



ANNUAL REPORT
APRIL 2019 - MARCH 2020



INTRODUCTION

CONTENTS

FORTH ENVIRONMENT LINK

A local organisation with a national impact

Forth Environment Link is a Scottish environmental charity, based in the Forth Valley, leading the way on connecting people and place. As an organisation, rooted in the communities we work with, we are passionate about what we do and about making our places and community spaces better to live, work and play in. This report summarises the projects and partnerships that guided our work in 2019-2020.

Our Vision

To enable and support communities to live healthy and sustainable lives in a way that reduces the impact on our planet.

Our Mission

We will put healthy people and a healthy planet at the heart of our work.

- We are community led - our projects, partnerships and priorities are shaped by and developed for the communities within which we work
- We value the planet and each other. This underpins everything we do
- We are enabling - what we do is practical, easy to understand and accessible to everyone
- We are collaborative - we like to work in partnership because we believe we are stronger together
- We love new ideas - innovation is at the heart of our work and is what pushes forward new ideas that inspire change
- We are passionate about what we do and it shows in our work and in our team's activities

Our Strategic Objectives

To deliver our ambition, we will focus on four main areas and our charitable activities will support:-

Active Travel

More day to day journeys walking, wheeling or cycling.

Food & Growing

More local food to be grown and eaten in our communities.

Reuse & Repair

Helping to increase the lifespan of our everyday items.

Volunteering

Provide meaningful volunteer opportunities for all.



Sustainable Development Goals	page 4
Introduction from the Chair	page 5
Active Travel	
ACTIVE TRAVEL HUBS	page 6
BIKE SHARE	page 9
Food & Growing	
NEIGHBOURFOOD STIRLING	page 10
REGIONAL FOOD PROJECT	page 10
Reuse & Repair	
REVIVE SKILLS	page 11
Volunteering	
VOLUNTEERS	page 12
FALKIRK COMMUNITY PROJECT	page 13
DIG IN FALKIRK	page 13
Funders & Partners	
FUNDING & FINANCE	page 14
PARTNERSHIP WORKING	page 15



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

We support the ambitions of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, or Global Goals. The vision of the Global Goals international action plan is to set out a positive vision for the future – to tackle poverty and inequality and promote sustainable development across the world. There are 17 Global Goals which form the basis of a global partnership for sustainable development. Forth Environment Link’s work directly contributes to Climate Action and Partnerships for the Goal. Within this report we’ll highlight the further Sustainable Development Goals addressed by FEL’s thematic areas and projects.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

<p>1 NO POVERTY</p>	<p>2 ZERO HUNGER</p>	<p>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p>	<p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p>	<p>7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY</p>	<p>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p>
<p>9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	<p>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p>	<p>11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p>	<p>13 CLIMATE ACTION</p>	<p>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</p>	



INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR

Fostering a positive relationship between people and their environment has never been more important than it was this year. My pride in the FEL team, our partners and funders is stronger than ever after another successful year of delivery.

Over the last twelve months we have strengthened our commitments to community climate action across Forth Valley and beyond. Our funding profile has become ever more diverse as we continue to develop new projects to support more food to be grown and eaten in our communities; an increase in every day journeys being made by walking, wheeling or cycling; and less waste being sent to landfill by developing reuse and repair opportunities.

Our work developing digital local food markets extended beyond Stirling as we secured collaboration funding from Forth Valley & Lomond LEADER and Transport Scotland to work across Fife, Scottish Borders, Perth & Kinross and Forth Valley.

Our Revive Skills project welcomed 23 young people aged 16-25, who have experienced barriers to training and employment, onto a 6 week wood reuse and upcycling programme. This expanded our partnership working across the region, with a particular emphasis on Falkirk.

During the summer, we moved our head office to The Barracks - Stirling’s new third sector, charity hub. This new space, with like-minded organisations, opens up new opportunities for collaboration and partnership development.

