. The 70 sites we manage, and the Fife Coastal Path, incorporate 14 Scotland's Beach Award winning beaches, 140 miles of coastline and 15 award winning public toilet blocks.

Maintenance Team

Operating from the Pitcairn Centre the Maintenance Team manages the Fife Coastal Path, Lomond Hills Regional Park, Fife Pilgrim Way and four Local Nature Reserves. It carries out regular maintenance of numerous core paths and undertakes numerous other tasks at more than 70 locations across Fife.

Achieving this objective requires our small team to have a broad skill set to help facilitate public access to the sites we manage. These skills include grass cutting, pruning, tree work, path upgrades, countryside furniture installation, and an ongoing replacement programme of steps, signage, bench infrastructure, drains, and much more. Our team also undertakes building maintenance work on the many facilities we manage. This work is undertaken as part of our Service Level Agreement (SLA) and involves working closely with stakeholders.

Car Parking Team

The most recent addition to the Operations Department is our Mobile Parking Operatives who are responsible for overseeing sustainable parking, primarily at 10 car parks at the coastal and inland locations we manage. Through education and engagement, the teams facilitate safe traffic management and sustainable overnight parking. The team also has a secondary responsibility to address traffic management issues at several other locations we manage, that currently operate under historic parking arrangements.

Conservation and Engagement Team

Over the past year we have seen the newly formed Conservation and Engagement team begin to settle and take shape. Organised by thematic focus areas of Environmental Conservation, Access and Recreation, and Outdoor Education, the teams have key focus areas but multiple overlapping priorities.

Our activities feed directly into the organisation's Mission and Vision of connecting environment and people. We recognise nature's value and understand the benefits of spending time in natural outdoor spaces. We believe that a healthier connection between humans and the natural world supports our wellbeing and that a deeper understanding of the ecosystems that support us is key to our shared future.

In 2022 we have seen the team grow, welcoming these staff members:

John Ford: Biodiversity Coordinator

John's role is to coordinate the development and implementation of the Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). This includes Fife Biodiversity Partnership coordination and liaison with a range of sectors, to protect and enhance Fife's environment and natural heritage.

Rebecca Logsdon: Community Tree Planting Officer

This role is funded through the Climate Action Fife project. It aims to engage with communities in developing and implementing community tree plans, establishing woodlands/orchards and coordinating tree planting activity across Fife through liaison with landowners, partners, and funders, supported by a cross-sectoral tree planting working group.

Yvonne McKie: Environmental Policy Support Officer

Yvonne's role is to carry out audit work, including site visits and quality assessments, to inform the development of Fife's Open Space Strategy, Play Sufficiency Assessment and Woodland Strategy.

Access and Recreation

The A and R Team's Countryside Wardens are FCCT's eyes and ears. Most of their time is spent on site, rotating between patrols of our beaches and nature reserves, the Lomond Hills Regional Park, the Fife Coastal Path, and the Fife Pilgrim Way. We are looking forward to another summer criss-crossing Fife to ensure everyone has a wonderful experience wherever they visit.

The A and R Team's main aims are to:

- Ensure the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC) is complied with by service users on all our sites.
- Identify and report issues, be it Health and Safety related or general repairs and tidiness.
- Ensure access to our sites is maintained and, where possible, to improve visitor experience.
- Liaise with other agencies, landowners/land managers, the public and any other stakeholders concerned with the management of our sites.

Conservation

The Conservation Team is primarily engaged with the conservation management of sites and projects across Fife, covering Local Nature Reserves (LNR's), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's), Special Protection Areas (SPA's), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's), wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention (RAMSAR's) and Fife Regional Park (FRP).

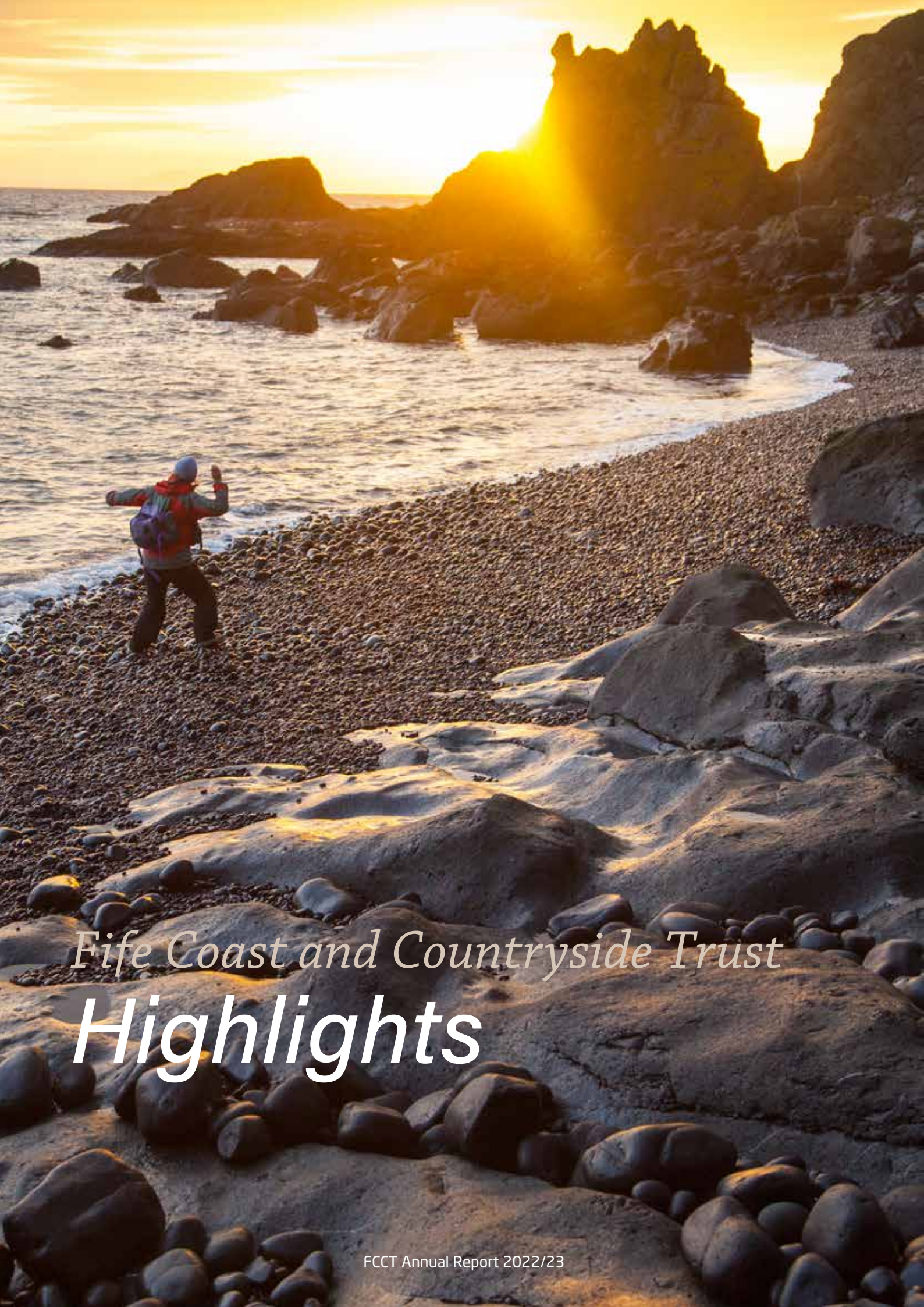
We advise on topics such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act, felling permissions, agri-environment schemes, and funding opportunities as well as producing site management plans and carrying out biological surveying across these sites for both FCCT and Fife Council.

