



Annual Review 2022

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

The Friends of the Pentlands welcome new members who share our aims.
For more information see our website at www.pentlandfriends.org.uk/membership/

Or contact us through Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Friendsofthepentlands1/>



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Chair's Foreword *Andrew Marsden*

If 2020 was our “annus horribilis” (as a result of the Covid pandemic) and 2021 was the year of “catch up”, then 2022 (my first year as Chair) can be looked upon as our most recent fully normal year. Indeed, the post-pandemic rebound has resulted in successes in many areas – as this review will highlight.

Our membership numbers are up slightly since 2021 and, significantly, we are seeing the age profile of our members falling, with younger members and their families joining the Friends. Our band of workday volunteers has been swollen by the inclusion of new recent – and early – retirees and it is now not uncommon to see over a dozen members volunteering for the set workdays. Accordingly, we are able to have more than one squad out in different parts of the Pentlands on the same day.

Similarly, our finances continue to remain healthy with reasonable reserves of monies awaiting projects on which to be spent. We are so, so grateful for generous donations from legacies, charitable foundations, corporate bodies, and individual members.

Our regular voluntary activities are very much in evidence with at least once a week sightings of volunteers carrying out litter picking, gardening at Harlaw, maintenance of the arboreta, undertaking path surveys and maintenance work (re-surfacing, drainage and waymarking) resulting from the findings. Conservation work has been carried out both within and outwith the Regional Park and this has included tree planting and maintenance, gorse management, production of wildflower meadows and wildlife surveys. As I commented at the end of the year our annual meeting of volunteers was the biggest, busiest and most comprehensive ever. We are again attracting corporate volunteers from the larger business and starting to see more schools and youth organisations coming to join us in the hills, some in pursuance of John Muir awards.

Our social programme has returned to normal with regular talks and a number of walks – at least one per month in the season. Sadly our “tea and cake” events remain dormant following the continuing closure of the Harlaw visitor centre.

The year's many highlights (described in this review) include the replacement of the North Esk bird hide; the management of the wildlife area at Patieshill Farm which George and Janet Burke have entrusted to our care; the completion of the Pentland Way waymarking and interpretation panels; the re-design and updating of the website; and, from a governance perspective, continuing work on data protection, safeguarding and risk management.

I am honoured to represent the Friends on the Pentland Hills Regional Park Joint Committee where we are enacting the Visitor Management Plan and have a group Pentlands Against Rural Crime (PARC) addressing antisocial and criminal behaviour which has, sadly, been on the increase since the pandemic.

Looking ahead in 2023, we have a rosy but busy immediate future. We need to secure improvements to the upland paths network, we have masses of protection and conservation projects lining up (not least some resulting from the winter storms in 2022) and we have grand designs on our conservation activities.

There are too many individuals to thank by name though I would like to acknowledge the contribution of our Board of Trustees and all our volunteers. In 2022 Olga Macfadyen and Iain Morrice retired from the Board. Judy Cantley handed over her litter picking responsibility to Andrew Gallacher and walks organisation to John Hutton. The list below recognises those external people and organisations who have given us support. Please forgive us if, inadvertently, anyone has been omitted.

And, if, as a non-member, you are reading this review and your appetite is whetted, please join us, support us, or work with us. Every contribution, large or small, is warmly appreciated.

Acknowledgements

- Andrew and Catherine Barr
- Balerno Ramblers
- Bavelaw Estate
- City of Edinburgh Council Natural Heritage Service
- Craigdon Mountain Sports
- Currie Kirk Minibus Fund
- Dalmahoy Estate and Farms
- Dry Stone Walling Association S.E.Scotland Branch
- Folio Trust
- Garvald Home Farm
- Gavin Marshall, Treeline
- George and Janet Burke, Patieshill Farm
- Hamish McKenzie
- Harmeny Pentland Athletic Club
- Harlaw Farm
- Hunters Bog Trotters
- Isobel Brown
- Michael Good Memorial Fund
- Midlothian Ranger Service
- Ministry of Defence – Defence Training Estate
- Newhall Estate
- Pentland Land Managers Association
- Pentland Mens Shed
- Scotland's Rural College
- Scotways
- Swanston Farm Ltd
- Tesco
- Water of Leith Conservation Trust
- West Linton & District Historical Association

Secretary's & Membership report *Dennis Smith*

After the trials and tribulations of the Covid years, 2022 was a year of progress towards a new kind of normality. Long-established activities resumed (some, but not all), new procedures started to bed in and new plans and projects began to take shape on the horizon.

