



# Forth Environment Link

ANNUAL REPORT

April 2014 to March 2015





## MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR

### KATE SANKEY

Each year, I reflect on the activities of our organisation and on the changes those activities have brought about. This past year has seen Forth Environment Link put health and well being at the core of our work; health of our people, our places and our practices. Perhaps more than any other year our projects have been fun and the celebratory events engaged communities across the area.

As I look back over the last year I can see that our work is increasingly focussing on three main areas of work – local food and orchards; waste and resource use and active travel. Each of these main themes is underpinned with what I feel is at the very heart of FEL – education. While I don't just mean education in its formal sense, because although schools are a vital element in much of our work, education and learning is for everyone – it is learning for life. Whether that is new skills on a bike; learning new techniques to minimise and reuse unwanted items; understanding how to grow, cook and eat the food around us; or making the most of the land we live in – it's all about learning. I think for all of us, no matter what age we are, we should be able to find new ways to learn and that process should be enjoyable.

It has been twenty six years since FEL began as a small grassroots organisation in Kippen. But the founding principles of working with people to enjoy, understand and respect the land around them still rings true. Health is not a simple measurement of how we feel, it encompasses so much more. Health should be measured in terms of our location and our place within it; how we use and move around that place and how we benefit from and provide benefit back to that place.

Developing the economic potential of our land has been something FEL has supported through our Forth Valley Orchards Futures Fund, providing small scale but vitally important support to our local emerging businesses. Developing community assets was also an integral part of our Landlove report, which looked at opportunities for the development of vacant and derelict sites across the region. Active Travel saw a local boost with the introduction and roll out of a new bike hire scheme in Stirling. Over 100 Nextbikes arrived in the city, across 11 locations to help people and communities access affordable travel choices in the city.

Everything we are able to do is down to our committed team of staff; each one driven by a passion to make a difference. This year we were sorry to say goodbye to our Zero Waste food expert, Donna Rodgers and to Executive Director, Jane Cullingworth. Jane provided superb support and direction to the organisation over the last three years and I speak on behalf of the whole FEL team in wishing her well in her new ventures. Jane has been succeeded by our new Executive Director, Clara Walker, who joins us from Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Community Partnership and looks set to bring her own enthusiasm and drive to the role.

My reflection on the past year leaves me in no doubt that FEL continues to punch above its weight and in such a vibrant and driven sector. Our staff team have endless energy and infectious enthusiasm which is wonderful to witness. However, the Board of Directors continue to worry about the core running costs of the organisation as we go from one short term funded project to another. The actual resource on the ground is very limited and we need to secure a sustainable core to ensure that we maintain our superb record of delivering on time and in budget, but always with that special FEL flair! Here's to another year of innovation in projects, partnerships and delivery!



**FEL Board Members** (Left to Right): John Lamond, Paul Smith, Kate Sankey, Sheila Winstone and Alasdair Tollemache.

# THE FORTH ENVIRONMENT LINK FAMILY



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **Kate Sankey** (Chair)
- **Roderick Lawson** (Treasurer)
- **Peter Stott**
- **Sheila Winstone**
- **John Lamond**
- **Paul Smith**
- **Helen Morrison** (resigned April 2014)
- **Alasdair Tollemache** (in-coming December 2015)

## STAFF from 1st April 2014 to March 2015

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Jane Cullingworth</b> | Executive Director out-going May 2014   |
| <b>Clara Walker</b>      | Executive Director in-coming May 2014   |
| <b>Vicky Vincent</b>     | FEL Administration Officer and Support Officer, Zero Waste Communities Initiative in-coming June 2014 |
| <b>Kelly Rice</b>        | Project Co-ordinator, Zero Waste Communities Initiative   |
| <b>Diane Alderdice</b>   | Project Co-ordinator, Forth Valley Orchards Initiative  |
| <b>Margaret Miller</b>   | Schools Officer, Forth Valley Orchards Initiative   |
| <b>Sadie Flanagan</b>    | Support Officer, Forth Valley Orchards Initiative in-coming May 2014                                  |
| <b>Emily Harvey</b>      | Project Co-ordinator, Grow Forth Food Network   |
| <b>Graham McQueen</b>    | Project Co-ordinator, Stirling Cycle Hub  |
| <b>Ray Burr</b>          | Cycle Hub Officer, Stirling Cycle Hub   |
| <b>Amparo Echenique</b>  | Cycle Hub Officer, Stirling Cycle Hub   |

