



A Message from our Board Chair, Kate Sankey



As Chair of Forth Environment Link (FEL), I am in a fortunate position to be able to look back over what the organisation has achieved over the last year but also to look forward to the year ahead.

It is an exciting time for FEL and there has been substantial growth across each of our main areas of work. More people are cycling for more local journeys; local food is on the menu in more local homes; and we are helping make the most of the items around us to keep them in our lives for longer, albeit often in a different guise.

I recognise that the work we do has an impact on the people and places around us; our actions and words are making a difference and I believe that FEL is stimulating change, at a local level, but also increasingly in ways that resonate more widely. The essence of what the organisation does still remains true to its original aim of linking people and the environment for a greener, healthier future, but how we do it is changing. We have been responding to this changing need over the years and have been invited to work in partnership with some of the key agencies in the Forth Valley. This has resulted in pilot initiatives exploring new models and which have proved successful.

Active Travel has become a key element in how we connect people to place. Stirling Cycle Hub continues to thrive in its central location at Stirling Train Station getting more people thinking about how they could travel differently. Access to a range of traditional and electric bikes stimulates interest and close partnerships with Stirling's big and small employers is helping to demonstrate that Stirling really is 'the cycling city'. Stirling's bike

share scheme is now part of the city transport network and we hope to see that grow and expand over the next twelve months giving us all more local travel choices.

Food is increasingly becoming the thread that weaves all of our work together. Whether it is supporting community growing, helping develop basic food and cooking skills, supporting our ability to access locally produced food or helping schools understand how to reduce food waste, we believe our relationship with food is pivotal to our overall health, happiness and sense of place. Social isolation, confidence and emotional resilience are just some of the issues we are working with our food partners to overcome. That coupled with our understanding that a strong local food economy and new opportunities for enterprise are essential if we really want to see social and environmental progress. This is driving our food agenda and will continue apace over the next twelve months.

That sense of place is what directs our work with communities and through them we recognise the areas we and others can focus our energies on. Development of community orchards and growing spaces allows people to come together around a common goal. It allows a discussion to take place around the value of our land and how together we can derive environmental, physical and financial benefit from it. FEL feels strongly that we should be leaving a lasting legacy with our work and what better way than to help support

the development of skills that equip communities to make informed choices now and in the years to come.

Scotland's circular economy is increasingly how decision-makers are describing our waste and resource use culture and aspirations. A reliance on new rather than renew is part of the problem; it is simply too easy to replace rather than repair the items in our life. FEL has been working extensively to challenge those attitudes - in shops, colleges, universities, schools and within communities. Change by doing, through workshops and events that give people ideas for doing things differently and contribute, quietly, towards delivering that National ambition.

As I look back over the year I am continually reminded that it is the value of the people who make FEL; our staff; our partners and our friends. Our achievements this year really demonstrate that together we are stronger and together we can deliver change. That doesn't mean to say that it is always easy, reliance on grant funding is eternally challenging and our long term security is never guaranteed. I am fortunate in having a stable, experienced and supportive Board of directors working alongside me and our staff team to guide and deliver our activity. We all share the same vision and together we look forward to another year of making that vision a reality.

Kate Sankey



The Forth Environment Link Family

Board Members

- **Kate Sankey**, Chair
- **Rod Lawson**, Treasurer
- **Peter Stott**
- **Paul Smith**
- **John Lamond**
- **Sheila Winstone**
- **Alasdair Tollemache** (in-coming December 2015)
- **Cath Preston** (in-coming April 2016)