At the AGM in May - the first face-to-face AGM since 2019 - the membership approved a number of amendments to the constitution, drafted by Douglas Tullis, with the aim of modernising and simplifying procedures for the electronic age. The meeting also noted concerns about changed plans for the proposed wind farm at Cloich forest. At the meeting Olga Macfadyen and Iain Morrice stood down as Trustees and Board members; Douglas Tullis and Bill Aitken, previously co-opted, were elected in their place. The meeting was followed by a fascinating talk by Laura Shelbourn, a Natural Heritage Officer with the Pentland Hills Regional Park, on the joys and perils of surveying moths for ecological purposes.

In June Bob Cook was co-opted as a Trustee and Board member. There are still vacancies on the Board and we would be delighted to hear from anyone interested in contributing. With a background in education, Bob has subsequently taken the lead in engaging with the Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme and developing a child protection policy for FoP.

With the easing of lockdown restrictions, two other face-to-face talks were given over the year, Joanna Soden on artists associated with the Pentland hills and Nick Brett on the history and achievements of the Garvald community. Nick's talk tied in neatly with various work projects done at Garvald over the year, notably a drystone dyke constructed in cooperation with members of the Dry Stone Walling Association. In November we were able to revive the annual volunteer meeting at which volunteers across the full range of FoP activities were able to get together to hear reports on the past year and discuss plans for the future.

We were also able to restart and extend our programme of walks. Judy Cantley decided to stand down as walks organiser after several years' work (many thanks to her), with John Hutton agreeing to take over in a slightly different format. As well as the traditional walks arranged and advertised well in advance, John has agreed to organise a series of more informal walks set up at fairly short notice.

2022 was the first full year of operation of our new membership database, designed and operated for us by Nigel Rose. Not unexpectedly, one or two features had to be tweaked but overall it did its job exactly as planned. FoP membership remained essentially static over the year, with a total of 435 members at the year's end. The very encouraging recruitment of 43 new members was balanced by an almost equal loss. There is no single reason accounting for lapsed memberships. Demographic factors clearly play a role, and the switch from a mainly postal renewal system to one relying on email may have played a part. Overall, the demographics are definitely in our favour: we have enrolled a lot of (relatively) young members who have signed up as volunteers and are now actively participating in work parties and other activities.

One new activity is our involvement in helping to manage an area of semi-natural native woodland at Patieshill farm near Carlops, developed over many years by George and Janet Burke. In 2022 we did some preliminary work on surveying the fauna and flora, restoring a basic path network and developing wildflower meadows to encourage butterflies and other pollinators (a project discussed elsewhere in this review).

As noted in the report a year ago, Bob Douglas offered his assistance in upgrading the FoP website, and good progress has been made, with able assistance from Andrew Gallacher. Elsewhere, technological change continues apace. Use of Google Workspace for online collaborative working expanded, particularly following a training session in October, with many more Trustees, team leaders and volunteers getting involved. This evolving IT environment has made us increasingly aware of the need to organise and secure our own archives, while also recognising the need to protect the privacy of members and non-members alike under the terms of GDPR legislation. Work has begun on tackling these issues, and will no doubt continue for some time to come.

Treasurer's Report *Iain MacLeod*

As anticipated, we operated at a deficit in the year as we began to spend funds accumulated in the two previous financial years. The year ended with funds on hand of £57,258 compared to £62,884 at the start.

The deficit would have been considerably higher but for further substantial donations received, most notable of which was a grant of £5,000 from the Folio Trust. The Currie Kirk Minibus Fund, a charity, was wound up during the year with its funds distributed among other local charities and we were the grateful recipients of £3,000. Harmer AC and the Bog Trotters Hill Race both made their usual generous donations on the back of their annual events in the Hills.

