

ACTIVE TRAVEL



FOOD & GROWING



CIRCULAR ECONOMY





Introduction

Forth Environment Link (FEL) is a Scottish environmental charity leading the way on connecting people and place. FEL supports more day to day journeys on foot or by bike; encourages more local food to be grown and eaten in our communities; and helps increase the lifespan of our everyday items.

People first

Investing in our team to ensure we can provide tailored support where it is needed most.

Enabling

Delivering activity in a way that is practical, easy to understand and accessible to everyone.

Collaborative

Ensuring we work in partnership to add value where we can.

Innovative

Testing and developing new ideas and being a catalyst for change.

Passionate

Demonstrating a love for the environment and our place within it.

Fair

Working in a way that is inclusive and reflects the needs of the people and communities we work with.

Our strategic approach reflects our ambition as an organisation and recognises the role the third sector will perform in delivering national outcomes at a local and regional level.

Our Vision

- To link people and the environment for a greener, healthier future.

Our Aims

We work with others on environmental and food issues to:

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



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A Message from Kate Sankey, Chair

This year has been about reflecting on and recognising our place in the communities in which we operate. We have been fortunate to secure a broad range of funding once again, which enables us to support, encourage and engage local people on issues that affect them and our environment.

Our funding helps us support positive individual choices. Whether that is through choosing to walk or cycle more for daily journeys; reducing how much we throw away; or our ability to grow, eat and buy local food, FEL works to make those choices simple and accessible to everyone.

In November 2017, we celebrated the launch of our Falkirk Community Hub with the opening of our reuse shop, Revive Falkirk. This was followed quickly in January 2018 by Falkirk Active Travel Hub. For the first time in FEL's journey, we have been able to draw together our tapestry of activity into one space and celebrate our passion for enriching community life. Thanks to strong partnership and support from Falkirk Council, Climate Challenge Fund, Big Lottery Fund and Falkirk Environment Trust our dream of a community hub has become a reality.

Scottish Government funding has enabled us to take the learning from our Stirling Cycle Hub pilot project and develop the Active Travel Hub model in Falkirk and Stirling. This, in conjunction with funding to develop bikeshare in the region has seen the number of cycle journeys increase by 30% this year. Further Scottish Government investment, coupled with partnership funding from Falkirk, Stirling, Clackmannanshire Councils and NHS Forth Valley through SESTRAN, will see the introduction of the first regional e-bike share scheme in the UK in 2019. So our vision of supporting more daily journeys by bike or on foot is increasingly becoming a reality in the area.

Food and its place on our table and in our communities has been promoted through our innovative digital local food market. The opportunity this project provides to promote, support and educate around what local food means to our economy, our environment, our communities and our health cannot be understated. As an organic beef farmer, I am passionate about our connectedness to where our food comes from and how we can maximize the benefits local food production can have to us now and in the future. Embracing digital technology is one way we are hoping to achieve that benefit. We are ambitious for the future of local food and are looking to secure LEADER funding to take a digital retail model, trialled in Stirling, to more communities across Scotland next year.

Partnerships are at the heart of our work and we simply would not be able to do what we do without the help and support of our friends, at a local and national level. Our team has continued to grow this year, reflecting the dynamic nature of our work and the changing project landscape. However, we have said farewell to some longstanding friends whom I would like to take this opportunity to thank.

Diane Alderdice and Margaret Miller, who together created and developed FEL's innovative and inclusive community orchard project, both retired this year. Forth Valley Orchard Initiative and before that, Forth Valley Food Links, put local food very much at the heart of our communities. Diane and Margaret were the powerhouses behind those projects and helped shape FEL today. We wish them well in their retirement but hope they will continue to be part of the FEL family as valued volunteers.

A fond farewell to two of our Board members, Alastair Tollemache whom we congratulate on becoming a local Councillor with Stirling Council, representing The Green Party and Paul Smith, a retired academic and committed community development enthusiast.

I am delighted to be able to welcome our newest Board member, Angela Mitchell, formerly Deputy Director at Soil Association Scotland and now Diabetes UK's Scottish Director. Angela's wealth of experience within the sector will help shape our thinking and pave the way for future board recruitment which I will be leading in the coming months.

The progress we make each year is in no small way a direct reflection of the work Clara Walker and her committed team put in to ensure FEL keeps punching above its weight. The enthusiasm of our staff team and our Board drives the organisation forward. We are increasing our coverage both in terms of our expertise but also geographically in the hope that we can keep doing what we do in a way that benefits more people and communities across Scotland.

