



Annual Review 2024

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/>



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

Chair's Foreword

Andrew Marsden

I am pleased to introduce our 2024 Annual Review which, once again, reports satisfactory progress in many areas.

Our membership numbers have remained encouragingly high thanks mainly to our first full years' experience of working with the "membermojo" digital membership system. Similarly, the number of conservation volunteers has again risen and the practice, commenced in 2023, of having several small squads out tackling specific different projects on the same workday has become normalised. We had a record number (177) of work parties notching up a staggering total of 3,742 hours of volunteers' time (an increase of 29% on 2023). Once again, our work has been supported by parties of corporate groups (12 days), outdoor organisations and educational institutions. My particular thanks to the workday co-ordinator Hamish Clark, the team leaders and all our volunteers including litter pickers, gardeners and path inspectors.

"Routine" on-going conservation activities such as litter-picking, tree management, gorse clearance and maintenance of the wildflower meadows and the unrelenting requirements for path surface drainage and restoration (both within the Regional Park and beyond) continued apace and consumed most of our time. There was opportunity for a number of special projects including repairs to bridges, construction of boardwalks, the installation of solar power to provide lighting in our tool store and the creation, at the Harlaw Visitor Centre, of a memorial plinth to the late John Stirling on which was mounted a topographical map of the Pentland Hills.

We continued our work on the wildlife reserve at Patieshill Farm- whose stewardship George and Janet Burke entrusted to us in 2021 - planting several hundred native hedgerow trees around the perimeter, enhancing the path network and extending the wildflower "meadow" area for butterfly conservation. (The number of wildflower areas in the Pentlands now stands at eight). We held our first Open Day on the reserve on a very wet Sunday in August!

As well as our team leaders I should single out for thanks a number of our members who have contributed in particular areas – Margaret Lang and Linda Stirling for overseeing the Harlaw wild life garden team; Ian Combe as quartermaster; Margaret Grainger for handling the distribution of our publications; David Syme for managing the calendar sales; John Hutton for running the "walks and talks" - now extending to visits -events programme; John Surtees for editing the Pentland Post; and Tim Simons who has now taken over responsibility for the assets register. We have appreciated the skills of Ian Rushworth in handling the solar power installation and overseeing the John Stirling memorial build and Richard Maguire for construction of number of woodworked projects.

Especial thanks to our Board of Trustees for their advice and sound governance over the year.

If I have, inadvertently, failed to give proper thanks to anyone in person, please forgive me – it is so easy to overlook individuals among the great number of helpers and volunteers within the Friends.

Acknowledgements

- Andrew and Catherine Barr, Harlaw Farm
- Bavelaw Estate
- George and Janet Burke, Patieshill Farm
- Cairns Farm Estate
- Cargilfield School
- Carnethy Hill Running Club
- James and Mary Christie, Ferniehaugh
- City of Edinburgh Council Natural Heritage Service
- Currie Scout Hall
- Dalmahoy Estate
- Dry Stone Walling Association S.E.Scotland Branch
- Susan Falconer, our Honorary President
- Folio Trust
- Garvald Home Farm
- Beccy Gibby & members of Carlops Community
- GMP Print Solutions
- Mrs G Hamilton, Crosswoodhill Farm
- Harmeny Athletic Club
- Margaret Hinselwood
- Logan Estate & the Trustees of the late Alastair Salvesan
- Gavin Marshall, Treeline
- Merchiston Castle School
- Midlothian Ranger Service
- Ministry of Defence – Defence Training Estate
- Newhall Estate
- North Tweeddale Paths Group
- Pentland Land Managers Association
- Pentland Mens Shed
- Red Moss Hill Race
- Scottish Widows
- Scotways – Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society
- Silverburn Community Association
- Specialized Signs
- SRUC Easter Howgate
- Fiona Stewart
- Sustainable West Linton Group
- Swanston Farm Ltd
- Water of Leith Conservation Trust
- West Linton & District Historical Association
- Whitewash Studio

Membership Review

Bill Aitken

Our new membership system, Membermojo (MM) was introduced in December 2023 as we entered the annual round of subscription renewals. The system achieved its prime objective of collecting subscriptions but its default process included more aggressive chasing of late payers than some of our members were used to. For the renewals round at the end of 2024, we modified the process and it is now more measured. Payment of subscriptions and donations can be made by members by any of BACS, Stripe or cheque. At the time of writing, we have 484 members, of whom 83 are still on the 'late payers' list. It is a measure of how times have changed that only three renewal letters have to be issued by post rather than email. This makes life for those involved in running the trust much easier.