The return to normal following two years of Covid restrictions is evidenced by the increase in project costs to £17,824 compared with £7,792 in 2021. A rebranding of the Pentland Way accounted for £7250 of this expenditure with £1,807 on the North Esk Bird Hide. The general path maintenance expenditure of £2,651 includes a donation of £1,500 made to support improvements to the track through Ferniehaugh Estate, over which the Pentland Way runs. The costs for the surfacing and re-drainage, work beyond our capabilities and carried out by a private contractor, were shared with the landowner. In addition £2,218 was spent on Publications and £2,389 on Education and Training.

The major item of general expenditure was £3,907 for publication of the 2nd Edition of "The Pentland Way" and, thanks mainly to our Chairman's efforts, sales of the book so far stand at £1,646.

Administration costs are well controlled at £1,164 compared to £1,214 previously. Once again the calendar provided a valuable source of income with profit of £1,708 and thanks are due to David Syme and his team for their efforts.

With substantial funds on hand and various projects about to come on stream we can expect, once again, to operate at a deficit during 2023.



Work parties *Hamish Clark*

This was the first year since the COVID pandemic that we were able to work throughout the year and quarter on quarter the amount done increased to give a very creditable total of 1900 hours - the workday volunteers definitely got back into their stride.

We undertook a mixture of maintenance and improvements across the whole of the Pentland Hills, including the Regional Park. Regular maintenance is essential on the extensive path network (surfaces, drainage, obstructing foliage), structures (gates, sleeper bridges, boardwalks, guide posts, willow banks, fences) and tree plantations (FoP arboreta and Regional Park woodland development)

Workdays were also devoted to improvements which are reported in detail later in the Review, including on the Pentland Way (dry stone wall and new steps at Garvald Home Farm, completion of the improved way marking and new interpretation panels), Patieshill project, development of wildflower meadows, site preparation for the replacement bird hide at N Esk reservoir, habitat improvement in Bonaly Country Park (tree planting, gorse removal), and new sleeper bridges near Harperrig reservoir.

We were joined on 5 workdays by volunteers from two companies who were a great help. Our good working relations and collaboration with the Pentland Hills Regional Park staff continued as we all dealt with the impact of COVID, extreme weather conditions and standard wear and tear as well as taking forward improvements.

The workday volunteers can take very justified pride in their contribution in 2022 and I hope are looking forward to a new year. A big thank you from me for their hard work, commitment and good humour.

Social Activities

Talks, *Judy Cantley*

In 2022 we were at last able to invite members to come together for the talks. (In 2021 we had been able to offer 3 talks by Zoom, with Hamish taking on the role of Zoom host.) All of these had attracted similar audiences to the “in person” talks.

Our first speaker, in March, was Dr Joanne Soden, whose title was The Pentland Hills Through Artists' Eyes. The attendance of 40 members confirmed our decision to go ahead with a face-to-face talk. The accommodation at the Boroughmuir Community Rugby Club in Meggetland proved very suitable.

In June, for our AGM, we were at the Gibson Craig Memorial Hall in Currie. We took the opportunity to introduce Laura Shelbourne, the recently appointed member of Pentland Hills Ranger Service. Under the general title of “Species monitoring in Upland Habitats” she spoke about her experience of moth trapping and recording, mainly in the Lake District.

Finding suitable rooms for our talks proved difficult, with most church halls well booked with regular activities during the week and other places often beyond our budget. Thanks are due to members' willingness to travel to a different venue each time and also to help as necessary with preparing and serving refreshments, moving furniture and pooling their skills to coax the different IT systems into action.

In November, Nick Brett spoke about the Garvald organisation - the history of the movement and his 35 years at Garvald Home Farm. Friends of the Pentlands work parties have undertaken a number of projects at Garvald and Andrew Marsden spoke briefly about some of these. For this talk, we were pleased to be able to return to our “usual” accommodation, kindly offered by Merchiston Castle School.

Each of these talks attracted around 40 members.

Walks, *Judy Cantley and John Hutton*

We had two Winter Warmer walks on 8th January and, with the Harlaw Visitor Centre being unavailable, the walks started and finished at Swanston with, afterwards, the option of taking refreshments at the Brasserie. 13 members signed up for the high level walk, led by David Syme, which tackled the northern ridge of the Pentlands, from Allermuir eastwards, while the lower level route, led by Judy Cantley, was an exploration of paths and woodland between Dregghorn and Swanston, with 8 members signed up. The day was cold but earlier rain stopped just before the walks started, with conditions ranging from ice on the high route to mud at lower level.