I am in no doubt that the annuality of funding for third sector organisations will continue to be challenging but I remain hopeful. Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2017-18, outlined an intention to look for ways to provide a longer term financial commitment to the sector. So, I take heart as we push forward with no less enthusiasm for our work to make positive environmental change a reality at a local level.

REVIVE FALKIRK

Revive Falkirk, a project funded by Climate Challenge Fund, focuses on supporting and encouraging carbon and waste reduction throughout the Falkirk area. The project provides a community space dedicated to displaying and selling quality reuse items along with delivering specific reuse events and upskilling workshops throughout various communities.

The project works closely with local communities, residents, schools and organisations to educate and provide opportunities for people to increase their skills and confidence with regards to reuse, upcycling, carbon reduction, and climate change. Our project also provides a prominent high street space where local crafters and designers can promote and sell their upcycled/reused products.





Circular Economy

REVIVE FALKIRK

Workshops, Events & Activities delivered throughout the year:

- Wood Upcycling workshops including “Nailed It” training sessions
- Textiles Upcycling workshops including “Sew You Know It” training sessions
- Furniture Upcycling workshops
- Bike Repair sessions
- IT Maintenance sessions
- Clothing and textiles donation drives
- Upcycled/Reused items sold within the shop includes:
 - Clothing: all second hand and redesigned using cyanotype.
 - Wooden items such as candle holders, chopping boards, and clocks all upcycled from locally felled wood.
 - Jewellery made from pottery and plastic washed up on beaches.
 - Teddy bears made from old t-shirts and cushion covers.
 - Art work painted on old packaging.
 - Prints created using old tiles and fridge shelving.
 - Arts and craft items made from old textiles and books.

Project Facts & Figures



126 Events and Workshops delivered



4160kg of materials reused, repaired and upcycled



131.15 tonnes co2e lifetime



2378 people engaged with



517 shop visitors between November 2017 and March 2018



17789 miles saved through our Active Travel Challenge



47704kwh saved through our Energy Saver Challenge





Circular Economy

FORTH UPCYCLING NETWORK

Forth Upcycling Network, a project funded by Zero Waste Scotland's Volunteer and Community Advocate Programme (VCAP), focuses on helping to encourage, support and educate on waste reduction in communities across Forth Valley. The programme began in June 2015 and ended in June 2017. The Project was split into two main strands:

- 1 Volunteer and Advocate Development:** Providing and facilitating training workshops to local groups, community volunteers and advocates, and project volunteers.
- 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.

Volunteer Training, Events and Community Workshops include:

- **Wood Upcycling**, making bug hotels, planters, raised beds, benches & compost bins
- **Upcycled Arts and Crafts**, making plastic bottle snowmen, upcycled logo art & eco bag designing
- **Love Food Hate Waste Cascade Training**
- **Info stalls at galas, fun days and eco days**
- **"Nailed It" training course**, involving basic - advanced woodworking and upcycling training
- **Foodbank Recipe Cards**, providing recipes and food waste prevention tips
- **Forth Valley College talks**, educating students on reuse and food waste
- **Textile Upcycling**, making keyrings, mobile pouches and gym bags

Project Facts & Figures

-  **320** events attended
-  **8278** people engaged face to face
-  **59,619** people engaged online via social media, blogs and website articles
-  **73** community volunteers
-  **22** community advocates





Active Travel

ACTIVE TRAVEL HUBS

FEL operates active travel hubs in Stirling and Falkirk. Stirling Active Travel Hub, received direct Scottish Government funding as an active travel demonstration project. Falkirk Active Travel Hub is funded from Falkirk Council's Healthier, Greener Falkirk Project, a Low Carbon Travel and Transport grant award from Transport Scotland.

The ATH's main aims are to increase awareness, access to and participation in cycling and walking for every day journeys. They do this by:

- Providing advice, guidance and route planning services.
- Planning and delivering a variety of events and outreach activities designed to encourage people to make more of their everyday journeys by cycling, walking or by sustainable transportation such as electric vehicles.
- Highlighting the fantastic cycling and walking routes in and around Falkirk and Stirling.
- Promoting the health benefits of cycling and walking.
- Signposting to partner organisations and facilities in the area delivering cycling and walking activities.
- Creating more opportunities for people to cycle and walk everyday.



