

Annual Review



**Friends of
the Earth
Scotland**

2019/20





Highlights from our campaigning to protect our climate and environment in 2019/20

Looking back at the past 12 months, it's initially hard to see past coronavirus and the devastation that has inflicted on families, communities and organisational plans. The team has adapted very well to working from home for the past 3 months, and our work is as important as ever as we begin the long campaign for a Just and Green Recovery.

Before this pandemic and its restrictions were imposed, we were enjoying another very successful period for Friends of the Earth Scotland. Our team grew in size, adding 6 fantastic new staff. We were at the heart of the largest climate protests in Scottish history, were successful in pushing the Government to adopt stronger climate targets, we welcomed new local groups, reached out to new allies and continued to lead the conversation in the environmental sector.

As in each of the past 40 years, we are enormously grateful to our members. Your generous and consistent support continues to make a huge difference to our work and capacity to protect the environment both now and into the future. This review is only a brief run through major milestones in our campaigns and we hope that you enjoy seeing the success you help make happen.

Looking ahead to our recovery plan, we recently co-ordinated a letter to the First Minister from over 80 civic society organisations from across different sectors of Scottish life. Together we are calling for a radical response to the coronavirus recovery that puts people before profit. This includes detailed policy recommendations and demands for economic stimulus that build a fairer, greener and more equal society.

Now, let's look at just a few of the many highlights from the past year in our campaigning.



Climate

The Scottish Parliament finally passed a new climate law in September 2019 setting new, tougher targets for reducing Scotland's climate emissions - including in the crucial period to 2030.

When we began campaigning on the Climate Change Bill back in 2017, the Scottish Government felt able to ignore the voices of the 19,000 people who had responded to their consultation telling them to do more. But 2019 saw the climate movement grow significantly, with thousands of new people getting involved in campaigning.

The energy of youth climate strikes and street protests culminated in tens of thousands of people in Scotland joining the millions in the Global Climate Strike of September 20th.

FoES has worked to support this growing movement, to build links with the new groups and to bring that public pressure into the Government and Parliament. On

the day of the final vote on the Climate Act it was great to take action outside the Scottish Parliament together with both seasoned and new activists, including Extinction Rebellion Scotland and the Scottish Youth Climate Strikers.

We have also been keenly involved in various coalitions working towards the now-delayed UN climate summit in Glasgow. This includes the growing Stop Climate Chaos Scotland team and helping establish the broader COP26 Coalition operating on both UK and Scottish levels. We'll also be working closely with our sister organisations of FoE England, Wales and Northern Ireland and FoE International.

Air pollution

In October, MSPs passed legislation which could deliver positive changes for air quality, climate emissions and for the ways we move around. The new Transport Act contains a wide range of powers for councils, including the power to establish a low emission zone, the ability to franchise or even own local bus



services, and to establish a workplace parking levy. We worked successfully with trade unions and grassroots campaigners to build political support for the vital changes to how buses could be run.

The coronavirus and its restrictions on movement will continue to have an enormous impact on our transport choices. The change in working patterns and reduction in travel will inevitably bring reductions in air pollution in some areas, along with a fall in climate emissions from this sector. However, this will not be sustained unless there is concerted political and business action.

There has been a welcome increase in cycling, and positive moves by many Councils to create more space for people both on foot and bike. The devastating fall in public transport use though will be an extremely difficult issue for many months ahead. The Low Emission Zones in Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh promised by the end of 2020 have been indefinitely delayed due to coronavirus.

Plastic pollution

We welcomed Sarah Moyes as our Plastic & Circular Economy Campaigner in summer 2019 which has given an enormous boost to our work in this area. This past year saw the Scottish Government tackle some environmentally harming single-use products in response to rising public concern about plastic.

Scotland became the first part of the UK to ban plastic stemmed cotton buds and, in October, they announced plans to introduce a 'latte levy' – a charge on single use disposable cups. However, the Scottish Government decided - prior to the pandemic - to further delay their plans for a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers until July 2022.

The Scottish Government has also pulled their plans for a Circular Economy Bill due to coronavirus. Previously, we helped over 1200 people respond to the public consultation to say that the Bill needed to



include robust targets to tackle our over-consumption of resources. We also held events with local activists in Dundee, Perth, Falkirk and Aberdeen to engage them with the proposals for a Circular Economy for Scotland. We will need this appetite for action as we try to get this work back on the political agenda as we exit the coronavirus crisis.

Just Transition

The idea of a transition away from fossil fuels gained ground in the past year with both industry and government using the phrase but not yet being true to its meaning. The oil industry pays lip service to the idea but fails to take any steps to put it into reality.

We also hired Ryan Morrison as a Just Transition Campaigner in the past year which has given us capacity to further strengthen relationships with the Trade Unions. We stood in solidarity with the BiFab workers and others who should be seeing more of the benefits of our renewable energy economy across the

country. We've continued to meet people across Scotland to discuss our ground-breaking 'Sea Change' report, going to political party conferences and to public events in Glasgow, Aberdeen and Biggar. We've continued to meet people across Scotland to discuss our ground-breaking 'Sea Change' report, going to political party conferences and to public events in Glasgow, Aberdeen and Biggar. We're making the case that Governments, with the right policies, could overhaul our economy to meet climate targets while providing decent work in Scotland for those currently dependent on the fossil fuel industry. This would be a hugely important shift for our workforce with more public investment ensuring the long-term social benefits are shared across communities.

With the downturn and job losses from coronavirus, the time is right to plan for a jobs rich energy transition that takes us beyond fossil fuels. We've been urging the Government's advisors at the Just Transition Commission to make the urgent case for the Government to bring a level of planning, investment and initiatives to match their Just Transition rhetoric.



