

FORRES AREA COMMUNITY TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT

October 2023 - September 2024

Key Achievements and Highlights

- Successful completion of Forres Town Hall Phase 1 Redevelopment Project
- Formation of a Forres Town Hall Working Group and funding secured to engage with a Heritage Project Consultant to plan for future improvements
- Working towards the Investing in Volunteers (iV) Award due to new funding received from the Volunteering Support Fund from Impact Funding Partners
- Regular Befrienders Training plus Support Sessions organised
- Forres Online remains a well used service with Project Staff are regularly invited to strategic meetings re. Digital Inclusion in Moray
- Forres Family Hub - Family Social Club has been praised for it's good practice
- External Bookings for Forres Town Hall have significantly increased with more entertainment based companies hiring the Main Hall for their concerts and events
- Creation of an Income Generation Group to organise Fundraising Events for FACT
- Forres Town Hall Reception now open from Monday to Friday: 10am - 3pm
- Forres Connected - Culture and Heritage Pilot Project has been well received and this will be fundamental in applying for future Grants for Forres Town Hall and for other Forres Area Community Projects and Activities
- The creation of a more sustainable model for FACT Activities
- Total Funding secured for Capital Projects - £430,000
- Total Funding secured for Projects and Activities - over £150,000

FACT BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

This has been another busy and challenging year for FACT. In an environment of reduced funding availability and increased demands on resources and time, it has been difficult to balance the various priorities that FACT undertakes on behalf of the local community. However, due to our committed staff, the continual support from our Volunteers and national, regional as well as local organisations along with good working relationships with our Funders we have been able to exceed expectations in many areas of our work.

There are so many people to thank which includes our local Grant Funders: the Berry Burn Community Fund, tsiMORAY, Moray Pathways and the Moray Local Action Group. We also would like to thank the National Funding Organisations who continue to support our work: The UK and Scottish Governments, the Architectural Heritage Fund, Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS), the National Lottery Community Fund, the People's Postcode Trust and the Scottish Community Landfill Fund. Highland and Islands Enterprise (HIE) have also continued to support us with the day to day operation of FACT and additional funding for strategic work as well as being part of the funding package to undertake the Phase 1 of the Redevelopment Project for Forres Town Hall.

Local residents and businesses have also made notable contributions, including the Finnerne Development Trust and all the generous donations from our regular Forres Town Hall users. We are also very grateful to local shops for contributions to many of the weekly Coffee Mornings and special thanks to Moray Food Plus, Incredible Edibles in Forres, Transition Town Forres, Mandala Gardens Project, Forres Friends of Woods and Fields, both Coop Stores, Lidl and Tesco for their continued support of the weekly Forres Pop up Pantry.

Notable achievements over the last 12 months have been many. The most significant one for the whole community has been to finally secure all the funding needed to undertake Phase 1 of the Redevelopment Project for Forres Town Hall which FACT owns and runs. The funding package included Grants from the UK Government's Community Ownership Fund, an HIE Green Grant, the Moray Local Action Group Fund and the Scottish Community Landfill Fund. The project involved further repairs to the roof so that the wool insulation that had been bought using the Money for Moray & tsiMORAY's Just Transition Participatory Budgeting Fund could be installed in the roof space. The process of securing the funding, the tendering process and making sure the building stayed open was challenging enough, but during the works we also discovered unexpected emergency structural repairs were needed to the beams and supports at the front of the Town Hall. Although there was a contingency fund within the original contract budget, we still needed to raise additional money and thankfully, with the help from the local community, organisations and businesses, we raised nearly £15,000 via a crowdfunding campaign and direct donations. We are also indebted to our committed Design Team, LDN Architects and the main contractor, Laing Traditional Masonry Group, who helped us to complete this Phase 1 Project in May 2024 successfully, despite the challenges that we faced.

