



Friends of the Pentlands

Annual Review 2012

Friends of the Pentlands is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation.
Registered in Scotland No. SC035514
<http://www.pentlandfriends.plus.com/>



Chairman's Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Friends of the Pentlands Review for 2012. At our birth in 2003 I do not think anyone anticipated that we would grow so quickly and be able to produce the results that we have in this past year. In my seven years in the Chair I have been most fortunate to have worked with a band of dedicated and committed people on our Executive Committee, our Volunteers and members without whom we would be nothing.

I have many good memories of our work in 2012;

- The Access for All event aimed at encouraging persons with disabilities to get into the Hills.
- The making of a path that links Penicuik directly to the Pentlands via Silverburn.
- Dealing effectively with the scourge of modern day society, i.e., litter, and the fly-tipping at Dreghorn.
- The planting of the first of two of the five planned arboreta for Pentland Hills; one for each Local Authority that go to make up the Pentlands.

However I think my lasting memory of the year will be the fact that we have stepped outside of the Executive Committee and engaged with the volunteers who have assumed responsibilities on many areas of our work. Our volunteers not only know they are doing a satisfying job and doing it very well, whilst at the same time sharing in the camaraderie that is evident to anyone who takes part. It is for these reasons that the leaders of the various work areas were asked to write this report and the reader will find it most informative. To drive the Friends of the Pentlands on we have established a Volunteers Co-ordinating Group thus affording the Volunteers more ownership of the tasks and hopefully a faster and more co-ordinated turn round of our work.

The hours that the volunteers undertook in 2012 are detailed elsewhere in this report, but mention must be made of the hours undertaken by Allan Ainslie in compiling objections/ observations in response to the many planning applications submitted to the five Local Authorities with responsibility for all planning applications that affect the Pentland Hills. The increased work load being placed upon Allan's shoulders is exceptional but to date his hard work has rewarded the Friends with success.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the retiral of Bob Paterson as Secretary at the AGM, Bob carried out his duties in exemplary manner and in passing over the work to our new Secretary John Surtees gave him the present of having to see us be transformed from a Scottish Charity to a SCIO, something which John did extremely well even if it meant long hours of very hard work.

In conclusion I thank the Office Bearers and Members of the Executive Committee, Section Leaders, Team Leaders, Volunteers, Balerno Ramblers and of course the Members for their support throughout the year.



Mission Statement

The Organisation seeks to act as a catalyst to promote the conservation, protection and enhancement of the Pentland Hills, with particular emphasis on recreational quality, public access, cultural heritage, landscape and biodiversity.

Purposes

The Organisation's purposes which are taken from its Constitution are-

- To protect and enhance the natural beauty and upland character of the Pentland Hills it's waters and surrounding countryside. Declaring that "the Pentlands" shall mean the Pentland Hills and surrounding countryside
- To protect and enhance the natural and cultural heritage and features of public amenity within this area
- To encourage respect for the quality of life of those who live and work within this area
- To carry out environmental projects that enhance public access and biodiversity
- To encourage high standards of design in all work undertaken within this area
- To provide an annual programme of activities to foster the enjoyment of healthy exercise, an appreciation of the environments and social and cultural history
- To promote the forming of appropriate planning policies, compatible with these purposes, through the considered long term development plan process and their effective and consistent implementation
- To stimulate public interest in these purposes by means of publications, meetings, exhibitions, appeals and other forms of publicity
- To co-operate with other bodies to promote the foregoing purpose



We continue to install bird nesting boxes, bug boxes and bat boxes throughout the Pentland Hills. This pipistrelle bat was found by the Licensed Bat Surveyor in one of our bat boxes at Erraid Wood.



Secretary's Report

2012 was an important year in the history of the Friends with a change in legal form from an unincorporated Society to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) being achieved in December.

