

Our Strategic Plan

A greener and fairer tomorrow,
starting today 2023 - 2028

Report on our progress

September 2024



This report was prepared by Kitty O'Connor. We welcome any feedback - please contact Kitty on kitty@greenerkirkcaldy.org.uk, with any comments or questions.

Introduction

In May 2023, we published our new strategic plan, *A Greener and Fairer Tomorrow, Starting Today 2023-2028*. It describes our aims to:

- Strengthen key projects that support our values and vision
- Develop new ideas to meet the needs and aspirations of local people
- Broaden and deepen our community engagement
- Create a financially sustainable future for Greener Kirkcaldy by diversifying our funding streams

In this plan, we said we would prioritise five key areas of work:

- Climate Action
- Energy
- Food and Growing
- Travel
- Community Engagement and Development

The plan also provides a plan for developing our organisation, by:

- Developing and empowering our staff, volunteers and management committee
- Building and strengthening partnerships
- Giving our community ownership through membership
- Diversifying our funding streams and generating our own income
- Reducing our own impact
- Increasing our equality and diversity

We developed the plan after consulting with our staff, volunteers, members and the wider community. We started by gathering ideas and experience from our staff and volunteers and continued the conversation with the wider community. We held a workshop at our November 2022 Annual Gathering, pop-up events in Kirkcaldy town centre and an online community survey. Over 350 people from our community gave us their ideas and feedback. Our consultation and Strategic Plan, can be read here: [Our Strategic Plan 2023-2028 - Greener Kirkcaldy](#).

This report outlines our progress between April 2023 and March 2024 (year one).

Our Progress

Between April 2023 and March 2024, almost 16,000 people took part in our projects and services. We are on track to meet our target of working with 17,500 people per year by April 2025.

Climate Action

We continued to lead the Fife-wide Climate Action Fife partnership project, made up of 12 cross-sector partners including Fife Council, Fife College, Fife Communities Climate Action Network and a range of Fife community groups and organisations. Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund's Climate Action Fund until 2027, the project is delivering an ambitious programme of climate action to tackle the key areas of emissions, work with all sectors and build capacity and resilience across Fife. Its aim is to deliver a community-led movement that can demonstrate what is possible when people take the lead in tackling climate change.

In 2023-24, we delivered a range of activities, including:

- Campaigns and pledges, Fife Climate Knowhow courses 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 to support 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



Climate Action Fife development day

In its second year (June 2023 – May 2024), Climate Action Fife engaged with over 10,000 people, communities, organisations and businesses across Fife. We engaged with 1,500 people at climate events, trained 31 people in Climate Fresk and Climate Knowhow, supported 116 businesses to reduce energy and food waste and provided 15 community groups with small grants funding. Our successful 'Fruit tree in every garden' campaign engaged over 2,000 people and 350 fruit trees were given to local people. The project helped our community to save 26,300 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

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 April 2023 and March 2024, Greener Kirkcaldy's energy advisors supported over almost 8,000 households and helped participants receive over £2.6 million in financial gains. In 2020, we adapted our service to offer a hybrid approach of home visits and telephone advice. We continue to offer this approach to meet the increasingly high demand of people asking for support and to help people in the way that best suits their needs.



Energy advisor, Tracey, at an energy advice home visit

In 2022, we secured a renewal of our Service Level Agreement from Fife Council to help people in fuel poverty for a further three years. In 2023, we supported Fife Council to set up a winter fuel voucher support scheme.

Our 'Warm and Safe Fife' project, working with gas network utility SGN to support people with long term illnesses and disabilities to heat their homes, has been extended for a further two years until 2026 and now includes gas servicing. We have also continued to develop new projects, including a 'Moneywise, Energy-smart' partner project between Greener Kirkcaldy and Citizens Advice & Rights Fife to deliver energy and income maximization advice to fuel poor households.