The team also undertakes:

- Delivery of projects and targets within the Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Engagement and partnership working with communities, landowners, and statutory bodies.
- Working with volunteers to enhance biodiversity across our sites.
- Educational engagement from pre-school to postgraduate levels.
- Delivery of guided walks, talks and events.

Development Team

FCCT's Development department secures funding that builds capacity in human resource and financial terms for the wider organisation. This part of the organisation is also responsible for exploring innovative ways of resourcing the delivery of our Mission and Vision, developing strategy in support of diversifying funding, and securing both projects and undesignated funding that build both financial and human capacity for FCCT in the pursuit of our objectives.



Fife Coast and Countryside Trust
Highlights

RTPI Planning Awards

The Fife Pilgrim Way was recognised for its outstanding engagement and partnership working at the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Awards for Planning Excellence 2022.

The 64-mile waymarked trail received a commendation in the category for Excellence in Planning for Heritage and Culture and was the only Scottish planning project entry to receive a prize, despite competing against multi-million-pound projects across the UK.

FCCT led on the trail's development and manages it on behalf of Fife Council. Opened in 2019, it starts in North Queensferry or Culross and winds through the heart of Fife and less well-known areas to arrive at the spectacular ruins of St Andrews Cathedral. It pays homage to Fife's rich medieval past while bringing to life the Kingdom's history, geography and industrial heritage for locals and visitors alike.



Highlight – Judges commented “The project has made great use of the area's distinctive heritage to inform the upgrading and development of a sustainable path network across the region.”

Proposed new route to honour Polish Armed Forces

FCCT staff were pleased to support the Polish Consulate and Fife's Polish Community at a series of events to mark the 81st anniversary of the 1st Independent Parachute Brigade of the Polish Armed Forces under the command of Major General Stanisław Sosabowski, which was stationed in Fife during the second world war.

The events included a walk along the proposed route of the “General Sosabowski Way”, which stretches from Elie Ruby Bay to Leven Festival Gardens, incorporating key historical locations.



Abbeyford Leisure – Donation to FCCT via Big Green Footprint Scheme

The Fife Coastal Path plays an important part in the lives of many Fife residents. And it is a highlight for many visitors too.

FCCT developed 'The Big Green Footprint Scheme' which allows Fife businesses to support the Trust's work. Businesses can contribute to the maintenance of the Fife Coastal Path and other sites and paths the Trust manages. They can do this in several ways from corporate volunteering activities to inviting customers to make a small voluntary donation.

Abbeyford Leisure was one of the scheme's founding members, inviting its guests to add a voluntary £1 donation when booking their stay. Since 2017, Abbeyford Leisure has contributed over £4000 to Fife Coastal Path's upkeep.



Fife Tree Warden Update

Fife Tree Warden scheme was launched in March 2023, at a community tree planting event run in partnership with CLEAR Buckhaven and Methil.

Tree Wardens are volunteer tree champions who plant, look after, and stand up for the trees and hedgerows in their area. Funded by Fife Council and the Community Woodlands Association, Fife Tree Warden scheme is supported by FCCT and Climate Action Fife. Tree Wardens is a national scheme run by The Tree Council, supporting local groups across the UK. Fife is the second local authority Tree Warden scheme to set up in Scotland, after Perth & Kinross.



Loo of the Year Awards

Fife's public toilets are among the best in the UK, according to judges of the 2022 Loo of the Year Awards, the 'Washroom Oscars' held in Birmingham.

FCCT manages 15 public toilets on behalf of Fife Council and was delighted to lift the UK trophy for Public Toilets. An FCCT team attended the ceremony where we also won the UK Market Sector Award for Beaches (Harbourmaster's House, Dysart) and were listed in the Local Authority Public Toilet Premier League.

FCCT also lifted Scotland national awards for ECO Friendly Toilets (Craigmead in the Lomond Hills), Local Authority Entries, Beaches (Harbourmaster's House), Car Parks toilets (Elie Harbour) and for Washroom Cleaner of the Year, which went to the FCCT in-house cleaning team. The awards celebrate 'away from home' washrooms and all entries are judged on over 100 criteria following an unannounced visit by a Loo of the Year inspector.



Gore supports the Trust's work

FCCT is grateful to W. L. Gore & Associates (UK) Limited for their generous donation of 40 Gore-Tex jackets and pairs of work boots for our team.

Our partnership came about thanks to Gore's Global Supply Chain Leader, Rodger Pheely, who is also an FCCT volunteer. He commented, "Gore has a rich heritage of giving back to the community, but there will be more to this partnership than the supply of outdoor wear. I have really enjoyed the work I have done for the Trust."

Going forward volunteer days will see Gore Associates help FCCT to deliver activities such as scrub clearance, wildlife surveys, tree planting and meadow surveys.

FCCT's CEO Jeremy Harris said: "We are really looking forward to developing a lasting relationship in our mission to connect environment and people. Every one of Gore's Associates who gets involved will be making an important and valued contribution to maintaining and preserving Fife's amazing outdoor places."



Conservation & Engagement



Access and Recreation Team – Getting the Message Across

Visitor numbers across our sites continued to be above pre-pandemic levels, which can cause issues at times. The Access and Recreation Team works hard to ensure there is effective countryside management at sites, by sharing the Scottish Outdoor Access Code's key elements with all user groups, be they visitors, residents, or landowners.

The team raises awareness of responsible countryside access across Fife by:

- Sharing the Scottish Outdoor Access Code in fun activities with younger people at events.
- Working with landowners, land managers and dog walkers to reduce incidents of livestock worrying and highlight the problems of wildlife disturbance. This has ranged from attending outreach events at Falkland Estate and Blairadam to installing new signage and infrastructure.
- Working closely with Police Scotland to patrol anti-social activity hotspots over the summer and highlight suspected wildlife crimes.
- Endeavouring to learn best practice from other organisations through informative visits to the Pentlands Ranger Service and the Scottish Outdoor Access Network conference.