MM is fully integrated into our web-site and the process of new members joining is clear and covers fully collection of relevant personal data. That data is held securely and is only available to the small number of 'administrator' members. Security and GDPR aspects are carefully managed.

In addition to handling subscriptions, MM has been valuable in assisting our Treasurer in managing donations and related Gift Aid issues. For those involved with work parties, it is straightforward to issue circulars to volunteers participating in that important work. The Secretary can send circulars to all members from time to time.

The Membership Secretary's role is supported by valuable input from Nigel Rose and Heather Gale (our external MM consultant).



Treasurer's Report

Iain MacLeod

The accounts for 2024 show a small deficit of £2,567, with funds on hand totalling £64,071 compared to £66,750 at the start of the year. We had expected the deficit to be larger but, once again, we were unable to commence a major path improvement project due to a delay in obtaining the necessary permissions.

Just over £14,000 was spent on projects, principally on the installation of solar powered lighting at the Steading and on the John Stirling memorial at Harlaw. Administration costs at £1,953 were largely in line with the previous year.

Once again our income was bolstered by donations approaching £5,000 and we are grateful to members and various hill running clubs and associated parties for their continued support in this way. In terms of other income the "Pentland Way" publication continued to sell well, producing income of £1,044. The 2024 calendar proved popular and produced profit around £1,500 and thanks are once again due to David Syme and his team for their sales efforts. Our sales have been augmented by the introduction of a "virtual shop" attached to our website and thanks are due to Andrew Gallacher and Bob Douglas for their work on the system. Bank interest received amounted to £2,179.

Looking at 2025 we are happy that our finances remain in a very healthy state and our main hope is that we can get further projects off the ground to utilise the reserves that have been accumulated in recent years.



Harlaw Wildlife Garden

Margaret Lang

2024 got off to a bad start when the first day of the season had to be cancelled due to bad weather but, thankfully, all sessions following that were fine weatherwise and we managed to complete 152 hours of gardening.

The garden looked really nice during spring and summer thanks in no small part to the planting of more herbs supplied by Norman, who tends the herb garden, and to the new willow arbour & fencing completed in the early part of the year. Thanks also go to the work party who, once again, riddled the compost bin for us and to the work party who turned up in good number to re-shale the pathways and do some other tasks.

The grass was kept in good order by Rob Melville who, when he was unable to attend on gardening days, gave up some of his weekend time to cut the grass.

This year we were kindly given a small donation to use for the garden and we are considering putting this towards a new wheelbarrow for use in the garden.

Lastly, and very importantly, a huge thank you goes to all members of the gardening team for their hard work, companionship and of course the pleasure of their company, especially during our well earned coffee breaks.

Education

Woodlands School

Linda Stirling

Once a week I meet the pupils from Woodlands School usually at Harlaw but sometimes Threipmuir. The pupils are working towards their John Muir Award which is a conservation award. It was a small group of only five pupils but they were very keen and hard working. Some of the tasks included:

- clearing leaves from the paths in Harlaw Garden
- compost riddling and understanding the value of composting in the garden
- clearing drains
- clearing the firepits around Harlaw reservoir
- building animal shelters
- planting trees
- visiting the bird hide at Threipmuir

It was a lovely group to work with and we always finished each week by feeding the birds in the garden at Harlaw.



Working with young people

Bob Cook

The sub-group which keeps in touch with schools, answers enquiries from schools and youth organisations and supports initiatives encouraging young people to explore and learn in the Pentlands, has met on three occasions in the course of the year. We are grateful to Alastair McClung and Sam Lockhart for providing meeting accommodation at Swanston.

