

Annual Review

2024–2025



Introduction

By Rochana Sheward, Director

Looking back over the past year, it's easy to be dismayed about the way climate issues have been sidelined. The Scottish Government has regressed in many key areas, scrapping targets and dropping hard won environmental policies in a sustained rightwards shift after Humza Yousaf and Nicola Sturgeon terms as First Minister.

Meanwhile, the UK Government is prioritising a narrow idea of economic growth with little regard for environmental harms and failing to deliver the climate policies that would improve lives. The intentional chaos, destruction and malevolence of the Trump presidency is dominating the UK press with no shortage of copycats vying for attention in UK politics.

We still have plenty of reasons for hope though. Over the past year, we have continued to push hard for progress in our campaign areas, and we are truly excited about our plans to build a strong, energised movement. To paraphrase Diane Di Prima, it's going to take all of us, pushing from all sides, to win the world we need. We can only win with a diverse and powerful movement of people working together.

Internally at Friends of the Earth Scotland, we have a new director, Rochana Sheward, who has joined us with years of leadership experience in the not-for-profit sector. She brings a deep understanding of delivering systemic change that has helped us to go deeper with our campaigning, to make sure we are tackling the root causes of the problems we face, not just the symptoms.

This annual report takes a look at some key updates across our campaigns over the past year. We have achieved a lot together, and none of it would have been possible without our members, so thank you and well done for all your efforts.

Climate

By Caroline Rance, Head of Campaigns

In November 2024, the Scottish Government passed legislation effectively sweeping away all its annual climate targets except for the 2045 'net zero' emissions goal. This was a hugely regressive step, which happened because the Scottish Government has, over many years, failed to deliver the action needed to bring down climate emissions in line with goals. So, whilst it was not surprising it remains incredibly frustrating especially while the ministers continue to pay lip service to the climate emergency.

Our analysis shows at least 10 major climate policies have been ditched or disappeared in the past year including plans to curb car use, plans to install clean heating systems, funding for nature friendly farming and banning the sale of peat for horticulture.

The annual targets will eventually be replaced by multi-year carbon budgets. Carbon budgets are when the total emissions for a five-year period are calculated and staying within this total becomes the goal. These budgets are significantly less ambitious than the targets but whatever way emissions are being counted, the action is just not yet there to meet these commitments.



No New Peterhead Gas

By Rosie Hampton, Oil and Gas Campaigns Manager

Our priority campaign to stop plans for a new gas burning power station at Peterhead has gained strength over the past 12 months. We secured a major victory in forcing the developer SSE to redo its assessment of the climate harm from the project. Our publication of independent research in October showed the new gas plant would create five times more climate pollution than the company had admitted in official planning documents. This has caused a major embarrassment, and the delay whilst new information is produced has meant ministers are unable to make any decisions.

We made a wide-ranging case that the Ministerial Code had been repeatedly broken in the Scottish Government's mishandling of this planning application. Breaches include the former First Minister, Humza Yousaf, visiting the Peterhead site and former Net Zero Cabinet Secretary praising the project, as well over 60 meetings between the developers and politicians, with the records of many meetings missing. These were front page news stories and have resulted in the Scottish Government refusing to make any comment about the project.

We have also worked tirelessly to build public campaigning against the project – delivering a 13,000 strong petition in opposition last autumn. We worked with activists to protest the SSE AGM last summer and supported the indefatigable North Sea Knitters who recently cycled the length of a proposed carbon capture pipeline from Grangemouth to St Fergus. We have consistently made the links between fossil fuels, high energy bills and the cost-of-living crisis and how this project will lock that in for decades to come.

Carbon capture

By Alex Lee, Senior False Solutions Campaigner

Our work to stop the Peterhead gas project is inextricably linked to our efforts to expose the greenwashing scam that is carbon capture. We have worked with allies across the UK and across the globe to highlight the huge public handouts that have been subsidising this technology despite its decades of technical failure.

The coming weeks will be decisive for the Acorn carbon capture project in Aberdeenshire as the UK Government decides whether to give the project more public money and support. The Scottish Government is dangerously over-reliant on carbon capture and is lining up to throw more public money at Acorn whilst real climate solutions are desperate for funding.



Just Transition

By Catrina Randall, Just Transition Campaigner

The past year saw one of our major fears come to pass as the Grangemouth oil refinery was shut without a clear transition plan in place for workers. Politicians have long been warned that clear pathways with retraining and support are needed to transition people out of high carbon jobs into secure green careers, but unfortunately, they didn't listen. We have been standing in solidarity with workers and have criticised politicians for this failure to plan for the inevitable, in a bid to ensure the same mistakes are not repeated.

