

Our Strategic Plan 2018 - 2023

Report on our achievements



This report was prepared by Lauren Brook, Chief Executive. We welcome your feedback - please contact Lauren on lauren@greenerkirkcaldy.org.uk, with any comments or questions.

Introduction

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, deliver an ambitious programme of work to meet the needs and aspirations of local people and work towards financial sustainability.

We said we would prioritise six 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
- Developing our greener travel work, including a potential active travel social enterprise

We set ourselves objectives to develop our organisation, increase our membership and number of volunteers, work with more people and make significant carbon footprint savings. We also set ambitious financial targets to increase the proportion of our income earned through social enterprises, service level agreements, donations and sponsorship.

In 2020, we carried out a community consultation and review of our strategic plan in response to two external events - the declaration of the climate emergency and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic meant that, like all organisations, we had to change the way we work. We closed our doors to the public, moved events online and played a key role in the local emergency response. Our staff and volunteers were amazing during lockdown. They quickly changed how they worked and adapted our services to meet the needs of the community.

Our strategic plan review added the following new priorities:

- Redoubling our efforts to support our community to tackle the climate emergency
- Providing emergency support to vulnerable people during the pandemic
- Training and employability
- Town Centre regeneration

You can read our [original strategic plan, review document and 2022 report](#) on our website.

Headline achievements

Between 2018 and 2023, 39,000 people took part in our activities and services, saving 184,547 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). We refurbished and opened a community building and launched two new social enterprises – the Lang Spoon Community Kitchen and the Lang Toun Cycles Community Bike Shop.

We created two new annual festivals – Kirkcaldy Walking Festival and Kirkcaldy Cycling Festival. We also led a new Fife-wide cross-sector partnership to tackle the climate emergency, Climate Action Fife.

Other headline achievements include:

- 120 regular volunteers gave 21,000 hours of their time
- 12,200 households received home energy advice
- 4,000 handy service visits, installing energy saving measures
- £7 million in financial gains for households receiving home energy support
- 18,000 community meals served
- 32,000 tonnes of good food redistributed through the Lang Toun Larder and community fridge
- 2,000 kg of textiles, electronics and furniture saved from landfill
- 1,500 bikes repaired and serviced by Lang Toun Cycles
- 800 people took part in cycle rides and training
- 1,300 people took part in Kirkcaldy Walking Festivals
- 170 people trained in climate literacy training

Find out more by reading our annual reports from each year:

- [2018-2019](#)
- [2019-2020](#)
- [2020-2021](#)
- [2021-2022](#)

Progress towards our key priorities

Community building and food hub

We opened our new community building in Kirkcaldy town centre in 2019. 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 space and a kitchen garden. The new building complements our Community Training Garden at Ravensraig Walled Garden. Together they provide a place for people to come together to grow, cook, eat and learn.

Over the last few years, the Lang Spoon Kitchen has hosted a range of courses, workshops and activities, including:

- ‘Smart Cooking’ programmes teaching basic cooking skills and household budgeting
- Cookery courses and events for paying customers, including kids clubs, local and seasonal classes and a popular ‘Taste Of’ series exploring world cuisines
- Weekly community meals to bring people together
- The Lang Toun Larder community pantry and community fridge, redistributing surplus food donated by individuals and businesses
- ‘Plate Up for Fife’ workshops, encouraging climate-friendly food choices
- A Fife Food Summit, bringing communities, organisations and businesses together to explore how we can work together to bring about good food for Fife and our planet
- Volunteering opportunities and employability courses, building skills and confidence and helping people gain jobs or college places

Our activities have been very popular, with sold-out classes, fully booked programmes and 150-250 people joining us for our community meals each month.



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, growing and using herbs, climate-friendly gardening, regular community open days and volunteering sessions to share our passion for growing. Volunteers are also currently creating a demonstration climate-friendly garden at our community building. This space showcases how to garden with the environment in mind.

Energy advice

Our Cosy Kingdom energy advice service, delivered across Fife in partnership with Citizens Advice & Rights Fife and St Andrews Environmental Network, continues to be in high demand. Between 2018 and 2023, our energy advisors helped over 12,200 households to stay warm and save energy, installed energy saving measures in over 4,000 households through the handy service and helped participants receive over £7 million in financial gains.

We have developed new partnerships and carried out engagement campaigns to reach households who might not usually access support. For example, the Dunfermline Healthy Homes project, supporting people with long term illnesses and disabilities to heat their homes and work with gas network, SGN, on community engagement for their Fife H100 project in Levenmouth.