We have contacts with an increasing number of schools and groups, though for one reason or another there hasn't been a lot of activity this year, due to such issues as transport difficulties, staff changes and lack of uptake. However, we have good and ongoing relations with a number of schools and organisations: Balerno High School and Scouts group; Kaimes School for young people with autism; Oaklands School for young people with profound learning disabilities; Seamab School for trauma affected young people; and Linda Stirling's excellent work with the young people of Woodlands School. Seamab School has dates in the diary for a Pentlands field day in March 2025.

An interesting development has been an approach from Scottish Rural Colleges (SRUC) with the suggestion of a link between SRUC and FoP which, if consolidated, will be mutually beneficial. SRUC at King's Buildings, Edinburgh University and at Oatridge, West Lothian, has students pursuing a range of courses who require to incorporate field work, surveys and research into their studies. With the arboreta, wildflower meadows, the Harlaw Garden, Patieshill and a wide range of habitats partially under our stewardship, there is infinite scope for collaboration. An on-site meeting was held at Patieshill in January 2025, when the possibilities were explored more fully.

Work Parties

Hamish Clark

The outstanding feature of the workday volunteers' contribution to the Pentland Hills was the almost 3,600 hours of activity in 2024, compared with around 2,700 in the previous year. This was mainly down to the larger number of volunteers available for workdays thanks to more members wanting to assist with our programme of work. In recent months 12-16 volunteers have been available regularly each workday. More than a dozen new FoP members have become workday volunteers.

This stream of new volunteers is encouraging as it is essential to replace retirals and maintain the pool of volunteers needed to continue our input to the conservation and improvement of the Pentlands.

A significant part of the work was on the maintenance and improvement of the extensive path network, including path drainage, surfacing, building sleeper bridges/boardwalks, replacing broken guideposts and damaged and faded signs, repairing fencing and gates, and cutting back vegetation which is overgrowing paths. This regular, often routine, work is needed for the many visitors to continue to have access to and enjoy the hills.

One-off and continuing projects made up the rest of the work programme.

Large areas of gorse, but not all, in Bonaly Country Park are being cleared to improve habitats and biodiversity which will take several years to complete. Cutting and burning the gorse has to be done in the winter months, outwith the nesting season. Typical of volunteers' dedication and hard work has been the real progress on gorse management made over the past years - although fair to say it's not everyone's favourite task!



A one-off task that volunteers were pleased to undertake was the preparation of the site of the John Stirling Memorial at Harlaw. The plinth was built (with the Dry Stone Walling Association), the displays mounted and the area round the memorial surfaced. In addition the paths in the Wildlife Garden were re-surfaced, the platform at the pond was cleaned and anti-slip strips fitted and the area in front of Harlaw House weeded and tidied.

The continuing work on wildflower meadow development and hedge and tree planting and care are described later in the Review.



Groups from companies came out on 12 days working on tasks such as helping resurface the path at Boghall, clearing vegetation from part of the path network at Hillend, and re-erecting a finger post and information board beside the new car park, gorse clearance and tree planting. Glad to say they were still smiling at the end of their day.

Looking ahead to 2025 there are 4 new projects we expect to tackle together. The lower bridge in Poets Glen, beside the pond, is in a bad state of disrepair and will be replaced by Spring. Improvements to Little Vantage to Gala Ford section of Thieves Rd have been proposed for several years and we hope that the necessary arrangements with the Regional Park will be finalised in 2025. The farmer at Easton Farm, near Dunsyre, is supplying us with 2 or 3 kissing gates to put in beside farm gates that are going to be permanently locked in future, to reduce sheep rustling. The gates will maintain access on paths used by walkers etc. The Regional Park has recently asked FoP to put in boardwalks and drains at muddy places on the West Rigg path towards Listonshiels.

As ever, lots to do for our great group of leaders and volunteers.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

John Hutton

Talks

Four talks were delivered over the year:

Mike Scott of The Colinton Tunnel Project discussed the tunnel revamp from initial ideas to fruition,

Karen Purves updated us on the John Muir Trust's Glenlude estate,

Josh Dixon ran his short film on Phantom's Cleugh and gave us the lowdown on its inspiration,

and Dougie Baird rounded things off with how the Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland has grown and faced its challenges.