Divestment

Scotland's new public bank, the Scottish National Investment Bank, has become law this year, following its endorsement by MSPs.

The idea for such a Bank came from civil society - a report by ourselves and Common Weal brought public banking into the UK and Scottish political mainstream.

As the Bank Bill made its way through Parliament activists successfully pressured MSPs to include a clear, unequivocal objective in law for the Bank to invest in a just transition to zero carbon. We also demanded a clear set of minimum ethical standards for the Bank's investments.

This was a great achievement - the pressure exerted will help ensure this is a Public Bank for the common good – and not just another business-as-usual investor, something that will be crucial as Scotland looks to deliver a just recovery from coronavirus.

Young Friends of the Earth Scotland

Young Friends of the Earth Scotland continued their intersectional approach to their activity - working on access, inclusion and accountability throughout their network and events. As part of this we created a new Safer Spaces policy and developed several workshops on power and privilege.

YFoES provided wellbeing stalls, rallied support, acted as march stewards and of course took to the streets in support of the incredible Scottish Youth Climate Strikes. The October AGM saw a weekend of workshops on creative activism, mainstreams and margins, challenging eco-fascism, zine making, bushcraft and more, as well as the election of our new steering group. In March 2020, after a residential network gathering had to be cancelled YFoES ran a two-week online skill share, including sessions on activism in lockdown, self care and social activities.



Most impressive of all is the fact that, on top of all of this, almost everyone in the network is involved in their own campaigning and organising. From divestment campaigns to food co-ops, migrant justice to marine conservation, young people across Scotland are achieving incredible things.

Fracking

In a victory for local campaigners across Scotland and ourselves the Scottish Government finally announced a firm policy ban on fracking in October 2019. This was the result of eight years of campaigning for us. In April 2020, Ineos finally admitted defeat and withdrew its planning application for coalbed methane extraction at Airth.

Fracking is certainly dead in Scotland for now but we will continue to work to ensure that the new National Planning Framework for Scotland further solidifies this status.

Environmental Rights

Together with Scottish Environment LINK, we helped establish an Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland in January 2020. Funding for the next 3 years has enabled the appointment of two staff members who are focused on developing and agreeing a strategy for the Centre's development.

This new centre aims to help educate people and organisations in Scotland to better understand and access their legal rights and responsibilities in relation to the environment, provide advice to those who need it and advocate for reform. In due course, it may also pursue strategic litigation where necessary to secure progress on key environmental issues.

Activism

In August we held our Summer Weekender near Biggar, with over 100



people from across Scotland attending. We had a wide range of workshops, activities and discussions on topics such as 'Climate Storytelling', 'Young People Making Change' and 'Sustaining Activism' as well as offering Campaigner Drop-in sessions to offer support to people campaigning in their local area. We also hosted a session for over 20 other groups and organisations to come together to discuss strategic ways of working together.

Our second Campaign Organisers Programme began in March 2019, with a training weekend for the 20 participants on the year-long course. Designed to strengthen the environmental movement in Scotland, the programme enhanced the skills and confidence of activists, as well as increasing the participation of people from underrepresented minorities. The group has already been incredibly active, with nine new local campaigns on air pollution, plastics and public transport starting, for example in Renfrewshire, Falkirk and Perth.

Roundup

The highlights above are just a small selection of the fantastic people-powered action from this year. We've also linked up with European allies, supported action to transform grouse moors, hosted many webinars since face-to-face meetings were prohibited, Ceilidh-ed and taken part in the UN climate talks in Madrid.

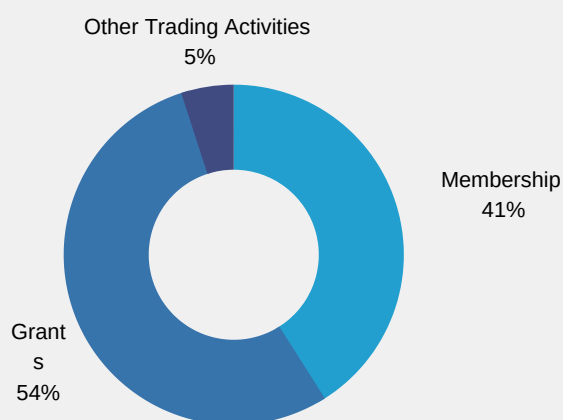
Thanks for making so many of these successes possible through your hard work, energy, and willingness to talk to decision makers and get your friends involved. Thanks to the team, our board, our supporters and members who enable us to keep working to protect Scotland's environment.





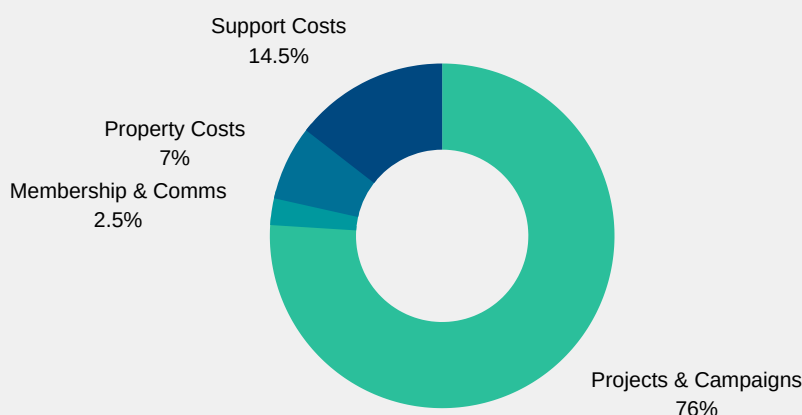
Finances for 2019-20

Income



Total income: £687,434

Expenditure



Total expenditure: £688,388

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