

Annual Review

2022 - 2023





The staff team in solidarity with striking workers in Edinburgh in February 2023

Thanks for your support as a member.

It's an exciting time at Friends of the Earth Scotland, as we are underway in developing a new three year strategy. This will clarify our focus for the coming years, articulate how we will win the big changes needed to protect our environment and respond to the broader context in which we find ourselves.

The past year has been a year of transition for the organisation with new team members, improvements to our internal systems and hybrid working arrangements becoming the norm.

We want to thank long standing members of staff who departed since the last AGM including Alice, Winnie, Sally-Anne, Ryan and Gavin. We're grateful for their hard work and commitment over many years.

Below are a selection of our highlights across the past 12 months. We were able to achieve so much because of the skill and hard work of our entire team, dedicated volunteers and local groups, and your ongoing support as a member.

Highlights

OIL & GAS

A big focus of our work this past year has been working to stop new oil and gas – particularly new fields being considered by the UK Government. We've taken the campaign against the huge Rosebank field to Shetland, to Equinor's Aberdeen offices and the UK Government buildings in Edinburgh.

We've spent months pushing hard to improve the Scottish Government's Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan to ensure it puts us on a path to phasing out fossil fuels this decade, as well as developing a real plan for workers and communities affected by this change. This has involved meeting with civil servants, organising roundtables with allies and helping the public to feedback to the draft plans.

Our research about the extent of the political lobbying by fossil fuel companies made front page news as we try to ensure that MSPs are not being influenced by big polluters who want to delay the transition.

We raised serious questions and highlighted community concerns following the announcement of the first round of awards from the Scottish Government's £500 million Just Transition Fund for the North East and Moray.

This fund could be transformative for communities and truly green ideas in this region but instead millions of pounds are going towards companies, many of which are backed by the fossil fuel industry.

There are also millions going to a contentious project which will destroy a vital community greenspace of St. Fittick's Park in Aberdeen. We've been supporting the local campaign there as it exemplifies an unjust transition for the community.

Our just transition organising in the North East saw us produce and screen a short film with locals talking about their relationship with the oil industry. Each screening has helped us to generate a rich discussion about oil's role influencing a city's culture and the relationships among people and a city.

The Just Transition Fund did pledge £5million to ensure training providers set up an offshore skills passport – a move which we had pressed for after our survey of offshore workers exposed the barriers in switching between oil and gas and renewables work.

Our ground-breaking in-depth engagement with offshore oil and gas workers to articulate what they need for a truly just transition, came to fruition with the publication of the Our Power report. The development of the 10 demands for the offshore industry was the culmination of years of relationship building and gained support from key trade unions and climate groups. These demands lay out a comprehensive plan which will ease the transition, enhance workers' rights and win a fairer energy system for us all.

As well as providing a positive vision for our energy future, we have also had to resist the Government's plans for unreliable technologies such as carbon capture and hydrogen that will prolong the life of fossil fuel companies. As the public pressure on the oil industry ramps up around the world, these technologies are central to their attempts to delay action and to greenwash their activities.

We've been drawing media attention to the false claims of carbon capture companies and building opposition in the local area to proposals to develop a new gas-fired power station at Peterhead with a promise of carbon capture in the future.

We commissioned and released a report on the potential role for hydrogen in Scotland that is helping us make the argument that it is too inefficient and expensive to use in most transport and heating.



TRANSPORT

Over the past year, we've continued to build support for the Low Emission Zones that have finally started in Glasgow, with Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee beginning next year, by drawing attention to the health issues caused by air pollution. These LEZs are the product of many years hard work, and it's great to see them finally in place. They're already making a difference too - our annual list of the most polluted streets showed that, for the first time, no location had broken the legal limits.



We've been supporting local transport campaigning around Scotland and have been really bolstered by the growth of groups like Kidical Mass, which are planning big family-friendly rides while building power to push councils for better infrastructure. We also helped stop a planned bus route cut in Perth, which would have left many people with no other option than to drive – or for those without cars, being unable to get to school, work or other essential services, and used this opportunity to shine a light on the importance of buses.