It was considered that being a `SCIO` would provide a better structure for the Friends future aspirations and it was agreed at last years AGM that we should take this step. During the year a steering group convened on a number of occasions as the proposed change in legal form also meant that a new Constitution had to be formulated and agreed by the Committee. In August a formal application was then made to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

On 18 December the Regulator registered the new SCIO and we were allowed to keep our same name and charity number too. The assets, liabilities and undertakings of the old Society, which has now been wound up, have been formally transferred to the SCIO. Whilst all of the above is quickly covered in a few lines, the process did involve a substantial amount of administrative work in 2012.

Whilst the day to day management of the Friends is still vested in elected Trustees collectively they will now be referred to as `The Board` rather than Committee. Where previously the word Society was used this will now be replaced by 'Organisation' to reflect the change in legal form.

Also new for the Autumn of 2012 was the restyled Pentland Post magazine. This now features contributions by a number of members covering a variety of topics. It is hoped that as time progresses the magazine will be further developed to cover in a bit more depth the wide variety of activities that the Friends take part in.



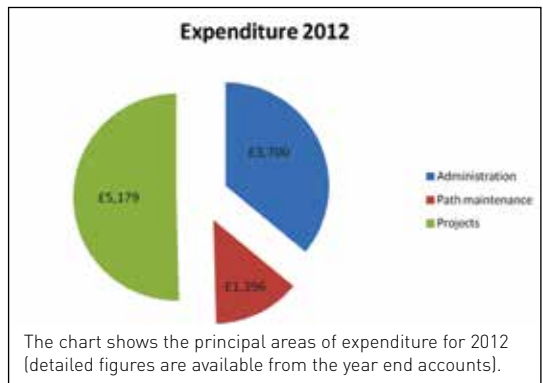
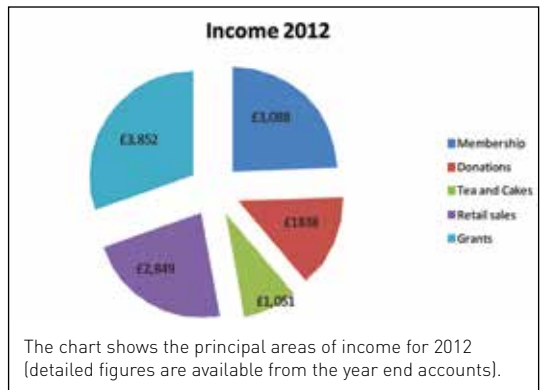
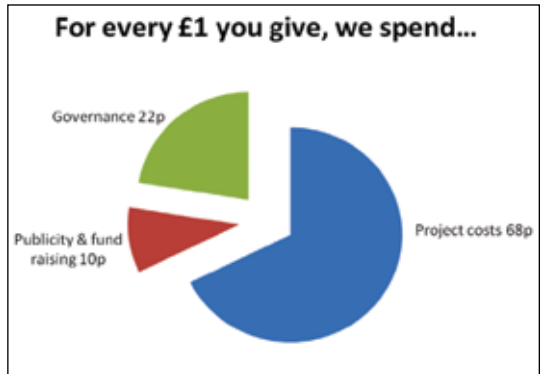
Before and after, the result of a two-day training event for our Volunteers on Dry Stone Walling.



Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to report that we have made a small surplus for the year of £813 compared to £719 last year. While subscription income has increased by £500 our donations received have dropped by £1,600. However our project costs are down on last year which included some £5,500 on producing the Pan Pentland Map. This year we received a grant from "Keep Scotland Beautiful" of £3,852 for work at Dreghorn to prevent fly-tipping and this project is now well advanced.

A lot of work has been done last year in changing the legal status of the Friends of the Pentlands from a charity to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) and this has now been successfully achieved. As a result the charity has been wound up with effect from 31st December 2012 and all funds transferred to the new SCIO. You will therefore see this reflected in the final accounts of the charity. With funds of just over £13,000 I am confident that we are in a healthy financial position and that the SCIO will go from strength to strength with its work in conserving, protecting and enhancing the Pentland Hills for our future enjoyment.