Access to bikes continued apace as we further increased our fleet of publicly accessible electric bikes and ecargo bikes. This year has also seen the launch of Forth Bike, the UK’s first cross regional partnership electric bike share project working with bike share provider Bewegen. Our active and sustainable travel work continues to be supported by Transport Scotland and we work closely with them and the other active travel

delivery partners to realise Scotland’s Active Travel ambitions bringing a local perspective to their national programmes.

As the financial year drew to a close, a new challenge emerged as we faced the emergence of the Covid 19 pandemic. A country-wide lockdown was enforced on March 23rd 2020 and our work quickly transformed from community outreach to digital connection and support. The challenges of the coronavirus pandemic cannot be underestimated but what it has done has made us reflect on the importance of community; on our connection to nature and green spaces; the availability of local food and the local food systems that support it; on the power of cycling, walking and wheeling; and on the value of volunteering in a time of crisis.

As we look ahead to an uncertain year, I feel secure in the knowledge that FEL will continue to adapt and thrive. The value we see from supporting communities to make practical changes that improve their lives and the environment are immeasurable. Our environment as a finite resource to be treasured and the power that comes with working at a local and community level cannot be understated – even more as we face a time of global change. The FEL team’s work will continue to focus on supporting and nurturing them both.

Kate Sankey



ACTIVE TRAVEL HUB
STIRLING



ACTIVE TRAVEL

ACTIVE TRAVEL HUBS

FEL operates active travel hubs (ATHs) across the region in a range of settings. Our ATHs aim to increase awareness of and participation in cycling and walking for every day, short journeys.


Stirling Active Travel Hub (SATH)


Stirling Active Travel Hub (SATH) is an exemplar cycling and walking behaviour change project, funded by Transport Scotland. Our vision is to support people to make more everyday journeys on foot or by bike.

Our community focus in supporting cycling, wheeling and walking this year was St Ninians with the production of a Community Active Travel Action Plan.


Facts and Figures

2,237 people have been engaged at 252 events. 

Over **250 people** attended Stirling Festival of Cycling and Walking 


149 bikes fixed over 37 Dr Bike sessions 


123 people have attended 23 Mug O' Tea bike Maintenance sessions 

111 people have attended 43 cycle training sessions 

181 people enjoyed 59 guided cycle rides 

1,188 people attended 95 pop up Active Travel Hubs 

57 people trialled an e-bike at outreach events 

227 people were surveyed to develop a Community Active Travel Action Plan for St Ninians 

SATH worked with employers including NHS Forth Valley, Forth Valley College, SEPA, Scottish Prison Service, The Robertson Trust and University of Stirling to deliver 573 engagements at 77 events across 7 workplaces. One employer Active Travel Action Plan was created for SEPA Stirling.


SATH delivered the Rock the Walk Step Count Challenge with 70 teams. 338 NHS Forth Valley staff took part. 46% of participants said they had replaced a car journey with walking or cycling during the challenge. 94% said they would continue to walk or cycle more. 83% said they walked more than they usually did during the challenge.

NHS Forth Valley


FEL worked closely with NHS Forth Valley to support staff, patients and visitors walk and cycle more through a range of interventions at Forth Valley Royal Hospital and Stirling Health and Care Village.

Facts and Figures

1,443 engagements across 113 events and pop-up Hubs 

15 participants on 4 guided walks 

194 participants on 52 guided rides 

8 people accessed route planning services 

see page 7

Lornshill Academy Active Travel Hub

Thanks to funding from Smarter Choices Smarter Places, FEL launched the first ever secondary school active travel hub. The embedded hub at Lornshill Academy in Clackmannanshire, will be responsible for encouraging students, parents and staff to participate in active travel through a variety of engagement programmes such as led walks, led rides, route planning sessions, bike maintenance sessions and a Step Count Challenge.