Lomond Hills Regional Park Partnership – Landowner Engagement Meeting

Lomond Hills Regional Park Partnership is a working partnership of landowners, estate managers, farmers, public sector agencies, individuals and organisations that have an interest in the recreational use, and its impact on the day-to-day life, of the land within and adjacent to the park boundary.

A meeting was held in Gateside Village Hall in February to engage with landowners and land managers across the Lomond Hills Regional Park (LHRP).

The Partnership had not met for some considerable time. Dallas Seawright, FCCT's Conservation Manager, wanted to explore how those involved in LHRP land management would like to engage with the public and government.

There was an appreciation that park visitor numbers have significantly increased since it was designated in 1986, with more people appreciating the importance of time spent out of doors, and that this brings significant challenges to land managers and those who live and work in the LHRP.

It was felt that reinstating the group would be an effective way of discussing shared challenges and being a collective voice to communicate with other stakeholder groups.



Lomond Hills Regional Park Warden Patrols April 22 to March 23

Number of patrols - 374

People Engaged with - 621

Campervans - 78

Old Fires/BBQs - 28

Dogs not on leads/close control - 9

Dog fouling - 201

Bags of litter collected - 38.75

Tents - 18

Countryside Warden Patrols

As part of their remit Countryside Wardens carry out regular patrols of the LHRP engaging with a wide variety of user groups including farmers and landowners, residents, walkers, dog walkers, fell runners and mountain bikers. Their engagement activities are vital to ensure that all user groups understand their responsibilities as laid down in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Fife Coastal Path

Managing the Fife Coastal Path, a 117-mile-long distance walk, does come with its challenges, these can often be related to the impact of weather related incidents. Some stretches of the path are seeing increased erosion. To mitigate this our Access Team and Maintenance Team have been working with landowners to find solutions to this by either moving the path inland or creating high tide routes where this is not possible, ensuring people can still enjoy the coastline.

Fife Pilgrim Way

Since opening in July 2019, the Fife Pilgrim Way continues to grow in popularity attracting local walkers and those from further afield. The 64-mile route starts in Culross or North Queensferry, with the route coming together in Dunfermline before passing through the heart of Fife, finishing in St Andrews. As part of this route's promotion our Access Manager delivers illustrated talks to community groups along the route.

The UK's first ever Pilgrim Pastor, Duncan Weaver, took up his post on St Andrews Day 2022. His role is to encourage modern pilgrims to make their own pilgrim journeys.

Funding from the Fife Environment Trust allowed us to install fencing on the route near Clatto to help avoid unnecessary interaction between walkers and livestock.

We have recently added a new page to our website 'The Story of the Fife Pilgrim Kingdom', which gives an insight to the journey of medieval pilgrims as they made their way to St Andrews.



**The story of
the Fife Pilgrim
Kingdom**





Highlight - Head of Conservation and Engagement Sarah-Jane Latto, and Board member Caroline Warburton were among the group representing Dunfermline Heritage Partnership, who welcomed King Charles to Dunfermline on his first official visit to Scotland since becoming king.

Beaches

West Sands in St Andrews celebrated its 30th Keep Scotland Beautiful Beach Award in 2022, having won the accolade every year since the scheme launched in 1992. We hope Aberdour Silver Sands will reach the same milestone in 2023.

Countryside Wardens Iwan Thomas and Bernadette Belcher developed our "Unpalatable" campaign, encouraging beach users not to burn wooden pallets on the beach and leave lots of nails for unwary feet to step on. They worked with partners including St Andrews University student representatives to raise awareness of the impact these fires can have. A social media campaign, press releases and public engagement activities were used to get the message across.





Eden Estuary Highlights

The Eden Estuary and the Eden Centre are popular locations for walkers and bird watchers who are often treated to unusual sightings. Species of note in the last year include Avocet, 18 Little Egrets (a Fife record), Green-winged Teal and a Black Kite (a first for Fife). Over one weekend in Spring 2023 a Beaver and a White stork were spotted from the hide.

Conservation Officers carry out annual wildlife surveys including Breeding Bird Surveys in the spring and summer, Heronry Census, and monthly Wetland Bird Survey and Winter Goose counts.

The Centre is a location for educational activities by groups ranging from local Guardbridge Primary School, who were learning about the estuary's biodiversity, to SRUC Elmwood and St Andrews University students learning about the reserve's importance and management.

Our monthly Eden Estuary newsletter is shared through our website and social media channels, with a growing readership now numbering around 3000.

River Eden Invasive Species Management

Working in partnership with Forth Rivers Trust, funding was secured from NatureScot to tackle the management of Invasive Non-native Species removal along the River Eden for another year. The spraying works carried out by Forth Rivers Trust were supported by the conservation volunteers, who cleared an old lade at Corston Mill which was choked with Himalayan Balsam. We hope to continue this work into 2023 and beyond.

Restoration Forth

Restoration Forth was launched in 2022. This 3-year project aims to improve Firth of Forth water quality and habitat by re-introducing native Oyster and Seagrass populations. The first year is focused on engagement.

FCCT is one of 6 Community Engagement Hubs around the Firth of Forth. We have delivered events including rockpool guddles, guided walks along the Fife Coastal Path, waterbird ID and beach art events. We have also worked with the Engagement Coordinator at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and Seagrass Officer, Lyle Boyle, based at Kinghorn Ecology Centre with seeding new populations of seagrass meadows. Future events and further development of training local communities in conservation practices are planned.

Forth Line Exhibition

The Coastal Centre at Harbourmaster's House, Dysart, hosted the Forth Line Exhibition. The exhibition came about during the pandemic, inspired, and developed by the Edinburgh Shoreline Project and a group of experienced craftworkers based in the capital. The exhibition celebrated the Forth Estuary's coastal environment and the varied wildlife to be found there. The 100 Species Project is a follow-on project, which is offering artists and makers the chance to respond creatively to one of the many species that lives (or lived) in and around the Firth of Forth and help raise awareness about its importance. The species – from tiny bacteria to whales – have been selected and distributed between the Restoration Forth Community Hubs.