Staff from April 2015 to Present

- **Clara Walker**, Executive Director
- **Vicky Vincent**, Finance & Administration Manager & Admin Support Officer, Forth Upcycling Network
- **Kelly Rice**, Project Coordinator, Forth Upcycling Network
- **Diane Alderdice**, Project Coordinator, Forth Valley Orchards Initiative
- **Margaret Miller**, Project Schools Officer, Forth Valley Orchards Initiative
- **Emma Erwin**, Project Support Officer, Forth Valley Orchards Initiative & Braehead Community Garden in-coming May 2015 until March 2016
- **Emily Harvey**, Project Coordinator, Grow Forth Network
- **Nikki Kenn**, Business Project Officer, Grow Forth Network in-coming April 2015
- **Ashley Robinson**, Community Project Officer, Grow Forth Network in-coming April 2015 until September 2015
- **Donna Rodgers**, Community Project Officer, Grow Forth Network in-coming September 2015
- **Graham McQueen**, Project Coordinator, Stirling Cycle Hub
- **Ray Burr**, Project Officer, Stirling Cycle Hub
- **Amparo Echenique**, Project Officer, Stirling Cycle Hub out-going April 2016
- **Susanne Mueller**, Project Officer, Stirling Cycle Hub in-coming June 2015
- **Emma Thomas**, Project Officer, Stirling Cycle Hub in-coming May 2016

Sessional Support Staff

FEL employs a number of sessional team members who provide part time seasonal support during peak times and for specialist short-term projects.

- **Sarah Fraser**
- **Richard Chatfield**
- **Kiri Stone**
- **Theo Laffargue**
- **Nicola Cockburn**
- **Tasha Manning**
- **Caroline Morrison**
- **Robyn Warburton**
- **Ahmed Elkesh**

Volunteers

We would like to acknowledge our wonderful team of volunteers who support all aspects of FEL's work. Our volunteers make a significant contribution to our projects and enable us to reach more broadly and deeply into many communities across the Forth Valley area.

Programmes and Activities 2015-2016



CYCLE HUB
STIRLING

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Forth
Upcycling
Network



Working with communities
to reduce waste

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STIRLING
CREATING CYCLE FRIENDLY
COMMUNITIES ACROSS STIRLING

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Stirling Cycle Hub

Stirling Cycle Hub, funded by Transport Scotland, is a pilot project in its 3rd year based at the Stirling Train Station. Its main aim is to increase awareness and participation in cycling and active travel.

We do this by:

- Providing advice, guidance and route planning services in the Hub
- Planning and running a variety of events designed to encourage people to take up cycling
- Highlighting the fantastic cycling routes in and around Stirling and promoting the health benefits of cycling
- Creating opportunities for people to cycle and to make cycling an easier choice for their everyday journeys

This year Stirling Cycle Hub also successfully worked with three employers in Stirling through its Employer Engagement Programme, funded by Smarter Choices Smarter Places in partnership with Stirling Council. The programme aimed to help make cycling a viable, every day option for employees and students locally. This year's participants were Stirling Council, Forth valley College and Prudential.

4,978+ VISITORS
Apr 2015 - Mar 2016

100+ EVENTS
Apr 2015 - Mar 2016

800+
Route Planning enquiries

1,792 FACEBOOK followers

1,523 TWITTER followers

6,655 BIKE HIRES
Apr 2015 - Mar 2016

↑ 22% BIKE HIRES
Oct 2015 - Mar 2016 compared to first year

Star Events and activities of the Year:

- **Thursday Morning & Sunday Morning Meanders** - In partnership with Active Stirling, our popular weekly leisure rides go from strength to strength and have expanded into the weekend. We completed a total of 27 Meander rides with an average of 20 riders each week.
- **Hub Club Rides** - We completed a total of 8 Hub Club Rides, culminating in the Pedal for Scotland's 'Classic Challenge' 46 mile ride from Glasgow to Edinburgh. We had an average of 15 Hub Club riders for each ride.
- **The Women's 100k Challenge** ride saw a total of 37 ladies cycling either the 50km or full 100km routes.
- Stirling's first ever **Festival of Cycling**, funded by Smarter Choices Smarter Place and held in partnership with the annual Pedal for Parkinson's Stirling cycle ride event. The festival, in Kings Park, attracted in the region of 1000 visitors and provided a host of cycling activities for all ages to enjoy.





Forth Upcycling Network

Forth Upcycling Network (previously Zero Waste Communities Initiative), a project funded by Zero Waste Scotland’s Volunteer and Community Advocate Programme, focuses on helping to encourage, support and educate on waste reduction in communities across Forth Valley.

