



**Greener  
Kirkcaldy**

# OUR YEAR 2023 - 2024







Photo credit: Markus Stitz

# WHAT WE DO

Greener Kirkcaldy is a community-led charity working locally to bring people together, take positive action on the climate emergency and support people through fuel poverty and food insecurity.

We deliver a range of projects, events and skills training to achieve the needs and goals of local people – building resilience as a community and working towards a future where everyone can live better and tread more lightly on our planet.

We carry out activities across Kirkcaldy and work with partners to deliver projects across Fife.

Our community building at 8 East Fergus Place houses our offices, community space and kitchens. This is also the base for our community food projects.

We also have a community training garden at Ravenscraig Walled Garden. And we run Lang Toun Cycles Community Bike Shop on Kirkcaldy High Street.

## Our Values

Three key values guide all of our work. Our staff, management committee members and volunteers chose them in 2013:

- **Protecting the Environment**
- **Social Justice**
- **Choosing our Own Goals as a Community**

These values underpin everything we do and influence how we do it. We use them when planning, delivering and evaluating our activities.

## Between April 2023 and March 2024, our activities included:

- The **Cosy Kingdom** energy advice service, helping Fifiers keep warm and save energy.
- Weekly **community meals**, bringing local people together and cooked and served by volunteers.
- **Smart Cooking** programmes, teaching basic cooking skills and household budgeting.
- **Cooking classes** and **kids holiday cooking clubs**.
- The **Lang Toun Larder** pantry and **community fridge**, redistributing good food.
- **Growing and gardening workshops**.
- **Climate Action Fife**, a cross-sector partnership tackling the climate emergency.
- **Lang Toun Cycles Community Bike Shop**.
- **Kirkcaldy Cycling Festival**.
- **Cycle maintenance classes**, fix-it events and build-a-bike programmes.
- **Led cycle rides, walks and training** to build confidence and encourage active travel for local journeys.
- **Start up support** for **Fife Climate Hub**.
- **Volunteering and employability opportunities** across our work.
- Launching our new **2023-2028 Strategic Plan** - *A Greener and Fairer Tomorrow, Starting Today*.



COSY KINGDOM



Greener Kirkcaldy



# MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE



**It is an honour to lead an organisation that touches the lives of so many people in our community. Greener Kirkcaldy runs a range of projects that help to tackle some of the biggest problems facing society.**

From community food, growing and active travel to climate action and energy advice, we encourage people to take practical steps that make their community a better and more sustainable place.

The past year has thrown up big challenges. These include the continuing cost of living crisis, skyrocketing energy prices and uncertainty over Scotland's commitment to climate change targets. These challenges make organisations like Greener Kirkcaldy more needed than ever and I would like to thank everyone who has supported us over the last year.

Since 2020, we have led Climate Action Fife. This ambitious partnership brings a wide range of organisations together to encourage people all over Fife to make climate-friendly choices.

Through Climate Action Fife, we hosted one of our largest ever events. Luna the Moon Gazing Moth visited Kirkcaldy Prom in November 2023. We gave hundreds of people the opportunity to see the moon through a high-powered telescope and reflect on the importance of taking care of our planet. Luna even attracted STV News, who broadcast live from the prom!

We also relaunched our walking programme with a new member of staff and several enthusiastic walking volunteers. Sue and her volunteers have organised an exciting programme of themed walks, helping people to keep their 'steps' up, even in the cold days of winter.

Finally, on behalf of everyone at Greener Kirkcaldy I have to put on record my thanks to Christine May who, I'm sorry to say, had to step down as our Chair in January 2024.

It's hard to think of anyone who is more enthusiastic about Kirkcaldy than Christine. We miss her calm decision-making and her sharp sense of humour. But I'm sure that she will be encouraged to know that several members have stepped up to strengthen Greener Kirkcaldy's board in recent months. Thank you to Amy Guy, Chris Kent, Matthew Lawson, Tom Morris and Hayley Williamson.

## Pat Crosbie, Chair



**Our Annual Report is an opportunity to step back and appreciate the enormous impact Greener Kirkcaldy has, both in Kirkcaldy and throughout Fife.**

We rescue bikes from the landfill and we recirculate tonnes of good food, that would otherwise go to waste, through our community meal and fridge.