Conservation Volunteers

Conservation Officer Hanna Rennie co-ordinates the Conservation Volunteer Group, who meet on the 3rd Saturday of the month. They have worked on a range of conservation activities at sites across Fife. Many of them have worked with FCCT for several years and have a wealth of practical conservation management skills. Recent activities include:

- Grassland Management – important for maintaining our species rich grasslands which is a priority habitat in the Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Vegetation management around the Gaddon Loch bird hide and refurbishment of the hide itself.
- Himalayan Balsam removal along the River Eden's banks.
- Clearing and cutting back blackthorn scrub to make Eden Estuary paths more accessible.
- Willow coppicing at Coul Den to open up the viewpoint from a memorial bench. A lot of the invasive Sitka spruce at Coul Den was also tackled. Volunteer Tim taught staff and volunteers a new skill of ring-barking a tree to create standing deadwood.

Management Plans

The Conservation Team have been working on a new format of management plans for the sites we manage; over time the previous plans had diverged in content and approach. The new format follows that of Countryside Management Systems, a format which is recognised across the industry and by many funding streams. The guidance also closely resembles the format used in the Eden Estuary management plan, which has been continuously reviewed and updated, following the same format, for over 30 years. By aligning our plans under the one format, we aim to ensure management across all our directly managed sites, and across all teams, is also consistent. This will allow any new staff to quickly get to grips with our management aims and objectives.

Wetland Bird Surveys

Wetland Bird Surveys were carried out monthly at Coul Den LNR and the Lomond Hills reservoirs with data uploaded to the British Trust for Ornithology database. These included counts of swan species which were passed to the Lothians & Fife Swan and Goose Study Group.

Biodiversity Coordinator

John Ford took up the Biodiversity Coordinator post in late summer 2022, which involves working with communities to improve biodiversity across Fife. This includes delivering advisory sessions with community representatives in settlements such as Tayport, Stenton (Glenrothes) and Crossford.

A key element of his remit is to work with Fife Biodiversity Partnership, which has been reformed after a three-year hiatus. The Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) is undergoing extensive review; the updated document will support biodiversity planning across Fife for the future.

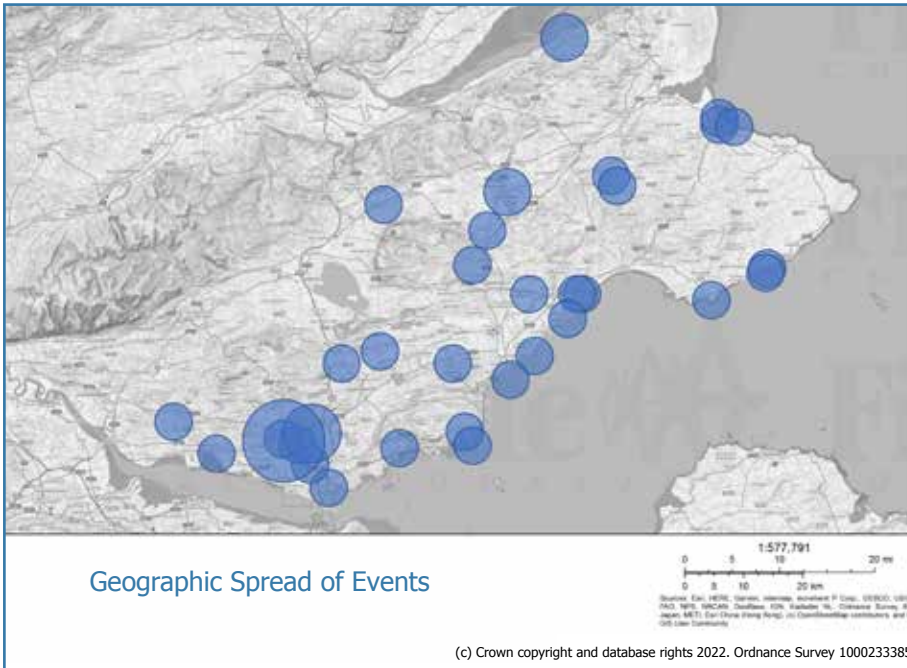
Other Activities include:

- Supporting Fife Council to comply with their statutory obligations. John will be compiling the Council's Biodiversity Duty Report (2020-2023) for submission to the Scottish Government.
- Working with FCCT's Conservation Team, and Fife Council colleagues, to support the village of Strathmiglo become recognised as Fife's first Biodiversity Village and working to roll out this national accreditation across Fife in the coming years in partnership with Tayside Biodiversity.
- A grassland enhancement project funded by Fife Council has begun to see improved grassland management, and management practices altered to bring these into better meadow management.
- In partnership with FCCT colleagues and Fife Council work has started to identify several key invasive species removal targets as well as general biodiversity improvements at Balbirnie Park, Markinch. Works will commence very soon alongside community engagement events.

Events Programme

Our Conservation and Engagement Team are delighted to be able to offer events again. The programme of walks and talks includes subjects as diverse as transient art, tree planting, geo-caching, rock pool guddling, Fife Pilgrim Way illustrated talks, walks with a warden and well-being walks.

From the 25th April 2022 to 29th March 2023, a total of 44 events, walks and talks were delivered across Fife with 659 participants enjoying a varied programme including guided walks, bird identification, geo-caching, illustrated talks, learning how to make a wildflower meadow and many other activities. We also had a presence at 7 large events including the Fife Show, Scout Fest, Summer at Riverside Park and some careers events. The map below shows the geographic spread of events.



Environmental Works

As part of FOTIP several habitat improvement activities were identified such as tree planting at Craigmhead and non-native, invasive Japanese Rose (*Rosa rugosa*) removal from coastal sites (Pettycur Bay, Ruby Bay and Temple, Lower Largo).

FCCT's Maintenance and Conservation Teams worked with FCCT volunteers, residents, corporate groups and SRUC (Scotland's Rural College) Elmwood students, to remove the Japanese rose from the sand dunes.

This out competes the native dune grasses and flowers, which are crucial for maintaining the dune's structural integrity. If allowed to spread, the rose would change the entire composition of the sand dune, making it more susceptible to 'blow outs' during storm events, and the surrounding area at higher risk of coastal flooding.

Marram grass was planted into the dunes, its matted roots help to stabilise sand dunes, allowing them to become colonised by other species.

Public engagement of this type allowed the residents to gain a greater appreciation of the wider FOTIP project and the Trust as a whole. Residents highlighted that Pettycur Bay would benefit from some signage to encourage responsible access during the summer months. The Conservation Officer Hanna worked with the Communications Team to develop bespoke signage for the area.



Work at Craighall Den

In last year's annual report, we shared that Conservation Officers had secured funding from NatureScot's Nature Restoration Fund to carry out path works and to create a new interpretation panel at Craighall Den, a SSSI designated ancient woodland.

A further £5000 has been secured from Fife Council to upgrade and repair infrastructure throughout the Den including safety fences, bridge repairs, bench upgrades and replacements, and redoing the self-guided waymarked trail. Volunteers have been involved in invasive species removal including *Rhododendron ponticum* clearance and cutting back a boundary hedge.



