

Annual Review 2020



'I feel so much more confident in my own abilities to lead groups. Thank you for gifting me a bank of ideas and tools for the future. Really valued learning.'

- Primary Teacher and Outdoor Programmes Coordinator

wildthings.org.uk

2020: WELLBEING IN THE WOODS, CALM UPON THE COAST



In 2020, our plans for growth and development took a back seat whilst we worked hard to adapt our services to the emerging challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the natural habitats and communities we serve. In spite of these difficulties, Wild Things achieved a huge amount, launching our flagship Silver Saplings programme, supporting care home residents, delivering activities to children of keyworkers as well as making new ground on our habitat restoration of the lower Findhorn River.

After the first lockdown was announced, Wild Things pulled together to create **Stay Wild At Home**, a suite of free resource packs to keep families entertained, educated and engaged with the natural world despite restrictions. Stay Wild At Home gained traction as Wild Things expanded the project to include delivering a programme of nature activities to isolated **care home residents** across the Highlands and Moray.

We were also proud to work with Moray Council, **supporting our keyworkers** through Moray's six Summer-Hubs. Wild Things delivered five weeks of outdoor holiday clubs for the children of keyworkers, enabling them to continue operating in their essential roles whilst childcare remained unavailable.

Thanks to the heroic efforts of dedicated staff and volunteers, **our habitat restoration project not only maintained progress but gained ground**, expanding the edges of our project-site to include the tidal mouth of the river and encompassing approximately 200 acres of woodland acutely infested with invasive non-native species.

Perhaps most importantly of all, Wild Things launched our most ambitious project to date, **Silver Saplings**. This **four-year programme engages whole communities to improve health and wellbeing** across Moray and the Highlands through meaningful interaction with nature. Our programmes are designed for children, teenagers, adults and older people living both independently and in care homes.

For many of us, **Covid-19 has reminded us just how important the great outdoors is for our wellbeing**. In spite of this, not everyone has equal access to these important places. Never before have our charitable programmes been more needed or relevant and we're excited to continue supporting our communities to meet the challenges ahead.



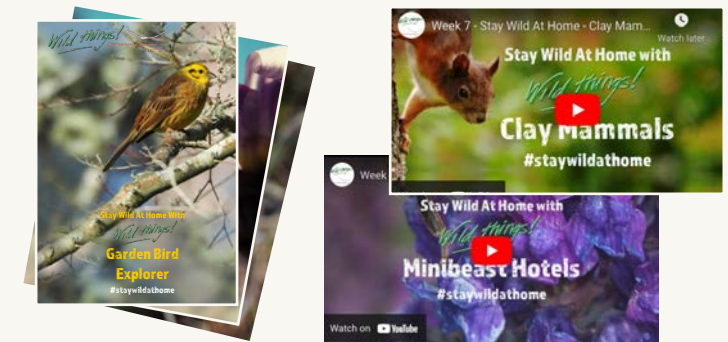
I Strachan

Chief Executive Officer



STAY WILD AT HOME

In response to the unprecedented challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, Wild Things developed the **Stay Wild At Home programme**, supporting educators, care home residents and families with resources and guides to help keep them active and engaged in nature despite lockdown restrictions.



We worked with **29 care homes** and **275 care home residents**.

- Participants and carers enjoyed a six-ten week programme of activities which could be delivered remotely, utilising and improving care home gardens for plants and wildlife.
- Our free activity guides were **downloaded over 1700 times**.
- Our packs each included materials and reusable equipment, information and activity guides, a bespoke video introducing the nature theme as well as a step-by-step video tutorial for carers and residents.
- Wild Things provided **exciting environmental activities and daycare for 202 children of keyworkers** across a five week period, enabling our keyworkers to continue their essential roles across the summer.

HABITAT RESTORATION

Wild Things has continued to work with our partner, the Findhorn, Nairn & Lossie Fisheries Trust, to control the proliferation of Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam on the lower Findhorn river.



The dedication of a handful of local volunteers and committed staff team enabled Wild Things to maintain our protection of the lower Findhorn River from a multitude of invasive non-native species. Our project site recently expanded to cover 125 acres of riparian woodland, previously overrun with giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam.

SILVER SAPLINGS

Our Silver Saplings project launched in July and since then we have been providing services to primary schools, care homes, young people and adults.