Although the building works have made a considerable difference to the amount of energy used, energy costs have soared and our electricity bills are still significantly high. The Board and Management have been working with Staff and Volunteers to come up with operational savings and income generating ideas so that FACT becomes more self-financing. We have set up an Income Generation Group who have started to organise fundraising events including quizzes, coffee mornings, dances and ceilidhs. A newly formed Forres Town Hall Working Group has also been organised to look at further improvements for the Town Hall. We will also continue to seek funding for the many projects and services we deliver as we aim to make the Forres Area a better place to live, work and visit and we hope that you enjoy reading the updates in this Annual Report.



Thank you for your continued support.

Jim Farquharson, FACT Chair
on behalf of the Board of Directors





Volunteering and Community Engagement

FACT is very grateful for all the invaluable contributions the 68 FACT Volunteers make in supporting the range of FACT Activities and Projects that we organise as well as the operations at Forres Town Hall, in addition to the support for groups across the Forres Area. We have continued to work in collaboration with local organisations to help them reach out to find additional Volunteers needed for particular Events as part of our Forres Volunteer Pool initiative which this year particularly benefited Fireworks Night, Grant Park 100, Findhorn Bay Arts and the Forres Pride Event.

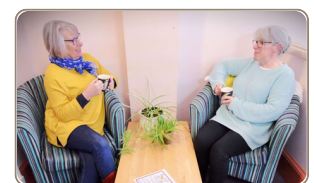
FACT Volunteer numbers continue to increase thanks in part to the links that we have developed with other organisations and we worked in conjunction with them to promote the importance of volunteering in relation to employability with the Volunteer Marketplace Event that took place in Forres Town Hall in conjunction with the DWP, Moray Pathways and tsiMORAY. Community engagement continued with attendance at meetings and training in the surrounding area which focused on Volunteering, Befriending and Digital Support.

Celebrating the input of volunteers who contribute to FACT's Projects and for other good causes in the Forres Area is an important part of our work and this included organising a Festive Thank You Drop In Event in 2023 and a Volunteer Thank You Tea in June 2024 which was organised to coincide with Volunteer Week. Both Events gave the Volunteers the opportunity to share ideas and to give us suggestions about how different Projects can progress further as well as for us to show our appreciation for the many roles that people undertake to support local organisations and FACT.

Befriending Service

FACT's Befriending Service aims to reduce social isolation and loneliness in the local community. Individuals who feel that they would benefit from a Volunteer Befriender can refer themselves or be referred by a number of local organisations and agencies including the Mental Health & Wellbeing Practitioner, the Community Physio Team, the Dementia and Frailty Nurse, the Forres Neighbourhood Care Team and Health & Social Care.

During the year, we have reviewed the policies and procedures to ensure what was being offered was within the boundaries that FACT could offer and utilised support from the Befriending Network. This has meant that Befrienders were able to undertake Training Opportunities as well as Support Sessions organised throughout the year which in turn has a positive impact on the Befriended. The Befriending Coordinator currently manages a Team of 14 Befrienders and continues to work closely with the Volunteer Coordinator who currently manages 54 Volunteers across a variety of Projects and their roles are funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.





Forres Pop Up Pantry in collaboration with Moray Food Plus

The Forres Pop Up Pantry Project focuses on the prevention of food surplus going into landfill but also continues to provide support for many households in the Forres Academy Catchment Area by ‘popping up’ each week in Forres Town Hall. FACT is fortunate to have a dedicated Team of Volunteers who run this Project each week and who collect food recovery donations from Lidl, both the Coops and Tesco and deliver them to the Town Hall Reception throughout the week. These items are free to anyone who needs them and can be collected between 10am and 3pm on weekdays.

There was a focus on how to continue this Project once Funding from the People's Postcode Lottery ended in June 2024 and this has included organising a Coffee Morning to raise funds which has bought a new freezer. This will help with the challenges of keeping food fresh between delivery and when the Pantry ‘pops up’. We are also starting to organise community meals with local chefs as part of the Project.