Lyne Burn Project

The Lyne Burn Project's first phase was to restore the burn to a more natural condition – following man-made changes – by reinstating its meanders, which has been achieved thanks to SEPA's Water Environment Fund. The next phase was the improvement of greenspaces along its corridor by planting trees, orchards, hedgerows, and wildflower areas to encourage pollinators and provide an enjoyable space for locals.

In the past two years the project has engaged with around 500 adults and children, who have planted 2000 trees and 2000 bulbs.



Restoring our Rivers

The River Leven and its tributaries are a vital part of Fife's landscape, as well as being a great asset to the communities that live alongside them. They provide a wide range of benefits, including:

- Wildlife corridors for plants, insects, and animal life.
- Opportunities for recreation, such as fishing and water sports.
- Natural flood management.
- Improving well-being, by providing places to spend time and relax.

Physical modifications, including dams, narrowing, and straightening, resulting from the area's industrial past and designed landscapes, have put significant environmental pressure on these waterways.

We are working hard to deliver two projects that address some of these challenges. One focuses on a 2.5-mile section of the River Leven between Windygates and Leven, and the other on the upper section of one of its tributaries, the Back Burn, flowing from the Lomond Hills.

Fife Council and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) commissioned the projects, supported initially with funding from the Water Environment Fund (WEF) and Fife Council.

FCCT is delighted to be managing both projects from concept design through to delivery on behalf of Fife Council. While the projects' key aim is restoring the river corridor, it is critical to their success to connect with communities and for them to have a say in how the projects are developed.

The projects are at distinct phases in their development. Work is progressing to create high-level improvement options for the Back Burn, which will be shared for community consultation to help shape them further in 2023.

The Restoring the River Leven project facilitated a joint consultation with the Levenmouth Connectivity Project in December 2022. This was an opportunity to present restoration proposals, for the benefit of people and wildlife, and to allow Levenmouth locals to provide feedback to ensure that, where possible, the final designs reflect the communities' needs and wishes. That information is now shaping more developed designs which will be taken forward on the ground.

The Conservation and Engagement Team has supported the Restoring our Rivers project by delivering several engagement activities:

- Establishing regular education activities with Levenmouth Academy and Methilhill Community Children's Initiative.
- Installation of noticeboards in Dam Wood.
- Litter picking event with Network Rail, Safer Communities and ORBIS Fife.
- Scheduling engagement events including public events, summer fayres and community group activities.



Outdoor Education

Spending time outdoors in green spaces has significant benefits to both physical and mental wellbeing, with an abundance of scientific studies establishing the link. This is one reason that encouraging people to make a connection with their local natural spaces is at the heart of FCCT's Mission Statement - Connecting Environment and People. This year has seen the launch of several new educational initiatives.

Branching Out

Declining mental health has been shown in many recent studies to have been exacerbated by the recent Covid-19 pandemic with feelings of loneliness, isolation, anxiety, and depression on the rise across Fife communities.

Our 'Branching Out' programme allows people who are affected by poor mental health to experience the powerful healing that accessing greenspaces and woodlands can have on their wellbeing. The programme incorporates weekly photography assignments and is underpinned by the 5 Ways to Wellbeing.

Doing focussed work around these 5 areas is an effective way to improve your wellbeing. They can be done in several ways and are not done in any specific order, rather, they are built into the sessions and activities each day and responsive to the presenting needs of programme participants. Our pilot programme has seen participants engaging in the John Muir Award, Scotland the Bread, Fife's tree planting strategy at Leven's Silverburn Park, team building, cycling, bushcraft, gardening, art with natural materials, litter picking, camp craft, fire lighting and outdoor cooking.



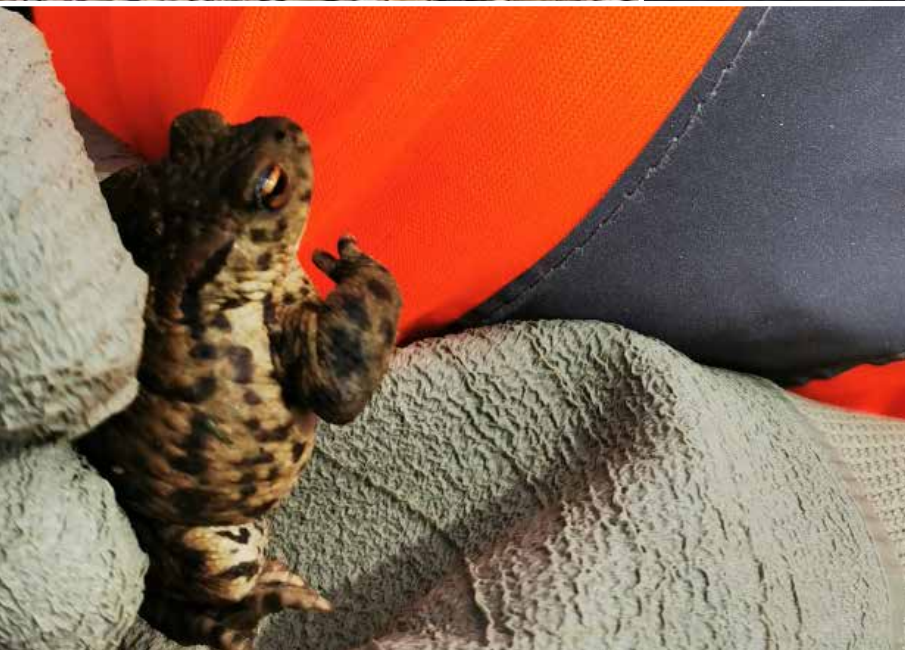
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New Education Sessions Development

Conservation Officers and our Education Manager have collaborated to develop a suite of interactive, nature-based environmental education sessions, which will allow groups to meaningfully engage with their local greenspace, while also learning how to act responsibly in the outdoors. Activities include kick-sampling for water health monitoring, tree identification, mini-beast hunts, and fire lighting.

Volunteering



Volunteering with FCCT

FCCT Volunteers have been busy again this year, contributing to many different projects from tree planting, invasive species removal, woodland, and grass management to litter picking. We have been delighted to welcome more corporate and community groups, who have supported our work and had a positive impact on the environment at many locations.

As an organisation we value our volunteers' contribution and this year we launched a volunteer newsletter which focuses on their contribution and gives them a chance to see what other volunteers have been involved with.

Recent Activities

Sixty volunteers from the Perth office of Bidwells, a property consultancy service, helped to clean up East and West Sands beaches. Later in the year they joined us for a tree planting day in the Lomond Hills to which they donated 100 trees.

Twelve volunteers took part in a Path Survey Course, to develop the skills to review paths and report any issues. A follow-up path maintenance workshop was planned for May 2023.

