

Strategic Plan Review

Summer 2020



Greener Kirkcaldy



This Review was prepared by Suzy Goodsir and Lauren Parry, with input from Greener Kirkcaldy's board, staff, volunteers, members and our community. We welcome feedback on this document. Please contact Suzy Goodsir (suzy@greenerkirkcaldy.org.uk), our Chief Executive, with any comments or questions.

Introduction

Greener Kirkcaldy is a community-led charity and development trust working on a local scale to benefit people and our environment. We deliver projects that tackle fuel and food poverty, protect and celebrate our environment, and bring the community together.

In April 2018 we published our *Strategic Plan for a Sustainable Future 2018–2023*. It described our aims:

- To broaden and deepen our community engagement
- To work towards financial sustainability by growing the proportion of our income that comes from social enterprise, service level agreements, donations and sponsorship
- To deliver an ambitious programme of work, meeting the needs and aspirations of local people

It has now been two years since we published the Strategic Plan. A lot has changed in that period – for our organisation, for our community, and globally. This Review looks back at our progress towards the goals we set in 2018, and sets out our new priorities and updated plans for 2020 to 2023. It should be read alongside the 2018 Strategic Plan document, which can be downloaded from www.greenerkirkcaldy.org.uk.

Our progress

Projects and services

In 2018 we said we would prioritise five key areas of work:

- The refurbishment and fit out of our premises in central Kirkcaldy as a new base for Greener Kirkcaldy and a new social enterprise project, the Community Food Hub
- Delivering energy advice to tackle fuel poverty and climate change
- Exploring the potential for community-scale renewable energy
- Waste reduction education
- Natural Play childcare

We also committed to developing our ‘greener travel’ work by delivering a grant-funded engagement project and carrying out a feasibility study into an active travel social enterprise.

East Fergus Place and the Community Food Hub

The refurbishment and fit out of our building at 8 East Fergus Place started in summer 2018 and was completed in March 2019. We opened the building to the public the following month. It centres on the Lang Spoon Community Kitchens – a training kitchen with 8 workstations and a professional-standard production kitchen. It also houses office space for our staff, a large events room for hire, and a kitchen garden. The new building complements our Training Garden site at Ravenscraig Walled Garden. Together, they form the Kirkcaldy Community Food Hub - a place for people to come together to grow, cook, eat and learn.

The Lang Spoon Kitchens have been a great success. We launched several activities there in 2019, including

- ‘Food Works’ employability courses, in partnership with Brag Enterprises, which build skills and confidence, and help people gain jobs or college places
- Eight-week ‘Smart Cooking’ programmes teaching basic cooking skills and household budgeting, and introducing participants to other support services

- The 'Elderberries' cooking club for older people - a fun, social experience, delivered with NHS Fife's Food and Health team
- Cookery courses and events for paying customers, including a popular 'Cook & Eat' series with world cuisines
- Regular Community Meals to bring people together
- A 'Community Fridge' redistributing short-dated food, donated by individuals and businesses, to anyone in the community



Cooking in the Lang Spoon Training Kitchen

The capital project took a bit longer than expected, and it took time to find the right person for the crucial Community Chef post, but by March 2020 the project was thriving, with events booking up quickly and excellent feedback from the community. Many of the Lang Spoon activities are currently on hold due to Covid-19; we will reopen to the public when it is safe to do so.

In summer 2020, thanks to funding from Fife Council, we will launch a new project at East Fergus Place – the 'Kirkcaldy Pantry'. This will collect unsold or surplus donated food and redistribute it in a friendly and welcoming environment, following a cooperative membership model.

At Ravenscraig Walled Garden, we have made good use of our Training Garden and indoor classroom since it opened in early 2018. We have run courses on growing your own vegetables and fruit, a new series focusing on growing and using herbs, and regular community open days to share our passion for growing.

Energy advice

This continues to be a flagship project for Greener Kirkcaldy. Our 'Cosy Kingdom' advice service, delivered across Fife in partnership with Citizens Advice & Rights Fife and St Andrews Environmental Network, made home advice visits to over 3,300 households in the last two years.

