

# Impact Report

## 2024 – 2025

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Our vision is that everyone in Edinburgh & the Lothians has access to quality greenspaces to help support health and wellbeing.

[www.elgt.org.uk](http://www.elgt.org.uk)

## CONTENTS

- 3 **Welcome**
- 4 **Vision / Mission / Aim / Values**
- 4 **What We Do And Why**
- 5 **Highlights**
- 6 **Greenspace and People**
- 8 **Climate and Nature**
- 9 **Active Travel**
- 10 **Health and Wellbeing**
- 11 **Case Study: Health & Wellbeing**
- 12 **Case Study: West Pilton Park**
- 13 **Forward Looking Plans**
- 14 **Thanks To Our Supporters**

# Welcome

## from the Chief Executive

This impact report demonstrates our success in delivering our strategic objectives over the past year, engaging more than 7,000 people to help communities care for and enjoy their local greenspaces, improving health, wellbeing and connection to nature across Edinburgh and the Lothians.

Our partnership work with the City of Edinburgh Council Thriving Green Space project has enabled us to develop greenspace improvement projects through community engagement activities. This has included improvement plans for West Pilton Park and the continued activities at Craigmillar Castle Park. We have also been helping to deliver on the Edinburgh Million Tree City Initiative by 2030 through the Tree Time initiative. Reducing biodiversity loss continues to be addressed through the development of restoration projects such as the Burdiehouse to Brunstane 'Restore the Burn' project with SEPA.

Our staff have been busy delivering health and wellbeing programmes to help reduce health inequalities. Thanks to partnership working we were able to help more people lead healthier active lives through the increased use of their local greenspaces.

The effort of our team to deliver projects and programmes across the region has been great. We have achieved so much over the last year, and this is largely thanks to the hard work from our trustees, partners, stakeholders and our staff. I would like to give special thanks to everyone who has supported ELGT.

**Charlie Cumming, Chief Executive**



Lorna Slater MSP meeting

***“I am delighted to present to you the Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust 2024-25 Impact Report. This will give you an overview of the work we do and a review of our performance during the financial year 2024/2025.”***

- Charlie Cumming

## Our Vision

Everyone in Edinburgh & the Lothians has access to quality greenspaces to help support health and wellbeing.

## Our Mission

To deliver practical environmental projects for the benefit of people and nature.

## Our Aim

To engage with communities and partners to enable greenspaces to be more accessible, climate resilient and biodiverse.

## Our Values

- We care for people and the environment
- We make things happen
- We are a reliable and trustworthy partner
- We inspire communities
- We are respectful and inclusive

# What We Do And Why

**The Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust has been working since 1991 to improve the quality of life for communities in the Lothians and we have successfully delivered £20M of practical environmental projects.**

Our inspiring, far-reaching and imaginative programme of environmental improvement and community involvement projects is designed to benefit people and nature, landscape and heritage and to re-connect people with their natural environment.

We combine professional expertise in project development, management and fundraising, with community development, consultation and engagement skills, enabling us to take a practical approach to the delivery of all projects, large or small and from start to finish.

# Highlights 2024 – 2025

## Greenspace and People

*Bringing Communities Together*

**554**

people consulted on 5 park improvement designs



## Climate and Nature

*Creating Habitats and Growing Edinburgh's Urban Forest*

**300m**

of new hedging creating vital wildlife corridors

**1,460**

new trees planted



## Enabling Active Travel

*Building Confidence and Expanding the Network*

**495m**

of new active travel paths built to help link up local communities to the network

**175m**

of boardwalk and path improvements at Hermitage of Braid and Cramond, improving access to nature for local communities



## Transforming Health and Wellbeing

*Delivering Accessible Programmes*

**110**

physical activity sessions engaging 1,016 people

**87**

woodland sessions supporting 81 individuals with targeted wellbeing needs





# Greenspace and People

**We aim to deliver accessible, biodiverse and climate resilient greenspaces through projects, partnerships, and community engagement.**

We engaged with residents to develop major greenspace improvement plans which include West Pilton Park and Restore the Burn project which enabled people to take a greater interest in their local greenspaces to help create better places.

We upgraded the play area at Keddie Gardens to help encourage greater use of outdoors spaces which enables young people to be more active.



