

Scottish Land Fund
Ionmhas Fearainn Na H-Alba

Easter Breich Wood Community Group

SC051201



Annual report 2024-25

About us

Our community group became a charity in August 2021. Our aims are:

- To secure Easter Breich Wood for the benefit of the community. (i.e Seafield, Polbeth, West Calder and Harburn).
- To maintain and improve the woodland in order to advance environmental protection and community health and development
- To involve the community and work with partners.

Thanks to funding from the Scottish Land Fund we bought Easter Breich on behalf of the community in March 2022.



Woodland maintenance

We hold regular volunteer maintenance events during the year. From May to September we've met weekly to scythe the path edges and bridle paths and one weekend a month we do more general maintenance – mowing in summer, hedge-cutting in autumn and winter.

Bramble cutting in March.



Winter hedge-cutting





Chainsaw work in February after storm Eowyn brought down some mature trees.

In February, Lothian Conservation Volunteers put in a hard day's work clearing blackthorn from near the path.

A huge thank you to everyone who has helped out during the year.



In October we celebrated everyone's efforts, holding a cake stall as part of the Community Land Festival, organised through Community Land Scotland.



Looking at nature



We've continued this year to take part in national wildlife monitoring and citizen science projects.

We did the RSPB's Big Garden Bird Watch in January and the Big Butterfly Count in August. The results were uploaded to national records.

In August, Sandy Davidson from Forestry and Land Scotland led an informative walk round the woods, explaining how to identify the trees in different seasons. So now we've got a much better idea of what's growing in the woodland.





In September, fungi expert, Chris Knowles, led a fungi foray through the woods.

Thanks to West Lothian Climate Action Network, we planted five more fruit trees in the woodland and were given training on maintenance and pruning.

We also continued monthly monitoring of river water quality through our involvement in the Guardians of Our River Project.





We've put some labels up on trees throughout the woodland – see if you can spot them when you're out for a walk!

Training and research

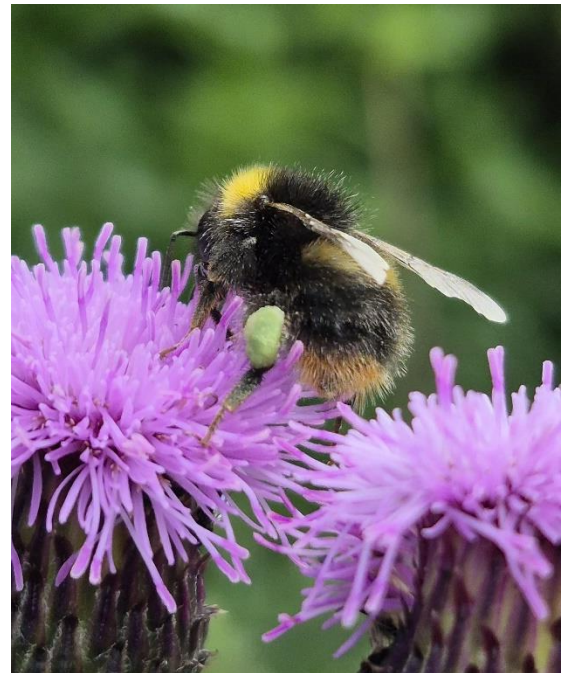


In March the pond was surveyed for invertebrates by Kerry Dodd from the charity Buglife. This trained some of their new surveyors in the kick sampling technique.