Five-year funding from Climate Action Fife has allowed us to support more households looking to reduce the carbon footprint of their homes. We have seen an increased demand for our thermal imaging service, with 87 households receiving a thermal image of their home in winter 2023. Demand for the service has outstripped capacity and there is a waiting list in place for next winter.

We continued to offer our free handy service, fitting simple energy-efficiency measures such as thermal curtains, radiator panels and LED light-bulbs, to improve the energy efficiency of households who qualify for the service. We will carry out a feasibility study in the summer of 2025 to determine the potential of developing this work into a social enterprise.

We have carried out several engagement campaigns to reach 'hard-to-reach' households who we haven't engaged with before. Our new outreach advisor role trained frontline workers from a wide range of organisations across Fife in fuel poverty awareness and energy safeguarding and to give basic energy advice.

Food and Growing

Our community food activities continue to be very successful, with most of our activities taking place in our Lang Spoon Community Kitchen. Activities in 2023-24 included:

- 'Smart Cooking' programmes teaching basic cooking skills and household budgeting, energy efficient cooking and introducing participants to other support services
- A regular cooking club for 'Smart Cooking' graduates to continue developing their skills
- Family cooking workshops in partnership with Kirkcaldy YMCA
- Weekly community meals
- A Community Fridge and the Lang Toun Larder 'pantry' and pop-up cafe
- 'Plate Up for Fife' workshops, encouraging climate-friendly food choices
- Cookery courses and events for paying customers, including kids' clubs, local and seasonal classes and a popular 'Taste Of' series with world cuisines
- A range of volunteering opportunities and employability courses, building skills and confidence, and helping people gain jobs or college places

Our cooking courses, cooking club and family cooking workshops continue to be very popular, and we receive great feedback from participants. Our community meals have also grown in popularity. 140 - 250 people join us each month and we now have two sittings to meet demand.

The 'Lang Toun Larder' community pantry collected unsold or surplus donated food and redistributed it in a friendly and welcoming environment. We continued to see a great demand for places with a waiting list of people wanting to join. We also ran a weekly pop-up café where pantry members could pay-as-they-feel for a hot lunch and the opportunity to speak to invited external support services. We provided households struggling to afford food with a monthly shopping voucher through the 'Your Choice' project. In 2023, we decided to review our pantry offering as, with a significant decrease in the amount of surplus food available and increased food prices, the current model was becoming unsustainable. In consultation with volunteers and members, we developed a new model which we will trial in 2024.

Our 'Community Fridge' continues to run alongside the pantry, redistributing short-dated food, donated by individuals and businesses, to anyone in the community.

We worked with Fife College to educate upcoming chefs in climate-friendly food through the 'Chefs of the Future' programme. Young chefs competed to create a three-course plant-based, seasonal menu.



Students at Fife College with their winning 'Chefs of the Future' dishes

We continued to offer weekly volunteer sessions at our community gardens at Ravenscraig Walled Garden. These were very well attended. To meet the high demand and to empower volunteers, we trialed volunteer-led sessions, with volunteers leading small groups and providing mentoring. We held community open days at the gardens and a programme of workshops at our training centre, including paid classes and courses on growing your own vegetables and fruit, a series of seasonal herb workshops and free workshops on climate-friendly gardening, biodiversity and composting. We also trialed family growing activities.

In 2022 we developed the garden at our community building at East Fergus Place as a 'show and tell' climate friendly garden to inspire local people. We held regular volunteering sessions at the garden, giving volunteers the opportunity to try out new methods to reduce our impact on the changing climate and make spaces more resilient to storms and drought.

Travel

Our social enterprise community bike shop, Lang Toun Cycles, offered cycle servicing and repairs, sales of refurbished bikes and of accessories, a bike lending library, bike maintenance training, volunteering opportunities and work placements. The demand for our bike repairs, services and sales remains high. In 2023, we were awarded a grant from Cycling Scotland to develop our e-bike free borrowing library to a paid subscription service (launched in June 2024) and we are looking into the possibility of developing a paid short-term local bike hire scheme.