In April, we released a new report called ‘On the Move’ which outlined the additional investment needed from the Scottish and UK Governments to increase public transport passenger numbers to reduce climate emissions. It found that 22,000 jobs would be created in Scotland with this investment.

We’re using this to press the Scottish Government to strengthen its plans to achieve its target of a 20% reduction in overall car kilometres driven by 2030.

DIVESTMENT

We have continued our divestment campaigning in partnership with Platform and Friends of the Earth England Wales and Northern Ireland targeting investors at a local, national and UK level.

We co-hosted the UK Divest Gathering in Staffordshire, our first fully residential training weekend since 2019, for over 50 volunteers involved in local fossil fuel divestment campaigning. This event helped lay the groundwork for our day of action in February 2023 involving groups in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Haddington and Borders which garnered lots of media attention and public support.

In late 2022, both the Edinburgh and East Lothian Councils voted in favour of the Lothian Pension Fund selling its shares in fossil fuel companies. This is great progress for a long-running campaign, and we’ll be keeping the focus on the pension fund managers to deliver on this commitment.



Photos, clockwise from top right: Stop Rosebank stunt as part of COP27 Edinburgh March; Divestment Day of Action at Edinburgh City Chambers; COP27 rally demanding freedom for Alaa Abdel-Fattah & Egyptian political prisoners; Edinburgh Climate Gathering; Friends of St Fittick's Park come to the Scottish Parliament; Standing with striking transport workers.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The promised circular economy law has been a long time coming, but we're continuing to try and shape how it will look by giving our views to the Scottish Government and encouraging others to do the same – over 1,300 people contacted the consultation to call for a strong circular economy. We will continue to push for strong consumption targets as the bill goes through the parliament.

Scotland's deposit return scheme has been delayed again, which is a very disappointing move given how long we've been waiting for it. It's now planned for March 2024, but with the UK Government refusing to include permission for Scotland to include glass so that it matches a UK-wide system, there's still some work to be done in making sure it goes ahead.

We had a big win on waste in June 2022, when the Scottish Government banned new incinerators.

This marks the beginning of the end of this harmful practice. Unfortunately, while the independent review has also called for banning the burning of plastics, we haven't yet seen this commitment from the Government.

We have been supporting local groups opposing against incinerators in their communities, and were delighted when a Clydebank community won, with the plant being withdrawn from the planning system.

Most recently, we've produced an important piece of work which explores the social and environmental harm being caused by transition minerals such as lithium and steel. The research has made it clear that we cannot transition away from fossil fuels without reducing demand for materials and changing the way critical minerals are extracted. We'll be pushing the Scottish Government to create a resource justice strategy to ensure that Scotland is using materials in a fair and sustainable way, that doesn't cause harm.

Divestment Day of Action, Glasgow March 2023



YOUNG FRIENDS OF THE EARTH SCOTLAND

Our youth network has kept up their work creating youth learning spaces, engaging new young people in the climate movement, and making sure youth voice is centred in decision making, as well as lending their support to campaigns and actions across the country.

YFoES has continued to be involved in the Stop Rosebank coalition, running stalls and workshops and taking part in actions. They also supported the campaign against new incinerators in Scotland, created a response to the Scottish government energy strategy consultation, and have plans to help push for a strong Circular Economy Bill.

Over the past year they have run two youth activist gatherings in Edinburgh and Glasgow bringing together over 100 young activists to share skills and network, and have plans to run another in Aberdeen in the autumn. The team also continues to deliver bespoke workshops and offer to support to other groups across Scotland.

A focus for 2023 has been on rebuilding local groups, resulting in the creation of YFoE Glasgow and YFoE Edinburgh. Both groups have held various social and educational events bringing together young people in their areas and generating thinking about local grassroots issues.

INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE

Our activism team delivered exciting visual stunts across the country this year, as well as lending their organisational skill to support lots of local groups campaigning for climate justice.

Friends of the Earth Scotland led on the organising and promotion of the hugely successful climate march through Edinburgh to coincide with the UN climate talks in Egypt, as part of a global day of action.

