



Annual Review 2018

The Friends of the Pentlands is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SC035514) which exists:

- To protect and enhance the natural beauty and upland character of the Pentland Hills, its waters and surrounding countryside
- To protect and enhance the cultural heritage and public amenities of the area
- To promote the quality of life of those who live and work here
- To carry out environmental projects that enhance public access and biodiversity
- To encourage high standards of design in new works undertaken in the area
- To provide an annual programme of activities including walks, talks, etc.
- To promote appropriate planning policies
- To stimulate public involvement by means of publications, exhibitions, appeals, etc.
- To co-operate with other bodies active in the area



For more information see our website at www.pentlandfriends.org.uk

Chair's Foreword - Hamish Clark

I am very pleased to present this Annual Review of the highlights of 2018.

John Surtees stepped down as Chair at the AGM and I would like to thank him for his active leadership and many significant contributions to FoP. Since becoming Chair I have become even more aware of the variety and scale of the work done that is only made possible by the enthusiasm and commitment of all our members and volunteers.

At the end of the year Malcolm Humphrey stepped down as Litter-picking leader and John Surtees as a work party leader. Thanks to them for all their time and effort. I'm pleased that Judy Cantley and Andrew Marsden are taking over as Litter-picking leader and work party leader respectively. I'm also grateful to May Le Sueur for taking over as Gardening leader after the sad loss of Esmee Yuille, and to Ian Combe and Mike Andrew who have become our new Arboretum leaders. Special thanks to Dennis Smith for editing and producing another Annual Review.

John Stirling organised a very successful Schools Access Day at Harlaw and Threipmuir in May, enjoyed by pupils from Dean Park Primary School and Braidburn, St Crispins and Woodlands Special Schools. Linda, John and the team have again assisted pupils from Woodlands School working towards their John Muir Awards.

Various groups have generated income for our coffers. Alyson, Linda and the rest of the team have once again done a wonderful job with Tea and Cakes Days at Harlaw Visitor Centre. David Syme, assisted by his sales team, has sold many copies of the 2019 calendar. The production costs of 'Wildwood Legacy' by Martyn Baguley have almost been cleared and future sales will generate income for FoP. We continue to benefit from the legacy of Bob Paterson's book 'The Pentland Way'.

The launch of mobility scooter trips from Harlaw Visitor Centre was unfortunately delayed by mechanical problems but we now look forward to this new activity starting up along with the better weather of spring. Thanks to Neil Macaulay and his team for all their work.

As ever the Gardening, Litter-picking, Arboretum and Work Day teams made a great contribution – many thanks to all the volunteers for their graft and good humour and to the team leaders (May Le Sueur, Malcolm Humphrey, Ian Combe, John Surtees, Dennis Smith, Iain Morrice and John Stirling).

One new development was a Pentlands litter-pick timed to coincide with World Clean-up Day in September. FoP arranged for a large team of volunteers from seven organisations to clear litter from ten popular paths in the Pentlands.

To put our path surveying on a more systematic basis, John Surtees has improved the reporting system and introduced a register of the 300-odd installed items for which FoP takes responsibility, including posts, stiles, bridges and perches. This information will feed into our future work programme.

At an event marking the contribution of Friends groups to green spaces in Edinburgh, FoP received the Green Flag award for the Pentlands Hills Regional Park, an acknowledgement of the tremendous contribution made by FoP at every level.

Wishing all of you a good 2019.

