





## WELCOME FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

I am delighted to introduce you to Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust 2021-22 Annual Report.

This will give you an overview of the work we do and a review of our performance during the financial year 2021/2022.

There has been increased recognition of the importance that greenspaces provide to local communities over the past year. They enable people to improve both physical and mental health. ELGT has seen an increase in demand for our services to provide activities to enable people to come together which had been sorely missed during the pandemic.

There has also been an increase in the requirement to help reduce biodiversity loss and mitigate against climate change through the restoration of our natural capital.

Our staff have been very busy developing projects and programmes of activity to address the increase in demand. 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 improvements to local greenspaces.



QMU Tree Planting

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

Our partnership work with Thriving Green Space project has enabled us to develop greenspace improvement projects through community engagement activities.

The Tree Time Initiative continues to develop in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council to help deliver on the Million Tree City by 2030. During 21/22 Tree Time was extended into East Lothian to raise funds for the Queens Green Canopy Initiative resulting in a significant interest in the planting of trees across the region.

The effort of our team to deliver projects across the region has been tremendous. 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. ELGT were particularly delighted to have won not just 1 but 2 awards this year. These are the Finest Woodlands awards for the Large Community Woodland and the Nature Scotland award for the first Health and Wellbeing award. I would like to give a heartfelt thanks to everyone.

**Charlie Cumming, ELGT Chief Executive**



Million Tree City Launch

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## ELGT 2021-2022 Highlights

### Greenspaces for people and wildlife

2 landscape improvement designs

2 greenspace feasibility studies

14,000 bulbs planted

11,240 new trees

300m of new hedging

7 hectares of wildflower meadow



### Increased active travel

2 new infrastructure designs

2 access feasibility studies



### Improved physical and mental health by

#### engaging with greenspaces

21 outreach sessions with 522 people

146 physical activity sessions with 965 attendees.

20 gentle exercise sessions with 79 older people.

192 walking activities with 561 attendees.

61 woodland sessions to improve 79 peoples' wellbeing.

29 gardening sessions with 59 people.

102 healthy eating cooking sessions with 118 people. Facilitated 14 courses and 10 talks on healthy eating for 230 people.

2 volunteer trained as walk leaders

98%

felt less isolated

95%

more comfortable  
using greenspaces

98%

more physically  
active

95%

eat more healthily

98%

felt their mental  
health is better

### Greater appreciation/understanding of greenspaces and natural capital

152 people consulted on 2 landscape designs

44 community/online activities delivered with 339 people

117 conservation sessions with 1,189 volunteers

40 outdoor learning sessions with 464 pupils and 26 teachers

25 upskilling sessions, awarding 24 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



## 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. ELGT are an active partner 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.





## 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. There is a substantial amount evidence that supports the value of greenspaces for our health and wellbeing as well as our local biodiversity and wider environment.

ELGT has produced **3** feasibility studies for Pentland Hills Regional Park, the River Almond and Burdiehouse Burn. **2** Green infrastructure projects have been developed in West Lothian as part of the Shale Trail and Pentland to Portobello route along with **3** climate change projects in West Lothian. **3** landscape designs have been produced for West Pilton Park, Coalie Park and Victoria Park Allotments in partnership with the local community. **2** community gardens have been created in SE Edinburgh.

Through the Tree Time initiative, ELGT has planted **80** new trees during the November to March planting season thanks to **129** donations worth **£46,888** from the public. It also received generous donations from businesses worth **£24,361**. The tree planting programme builds on a commitment to make Edinburgh a "Million Tree City" in partnership with The City of Edinburgh Council. **£48,000** was donated through the East Lothian Queens Green Canopy.

ELGT also worked with Trees for Cities to help plant up **1120** new trees in Stenhouse as part of the Queens Green Canopy Initiative. **11** new trees were also planted through the initiative in East Lothian with support from a local business. There were also **1,700** trees and **500** bulbs planted at Huntershall Park.

ELGT created **2** arboretums in Leith Links and Little France Park in partnership with the Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh with a total of **130** unique trees being planted. There were also interpretation panels installed so that the public could find out more about the importance of the trees.



East Lothian Tree Planting



Coalie Park Consultations



Stenhouse QGC Tree Planting



Leith Links Arboretum





An access feasibility study was undertaken along the River Almond which helped to identify potential improvements through funding from SEStrans

As part of the nature restoration project funded by Nature Scot a new wetland area was created and a burn restored in Cammo Estate in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council and the local Friends of Park group.

As part of the project **300m** of hedge and **5.9** hectares of meadow grass enhancement were implemented in Craigmillar Castle Park along with **10** new trees planted.

The project also involved nature improvements at Stenhouse which involved tree planting and wildflower seeding.

These projects will help reduce biodiversity loss and provide habitats for wildlife to thrive.

**8** Wee Forests have been created across the region which involved planting **4800** trees with the local community which is part of a world wide programme. The project has enabled us to work with both West Lothian and Midlothian councils. They have involved working with over **12** nearby schools who will help monitor and look after forests for future generations.