Membership Secretary's Report

The membership at the 31st December 2012 stood at 34 Individual Life members, 32 Family Life members, 118 Individual Annual members and 180 Family Annual members, a total of 364 individuals. It also has 11 Associate members and 2 Corporate members.

A table produced using the membership list of the 31st December 2012 date shows that after an initial, very enthusiastic, start in 2003-4 of some 92 members it has added to this number by approximately 30 member gains each year.

In 2012 the new members increase was 46. The table produced shows that each year some 30 people remain members after one year and so I expect some sixteen people not to renew for 2013 from this total of forty six. These observations help the Trustees to monitor the income required to cover its basic running costs and make the necessary adjustments to the annual subscriptions.

It is encouraging that the Friends of the Pentlands can generate more membership each year. This is due to the positive attitude of the Board and all the helpers of Friends of the Pentlands. Long may this positive attitude continue.

Walks Organiser

2012 saw a new Walks Organiser in post, we were very lucky to have Fiona Black volunteer as she is a very busy lady. Fiona brings with her a wealth of knowledge and experience in regards to walking and the outdoors and has a very infectious and relaxed attitude to hill walking. Rather than attempt to paraphrase her year it is best to let her walk reports do the talking for her.

West Linton and 'Siller Holes'.

The weather was a wee bit dreich, but never wet enough to dampen our spirits. Arthur Mackenzie explained about the 'siller holes' which are just at the junction to Stonypath farm. Dodging puddles and flooded track we headed towards Baddingsgill then veered down a grassy slope to eventually cross the infant Lyne Water over a well made wooden bridge. Sheltering under some sycamore trees we ate our lunch and then proceeded back down the tarmac road towards West Linton in brilliant sunshine. On reaching Medwyn, which is a hamlet of some lovely old houses, we turned left and re-crossed the Lyne Water. We went up a steep track and looked for the high, narrow, woodland path which would lead us to "Catwalk Wood" and back to our cars. Six of us retired to the Gordon Arms for a cup of tea and friendly chat and everyone thought it had been a great outing. But I think the weather played it's part!

East Linton, Hailes Castle, Trapain Law and Pencraig Hill

Met everyone inside the Linton which is a very friendly inn at East Linton. Walked up the north bank of the river Tyne which in parts was incredibly muddy and water logged. The



weather, although mild had a tendency to deluge us in short, drenching showers. The Chairman, John Stirling, did a spectacular slide whilst coming over the footbridge near Hailes, however with a bit of nifty footwork he avoided falling and hurting himself.

We ate our lunch in the main hall of Hailes Castle and it was there that half the party decided that they did not want to climb Trapain Law. However they did go part of the way up the track towards this ancient monument before returning via PenCraig and led by Cameron Black who had already done this walk a few years ago. The remaining four swiftly climbed the hill and were rewarded with views over the North Sea and the Pentlands. There are now six Exmoor ponies on Trapain Law where it is hoped that they will encourage wild flowers from their grazing. Being fast walkers we nearly caught up with the breakaway group, returning by Upper Hailes. PenCraig Hill and on down the public footpath through a field of broad beans to East Linton.

The weather, by the time we reached Upper Hailes was fabulous. So warm that we were compelled to remove our outer garments.

I have to say that the breakaway party were in a merry mood when we met them in the pub afterwards!

The Christmas Walk

The weather had changed dramatically in the three days from having checked out this walk, so instead of deep, squelchy mud the Friends fairly romped across the frozen ground which was covered with a dusting of snow. Indeed the entire walk was delightful with a variety of terrain; from woodland, steep inclines, jumping over burns, a sylvan glen, fields of Jacob sheep, a historic house and with the best bit at Silverburn, kept to last!

We had been expecting to have afternoon tea at the superb village hall in Silverburn, but discovered that the place was booked for a children's party. No matter! Kath Hill the hall's convener welcomed us all into her home for a sumptuous afternoon tea. Any calories lost during the walk were replaced from eating Kath's delicious home baking and the fund for the Silverburn Hall was £90 richer from our donations.

This had been a most successful outing for the FotP and a great start for everyone's Christmas festivities.