We are working with allies across the UK to build their understanding and capacity on worker transition issues so that there is more strength in this fight. Together with trade unions, we are demanding the chancellor delivers funding to create permanent, unionised renewable energy jobs, and supports the country's oil and gas workers to transition into them. This means building a publicly owned wind manufacturing base, upgrading our ports and a dedicated transition training fund for workers.

The UK Government looks set to ban exploration for new oil and gas, which will be a significant victory that we have helped deliver – but it must go further and ban all new drilling.

We have continued to play a significant role in energising campaigns to stop high profile oil fields, which secured a major victory with the court of session recently declaring Rosebank's approval by the previous government as unlawful. Together with allied organisations, we handed in a petition of 1 million signatures to Downing Street demanding an end to all new oil and, crucially, a just transition for the workers affected by the end of fossil fuels.

Resource Justice

By Kim Pratt, Senior Circular Economy Campaigner

Scotland made history when it passed its first Circular Economy Act in June 2024. Working with allied groups and hundreds of activists, we won major improvements to the bill as it passed through the Scottish Parliament.

Our final action to push MSPs to vote for changes to the bill, the day before the final debate on the bill, was to pile up electrical waste outside Holyrood to show MSPs they had to do more to improve the way electrical waste is managed. There was no way it could be ignored, and garnered plenty of press attention.

The earliest version of the bill had no mention of reuse, repair or even the waste hierarchy – essential aspects of a circular economy! We successfully campaigned for a just transition for workers and communities affected by changes to our waste system, a commitment to reduce the environmental impacts of our consumption to sustainable levels and a recognition that Scotland's consumption of materials has significant impacts internationally.

Unfortunately, incineration is an area which has not progressed as well in the past year. Despite a supposed ban, incinerators continue to be built across Scotland. One opened in Grangemouth, with another expected to start burning waste in Fife soon and five more with planning permission. We have pushed for an investigation by Environmental Standards Scotland who should report soon on ministers' failure to keep their promises. Curbing incineration is essential to a more sustainable future for Scotland – we can't break free of our throw away society if we continue to burn resources for decades to come.

Resource Justice

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On plastics, the negotiations for the first Global Treaty to stop plastic pollution ended without agreement in late 2024. This has the potential to be globally significant, it's effectiveness is yet to be confirmed, and the discussions will continue later this year. We successfully pushed the First Minister to back the treaty, but there is plenty of action that he must drive forward at home to show commitment to reducing the harmful impacts of plastic too.

We have been developing our work on mining this year, publishing two significant reports into the harmful impacts of mining on communities and how this can be reduced – one looking at Scotland, and one with a global lens. Both found that community consultation, fair supply chains and demand reduction are essential.

We have been developing a new work programme focussing on resource justice, which means transforming the way we use resources so that systems of material extraction, consumption and disposal are fair and sustainable. It is an essential part of addressing the climate crisis and creating a world where everyone can flourish.

We are working with communities across Scotland to understand how to talk resource justice, how to build support and to identify our winnable goals.

Divestment

By Sally Clark, Divestment Campaigner

Working with our colleagues at UK Divest, we have launched a campaign to call on the National Employment Savings Trust (Nest) pension fund to divest from fossil fuels. Nest is one of the UK's biggest pension funds and it already offers a fossil fuel free Ethical Fund, so it's an important target and more work in this area will follow.

We've been working with incredible campaigners across Scotland and the UK as part of the Fossil Free Parliament campaign to end the influence of the fossil fuel industry over our politics and kick big polluters out of Parliament. We attended the Scottish Labour Conference in Glasgow in February and are continuing to engage with politicians we spoke to there.

We've continued to work alongside local campaign groups to demand Scottish councils end their investments in fossil fuels. Despite both Glasgow and Edinburgh councils passing resolutions, their pension fund managers have failed to sell off shares in big polluters. Activists haven't been deterred though, and we've helped to organise ever more creative protests at significant moments.

In September, we were delighted to join groups from across Scotland and around the world for the Global Week of Action for Climate Finance and a Fossil-Free Future – this included colourful photo actions and outreach stalls in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stirling.

Organising in the North East

By Guy Ingerston, North East Organiser

Our team in the North East, now consisting of three people, has been working to build community capacity in the region and developing a sense of the community's needs and concerns.

Door knocking in Boddam, where Peterhead power station is located, and surrounding towns, revealed little engagement with the new power station plans. People are much more focused on improving public services and resisting cuts like the council's recent plan to close 13 libraries across Aberdeenshire.

We're building community and increasing our visibility through a new film club. Later this year, we will launch a new group responding to the concerns raised by locals, providing a base for political education, tackling local issues and joining up with others regionally and globally.

We have continued to support the community in Torry in Aberdeen that's fighting against the corporate land grab of the Energy Transition Zone which threatens the beloved St Fittick's Park. Along with the legal fight, we are helping to develop real understanding of the issues the community is facing through art. Along with a playwright and number of local people, we are creating about the history and its struggles of Torry. The development of this project included extensive interviews with the community members, and it recently had its first table reading in the area. We are now working towards its first performance in Torry, followed by a Scottish tour.