Acknowledgements

Alastair Cowan, Eastside Farm
Andrew Barr, Harlaw Farm
Baberton Golf Club
Balerno Ramblers
Bob Barr, Easter Kinleith
Braidburn Special School
City of Edinburgh Council Natural Heritage Service
Dean Park Primary School
Folio Trust (formerly James Thin Charitable Trust)
Garvald Home Farm
Gavin Marshall
George and Janet Burke
Harmony Pentland Runners
Lee and Carnwath Estate
Malleny Angling Association
Merchiston Castle School
Ministry of Defence/Defence Training Estate
Pentland Lodge Ltd, North Slipperfield Estate
St Crispin's Special School
Scotmid Balerno
Scotland's Rural College
Scottish Widows
Scottish Wildlife Trust
ScotWays
Swanston Farm Ltd
Tesco - Bags of Help Initiative
Water of Leith Trust
Woodlands Special School

Treasurer's report

Malcolm Patrick

At the end of another year I can report that our funds at 31st December stood at £16,988, showing a deficit for the year of £1,828. This is very much in line with our plans to reduce our balance of funds although we had budgeted for a deficit of slightly in excess of £5,000.

Our membership income is slightly up on last year's figure but Gift Aid is less as we were able last year to recover tax on a substantial donation.

Our Tea & Cakes days raised £1,064 compared to £1,348 last year but this reduction was due entirely to having had to cancel one Tea & Cakes day as a result of circumstances outwith our control.

No grants were applied for during the year as we had sufficient funds to cover the costs of projects.

Sales of 'The Pentland Way – A Walk with History' book have now reached £5,621 against a production cost of £2,812.

A further book, 'Wildwood Legacy' by Martyn Baguley, had sales this year of £1,030 bringing sales to date of £3,001 against a cost of production of £3,369 and I expect cumulative sales to exceed production costs in the coming year.

Our calendars have again sold well this year with income received during the year of £2,137 against a cost of £1,080.

Our administration costs were lower this year than last year mainly due to one-off costs of repairs to the mobility scooter the previous year.

I am therefore pleased to report that our finances are once again in good shape and that we can look forward to another busy and successful year in 2019.



Membership Secretary's report

Rod Greenwell

This is the seventh Membership Report for Friends of the Pentlands under its new charitable status constitution.

Over the last few years the members of the Friends of the Pentlands have remained faithful to the themes generated and perpetuated by the Board. The membership over that last six years is shown below.

Membership Grade	October 2013	October 2014	October 2015	October 2016	October 2017	October 2018
Individual Life	43	48	53	56	58	59
Joint Life	34	46	44	48	48	50
Individual	119	113	105	107	107	112
Joint	172	168	174	162	172	172
TOTALS	368	375	376	373	385	393

Friends of the Pentlands also has six Group and six Corporate members.

I am pleased to report that Friends of the Pentlands has slightly increased its membership this year to over 390 at the end of October 2018. Several members failed to renew in June this year but the organisation received an equivalent number of new applications to join through their presence at Balerno Gala Day and other shows. Other new applications have arrived via the membership form printed in the Annual Review.

The organisation is always pleased to welcome new corporate groups who join us to participate in team-building and group activities that contribute to project work in the Pentland Hills.

Various FoP officials undertook a lot of work to ensure that our practices comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) requirements that came into force in April. This was successfully completed in respect of existing members and the rules are now applied to all new membership applications.

Work parties

Hamish Clark

1620 volunteer hours

Regular maintenance made up a large proportion of our work in 2018. The combination of wet weather and high usage means that path drainage, surfaces, edging and steps all need steady attention. Likewise vegetation needs to be trimmed back in our arboreta and along paths. Other tasks included replacing damaged perches, installing new ones at Swanston and Harlaw plus a bench at Loganlea, re-weatherproofing the bird hide at North Esk reservoir and cleaning the pond in Harlaw wildlife garden.

Our main project for the year was the refurbishment of line of sight and other guide posts on routes in the SW Pentlands, outwith the Regional Park. With the help of local member Roger Oakes, John Surtees surveyed and planned this work. The remoteness of many of these 'venerable old posts' required co-operation from landowners who allowed us to transport materials and tools as close as possible, followed by some heavy lifting by our volunteers. We had some good weather days for this, and some definitely not so good.