Thousands of households in Fife benefit from our impartial energy advice each year. We also provide accredited training in food hygiene, Fife Climate Knowhow and much more.

Our 129 volunteers continue to make a huge difference and they have given us an amazing 7,000 hours of their time this year. Thank you!

This review is a look back but we're also looking ahead to a greener and more sustainable future for our community.

We are at the halfway point of our current five year plan *A Greener and Fairer Tomorrow, Starting Today* and we have some exciting work to share over the months to come.

Not least, we are developing Lang Toun Cycles into an Active Travel Hub. We want to become a centre for excellence for walking, wheeling and cycling in Fife. We are also increasing our work with local businesses and community groups – helping them to reduce their impact, deliver their own projects and providing opportunities for them to support our work.

While our projects are wide ranging, they all have one thing in common. People. Everything we do is guided by our community and aims to create a greener and fairer Kirkcaldy for the folk who live, work and study here.

Whether you are a participant, a volunteer, a staff member, a funder or a member of Greener Kirkcaldy, I'd like to say thank you for making our work possible. I continue to be amazed and humbled by your hard work and commitment to community and climate action.

## Lauren Brook, Chief Executive

# OUR WORK



**Climate Action Fife is a five-year project bringing together, individuals, communities, local government and businesses to tackle the climate emergency and make Fife a greener and fairer place to live.**

Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund's Climate Action Fund, the project is a partnership between 12 cross-sector organisations.

## Activities include:

- Campaigns and pledges, Fife Climate Knowhow course and climate change engagement events for a range of audiences.
- Innovative behaviour change activities encouraging climate-friendly businesses, homes and gardens, climate-friendly food and travel choices and climate-friendly holidays.
- Community tree planting support and training.
- Advice and support for community groups and public sector organisations to mainstream climate action activities.
- Community Climate Grants for groups to engage local people in climate action.
- A commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and engagement with groups in 'easy to ignore' communities, including youth engagement.

In its second year, Climate Action Fife engaged with over 10,000 people, communities, organisations and businesses across Fife. We helped our community to save 26,300 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

## ENERGY ADVICE

**The Cosy Kingdom household energy advice and fuel poverty service operates across Fife, providing home energy advice, a handy service and community outreach work.**

Greener Kirkcaldy leads the Cosy Kingdom partnership alongside Citizens Advice & Rights Fife and St Andrews Environmental Network. The service works closely with Fife Council, Fife Housing Association Alliance and many other local partners.

Cosy Kingdom helps people to insulate their homes, get the most out of their heating and get their energy bills under control. It has a particular focus on households who are in fuel poverty and includes a free handy service to fit simple energy saving measures.

In 2023-24, Cosy Kingdom delivered energy advice to 3,123 households. 1,589 households received assistance from the handy service, for example replacing light bulbs with low-energy LEDs and fitting thermal curtains to keep the heat in.

The partnership supported participants to save over £2.6 million through energy, debt and benefits advice. We also delivered a programme of events, talks and workshops, engaging with 4,870 people. Our new outreach advisor trained 321 frontline workers to give basic energy advice.

## GROWING

**We continued to develop our community orchard and training garden at Ravenscraig Walled Garden through regular volunteer sessions.**

Around 30 volunteers attended sessions each month. Ten volunteers attended climate-friendly garden sessions at our community building. We also ran a number of public gardening workshops and community events.



## COMMUNITY FOOD

**We delivered a range of projects to increase access to healthy, sustainable food and bring people together to learn, cook and eat together.**

2,134 people joined our weekly community meals, cooked and served by our volunteers. 2,040 people visited our community fridge, which redistributes surplus or unsold food from businesses and individuals. 127 people accessed our community pantry and we continued to run a pop-up café, offering social opportunities and additional support.

We redistributed more than 13 tonnes of surplus or unsold food through our community fridge and pantry. The 'Choice First' programme helped 27 local families experiencing food insecurity.