Between 2019-2020 FEL's active travel team has delivered:

3 School Assemblies

1 Launch Event

2x Step Count Challenges

6x Dr Bike Sessions

Weekly bike maintenance classes aimed at engaging disengaged or vulnerable pupils

1 Bike Week full of cycling activities such as bike breakfasts, BMX/MTB sessions, adaptive bike sessions, route planning and roadside repair

Weekly led walks with pupils who struggle to stay in class

A base of volunteers from the school of environment working weekly on a school travel plan

Lornshill Active Travel Hub has led to a **700% increase** in active travel to school

SQA Bike Maintenance has been introduced to the curriculum

Smarter Choices Smarter Places funding enabled FEL to host satellite Active Travel Hubs in both Forth Valley Royal Hospital and Stirling Health and Care Village.

Forth Valley Royal Hospital Active Travel Hub

At FVRH, FEL delivered 3 weekly pop up hubs including Wheelie Wednesday which was an outdoor pop up hub located in the main thoroughfare. The hub attracted staff, visitors and patients and provided advice, ebike demonstrations and weekly led rides. Indoor Active Travel Hub's provided targeted engagements for the Oncology unit bowel surgery patients.

Facts and Figures

1250 engagements 

75 Pop Up Hubs

8 participants at Forth Valley Royal ebike taster sessions 

Stirling Health and Care Village Active Travel Hub

FEL supported NHS care staff and GP surgeries move into the new Stirling Health and care Village (SHCV), delivering weekly pop-up hubs at the hospital.

Through working with the staff at SHCV, FEL were able to help establish a weekly cycling group for patients attending mental health services at Livilands Resource Centre. Through working with staff from Livilands, FEL were able to service their pool bikes, service patients own bikes, provide essential cycling skills training for the group and lead weekly social rides for patients.

Facts and Figures

5 regular patients attended rides

460 miles cycled by each Livilands Resource Centre Cycle Group participant

38 pop up hubs delivered

193 engagements 



ACTIVE TRAVEL

BIKE SHARE

Falkirk Active Travel Hub

Falkirk Active Travel Hub (FATH) is based in the High Street in Falkirk and is funded from Transport Scotland's Low Carbon Travel & Transport Fund in Partnership with Falkirk Council.

From 1st January 2019 to 16th March 2020 the Hub saw:

1834 visitors

126 cycling, **51** walking and **176** route planning walk-in enquiries

297 partnership/volunteering meetings and enquiries and **41** partnership referrals

89 attendees at outreach walking events

Walk to Westfield collaboration with Falkirk Football Club and as part of the Council's Take the Right Route Campaign

154 outreach activities in 2019 engaging **2700** people through events including;

- Pop up hubs in the local communities
- One to one electric bike demos
- Dr Bike and maintenance sessions
- Led walks and led rides
- Partnership events

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Cycle Falkirk

FEL supported the development of Cycle Falkirk, fortnightly cycle rides led by our FEL volunteers.

12 led rides over Spring and Summer

8 Volunteers received Cycle Ride Leader and First Aid Training Certification

32 attended the rides

3 Community Active Travel Action Plans have been completed for Bainsford, Camelon and Grangemouth

The work of this group was recognised by Paths for All when it won Active Travel Project of the Year as part of the annual Volunteer Awards in September 2019. The group was awarded £250 which they spent on branded clothing for use on the led rides.



Grangemouth Bike Library

This was developed in partnership with Zetland Park Regeneration Project, which provides free bike loans and cycling support to Grangemouth residents. FEL continue to support this project through regular servicing of the bike fleet and logistical support.

BIKE SHARE

FEL continues to support access to bikes through bike share, hire and loans of bikes.

nextbike

- 41,512 journeys
- 2.09 km average distance travelled
- 28 bike stations
- 200 bikes
- 15.37 tonnes of CO2 saved

Bikes for All

A bikeshare subsidy scheme for nextbike continues with targeted communities and NHS patients. Partners have included:

- Start Up Stirling Food Bank
- Raploch Community Partnership
- NHS Forth Valley

Energy Savings Trust E-Bike Library

- 1,089 days cumulatively on loan
- 78 people borrowed an ebike for between 3 days and 3 weeks
- Over 4,200km travelled
- 0.74 tonnes of CO2 saved
- 54 electric bike loans in partnership with Energy Savings Trust

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



School Bike Share

FEL installed 4 new nextbike docking stations at Stirling's secondary schools in September 2019. This is to provide students free access to bikes and allow sustainable travel to college, employment and leisure.