## NEW STAFF from April 2015

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Ashley Robinson</b> | Community Project Officer, Grow Forth Food Network in-coming April 2015 until September 2015      |
| <b>Nikki Kenn</b>      | Project Business Officer, Grow Forth Food Network in-coming April 2015                            |
| <b>Emma Erwin</b>      | Project Support Officer, Forth Valley Orchards Initiative & Grow Forth Network in-coming May 2015 |
| <b>Susanne Mueller</b> | Cycle Hub Officer, Stirling Cycle Hub in-coming June 2015   |
| <b>Donna Rodgers</b>   | Community Project Officer, Grow Forth Food Network in-coming September 2015                       |

## VOLUNTEERS

We would like to acknowledge and thank our fabulous team of volunteers who support all aspects of FEL's work. Volunteers contribute significantly to our work and enable us to reach more broadly and deeply into many communities across the Forth Valley.

# PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES 2014—2015



**STIRLING CYCLE HUB**

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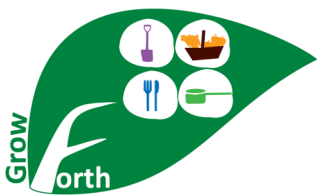
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# STIRLING CYCLE HUB



Stirling Cycle Hub, funded by Transport Scotland, is a pilot project in its 2nd year and based at the Stirling Train Station. Its aims are to develop cycling in and around Stirling and encourage people to get on their bikes. They do this through:

- Providing advice, guidance and route planning service in the Hub
- Planning and running a variety of events designed to encourage people to take up cycling, to highlight the fantastic cycling routes and options in and around Stirling and to promote the health benefits of cycling
- Creating opportunities for people to cycle and making cycling an easier choice for everyday journeys

*Project Co-ordinator is Graham McQueen, with Cycle Hub Officers Ray Burr and Amparo Echenique.*

## Facts and Figures:

- Over 4076 visitors between April 2014 and March 2015
- Over 90 events/led-rides held between April 2014 and March 2015
- 1003 Route Planning enquiries
- 1304 Followers on Facebook



## Some of our Star Events of the Year:

- Thursday Morning Meanders—a staple part of Hub Life, in partnership with Active Stirling. We completed a total of 17 rides with an average of 10-15 riders each week!
- Hub Club Rides. We completed a total of 7 Hub Club Rides, culminating in the Fresh n'lo Pedal for Scotland ride with an average of 10 to 15 riders
- The Women's 100 Challenge Ride saw a total of 53 ladies cycling between 50km to 100km



FEL also secured funding from Transport Scotland to bring a new bike hire scheme to Stirling. Nextbike is a public bike hire scheme which allows members to use any one of 100 bikes at 11 stations throughout the city.

The Nextbike scheme, launched in September 2014, has had a total of 5402 hires in its first year. This is an average of 450 journeys made by nextbike per month. That's 450 journeys which would otherwise have been made by less environmentally-friendly means.

# ZERO WASTE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE



## Zero Waste Communities Initiative April 2014-March 2015:

The Zero Waste Communities Initiative is a project funded by Zero Waste Scotland, building on the success of the previous Volunteer Scheme. The Project enables us to work closely within targeted communities across the Forth Valley area, and focuses on encouraging and supporting communities to reduce waste through various activities and events.

Project Co-ordinator is Kelly Rice with administrative support from Vicky Vincent.

### Vision:

To work towards a greener, healthier future by encouraging and supporting communities to reduce waste.

### Aims:

Working in partnership with local communities on recycling and food waste issues to:

- Encourage and support community involvement
- Encourage and support the Zero Waste Volunteers and Community Advocates
- Increase community and household recycling rates
- Increase food waste caddy participation rates
- Reduce household food waste and in turn save money
- Change community behaviours towards recycling and food waste
- Educate and raise awareness



### Facts & Figures

- 68 events attended/run
- 866 people engaged
- 296 event surveys completed
- 96 individual follow ups completed
- 20 registered volunteers
- Completed 5 sets of data collections covering 2,145 households

### Events include:

- Forth Valley College class presentations
- Campaign workshops
- Cooking demonstrations
- Upcycled pallet workshops
- Upcycled art workshops
- Information stalls held at fun days, gala days and eco days
- Metal upcycling workshops
- Pass it On Week included: swap shops, pallet upcycling & presentations.



