



WELCOME FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

I am delighted to introduce you to Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust 2020-21 Annual Report. This will give you an overview of the work we do and a review of our performance during the financial year 2020/2021.

The lockdown led to many people discovering new parks and greenspaces close to home. Greenspaces now play an even more important role in our everyday lives. Over the last year, it has become clear just vital greenspaces are for both our physical and mental health and what a precious resource they provide us.

The Covid-19 pandemic provided ELGT with some challenges and uncertainties but shone a very bright light on how important our vision is - that everyone in Edinburgh and The Lothians has access to quality greenspaces. Our staff were able to adapt quickly and effectively to the challenges of working from home and were able to provide many of our projects online to Edinburgh communities during lockdowns. Thanks to the hard work of so many staff members, partners and supporters, we were able to build on the successes of recent years and make significant strides.



Over the past year, ELGT has delivered a project programme worth nearly **£1 million**. The annual report demonstrates the success that we have achieved over the past year against our new strategic objectives

Our partnership work with the Thriving Greenspaces has enabled us to develop a mechanism to future proof the development and maintenance of greenspaces in the city.

The development of the Tree Time Initiative involved partnership working with the City of Edinburgh Council and The Woodland Trust. This will help deliver on the Million Tree City by 2030.

This annual report shows how our long-term financial model enables us to provide projects that benefits and helps communities across Edinburgh and The Lothians

It takes a real team effort to deliver our projects across local communities. We have achieved so much in the last year and this largely thanks to the hard work from our trustees, our partners, our supporters and of course our staff. I would like to give a heartfelt thanks to everyone.

Charlie Cumming, ELGT Chief Executive



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ELGT HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020-2021

Greenspaces for people and wildlife

2 greenspace improvement studies

3 new management plans

2 new play areas upgraded

5,500 bulbs planted

6317 new trees

420m of new hedging

6.8 hectares of wildflower meadow



Increased active travel

1 new infrastructure design

800m of upgraded paths

108m of new paths

6 new information signs

14 bike information sessions



Improved physical and mental health by

engaging with greenspaces

36 outreach sessions with 671 people

37 physical activity sessions with 238 attendees.

23 gentle exercise sessions with 24 older people.

38 walking activities with 179 attendees.

11 woodland sessions to improve 34 peoples' wellbeing. 16 gardening sessions with 26 people.

81 healthy eating cooking sessions with 163 people Facilitated 15 courses and 8 talks on healthy eating for 179 people. Trained 5 volunteer walk leaders

98%

felt less isolated

95%

are more comfortable using greenspaces

95%

eat more healthily

98%

felt their mental health is better

Greater appreciation/understanding of greenspaces and natural capital

715 people consulted on 6 landscape designs and management plans

86 online networking events attended with 878 people

68 community/online activities delivered with 587 people

25 conservation sessions with 144 volunteers

24 upskilling sessions, awarding 14 young people the Saltire award

Our Vision:

Everyone in Edinburgh and the Lothians has access to quality greenspaces which can help to improve their health & wellbeing



Oxgangs Walking Group

WHAT WE DO AND WHY:

Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust works to improve local greenspace for the benefit of local people. Since 1991 we have achieved this through practical environmental and educational projects in partnership with local communities and health focused initiatives as a way to support more people getting outdoors. Our projects are designed to benefit people, wildlife, landscape and heritage and to help connect people with their natural environment. As well as working at the heart of local communities, partnership working is critical to our success. We are an active part of the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership helping to deliver the Edinburgh Living Landscape initiative and we contribute to the creation of the Central Scotland Green Network.



Move and Groove Class



Moredun Tree Planting



Youth Upskilling

Improving Greenspaces

ELGT aims to create, enhance and improve access to quality greenspaces for people and wildlife by prioritising places and neighbourhoods where this offers significant benefits in terms of improving people's visual surroundings.

Over the last year ELGT has worked to improve and enhance greenspaces throughout Edinburgh city and The Lothians.