Ghost fishing gear is an issue for our wildlife, both in and out of the water. Volunteers, FCCT Maintenance and Access and Recreation Teams tackled this problem earlier this year. They collected a vast number of creels, fishing lines and nets, along with other debris washed up on our shores, near Crail and Cellardyke. Two 20-foot skips were filled with fishing gear and litter cleared from a 4km stretch of coastline.

The Conservation Team was joined by FCCT volunteers to plant trees in several locations as part of the FOTIP (Fife Outdoor Tourism Infrastructure Programme) Project.

Volunteers helped Conservation Officers tidy up the Pitcairn tree nursery. Overgrown beds were weeded, and the trees were sorted by species. The cleared beds were then filled with 12 tonnes of compost in preparation for the next tree planting season.

One of our volunteers, John van Deiken, is currently documenting the whole Fife Coastal Path on Google Street View. This will make it easier for everyone to visualise the path, especially important for those with reduced mobility, who will be able to make informed choices before accessing the route.

FCCT is supported by two teenagers who are completing their Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Lachlan and Millie are picking litter in their local area and raising awareness of how litter and plastic can affect wildlife and the environment. FCCT has supplied litter picks and bags, while our young volunteers do the hard part – collecting the rubbish. Lachlan has been picking litter at Pillars of Hercules and Freuchie, while Millie has been working at Balmerino Beach, Lower Largo Beach and Flisk Beach. It is great to see these young people get involved and making a difference in their communities.

Volunteer Hours 12/4/22 to 30/3/23	
Education	70
Community Groups	511
Individuals	711
Corporate	801
Total	2093 *

** The contribution of 2093 volunteer hours is the equivalent of 1.11 full-time posts*

Highlight – More than 1000 creels were collected from Fife's Coastline in 2022



Maintenance Team

The Maintenance Team is made up of 8 full-time members of staff, supplemented by 1 seasonal member of staff.

The Litter Squad and Facilities Teams, in addition to our SLA (Service Level Agreement), also undertake additional project work when the opportunities arise to improve the many areas in Fife that we care for.

FCCT's Maintenance Team focuses on delivering Fife Council's SLA, but also undertakes additional project work when opportunities arise to improve the many areas we care for. When possible, the team also delivers some goodwill activities to support Fife's communities.

These are just some of the projects that the Operations Team have undertaken over a 12-month period however they demonstrate strong links and partnership working with the many communities we serve.

- FCCT facilitated the removal of a dead whale from Cellardyke. FCCT staff liaised with contractors to remove the whale, which had washed up close to several houses. Its location was a public health concern and required the whale to be towed along the Forth to Burntisland from where it was removed.
- In June 2022 there were reports of Avian Flu being identified on the Bass Rock, home to 150,000 gannets and other breeding birds. FCCT was called upon to support Fife Council between 15/06/22 and 21/06/22. Maintenance Team members patrolled priority coastal locations removing any dead birds if required. Around 500 birds were collected and disposed of in accordance with industry guidance, which helped to mitigate the spread of the disease.
- Two bridges at Birnie and Gaddon Lochs, which were no longer fit for purpose, were replaced with new culverts, which are more access friendly.
- A pilot scheme to promote sustainable camping zones at Elie Ruby Bay will continue in 2023, after positive feedback from users, land managers and the community. These procedures will not only enhance the visitor experience, but protect the site's designation and support the spirit of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.
- The Maintenance Team has resurfaced a 500m section of Lower Pitcairn Path, where drainage issues had been identified.
- The Team carried out works to improve the path near Donibristle Chapel on behalf of Dalgety Bay Community Woodlands Group. Trees were cut back to enable access and a clear path for walkers, and the steps at the end of the path were renewed. Drainage was installed to help with water run-off and the path was resurfaced.
- Monks Walk, a historic path to the north of the A911 in Leslie, has been upgraded on behalf of Leslie Community Council.
- Notice boards have been upgraded at 18 locations including Aberdour Black and Silver Sands, Burntisland, Kinghorn, Seafield, Pathhead Sands, Leven, Elie Harbour, Elie Ruby Bay, Crail Roome Bay, Kingsbarns and St Andrews East and West Sands.
- The Litter and Facilities Teams have coped with significantly increased visitor numbers at many of our sites. Summer 2022 saw exceptional numbers drawn to our beaches. At times, up to 5000 visitors were recorded at Aberdour Silver Sands, bringing with them significant site management challenges.

Upgraded Car Parks

Craigmead - Resurfaced, parking meter, disabled spaces and overnight parking.

East Lomond - Resurfaced, parking meter, disabled spaces and overnight parking.

Pittenweem West Braes
Resurfaced and parking meter.

Birnie and Gaddon
Resurfaced, parking meter (replaced with an honesty box), disabled spaces and overnight parking.

Elie Ruby Bay - Resurfaced.

Limekilns Promenade
Resurfaced, honesty box, disabled spaces and overnight parking.

Works funded by the FOTIP Scheme



FOTIP Car Park Upgrades

During late 2022/early 2023 several Fife car parks have been upgraded as part of a project funded by Fife Outdoor Tourism Infrastructure Programme (FOTIP).

After consultation with communities, landowners and stakeholders, FCCT has introduced Parking Charge Notification (PCN) schemes to several car parks.

Under this scheme, drivers will pay a modest fee to park their vehicles for over 2 hours (3 hours at Limekilns) and overnight, which will allow us to manage the car parks more safely and sustainably. Income will go towards the cost of managing the schemes and making further improvements, including improving public toilets and providing chemical toilet disposal points in some key locations. Some car parks have benefited from being resurfaced and parking bays were remarked.

FCCT's Head of Operations, Robbie Blyth, explains: "For many years now, non-regulated public car parks have proved to be a challenge in terms of being over-used and finding resources to manage them. In non-regulated car parks, rules such as overparking and inappropriate use of disabled bays without a blue badge cannot be effectively addressed.

"We are now seeing higher levels of daytime usage and unacceptable levels of overnight parking, in part due to the staycation phenomena.

"Introducing a PCN scheme means drivers entering the car parks are contractually obliged to adhere to the conditions of use. As a result, we can manage the car parks much more safely and sustainably and protect the environment. This will benefit locals and visitors alike."

In March 2023 PCN schemes were introduced at the following car parks.

- Birnie and Gaddon Lochs
- Craigmear
- East Lomond
- Pittenweem West Braes
- Limekilns Pier
- Wormit Bay
- Glenvale

We hope that the motorhome initiative will be expanded until 150 motorhome spaces are available over the coming years.