During the pandemic, we adapted our service to offer a hybrid approach of home visits and telephone advice. This allowed us to reach the increasing number of people who need our support. In 2022, we secured renewal of our Service Level Agreement with Fife Council to help tenants in fuel poverty for a further three years. Five-year funding from Climate Action Fife is also allowing us to support more households to reduce the carbon footprint of their homes.

Community-scale renewable energy

We wanted to explore the potential for community-scale renewable energy projects 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 our community building - 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.

In 2020-22, we worked with Fife Communities Climate Action Network to carry out a feasibility study for a potential Fife solar energy cooperative, as part of the Climate Action Fife project. We identified five potential sites and were successful in securing funding from Fife Council's Vacant and Derelict Land Fund and CARES (the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme) to carry out technical feasibility work on these sites. Fife Communities Climate Action Network is taking this work forward.

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, computer and bike 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. There was competition from other local organisations running similar activities and people were not willing to pay enough to cover our costs. As a result, we decided not to continue them.

We also secured funding from Zero Waste Scotland for a pilot project, 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. However, this project was cancelled as a result of Covid-19.

Some waste reduction work remains in our work plan. Lang Toun Cycles provides bike repairs, sales of second-hand bikes and bike maintenance workshops and our community fridge and pantry continue to redistribute surplus donated food. Our community building is also a drop off point for people to bring old IT equipment to be reused by the Edinburgh Remakery.

Natural Play childcare

We piloted a varied programme of free and paid-for school holiday kids clubs 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. They 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 other projects, with kids cooking clubs in the Lang Spoon Kitchen, family cycling and walking activities and family climate change events. These have been very popular and we will continue to develop events and activities for children and families across our programme.

Greener travel

Following a community consultation and detailed feasibility study, we opened our social enterprise community bike shop, [Lang Toun Cycles](#), in November 2020 with start-up funding from the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund. The shop offers cycle servicing and repairs, sales of refurbished bikes and of accessories, a bike lending library, bike maintenance training, volunteering opportunities and work placements.

We have seen very high demand for our bike repairs, services and second hand bike sales, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. The bike library is also very popular, with people particularly keen to borrow electric bikes. We are currently trialling new e-bikes sales and exploring new income generation options such as business-to-business selling.

We also delivered a series of popular 'greener travel' engagement projects, with funding from the Climate Challenge Fund, Smarter Choices, Smarter Places and Climate Action Fife between 2018 and 2023. These encouraged people to walk or cycle as alternatives to short car journeys. We ran cycle training and led rides for a range of audiences, a bike borrowing scheme, Dr Bike events, bike maintenance workshops, build-a-bike courses, group walks, and launched new annual Kirkcaldy Walking and Cycling Festivals. We also offered route planning, promoted fuel-efficient driving and electric cars, ran a Kirkcaldy Car Free Week and ran a campaign encouraging people to fly less. We created new volunteer roles and built a great team of enthusiastic cycling champions.

In 2021, we published the [Fife Community Cycling Action Plan](#). The plan proposes ten actions to get more people commuting by bike in Fife, across three main themes: route improvements, cycle storage and behaviour change measures.



Tackling the climate emergency

Our 2020-22 Climate Challenge Fund project delivered a programme of climate change engagement work, including events such as workshops, monthly climate cafes, walks, cooking demos and film nights, and a [Local Guide to Low Carbon Living](#).

We led the '[Climate Action Fife](#)' development project between October 2020 and March 2022. Funded by the National Lottery's Climate Action Fund, this was a partnership project working with Fife Council, Fife College and Fife Communities Climate Action Network (FCCAN). It delivered ten activities, grouped under four themes: engage, pilot, develop and building capacity across Fife.

The project engaged over 2,000 people and our carbon evaluation shows that it will lead to savings of 3,346 tonnes of CO₂e over the lifetime of the changes it inspired. As part of the project, we became a Gold Climate Literate Organisation, accredited by the Carbon Literacy Trust. This recognises that we are improving carbon literacy in our community and provides us with greater authority and influence to make Fife a greener and fairer place to live.

We used the learning from our development project to successfully apply for a follow on 5-year project, funded by the Climate Action Fund between 2022 and 2027. This is working with 12 community and public sector partners to deliver an ambitious programme of climate action, including:

- Climate change communications, training and engagement events for a range of audiences
- Fife Climate Knowhow training for communities and the public sector
- Innovative behaviour change activities encouraging climate-friendly businesses, homes and gardens, food, travel and community tree planting
- Capacity building to get more community groups and the public sector involved in action on the climate emergency



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 thousands of nutritious meals. Our Cosy Kingdom energy advisors 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 distribute funding to five other local organisations in Kirkcaldy to support their emergency response work.