In addition to an income stream from direct sales and services, the shop is also a key partner for grant-funded projects and service level agreements, including contracts through Cycling UK and Cycling Scotland to provide refurbished bikes to adults and young people. We continued to collect, refurbish and redistribute bikes from Fife Council recycling centres. We have also seen an increase in requests from other organisations to learn from us and provide training, and we are developing Lang Toun Cycles into a Centre of Excellence to meet this need. We also have plans to develop Lang Toun Cycles into an all-round active travel hub in 2024.



Group ride in Dysart (credit Markus Stitz)

We continued our popular programme of free behaviour change activities, encouraging people to cycle or walk for short journeys instead of driving. Activities included:

- Led walks and cycle rides for a variety of audiences
- Cycle training, bike maintenance classes, Dr Bike events and build-a-bike courses
- A bike 'library' borrowing scheme, including a month's 'try-before-you-buy' for e-bikes, and loans of bikes to people in targeted groups and communities
- Kirkcaldy Cycling Festival
- Active travel champion volunteers
- Cycle Friendly Workplace delivery partner
- 'Staycation' events and a climate friendly holiday campaign, encouraging people to fly less, held as part of Climate Action Fife
- Targeted activities in areas with high levels of deprivation and partnership working in new areas, including Glenrothes and Levenmouth

Our active travel programme had a strong focus on reducing inequality locally and inspiring people from diverse audiences to overcome some of the barriers to cycling and walking, as well as giving people the skills and confidence to cycle or walk for local journeys and reduce their carbon emissions by driving less. We worked with local community groups and organisations, as well as Fife Centre for Equalities and Outdoor Education Fife, to engage with, and make our activities inclusive and accessible to a diverse range of audiences who might face additional barriers to travelling more sustainably, for example people needing adaptive bike to travel.

Based on strong support in our community consultation for walking activities, we added this to our travel behaviour change work. We created a new programme of walks, showcasing local routes and increasing knowledge and confidence to walk more for local journeys. We also delivered a number of 'themed' walks to educate people on the climate emergency, which proved very popular, including a bat walk, foraging walk, woodland walk and biodiversity walk.



Group walk

We added a new activity to our Cycling Festival, a cycle-cross race. This was very popular and a great draw for the family fun day. We started a series of talk-and-ride events with cycling celebrities. These were very popular and helped to promote cycling across the seasons and attract a different audience to cycling. We also held Sunday social rides, to help people new to cycling increase their confidence to ride on a regular basis, as well as led-walks from our community meals, encouraging people taking part in other Greener Kirkcaldy activities to walk more.

Feedback from our community told us that these activities also play a vital role in improving people's mental health and physical wellbeing, as well as helping people connect with others.

We supported five local employers to take part in Cycling Scotland's Cycling Friendly Employer Award scheme and create cycling friendly workplaces.

We were a key partner in the development of Fife Council's new [Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan \(2024-34\)](#) and the [Local Transport Strategy for Fife \(2023-33\)](#), supporting stakeholder and public consultations and contributing to the strategies. We were also part of a Levenmouth working group on increasing active travel opportunities in the area, particularly opportunities as part of the Leven Programme and the reinstated Levenmouth rail service.

Community engagement and development

When we consulted on our Strategic Plan, our community told us that, in addition to a focus on continuing work in our five key themes, they also wanted more volunteering opportunities and volunteer-led projects, training and employability opportunities to tackle unemployment.

They valued community events to bring people together, improve mental health and wellbeing and reduce isolation and open days and visits to our sites, and wanted us to continue providing programmes of events that are accessible to all. They also told us that they would like us to work more with young people and families and provide intergenerational activities.

Volunteering, training and employability

We continued to offer a range of high-quality volunteering roles across our projects and supported around 120 regular volunteers in 2023-24. In 2023, we signed up as a Charter Champion through Volunteer Scotland. The Volunteer Charter gives organisations the opportunity to express their support for the spirit of volunteering and uphold the principles of good volunteer practice.