We have also recently launched a show on Aberdeen's community radio station shmu, where we will talk about key climate issues.

Young Friends of the Earth Scotland

By Rhys Saunderson, Young Friends of the Earth Scotland Network Coordinator

Young Friends of the Earth Scotland has gone from strength to strength in the past year, continuing to roll out its new strategy focussing on education, connection, solidarity and support for the youth climate movement.

We held several gatherings, including social events and a community weekender in Edinburgh in the autumn of 2024, focussed on solidifying our new structure and deciding on priorities for the year ahead. In spring this year, we returned to Pitlochry for another skillshare weekend in glorious sunshine, with attendees running workshops for each other on movement ecology, resisting fossil fuels, Gaelic culture, climate justice, cyber security and more. These uplifting gatherings helped strengthen our community, giving young people hope and equipping them with tools in the fight for system change.

Our education work continued, with workshops and trainings happening across the country exploring political education and key campaigning and organising skills. We trained up more of our members to be able to run workshops and hope to continue to expand this work.

We provided support and guidance to young campaigners and organisers across Scotland, through bespoke advice, workshops and resources.

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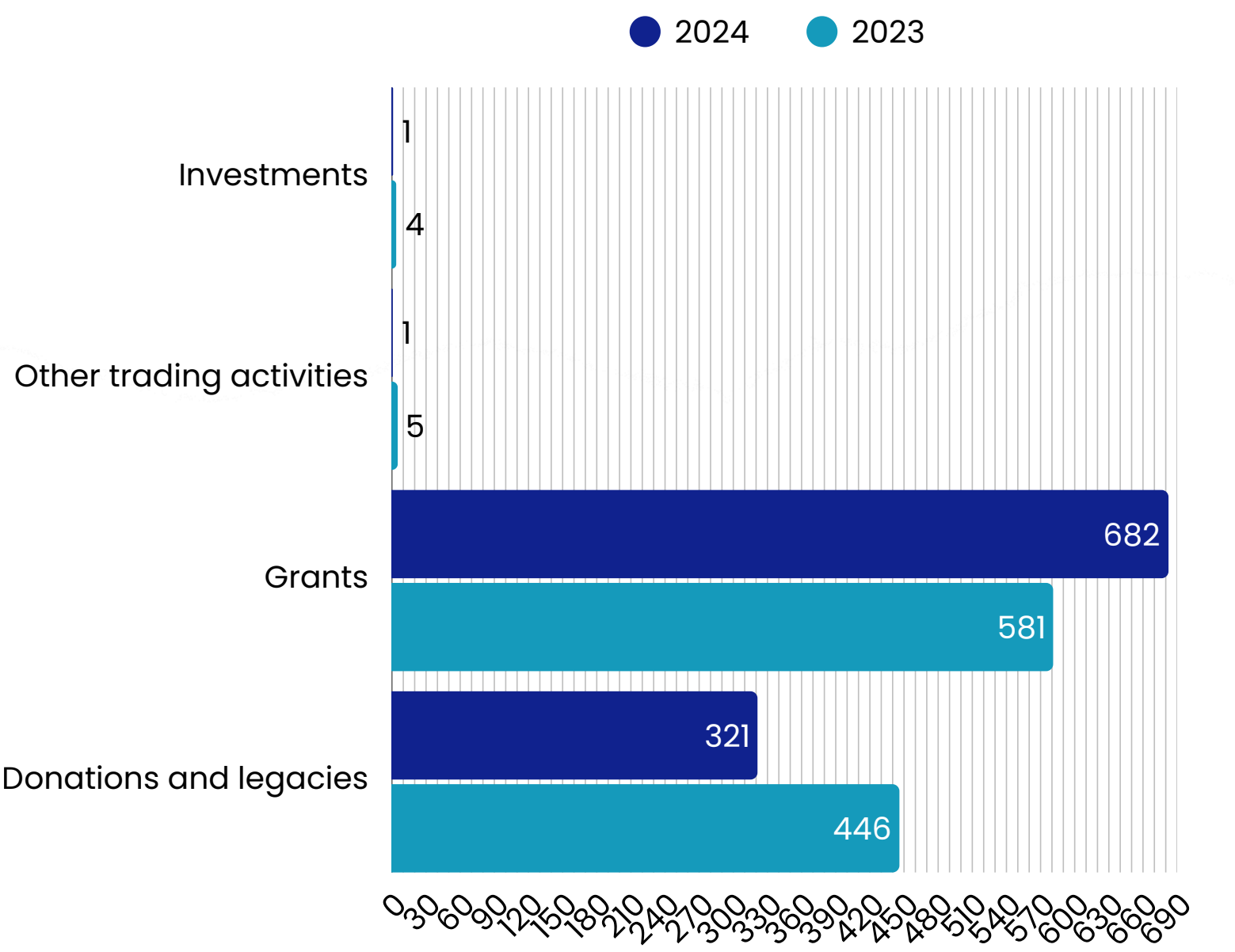
Finally, we have continued our work exploring the intersections of climate justice, with an internal focus on disability justice. Our intersectionality working group has been learning together and developing new resources, workshops and projects on this topic, led by disabled, chronically ill and neurodivergent members. We also worked with Inclusion Scotland to develop an internship programme, providing meaningful work experience for a young disabled person

We're so excited to keep building our network and strengthening the youth climate movement across Scotland.