ELGT carried out greenspace improvements at Burnshot on the A90 as part of the new bridge that was built in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council. This involved planting over **450** trees with the local school pupils along side staff from Balfour Beatty. This will help to improve the appearance and biodiversity of the site.

ELGT worked with the Friends of Park group in Figgate Park who were keen to encourage the local community to get more involved with the biodiversity improvement of the park. Some of the members came out to plant up a variety of perennial plants and **180** shrubs to provide good horticultural interest, including summer and winter interest for birds.

There are several local primary schools which surround the park who are keen to use the space for outdoor learning .





## Improving 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.

The project delivered over **92** physical activity sessions which involved **730** attendances of people facing health inequalities and isolated older people. **92%** of participants felt more comfortable using greenspaces and local parks.

*"It has shown me different ways I can be healthy.  
And I have met other people to get fitter with"*



**20** gardening sessions which involved **54** participants learnt about growing vegetables where **97%** felt more involved in their community. This linked with running **18** cooking courses in partnership with Edinburgh Community Food. **20** environmental enhancements sessions involved **80** participants planting bulbs and fruit trees as well as **16** litter picks where **98%** felt more positive about their local community. **12** family woodland sessions involved **159** attendances where **98%** felt more comfortable using local woodlands.

## OUT & ABOUT CASE STUDY

G is an elderly man living in Gilmerton alone, having lost his wife a while ago and he clearly struggles with his memory and can't read or write very well. G was someone looking for social opportunities, keen to take part in walking groups and find out more about things happening locally. He came along to our walking group and we recommended he attend the Move 'n' Groove programme we were running and then he attended our garden get togethers too. He absolutely loves music and always likes to have a dance whatever we are doing, he loves encouraging others with gentle exercise to music and reminisces when his favourite tunes come on.

When he came along to Move 'n' Groove we introduced him to Jean from Gregarious Chinwag, who invited him along to their social lunch and gathering. This was a real success and he just loved having other things to branch out into. He's since taken part in activities at Bridgend Farmhouse and is now a regular at our Goodtrees Get Togethers and Walking Adventures. He enthuses about the activities and the people he gets to mix with, loves being outdoors and enjoying fresh air.

G has now agreed to attend our garden workshops at Gilmerton Community Centre being run by Out & About and Thrive, which will give him a weekly activity each Friday too.

Through the connection we have made with Goodtrees Neighbourhood Centre, G also has access to the pantry service which he really is grateful for.

We have since realised that G attended Health In Mind activities pre-lockdown and was lost without the structure and support each week – the service we have been able to offer has made a massive difference to the impact on G.





## Improving Health & Wellbeing

The Thrive Wellbeing programme involves working with Edinburgh Leisure, Cyrenians and SAMH through a Physical and Greenspace collective across Edinburgh to help improve people's wellbeing. The programme is funded for 5 years by the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership.



Redhall Walking Group

ELGT delivered **177 regular** nature walks with **459** attendees. There were also **52** jogging sessions with **202** attendees to help people be more active and for them to meet other people to help form support groups.

"The programme is great. I love the different walks and the interesting chat"

"I get physical exercise and company which I wouldn't normally have."



Oxgangs Walking Group

The programme involved delivering **27** conservation sessions were delivered with **49** attendees. These provided opportunities to make local improvements to help people feel more valued. The work includes tree and bulb planting where people generate a sense of achievement. The participants are also encouraged to join any local friends of parks groups to help them to stay connected within their local community.



Redford Conservation Activities



Branching Out

ELGT have run over **58** woodland activities with **361** attendees through an award winning Branching Out programme which is run over 12 weeks. The participants are referred into the programme and take part in a variety of outdoor activities. These include environmental arts and gentle exercise to help de-stress and improve confidence and wellbeing.

ELGT worked with Preston Street Primary School as part of our walking adventures programme. This involved activities with the families from the school which had a large mix of backgrounds. We ran walks in Holyrood park where they were able to explore the area and learn about the benefits that nature can provide.



Walking Adventures



## 9 Engaging 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.

The woodland engagement project at Craigmillar continues to encourage the local community to be involved in Craigmillar Castle Park. As a result of the successful delivery of the WIAT woodland management and access improvement works and the established and ongoing community engagement activities, the project won Scotland's Finest Woods – Large Community Woodland Award.

Judges said: "The Trust (ELGT) has made excellent progress in engaging with the local community, developing their awareness, understanding and appreciation of Craigmillar Castle Park. It has been notable how valuable the woodland has been to the local community during lockdown, providing an attractive greenspace which has helped with physical and mental wellbeing."



The project has delivered **134** community engagement events and engaged with a total of **1690** people. Due to the pandemic most events were for closed groups rather than open events. Examples include:

- Outdoor learning programme with St Francis Primary School
- Health walks for local people in partnership with Craigmillar Community Grows
- Community Conservation activities in partnership with Bridgend Farmhouse
- Afterschool club activities in partnership with Sandys Community Centre
- Litter picking group in partnership with Niddrie Medical Centre

The project has also successfully delivered two, 12 week upskilling programmes in partnership with Action for Children for 24 young people. Activities included footpath maintenance, vegetation clearing and woodland management tasks such as selective felling, pruning and crown lifting.