All talks were well attended and spawned useful Q&A sessions.

We are very grateful to Merchiston School for free use of their Old Library (and for tea, coffee and biscuits) to host three of these talks.



Walks

Seven Walks were led over the year.

The two Winter Warmer walks got us off to a very good start just after New Year, with a grand total of 35 walkers setting off in excellent conditions from Silverburn, returning to Silverburn Community Hall for eats and drinks.

We had a very good run of weather over the year, the second year in a row.

The other walks took us to such exotic locations as Glenlude (to follow up on Karen's talk), three reservoirs in the Pentlands (led by Susan Falconer and tracing one of the walks from her Cicerone book), and the length of the Water of Leith Walkway, with a lunchtime break halfway for Josh's film and lunch.



A planned mixture of walks to celebrate the Pentland Way on a day in July unfortunately had to be cancelled when we failed to reach the numbers required.

We have continued to provide a mix of walks relative to the Friends Strenuous/Moderate/Easy grading.

101 walkers took part, on average, 14 per walk and, happy to report, without injury or "incidents"!

Conservation, Training And Quartermaster's Report

Ian Combe

Quartermaster

We are delighted to have retained our "Steading" tool store / workshop after the significant developments at Hillend. A big thanks goes to Ian Rushworth for his work and expertise installing the two solar panels and overseeing the charging and power storage solution for the building. We now have the benefit of brilliant motion sensor lights in each area.

Swanston Farm has provided us with a container which is most conveniently sited just over the Bypass and this suits us perfectly for storing wood and mortar, and with easy access for bulk deliveries. It is difficult now to believe that when I took over from John Surtees as Quartermaster most of the tools were contained in a small garden shed in my back garden!

Training

The number of tasks in the last 12 months have multiplied and a big thanks goes again to Hamish Clark for all his efforts and with regard to organising corporate groups such as Scottish Widows. Thus introducing them to the joys and arts of beating and weeding trees and hedges, clearing culvert drains, not to mention everyone's favourite day out.....gorse cutting and then burning it. Also for maintaining great links and much needed support to our friends at Scottish Natural Heritage.



Meetings were held with TCV (The Conservation Volunteers) who had offered us training courses through our friends in the Dry Stane Walling Association, one which Andrew Marsden attended, and another prior to our work on the John Stirling Memorial. We anticipate further courses being arranged next summer.

A special mention to Richard Maguire for his craftsmanship, The Mendick Hill sign and the Garvald picnic table are great examples.

The Garvald Farm again provided us with their kind hospitality and excellent campsite which was welcomed by the intrepid volunteers who joined in for the Garvald Charity Pentland Way Fund Raising Walk, with special mention to Andrew Gallacher, who not only completed the full distance, but also the walk back to Garvald from Dunsyre, just in time before the kitchen closed!

A refresher Emergency First Aid Course is being arranged for early in the New Year for all team leaders.

Conservation

We now look after 4 significant Wildflower Meadows:

- West Linton arboretum;
- by the Lyne Water at Baddinsgill;
- Patieshill Wildlife Reserve;
- and by the John Stirling Memorial.

Path edging support was installed at a steep section on the upper Poets Glen.

On Threipmuir Reservoir north bank we planted silver birch, alder, willow among the Scots pine already there.