We extended our successful willow spiling to reinforce the river bank beside a section of path near Baddinsgill, installed two bridges on the path to the south of Clubbiedean reservoir and improved a boggy section of the Pentland Way above the Kirk Burn by laying sheep fleeces as a lining which was then covered with stone. This technique, new to us but long-established elsewhere, attracted media attention and generated a lot of interest. Early signs look promising and we hope to extend the technique to other problem areas.

This year we have been fortunate in welcoming several new volunteers – a good augury for the future. We work closely with the Natural Heritage Service's Regional Park team and greatly appreciate their guidance, advice and practical help. We also continue to benefit from the co-operation of the Ministry of Defence, the Scottish Wildlife Trust and other landowners and managers.



Volunteer support

Hamish Clark

We again benefitted from the assistance of Balerno Ramblers and Scottish Widows who have both now worked with us for several years.

Small squads of dedicated Ramblers joined work parties monthly on all types of work – path maintenance, tree care and refurbishment of guidance posts in the SW Pentlands. They have contributed a very helpful 70 hours of work.

A total of 34 volunteers from the actuarial department of Scottish Widows joined us on five workdays through the summer. It was good to see some 'kent' faces from earlier years together with new volunteers. They undertook major vegetation clearance on the path from Lowries Den to Silverburn on a very hot day, path maintenance at Bonaly and Erraid Wood and helped install a sleeper bridge and a culvert on the Clubbiedean path. Finally, a group helped to install six new guide posts on the Garvald/Covenanter's Grave path – something of a record for one day and an inspiring example. Scottish Widows volunteers put in almost 200 hours of work.



Litter-picking

Malcolm Humphrey

218 volunteer hours

The established squad of Janet, Norman, Christina, Stewart, several Margarets, Judy, John, Iain and myself were joined this year by Nicola, Chris, Donald and on one occasion by Gordon MacDonald, MSP for Edinburgh Pentlands.

This year we collected 110 bags of litter in 218 hours of work, compared with 149 bags in 206 hours in 2017 and 150 bags in 151 hours in 2016. So there was not a lot of change in the hours worked but a noticeable drop in the number of bags collected. This year (sadly) we have no really unusual finds. Our usual schedule is to litter-pick at Dreghorn and Bonaly on the first and third Tuesday respectively of every month; but this year we picked at Hillend while Dreghorn was closed due to ongoing work. When Dreghorn was open it yielded less litter, probably due to the new barrier and other measures to discourage fly-tipping.

I would like to thank all the people who help with litter-picking – we have definitely expanded our team. And a special thanks to those members of the public who stop to say a kind word while we are at work.



World Clean-up Day, 15th September

John Stirling

For his swansong Malcolm Humphrey, our retiring litter-picking organiser, suggested that the Friends of the Pentlands should consider taking part in World Clean-up Day (15th September). This was quickly agreed and we enlisted the assistance of several other groups – the Water of Leith Trust, Balerno Ramblers, North Tweeddale Paths Group, Youth Vision, Edinburgh Southern Orienteering Club and the Pentland Hills Regional Park Voluntary Rangers. On the appointed day we set off to pick litter along ten popular routes in the Pentlands. Earlier in the week volunteers from FoP had visited a further eight sites.

This joint action saw 33 bags of litter collected, together with miscellaneous items including an abandoned tent and various household goods. The volunteers also informed the Council of four locations where bulky items and piles of rubbish had been fly-tipped.

Our Chair aptly commented 'The removal of this litter will make the Pentlands more attractive to users and safer for wildlife. This event shows the scale of littering and how important it is to work at changing behaviour over time as well as devoting resources here and now to remove it'.

Our incoming team leader Judy Cantley has some new ideas in mind to involve a wider range of groups.

Gardening

May Le Sueur

148 volunteer hours

The weather was very good this year for gardening. After a day or two clearing up from the ravages of winter, we were able to put in a good number of new plants, mainly in the scented border, the sensory border and the herb garden. Before planting we were able to mulch the borders thanks to work party volunteers who riddled plenty of compost for us.

At every meeting Neil Macaulay cut the grass: the new lawn mower has made this task a bit easier for him. The area beside the flag pole has had a good clear-out and we hope to put something in there next year that will give more interest.