During the year three walks were organised by John Hutton, who led the two walks which took place in the Pentlands. The third walk took place in the hills north of Peebles and was led by Goff Cantley on a clockwise circuit, taking in part of the Old North Drove Road passing below Hamilton Hill, then dropping to cross the A703 near Nether Kidston. After a quick detour to see the memorial to George Meikle Kemp, the architect who designed the Scott Monument in Princes Street, there was a steady climb to Collie Law. Although the morning had been cloudy the sun eventually emerged for a pleasantly warm descent into Peebles.

These walks ranged from Easy to Strenuous on the FoP scale, between 4 to 8 miles, and were attended by 23 people in total.

The ongoing plan is to offer similar walks every 6 to 8 weeks and to have a couple of more “official” themed walks relating to the “Friends” raison d'être.

Harlaw Wildlife Garden *Linda Stirling*

Gardening

Firstly I'd like to thank all the gardening volunteers who have done 108 hours of work at Harlaw during 2022. Anyone interested in joining us will be made very welcome.

The garden has three areas:

- a sensory garden
- a herb garden
- a nectar garden and borders

In 2022 the colours in the garden were spectacular. A group of volunteers came to help riddle the compost which is really hard work. Tesco provided vouchers to be used at B&Q so we acquired new trugs and bulb planters. Woodlands School used the bulb planters to help plant wild flowers and we hope to get more plants to refresh the sensory garden.

During the winter Margaret Lang and I attend every week to refresh the bird feeders and a wide variety of birds come in, providing great opportunities for photographs.

Educational Support

We have been helping Dean Park school for a number of years although this ceased during Covid. However, the school got in touch with us and the Regional Park and, after a number of meetings, a new programme has been arranged. Friends of the Pentlands are really only there to assist the teachers and park rangers but the staff are very grateful for our input.

For the last seven years I have been helping pupils from Woodlands School who come to Harlaw for an hour each Thursday morning. They are working towards their John Muir Award (conservation) and I have to thank all the volunteers who come each week to help me. An extra person is always good to have. Woodlands is a school for pupils with learning difficulties and the pupils who come are aged 14 – 16 years. Most work very hard and the tasks, although simple, are very rewarding for them. These include :-

- Gathering leaves for the compost area and riddling compost
- Clearing drains along paths and fire pits around Harlaw
- Pruning trees and planting wildflowers in the meadow

In conclusion I'm looking forward to another successful gardening year at Harlaw.

Conservation, Training, and Quartermaster's Report

Ian Combe

Conservation

At both Baddingsgill and Garvald we carried out maintenance on the willow weaving at the bank/path erosion sites.

As well as new tree planting there has been regular maintenance on our five arboreta.



All the landowners and farmers in the area have formed a group for management of and access to the land. The group includes MoD and the Agricultural College and is known as the Pentland Land Managers Association. This is undoubtedly a positive step and indeed it may prove useful in assisting us with transportation of tools and equipment.

Training

All team leaders successfully completed a course in Emergency First Aid in February.

On the job training was provided by the Dry Stone Walling Association to build the drystone wall at Garvald and this exercise was enjoyed by all the volunteers who participated. There may be an opportunity in the future should an extension to this wall be approved.



John Surtees kindly gave a training presentation on Workspace, which is a Google platform for collaborative working, which those involved in the workday programme and asset register/path inspections have been using since 2019. Various volunteers have expressed an interest in developing these skills going forward.



Wildlife Sightings

Wheatear, meadow pipits, skylark, red grouse, kestrel, buzzard, stonechat, tree sparrow, grey wagtail, pink-foot geese, greylag geese, hares, stoat, roe deer, dipper and osprey, the latter flying over and catching fish at Bavelaw and Threipmuir. A rich variety of wildlife on our doorstep.

Quartermaster

Our trial of plastic cross drain units, which are very light and easy to install, has been very successful on the boggy Kirk Burn path.

We now have the benefit of two reliable petrol trimmers and a few expert operators. Training has been organised for further interested volunteers in January.

We have recently successfully utilised an old garden paving stone to prop up a deteriorating part of the path by Torduff Reservoir. This is another "out of the box" idea besides ski matting and sheep fleeces before. Some great examples of recycling.