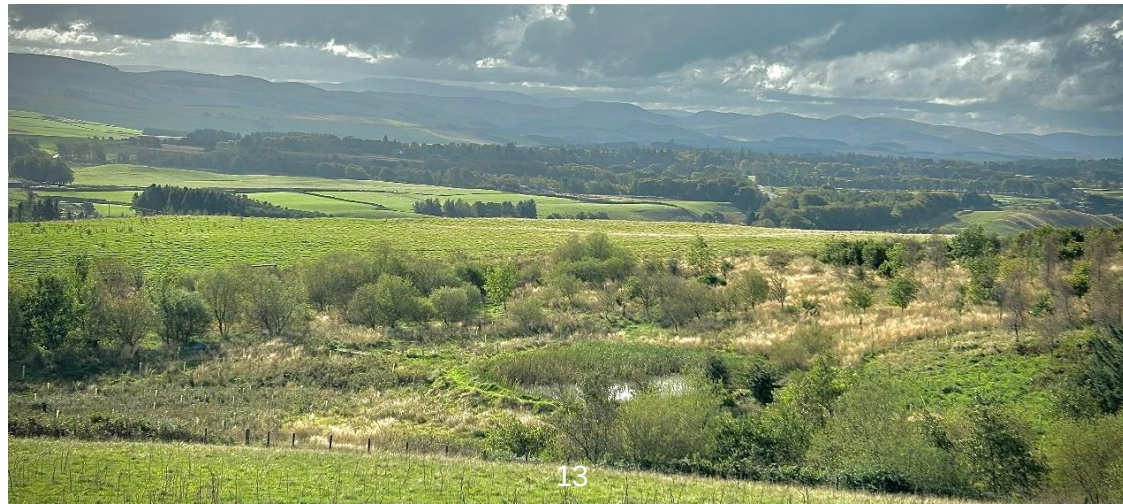
Much needed repairs were completed at North Esk Bird Hide to prevent water ingress. Annual gorse cutting / trimming at Bonaly, Threipmuir, Black Springs, and Boghall.

At Harlaw Reservoir we required to cut and prune the numerous trees which had been damaged by people breaking off branches for fires; also the edges of the walkway were strimmed and raked.

A bit of tidying up of the Bonaly tree plantation, removing old tree guards etc

Path restoration was required at the Daisy Dell by Flotterstone.

And of course the annual maintenance on our 5 arboreta.



Wildflower Meadows for Butterflies and Other Pollinators

Bob Douglas

Background:

For those who are new to FoP or volunteering, we started the wild flowering programme a couple of years ago. The aim is to take small parcels of unused grassland and convert them into wildflower meadows that will attract and support a number of target butterfly species and other pollinators.

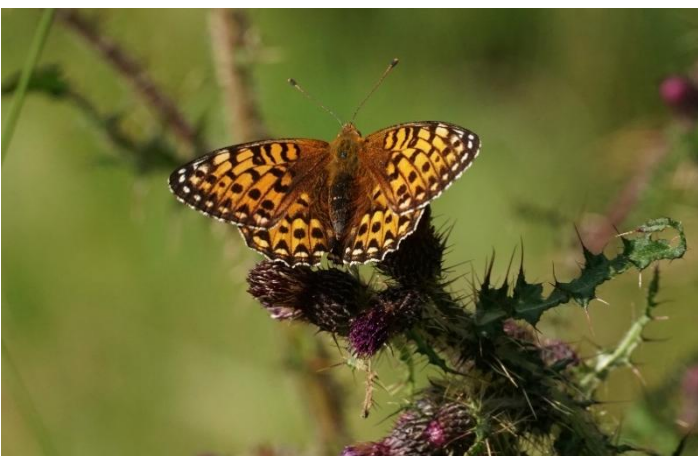
We are loading the meadows with caterpillar food plants of the target species, and nectar sources that attract the adults.

We now have five major sites, with discussions underway on another possible site.

Harlaw

We formally took control 12 months ago so have just completed year one. We have considerably extended the area that was historically called a meadow.

Two invasive species, Blackthorn and dockens have been dug out by hand – they will return but in reduced numbers. There is a small section where knapweed is doing well, and that has been under planted with spring flowering plants. Otherwise it is a regime of cut hard and rake off the vegetation, spread Yellow rattle seed and plant wildflowers.



are known to be in the vicinity so hopefully as the area increases and the plants consolidate we'll see them, and more, on-site.

There are a couple of other tree-lined patches at Patieshill I'm looking to manage, but on a cut and self-regenerate approach.

