

Impact Report

2025-26

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

www.elgt.org.uk

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Welcome from our Chief Executive

This year, the Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust has delivered measurable impact across the region by creating greener, healthier and more connected places for people and nature. Through our projects and partnerships, we engaged with over 5,000 people, helping communities play an active role in shaping their local environments.

In West Pilton, we worked with residents and the City of Edinburgh Council to develop an ambitious improvement plan for West Pilton Park with works due to start in July 2026. At Craigmillar Castle Park, our long-term community programme continues to flourish, with over 2,700 people taking part in 166 events and activities. These successes demonstrate the value of local engagement in creating thriving, inclusive greenspaces.

We have also advanced our climate and nature restoration work through projects with SEPA, Edinburgh Thriving Greenspaces Team and the West Lothian Biodiversity Team by enhancing biodiversity and creating new habitats across Edinburgh and in West Lothian.

A key achievement has been our continued contribution to the Edinburgh Million Tree City Initiative and the Lothians Climate Forest through our Tree Time programme, supported by generous donations and volunteers, expanding the tree canopy across the region and strengthening its climate resilience.

These achievements are made possible through the dedication of our team and the support of our trustees, partners and funders. Together, we are delivering lasting environmental and social value across Edinburgh and the Lothians.



Charlie Cumming, ELGT Chief Executive

Our Vision

Our vision is that everyone in Edinburgh & Lothians has access to quality greenspaces to help support their 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 £21M 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.

Our work supports national objectives for climate mitigation, adaptation and a just transition, through place based delivery in an urban setting.

- Aligns with Scotland's ambition to become Nature Positive by 2030 and to restore biodiversity by 2045, as well as NPF4 requirements for biodiversity enhancement and nature networks.
- Contributes to Scotland's net zero pathway through the promotion of Green active travel routes which reduces car dependency.
- Aligns with national objectives around place based regeneration, community wealth building and reducing spatial inequalities.
- Supports Scotland's preventative health agenda, reducing pressure on health services through early intervention and community based activity.

Highlights 2025-26

Greenspace And People

Bringing communities together

3316

people took part in
community events



568

people consulted
on 7 park
improvements



Climate And Nature

*Creating Habitats and Growing
Urban Forests*

1336

people took part in
conesevation activities



990

new trees
planted



Enabling Active Travel

*Building Confidence and
Expanding the Network*

750m

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



Transforming Health and Wellbeing

*Delivering Accessible
Programmes*

1300

people took part in
outdoor physical activities
to improve their health



33

woodland sessions
delivered supporting 75
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, including Prestonfield Bowling Green which enabled people to take a greater interest in their local greenspaces to help create better places.

We upgraded the play areas at Murieston Park and Bruntsfield Links. Built a new Cruyff Court in Figgate Park to help encourage greater use of outdoor spaces which enables young people to be more active.

“The new Cruyff Court is a fantastic addition for Edinburgh, creating a free and accessible space where children can come together, get active and enjoy sport close to home. I hope it inspires the local community to get involved, try something new and make the most of this brilliant resource.”

Councillor Margaret Graham, Culture and Communities Convener, opening Cruyff Court





Greenspace and People

2757

people brought together through the delivery of **98** community events in Craigmillar Castle Park



“We loved our trip to Craigmillar Castle earlier in the year. Families had a brilliant time. What a fascinating site”. Partner Organisation



35

upskilling sessions with **60** young people

94%

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

218

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



24

woodland family sessions with **63** people to help them connect with nature





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

£31,359

raised from public donations through Tree Time to plant **58** new parkland trees.

15300

bulbs planted to support pollinators in West Lothian involving **197** young people

1336

volunteers carried out conservation activities, helping to develop knowledge and skills