Planting the first of five Arboreta in the Pentland Hills. This one is at Swanston, another has been done at West Linton.

Three more will follow in Midlothian, West Lothian and South Lanarkshire sectors.

In the Year of Natural Scotland 2013 we were very pleased to have received a grant from Scottish Natural Heritage to allow us to undertake this project.



Reports from volunteer leaders

We have five volunteer team leader(s) for ease of administration and this part of the annual report gives a brief summary of their work during 2012.

Work days by Donald Graham

2012 was a highly productive and successful year for the workday volunteers with us recording a total of 1800 hours in actual work and time travelling to the work locations during the year. Despite losing quite a number of planned work days to bad weather in the early part of the year we ended the year on a high with us managing 4 full work days in December, a month we usually take off. It was good to complete jobs such as the Silverburn Woodland Path and the initial Arboretum tasks by the year end. As usual a lot of our efforts was directed at path maintenance and repair throughout the Pentlands. We also undertook fence repairs, installation of gates and erected stiles in a number of locations in addition to planting and beating trees mostly in the Swanston area. We also did a bit of training and repaired a length of dry stane dyking and we envisage building on these skills in the coming months. We assisted with some of the work with the Harlaw Garden and maintained the Bavelaw wildflower meadow and massively improved the path to the bird hide

On the personnel front we had a very good year with 10 new volunteers signing up to help and a number of these have become our ever presents. In addition we have been assisted handsomely by the Balerno Ramblers who provided us with a team of 7/8 on a monthly basis and have supported us significantly on path maintenance and tree planting

In the year ahead in addition to the recurring work with paths etc. we are looking forward to helping with the establishment of a new path from Kirkliston to Little Vantage in association with West Lothian Council. New arboretum sites will be developed and we look forward to another challenging and equally successful year ahead.



The Friends took on the remedial work required following the flooding of the path leading to the bird hide at Bavelaw. The result was a success and we thank the Tarmac Group for the donation of several tons of aggregate to complete the work.





Litterpicking and anti-flytipping activities by Phil Rowsby

We have carried out bi-monthly litterpicking sessions at Bonaly since 2009. However, after a discussion with the Pentland Hills Ranger Service in late 2011, we have reduced our visits to Bonaly to once a month and have begun a regular monthly litter picking session at Dreghorn car park, which the rangers identified as a problem site for litter.

During 2012 we have also carried out regular inspections of the laybys along the A70, the Lang Whang. Where necessary we collected the litter and bagged up a variety of flytipped rubbish. The full sacks were then collected by one of the local authorities (Edinburgh, South Lanarkshire, West Lothian) who are responsible for this section of road. Regular sessions have also taken place along Rangers Road near Torduff Reservoir and in the laybys of the A702 between Hillend and Silverburn.

The regular sessions in 2013 start at 09.30 at Dreghorn on the first Tuesday of each month and at Bonaly on the third Monday of each month.

Anti-flytipping grant for Dreghorn carpark

Due to our new commitment at Dreghorn and following a successful application we were awarded £3, 850 to install anti-flytipping measures at Dreghorn. The grant has covered:

- the installation of new fencing, large boulders and anti-flytipping signs;
- publicity around the works (notices in local libraries etc)
- developing the local community with the project

A number of work day volunteers have helped to tidy up the area. Hopefully, the grant, our regular litter sessions and work day activities will make Dreghorn look more like a car park and encourage more people to use it as an easy access point to the Pentland Hills.



Once again we all enjoyed the Access for All Event held at Harlaw Visitor Centre. Here the wheelchair users take to the mobility scooters hired by the Friends. In previous years they could not have crossed the spillway if water was running, but thanks to the City of Edinburgh Council it is a thing of the past now that they have adapted the bridge. Thanks go to Scotmid for donating the refreshments for the two-day event.



