

# Annual Review

2020/21



**Friends of  
the Earth  
Scotland**





**Thank you for  
continuing to  
support us.**

Despite the focus of everyone rightly being on coronavirus, we have been as busy as ever in the past 12 months. We've adapted well to the necessary changes, continuing to work from home and meet only online.

Our team has grown in size, adding new positions and talented colleagues. Our analysis and expertise has persuaded funders to back our vision and support our work to use the moment of the UN climate talks to push for transformative change in Scotland.

Whilst the pandemic has diverted attention in many areas, it has shown the underlying inequality of our current economic system and heightened the need for action.

We made this case strongly in the elections, arguing for a recovery that prioritises creating good green jobs that build a greener, fairer society with wellbeing and climate action at its core.

Here are just a few of the many highlights from the past year in our campaigning.

## **CLIMATE JUSTICE**

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Climate action is the thread that runs through all our work and we've continued to push hard for transformative policies across the last 12 months. The improvements to Scotland's climate commitments that we won in 2019 must now be delivered upon - largely via the Government's updated Climate Plan.

Through our new campaigner Jess, we've sought to steer the debate on climate solutions away from relying on fossil hydrogen and carbon capture technologies.

# Highlights

These projects, backed by fossil fuel companies, keep us locked into oil and gas, and delay the action needed in this decade.

We've been making the case that a programme of green job creation and climate action can create thousands of good jobs across the country while setting us on the right path to meet our climate targets and speeding the recovery from coronavirus.

We're still working towards UN climate talks this November with the fantastic COP26 Coalition and our friends at Stop Climate Chaos Scotland.

We're trying to prepare for every eventuality whilst also challenging the greenwash of corporate sponsors of the talks. We are hopeful that we'll be able to welcome our sister organisations of FoE England, Wales and Northern Ireland and FoE International to Scotland.

## ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

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The Scottish Government's National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership published detailed proposals for a new human rights law and recommended that the new law is brought forward by the new Parliament. This could mean that the human right to a healthy environment could be put into Scots law.

Mary has continued to support the development of the Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland.



The ERCS is helping to 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.

## PLASTIC POLLUTION

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The pausing of the Circular Economy Bill meant that our work changed to focus more on the threat of incineration. Our research revealed the spiralling growth in Scottish Councils burning their waste and plans to build even more incinerators. We've been in close contact with community groups in South Lanarkshire to support their objections to proposals in their area.

Whilst the Deposit Return Scheme is still delayed, the Government has pledged to ban some problematic single use items like plastic straws, cutlery and balloon sticks. We've helped demonstrate the significant public support for introducing a ban and used the media to push politicians to go further and highlight that we must tackle the problem at its source.

We've been working with FoE Falkirk to plot out how we can address the enormous plastic and climate pollution from Ineos at Grangemouth.

## AIR POLLUTION

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Coronavirus and its restrictions on movement continue to have an enormous impact on our transport choices, both in terms of the need for travel and the mode of our journey. Our analysis shows that short-term falls in pollution were not maintained with traffic and toxic air returning to pre-pandemic levels in many places.

Buses have been particularly hard hit but we've been drawing attention to the fact the Government is bailing out private operators with hundreds of millions of pounds and getting very little in return. We'll continue to press for services to be run in the public interest.

Thanks to public pressure and an alliance with health groups we did force the Government to rethink their pitifully weak Clean Air strategy. The Government's commitment to cut total miles driven by 20% within the decade looks like a recognition that things need to change but they've so failed to spell out how exactly they plan on achieving this.

Meanwhile, Low Emission Zones in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee are all still delayed.

The Spaces for People programme - funding from Scottish Government to councils to temporarily re-allocate road space to ease physically distancing - has produced a mixed picture.

Many councils are introducing long-needed cycle lanes and other measures which have proved popular. In some areas, such as Edinburgh, the measures have produced a toxic backlash with politicians capitalising on motorists' anger. The rapid introduction of these measures has meant bypassing consultation with voices, particularly those of people with disabilities, which haven't been heard.

In our campaigning for the measures necessary to cut car miles by 20%, we'll make sure this is formed around the need for equity and transport justice.



Spaces for People cycle lane in Edinburgh



YFoES banner drop in Glasgow

## **FOR A JUST & GREEN RECOVERY**

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Together with over 80 organisations from across society we've been calling for a recovery plan that builds back a better, greener Scotland for everyone, instead of going back to 'normal' with inequalities and environmental destruction.

We've started making stronger connections between our issues – environment and economy organisations working together with housing and health groups, churches and trade unions – because all of our issues are connected, symptoms of an economic system that fails to put people and planet before profit.

We ran webinars, workshops and supported community conversations because our collective problems created by a society that puts profit above people's needs and protecting the environment.

A group of key workers took their message directly to the Scottish Government's headquarters in Edinburgh in a socially distanced protest.

We took action online including a Week of Action in November when hundreds of people signed up to contact their MSPs and take part in a virtual lobby to share their experiences of this year, and their hopes and demands for the recovery.