We also refreshed our volunteering roles, processes and support and offered taster sessions to people interested in volunteering with us. We introduced new volunteer roles of Walking Volunteer and Climate Friendly Garden Volunteer.

Our Strategic Plan consultation identified employability and tackling unemployment, especially of young people, as high priorities for our future plans. We have, therefore, scaled up our employability work at our Lang Spoon Community Kitchen, Training Garden and Lang Toun Cycles shop by exploring new work experience and accredited training opportunities.

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 already delivered multiple courses for volunteers and members of the public. We are now exploring further accreditation opportunities for our kitchen, garden, bike shop and other projects.

We continue to offer two informal employability training roles, working with either the Community Food or Community Garden Team, to help people to gain valuable work experience, skills and confidence, improving participants' employability and offering a social opportunity. We worked with 42 volunteers, supporting them to enhance their employability. Participants received a range of accredited training interventions, along with developing additional skills through peer support and informal training. Experienced volunteers were supported to mentor new volunteers and those that need additional support.



Garden volunteers in our training garden

We also supported young people to gain work experience by offering placements in our kitchen, garden and cycle shop as part of Fife Employability and Training Consortium's 'No One Left Behind' project.

We have set up a volunteering, training and employability working group to develop a strategy for the organisation. The strategy will create a plan for future placement and funding opportunities and help us to increase our employability offering in 2025.

Young people and families

We have had great success with our hands on Kids' Holiday Cooking Clubs in the Lang Spoon Kitchen. The classes provide a space where children can come together during the Easter, summer and autumn holidays to learn cookery skills and make a range of simple and tasty two course meals and baked treats to take home.

We developed a new partnership with The Princes Trust to host two 'Get Started in Sustainability' employability programmes for 15-16 year olds. Delivered across our sites and teams, programme gave 18 young people from local schools and chance to learn about community food, growing and climate change and an introduction to the world of work and volunteering.



Princes Trust group tree planting Ravenscraig Walled Gardens

In partnership with Kirkcaldy YMCA, our 'Family Fun in the Kitchen' project brought families together to learn cookery skills, raise awareness about nutrition and food choices, and provide energy efficiency and budgeting support along with healthy, low-cost family-friendly recipes to make at home.

We also held several free events, open to anyone in the local community but especially targeted at families and young people. These included a youth climate bike ride and picnic, a family nighttime Halloween cycle ride, a film-showing of Dr Seuss' the Lorax and a moongazing climate change event, giving people the chance to get a closer look at our moon through Luna the Moongazing Moth's telescope. The events were well attended, engaging people new to Greener Kirkcaldy and we plan to hold similar events in 2024-25.

Community events and open days

We held a range of community events and open days across our three sites. These included an open day at 8 East Fergus Place to launch our new strategic plan and give people an opportunity to find out more about Greener Kirkcaldy, our activities and our future plans, 'Doors Open' days at Lang Toun Cycles and Ravenscraig Walled Garden, with a led-cycle ride between the two sites, and our annual Apple Day at Ravenscraig with tours of the orchard, apple-pressing, activities and refreshments.

We continued to host weekly community meals, to bring our community together and reduce isolation. To ensure social inclusion, these are free, but donations are welcomed on a pay-what-you-feel basis. The community meals have been very successful at helping people to feel more confident to try new food, especially unfamiliar vegetables and plant-based alternatives to meat, as well as providing a welcoming space for people in our community to develop new friendships.

Our Annual Gathering and AGM, 'Working together for a better future', welcomed a panel of speakers from other local organisations, including Love Oor lang Toun, Nourish, YMCA Kirkcaldy and The Leven programme, to share the work they were doing in the community. The event highlighted what others in Kirkcaldy are doing to make Kirkcaldy a better place to live and work and showcased examples of partnership-working to achieve our goals.