Gardening at Harlaw and Threipmuir by Bob Paterson

2012 was not a good year for gardens or gardeners. Nevertheless the Harlaw gardeners clocked up 110 hours split over 19 sessions. We kept the grass cut and the garden tidy while tending the very successful nectar border we planted in 2011. Some of the plants in the nectar border have grown so vigorously that they have had to be moved to give them a bit more space. We have also waged a mini war on some of the more invasive species, cleared the raised bed so that it can be replanted as a sensory bed in the spring and helped give the pond its annual clean. The plants from the raised bed are being overwintered and will be replanted at Hillend in the spring.

Our plans for this year include helping to establish the sensory bed, planting the area below the flagpole with wildflowers and planting some foxgloves in the area of the bird table.

During next year we will also be beginning to establish a wildflower garden at the site of the former workshop at Hillend. We will need some help from the work day volunteers to clear the ground which will enable the gardeners to concentrate on the rather less strenuous task of planting a range of wildflowers. As always a gardener's job is never done!

Our wildflower meadow on the side of Threipmuir Reservoir near Redford Bridge was again cut twice during the year (April and September). As mentioned above the flora was a disappointment this year but we are hopeful of a better show next year, the gardener's perpetual hope!

Quartermaster's training report by Ian Combe

We are continuing to build up our holding of tools and equipment, which are required to meet the increasing numbers of projects, and indeed the increasing numbers of volunteers attending work days. The cost of certain items directly related to Dreghorn, will be recovered from the recent award from Zero Waste Scotland. A small shipping container, a gift from Scottish Water, was delivered to a site at Swanston which we will use as a tool shed. This will mean that all the tools are in one place, which will make it much easier to access them.

We have once again purchased some bat/bird/bug boxes. These are made for us at Saughton Prison and vary in size and purpose. The plan is to place them in various locations, such as the small wood next to the carpark at Dreghorn.

The North Esk Reservoir appeared in a drama on the TV late last year and a quick glimpse was seen of our bird hide! At dusk in early December one of our volunteers was blessed with a very clear and close sighting of an otter sliding/running across the frozen water directly in front of the bird hide at Bavelaw. The opportunity to watch badgers is being offered again during July and August; if you are interested then please contact me.



Training matters

We are trying to increase the skill level of our workforce:

A volunteer handbook is issued to all new work day volunteers. This gives most of the details with respect to volunteering and with particular respect to various risk, health and safety issues

Our team leaders enjoyed Charles Black giving a refresher course on basic first aid, from which a set of "emergency cards" has been produced .

"Paths for all" run various courses on the construction and maintenance of paths. To date some 6 people have enjoyed these courses which improve our path construction skills.

In August a group went on a dry stane dyking course and renovated a dyke near Swanston. In 2013 working with Members of the Dry Stone Walling Association we will construct a sheep stell or fank, which will be a major challenge.

Tea and Cakes Days at Harlaw

by Alyson Patrick and Linda Stirling

We had four Tea and Cakes days throughout the year (April, June, September, and November) at Harlaw Visitor Centre. These days are one of the ways by which the Friends of the Pentlands raises monies to go towards some of their many projects. This year £1,051.00 was raised. None of this would happen without the help of the many volunteers either serving the food or more importantly baking the delicious goodies. For many years Maggie and Bob Paterson organised this fund raising event, but in June they stepped down and Alyson Patrick and Linda Stirling are determined to maintain the high standard set by their predecessors. So far everything is working out well having the full support of the existing team augmented with some new faces. We would like to thank everyone who has kindly helped on these days and hope they will support us in the future. We know how important the money raised is to the Friends of the Pentlands as it is their main source of income generated by the work of our volunteers.

P.S. You do not have to be a baker – help is always needed at Harlaw on the day.



Testing the bench after installation adjacent top Tytler Memorial. The bench was donated by Margaret McTavish in memory of her late mother and father.