***“These improvements have opened up Keddie Gardens Play Park to lots of people, providing safe and inclusive play equipment for children and their families. Play, interaction and spending time outdoors is so important to children’s development and quality of life, and this refurbishment will help more local people to spend time in the park.”***

*Councillor Margaret Graham, Culture and Communities Convener, opening Keddie Garden*

**200<sup>m2</sup>**

of wetland improvement of Seven Acre park

**94%**

of activity participants felt more connected and comfortable using their local greenspaces

**3,860**

people brought together through the delivery of **57** community events and **122** partnership activities in Craigmillar Castle Park



## Greenspace And People continued

121

conservation sessions delivered alongside businesses and local communities, with **1,056** volunteers helping to develop knowledge and skills

45

upskilling sessions with **144** young people at Craigmillar Castle Park

416

young people helped to build skills and confidence through outdoor learning programmes

*“It was a real pleasure working with you, and our team had so much fun on the day. Thrilled to hear how much of a difference their efforts made...Thanks again for having us, and we hope to collaborate again in the future!”*

*- Cushman & Wakefield*



# Climate and Nature

**We aim to develop and deliver projects that address climate change and biodiversity loss, such as supporting local biodiversity action plans, woodland creation, and green corridor development.**

ELGT recognises that good quality natural habitats can reduce the risk of flooding as well as protecting the pollinators needed to produce food. Our projects have helped restore nature and mitigate against climate change.

**£34,738**

raised from public donations through Tree Time to help grow urban forests by planting **1,460** new trees.

**3**

hibernacula shelters built, providing safe havens for wildlife

**1,800<sup>m2</sup>**

of wetlands across the Lothians improved to help preserve great crested newts.

**950**

bulbs planted to support pollinators



Pond planting at Drumshoreland

***“By participating in activities that support local greenspaces such as planting, habitat restoration, the volunteering directly contributed to environmental sustainability, which is a key pillar of Corporate Social Responsibility.”***

*Blackrock Volunteer*



# Active Travel

**We aim to deliver green active travel projects and encourage greater use of the active travel network. Working with local authorities, landowners and partners to develop and enhance green active travel.**

We built access improvement projects at Craiglockhart Pond, Hermitage of Braid, Miller Row and Cramond to help people visit their local greenspaces.

**495m**  
of new pathway  
created at Hunters  
Hall Park

**18**  
bike club sessions  
introduced cycling  
to new riders

**500**  
Innertube cycle route  
maps distributed to  
encourage network use

**175m**  
of access improvement  
at Craiglockhart Pond,  
Hermitage of Braid  
and Miller Row

***“It’s been great regaining my cycling confidence in good company and learning local routes”***  
*Social Cycles participant*



# Health and Wellbeing

*“Having these workshops and walks to come along to keeps me on track with my fitness, I really do feel the benefit of regularly taking part”*

*Inch Park Walking group participant.*

**We aim to deliver accessible and inclusive health improvement programmes with a focus on areas of disadvantage, including mental health, physical activity, and community growing initiatives.**

We transformed the health and wellbeing of people suffering from health inequalities through the Out & About and Thrive programmes.

**64**

outreach sessions reaching **420** people facing health inequalities

**100**

people referred to health improvement programmes to reduce social isolation and improve their physical & mental health

**288**

walking activities with **1,604** participants

**20**

gentle exercise sessions tailored for older adults

**148**

woodland activity sessions helped connect **371** people with nature to improve mental wellbeing

Participant Outcomes:

**94%**

more comfortable using greenspaces

**94%**

more physically active

**95%**

felt less isolated

**97%**

reported improved mental health

## CASE STUDY

# Health and Wellbeing

**'A'** is a 59 year old man living in South East Edinburgh, suffering from poor mental health and panic attacks as well as having diabetes and being 'generally unfit'. He came to us after his Community Link Worker recommended our health walks from Ferniehill Surgery.

Initially, he was very anxious and unsure whether he could come along and manage to complete the walks. We worked closely with **'A'** to help build his confidence and give him encouragement to come along each week.

As a local man, he loves sharing the area's history with others, giving him a great route to connect with the group and add to everyone's experience. Information provided about the route before the session also helped him attend regularly.

A has since taken on the role of creating a route each week, which has done wonders for his confidence. Since coming along to the group, he has grown in character and developed strong friendships with other members of the group, encouraging others to feel part of the group too.

*"I do feel very proud and very happy I joined the group, I believe it's the beginning of what can be described as a rather long journey in getting more active and fitter. I joined not being able to walk very far, around 800 metres without requiring a seat to rest.*

*I'm now capable of walking 1.5 km before requiring a rest. My muscles are still very sore after the walk but nobody said it would be a quick fix."*



## CASE STUDY

# West Pilton Park

**ELGT are working in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council to develop exciting plans for the enhancement of West Pilton Park in North Edinburgh. The aim is to transform the park into the beautiful, bustling centre of a thriving neighbourhood community by improving access, play, nature connection and amenity.**

West Pilton Park serves over 6,000 residents in one of Edinburgh's most deprived areas (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2024). The 1.55-hectare site is owned by the City of Edinburgh Council and located in isolation from other greenspaces. It provides vital access to nature for families in Pilton, Muirhouse, Drylaw, and Crewe Toll, who would otherwise travel to reach alternative open space.

Designs have been developed through consultation with the local community which identified existing problems which included drainage issues and the lack of facilities. This transformative project will create a flexible, inclusive community asset addressing climate change mitigation and biodiversity enhancement while serving diverse user needs.