And finally... This year we introduced the "I don't know my own strength award" which was keenly contested and goes to **Andrew Gallacher** in recognition of his perseverance in digging out a tree stump from a critical part of the Pentland Way path at Garvald which had, so to speak, kind of stumped the rest of us. Well done Andrew!

Butterfly Conservation - Meadows

Bob Douglas

Last summer I set myself the challenge of photographing the 18 butterfly species that PHRP had recorded in the Pentlands (which included recently arrived species). I completed the task in June this year when I found & photographed my 21st species.

Climate change has seen 3 species arriving in the last few years, whilst the species that I found in June has probably been here for decades, but hiding under the radar. This took me to a number of habitats and locations across the Pentlands, but there are only a handful of spots where numbers could be described as prolific. Across the country the general picture is one of long term decline.

When I first visited Patieshill in the spring the one thing that struck me was the near absence of wildflowers – thick grass prevailed – and there were very few butterflies or bees in sight.



So the seed of idea was sown – could we establish wildflower meadows and habitat corridors across the Pentlands? So that is what we have started.

The key element in the wildflower habitats we are seeking to establish is that they will be geared specifically towards a handful of the more colourful rural butterflies found in the Pentlands by providing caterpillar foodplants as well as nectar sources for the adults. The species I'm targeting are Orange Tip, Common Blue, Small Copper, SPB Fritillary, DG Fritillary and Northern Brown Argus.

We have started in a number of small sites at Silverburn, Patieshill, Garvald and West Linton. We also have agreement from PHRP to extend the meadow at Harlaw, which might extend to the banking along the ditch to Threipmuir.

The most exciting prospect is about 1/3 acre of grassland at Baddinsgill. Those who have been there willow-spiling or installing gabions will know the spot, just after the stone wall at the corner of the field.

The biggest challenge in most of these areas is the thick grass cover. This has to be seriously depleted over several years to allow the wildflowers to compete. We will need to invest in a bit more tooling for grass cutting and removal.

At some sites the landowners may be able to help with grass cutting and removal. I must stress that wildflower meadows need several years of maintenance to get established .. and it will be a couple of years at least before we see a significant impact on the target species and indeed across all pollinators.

We're using a number of approaches to establishing wildflowers:

- Spreading wildflower seed after giving grass a hard cut. Includes Yellow Rattle, a parasitic annual that feeds on grass.
- Growing plug plants. Growing seed to plug plant stage is quite labour intensive but gives a much better return on seed. We have several volunteers plus Dean Park school growing on wildflower seed. We should have a few thousand plug plants next year.
- Guerilla sowing on rough, bare ground eg track margins, semi brownfield or scarred sites – speeding up the natural process of reclamation by wildflowers.

We will increasingly harvest seed from the meadows we establish. Ultimately nature, with a bit of assistance from volunteers, will determine what survives and thrives. The combination of sites, plants and planting strategies will be a good learning process. No doubt we will make mistakes, but hopefully we will be able to increase the acreage year-on-year and see tangible results over the long-term.

Publications *Peter Moore*

The Publications team continues to produce the twice-yearly PENTLAND POST and the annual CALENDAR with the help of a range of member contributors.

PENTLAND POST:

Two editions have been produced in 2022, with a range of features and photographs based around the activities of the Friends of the Pentlands, as well as historic and current events associated with the hills. We aim to get a balance of text and pictorial content, news of developments in the hills, reference to the wildlife and natural history of the Pentlands, and some creative writing inspired by the Pentlands. Many thanks are due to everyone who has contributed, providing a range of interesting themes.

The POST is distributed electronically to most Friends, with paper copies also provided to members who rely on reading printed material, and to key “partners”. We are also obliged to lodge copies with the Agency for Legal Deposit Library, which ensures a record of our activities is archived and preserved for posterity.

Issues of the POST are planned for May and October 2023, in the same format. As always contributions, from brief comments to more lengthy features, are welcomed, as are suggestions of topics readers would like to see covered. Please do not hesitate to contact the Editor with ideas.

CALENDAR:

Based on excellent sales in previous years, 700 copies of the Calendar were printed for 2022. Most were sold, despite fears that continuing Covid-19 concerns might have a negative impact through lowered footfall in our usual outlets. As a result, the receipts contributed very positively to the Friends funds, and therefore to supporting the activities of the Friends.