Greenspace play an important role in our everyday lives. They provide us with a place to play, to be active, relax and a place to meet family and friends. There is a substantial amount of evidence that supports the value of greenspaces for our health and wellbeing as well as our local biodiversity and wider environment.

Through the Tree Time initiative ELGT has planted **74** new trees during the November to March planting season and **79** donations worth **£22,000**. Tree Time tree planting programme builds on a commitment to make Edinburgh a "Million Tree City". Tree Time is working in partnership with Edinburgh Council and Woodland Trust to help Edinburgh. ELGT was able to expand the community orchard at Campbell park by planting **15** additional trees to make a total of **30** trees. A new fruit orchard was created in the grounds of Castleview Primary school. The tree will be enjoyed by the pupils and will also benefit the local wildlife. ELGT also successfully planted additional trees in Bruntsfield Links thanks to generous donations from local businesses.



New street trees through Tree Time



Fruit trees at Castleview Primary



Orchard Planting at Campbell Park



Pentland Community Playpark

Improved Health & Wellbeing

Our belief is that we can improve physical and mental health through activities in greenspaces which help to tackle social and health inequalities.

The Out and About project focuses on encouraging people to engage with their outdoor spaces through activities which promote healthy living and encourage positive health and wellbeing. The project also helps to build community spirit, reduce social isolation, and provide a welcoming environment for residents. All activities provided by the team are affordable, which means they are sustainable for the foreseeable future.

Through the Out & About healthy lifestyle project in South Edinburgh, we have developed and delivered over **72** physical activity sessions which in-volved **1,231** attendances of people facing health inequalities and older people. **99%** of participants were extremely happy or very satisfied with the sessions provided.



"It gave me a chance to do gentle exercise and socialise with other people".

We delivered **15** walking activities for **105** people with long term health conditions, older adults or people with early stage dementia and their carers in Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park & Redford Woods

"The virtual catch ups have been a lifeline to my positive mental health".



OUT & ABOUT CASE STUDY

FT lives in Oxbgangs and took part in our Fitness Roadshow, Gardening in the Park and Move & Groove sessions in Colinton Mains Park. When restrictions meant we couldn't offer face to face activities FT joined our virtual catch ups and online exercise sessions.

FT said that she would never have felt confident enough to attend exercise sessions held in a centre. By bringing exercise to her doorstep she felt able to join in as much or as little as she liked, with no pressure. Living with long term health conditions FT found that most exercise sessions are too strenuous. She felt that she benefitted from spending time outdoors. When the classes moved to the local park she became an ambassador encouraging others in the community along, explaining how it is suitable for everyone and how it can break isolation.

"The isolation before covid I thought was bad. Then the consistency of the sessions with out and about gave some structure to the week, and something to look forwards to These sessions have literally been a lifeline. I know of at least 3 others that don't physically come out but watch from there windows and do the exercises, and probably laugh at our moves and grooves. A friendly smile, along with fresh air has been the best medication offered. Kim and Ruth offer a safe, non judgemental and kind space"

After a Move & Groove session in Oxbgangs, she discussed a job she was trying to apply for. She mentioned her difficulties as she didn't have a suitable device and was using her mobile phone.

We got in touch with People Know How. We heard about their services at the South East Voluntary Sector Forum and through the EVOC slack channel. We explained the situation and that her daughter was also using a mobile phone for home schooling. People Know How were able to provide a tablet free of charge.

Receiving a tablet made a huge difference to our participant and her family. We received this feedback in an email

"I've just spent the last hour in tears because that place you organised for a tablet just called and they are delivering one this Friday. Thank you so much. This is a life-changer. This will make such a difference for me and my daughter."

FT was able to benefit from the tablet, making job applications easier. They were able to access our online sessions such as yoga and gentle fitness. It also made home-schooling significantly easier for her daughter.

We held 30 outreach activities called The Fitness Roadshow with local groups. with **300** attendees. The roadshow tasters allowed us to engage with potential participants in a covid-friendly way. We were able to reach people who were isolated and who we hadn't reached before.



Community Garden Tidy Up

"Looking fab. Your youth volunteers are amazing too and look great all dressed up. Brought a smile to my face".