- 1,079 face-to-face engagements were made
- 47 students have completed cycle skills training

Forth Bike

Forth Bike is the first regional electric public bike share in the UK. It was launched in June 2019 by Joe FitzPatrick, MSP for Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing at Forth Valley Royal Hospital with 10 charging stations.

- 4,002 journeys
- 6.05km average distance travelled
- 10 bike stations
- 104 bikes
- 30.698 tonnes of CO2 saved



FOOD & GROWING

NEIGHBOURFOOD STIRLING

FEL handed over the running of its successful market to The Kitchen at 44 King Street CIC in January 2020. This ended a 3 year project which resulted in 7,700 baskets of local and sustainable produce being purchased by 700 shoppers, and engaged 50 local producers.

Stats 2019-2020

Baskets - **1,402**

Turnover - **£35,448**

Active Travel Journeys - **28%**

The Stirling NeighbourFood collection on Thursday 6 June 2019 hosted the official launch event of the Alive With Local Food - a Strategy paper on supporting and growing the local food economy across the Forth Valley and Lomond region. The well-attended event raised the profile of Stirling NeighbourFood as a market for local food in Stirling. FEL and producers put on tastings and activities that included a flower crown workshop by Tomnah'a Market Garden, seed planting with FEL volunteers and Counterroast Coffee created a special limited-edition blend to mark the occasion.

Rivesaltes Food Assembly from the south of France visited Stirling NeighbourFood's Easter 2019 collection. The students of the agricultural school who run the market gave Stirling customers a taste of the Mediterranean including anchovies, olives and peach juice.



REGIONAL FOOD PROJECT

The Regional Food Project is funded by the LEADER Cooperation Fund and Transport Scotland, with the aim to deliver cascade training and seed funding to rural organisations who want to replicate Stirling NeighbourFood's outcomes by launching local food markets in their communities.

The project is active across four regions: Forth Valley & Lomond, Perth & Kinross, Fife and Scottish Borders and includes a support package to encourage the development of 8 new markets.

In this first year of the two-year project, FEL supported the launch of two NeighbourFood markets.

- Blairgowrie & Rattray NeighbourFood, hosted by The Heat Project (Blairgowrie Development Trust)
- Balforn NeighbourFood, hosted by The Hub G63

In addition, it commenced training with 4 more organisations

- Hosted 4 regional networking events to engage local producers
- Held 1 Host Gathering at Gartur Stitch Farm with activities and expert speakers

The project team delivered a total:

23 cascade training sessions

5 networking events

1 annual gathering

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



REUSE & REPAIR

REVIVE SKILLS

FEL worked with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to support a range of skills that support further careers development and positive pathways. Young people were involved in volunteering opportunities and added value experiences across our active travel, climate literacy, food and growing and reuse and repair themes.

Many of the young adults that came to us had never completed anything prior to taking part in our skills shed course. Not only did these young people leave with a sense of accomplishment but also a set of practical skills that they will be able to take on and use throughout their life.

- 23 young people participated in courses
- 28 weeks of training were delivered
- 62 hours of volunteering contributed towards projects including; Dig in Falkirk, Muiravonside Country Park and FEL's Climate Kitchen Garden
- Cycle maintenance classes and led bike rides facilitated by Falkirk Active Travel Hub
- Young people created 30 upcycled products including commissions with all profits from sales and commissions re-invested into the project

One student has since gone on to work as an apprentice with a local Joinery Company, others onto further education and volunteering.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



“ I've learned new skills and enjoyed building stuff. I didn't think that I could build things like benches.

I felt chuffed that I was working on a paid commission and I gained a sense of achievement by creating pieces of work that have gone on to be sold.

Sometimes I feel overwhelmed, and I loved the visit because it was so quiet and peaceful. One participant after a visit to a community garden.

I feel good that I've finished the course, first course that I have ever finished.