Finance

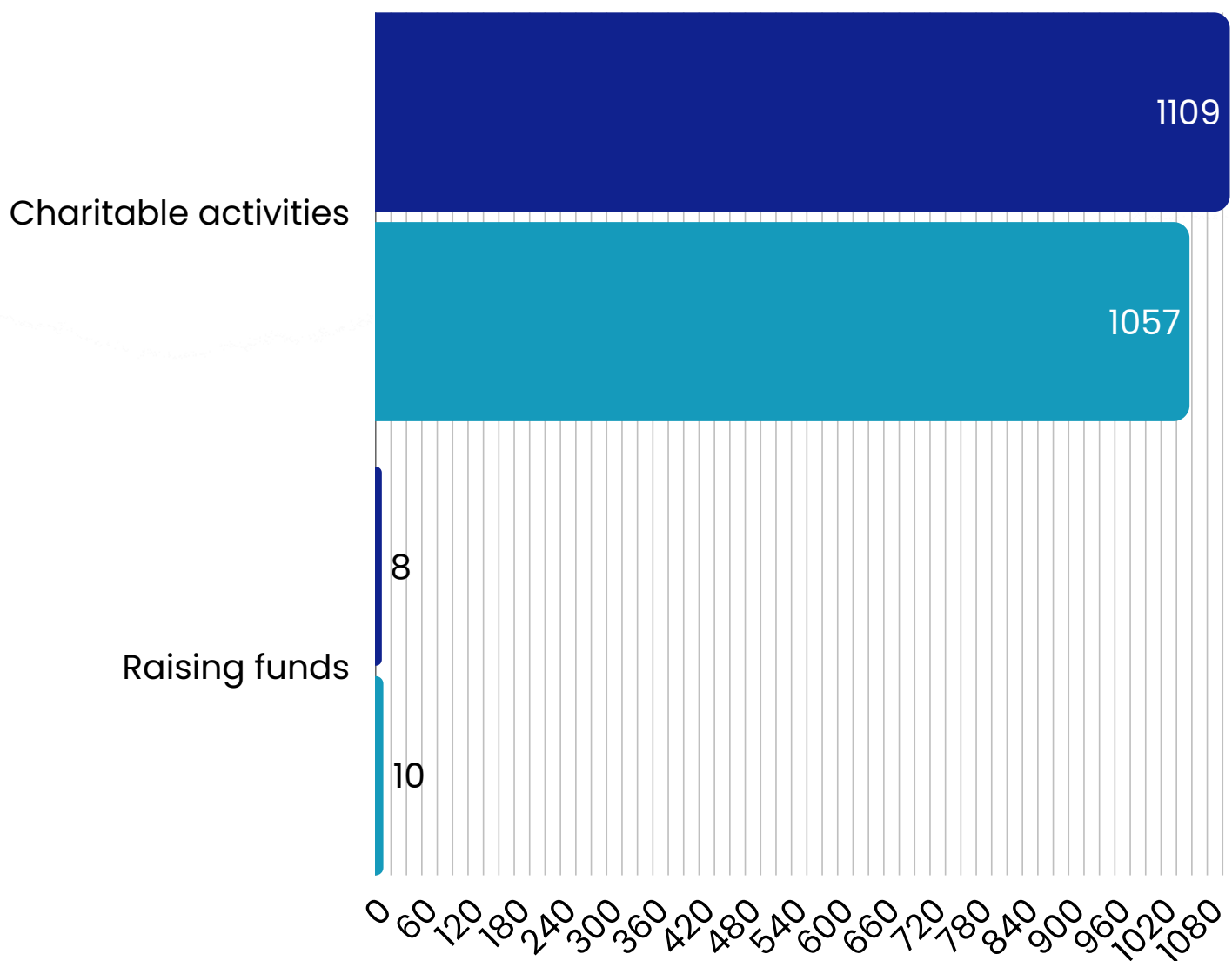
Income (by thousand)



Finance

Expenditure (by thousand)

● 2024 ● 2023





**Friends of
the Earth
Scotland**

END FOSSIL FUELS!
A JUST TRANSITION FOR WORKERS
AND COMMUNITIES