

Annual Review 2022



*I don't get out enough, it's soothing and restores the soul.
I learned about Ospreys, pine forest cycles, growth, bird calls.
It was just lovely to get out with a group of like-abled people."*

wild-things.org.uk



2022 – Freedom in the Forests and the Fields

2022 has been the first uninterrupted year for Wild Things since the outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020, enabling us to deliver our many charitable programmes without restrictions. We scaled-up our activities throughout the year and were delighted to be able to work directly with care home residents, alongside our regular groups for children, teenagers and adults.

Whilst the pandemic may already feel like a lifetime ago to many of us, our communities have been shaken in ways which we are only beginning to understand. Throughout this time, Wild Things has been able to support the wellbeing of both the natural environment and vulnerable people of all ages across the North of Scotland through our various **Silver Saplings** programmes.

Of these, **Growing Wild and Well** has enabled young people with varied challenges to gain skills and qualifications in the great outdoors. **Our Little Saplings** programme also worked with a broad range of primary schools, helping children to gain *John Muir* and *Saltire Awards*. Adults have enjoyed our various **Skills and Wellbeing days** by exploring new interests such as whittling, foraging, photography, art and much more.

Meanwhile, our **Adventure Day-Trips** for independent older people have gathered momentum alongside our **Care Home programme** for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. These services offer opportunities for gentle exercise, supported learning and social connection for many who might otherwise be isolated and lonely.

After more than 5 years of intensive **restoration of Findhorn River and Bay** (SSSI), we have transformed large swathes of the riverside from giant hogweed jungles into wildflower filled woodlands. Whilst the problem of invasive non-native species already has deep roots in Scotland, our partners at the *Scottish Invasive Species Initiative* have proved an invaluable ally in turning the tide.

The importance of helping people to grow, learn in and protect the natural environment has never been greater. The therapeutic qualities of spending time outdoors continues to be a lifeline for many people whilst the natural world needs our continued care and commitment. Through our programmes, we are proud to have supported both to be healthier, more resilient and to realise their full potential.

Best wishes,



Luke Strachan, CEO



Woodland and Coastal Classrooms



"Now that I have explored nature I think that it's very important and be more respectful. Wild Things Leaders are very kind"

Our Little Saplings outdoor programmes included nine Primary Schools and 430 children from across Moray and the Highlands. Many of them continued to use their local woodlands as play-spaces after our programmes concluded.



177 children earned John Muir Awards



96% said our instructors were "great"

Growing Wild and Well

Our charitable work with vulnerable young people and adults has been loads of fun! Participants have gained accredited qualifications, developed new skills and interests whilst volunteering in local woodlands and beaches through conservation activities.

"I have learned that our environment is rare and we need to start taking care of it now."



Over 100 young people & adults helped protect local green spaces

84%

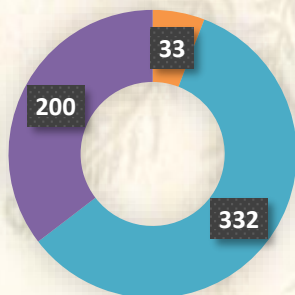
agreed that Wild Things sessions had improved their wellbeing

Habitat Restoration

Our work on the SSSI local nature reserve of Findhorn Bay and River has stemmed the encroachment of multiple highly invasive non-native species (INNS). Whilst we have cleared as much as 150 acres of impassable woodland, we have much work to do to restore the remaining 50 acres of our project site.



At least 26 native plant species have returned to habitats cleared of INNS



■ Volunteer days

■ Hours of conservation

■ Acres of land

Accredited Training

It's been an exciting year for our accredited training services as we launched our new online e-learning platform. We have since been encouraged by the strong uptake of our online training and are excited to continue to expand the range of courses on offer.

In Addition, we received official Endorsement from Education Scotland.



106 people qualified as accredited outdoor leaders



Kristy Lee Harris (3/10/1979 - 16/2/2022)

Our beloved colleague and friend

In early 2022, our much-loved Fieldwork Instructor and friend, Kristy Lee-Harris, sadly passed away.

The whole team here at Wild Things will always celebrate her dedication to Wild Things' work, which spanned over 15 years. Words cannot express our gratitude for her many and varied contributions to communities across Scotland, for her professionalism and her kindness. She will always be remembered by the team and we will always miss her graceful presence, her positive attitude and her dedication to improving peoples' lives through sharing her love and knowledge of nature with others.



Organisations Worked with in 2022

Primary Schools

Aviemore Primary/ELC
Milne's Primary School Primary 7
Milne's Primary School Primary 4
Applegrove Primary School
Cawdor Primary School
Croy Primary School
Logie Primary School
Raigmore Primary School
Keith Primary School
Burghead Primary School

Secondary Schools and Social services

Grantown Grammar
Kingussie High School
Keith Grammar
Buckie High School SED

Community groups and charitable partners

Wild Wanders Group (General Public)
Findhorn and Forres Older People
Archiestown BALL Group
Hopeman BALL Group
Moray Women's Aid
Dufftown and District Community
Association
Children 1st
Holiday Club (General Public, local
children)
Alzheimer Scotland
L'Arche Communities Inverness
Community Connection Aviemore
Alzheimer Scotland (Inverness)
Archiestown BALL Group

Aviemore Befrienders (Alzheimer
Scotland)
Army Welfare Service

Care Homes

Hanover Housing Linn Coort Buckie
Whinnieknowe Care Home
Isobel Fraser Care Home
Abbeyvale Nursing Home
Isobel Fraser Care Home
Lynemore Care Home
Cathay Care Home
Grant House Care Home
Lynemore Care Home

Thank You!

Our work is only possible thanks to generosity of our funders and supporters. We would like to say a huge thank you to them all.

Our Funders in 2022

Beatrice Partnership Fund, Berry Burn Community Fund, Cairngorm Group, Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, Community Wellbeing PGM Fund, Ernest Klienwort Charitable Trust, Foundation Scotland, Gordon and Ena Baxter Foundation, EB Scotland Ltd – Scottish landfill Communities Fund, Gordon Fraser Trust, Grocers Charity, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Hugh Fraser Foundation, Inspiring Scotland, Jennifer's Fund, Moray Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund (Scottish Government), NHS Grampian Endowment Fund, Scottish Southern Electric (SSE), The Stafford Trust, Support in Mind Scotland – Rural Community Engagement Fund, The MacRobert Trust, TSI Moray



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Scottish charity no: SC034873
Company no: SC251691

**"Between every two pine trees there
is a door leading to a new way of life."**

John Muir