“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.” EDF Volunteer

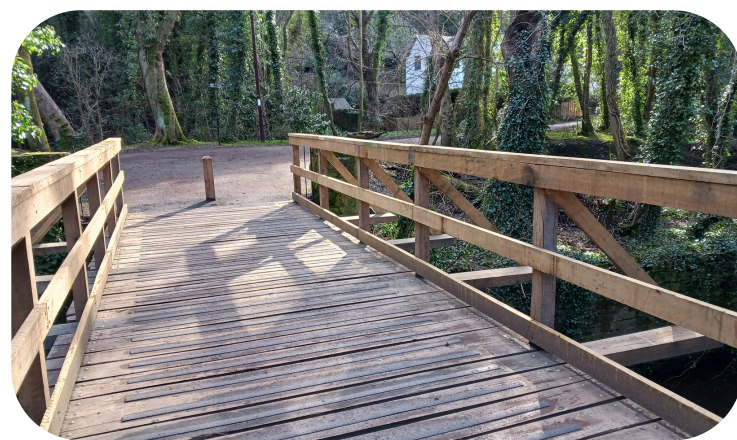


Active Travel



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 an access improvement project at Katemill Bridge over the Water of Leith to help people visit their local greenspaces.



750m

of new pathway created at Muirwood Field to connect communities



10

bike club sessions delivered to help people be more confident cycling



“Thank you for running such a fantastic group. It’s been great regaining my cycling confidence in good company and learning local routes”

Social Cycles Participant



Health and Wellbeing



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 through the Thrive, Out & About, Branching Out and Community Mental Health programmes.

120

people referred to health improvement programmes through community link workers to reduce social isolation and improve their physical and mental health

42

outdoor activity sessions helped connect **37** young people with greenspaces to improve mental wellbeing

189

walking activities with **1,297** attendances helped to improve physical health

56

woodland activity sessions helped connect **345** people with nature to improve mental wellbeing

Participant Outcomes:

94%

felt less isolated

94%

more comfortable using greenspaces

94%

more physically active

97%

reported improved mental health



Case Study

Health and Wellbeing



Brian found a new lease of life through enjoying greenspace through a South-East Edinburgh Walking Group, after being referred by our Community Link Worker. He had been very active and social until his health deteriorated after an accident at work a few years ago. Brian lived on his own, and was feeling very socially isolated, as well as coping with memory problems, mobility issues and ongoing pain. His confidence had dropped with reduced social connection, and he had prediabetes to manage too.

Joining our sociable Ferniehill Walking Group helped a lot, as he loved to walk as much as he could manage. Whilst somewhat nervous at first, Brian has gone on to join in with other activities and groups, in a supported way. His confidence and abilities to do things has rocketed. He loves getting to know new people, enjoying community lunches and helping in all sorts of ways in gardens, parks and woodland areas.



“I enjoy walking and talking with the group. We also learn about our surroundings and different trees, flowers and the occasional birds. We chat about all kinds of things. I’ve learned about how exercise improves your physical and mental wellbeing.”

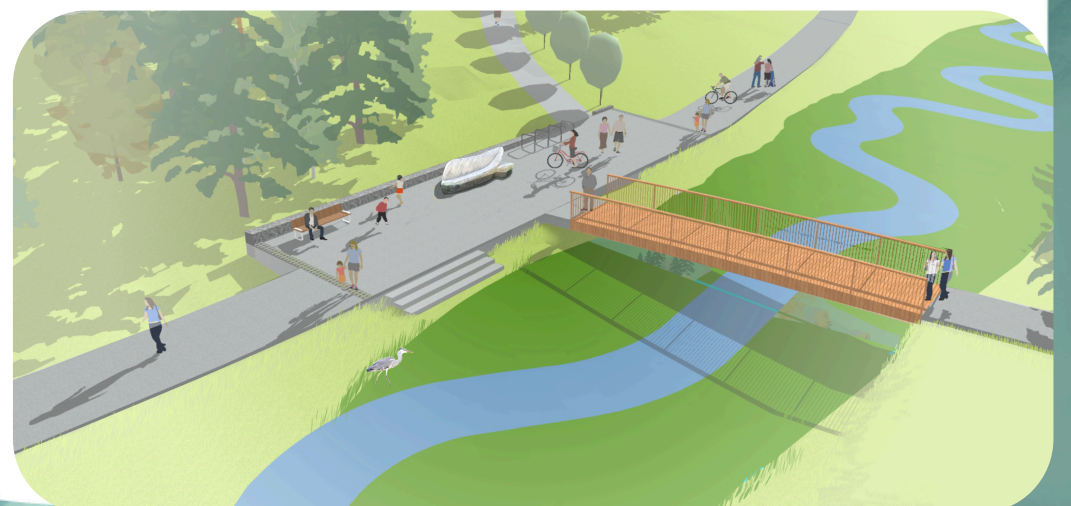
Case Study

Restore the Burn



ELGT are working in partnership with the SEPA to restore a burn which flows from Pentland Hills to the Forth. The project vision is for the burn to become a successful and notable blue-green regeneration project having restored approximately 5km of the burn and surrounding habitats. It will realise the potential of the burn to:

- **Be a blue corridor** - Restored, enhanced, and realigned, with improved morphology, in-stream habitats, sediments, and vegetation.
- **Be a green corridor** - Restored, enhanced, and newly created habitat and vegetation line the banks of the burn and expand out into the connecting landscapes.
- **Provide valued public places** – There are attractive spaces for work, relaxation, recreation, education, and play, that are valued and used by local communities and organisations.
- **Provide public access & active travel** – Well maintained routes increase and support active travel throughout the neighbouring communities of the burn, connecting them and the burn with each other and to the wider city of Edinburgh.
- **Educate and engage** – Local people, groups and schools use the burn to connect, educate, and engage with water, nature, and wildlife in their everyday life.
- **Provide climate adaptation and resilience** – Space for the burn to flood is designed into its surrounding areas through two-stage channels, wetlands, and managed floodplains that keep water away from property. The heat-island effects of the city are counteracted by the burn and its surrounding lands.



Forward Looking Plans

12 -24 MONTH OUTLOOK

Greenspaces and People

- Deliver £5m greenspace improvements at West Pilton Park
- Community events and activities at Craigmillar Castle Park including 6 week upskilling programmes for 20 young people in Craigmillar.
- New play facilities at King George V Park (New Town) and King George V Park (South Queensferry), including green infrastructure improvements.
- Support Friends of parks groups to help improve local greenspaces through conservation and environmental enhancement sessions with over 500 volunteers.

Climate and Nature

- Help to deliver on the Million Tree City Initiative through Tree Planting, Tree Time and Wee Forests.
- Lead collaborative delivery of the Lothian Climate Forest with local authorities, ensuring Climate Forest projects actively contribute to the Woodland and Open Space Strategies.
- Help to deliver the Edinburgh Thriving Greenspaces Initiative, the Edinburgh and West Lothian Biodiversity Action Plans and nature networks.
- Undertake RIBA Stage 3 & 4 Technical Design for the Restore the Burn project with SEPA through the Water Environment Fund.

Active Travel

- Development of plans to make path improvements to Easter Craiglockhart Hill.
- Cycling programme to improve confidence of using the network.

Health and Wellbeing

- Run over 50 community engagement and physical activity sessions including fitness sessions and nature walks with over 700 attendances to help participants stay engaged and active.
- Deliver 48 woodland activity sessions to help improve mental wellbeing which support over 48 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 2025–26

Atkins Realis
Atria One
Aegon
Centrica
Changes
City of Edinburgh Council
Clarks Contracts
Copper Consultancy
Cruyff Foundation
Drylaw and Telford Community Association
East Lothian Council
Earthwatch
Eco Bride
EDF Renewables
Edinburgh Napier University
Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society
Edinburgh Health & Social Care Partnership
ECCAN
Environmental Standards
Ernst & Young
Eversheds Sutherland
Friends of Inch Park
Forth 20
Forth Climate Forest
EVOC
FCC Communities Foundation
Gilmerton Community Centre
Green Action Trust
Groundwork UK
i4 Product Design
James Hambro & Partners
Juniper Green Community Council
KPE4
Lumacron
M&G
Miller Homes
Mercer
Moody's
NCM Fund & Corporate Services
NatureScot
NatWest Group
NHS Lothian
NHS Lothian Charity
North Edinburgh Arts
Prospect Housing Association
Pulsant Data Centre
PWC
Red Rock Renewables
Royal London
Rowanbank Environmental Arts
The Scottish Football-
Partnership & Trust
Scottish Forestry
Scottish Power
SEPA
TESCO
Tree Council
Trees for Cities
University of Edinburgh Business-
School
Walking Scotland
Walk Wheel Cycle Trust
Walter Scott Partners
West Lothian Council
West Lothian Development Trust
Wood Mackenzie
WPP Media

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



<https://www.elgt.org.uk/support-us/>

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. We work closely with Scottish Forestry, NatureScot, 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

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