

The Friends of the Pentlands

**Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation.
Registered in Scotland No. SC035514**

ABOUT US

1 Background

The inaugural meeting of the Friends of the Pentlands was held on 29 March 2003. The raison d'être for that meeting was a willingness to take forward two specific objectives stated in the Pentland Hills Regional Park Integrated Management Strategy; viz, the wish to establish "an independent friends group" and the wish "to encourage wider participation by the public". The first Annual General Meeting was held on 11 May 2004 and the Organisation became a registered Scottish Charity on the same date.

To better meet its longer term aspirations and needs the decision was taken at the Annual General Meeting on 8 May 2012 to apply to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) to change its legal form to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). The application was successful with the SCIO being registered on 18 December 2012.

As at 31 December 2016 the membership of the Friends of the Pentlands stood at 387 (individuals and organisations) and the Board currently has 12 Trustees. During 2016 members contributed 6175 hours of their time to support a wide range of activities.

2 Mission Statement

The Friends of the Pentlands seek to act as a catalyst to promote the conservation, protection and enhancement of the Pentland Hills, with particular emphasis on recreational quality, public access, cultural heritage, landscape and biodiversity.

3 Purposes

Taken from our Constitution:

- To protect and enhance the natural beauty and upland character of the Pentland Hills its waters and surrounding countryside. Declaring that "the Pentlands" shall mean the Pentland Hills and surrounding countryside
- To protect and enhance the natural and cultural heritage and features of public amenity within this area
- To encourage respect for the quality of life of those who live and work within this area
- To carry out environmental projects that enhance public access and biodiversity
- To encourage high standards of design in all work undertaken within this area
- To provide an annual programme of activities to foster the enjoyment of healthy exercise, an appreciation of the environment and social and cultural history

- To promote the forming of appropriate planning policies, compatible with these purposes, through the considered long term development plan process and their effective and consistent implementation
- To stimulate public interest in these purposes by means of publications, meetings, exhibitions, appeals and other forms of publicity
- To co-operate with other bodies to promote the foregoing purposes

4 Area of Interest

The Friends area of interest is as follows:-

- The City of Edinburgh By-pass in the north;
- The A702 in the east;
- The A70 in the west and
- The minor road from Dolphinton, via Dunsyre to Newbigging, and then the A721 to Carnwath in the south.

While the Organisation's practical activities are largely conducted within the area defined above or on footpaths giving access to this area the Friends also have an interest in developments which impact on the visual landscape of the Pentland Hills, either when seen from the Pentlands or from the surroundings of the Pentlands.

5 Modus Operandi

The Organisation, in fulfilling its Purposes, will adopt the following procedures:-

- Comply with the relevant guidance from the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)
- Seek to ensure that, as far as is practical, the Organisation's work demonstrates its all-embracing aspirations; its wish to be a catalyst for integrated action; its enthusiasm for advocacy; its wish to avoid being overtly political, yet retaining its right to lobby when necessary, especially with regard to perceived threats; and its hope that its work will, in the long term, lead to an inspirational approach to the environmental protection and enhancement of the Pentland Hills.
- Recognise that, as an all-volunteer body, its capabilities and influence are limited. In recognition of that reality the Organisation will seek, whenever appropriate, to obtain advice from and/or work with bodies that have greater expertise in the field of natural and cultural heritage and conservation and biodiversity.
- Use its membership of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Consultative Forum to co-operate with the Regional Park, bearing in mind, however, that the Friends' interests may not always coincide with those of the Park, and that the Organisation's area of interest extends well beyond the boundaries of the Regional Park.

- Maintain mutually beneficial relationships with Local Authority Access Officers, landowners, land managers and other organisations with an interest in the Pentlands.
- Monitor planning applications lodged with Local Authorities or the Scottish Government to ascertain their potential impact on the Friends' area of interest and, when necessary, to submit an appropriate response.
- Apply for membership of those bodies that the Board considers will help with achieving the Organisation's purposes

6 LONGER TERM OBJECTIVES

The Organisation's long term objectives relate to improvements that will need substantial grant funding and need to be addressed in partnership with other organisations. They are listed below:-

To consider the possibility of establishing a path ranger survey service for the area of the Pentland Hills which lies outwith the boundaries of the Regional Park.

To promote the extension of the Regional Park in order that it may cover the whole area of the Organisation's interest

7 SHORTER TERM OBJECTIVES

The Organisation expects the shorter term objectives to be completed by 31 December 2016. Major projects that are developed during the year are to be funded from grants while the Friends contribution is expected, in most cases, to continue to be met in kind by time, managerial or labour or both.

Protecting

- To continue to carry out a programme of path maintenance where possible including the continued 'adoption' of:

Buckie Brae
 Hillend to Boghall, Boghall to Castlelaw,
 Phantoms Cleuch paths (NT 210658 to NT212651 approx.),
 Lowries Den to Silverburn
 Selm Muir Wood to Little Vantage.

- To continue to carry out a programme of countryside furniture inspections (for items installed by the Friends of the Pentlands i.e. stiles, boardwalks etc.) and maintain appropriate records.
- To carry out a programme of path inspections in the South West Pentlands, the adopted paths within the Regional Park and the two paths developed by the Friends of the Pentlands (Lowries Den to Silverburn and Selm Muir Wood to Little Vantage).
- To carry out improvements to the path network in the South West Pentlands. These may be subject to a requirement for external funding.

- To review the Organisation's requirements for a storage/workshop building.
- To continue to monitor the Pentland Way

Conserving

- To continue to carry out a litter picking programme
- To maintain the Harlaw Visitor Centre Wild Life Garden in conjunction with the Natural Heritage Service and a wildlife garden at the Hillend Steading. Explore any opportunity that might arise for an additional wild life garden elsewhere in the Pentland Hills.

Enhancing

- To maintain the 5 arboreta planted within the Pentland Hills in 2013 and 2014.
- To develop appropriate new paths in conjunction with others.
- To develop the Harlaw Visitor Centre Wildlife Garden following the awarding a £12,000 grants under the Tesco Bagsofhelp scheme

Reaching Out

- To hold an Access for All event
- To give talks to promote the Friends of the Pentlands
- To attend local fairs/events to promote the Friends of the Pentlands
- To develop and further promote our existing educational activities
- To continue to develop the mutually beneficial relationship with the Balerno Ramblers, local TCV group and corporate groups.
- To continue to work with Woodlands School Currie to enable the pupils to obtain their John Muir Award.
- To carry out a programme of educational walks and talks for members and their friends
- To develop the organisations capacity to help people with disabilities access the Pentland Hills by using its mobility scooter
- To publish and sell an educational book, Wildwood Legacy written by one of its members

- To explore the setting up of activities aimed at younger people.

Administration

- To develop a training programme for volunteers by formal and informal training
- To maintain and develop a website and Facebook page
- To issue an annual review and two editions of the Pentland Post each year
- To maintain reserve funds of not less than £7500 and not more than £15,000
- To review the Organisation's premises requirements

Administrative costs to be met from membership fees, including gift aid

The above objectives are in addition to the planned activities described in the 2017 Programme of Events - please see that document for details.