We are currently in our 1st year of the new VCAP funding. Our Project is split into two main strands:

1. Volunteer and Advocate Development: Providing and facilitating training workshops to local groups, community and project volunteers and supporters.
2. Community Engagement: Increasing the knowledge and skills of local community members and residents within the Forth Valley area, with the aim of changing behaviours; increasing recycling; reducing and preventing food waste; and extending product life-cycles via reuse and repair.

98

EVENTS
attended/run

1,893

PEOPLE
engaged face to face

14,712

PEOPLE
engaged online via social media, blogs and website articles

25

Registered and
Community
VOLUNTEERS

11

**COMMUNITY
ADVOCATES**

Volunteer Training, Events and Community Workshops include:

- Wood Upcycling
- Upcycled Art
- Information stalls held at fun days, gala days and eco days
- Furniture Reuse
- Love Food Hate Waste Cascade Training
- Reuse Cascade Training
- Upcycled Mini Make activities such as eco bag designing and plastic bottle bug hotels





Forth Valley Orchards Initiative

Forth Valley Orchards Initiative focuses on inspiring, involving and engaging communities on the revival, development and care of orchards.

FVOI receives a range of funding and support from Central Scotland Green Network Trust, Inner Forth Landscape Initiative, Helping Britain Blossom, Falkirk Environment Trust, Falkirk Community Trust and People's Postcode Lottery. The funding has allowed a range of orchard care and maintenance training to be delivered to communities across the Central Belt as part of the Fruit Futures Project. Targeted training has begun to support a group of Master Orchardist Volunteers who will work towards a programme of tailored support to their own and other neighbouring community orchards.

Networking continued to be a fundamental part of our project bringing skills and enthusiasm together to develop new orchard growing programmes and sustain existing spaces.

Engaging schools in fruit growing, biodiversity and environmental education continues to be a cornerstone in FVOI delivery, working to FEL's Orchard Resource Pack.



19
WORKSHOPS/EVENTS
CSGN Fruit Futures Project

8
MASTER ORCHARDISTS TRAINED
Edinburgh (1), Falkirk (1), Fife (1), Glasgow (3), Clackmannanshire (1), East Lothian (1)

842
PUPILS AND
40
TEACHERS

Supported Inner Forth Landscape Initiative, School programme

60
TREES PLANTED
at Helix Nuttery

961
PARTICIPANTS
in workshops and networking events

437
VOLUNTEER WORKDAYS
from FEL-led events

Star Events and activities of the Year:

- **Orchard Gathering** - Seed & Tree Festival (February 2016)
- **Master Orchardist recruitment and induction** (January 2016)
- **Helix Nuttery enhancement** (December 2015)
- **IFLI schools' orchard programme**





Grow Forth

The Grow Forth Network, funded by the Climate Challenge Fund, focuses on connecting communities and businesses to create a more vibrant local food culture.

Our project for 2015-16 'Get Ready for Local' worked closely with local communities, community food projects, schools and local food businesses to take more control of their local food system, helping people to get more involved with food at every level from growing and harvesting to sourcing, cooking and eating.

Star Campaigns, Events & Activities of the year:

- **Big Green Day Out** - our fabulous launch event in partnership with Transition Stirling (Stirling's Low Carbon Future). The day was full of fun events and activities, as well as some delicious local food.
- **Our Food Waste Challenge** - a 4 week challenge aimed at getting Stirling residents to reduce their food waste.
- A pilot **Fresh Local Food Vending Machine** - based at Forth Valley College, which was stocked full of fresh local produce from local honey to real bread and local veggies.
- **Harvest Fortnight** - celebrating Stirling's seasonal Harvest with Pick Your Own Pumpkin events, seasonal offerings at Stirling's eateries and much more.
- **Butchery Masterclass** with Cameron Skinner and Chef Martin Luti.