# FORTH VALLEY ORCHARDS' INITIATIVE



## Forth Valley Orchards' Initiative April 2014-March 2015:

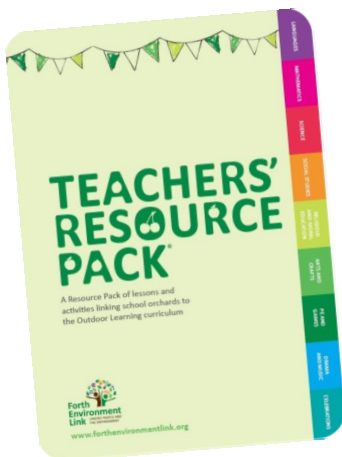
The Forth Valley Orchards' Initiative, is a project funded by Central Scotland Green Network Development Fund 2014 in partnership with the Forestry Commission Scotland. The initiative's vision is to: Increase orchards in the landscape that contribute to the economy and that are used, maintained and loved by the community throughout the year.

The end of March 2015 saw the end of the three years' funding from the CSGN Development Fund and six years of continuous work towards the revival of orchards across the Forth Valley (Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Falkirk Local Authority areas).

The FVO team has facilitated the increase in the number of orchards created, built the capacity of the orchard community to manage them, supported the development of new and enhanced orchard businesses, spread the message of orchards and their benefits, and linked and networked communities groups, businesses and schools together to share knowledge and experience about orchards.

One of the most exciting orchard developments of recent years was the holding of two national Orchard Gathering events in November 2014 (Dunblane) and Edinburgh (February 2015), which FEL helped organise. The team is also proud to be widely-regarded across the Scottish orchard movement as having been at the forefront of orchard development in Scotland for the past six years.

Project Co-ordinator is Diane Alderdice with support from Sadie Flanagan and Margaret Miller.



### Facts & Figures:

- 24 projects were funded via the CSGN Orchard Grant Scheme 2014 - with 460 fruit trees planted, averaging 20 trees per project and a total of 1.26 hectares of orchards created
- 6 Forth Valley schools were supported: Denny High School; Braes Academy; Airth, Avonbridge, Beancross Primary Schools (all Falkirk Area); and Buchlyvie Primary School (Stirling Area)
- 1 school networking event held with 51 pupils and 7 adults.
- Acclaimed 'Teachers' Resource Pack<sup>®</sup>' launched and 150 School Orchard Calendars 2015 sent to schools
- 4 additional schools supported via the CSGN Orchard Futures Fund (Abercromby, St Bernadettes, Banchory and St Serfs primary schools)
- 4 businesses funded via the CSGN Orchard Futures Fund - Plants with Purpose & Appletreeman (£1,490), Ochils Landscape Partnership (£4,750), Beechbrae Scotland Ltd (£4,314), and Tullibody Healthy Living Initiative Ltd (£4,446)
- 8 FVO Workshop events were held with - 85 bookings, 73 people attending. Workshops included: Bees, Blossom and Biodiversity; Orchard Maintenance; Summer Pruning; Bud Grafting; Planning and Planting an Orchard; Cider Making; Master Pruning; and Winter Pruning
- FVO Roadshow: 16 events, 449 attendees



Grow Forth Local Food Network aims to help connect and support communities to grow their own food, to help source local food, to cook more, reduce food waste and encourage people to celebrate food. 2014-15 was a fantastic year for Grow Forth, we carried out many events to promote the Stirling Local Food Map, we held Feast Together events, participated in partnership events, we consulted on the Good Food Nation and attended many events such as, Bannockburn Live, Armed Forces Day, the Killin Highland Games and Stirling Highland Games.



The Stirling Local Food Map project was an integral part of Grow Forth in 2014-15, funded by the Community Food Fund, and supported by STEP, Stirling Farmers Market and Destination Stirling. The map encouraged everyone in Stirling to source food locally. Stirling food businesses from farm to fork were given the opportunity to be included in the Stirling Local Food Map and a stunning 54 Stirling Food Businesses were featured. This map was distributed by a target marketing group on our behalf, 14000 copies were circulated with an additional 7000 reprinted and also distributed. The Stirling Local Food Map is available to download from the Grow Forth page in the Forth Environment Link website.

*Project Co-ordinator is Emily Harvey.*



### **Some key events include:**

- **The Taste and Chill, Stirling Local Food Map Launch.** A launch party with samples of local food and some music, and a footfall of 200 people.
- **Savour Stirling.** This event was hosted in partnership with Destination Stirling and had over 100 local food producers and retailers in attendance. The event encouraged networking, collaboration and future planning for the year of Food and Drink 2015. The Savour Stirling guide was produced and can be downloaded from our website.
- **The Festive Feast Together and the Spring Feast Together.** A feast together is a space where people bring and share food inspired by many a Fife Diet dinner. These social food occasions apart from being incredibly tasty provide a platform for conversation around food and future activities.
- **Good Food Nation Consultation.** Grow Forth hosted a consultation in partnership with Nourish Scotland on the Scottish discussion paper "The Good Food Nation". We had 30 people attend from the Forth Valley Area ranging from local authority, community organisations, business and tourism and enthusiastic individuals. Following this consultation, Grow Forth sent in a response to the consultation based on the themes from the discussion.