We also held recently held an in-person gathering to bring the Edinburgh climate movement together.

FINANCE

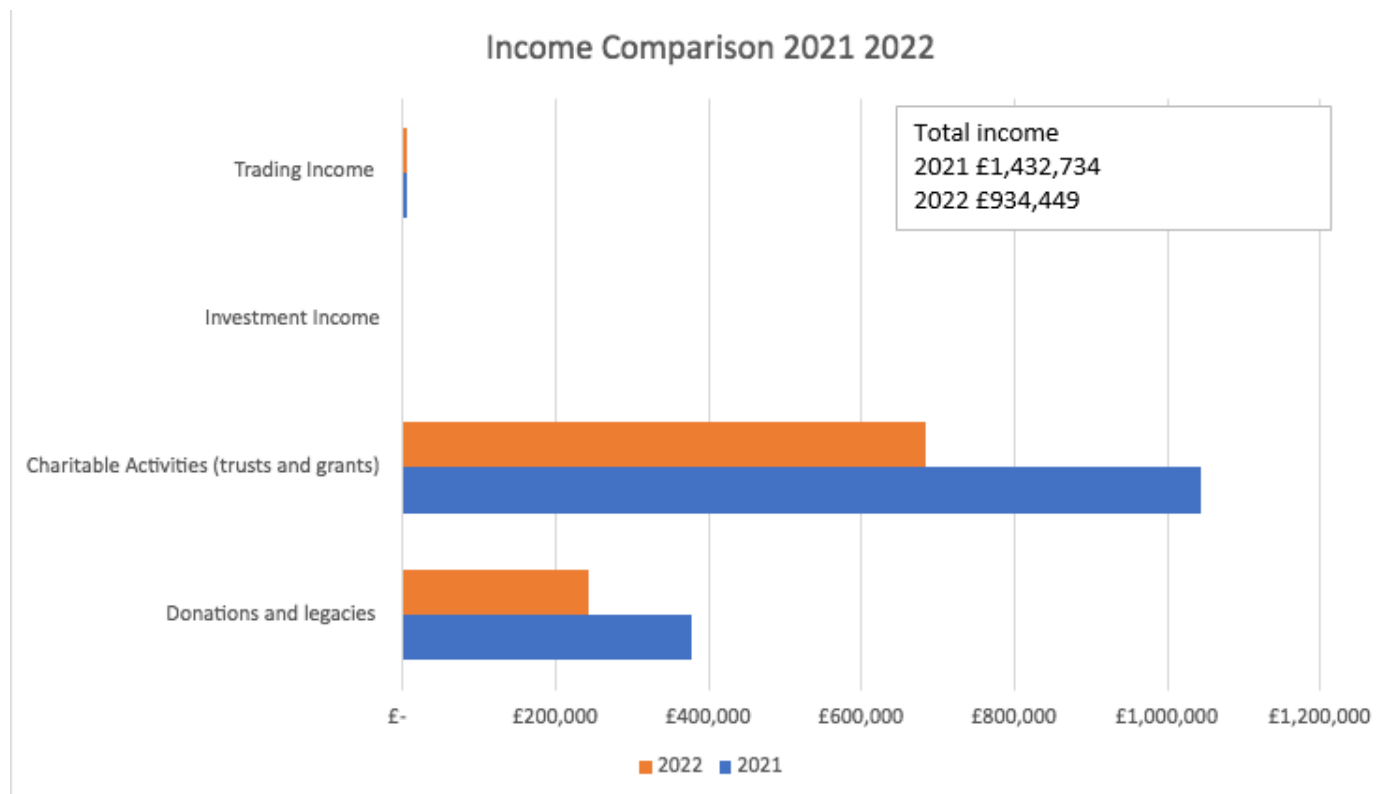
Thanks to our members for your ongoing support, especially given the acute financial pressures many people will be feeling in the past year.

The many successes we have achieved are possible because of your backing and can help us go from strength to strength into the future.

Thanks to the team, our board, our supporters and members who enable us to keep working for climate justice and the better world that we know is possible.

Financial information for 2022

Income



Expenditure