”



VOLUNTEERING

VOLUNTEERS

Over the course of the year we have been able to recruit and train a core group of 29 volunteers who have actively participated in many events/activities across the projects we have run from our Falkirk building. FEL has built volunteer partnerships with over 20 organisations.

We also ran a series of corporate volunteer days where 15 volunteers from Zero Waste Scotland and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) took part in wood recycling workshops to make planter beds for local community projects.


FEL has signed up to and is working towards the Volunteer Friendly Award which is a quality standard to support, recognise and reward groups who are good at involving volunteers

Our volunteers have been pivotal in the success of our projects operating from our Falkirk premises and we continue to show our appreciation through thank you events, group activities and training that may be of benefit to their personal development.

Facts and Figures

2 volunteer induction training sessions 

Corporate volunteering days with Zero Waste Scotland, DWP, Falkirk Council, Skills Development Scotland and HSBC contributed **9 days** of time to FEL 


100 volunteers contributed 1,800 hours, the equivalent of one full time member of staff 

FALKIRK COMMUNITY PROJECT

The Falkirk Community Project (FCP) is a community-led initiative delivering community events, activities, training and volunteering opportunities. It aims to provide social cohesion and creates opportunities for routes to employment through teaching new skills and offering experience.


The project is funded by the Big Lottery Community Fund, and together with a core group of 40 volunteers it has hosted a variety of activities that have directly benefited over 2,000 people.


Facts and Figures

20 young people have completed the skills training program 

Community meals fed over **250** local residents, and involved **15** volunteers 

200 people attended the Green Christmas Fair on Falkirk High Street 

15 members sat on the FEL Falkirk steering group 

Community film screening with Falkirk Council as part of **National Climate Week** 

Partnerships:

- Skills Development Scotland acted as a conduit for referring young people between the ages of 16-24 to the Revive Skills Shed program
- Sustainable Thinking Scotland have supported food and growing projects
- Outside The Box regularly hired out The Falkirk Building's meeting room and worked in partnership to deliver clothes swapping events in line with FEL's Reuse and Repair work
- FEL worked alongside Froglife to help develop the climate kitchen garden at the Falkirk building, which grows local, seasonal produce for community meals, while Froglife staff expertise was used to promote biodiversity
- FCP has collaborated with 30+ local partners over the year

FORTH VALLEY SENSORY CENTRE



FEL worked in partnership with Forth Valley Sensory Centre to support them to develop and install their Kitchen Garden, formerly an unused piece of space at the centre. The Kitchen Garden was designed by the centre users and centre team, to provide a space to grow food. The layout and types of plants all took into consideration the needs of centre users; people with a visual or hearing loss. Princess Anne HRH officially opened the garden in summer 2019. The partnership also delivered a pilot summer programme, called The Flavour School, which tested out the Sapere method of exploring food through the senses. Children that took part explored food through games, discussions, cooking and experiments all designed to build their interest in a wide variety of foods and improve their diet. One parent was utterly astonished when collecting their daughter from the session, that she was tucking into a bag of rocket! The Kitchen Garden was very productive in the first year, furnishing centre users and cafe with vegetables for soups and salads.

DIG IN FALKIRK



Dig in Falkirk, a partnership project with Falkirk Council, finished in the Autumn. The project worked in partnership with Falkirk Delivers to develop pocket-size growing spaces in Falkirk's town centre as a demonstration that produce can be grown in an urban environment to directly benefit communities.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