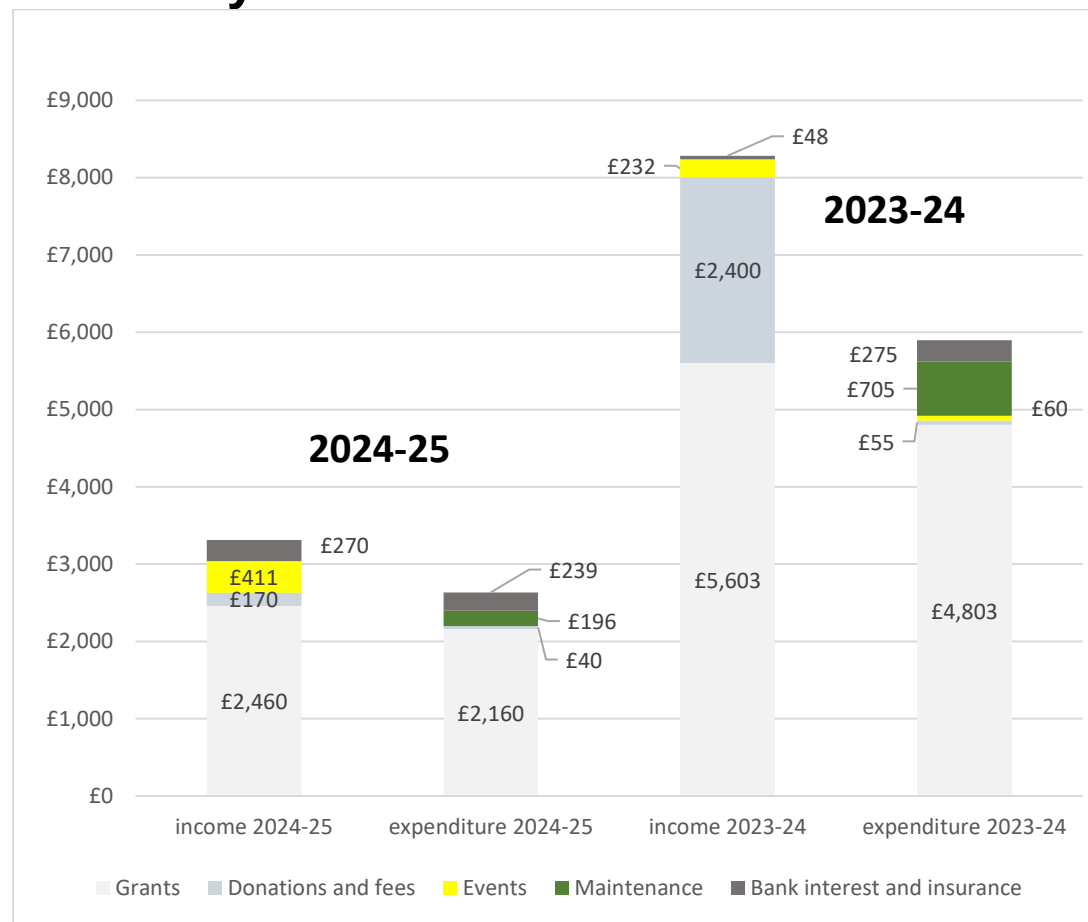
Our own Guardians of our Rivers team were involved in research in April, where they tested the levels of *E.coli* bacteria in the Breich Water. The data contributed to Freshwater Watch's national survey.

The woodland was also used as a research site by an Environmental Science student who carried out a study comparing how two different tree species intercepted rainfall, and then again in the summer an MSc project student surveyed bumblebees as part of a wider study on how woodland management affects bumblebee diversity.

It's fantastic to see the woodland being used as a resource for training and research!



Summary of Accounts



| | | income 2024-25 | expenditure 2024-25 | income 2023-24 | expenditure 2023-24 |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Grants | Inspiring Scotland | 2160 | 2160 | 0 | 0 |
| | WLCAN, Paths4All | 0 | 0 | 4,800 | 4,803 |
| | freshwater watch | 0 | 0 | 203 | 0 |
| | CLS bursary | 300 | 0 | 600 | 0 |
| Donations | WCHDT donation | 0 | 0 | 2,400 | 0 |
| | cherry tree donation | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | site hosting and speaker fee | 150 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | memberships | 0 | 40 | 0 | 55 |
| Events | cake stall | 301 | 0 | 200 | 50 |
| | fungi foray | 110 | 0 | 32 | 10 |
| Maintenance | equipment | 0 | 101 | 0 | 196 |
| | tree work | 0 | 0 | 0 | 420 |
| | Lothian Conservation Volunteers | 0 | 95 | 0 | 89 |
| Banking and insurance | bank charges | 0 | 0 | 0 | 36 |
| | bank interest | 270 | 0 | 48 | 0 |
| | insurance | 0 | 239 | 0 | 239 |
| TOTAL | | 3,311 | 2,710 | 8,283 | 5,898 |

Our main funding this year was from Inspiring Scotland who provided £2,160 to commission a report on the feasibility of pond and wetland improvements. This will help plan future work in this area.

While our grant income has fallen, our income from fundraising events – the cake stall and fungi foray increased.

Compared to last year, we have considerably lower income and expenditure as more of our activities are ongoing maintenance rather than initial equipment purchase and training.

Thank you to Margaret Boyack, Edinburgh College for reviewing our accounts for our annual return to OSCR.

Reserves Policy

We manage Easter Breich Wood on behalf of the community, including encouraging community access by maintaining paths. A certain level of reserves is needed in case of unexpected, urgent path repairs or urgent tree removal along the roadside boundary.

This year we are putting £250 toward reserves.

This is reviewed annually in the light of costs actually incurred. Regular path maintenance and an annual tree condition survey will reduce the risk of unexpected urgent work being required.

Our Trustees

- Camilla Kidner, Chair
- Heather McClafferty, Treasurer
- Tina Crookston, Secretary
- Rhoda Lawton
- Grant Knight
- Norman Lannigan



[Easter Breich Wood Community Group SC051201](#)
9 Oakbank Cottages, West Calder, EH55 8PR