Patieshill

We are near the end of year 2 at our main site at Patieshill. The approach here is to rip up the layer of thatch and plant on the exposed ground. We are extending outwards by a manageable amount each year, gradually increasing the size of the planted area. This summer it was beginning to flower and there were a large number of pollinators appearing. A couple of the target species

West Linton

We're also ending year 2 at West Linton on the mound housing our arboretum. We are using the same approach as at Patieshill of turf stripping and extending the perimeter each year. We have started with three small patches. The aim is that in 2-3 years they will join up so that the majority of the mound becomes meadowfied.

Lyne Water

We've completed year one in what is our largest area. Last year's hard cut and seed sowing seems to have been successful. There's a large section where the grass regrowth has been minimal. Where the grass regrowth is stronger we have done a hard cut. Again it is a cut & rake-off regime.

Roamers Wood

This is a new site this year. The whole site of about 5 hectares is a Community resource managed by Sustainable West Linton. We have a meadow area slightly smaller than the one at Harlaw, and we are also aiming to wildflower alongside the tree-lined central path - along the lines of "Butterfly alley" at Saltoun wood in East Lothian.



I've also met a number of landowners in the Carlops, Kittleyknowe, West Lothian area who are supportive of what we're doing, and who, in some cases are doing something similar on their land.

Garvald - There is a small patch at Garvald behind the drystone walls built by FoP. It's more like a flower border, so handplanting is possible here. ... but there is a hillside behind it which looks interesting.

The final potential development is with Edinburgh University at Flotterstone. Many of you will be aware the University own a lot of the land between Flotterstone, Turnhouse and Rullion Green. They have a major tree-planting scheme underway as part of the University's carbon offset target. Part of the scheme involves creating a community space on the large area behind Flotterstone and that's potentially where we come in, with the proposal of including a large wildflower meadow. The site would be too large for us to attack by hand, but it may be possible for a local farmer to be contracted to get machinery in to do the heavy work. I was also told that the University could potentially have several thousand volunteers available for workdays for all the sites we are working on. The University should be running a consultation process for Flotterstone early next year.

In all cases these are long-term projects. An autumn cut and rake-off is required to deplete the nutrients, with ongoing selective seed spreading and planting.

Ultimately it is nature, along with our ability to manage each site, that will determine what plants and pollinators do well.



Publications

John Surtees

PENTLAND POST:

We've been publishing the Post twice a year, May and October, sharing the activities of the Friends of the Pentlands and some fascinating contributions from our members on topics related to the Pentland Hills.

We'll keep sending the Post electronically, but we'll also provide paper copies to members who rely on printed material. If you have any topics or suggestions for future issues, feel free to let the editor know!

CALENDAR:

The 2024 calendar "Life in the Pentlands" was successful, producing a surplus of £1,570 for the Friends. Thanks to everyone who submitted photos and to the team that picked the best ones for the calendar – it was a tough job! Also, thanks to the members who helped to distribute and sell the calendar, and those who attended stalls at Balerno Farmers Market and other locations.

The 2025 calendar with the theme "Pentlands through the Seasons" has been selling well and, looking ahead, the theme for the 2026 calendar will be "Favourite Corners of the Pentlands. If you have landscape format photos that you'd like to share please send them to John Surtees at john.surtees@pentlandfriends.org.uk by 31st July 2025.

Arboreta

Mike Andrew

The five arboreta together with the Wildwood Legacy arboretum beside our spot at Swanston are now well and truly established. Since planting during 2013 and 2014 the trees have required a fair amount of care although they are now more or less looking after themselves and we hope they have a strong and healthy future.

All sites are still being maintained mainly thanks to "Friends" volunteers, although we are helped by the Hamilton family at Harperrig and Silverburn is being kindly maintained by Peter Walker who has cut a pathway through this arboretum.

Work parties will be required in the spring to tidy up at Swanston, Carnwath, and West Linton.