Highlights include:

- Securing **full funding to deliver four years of activities** improving health and wellbeing through nature, with programmes designed for **all ages and abilities**.
- Our first **health and wellbeing group session was joined by Ruby Wax** who delivered **mindfulness activities**.
- We worked with **84 children across three schools**: Pilmuir Primary, Strathdon Primary, Hopeman Primary

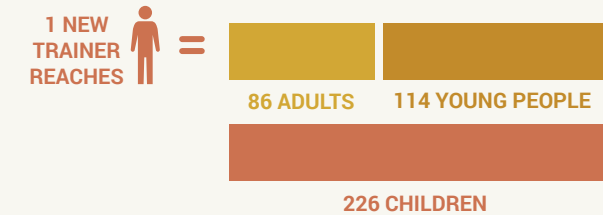


ACCREDITED TRAINING

This year our accredited training was heavily impacted by Covid-19 restrictions. We are, however, excited to announce the development of our first ever online training courses which will enable us to train more people than ever before whilst also making Wild Things a more robust organisation in the future. Highlights this year include:

- Issuing **44 new outdoor qualifications**
- Delivering our new level two training course for carers and social workers: **Environmental Education in Social Care**
- Achieving **Professional Recognition** for both our Woodland and Coastal Activity Leader Training courses from the General Teaching Council for Scotland

Our surveys show that, on average, each graduate goes on to share their newly gained skills and knowledge with over 400 people:



HERITAGE HEROES

Wild Things' CEO, Luke Strachan, was included as **one of the UK's ten heritage heroes** with portraits of the awardees being projected onto **Stonehenge**. This celebration of Wild Things' contribution to local communities throughout the pandemic helped raise awareness of the importance of maintaining and protecting our natural heritage despite the significant challenges currently faced by the sector.



THANK YOU



Our work is only possible thanks to the generosity of our funders and supporters. We would like to say a huge thank you for making our important work happen.

Our Funders in 2020

Auchernack Trust, Beatrice Partnership Fund, Berry Burn Community Fund, Corra Foundation, EB Scotland – Scottish Landfill Communities Fund, Garfield Weston Foundation, The Gordon and Ena Baxter Foundation, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Heritage Fund, Hugh Fraser Foundation, The Robertson Trust, SSE – Highlands Sustainable Development Fund, Tesco's Bags of Help.

Our other Supporters and Partners in 2020

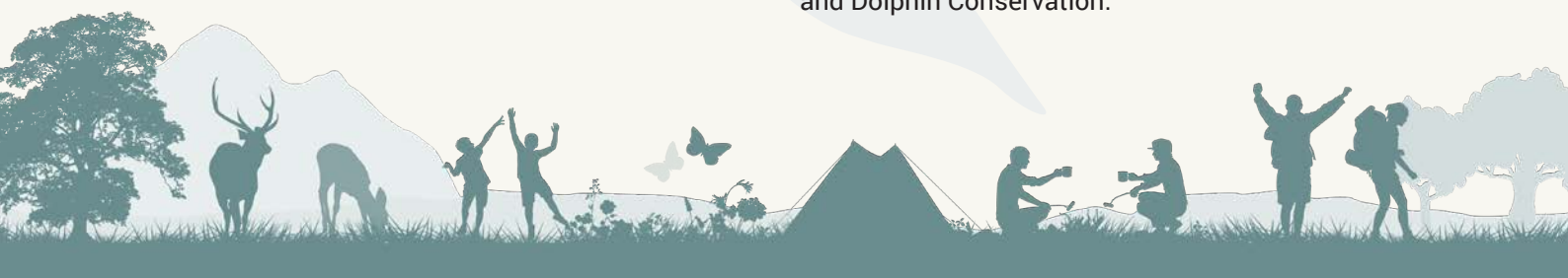
Primary Schools – Hopeman, Pilmuir, Strathdon

Secondary Schools – Buckie High, Culloden Academy, Keith Grammar

Further Education – University of the Highlands and Islands

Care Homes – Abbesside Nursing Home, Abbeyvale Nursing Home, Ach-an-Eas, Aden House, An Acarsaid Care Home, Anderson's, Budhmoir House, Cameron House, Castlehill, Cathay Care Home, Cradlehall Care Home, Culduithel Care Home, Grant House Care Home, Invernevis House, Isobel Fraser Residential Home, Kingsmills Care Home, Lochbroom House, Meadowlark Care Centre, Moss Park, Netherha House, Oversteps, Parkholme, Parklands Nursing Home, Riverside House Care Home, St Olaf Care Home, Southside Nursing Home, The Grove, Whinnieknowe House, Wyvis House Care Home.

Others: Altyre & Logie Estate, Ballindalloch Castle/Estate, Cullerne Gardens group, Findhorn Church of Scotland, Findhorn Village Centre, Findhorn, Nairn and Lossiemouth Fisheries Trust, Forestry and Land Scotland, Forres Action Community Trust, Forres Community Woodland Trust, Forres Outreach, Hillcrest House, Findhorn Hinterland Trust, Innes Estate, John Muir Awards, Kilravock Estate, Moray Way Association, New Findhorn Association, Quarriers, Scripture Union, Spey Fisheries, Trees for Life, WDC Whale and Dolphin Conservation.



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Trust