The 2022 calendar on the theme of “Hidden Treasures of the Pentlands” attracted many photographs of less well-known spots in the Pentlands, although some photographers were reluctant to publicise their special unfrequented places. Special thanks are due to all those who submitted pictures and to the members of the panel who had the hard task of picking out the selection to feature in the calendar. Thanks to everyone who helped distribute calendars and looked after stalls at Balerno Farmers Market.

Sales of the 2023 calendar with the theme “At Work and Play in the Pentlands” are well underway. Looking further ahead, the theme for the 2024 calendar is “Life in The Pentlands”, a very broad theme which we hope will generate lots of submissions to contribute to another Calendar showing off the best of the Pentlands. All photograph entries should be submitted to the Editor by 31st July 2023, with a brief note of the location.



Arboreta *Mike Andrew*

In my opinion lockdown helped the trees to really establish themselves and, while there have been a few losses, all six arboreta have done really well. This also applies to the wildlife legacy at Swanston which we look after.

All of the sites have been visited at various times during the year and we have made good by cutting back grass and gorse. Access to Harperrig seems to be problematic at times as discussions seem to have stalled.

Apart from the arboreta, we replaced four fruit trees at the Harlaw Orchard and this project is now well established. We also enjoyed two good days of planting a variety of 100 saplings on the land to the North side of the top car park at Bonaly. Looking forward to the new planting season we have two potential new projects, at Patieshill and Threipmuir Reservoir.

Over the years we have worked on other plantations including at Torduff, Bonaly, Hillend and Threipmuir and I intend to visit these over the next few months to determine what work may be required and so there is potential for numerous work days.

My grateful thanks to all volunteers who have worked on these projects throughout 2022.

Planning *Douglas Tullis*

Every ten days or so I visit the planning portals for each of the five relevant local authorities to identify any new applications of potential interest to us and to follow developments in relation to those that we are following. Of current interest are the following:

CITY OF EDINBURGH

Wards 02 Pentland Hills & 08 Colinton/Fairmilehead

Proposed speed limits on rural roads - Edinburgh City Council is holding a consultation which closes on 8 February on a proposal to introduce speed limits on various rural roads including those to the south of Currie and Balerno which give access to the Pentlands. Specifically 20mph limits are proposed for the roads running generally N/S from Currie and Balerno and 30 mph for those running E/W including Harlaw road. We have responded to the consultation to welcome the proposals.

Land North of Newmills Road Currie/Balerno - Cala Homes – No new developments. Large mixed use development of 600 - 900 houses for which a Pre Application Notification was submitted in June 2021 leading to a report highlighting the key issues to be considered in relation to any full application as (a) principle of development on Green Belt land, (b) design considerations (c) transport and access arrangements and (d) environmental considerations. It is outwith our main area of interest and will probably have only limited visual impact from the Pentlands. We will, however, need to consider whether to make any representations when a full application is submitted.

Land North of Dalmahoy - A Pre Application Notification has been submitted relative to a proposed new village on a 62 ha/153 acre site. This is another potentially big development but is outwith our area and impact on the Pentlands is unlikely to be significant.

MIDLOTHIAN

Wards 01 Penicuik & 04 Midlothian West

Midlothian Snowsports Centre – No further important developments on this one. There is one application outstanding in relation to proposed new lighting for the short “jump” slope at low level and to the south the main slope. Current programme envisages works from May 22 (sic) to July 24 but there may already have been some slippage. An application has recently been made for clarification of EIA implications of 21 proposed glamping pods to the south of the access road which have been held not to constitute EIA development requiring an Assessment.

Former filling station at Hillend - Proposed erection of 9 dwellinghouses. This application was initially refused but was called in by Scottish Ministers for determination. It is understood that the Report has been done and is presumably with Ministers for consideration.

Former Rosslynlee Hospital - This site already has outline approval for 280 houses and application has now been made for detailed consent for 121 houses and associated infrastructure. No real implications for Friends of the Pentlands but it's yet another sizeable housing development in prospect.