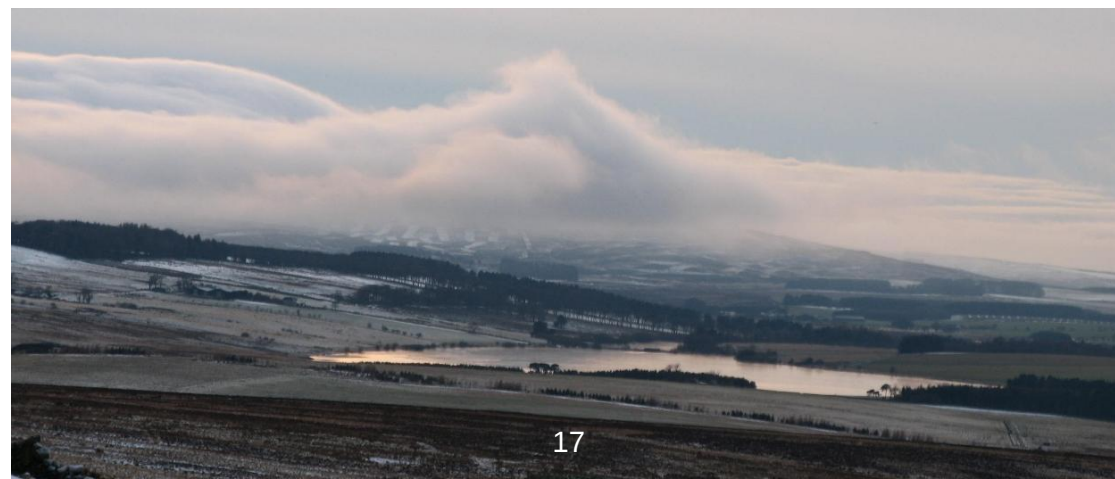
The 120 Scots Pine we planted on the north side of Threipmuir during 2020 have now taken off and are doing really well as are the fruit trees beside the wildflower meadow to the east of Harlaw House.

Patieshill is now starting to take shape with over 100 trees having been planted there three years ago and a further 80 protected with tubes and chicken wire. The hedge planted last year seems to be doing well and a further 650 hawthorn trees have been ordered for planting in February 2025.

To the southeast of Torduff reservoir the 60 junipers and 80 birch appear to be starting to get established although they are slow to grow and require considerable care in the meantime. The birch have taken a battering from the wind coming up the valley from the reservoir and we have re-staked the majority of them.

Finally, the 120 trees that we planted three to four year ago on the right hand side of the top Bonaly car park in the newly developed wetland area are now well established and should go on to greater things.

So, in overall terms the work carried out over the past few years seems to be paying off, with good news coming from all areas.



In terms of our current Action Plan our policy towards planning matters is to:

“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.”

Also in terms of the Action Plan we define our area of interest as bounded by the roads that encircle the Pentlands namely the City of Edinburgh By-pass in the north, the A702 in the east, the A70 in the west, the minor road from Dolphinton, via Dunsyre to Newbigging and the A721 to Carnwath in the south. We do, however, 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.

Our monitoring of planning applications involves applications submitted to no fewer than five different authorities namely the Edinburgh City, Midlothian, West Lothian, Scottish Borders and North Lanarkshire Councils as well as Scottish Government which is involved with large scale energy consents and with “called in” applications.

Unlike the National Parks, the Pentland Hills Regional Park (PHRP), operated jointly by Edinburgh, Midlothian and West Lothian Councils, is not itself a planning authority but has relevant aims namely:

- To retain the essential character of the hills as a place for peaceful enjoyment;
- Caring for the hills so that the landscape and habitat are protected and enhanced;
- To encourage responsible public enjoyment of the hills; and
- Co-ordination of these aims to co-exist with farming and other land uses within Park.

In 2023 we responded to Edinburgh City Council’s consultation in support of its City Plan 2030 which was approved in November 2024 and confirms the Council’s position that development which supports the aims of the PHRP will be supported provided it has no unacceptable impact on the landscape character and special qualities of the Park including views to and from it.

Over the past year we have been involved in consideration of a number of specific planning and other proposals which include:

MIDLOTHIAN

Wards 01 Penicuik & 04 Midlothian West

Torfichen Windfarm - This windfarm proposal in the Moorfoot Hills was considered by the Board on various occasions which, recognising the distance of the proposed development from the Pentlands, the recent changes in Scottish Government policies and the realities of climate change, decided against an objection at this time. The matter was the subject of discussion at the 2024 AGM and the position of the Friends remains that, while we will keep this proposal under review, we are not presently objecting to it. The application remains with Scottish Government for determination.