We continue to offer support to help people in our community to access food and heat their homes. With the current cost of living crisis, we are seeing that more and more people in our community are experiencing food insecurity and falling into fuel poverty. Our community meals and community fridge continue to help people access good, nutritious food in a dignified way.

We added to this with the launch of the Lang Toun Larder community pantry in 2020 and we were a key part of the 'Cash First' partnership project in 2022-23. The project offered shopping vouchers alongside income maximisation and financial capability support such as cooking classes and budgeting sessions. Our energy advisors continue to support families at risk of disconnection and offer a 'handy' service to those struggling to keep their homes warm. This work continues to be a vital part of our work programme.



Training and employability

We have started to scale up our employability work at our Lang Spoon Community Kitchen, Training Garden and Lang Toun Cycles shop by trialling work placements and accredited training opportunities. Between 2018 and 2023, 170 people took part in our Food Works' employability courses, in partnership with Brag Enterprises. The courses build skills and confidence and help people gain jobs or college places.

We have also supported over 200 young people to gain work experience by offering placements in our kitchen, garden and cycle shop as part of the Government's 'Kickstart' programme and Fife Employability and Training Consortium's 'Bright Futures' projects. In 2022, we became a Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS) accredited training centre, with staff qualified to deliver a variety of accredited food and cooking training courses. We have delivered multiple courses for volunteers and members of the public. Our placements and courses are popular and we have seen high demand for us to run more.

Town Centre regeneration

In 2020-21, we provided start up support to allow the new community-led organisation Love Oor Lang Toun to become a Community Interest Company, plan and run community engagement and marketing campaigns, develop a strategy and secure funding. We will continue to work alongside Love Oor Lang Toun, ensuring both community interest and environmental sustainability are high on its agenda and partnering with them on projects that benefit the Kirkcaldy community.

Organisational Development

We set ourselves an ambitious target of 40% of our income to come from service level agreements, donations and sponsorship by April 2023. By March 2023, 20% of our overall income was from these sources. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we had to postpone our social enterprise cooking and growing classes for over a year. This meant the income from these activities has been much lower than predicted and we had to start from scratch when lockdown restrictions ended and people slowly re-gained confidence. Overall, the pandemic has set back our business development by about two years.

Some of our other projects and services are starting to contribute to their own costs. Cosy Kingdom is in its third renewal of a Service Level Agreement with Fife Council, which funds part of its work. We also successfully opened the Lang Toun Cycles Community Bike Shop between the two Covid-19 lockdowns. Income generation at Lang Toun Cycles exceeded our expectations in the first 18-months, before being impacted by a mix of staff illness and the cost-of-living crisis. We are currently writing new business plans for all of our social enterprise activities. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and cost-of-living crisis, we put our plans for fundraising through individual donations and sponsorship on hold. Before this, in 2019, we ran a successful fundraising event, our 10th anniversary ceilidh, and a winter appeal, Help Fuel Fife Folk.

We nearly doubled membership from 500 to 977. We also increased our number of regular volunteers from 50 to 120 by introducing Climate Champion, Cycling Volunteer, Bike Shop Volunteer and Community Food Volunteer roles.

We achieved accreditation under the Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers' quality assurance scheme and 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 and embed a culture of continuous improvement. We also developed an action plan to strengthen our impact evaluation systems, with support from Evaluation Support Scotland.

We developed a Climate Action Plan setting out an ambition for our operations to be carbon-neutral by 2030 and established an internal 'Green Team' to do this. The current version of this plan can be viewed on our website. In 2022, we became a Bronze level Equality Pathfinder Organisation with Fife Centre for Equalities. This scheme recognises the efforts made by organisations in furthering equality, diversity and inclusion as part of their day-to-day policies and practices. We are now working towards Silver level accreditation and have developed an Equalities Action Plan, which is driven by an internal Equalities Action Group.

We have built a number of strong local, regional and national partnerships. For example Cosy Kingdom and Climate Action Fife, which is a 12-strong cross sector partnership. We also work closely with Love Oor Lang Toun, Fife Communities Climate Action Network and the Fife Employability and Training Consortium. We are members of the Food4Fife Partnership, Fife Food Insecurity Working Group and lead the Fuel Poverty Taskforce.

Looking forward

In summer 2022, we carried out a review of our progress towards our 2018-23 strategic plan, alongside a series of staff, volunteer and community consultations to gather ideas and feedback. Over 350 people from our community took part. We organised a workshop at our November 2022 Annual Gathering, an online survey and pop up events in Kirkcaldy town centre. The [results](#) have played a key role in informing our 2023-28 strategic plan.