WEST LOTHIAN

Ward 5 East Livingston

Selms Muir, Kirknewton - No further developments. While unlikely to cause us any concern, an interesting application for an Environmental Impact Assessment screening opinion was submitted on 13/08/21 for a 110 acre 18MW solar electricity farm. WLC decided on 06/09/2021 that EIA screening is not required. Full application still awaited.

SCOTTISH BORDERS

Areas of West Linton & Carlops Community Councils

Carlops speed restrictions - We duly made representations against the proposed restriction of the current trial 20MPH limit to only the central part of the village which has potential road safety implications for those crossing the A702 including users of the Pentland Way. As this is a trunk road, the final say will lie with Transport Scotland.

Rutherford Castle Golf Course - No further developments. This application is for a major development, albeit reduced from the original proposal, consisting of 180 lodges, 3 sales cabins and much reduced restaurant and other facilities. Friends of the Pentlands has objected on visual grounds. On 24/06/21 the developer proposed further reduction to 120 lodges and a 50% reduction in the area of the central facilities building but there are drainage related issues raised by SEPA and this application is not going anywhere fast.

Cloich windfarm, Eddleston - No recent developments. I duly lodged an objection on the basis of the draft which was approved by the Board. It has been acknowledged and has now, rather belatedly, been posted up at the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit webpage. Timescales for the application are unclear.

Slipperfield Quarry - The refusal of this application has been appealed to Scottish Ministers. A Reporter has been appointed but timescales are presently unclear.

SOUTH LANARKSHIRE

Area of Clydesdale North Ward

Land NW of Woolfords Farm - We previously decided not to object to this application for a small 3 turbine windfarm lying to the West of the Cobbinshaw reservoir in the vicinity of the existing Harburnhead and Pates Hill windfarms which remains outstanding.

I.T. Activity *Bob Douglas*

Facebook:

Regular postings of workdays, litter-picking and seasonal views from around the Pentlands are made and we now have about 1700 followers.

Website:

The big job this year was with the website, and I suppose we can break this down into four phases:

Phase 1: Totally renovating the existing content, which was, to say the least, a bit uninspiring.

So there are fewer pages that read like Corporate Press releases, out-of-date material has been removed or archived, more photographs, there is more news about what we actually do, and all updates on the site are posted in the News section.

Phase 2: Building a whole new section on the Pentland Way to support the book and the Information Panels which have been located at seven sites along the way. The Info panels have QR codes which link to pages about the location on the website. We had thought about building a separate site, but it was much easier to construct as a section within the existing site.

Phase 3: We are currently looking at migrating to a more up-to-date development and presentation framework as the current one is a bit clunky and some features we'd like are readily available.

This is currently underway, with Andrew taking the lead.

Phase 4: We hope eventually to support some eCommerce, but I'm not sure yet if we'll be geared up to sell stuff worldwide.

Finally, a few words on Google Workspace: This is a shared "Office" environment hosted by Google which charities can use free of charge.

FoP officials and assorted team leaders are increasingly being encouraged to use Workspace for creating and storing FoP material so that we have less FoP content residing solely on personal machines.

Still a long way to go, but we're moving in the right direction.

Friends of the Pentlands people

Office Bearers

Chair	Andrew Marsden (from June 2022) Hamish Clark (until June 2022)
Treasurer	Iain MacLeod
Secretary and Acting Membership Secretary	Dennis Smith

Other Board members

Judy Cantley	Bob Cook (from June 2022)
Nicola Fryer	Olga Macfadyen (until June 2022)
Douglas Tullis	Iain Morrice (until June 2022)
Bill Aitken (from June 2022)	

Team leaders

Alyson Patrick	Tea & Cakes
Linda Stirling	Tea & Cakes + Harlaw Garden
Judy Cantley	Litter-picking + Walks and Talks
John Hutton	Walk coordinator
Andrew Gallacher	Litter-picking coordinator
Iain Morrice	Wheelchair Walks
Douglas Tullis	Planning Officer
Iain MacLeod	Annual Review editor
Ian Combe	Conservation and Training
Hamish Clark	Workdays + Corporate Liaison
Andrew Marsden	Schools Liaison
Donald Sandeman	Work parties
John Surtees	Path inspections coordinator
Mike Andrew	Arboreta coordinator
Angus Ogilvy	Liaison with HMP workshop
Peter Moore	Publications editor
Bob Douglas	Facebook editor + IT coordinator





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