Midlothian Snowsports Centre, Hillend - We have taken a close interest in the major development still in progress at Hillend, to be renamed “Destination Hillend”. This is a major £25M project to revitalise the centre of which we are supportive and which should ensure the future of this facility.

SCOTTISH BORDERS

Areas of West Linton & Carlops Community Councils

Slipperfield Quarry - Along with the many other objectors to this application, we had a disappointment in the early part of the year when Scottish Ministers upheld the developers appeal against the initial refusal of this application by Scottish Borders Council. The application was for quarrying on a large 35 Ha site north of the A702. It is not yet clear when actual quarrying will commence.

Cloich Windfarm and transmission lines - In 2016 consent was granted after a Public Inquiry for an 18 turbine wind farm near Eddleston – a proposal to which the Friends did not then object. A fresh application was submitted in 2021 for the same site for a reduced number of larger turbines. At that time we made representations to Scottish Ministers expressing our concerns at the visual impact of the higher turbines particularly from Mendick and Ingraston Hills. That application remains for determination.

During the summer of 2024 we responded to the consultation promoted by Scottish Power Energy Networks in relation to the siting of the 132kV overhead power lines linking Cloich to the existing substation at Currie.

Rutherford Castle Golf Course - This is a long running proposal for the former golf course which was first submitted in early 2019 for a development initially comprising 180 lodges and various leisure facilities to which we objected on visual grounds. The scope of the application has been reduced to 100 lodges. There have been issues concerning flood risk of which an assessment was submitted to Scottish Borders Council in November 2023. The application remains outstanding.

Forestry applications - We have been consulted concerning a number of forestry proposals in relation to which we are in the course of developing our policy. While forestry planting usually involves significant landscape impact it is difficult to object to such proposals. Our approach so far is to satisfy ourselves that planting does not involve any significant adverse visual impact particularly to the skyline and affecting important viewpoints or interference with footpaths and sites of historic or archaeological significance.

Litter-picking

Andrew Gallacher

Our normal schedule is to meet twice monthly from March to December and we have managed to do that during 2024.

This year we reintroduced Dregghorn and Hillend to our schedule. The Dregghorn car park has been permanently closed by the MoD. We now start from the Travelodge car park working along the path on the banking on the west side of the Dregghorn link road towards the Link Bridge and on to the barracks entrance. We managed to meet here on three occasions and collected 23 bags of litter.

Following a long wait for the construction work at Hillend to near completion we managed to meet on a chilly November morning and collected 8 bags.

From March to November inclusive we have met 18 times, accumulated 140 volunteer hours and collected 73 bags – a sad indictment of wilful littering by many of our citizens.



Friends of the Pentlands people

Office Bearers

Chair	Andrew Marsden
Treasurer	Iain MacLeod
Secretary	Ian Walford
Membership Secretary	Bill Aitken

Other Board members

Bob Cook
Nicola Fryer
Sam Lockhart
Neil Mackay
Douglas Tullis

Team leaders

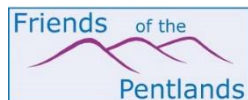
Margaret Lang	Harlaw Garden
Linda Stirling	Harlaw Garden/Educational Support
John Hutton	Walks and Talks coordinator
Andrew Gallacher	Litter-picking coordinator
Douglas Tullis	Planning Officer
Iain MacLeod	Annual Review editor
Ian Combe	Conservation, Training, Quartermaster
Bob Cook	Schools Liaison
Tim Simons	Path inspections coordinator
Mike Andrew	Arboreta coordinator
Angus Ogilvy	Liaison with HMP workshop
John Surtees	Publications editor
Bob Douglas	IT coordinator and Facebook editor
Hamish Clark	Workdays and Corporate Liaison
Donald Sandeman	Work parties
Gordon Cameron	Work parties (assistant)
Brian Gallagher	Work parties (assistant)





Credits

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