In 2019 it secured renewal of its Service Level Agreement from Fife Council to help tenants in fuel poverty, for a further three years. This complements its grant funding from the Scottish Government, trusts and donations. We recently achieved accreditation under the 'Scottish

National Standards for Information and Advice Providers' quality assurance scheme, and have embedded a culture of continuous improvement.

Our energy advice work helps people out of fuel poverty; it also makes an important contribution to tackling carbon emissions. We have carried out many engagement campaigns, some in neighbourhoods with high levels of fuel poverty and others in areas with high carbon footprints. We have also developed new partnerships projects, including working with gas network utility SGN to engage people in Levenmouth on possible future changes to their energy systems.

Community-scale renewable energy

We want to explore the potential for community-scale renewable energy projects in order to generate income for Greener Kirkcaldy and to reduce our community's carbon footprint. Our first step was to build knowledge and capacity among our staff, volunteers and the wider community. Throughout 2019, we took part in the Community Energy Futures training and development programme, run by national charity Community Energy Scotland.

We also installed our own system at 8 East Fergus Place - a 20kW solar PV array, connected to a 27kWh Tesla Powerwall battery storage system and an electric vehicle charging point. We held events showcasing it as an example for other buildings, and were featured as a [case study](#) by funder Local Energy Scotland. We are now working with partner Fife Communities Climate Action Network, looking for opportunities for larger-scale projects.

Waste reduction education

Over the period 2018-20 we delivered the Zero Waste Kirkcaldy project, with funding from the Climate Challenge Fund. The project engaged 1,076 people, building skills and confidence to reuse and repair more, through programmes of sewing classes, furniture repair and upcycling workshops and computer maintenance courses. We delivered free sessions to community groups whose members are mainly people on low incomes, including a popular programme with the Cottage Family Centre in Templehall. We also introduced charges for some workshops and courses, to transition the project to a social enterprise model.

We found that it was difficult to make the paid-for courses financially viable. People were simply not willing to pay enough to cover our costs. We will not continue those, but we will seek further grant funding to provide more upskilling courses with the Cottage Family Centre, where the social benefit to the parents taking part was high.

We have also secured funding from Zero Waste Scotland for a pilot project, working in partnership with Fife Council's Resource Efficient Solutions, to support Fife Pride and Kirkcaldy Parks Half Marathon to reduce single-use items at their 2021 events.

Natural play

We delivered a varied programme of both free and paid-for school holiday Kids Club events giving outdoor play experiences to primary-school age children. With grant funding from the Young Start fund, we ran play sessions for children from families on low incomes. We ran several sessions with Kirkcaldy YMCA, and in 2019, we worked alongside the 'Café Inc' free lunch club at Hayfield Community Centre. The sessions took place in Kirkcaldy's community gardens, parks, woodland and beaches and took a 'free play' child-led approach. We also ran outdoor Kids Clubs that were open to any family, for a small fee.

We have also started to mainstream children's and family-friendly events into our projects. In summer 2019 we added kids Cooking Club events in the Lang Spoon Training Kitchen, and kids cycling activities and family walks as part of our active travel project. Going forward, we will continue and develop events and activities for children, across our programme. We plan to start a school holiday kids gardening club in 2021.

Travel project and feasibility study

Our 'greener travel' engagement project ran from 2018 to 2020, with funding from the Climate Challenge Fund and Smarter Choices, Smarter Places. It encouraged people to walk or cycle as alternatives to short car journeys. We ran beginner cycle training and group rides, a bike loan scheme, bike maintenance workshops, group walks, and launched new Kirkcaldy Walking and Cycling Festivals. We also offered route planning, promoted fuel-efficient driving and electric cars and ran a campaign encouraging people to reduce their air travel. We created new volunteer roles and built a great team of enthusiastic cycling champions.