We ran a range of cooking classes and kids holiday cooking clubs throughout the year. 95 people took part in Smart Cooking - a six-week course teaching cooking skills, healthy low-cost recipes and awareness of nutrition, food choices and budgeting. 28 families took part in a series of cooking workshops delivered in partnership with YMCA Kirkcaldy.

20 students took part in our Chefs for the Future competition with Fife College, developing tasty and nutritious plant-based menus. 30 people took part in Plate up for Fife, exploring the link between food choices and the climate emergency.

We ran 29 social enterprise cookery classes, attended by 227 people. These include our popular 'A Taste of...' cook and dine evening workshops.



## VOLUNTEERING AND EMPLOYABILITY

## ACTIVE TRAVEL

**We delivered free bike fix-it events, maintenance workshops, build-a-bike programmes, cycle training, led rides and a week-long cycling festival.**

We worked with partners to deliver these events across Fife as part of Climate Action Fife.

In 2023, we added walking to our active travel activities. Our walking and cycling activities encourage people to reduce their carbon footprint by using a car less for short journeys. They also benefit people's health and well-being and increase social inclusion.

Lang Toun Cycles Community Bike Shop makes it easier for people in Kirkcaldy to cycle more.

We continued to collect, refurbish and redistribute bikes from Fife Council recycling centres. We refurbished a total of 2,590 bikes and we distributed 256 bikes for free to people within the community.

As Cycling Scotland's Cycling Friendly Partner in Fife, we helped five employers to achieve a Cycling Friendly Employer Award.



**We continue to offer a range of good quality volunteering opportunities, supporting 129 regular volunteers across our programmes.**

We also supported a wide range of employability programmes. These included:

- Training 42 people in food and horticulture skills.
- Seven placements for young people in our kitchens, gardens and bike shop.
- Two week-long sustainability skills programmes with 18 young people through The Prince's Trust.
- Ten public food hygiene training courses.

# YOUR STORIES

## VOLUNTEERING



**After her mother died, Emma moved to Fife to be near her family. She wanted to get involved with her local community and meet people.**

Emma applied to become a gardening volunteer. She felt volunteering would increase her confidence and skills and help her to find work.

Emma became a regular volunteer at Ravenscraig Walled Garden. She enthusiastically took part in educational away days and other events.

Emma has grown in confidence with each session. Volunteering with us has helped her to develop many of the 'soft skills' that employers look for including communication, active listening, time management, problem solving, collaboration and team working.



After six months of volunteering, Emma felt confident enough to start applying for jobs and she was delighted when she was invited for an interview.

The experience and confidence she gained while volunteering at Greener Kirkcaldy enabled her to excel at interview and secure a position at a local hotel. Emma wants to use her role as a housekeeper as a stepping stone to further opportunities.

## CLIMATE-FRIENDLY BUSINESS



**Relationships Scotland - Couple Counselling Fife is a charity based in Kirkcaldy.**

They have counselling rooms in a very old listed building in a conservation area on the High Street. The rooms were difficult to heat and their energy costs were very high. Due to these challenges they contacted Louise, our Business Outreach Advisor, for support.

Louise carried out an energy check and developed an action plan of energy efficiency improvements and behaviour changes that they could make.

We recommended measures including installing low carbon heating infrared panels, secondary glazing, roof insulation and LED lights. We also helped them find funding to cover some of the cost of making changes.



As a result of our advice, Mieke, the charity's manager, has replaced some heaters with infrared panels. These heat the person, not the room. As a result, the charity's premises are much warmer and the new heating is much more efficient. She explained what a difference it made.

*"Navigating the various funding streams that are available to help improve the energy efficiency of our office and combat climate change can be a bit bewildering. It's outwith my expertise so it's great to have Louise's guidance and support."*



## SMART COOKING



**Adam\* was referred to our Smart Cooking course by Fife Council's Social Work department.**

He has been in and out of the prison system, out of work and is socially isolated. He was not cooking at home at all, relying instead on takeaways and processed ready meals. He gained weight and was feeling unwell.

Adam interacted really well with his group. He loved coming along to meet new people and share in the banter!