Volunteer hours

This year saw our volunteers undertake over 6,000 hours in total and the break down is as follows:

General work days	1785
Litter picking	355
Harlaw Garden	110
Tea & cakes	126
Events	48
Walks	383
Sub	2807
Hours undertaken by Office Bearers and members not included in above	3259
Total	6066



This bike friendly water bar was constructed and installed by the Friends on a path in the Pentland Hills. We thank Cockenzie Power Station for the donation of the rubber insert. So successful in trial the PHRS are now installing them





Friends of the Pentlands People

Chairman	John Stirling
Vice-Chairman	Colonel Mike White
Treasurer	Malcolm Patrick
Secretary	John Surtees (from May 2012)
	Lt. Col Bob Paterson (stepped down May 2012)
Membership Secretary	Rod Greenwell
Members of Committee	David Pritchard
	Allan Ainslie
	Jayne Gordon (stepped down September 2012)
	Donald Graham (co-opted September 2012)
	*Margaret Granger
	Neil Macaulay
	John Sheldon (stepped down June 2012)
	*David Syme
	*Elected at the AGM
Retired from Committee at AGM 2012	Janet Clark
	Grace Jamieson
	Alyson Patrick
Section Leaders	Horticultural – Bob Paterson
	Litter Picking – Phil Rowsby
	Quartermaster and training co-ordinator – Ian Combe
	Walks Organiser – Fiona Black
	Work Day Organiser Donald Graham
	Tea and Cakes Days Organisers – Alyson Patrick and Linda Stirling

Volunteers Coordinating Group

Convenor	David Pritchard
Members:	Donald Graham (link to Executive Committee re. work days, quartermaster and training.)
	Neil Macaulay (link to executive Committee re. horticultural and litter picking)
	Ian Combe
	Bob Paterson
	Phil Rowsby
	Norman Leslie



The Board is currently looking for volunteers to assist with the following tasks

2014 Calendar

We require a member to co-ordinate the Friends Calendar for 2014. They will lead a small team of 3-4 members to receive and review photographs submitted for the 2014 Calendars. Arrange the printing of the Calendars and subsequent marketing. Full details of sales outlets for the first two calendars will be available.

Access for All Event

The Friends of the Pentlands has established this annual event for persons with disabilities, at present each area is led by a Member and this will continue. What is required is someone to coordinate it and bring it all together.

Pentland Inspirations – Art and Photographic Competition

The biennial Pentlands Inspirations competition is run by the Natural Heritage Services Department (formerly Regional Park) of City of Edinburgh Council and the Friends of the Pentlands sponsors it. A Member is required to liaise with the Council in seeking submissions and arranging certain of the venues for the subsequent exhibition and arranging for Members to 'sit' the exhibition at certain locations. A small budget has to be managed.

Full training and support will be given.

Interested in any of these tasks either as leader or support then contact the Secretary, John Surtees by email john.surtees@blueyonder.co.uk or the Chairman, John Stirling, 0131 449 3456

There are many other volunteers required not just digging ditches or holes; why not contact the Secretary or Chairman to find out more.

The Friends of the Pentlands would like to thank Swanston Farm, Tiso Outdoor Specialists, Merchiston Castle School, Pentland Hills Ranger Service, Scottish Water, Midlothian Council, South Lanarkshire Council, West Lothian Council, Scottish Borders Council and all land owners and land managers in the Pentland Hills for their support throughout the year.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2013

Individual	£8.00	Individual Life	£120.00
Joint	£14.00	Joint Life	£210.00
Corporate	£14.00	Associate	£14.00

Please enrol me as a member of the Friends of the Pentlands.

Name(s)

Address

Postcode

Tel:No Date

Email

I agree to support the purposes of the Friends of the Pentlands and I am over 16 years of age

Signature

Should you wish to add a donation to your subscription, however modest, that would be very much appreciated.

I enclose the following payment

Please make cheques payable to 'Friends of the Pentlands'.

I am a UK taxpayer, please provide me with a Gift Aid Declaration.

(Please delete if not applicable).

I wish to actively participate in project works in the Pentland Hills – please delete if not applicable

Please return this form to:

**Rod Greenwell, Membership Secretary, Friends of the Pentlands
4 Dovecot Park, Edinburgh EH14 2LN**

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