## Project Benefits to the Local Community

Access will be dramatically improved with new paths, entrances and many benches & seating areas; drawing people into the park and providing beautiful spaces in which to stay and relax.

A community growing area will form the centre of gardening and growing.

The park will be a busy place with an outdoor gym and basketball court, as well as open amenity space for people's own activities.

Play will be improved through new formal equipment and informal play spaces spread throughout the park, as well as the introduction of skate and bouldering features.

The seasonal wetland will form a central feature and with over 300 new mature trees, meadows, perennials and bulb planting, the park will become a haven for wildlife and nature.

Flexible open space with in-ground power points can host large festival events, with a formal 'bandstand' performance space for everyday community use.

A new café pavilion will provide food, drinks, flexible meeting space and toilets for the park. It will act as a hub for the park and for the community as a whole.



# Forward Looking Plans

12–24 MONTH OUTLOOK

## Greenspaces & People

Consultations on play facilities for Paties Road Recreation Ground.

6 week upskilling programmes for 20 young people in Craigmillar.

Run a programme of 20 youth activities with 50 attendances by young people in South East Edinburgh.

Support Friends of parks groups to help improve local greenspaces through conservation and environmental enhancement sessions with over 500 volunteers.

Greenspace improvements at West Pilton Park, Craigmillar Castle Park and Prestonfield Greenspace.

New play facilities at Murieston Park, King George V Park (New Town) and King George V Park (South Queensferry), including green infrastructure improvements.

Deliver a new Multi-Use Ball Court at Figgate Park.

## Active travel

Development of plans to make path improvements to Easter Craiglockhart Hill.

Improve access along Katesmill bridge at the Water of Leith.

Cycling programme to improve confidence of using the network.

## Climate & Nature

Help to deliver on the Million Tree City Initiative through Tree Planting, Tree Time and Wee Forests.

Engage with the Woodland Strategy and Open Space strategy.

Help to deliver the Thriving Greenspaces Initiative, the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan, Edinburgh Living Landscape and nature network actions.

Undertake RIBA Stage 2 Concept Design, RIBA Stage 3 & 4 Technical Design for the Burdiehouse Burn project with SEPA through the Water Environment Fund.

Develop strategic nature restoration projects with NatureScot.

## Health and Wellbeing

Run over 150 community engagement and physical activity sessions including fitness sessions and nature walks with over 700 attendances to help participants stay engaged and active.

Plan and deliver 60 woodland and conservation sessions, supporting over 200 participants.

Ongoing evaluation and promotion of activities through surveys with an aim of getting 95% of participants to feel more connected to their local community and value their local greenspaces.

# Thanks

We are grateful to the following organisations for supporting our work in 2024–25

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**Aitken Turnbull**

**Anderson Strathern**

**Artemis Fund**

**Avaloq**

**Baillie Gifford**

**BCHS Cleaning**

**City of Edinburgh Council**

**Clearscore**

**Cushman & Wakefield**

**East Lothian Council**

**Earthwatch**

**Eco Bride**

**EDF Renewables**

**Ernst & Young**

**Edinburgh Health &  
Social Care Partnership**

**Edinburgh International Festival**

**EVOC**

**FCC Communities Foundation**

**Friends of Gyle Park**

**Gilmerton Community Centre**

**Janus Henderson Investors**

**JLL**

**JP Morgan**

**LMG**

**Link Orthopaedics**

**M&G**

**Morningstar**

**Mercer**

**The Mushroom Trust**

**NatureScot**

**NHS Lothian**

**Office for the Internal Market**

**PWC**

**Scottish Forestry**

**SEPA**

**S&P Global**

**Siemens Energy**

**Skyscanner**

**Sopra Steria**

**Stryker**

**SQW**

**Tree Council**

**Trees for Cities**

**University of Edinburgh**

**Walking Scotland**

**Walk Wheel Cycle Trust**

**Walter Scott Partners**

**West Lothian Council**

**William Grant & Sons**

**The Woodland Trust**

# Get Involved

Help us create greener, healthier communities across Edinburgh and the Lothians.

**Donate** to support practical environmental projects

**Volunteer** as an individual or corporate team

**Take part** in a community activity or wellbeing programme

**Sign up** to our newsletter

**Follow us** on social media @greenspacetrust

[www.elgt.org.uk/support-us](http://www.elgt.org.uk/support-us)

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**f** **🦋** **✂** **@greenspacetrust**

ELGT is governed by a board of trustees to ensure that we meet our strategic priorities and deliver meaningful benefit for people who use greenspaces across the region. Our current members are City of Edinburgh Council and Midlothian Council and we work closely with Scottish Forestry, NHS Lothian, Walk Wheel Cycle Trust and other organisations to deliver against agreed outcomes.

Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust is a charity registered in Scotland no. SC018196 and a company limited by guarantee in Scotland no. SC132480