Group bike ride

In 2019 we carried out community and stakeholder consultations to identify ideas for future cycling projects. We found strong demand for a cycle social enterprise, offering sales of refurbished bikes at affordable prices, repair and servicing, and bike maintenance workshops and courses. We carried out a detailed feasibility study, developed a business plan, and secured start-up funding for the project from the Climate Challenge Fund and Smarter Choices, Smarter Places.

We are now in the process of securing new high street premises for this project and the social enterprise aspects – the Lang Toun Cycles community bike shop - will launch in summer 2020. We are also continuing our free community engagement work encouraging walking and cycling. The Covid-19 lockdown has shown an increased need for our cycling project. More and more people are now choosing to cycle – for exercise and for active travel and we have seen high demand for our bike repairs, services and second hand bike sales so far.

Organisational development

We set ourselves a target of generating income of £47,000 from the Food Hub project by April 2020. Until lockdown, we had been on track to meet that target this financial year (2020-21). The Covid-19 crisis has put our Food Hub social enterprise activities on hold, but a Business Support grant from the Scottish Government has helped mitigate the lost income.

We set out plans to strengthen our role in the community through increasing our membership and creating new volunteer opportunities. We have increased our membership from 500 to 650. We have increased our number of regular volunteers from 50 to over 70, through the introduction of new Cycling Champion and Community Food Volunteer roles.

We also committed to strengthening our quality management and impact evaluation systems, and to continuing to build strong local, regional and national partnerships.

We have completed the self-assessment stage of the Trusted Charity quality mark (formerly called PQASSO). This process has been a valuable way to review and improve our administrative systems. In early 2020 we developed an action plan to strengthen our impact evaluation systems, with support from Evaluation Support Scotland. We will put that plan into place over the course of 2020.

We also continue to make good progress in building partnerships, both for joint delivery work and at more strategic levels. For example, we are now part of the new Love Oor Lang Toun regeneration group, and we are leading a regional partnership to develop a major new climate change project in Fife.

Looking ahead – updating our plan

In the two years since we developed our Strategic Plan, two key external factors have affected our work.

In October 2018, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published a stark report making it clear that urgent action is needed. Throughout 2019, climate change got more and more attention. School students protested, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon declared a climate emergency, and Fife Council set a target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. Then, in March 2020, everything changed with the twin public health and economic crises of Covid-19.

The rest of this document sets out how we are responding to these factors, and our updated priorities for the years ahead.

Climate change

Greener Kirkcaldy has been helping local people do their bit to tackle climate change since we started, in 2009. Last year, we resolved to redouble our efforts and support our community to tackle the climate emergency.

In March 2020, we commissioned the Fife People's Panel, a market research service provided by Fife Council's research team, to carry out a survey about local attitudes towards climate change. 416 people from a range of backgrounds across Fife took part. The results showed that while the majority of Fifers are already concerned about climate change, more needs to be done to engage with those who are not. We also found that there is a demand for information and support to help people take individual action on climate change, and that people want to see local, community and cross-sectoral action on this key issue.

We have used these findings to develop an innovative and ambitious 18-month Fife-wide climate action project, which will start in September 2020, thanks to funding from The National Lottery Community Fund. 'Climate Action Fife' will build capacity in communities across Fife to take action on climate change, engage people from all backgrounds and sectors, pilot a range of activities to tackle carbon emissions, and develop ambitious longer-term plans. We will work with partners including Fife Council, Fife College and Fife Communities Climate Action Network to deliver this project, which is the first in Scotland to be funded by the Lottery's new Climate Action Fund. This Fife-wide project will complement the climate change engagement work we are already carrying out in Kirkcaldy as part of our Climate Challenge Fund project.

Covid-19 and our 'next normal'

When we went into lockdown in March 2020, Greener Kirkcaldy set up a Covid-19 Planning Group, consisting of members of our volunteer management committee and representatives of our staff team, to guide us through the crisis and help us plan our post-Covid 'next normal'.

We closed our doors to the public, moved our events online, and played a key role in the local emergency response work. Our staff and volunteers have been amazing during lockdown, quickly changing how they work and adapting our services to meet the needs of the community. At the time of writing (August 2020) we are gradually resuming face-to-face activities, in line with Scottish Government guidance.