After consulting our members on what they would like from their membership, we created a new 'members only' annual programme of special events, to give members the opportunity to get more involved in our activities and feel more connected to others in the community. Events focused on different aspects of our five key themes and included a member's community meal and climate-friendly garden tour and a Lang Toun Summer Trails bike ride.

To give local people the opportunity to have their voice included in the process of local and national decision-making, we held one of the Scottish Government's 'Democracy Matters' events, hosted jointly with Nourish. People were able to discuss and feedback on how decisions should be made and budgets allocated to ensure processes are inclusive, transparent and representative of the wishes of the local community.

Organisational Development

Our team

We have a strong staff team, with a wide range of skills and experience. Our staff turnover is low and staff are supported through a good system of supervision, a positive working environment, meaningful work and opportunities for training and development.

April 2023 saw a big change for the organisation, with a new Chief Executive, Lauren Brook, previously Greener Kirkcaldy's Development Manager.

To ensure staff feel a sense of ownership of Greener Kirkcaldy, we carried out our first all-staff satisfaction survey. In response to this, we set up a new wellbeing working group and added a range of wellbeing activities for staff. We also created a new peer-to-peer learning and development scheme – Staff Mashup Days – giving staff regular opportunities to spend time with different teams. We created new idea sharing forums and regular 'open hours' with the Chief Executive for staff to share their feedback and ideas.

We continue to involve the team in decision-making and strategic planning. Staff and board members can take part in a range of cross-team working groups and we hold staff and board development days to further cross-team interaction and opportunities to develop new ideas.

Our members

Our membership has increased from 997 to 1,090. In 2023, we carried out a consultation on the benefits of membership and have reviewed our membership plan in response to this. We plan to add a regular membership renewal process in 2024-25 to increase our communication with members and support members to actively engage in the organisation.

Partnership working

We are continuing to make good progress building strong local, regional and national partnerships. We still work closely with Love Oor Lang Toun and Fife Communities Climate Action Network and we provided start-up support for the new regional Fife Climate Hub.

We continue to lead the strong Cosy Kingdom partnership and our Climate Action Fife project has 12 community and public sector partners across Fife, as well as an expanding network of grassroots organisations delivering activities that tackle the climate emergency.

We work closely with Fife Council and are members of the Food4Fife Partnership and the Fife Food Insecurity working group. We also lead the Fuel Poverty Taskforce of partners across Fife and work closely with the Fife Employability and Training Consortium. We have formed new regional partnerships with national sustainable travel organisations, including SEStrans and Cycling Scotland to deliver active travel activities in Fife. We will continue to work with other organisations across all sectors and to look for new opportunities to deliver more partnership projects.

Income generation

Income generation from classes and room hire continues to see growth. We have a number of regular long-term room bookings from other community organisations and small local businesses. Our holiday Kids' Clubs and 'Taste of' evening cookery classes have been very popular with most events fully booked. We are also exploring options to increase our income from room hire bookings, for example the hire of our production kitchen by start-up food businesses. We will create a new social enterprise business plan for our community building, including our cookery school and room hire in 2024-25.



Kids club in the Lang Spoon Community Kitchen

Cosy Kingdom is now in its third renewal of its Service Level Agreement with Fife Council, which funds part of its work. In 2023, we were approached by the Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP) to become the energy advice delivery partner for Fife. LEAP is a UK-wide energy advice operation. The partnership pays per visit and offers us an opportunity for an energy advice social enterprise income stream. We will develop this side of our work in 2024-25 and beyond.

After a very successful two years of sales at Lang Toun Cycles, when income exceeded expectations, income from bike repairs, servicing and sales reduced slightly last year. However, our income from grant-funded projects and service level agreements was much higher than expected and allowed us to increase the range of services offered by Lang Toun Cycles. This mixture of income streams will form part of our business plan in future years.