Pitcairn Path Upgraded Spring 2023

It was identified that the Lower Pitcairn Path required upgrading after the winter. A 500m section of path has been resurfaced, while sections where drainage was an issue have been improved to allow surface water to drain away from the path.

The Maintenance Team also carried out some revetment work and added Stoneflex, anti-slip treads to the bridge. All the works were carried out by the FCCT Maintenance Team.



Other Scheduled FOTIP Works

- Installation of a new toilet block (single unit) with a chemical disposal point at Kinghorn Pettycur Bay.
- Installation of dedicated BBQ bins at Elie Ruby Bay, Pittenweem West Braes, Lower Largo Temple Car Park, Kinghorn Pettycur Bay, East Lomond Car Park, Craigmear Car Park, Glenvale Car Park and Birnie and Gaddon Lochs.
- Installation of dedicated plastic bottle and can recycling points at Elie Ruby Bay, Pittenweem West Braes, Lower Largo Temple Car Park, Kinghorn Pettycur Bay, East Lomond Car Park, Craigmear Car Park, Glenvale Car Park and Birnie and Gaddon Lochs.

Toilet Upgrades

Craigmead toilets, which won the Scotland National Award for ECO Friendly Toilets in the Loo of the Year Awards 2022, have benefited from the installation of solar panels. These provide a 240-volt supply which provides public phone charging and a frost system that will allow the toilets to open during the winter.

A modern new toilet block, with 24/7 access, has been installed at Elie Ruby Bay (below) in time for the new tourist season. The block of six cubicles includes a chemical toilet disposal point that's open from 10am to noon. Campervan and motorhome drivers are invited to make payment to an honesty box to use this facility. One unisex toilet is open overnight, all-year round, and an accessible toilet is available 24/7 by using a RADAR key.

The new toilet block was made possible with support from the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund and Fife Council.





Business Development

Blended Finance

Our vision is to connect people with the environment in a way that benefits both. We believe that by working together, we can protect the natural environment, promote sustainable land use, and provide opportunities for people to enjoy and learn from the outdoors. One way we can achieve this vision is through blended finance.

Blended finance is a powerful tool that can help us to secure funding for our projects and activities, while also leveraging additional investment from private sector sources. By combining public and private resources, we can bridge the funding gap and achieve our objectives more efficiently and effectively. This is particularly important for us as a charity, as we rely on a limited pool of supporters to fund our work.

One of the key benefits of blended finance is that it allows us to reduce risks for private investors. Many private investors are hesitant to invest in rural or remote areas, where the risks are perceived to be higher, and the potential returns lower. By using blended finance, we can offer private investors greater security by spreading risk. This is made possible by identifying the different outcomes that various funders have as a requirement. For example, a private investor may view any threat to financial return as the greatest risk, where a grant-making body will likely be more concerned with objectives and deliverables not being achieved. This aggregated approach to risk and return can make investments in our projects more attractive and encourage greater private sector involvement in our work.

Another advantage of blended finance is that it enables us to access a wider range of financial instruments. While grants and donations are important sources of funding for us, they are often limited in scope and difficult to scale up. By using blended finance, we may be able to access a range of financing options that can be tailored to meet our specific needs. This can help us to fund larger and more complex projects, and to achieve greater impact.

Blended finance can also help us to achieve greater sustainability in our work. By combining public and private capital, we can encourage private investors to adopt more sustainable practices, such as renewable energy or sustainable agriculture. This can help to reduce our carbon footprint and promote sustainable land use, while also creating new business opportunities for local communities.

To successfully use blended finance, we need to be strategic and deliberate in our approach. We need to identify projects that are well-suited to blended finance, and that can offer attractive returns to private investors and positive impact in our landscapes. We also need to build strong partnerships that can provide the additional capital and expertise we need. There is more on this work in the sections on Nature Finance Fife and Strategic Network Development. Finally, we need to ensure that our projects are aligned with our mission and values, and that they deliver real benefits to the environment and local communities in Fife.

Blended finance is an important tool that we believe will help us to achieve our vision and mission. We look forward to exploring the opportunities that blended finance can offer us, and to working with partners in the public and private sectors to achieve our goals.

Strategic Network Development

FCCT's innovative approach to diversifying revenue streams and delivering benefits for nature and people has driven us to reach out to national partners and networks. In October 2022, FCCT joined the Scottish Nature Finance Pioneers, a pioneering network of organisations and individuals coming together with the aim of developing new avenues for directing investment into nature projects and creating a high-integrity nature finance market in Scotland. With a particular focus on integrity and benefit for communities, FCCT joined the sub-group of the Nature Finance Certification Alliance, presenting to Scottish Government, the Scottish Forum on Natural Capital, and investment fund managers on the need for certification of high integrity nature-based projects to ensure a just transition through nature finance markets.

FCCT has been collaborating with North Star Transition and the Global Soil Health Programme to establish a Scotland Transition Lab; a new initiative aiming to bring together leaders, researchers and practitioners with the foresight and creativity to explore the possibilities that lie beyond the silos of organisational and sectoral boundaries, with a particular focus on food, health, and environment.

We have continued our part in the Scottish Environment Fundraisers Forum; a sub-group of Scottish Environment LINK that shares learning and knowledge in the sector and engages with the Environmental Funders Network as well as individual funders to share information and communicate the needs of the environment sector.

Closer to home, FCCT has joined the Fife Local Advisory Group (LAG) of the Scottish Government Rural Community Led Fund; an organisation that channels funding into rural community-led projects and feeds back to government on the priorities and needs of rural communities in Fife.