Callander Active Travel Hub

Between April and October 2017, FEL piloted an Active Travel Hub in Callander, with financial support from Callander Community Hydro Scheme. The Hub operated from a premises on Callander Main Street and welcomed a range of visitors during the high visitor season in the town.





The majority of visitors were tourists looking for information on cycling opportunities in the National Park, with some local interest in raising the profile of cycling for residents. One success of the project, as a result of funding secured from Cycling UK, was the development of a woman's cycling group. The visitor profile of the project further influenced the recruitment of a LEADER funded Cycle Tourism Officer for the region.

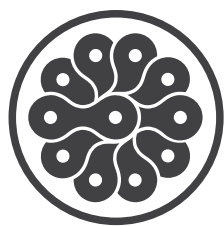
FEL was unable to secure additional investment to continue the project beyond its pilot phase but is keen to see the development of an active travel hub project in the town, if a suitable location and appropriate funding can be identified.



Active Travel

Stirling Facts & Figures







-  **5228** visitors April 17 - March 18
-  **18** events April 17 - March 18 with **237** attendees
-  **358** Route Planning enquiries April 17 - March 18
-  **2367** Facebook likes
-  **2127** Twitter followers
-  **568** Instagram followers
-  **24,726** nextbike journeys April 17 - March 18
-  **225** bikes fixed through Dr Bike events
-  **741** face to face interactions,
-  **474** surveys completed

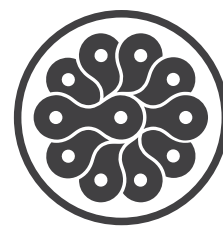


ACTIVE TRAVEL HUB
STIRLING

Falkirk Facts & Figures

In the first two months of opening the Hub saw over 260 visitors and delivered:

-  **Over 260 visitors** to the Falkirk Active Travel Hub (February 2018 to March 2018)
-  **Hosted or delivered 8 local events** including Kelpies to Kick-Off, CSREC Eco Family Fun Day, Meander Rides, Dr Bike & Bicycle Maintenance sessions (February 2018 to March 2018)
-  **278** cycling, walking, electric bike, route planning and partnership enquiries
-  **381** Facebook followers
-  **150** Twitter followers
-  **82** Instagram followers



ACTIVE TRAVEL HUB
FALKIRK



Food & Growing

GROW FORTH

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

Our project for 2017-2018 "Stirling Food Hub" worked closely with local communities, including other local food projects, schools and with local food businesses. It helped them get more involved with local food at every level from growing and harvesting, to sourcing, cooking and eating. In addition, we also focussed on two new strands:

- Active Travel Incentive Scheme, encouraging cycling and walking for short food-related journeys.
- Energy Advice, providing information and support around energy efficiency

Star Events:

- Stirling Two Day Food Summit at Forth Valley College over 200 people came along.
- Summer Open Farm Day saw 200 local people attend a Foot of Hill farm to learn about farming, in particular egg production, take part in activities and have a picnic style lunch.
- Energy Saving Days. We ran eight of these within local communities, with Start Up Stirling and Forth Housing.



Facts & Figures



80.52 Tonnes CO₂e saved by the project (Lifetime Saving).



2361 People actively involved in our project throughout the year, attending activities, workshops and participating in challenges.



174 total events, workshops and activities held through the year including cooking sessions, food waste sessions, community meals, talks, films, bread making, foraging, cooking on a budget, energy and active travel days.



97 people participated in 4 food themed led cycle rides clocking up 3908 miles.



12 Community meals have been held and 20 soup socials.



7 local primary schools have participated in the Schools Food Waste Challenge 994 children participated in the School Food Waste Challenge.



97% report increase confidence in cooking skills.



Food & Growing

STIRLING FOOD ASSEMBLY*

Stirling Food Assembly, was funded by Climate Challenge Fund as part of the Stirling Food Hub project. It brings producers into the heart of the community on a weekly basis to increase awareness of, and access to local and seasonal food.

The Food Assembly allows local products to be pre-ordered online, giving producers a guarantee of sales and cutting their food waste at source, whilst also giving local shoppers access to local produce they would have otherwise have little access to. Our dedicated team supports a growing network of local producers and shoppers through weekly meet the producer collections at Stirling Cycle Hub, providing seasonal food tastings, and cooking workshops to increase relationships between growing, cooking and eating local food.