His cooking skills improved a great deal and he became enthusiastic about trying new recipes both in the class and at home. Adam is now able to care for and cook for his father. He is also losing weight and feeling better as he is cooking more and looking after himself and his family.

*"I enjoyed the course because I was in a safe environment. I felt like the tutors taught me well and made me feel more confident about cooking for myself. I am shopping better and cooking from scratch."*

\*Not his real name.



“

The cooking classes helped me gain confidence, were supportive and encouraging and I never felt pressured. I now cook at least five days a week.

”

“

I'm feeling healthier and the fridge has given me my dignity back. When I arrived in Kirkcaldy, I felt really disconnected from the community. Coming here, with all that you're doing, has helped me feel more settled and part of the place.

”

“

Your demonstration climate-friendly garden is such a good idea! I now have tips and resources that I can use.

”

“

Climate change is a serious threat to our physical resources, our shared culture and the sense of community in our villages and towns. These events not only help to educate and prepare us for the future, they foster a shared meaning in the process.

”

“

Having a plant-based option at the community meals shows more people how good this food is.

”

“

There is help [with energy advice] out there, especially for low-income households. From heating advice to debt management. I received thermal curtains which I close every night and I am very grateful because I'm nice and warm now.

”

“

The bike rides have shown me safe, low-traffic cycle routes that I now use instead of driving for everyday journeys like visiting friends or popping to Asda.

”

# 2023 - 2024 HEADLINE MOMENTS



# Greener Kirkcaldy

## MAY 2023

We launched our **new strategic plan** for 2023-28 at an open day in our community building. Around 70 people attended to find out about our plans and priorities for the next five years.



## JUNE 2023

We started a new programme of **led walks**, helping build people's confidence to walk more and drive less for short local journeys. The first walk was straight after our community meal to encourage people to enjoy a stroll after their dinner.



## JULY 2023

Climate Action Fife released **Planet Earth Noo Needs Oor Help**, a stirring performance by poet Len Pennie encouraging people to take action to tackle the climate emergency.



## AUGUST 2023

Over 400 people took part in **Kirkcaldy Cycling Festival**. The festival included a family fun day, a talk by Markus Stitz on bike-packing and new events including an adaptive bike ride and a youth ride.



## SEPTEMBER 2023

We launched a **winter thermal imaging** campaign to help people to identify where heat is lost within their homes. Over 470 people engaged with the campaign and 87 households received a thermal image of their home.





## OCTOBER 2023

We launched the Climate Action Fife **A Fruit Tree for Every Garden in Fife** campaign. We gave 453 fruit trees to households in Fife in spring 2024 and over 1,000 individual fruit trees were added to our interactive Green Map.



## OCTOBER 2023

We signed up as a **Volunteer Charter Champion**. Volunteers are at the heart of Greener Kirkcaldy and they support our wide range of activities. Developed by Volunteering Scotland and the Scottish Trades Union Congress, the Charter's key principles support the foundations of a good volunteer experience.



## NOVEMBER 2023

We held two incredibly popular events with **Luna the Moongazing Moth**, on Kirkcaldy Prom and at the Larick Centre in Tayport. 260 people came to the prom to see Luna and STV News broadcast live from the event!



## NOVEMBER 2023

Greener Kirkcaldy won the Climate Community Award at the prestigious **Holyrood Climate Action Awards**.



Photo credit: Andrew Perry

## JANUARY 2024

Our **Veganuary** campaign raised awareness of the links between carbon emissions and food choices. We shared recipes and advice on social media and at our community meals. We also ran a live Q&A session on Instagram.



# OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS:

## VOLUNTEERING

**129** volunteers gave almost  
**7,000** hours of their time.



## CYCLING INITIATIVES

**256** refurbished free bikes  
for adults and children.

**630** bikes repaired and serviced by Lang Toun Cycles.

**591** people participated in cycling events, training, led rides, maintenance workshops, and build-a-bike courses.



## COMMUNITY MEALS & FOOD DISTRIBUTION

**2,130** people joined our weekly community meals, made and served by volunteers.

**13** tonnes of good food redistributed through our pantry project and community fridge.



## ACTIVITIES & PARTICIPATION

**15,920** people took part  
in our activities and events.

## ENERGY ADVICE & SAVINGS

**3,123** energy advice sessions  
through telephone calls and home visits.

**1,596** handy service visits, helping  
households save energy through measures.

Over **£2.6 million** in financial savings for households.