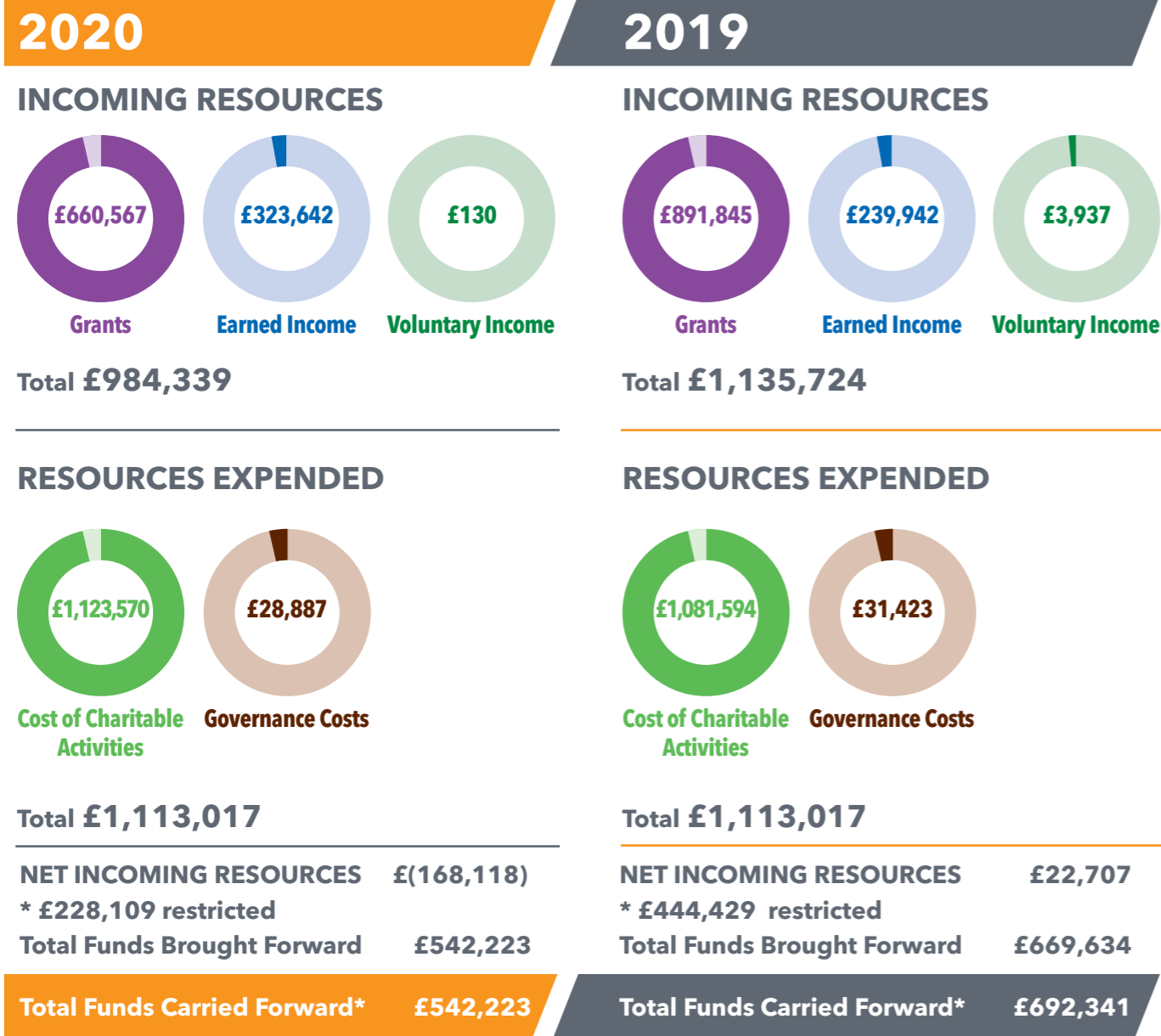




FUNDERS & PARTNERS

FUNDING & FINANCE

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:



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:





www.forthenvironmentlink.org

 **01786 449215**

 www.forthenvironmentlink.org

 info@forthenvironmentlink.org

 @ForthEnvironmentLink

 @FVActiveTravelHubs

 @ForthEnviroLink

 @ForthEnviroLink

 FEL TV

Forth Environment Link - Stirling

Cameron House, Forthside Way,
Stirling FK8 1QZ

Telephone: 01786 449215

Forth Environment Link - Falkirk

199a - 203 High Street,
Falkirk, FK1 1DU

Telephone: 01324 230126/7

Stirling Active Travel Hub

Stirling Train Station, Goosecroft Road,
Stirling, FK8 1PF

Telephone: 01786 474160

Company Number 286 723
Scottish Charity Number SCO 019 276