Family Social Club - part of the Forres Family Hub - a Cost of Living Project

FACT applied to the National Community Lottery’s Cost of Living Fund to enable us to support families in the area who were experiencing a range of challenges that impacted their wellbeing and their ability to thrive. Our Application was successful and a programme of after school and holiday time provision was organised that enables families to engage with agencies and get the advice and support they could benefit from in a welcoming environment. The Family Social Club provides an opportunity for families to meet, chat and get advice whilst their children are given the chance to participate in creative activities. This approach has been well supported and we have widened our collaboration by partnering with St. John’s Church, Wild Things! and Brodie Castle plus enabling connections with the Moray Firth Credit Union and Moray Pathways (Moray Council Employability Partnership) to develop additional activities and support under the banner of the ‘Forres Family Hub’.

Activities Programme

FACT continued to organise a range of activities throughout the year. These included exercise based activities such as Gentle Seated Exercise, Yoga and Qigong, as well as Art and Craft activities, some of which focused on Heritage and Culture. We also collaborated with Wild Things! to support older people and families so that they could participate indoor and outdoor nature focused activities.

Over 2000 people have attended our Activities Programme during the year, with Waiting Lists set up for many of the Art Courses in particular. The Activities were funded by a number of Grants from the Moray Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund which is distributed by tsiMORAY, The Crerar Trust, the National Lottery Community Fund and the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund amongst others. To make the Activities Programme more sustainable, we also introduced some Paid Courses. These started with Exercise Classes and we are developing this model further, while being mindful of keeping fees as low as possible to support inclusion.

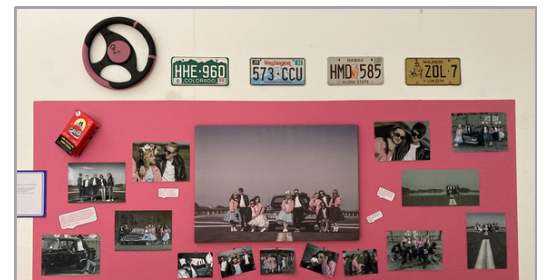


Forres Online - Digital Inclusion Project

Forres Online continues to offer free, face to face Digital Support Drop In Sessions in Forres Town Hall twice a week, for 2 hours each session. We have signed up to the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisation's Digital Participation Charter, which confirms our commitment to improve digital skills for Staff, Volunteers and residents from our community. FACT is also part of the Moray Pathways Partnership and they have supported our Family Social Club Events to give advice to parents.

FACT have also started to work with the Moray Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), the Rural Centre of Excellence (RCE), Quarriers and other organisations who are exploring the use of digital solutions to help support challenges with health and social care needs. Working collaboratively we are developing 2 digital tools in the Moray Area with the aim of improving the experience for older people and Unpaid Carers who are looking for support. Community Connections Moray is a website that helps a person to find community support and can introduce them to a range of available services. Once details are shared they are stored on a secure platform which aims to help a person to tell their story just once and in their own words. This can help identify specific needs and offers support to share their details with services that individuals want to engage with as Carers or for the people that they care for. We look forward to being involved further in these innovative approaches.

The total number of attendances at Forres Online Events during the year has been over 800 people at 146 Sessions or Events. This included Drop Ins at Forres Town Hall plus Outreach Sessions in local Halls and at the Forres Job Centre, plus extra Digital Tea & Tablet Events during Get Online Week and when other Tutors were away which reduces social isolation for the Exercise Group participants. In addition our Dungeons & Dragons Games have proved popular and the families who attend the Family Social Club have enjoyed the Digital Activities that have been introduced.



Forres Town Hall Operations

The Town Hall remains popular with additional Bookings from frequent users as well as other local groups and businesses hiring the rooms for events, meetings, training plus weekly Coffee Mornings. A great new addition has been the moveable bar which can be hired from FACT. The Town Hall User Groups (THUGs) have regular meetings which supports our partnership approach to improving the facilities and make plans for the future. The Wee Gallery continues to be a popular space for displaying local art and photography exhibitions as well.



Phase 1 of the Forres Town Hall Redevelopment Project

Surveys were completed which informed the tendering process for Phase 1 of the Town Hall Redevelopment Project to complete repairs to the roof and enable the wool insulation to be fitted. FACT Staff worked hard to secure additional funding to match the £300,000 that had been awarded from the UK Government's Community Ownership (COF) Fund. The COF Grant was awarded to FACT in March 2023 and £250,000 of further funding needed to be secured so these funds could be used.