Another area that needed a lot of work to get it cleared is beside the herb garden, facing the grass area. This has now been tidied up and has been producing some beautiful wild flowers which the bees and butterflies have been enjoying.

The Natural Heritage Service officer responsible for Harlaw has agreed to arrange for the pond to be cleaned out. This can only be done in the winter when all the wildlife is dormant. The area for the wild flower garden will also be cleared at the beginning of the new gardening year and we will be looking at cutting back quite a few trees to allow more light in. We have been asked to ensure that the wood pile is added to regularly for the benefit of bugs.

Thanks to all the volunteer gardeners who worked so hard throughout the year.

Education

John Stirling

219 volunteer hours

Woodlands School

Every Thursday during term time pupils of Woodlands Special School join us to work towards achieving the conservation part of the John Muir Award. We are now in our eighth year of working with the pupils. A diverse programme of work this year has included:

- Sowing of yellow rattle in the wildflower meadow
- Riddling compost
- Checking and clearing ditches at Harlaw and Threipmuir
- Litter-picking
- Spreading bark as a mulch at the base of the Harlaw hedge
- Making safe the dipping deck at the pond in Harlaw wildlife garden which had become very slippery
- Building a container to compact leaves in the garden and produce leaf mould
- Willow weaving

Dean Park Primary

In June the three P6 classes from Dean Park Primary visited Harlaw to plant wildflowers which they had grown on at school. They spent the rest of the day enjoying the garden, pond dipping and doing art work before completing the Biodiversity Trail round Harlaw reservoir.

Schools Access Day

Braidburn, Woodlands and St Crispin's special schools all took part in an access day based at Threipmuir reservoir. They investigated the board walk at the Scottish Wildlife Trust Red Moss of Balerno wildlife reserve and also visited our bird hide at Bavelaw Marsh before adjourning to Balerno Parish Church hall to enjoy a picnic lunch supplied by Scotmid. In 2019 we also expect to be joined by Beatie Special School in Livingston.

We are indebted to all the volunteers who support us in this very important area of work.

Wheelchair Walks

Neil Macaulay

The story of FoP's Wheelchair Walks (a name still open for suggestions) in 2018 has been one of detailed planning beset with last minute problems.

Two years ago FoP were bequeathed a top of the range electric scooter, probably manufactured in the USA, and saw the potential for organised outings for people with mobility problems. In 2017 I took on leadership of this project. Our first task was to reconnoitre suitable routes around Harlaw, Threipmuir and Bavelaw in preparation to producing a leaflet and map. We quickly realised that the steep unfenced bridge at the south-east corner of Harlaw reservoir posed an unacceptable risk. Balerno Ramblers kindly took on the task of raising funds to improve the bridge and install fencing. A contractor was employed for the core job and FoP work parties also helped with resurfacing.

We sought advice on issues of legal liability and practical matters like seat belts and safety equipment and began recruiting guides from among the FoP membership. A training pack is in preparation, containing historical information and nature notes as well as practical essentials. During a training run in August disaster struck. The scooter broke down at Threipmuir and had to be towed back to Harlaw (innocently causing some damage to the brakes in the process). Following repairs and the installation of new, more powerful batteries, further trials followed – and another power failure. This was eventually traced to electrical wiring which had become corroded inside its protective covering, requiring further professional repairs.

All this led to the postponement of the planned launch in August, and then of a shorter autumn season. We are now looking at a start date around Easter 2019.



Conservation, Training & Quartermaster's report

Ian Combe

Conservation

Tree beating was completed at all arboreta as well as gorse cutting at Swanston. Martyn Baguley, author of the 'Wildwood legacy' book, kindly gave us the benefit of his professional expertise by reviewing the Swanston arboretum and Wildwood Legacy plantation. Some trees were considered to be in relatively poor condition, sometimes frayed by roe deer or rabbits. This taught us a lesson about the premature removal of tree guards and netting. A full review of all sites was undertaken and we have instigated an intensive maintenance programme. We will give the trees time to see how many can be saved, replacing protection where necessary. At the latest review West Linton appears to be doing well; Silverburn has rabbit problems but is fairly stable; Harperrig suffers from rabbits and possibly also badgers and is exposed to westerly winds; Carnwath suffers from poor location and damp ground.