Nature Finance Fife

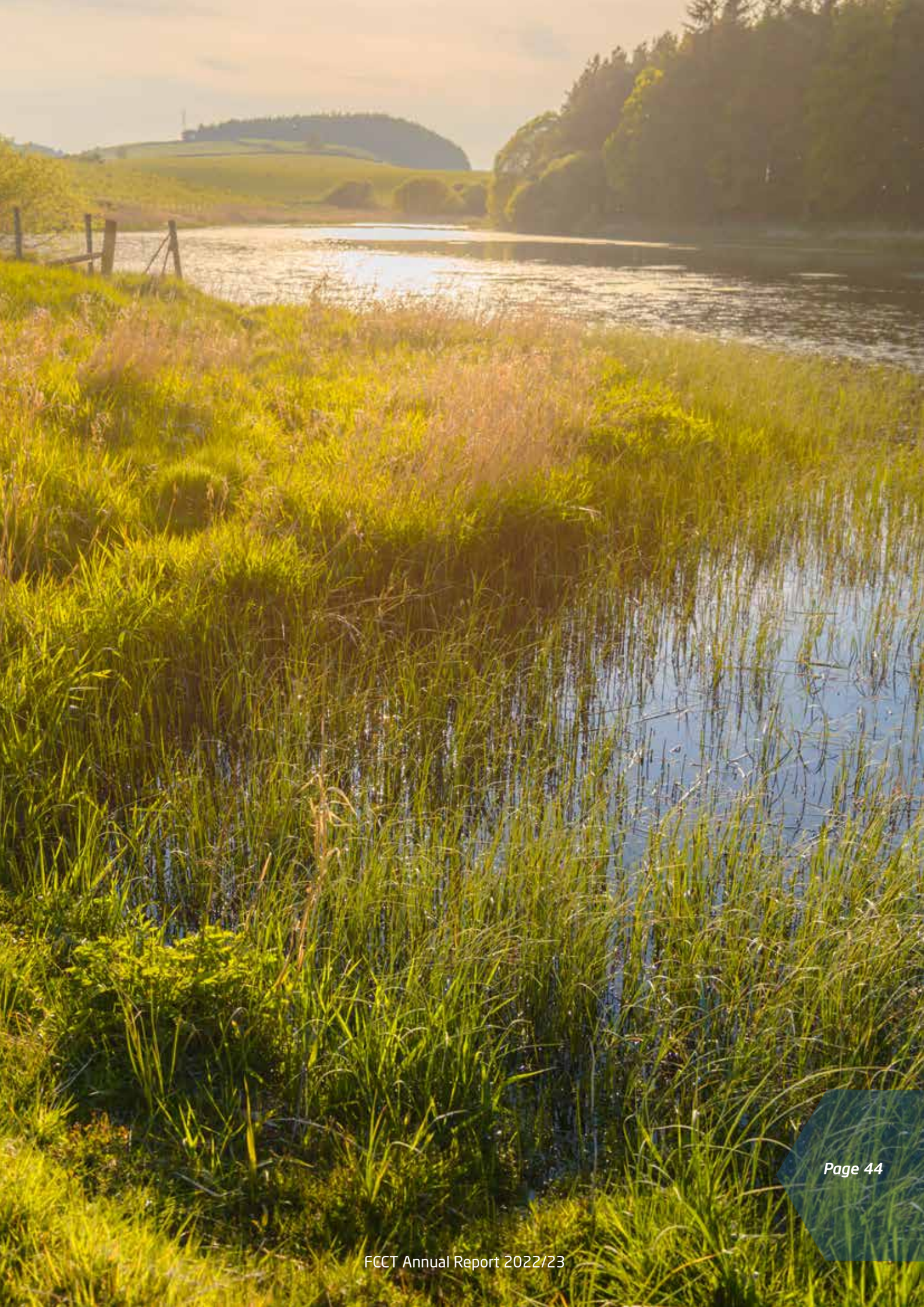
This year has seen the Development Team at FCCT establish Nature Finance Fife. This is a collaborative initiative that seeks to develop and deliver a pipeline of high integrity nature-based projects in Fife that, when delivered, will create a healthier environment that supports wellbeing and sustains the balance between people and nature – which happens to be our Vision.

We will do this through a blend of public, private, and philanthropic finance that drives the landscape scale changes needed to tackle both the climate and nature emergencies while simultaneously meeting the needs of communities and facilitating a just transition to a green economy.

As it stands at the end of the 2022/23 financial year, this collaboration has already brought together 3rd sector and not for profit organisations, regulators, local authority, specialist consultants, land managers, community, academia, private companies, funders, and investors keen to understand and realise the needs and aspirations of each stakeholder while focusing on aligning local business, community interests, and development opportunities.

All those joining us on this journey are committed to taking a place-based approach to solving key issues, developing, and testing the principles of blended finance in delivering nature-based solutions, and building projects and programmes that will teach us lessons that may well then be applied across Fife and beyond.







Future Focus

Green Health Partnership

This year FCCT were successful in a joint National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) bid as part of the Leven Programme, allowing us to begin green health development work.

The NLHF bid has also allowed us to develop a more strategic approach to engaging with Fife's education sector. This will see us help schools build capacity for, and a long-term approach to, delivering Outdoor Education in and around their grounds.

The Green Health Partnership is in its development year phase of the NLHF process. We are identifying community need, building a strategy, building a community network, identifying, and engaging with stakeholders, running community stakeholder engagement events and building a work plan for a Green Health Coordinator.

We aim to develop and promote a Leven catchment area-wide Green Health Partnership. This work will draw on sound knowledge of community needs, existing outdoor assets and green health activity and is based on the NatureScot 'Our Natural Health Service model.' This approach aims to promote greater use of the outdoors, drawing on existing third sector service provision and nature's innate therapeutic qualities, to tackle widespread physical inactivity, mental health issues and health inequalities in Fife.

Explore Outdoors

'Explore Outdoors' aims to close the gap between traditional, formal classroom-based lessons, and informal, learner-centred, outdoor learning. This pilot will be run later this year and will focus on the Levenmouth area.

We have all encountered the power of place at some point in our lives: those times where we are deeply immersed in engaging with the world around us in an organic and visceral way, experiencing moments that are authentic and meaningful. The learning that occurs through these moments is deep and inextricably connected to our interpretation of the world around us. These moments represent a powerful opportunity to be harnessed by educators.

We will collaborate with teachers to develop a programme that supplements and emphasises the topics they are exploring in class, adding value to their curriculum instead of feeling like extra work, making real world links within the locality and places that are important to the pupils and wider community. We will work with partner organisations to develop and deliver a range of sessions that embed this learning over a long-term programme of outdoor learning opportunities, including development of school grounds to better facilitate Outdoor Learning.

This diagram of the concept of 'Our Natural Health Service' shows how green health activities that make use of our environmental assets can contribute to the collective responsibilities associated with public health, health and social care and nature asset management.

The aim of the framework is to enable partners in the environmental, voluntary and health and social care sectors to work together more closely to expand the provision of green health opportunities, support existing opportunities, enhance the quality of the opportunities, and promote them to a wider range of individuals through health and social care professionals.



Funding Secured for Tree Planting in the Lomond Hills Regional Park

Funding has been secured from Greenspace Scotland, a Scottish Government programme to support delivery of a nature restoration in parks action plan programme, and for tree planting programmes in regional and country parks.

The project will see 6,000 trees planted to replace those lost to ash dieback, storm, and deer damage. Undertaking this work will also be used as a springboard, to encourage other landowners and land managers within the Lomond Hills Regional Park to consider similar undertakings and demonstrate how they can contribute to national and regional strategies and policies at a local level, such as Biodiversity Net Gain, Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

It's hoped this project will act as a positive land management example, which will contribute to long-term carbon capture in the upland area of the Regional Park, both by reducing carbon loss through soil erosion and capture in the growing trees.



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