## EMPLOYABILITY & BUSINESS SUPPORT

**86** people supported through  
our employability programmes.

**116** small businesses and community  
organisations supported in energy efficiency and food waste.



## WORKSHOPS & TRAINING



**11** Boosting Budgets workshops on  
energy and financial capability for  
primary school parents.

**321** frontline workers trained in  
basic energy advice and when to  
refer people to Cosy Kingdom.

## CLIMATE & CARBON SAVINGS



**31** people trained in climate literacy through  
our accredited Fife Climate Knowhow course.

**15** organisations received grants to tackle  
the climate emergency in their community.

**52,505** tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> saved through our activities.

# OUR IMPACT:

## FOOD & HEALTH

- More people grow, cook and eat local and seasonal food.
- People have improved health and well-being due to increased access to healthy food and green spaces.



## SKILLS & CONFIDENCE

- People have increased skills and confidence around home energy use, growing food, planning and cooking healthy meals, cycling or walking for short journeys and household budgeting.



## CLIMATE ACTION

- More people recognise the importance of taking action to tackle the climate emergency and the actions they can take to reduce their carbon footprint.
- Lower carbon emissions in our community.



## VOLUNTEERING & SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

- Volunteers gain valuable experience, skills and confidence to move on to positive destinations.
- People have more social connections and feel less isolated.
- People take on more active roles in the local community.





# PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Our Cosy Kingdom energy advice service, Climate Action Fife partnership, community food and gardening activities and work to engage our community on greener travel will continue in 2024-25 and beyond.

Training and employability will remain a core part of our work, along with activities for young people and families and community events and open days.

We will continue to develop our organisation. We will engage with our members, try new ways to diversify our income streams and increase equality and diversity. Our Equalities Action Plan sets out the work we will do to improve our diversity and inclusion.

Our Climate Action Plan sets out an ambition for our operations to be carbon-neutral by 2030. We will continue to look for ways to ensure we have a positive impact on the planet.

We will continue to build partnerships and share our learning. We will support other organisations and networks across Fife, Scotland and further afield.



## SPACES FOR OUR COMMUNITY

In 2024, we celebrate five years of ownership of our **community building** at 8 East Fergus Place. We bought and transformed the building with grants from the Community Land Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund and opened to the public in 2019. We welcome around 10,000 visitors through the doors of our community building each year.

We've been working at our community garden and orchard at **Ravenscraig Walled Garden** since 2012. We added a training centre in 2018.

We opened **Lang Toun Cycles Community Bike Shop** in 2020. We plan to expand its offering in 2024 to cover walking, wheeling and cycling.



# Everything in this Annual Report was made possible by you!

Greener Kirkcaldy's range of projects, events and skills training meet the needs and goals of local people, building resilience as a community and working towards a future where everyone can live better and tread more lightly on our planet.

Our work in 2023-24 was funded by BRAG Enterprises, British Gas Energy Trust, Community Energy Scotland, Crown Estate Scotland, Cycling Scotland, Cycling UK, Development Trusts Association Scotland, Fife Council, Fife Housing Association, Fife Voluntary Action, Glen Housing Association, Green Action Trust, Link, Neighbourly, Paths for All, The Robertson Trust, SCVO, SGN, The National Lottery Community Fund, The Prince's Trust (The King's Trust), The Scottish Government, community donations and the customers of our social enterprise projects.

We would also like to thank the people of Kirkcaldy and Fife who have continued to support our work, use our services and help us to plan our future. We couldn't do it without you!



## You can support our work by:

- Becoming a member of Greener Kirkcaldy for free
- Donating your time as a volunteer
- Making a financial donation to support our activities
- Signing up to our mailing list
- Coming along to an event or workshop

## Follow us on social media



Find out more about our work at [www.greenerkirkcaldy.org.uk](http://www.greenerkirkcaldy.org.uk)

## Contact us

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