We have also been looking at what the next normal might be and what that means for Greener Kirkcaldy. Our Covid-19 Planning Group has been examining shifts in people's preferences and expectations, predicting changes in policy and funding, and thinking ahead to the likely impacts on how we live, work and use technology. We have used this research to consider different scenarios we might see over the next few years - in Kirkcaldy, Fife, Scotland and the UK - and to identify the challenges and opportunities that go with them.

We have also listened to the views of hundreds of local people, through events and surveys, and consulted with our project partners, on what our community could be like after the Covid-19 crisis is over and what part Greener Kirkcaldy should play. We held an online public meeting – 'Kirkcaldy After Lockdown' – attended by 60 people, and 150 people responded to our community survey, offering their thoughts and ideas on what post-lockdown Kirkcaldy, and our future plans, should look like. The responses were incredibly positive and inspiring. For a summary, see our [event report](#) and [survey results](#) blogs.

A number of themes arose strongly throughout both our scenario planning and community consultation, and we have used those to identify new priorities for the future.

Emergency support

As part of our response to Covid-19, we secured funding from the Scottish Government's Supporting Communities Fund to support emergency response work in Kirkcaldy. Our Community Food volunteers and staff stepped up to help people who needed support accessing food, preparing and delivering over 7,000 nutritious meals to vulnerable people in Kirkcaldy since April, and our Cosy Kingdom energy advisors have made crisis gas and electricity meter top ups for hundreds of families at risk of disconnection. The Scottish Government also recognised us as a [Community Anchor Organisation](#) for Kirkcaldy, enabling us to respond quickly and distribute funding to five other local organisations in Kirkcaldy, supporting their emergency response work.

We will continue this emergency support work throughout the crisis, as funding allows, working closely with the local Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty networks.

Training and employability

Our scenario planning research and our consultation results both identified employability and tackling unemployment, especially of young people, as high priorities for our future plans.

Greener Kirkcaldy have already done some work on employability through our growing and cooking programmes, for example our Food Works course. With our Community Chef, Lang Spoon Community Kitchen, Training Garden and new Cycle Shop team, we are well-placed to offer employability support. We will now explore options for scaling up our employability work to offer accredited training around food and growing, aiming to make our Food Hub a centre of excellence for all aspects of food training. We will also develop work experience and accredited training opportunities in cycle mechanics, at the new Lang Toun Cycles shop.

We will look for funding to offer training to people needing to gain skills for employment, as well as considering a social enterprise model for people and organisations who are able to pay. We will work in partnership with members of the Fife Employability and Training Consortium to complement the services they already offer.

Town centre regeneration

The regeneration of Kirkcaldy town centre has also been identified as a priority by our community, and is something we want to support. We are already working closely with the new town centre regeneration group, Love Oor Lang Toun, on their ShopAppy Kirkcaldy project, bringing together town centre businesses into one online marketplace and encouraging people to 'shop local'.

We will continue to play an active role in this area, working alongside Love Oor Lang Toun and ensuring both community interest and environmental sustainability are high on its agenda. The results from our virtual event and survey show that there is a lot of love for Kirkcaldy and that people in our community have a lot of ideas on how we can make it even better. We will help bring people together, facilitate conversations, and support Love Oor Lang Toun to engage and consult the Kirkcaldy community and involve local people in decision making.

We will also partner with the Love Oor Lang Toun group on projects that benefit the Kirkcaldy community, and we will use our skills and expertise to encourage town centre projects that support sustainability and carbon reduction.

New methods of community engagement

Lockdown has also resulted in changes in the way we engage with our community. We have been offering more online activities and have found that this has helped us reach new audiences we haven't worked with before. Many people have told us that they find it easier to take part online, because of caring commitments or travel constraints, and would appreciate having this option even after face-to-face events can resume. We are also aware that people will have mixed thoughts on returning to face-to-face events, so will continue to offer a blend of online and face-to-face activities to cater for a range of audiences.

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