## CONSULTATION SERVICES

### Cultenhove & Bruce View Community Park



It was a very busy year in Cultenhove, we hosted many events and workshops at the Bruce View Community Garden. The highlights included the Art in the Park day, outdoor learning with the school and nursery, summer BBQ's and over six weeks delivered six sessions around harvesting, foraging and production.

#### **Facts and Figures**

- We delivered 30 community activities that included practical sessions, workshops and seasonal events
- 90% of residents felt their community garden spaces were better than before
- 65% of residents surveyed said they use the space more and 54% will now use the plants and herbs
- 65% of people surveyed said they used the community garden more and many commented how often their kids or other kids were now regularly using the space

*Emily Harvey is the Project Officer leading this work.*



### Braehead Community Garden

Forth Environment Link has been working with Braehead Community Council since 2012, to support the development of a large community growing space in Braehead along with a Community Development Plan. Through community engagement sessions, door-to-door and online surveys we successfully completed the Community Development Plan. The plan itself aims to bring people together in the community, public, private and voluntary sector partners to look at the planning and provision of services, to ensure public services meet the needs of the community more effectively. It also provides a working document for the Braehead Community Council to use for future community activity, for example directing efforts towards applying for funding for projects that the community have prioritised, for example, play areas. Ultimately it provides opportunity for communities to influence what happens in their area.

Braehead Community Council were also successful in securing funds from Big Lottery to create their community garden. Work began in November 2014 supported by Forth Environment Link.

*Emily Harvey is the Project Officer leading this work.*



## CYCLE STIRLING



FEL continues to provide administrative support and web hosting to Cycle Stirling. The group has grown in membership over the last year comprising of stakeholders from across the public, private and voluntary sectors. Cycle Stirling continues to work towards achieving more sustainable and active travel choices across the region and delivers activity across four main areas of work: promotion; training; networking & lobbying; and infrastructure.

A consultation meeting was held this year to look at what has been achieved over the last three years and to prioritise activity for the year ahead. A priority activity for Cycle Stirling will be to continue to actively promote cycling and active travel across the region. The group will also work closely with partners to highlight best practice locally and identify new opportunities to improve the active travel landscape in Stirling and its surrounds.



## LANDLOVE

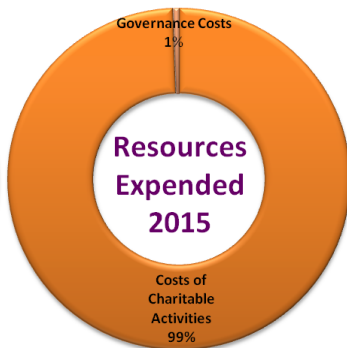


The Landlove project, funded by Zero Waste Scotland, focussed on working within local communities throughout the Stirlingshire Area with an aim of identifying, monitoring and evaluating the wider contributory factors associated with litter and fly-tipping. The project looked at a range of sites across the region - both urban and rural - and explored the extent of the issue; what was causing it; and what would the community want to see happen locally to try and improve the area. The project culminated in a community event in Callander. A project report was produced and will be used to help provide evidence towards reaching local solutions to litter and fly-tipping.



# FUNDING AND FINANCES

Forth Environment Link would like to thank and acknowledge the support of a wide range of funders. In addition to grant funding FEL raises money through consulting work. The breakdown of funding, for this year and last, is as follows:



## INCOMING RESOURCES

|                  |          |
|------------------|----------|
| Voluntary Income | £2,607   |
| Grants           | £439,720 |
| Earned Income    | £15,866  |

## INCOMING RESOURCES

|                  |          |
|------------------|----------|
| Voluntary Income | £2,598   |
| Grants           | £268,000 |
| Earned Income    | £17,275  |

## RESOURCES EXPENDED

|                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| Costs of Charitable Activities | £456,877 |
| Governance Costs               | £2,607   |
| Support Costs                  | £218     |

## RESOURCES EXPENDED

|                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| Costs of Charitable Activities | £283,102 |
| Governance Costs               | £2,272   |

NET INCOMING RESOURCES - £1,509

\* £5,022 restricted

Total Funds Brought Forward £72,756

TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD £71,247

NET INCOMING RESOURCES\* £2,449

\* £24,629 restricted

Total Funds Brought Forward £70,257

TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD £72,756

## FORTH ENVIRONMENT LINK IS SUPPORTED BY:



The Caram Charitable Trust

The co-operative membership Community Fund