A stinkhorn fungus egg found in Swanston arboretum (once identified) was a good sign since fungi are important to the woodland ecosystem and eggs tend to form only when the trees have stabilised.

At Baddingsgill another section of badly eroded path by the Lyne Water was stabilised by willow spiling and back-filling with stones.

In the Scottish Wildlife Trust reserve at Erraid Wood we placed wooden edging on eroding sections of path and cleared vegetation, and did similar work between the Tytler memorial and Boghall. We carried out drainage and path work at Bavelaw and cut back trees at Threipmuir car park.

The pond in Harlaw wildlife garden was cleaned out. Later in the year, when pond dipping with the primary school kids, an impressive quantity and variety of aquatic life was caught – a measure of how well the garden is doing. Sadly, almost half the trees in the orchard at Harlaw were lost due to a combination of rabbit nibbling, dog intrusion and extreme weather.

Three stalwart volunteers joined a 'swat' team organised by the Natural Heritage Service to rescue three roe deer trapped inside a forestry enclosure at Bonaly. With no source of water their future looked uncertain. One way or other they seem to have been persuaded to move on.

Training

FoP again provided training to corporate groups from Scottish Widows and pupils from Woodlands school learned jobs like path work at Bavelaw, gardening at Harlaw and fixing non-slip treads to the decking at the pond.

Following Martyn Baguley's training on tree management, Mike Andrew has agreed to oversee the Swanston, Wildwood Legacy and Silverburn arboreta, with Barbara Darcy continuing to cover West Linton and Iain Macleod and Rob Melville covering Harperrig and Carnwath.

Quartermaster

FoP continue to expand its supply of tools, which now includes a small selection of wellies. Andrew Marsden has kindly offered the use of a strimmer plus his strimming expertise.

Tea and Cake Days

Alyson Patrick

488 volunteer hours



Our year started badly when we had to cancel our first day in March due to the lack of running water at Harlaw Visitor Centre. However our other three days were very successful, in particular October which raised an almost record sum. Over the three days we raised £1064.10.

The money was used to help fund three different projects:

- Further development of the wildflower garden at Harlaw by P6 pupils from Dean Park Primary School
- Schools Access Day involving three special schools
- Supporting pupils at Woodlands Special School to gain their John Muir Award.

We have a wonderful team of volunteers who help on the day and also do baking. But two people in particular deserve special mention – Maggie Paterson and Helen Aitken who provide most of the delicious food which is enjoyed by everyone who attends, including many Friends who come along regularly to support us.

Our thanks to everyone involved.

Pentland Post

David Syme

Pentland Post is issued to members in May and October. The aim is to complement the Annual Review and the website with articles and pictures related to the Pentlands and our activities in and around them. Most members are happy to receive their copy as an email attachment but some prefer a hard copy sent out by post. Hard copies also go to people and organisations with an interest in what we do.

As a result of the demand for the 2018 calendar, which raised £1,800 for our funds, we decided to increase the print run for 2019 from 500 to 600. By early December sales were brisk so, despite increased printing costs, we confidently expect a return of over £2,000.

Path surveys

John Surtees

Twenty paths throughout the Pentland Hills are currently surveyed by FoP on an annual basis, including the 19 mile Pentland Way which stretches from Dunsyre to Swanston. One of the principal aims of these surveys is to check the condition of countryside furniture installed by ourselves (gates, stiles, sleeper bridges, posts, etc.), currently totalling more than 220 items. A new asset register is being developed to help monitor their condition systematically.