Planting Tree in Moredun

"Thanks for putting on such a great Halloween trail. The kids said they loved finding monsters and pumpkins and now want to visit the castles"



Festive Fitness Roadshow

OUT & ABOUT CASE STUDY

SA attended our walking sessions at Oxfangs Walking Group when restrictions allowed. She had felt that all of her normal support systems had disappeared as centres were closed. This left her feeling isolated and with not much to do with her time. She always reported feeling energised after walking. She made suggestions of routes that we could explore together and really enjoyed it when we were able to do this.

During one of our walking group sessions, we introduced our walkers to Best Bib N Tucker, a local charity that works to alleviate loneliness and isolation through sewing, knitting and crochet lessons in the community. Although they couldn't offer face to face sessions at the time, they offered our walkers crochet kits that they could take home and enjoy. SA was really interested in this as she had never tried crochet before.

SA loved taking part in the activity at home. It sparked an interest and they returned to Best Bib N Tucker independently where they were welcomed and supported. They learned more about crochet and knitting and during lockdown they have been making twiddle-muffs which they donated to care homes.

When restrictions meant that we couldn't meet outside, SA was initially reluctant to try online sessions. However, with a little encouragement she joined our Zoom Virtual Catch Ups. Like a lot of this group, it was her first time using zoom and they all felt a sense of achievement in learning something new. This kept the connection going with the walking group and everyone said that it was an fantastic opportunity to get to know each other a lot better. We hosted our own Burns celebration with a sing along and SA's favourite session was with Living Memory, where we reminisced about all things to do with the Great Outdoors!

"Gives me a reason to go out to exercise and meet others. Feels good to get out and about exploring the local landscape and learning about nature."

"I don't feel lonely because I meet people"

Engaged Communities

Increase community engagement to highlight the importance of greenspaces by supporting and empowering local communities to connect with nature by becoming actively involved in local projects.

ELGT worked in partnership with Sandys Community Centre in Craigmillar and Goodtrees Neighbourhood Centre in Moredun to deliver an 8 week online activity programme for targeted families during the national lockdown. Nature themed activity packs were delivered to families and sessions were delivered online every week. The activities encouraged families to stay connected and motivated during the pandemic. Through the online activity programme we delivered **32** sessions to over **65** people with 20 tablets and data packs provided and **300** activity packs made up and delivered.

“Had a great time looking forward to the coming weeks and it’s great being able to connect. Hopefully soon we all be together

ELGT worked in partnership with Sandys Community Centre and Craigmillar Community Grows (Carr Gomm) to build a set of **3** outdoor learning pods and learning stations that will help facilitate outdoor education activities for disadvantaged children, adults and families living in the greater Craigmillar area.



Outdoor Learning at Craigmillar Castle Park

The project delivered a structured programme of outdoor learning throughout the year and enable all the local community to benefit from outdoor programmes which can help improve their confidence and team working, and health and wellbeing.

'We are so glad you are going to do this in support of our school. Outdoor learning is going to be the future. You are right next door to us so having a safe place to learn with all your space and woodland is going to be brilliant.



Outdoor Learning Pods in Craigmillar



As part of a larger Recovery Fund project and following our successful programme of online activities, we developed an outdoor activity programme with Sandys Community Centre and Craigmillar Community Grows (Carr Gomm) for children enrolled in Sandys Youth Group. New restrictions imposed after Christmas meant we had to adapt the programme to online sessions initially and then outdoor activities once restrictions allowed. Activities were chosen by the children to foster a sense of empowerment and included:

- ◆ Fire lighting and marshmallow
- ◆ Bat Boxes
- ◆ Hammocks
- ◆ Dream Catchers
- ◆ Games
- ◆ Arts & Crafts

The programme was developed as an essential means to allow the children to re-connect with each, nature and their local community after the national lockdown.