SAVED
290
tonnes of CO2e lifetime

Engaged and supported
354 PEOPLE
on the food waste challenge

80 PEOPLE
returned food waste data
(22.6% data return rate)

Delivered
67 WORKSHOPS
across a range of food topics in
communities

Delivered
21 EVENTS
with communities

Delivered
3 BESPOKE TRAINING SESSIONS
for business ambassadors

693
PEOPLE
were actively involved
with the project

1,538
PEOPLE
were engaged at events.

Consultation Services

Culterhove

Working with Culterhove Opportunities & other partner organisations we delivered a series of events and workshops with at the Bruce View Community Park, as well as the neighbouring youth centre raised bed space, the local school and local nursery. Our programme of workshops included building upcycled planters, fruit tree pruning, 'Garden With Us' sessions for local Bruce View Park volunteers and residents and we hosted a celebratory 'FEAST Together' meal with the community.

Our Star Event was Paws in the Park - the event was aimed at creating a more inclusive space for dog walkers and owners, encouraging them to not only look after dogs whilst in the park, but to pick up after the dogs too. It included many activities but by far the star part of the day was the fun dog show. We had over 40 dog owners attend the day and over 70 people in total.



Braehead Community Garden

Forth Environment Link has been working with Braehead Community Council since 2012, to support the development of Braehead Community Garden and to help the community with their Community Development Plan.

Through community engagement sessions we delivered workshops in partnership with Transition Stirling (Stirling's Low Carbon Future), held large scale community events like our Grow Forth 'Big Green Day Out' and hosted an Apple Day complete with apple pressing, local cheese and jam tastings.



Cycle Stirling

Partnership working on cycling and active travel has continued this year through FEL's support to Cycle Stirling. This cross-sectoral working group aims to support collaboration and consistency in the delivery of cycling-related strategies, activities and events throughout the region.

The group worked together to support and promote a range of events and activities throughout the year, as well as organising a dedicated led ride with key local decision-makers and influencers to review existing cycling and walking infrastructure. Providing advice and guidance on funding opportunities, infrastructure developments, training activity and promotional campaigns, Cycle Stirling continues to give a voice to those with an interest in cycling and active travel.





Dobbies Local Charity Partner of the Year 2015

In May 2015 Forth Environment Link was chosen as Dobbies Garden Centre Stirling's Local Charity Partner of the Year.

Over the course of the year we organised a range of activities and events to promote FEL and to help raise money for the work we do throughout the Forth Valley area, including;

- Real Bread Weekend - our Grow Forth Team, accompanied by Riverside Bakery, provided tasters and local food maps to the customers of Dobbies
- FEL's Weekend at Dobbies - a fun filled weekend with the FEL team which included information stalls, eco bag designing, apple hedgehog mini makes, smoothie bikes and much more
- Love Food Hate Waste, Recycling, Reuse & Composting quizzes and stalls with our Forth Upcycling Network Team
- Dr Bike sessions and Meander Rides with our Stirling Cycle Hub team