Friends of the Pentlands people

3664 volunteer hours

Office Bearers

Chair	John Surtees (to May 2018) Hamish Clark (from May 2018)
Vice-Chair	Hamish Clark (to May 2018)
Treasurer	Malcolm Patrick
Secretary	John Stirling (to May 2018) Margaret Granger (from May 2018)
Membership Secretary	Rod Greenwell

Other Board members

Planning officer	Allan Ainslie Judy Cantley (from May 2018) Neil Macaulay Andrew Marsden (from February 2018) Donna Partridge John Stirling David Syme
Editor	

Team leaders

Tea & cakes	Alyson Patrick
Tea & cakes	Linda Stirling
Gardening	May Le Sueur
Litter-picking (to December 2018)	Malcolm Humphrey
Litter-picking (from January 2019)	Judy Cantley
Wheelchair Walks	Neil Macaulay
Volunteer coordinator & Annual Review	Dennis Smith
Conservation, Training & Quartermaster	Ian Combe
Work party planning & corporate liaison	Hamish Clark
Path surveys	John Surtees
Work Party team leaders	Andrew Marsden Iain Morrice John Stirling

2019 Programme

Further details including booking information and meeting place will be issued to members nearer the time.

Thursday 7th March

Talk at Craigdon Mountain Sports, 44 Biggar Road, 7.00pm for 7.30p.m.
Karen Inkster: The deaf, the daft and the ditsy: a journey across the Outer Hebrides

Wednesday 20th March

Walk led by Goff Cantley, starting from the Covenanters' Monument on Redford Road at 10.00a.m. Booking required: contact Goff Cantley

Saturday 30th March

Tea and Cakes at Harlaw Centre

10.00a.m to 4.00p.m. No booking required

Thursday 9th May

AGM at Merchiston Castle School, 7.00p.m. for 7.30p.m.
Followed by a talk by Thomas Gifford, Supervisor at Dawyck Botanic Garden

Thursday 23rd May

Schools Access Day for pupils from special schools

Saturday 15th June

Tea and Cakes at Harlaw Centre

10.00a.m to 4.00p.m. No booking required

Saturday 10th - Sunday 18th August

Midlothian Outdoor Festival

September Tea and Cakes at Harlaw Centre (date to be confirmed)

10.00a.m to 4.00p.m. No booking required

Wednesday 9th October

Walk led by Allan Ainslie. Booking required, details later

October Tea and Cakes at Harlaw Centre (date to be confirmed)

10.00a.m to 4.00p.m. No booking required

Thursday 7th November

Talk at Merchiston Castle School, 7.00p.m. for 7.30p.m.
Andy Paterson (son of our founding Secretary): *'It started with the Pentlands'*

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2019

Individual	£9.00	Individual Life	£135.00
Joint	£16.00	Joint Life	£240.00
Corporate	£16.00	Groups	£16.00

Please enrol me/us as a member of the Friends of the Pentlands.

Name(s)			
Address			
Postcode		Tel. no.	
Date		Email	
I/we agree to support the purposes of Friends of the Pentlands.		☐	(Please tick box)
I/we am/are over 16 years of age.		☐	(Please tick box)
Signature(s)			

Should you wish to add a donation to your subscription, however modest, that would be very much appreciated.
(Please make cheques payable to **Friends of the Pentlands**).

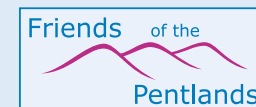
I enclose the following payment £

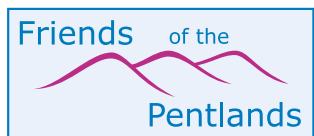
I am a UK taxpayer: please provide me with a Gift Aid Declaration.
(Please put a cross in box if not applicable). ☐

I wish to actively participate in project works in the Pentland Hills.
(Please put a cross in box if not applicable). ☐

Please return this form to:

Rod Greenwell
Membership Secretary,
Friends of the Pentlands
4 Dovecot Park
Edinburgh EH14 2LN





The Friends of the Pentlands is a Scottish
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