We added a secondary pick up point for Stirling Food Assembly at SEPA, Castle Business Park to enable employees in the park to access the market and get a direct delivery. We ran an active travel incentive scheme through the year, encouraging customers to travel actively to pick up their orders for this they received a collector stamp, incentive being Food or Active Travel related.

* Food Assembly has withdrawn from the UK and has been replaced by Neighbourfood.



Project Facts & Figures



1,900 members



4,198 baskets sold



574 individuals
buying



5+ visits **181** (32%)



45 producers engaged



£91,404 turnover



Food & Growing

DIG IN FALKIRK

Dig in Falkirk is a new partnership project, between Falkirk Council, FEL and our partners. Dig in Falkirk seeks to increase interest in growing food and to support the development of the food growing strategy which Falkirk Council is developing. The partnership has supported local communities to take ownership of municipal planters in Falkirk High Street for growing food, this has been aptly named "Pocket Allotments". Twelve of the beds have been adopted by local communities and businesses. In addition the partnership has run educational food growing workshops, run promotional pop up stalls and delivered the Falkirk Eats Food event.

Workshops, Events & Activities delivered throughout the year:

- 12 workshops 151 participants attending
- Falkirk Eats Food event attended by 63 people
- 5 Focus groups on Community Growing
- 11 pocket allotments adopted by communities
- 141 Falkirk Community Growing Surveys completed



FORTH VALLEY ORCHARDS INITIATIVE

Forth Valley Orchards Initiative (FVOI) focused on inspiring, involving and engaging communities on the revival, development and care of orchards. FVOI received a range of funding and support from Inner Forth Landscape Initiative, Central Scotland Green Network Trust (CSGNT), Helping Britain Blossom, Falkirk Environment Trust, Falkirk Community Trust and People's Postcode Lottery.

The 'Fruitful Communities' Project followed on as a new phase of CSGNT's successful 'Fruitful Landscapes' Project and aimed to support communities increasing their capacity to gain the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to enable them create, maintain and use the orchard resource of the Inner Forth. Working with community groups, individuals and landowners associated with orchards we engaged in a varied program of learning events and activities to build skills and give them the knowledge and confidence in managing their orchards in the longer term. Engaging schools in fruit growing, biodiversity and environmental education was a cornerstone in FVOI delivery, working to FEL's Orchard Resource Pack. We also continued to support and work with our 8 Master Orchardist Volunteers to provide training and support within orchard communities





Volunteering

In 2018, we received funding from Big Lottery for a three year project which in part aims to help us redevelop and refine Volunteering at FEL. Newly adopted as one of our key thematic areas of work, we enable volunteering activities within our other work areas of Active Travel, Food and Growing and Circular Economy.

We have developed volunteer roles and key organisational processes to enable us to provide each volunteer with the best possible experience that suits their needs. Our core aim is to help volunteers develop skills and improve confidence, provide new experiences, training opportunities, improve health and well-being and increase pro-environmental behaviours.

Our volunteers have made a fantastic contribution to our project work so far in 2018, furthering our objectives as an organisation. We would like to recognise their value within our organisation and thank them for their time, efforts and enthusiasm.



CASE STUDY 1:

Alistair Grainger

Alistair has been involved with FEL since June 2016 both in a group capacity and as an individual. He has taken part in wood upcycling workshops, training courses and subsequently became a volunteer with FEL in 2018.

Since his first contact with FEL Alistair has said that “he had felt inspired” to work with wood so that he could develop and attain a practical skill. As a result of his involvement with FEL, Alistair has been more confident socially and feels he now has a direction to pursue and that his ability to work and connect with other people has improved.

CASE STUDY 2:

Muna Ausrat

Muna attended our wood upcycling course, as wood work was something that she had wanted to try. Muna enjoyed the camaraderie in working alongside other participants. She learnt some specific skills that she has been able to apply at home and has borrowed equipment from a tool library to facilitate this.