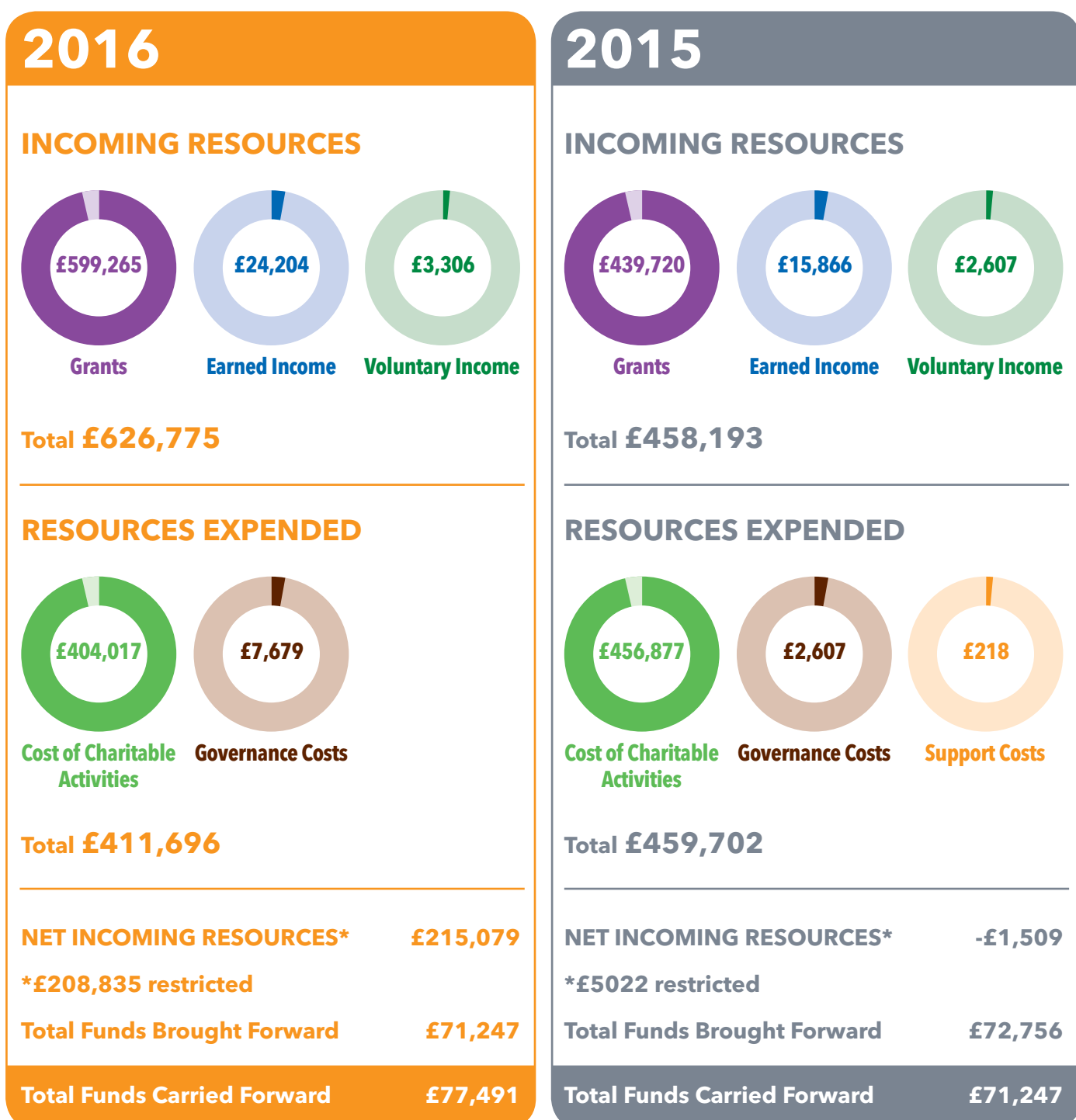
We would like to thank
Dobbies loyal customers
for helping to raise a fantastic

£1,256
for our charitable activities.



Funding & Finances

Forth Environment Link would like to thank and acknowledge the support we receive from a wide range of funders. In addition to grant funding FEL also raises money through consulting work. This financial year's accounts have been fully audited in accordance with UK Charity regulations and have been prepared using the new Charities FRS 102 SORP. The breakdown of funding, for this year and last, is as follows:



Forth Environment Link

Linking people and the environment for a greener, healthier future

We work with others on environmental, food and active travel issues to:

- Encourage and support involvement, learning and practical action
- Educate and raise awareness
- Create and develop new ideas

Forth Environment Link (FEL) began as the Kippen Nature Club in 1989 with the aim of teaching children about biodiversity and nature. In response to community need and interest, the organisation grew in both mandate and geography, expanding to include adult education and demonstration projects. In 2005 the organisation reconstituted as Forth Environment Link - a company limited by guarantee with charitable status, serving three local authority areas - Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Falkirk. In 2008 Forth Valley Food Links merged with FEL, bringing an additional focus on sustainable local food production and consumption. In 2012 FEL took over the hosting of Cycle Stirling bringing a new cycling focus to our work. In 2013, Stirling Cycle Hub started operating from Stirling Train Station enhancing FEL's cycling provision.

Forth Environment Link is supported by:



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