“My son absolutely loved doing the hammocks– thank you so much! We’re going to get one for our garden now” Parent of one of the participants in Craigmillar





Moredun Walking Adventure Group

Focusing in and around Craigmillar Castle Park, the Craigmillar Woodland Engagement project delivered a wide range of community engagement activities and volunteering opportunities that have fostered a greater understanding of nature and its value through community events, health & nature walks, natural play activities, workshops and practical conservation tasks. These opportunities have enabled the local community to learn new skills, get involved in volunteering activities, partake in active lifestyles and meet other local residents. Due to the global pandemic we had had to adapt our normal outdoor engagement activities which led to the development and delivery of online activities and a greater online presence to encourage the local community to explore the park on their own.

We have worked alongside local schools, organisations and community groups to deliver several initiatives to further strengthen the project's outcomes. The project has also identified opportunities and delivered woodland improvements within Craigmillar Castle Park through the Woods In and Around Towns scheme (WIAT).

"The activities give me something to look forward to every week. I love being out in nature and meeting other people. I feel my mental health has improved since coming along"



Branching Out



Health Walk



Hula Hoop Fitness

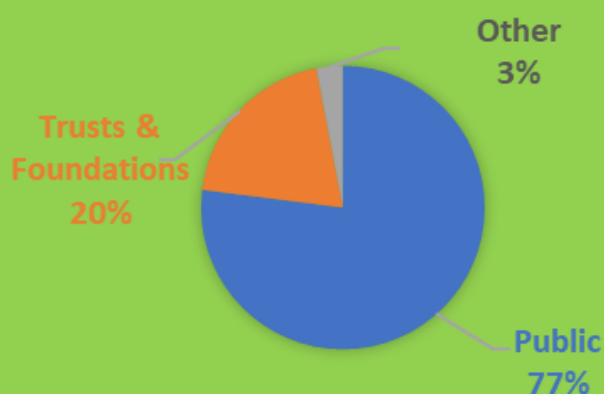
Financial Summary

Income

Public: £802,891- 77%

Trusts & Foundations: £210,807- 20%

Other: £35,632-4%

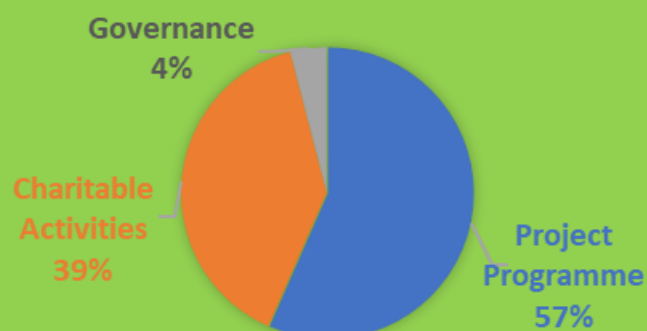


Expenditure

Project Programme Costs: £557,974-57%

Cost of Charitable Activities: £389,916-39%

Governance: £41,590-1%



THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

The Armed Forces Covenanters Trust
 Aviva Community Fund
 Bank of Scotland Foundation
 Burness Paull LLP
 Greyfriars Charteris Centre
 Choices for Change
 City of Edinburgh Council
 Co-Op Local Community Fund
 Colinton Community Council
 Cruden Foundation
 Edinburgh Airport
 Edinburgh Community Health Forum
 Edinburgh Health & Social Care Partnership
 Edinburgh & Lothians Health Foundation
 Edinburgh Old Town Development Trust
 EVOC
 FCC Communities Foundation
 Hunter Foundation Wellbeing Fund
 KPE4 Trust
 LEADER
 Lifecare Edinburgh

The Mushroom Trust
 NHS Lothian
 Paths for All
 Pentland Community Centre
 Prospect Housing Association
 RHS Scotland
 The Robertson Trust
 Scottish Forestry
 The National Lottery Heritage Fund
 NatureScot
 Sandys Community Centre
 Soroptimist International Of Edinburgh
 Southside Community Council
 Sustrans
 Tori Ratcliffe Art
 Tesco Bags of Help COVID-19 Communities Fund
 Trees for Cities
 The Woodland Trust
 Third Sector Resilience Fund
 William Grant Foundation
 West Lothian Council

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