We have developed fundraising plans for individual donations and sponsorship and provided training and guidance for staff and volunteers to build confidence in this area. We piloted a Christmas fundraising event at East Fergus Place. We also ran two winter donations campaigns – The Big Give Christmas Match Fund and Help Fuel Fife Folk. We are now starting to put plans in place for new fundraising campaigns in 2024-25. This includes taking part in a pilot scheme to develop our skills and confidence in legacy-giving campaigns.

In 2023-24, we provided paid start-up support to Fife Communities Climate Action Network (FCCAN) for the new Fife Climate Hub. We helped to set up HR, IT and financial systems and led on recruitment and inductions for new staff. This was very successful, and we have been asked to provide further support with recruitment in 2024-25. This is a model that could be repeated with other organisations, and we will look for new opportunities.

Reducing our own impact and increasing equality and diversity

We are also developing the organisation in other ways. Our [Climate Action Plan](#) sets out an ambition for our operations to be carbon-neutral by 2030. This is overseen by an internal 'Green Team' and the plan is reviewed annually. In 2023-24, we started to look at decarbonising our heating at East Fergus Place. We will continue this in 2024-25.

Similarly, our Equalities Action Plan sets out the work we will do to improve our diversity and inclusion and is led by an internal Equalities Working Group. We are taking part in Fife Centre for Equalities' Equality Pathfinders programme. This scheme recognises the efforts made by organisations in furthering equality, diversity and inclusion as part of their day-to-day policies and practices. In 2022, we became a Bronze level Equality Pathfinder Organisation with Fife Centre for Equalities and are working towards Silver level accreditation. In 2023, we joined the Race Equality Environmental Programme, facilitated by CEMVO Scotland, to explore barriers to minority ethnic groups participating in our work.

Managing and monitoring our progress

We are also committed to strengthening our quality management and impact evaluation systems. In 2022, we formed a new cross-team working group to focus on increasing our knowledge and confidence in monitoring and evaluation and in 2023-24 the group reviewed and refreshed the organisation's evaluation plans and tools for measuring impact.

In 2023-24, we engaged an external evaluator, The Improvement Service, to undertake a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of Cosy Kingdom. The analysis enables us to calculate and place a monetary value on the social, economic and environmental benefits of our energy advice service. The report will be ready in 2024.

Communication and engagement

We are committed to keeping our community informed and engaged on our progress. We continue to encourage people to get involved by offering a wide range of activities and offer a number of opportunities for people to give us their feedback and ideas. This includes regular consultations, surveys, open days and events, project working groups and volunteering, as well as in person at our community building and online through our website. We share the outcomes and impact of our work through regular blogs, on social media and in our reports to funders.

We hosted learning exchanges for other community organisations and groups wanting to learn from us and take action in their own communities and distributed small grants to community groups wanting to deliver their own local activities to address the climate emergency. We

continued to take part in many local and regional networks, including Fife Communities Climate Action Network, Scottish Communities Climate Action Network and Development Trusts Association Scotland.

Looking ahead

Our current Strategic Plan ends in 2028. It provides a roadmap for our work and aspirations for the next five years. However, we know that this might change as some of the projects it describes are subject to securing external funding which may not be available and new, unforeseen opportunities or challenges will also arise. We will be flexible and update the plan in consultation with our community as we go.

Developing and trialling new ideas

Some of the ideas in our Strategic Plan are new to us, require longer lead-in times to secure funding and test the appetite for these activities. These include:

- A climate adaption project
- An energy efficiency social enterprise
- A kids' growing club
- Car-free days
- Exploring other accredited training options
- An organisational-wide volunteering placement

We aim to seek funding to explore the feasibility of these activities in 2025-26.

Our strategic plan review

We will review and update our plan in 2025-26. This will include consultations with our staff, volunteers, partners, members and community. The first community consultation event will take place at our Annual Gathering in November 2025.

We will also do some scenario planning to identify challenges and opportunities by analysing external priorities, examining shifts in people's preferences and expectations and predicting changes in policy and funding.