Through dedicated efforts, further Grant Funding was awarded and FACT received £150,000 in a Green Grant from HIE and £30,000 from the Moray Local Action Group Funding in Autumn 2023. This was added to the £20,000 from the Scottish Community Landfill Fund and £50,000 from the Money for Moray & tsiMORAY Scottish Government's Just Transition Participatory Budgeting Fund which bought the insulation that needed to be installed.

Despite extensive Surveys, additional structural issues relating to the 17m wooden beam that can be seen above the 2nd floor front windows in the photo above were found after the work has started, so extra fundraising was needed. These repairs were essential to ensure the sustainability of the building and we now look forward to working with stakeholders to look at how we continue to make improvements to this important community asset for the Forres Area in Phase 2.

During the building works, some representatives of the Grant Funders took part in a Hard Hat Tour, and this included the MP and MSP for Moray at the time, as both the Scottish and UK Governments awarded Funding for Phase 1 following Grant Applications. This is a historic photo as we believe it is the only time that Douglas Ross and Richard Lochhead have been photographed together!

Community Wellbeing Participatory Grant Funding Project - Menopause Moments Pilot Project

Following a request from a member of the Forres Community we applied for funding from the Community Wellbeing Fund which was a Participatory Budgeting Grant Process that was being distributed by tsiMORAY. We identified the aims of the Menopause Moments Pilot Project with the community member and supported the voting process which enabled Moray residents to decide how the Grants are allocated. This Pilot Project was chosen by a public vote as one of 12 projects to be awarded Funding from the 23 organisations that applied. The £2,000 that we received was part of the £20,000 allocated thanks to 1468 people voting for their 5 favourite projects.

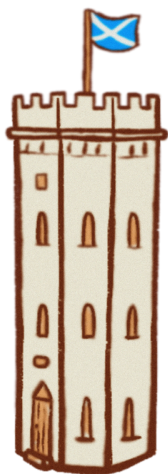
The money enabled FACT to deliver free events and activities to support women who are experiencing the menopause. We organised 2 Cafe Style Events, 2 Activities and a Marketplace which gave local people the opportunity to come together and share experiences plus explore possible solutions. This Pilot Project completed in Autumn 2023 and it was well received by the 90 participants and has been further developed by The Midlife Mingle which continues to provide events and activities in the Forres and Lossiemouth areas to support those going through the menopause.



Forres Connected - Culture and Heritage Project

In January 2024, the Forres Connected - Culture and Heritage Project received £20,000 of funding from the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Initially this Project involved FACT and the Forres Heritage Trust working together to explore how the local buildings and their history could be better promoted for the residents and visitors to the area. This has involved working in partnership to develop a new range of educational and learning resources, activities plus promotional material which has been delivered as an intergenerational community-based pilot initiative and involving over 14 organisations, businesses and individuals.

We look forward to seeing how this Project can support the plans that Moray Council has for a Forres Conservation and Heritage Scheme and other Projects when further funding is available.



Community Research Network - Collaboration for Mental Wealth in Moray

Whenever possible FACT has supported the development of the 'Collaboration for Mental Wealth in Moray' which is exploring and assessing new approaches to stimulate community engagement in research and mental wealth for all. Working in partnership with other organisations and led by the Moray Wellbeing Hub, the Moray Community Research Network (CRN) and the Digital Health & Care Innovation Centre (DHI) will be researching solutions and community-driven action with others. We look forward to being involved further in these innovative approaches.

Spirit of Community Plan 2024 - 2034

The process of reviewing the 2014 Spirit of Community Consultation Report began in 2022 with a series of meetings, events and a survey that enabled residents to comment on how they felt the Forres Area could move forward. Along with other consultation events that targeted further Youth Engagement which were supported by our partnership with the Forres Area Forum, the new Community Plan was completed in May 2024. FACT are now looking forward to the next stage of collaboration with other interested parties and individuals on the development of this plan.