ELGT worked with Gracemount Primary School to deliver **8** forest school taster sessions. These were delivered with **184** Primary 4 pupils and their teachers. The activities delivered encouraged play and exploration as well as teamwork and challenge. Activities focused on using the senses, building cooperation, as well as basic literacy and motor skills. The programme and activities were decided and developed to ensure that pupils benefitted from the outdoor environment and were able to take part in activities that would increase their interaction with nature and improve their social and personal development skills.





## Engaging Communities

A key project was in partnership with a local nursery at Dregghorn and the local Armed Forces families through funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund. The staff and parents were involved in developing plans to improve the outdoor area. A contractor was used to build a teepee area and a mud kitchen area.

Nursery staff and parents helped to create a hidden garden area which was planted with a variety of vegetables, herbs and flowers. A series of grow and taste sessions enabled the parents to learn more about different plants. A hedge was created with a willow arch and screen.



Dregghorn Nursery Families

The project also involved bringing families together through a programme of activities to help their health and wellbeing. This included jogging fitness sessions where participants reported feeling better physically and mentally.

"The project came at a great time for me needing to get back in to exercise after having a baby and getting time to myself. Being outside and meeting new people has been great for my mental health"

"It's really got me out and moving and as a result I'm doing a jogging fundraiser, sort thing I'd have been to scared to take part in before."

Woodland sessions were thoroughly enjoyed by all the families who attended. Activities included shelter building, scavenger hunts, woodland crafts and bug hunts. Individuals benefitted by having activities over the school summer holidays in their local woodlands and by being inspired to spend more time in nature.

Families in the local area benefitted from feeling involved in nursery activities and having an outdoor space to grow herbs and vegetables together.



Dregghorn Nursery

The area has been greatly improved and been transformed from an underused section to a brightly-coloured and sensorily stimulating area full of vegetables, flowers and herbs.

The staff said that they felt inspired to use the vegetable and herb growing area and would use them again in activities with the children. The children at the nursery benefitted from having their play space improved and by seeing it be constructed and ask questions. The people involved in developing the area have felt included in the growth and have a sense of satisfaction from seeing the area change.



Family Outdoor Activities



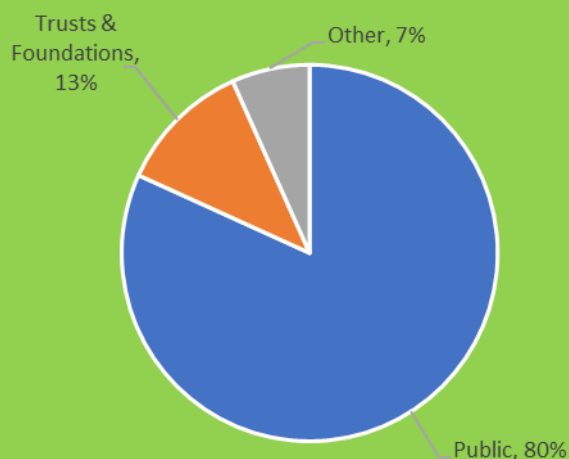
## Financial Summary

### Income

Public: £927,802- 80%

Trusts & Foundations: £148,621- 13%

Other: £81,146- 7%

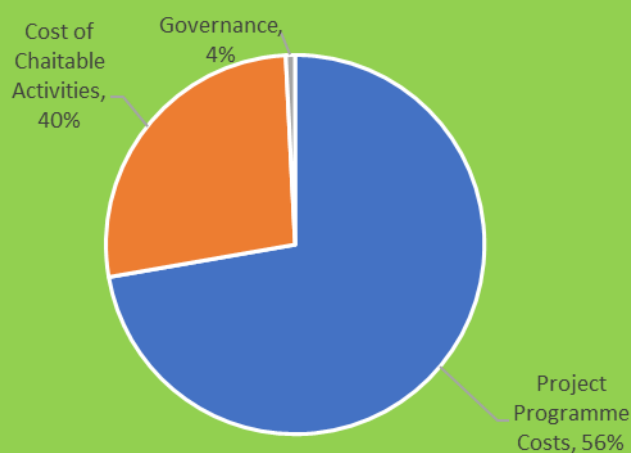


### Expenditure

Project Programme Costs: £606,036- 56%

Cost of Charitable Activities: £427,036- 40%

Governance: £42,917-4%



## THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust  
 Aegon  
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 Delta EE  
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 The Mushroom Trust  
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 SEPA  
 SEStrans  
 Tesco Bags of Help  
 Trees for Cities  
 The Woodland Trust  
 Third Sector Resilience Fund  
 Waitrose  
 West Lothian Council



Conservation Activities with Aegon at Little France Park





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& LOTHIAN  
GREENSPACE  
TRUST

## WANT TO FIND OUT MORE

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