## **FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT**

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Our campaigning to get public money out of fossil fuel companies has made some real progress in the past 12 months. In April 2021, Glasgow City Councillors endorsed a plan to end the £500 million investment in fossil fuels held by the Strathclyde Pension Fund.

The decision must now be approved by the Strathclyde Pension Fund Committee likely just months before the UN climate talks take place in Glasgow, and Committee members will be under considerable pressure to support action against climate polluters. We've worked with 'Divest Strathclyde', a group of local people and pension fund members in Glasgow and the West of Scotland who have led this campaign.

Previously we had revealed the £1.2 billion of fossil fuel company investments held by Council pension funds across the country.

Divestment activists in Glasgow, 2019



Just a few weeks ago, the Church of Scotland finally listened to the pressure and ended their investments in fossil fuel companies. We had been closely involved with the campaigners driving this a few years ago.

We've also just employed Sally Clark as another Divestment Campaigner and she'll be working to challenge MSPs to end the Scottish Parliament pension fund's investments in climate polluters.

## ACTIVISM

Activism was hugely impacted by the inability to meet up but under Kate's leadership we adapted fantastically. The switch to Zoom meetings freed people of the need to travel, lessened the time required to attend meetings and enabled people to still feel connected.

We've worked with Tripod and Resist + Renew to run a 9-month organising and campaigning course for groups working on many different aspects of a just recovery, from health to climate to migrant justice. Workshops built capacity around campaign skills like relationship building, media work, care and making connections with other groups.

In 2021, we have run an 8-part Introduction to Campaigning course online which has taken people through the stages of forming a group, choosing targets and running your campaign. This will give people the skills and confidence they need to campaign on issues close to their hearts.

We launched the People Power Network to support people who want to get active in their community. Through it people can access resources, support, training, connect with groups in their area or start their own.

We have supported the COP26 Coalition plans including the two major From The Ground Up online event series which saw thousands of people join, learning about key climate issues around the world and how they can get involved.

Kate has also worked closely with community groups around the Mossmorran petrochemical plants in Fife helping them to organise, gain attention and articulate their demands.



Protests at Mossmorran in Fife, James Glen



For the election, YFoES teamed up with Fridays for Future and Teach the Future to run the #Vote4Climate campaign, encouraging young people to register and pledge to vote for climate. It also worked with others to create The Climate Hot Seat, a youth climate hustings event featuring all 5 major Scottish party leaders.

It has continued to successfully adapt its skillshare events to an online format, teaming up with People & Planet last autumn and just finished a spring skillshare on the theme of Rest & Resistance.

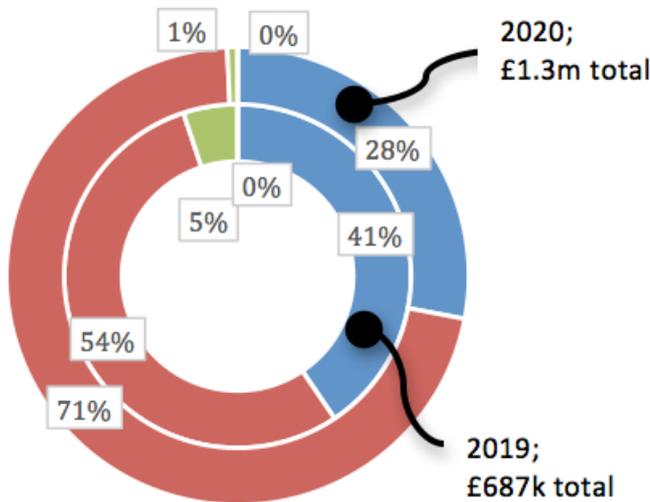
## THANKS

Thanks to you 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.

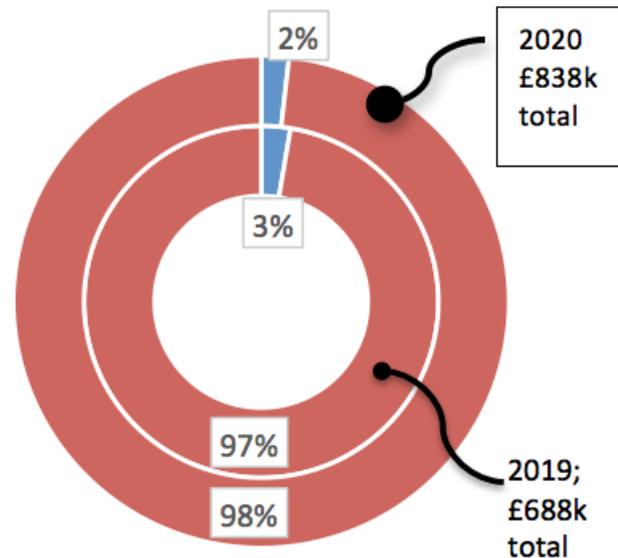
Thanks to the team, our board, our supporters and members who enable us to keep working to protect Scotland's environment.

## Finances for 2020-21

### Income



### Expenditure



- Donations and Legacies
- Charitable Activities
- Other Trading Activities
- Investment Income

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