Muna said that it “was great to get away and concentrate on something for myself, the group dynamic was great and the social side that has developed has been very positive. I feel that I have achieved a lot and surprised members of my family, which has made me feel really good about myself”

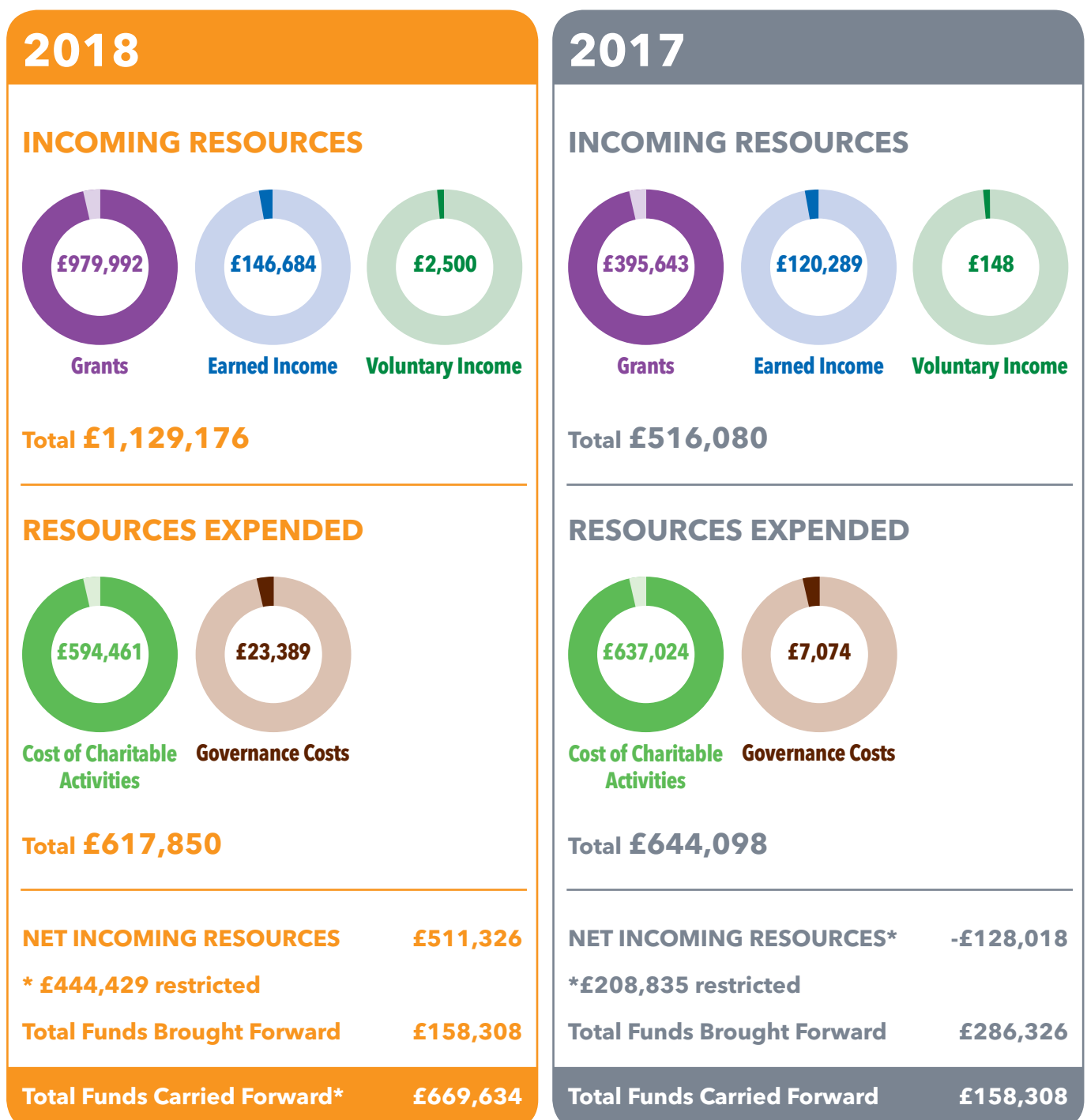
Forth Environment Link would like to thank and acknowledge the support we receive from a wide range of funders. In addition to grant funding FEL also raises money through consulting work.

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.

Funders & Partners

FUNDING & FINANCE

The breakdown of funding, for this year and last, is as follows:





Funders & Partners

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The impact, reach and success of our activity is as a direct result of the strong partnerships we have developed with a wide range of local and national organisations. Together we are stronger and more able

to make a positive impact where it will be felt the most. We couldn't do what we do without this level of support and we are enormously grateful to everyone who has contributed to our work this year.

FORTH ENVIRONMENT LINK IS SUPPORTED BY:



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