Forres Area Community Trust
Company Limited by Guarantee
Statement of Financial Activities
(Including Income and expenditure account)
Year ended 31 March 2024

		Unrestricted funds £	2024 Restricted funds £	Total funds £	2023 Total funds £
Income and endowments					
Donations and legacies	5	93,354	577,476	670,830	373,474
Investment income	6	213	—	213	32
Total income		<u>93,567</u>	<u>577,476</u>	<u>671,043</u>	<u>373,506</u>
Expenditure					
Expenditure on charitable activities	7,8	112,039	559,789	671,828	358,772
Total expenditure		<u>112,039</u>	<u>559,789</u>	<u>671,828</u>	<u>358,772</u>
Net (expenditure)/income and net movement in funds		<u>(18,472)</u>	<u>17,687</u>	<u>(785)</u>	<u>14,734</u>
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		145,905	305,720	451,625	436,891
Total funds carried forward		<u>127,433</u>	<u>323,407</u>	<u>450,840</u>	<u>451,625</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

This is an extract from the Annual Unaudited Financial Statement prepared by Ritsons Chartered Accounts, Forres, Moray, Scotland.



Thank you to our members, volunteers, businesses, partner organisations and funders for your tremendous support over the last year, and with particular thanks to:

Architectural Heritage Fund
 Babalu
 Befriending Network Scotland
 Berry Burn Community Fund
 Brodie Castle & National Trust for Scotland
 Coop Shops in Forres
 Craft and Chatter at Forres Town Hall
 Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS)
 Department of Work & Pensions (DWP)
 EB Scotland Ltd: Scottish Community Landfill Fund
 Fantastic Forres
 Film Forres
 Finderne Development Trust
 Forres Area Forum
 Forres in Bloom
 Forres Communities Activities Association
 Forres Friends of Woods and Fields
 Forres Gazette
 Forres Health Centre
 Forres Heritage Trust
 Forres Theme Day Association
 Forres Town Hall Users Groups (THUGs)
 Findhorn Bay Arts
 Friends of the Falconer Museum
 Heritage Trust Network
 Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)
 Impact Funding Partners: Volunteering Support Fund
 Incredible Edibles, Forres
 Laing Traditional Masonry Group
 LDN Architects
 Leancoil Trust
 Lidl, Forres
 Mandala Gardens Project
 Money for Moray
 Moray Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund
 Moray Council
 Moray Firth Credit Union
 Moray Food Plus
 Moray Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP)
 Moray Local Action Group Fund
 Moray Pathways
 Moray Wellbeing Hub
 National Lottery Community & Cost of Living Funds
 People's Postcode Lottery

reBOOT
 Rural Centre of Excellence (RCE)
 Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
 Scottish Government Just Transition Fund
 Solo Hair Design
 St. John's Church
 Tesco, Forres
 The Crerar Trust
 The Midlife Mingle
 Transition Town Forres
 tsiMORAY
 UK Government Community Ownership Fund
 UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund
 Wild Things!

FACT Staff on 1st September 2024

- Agnes Fraser - Cleaner, Operations Team
- Audrey Boyd - Finance Manager
- Euan Kershaw - Digital Project Assistant
- Graham Watson - General Assistant
- Iain Watt - Cleaner, Operations Team
- Ilona Wood - Project Development Officer
- Janice Cooper - Forres Online Coordinator
- Lindsey Standing - Volunteer & Community Engagement Coordinator
- Michelle Gillibrand - Development Manager
- Nick Clark - Operations Manager
- Ruth Jeffries - Befriending Coordinator

FACT Directors on 1st September 2024

- Jim Farquharson - Chair
- Joanne Barry - Treasurer
- Tina Coffey - Company Secretary
- Kev Skivington
- John Robinson
- Lorna Creswell
- Peter Airey

**Our aim is to help to make the
Forres Area
a better place to live, work and visit.**



**Working together to make
YOUR Town Hall more suitable
for the needs of the Community**

Forres Area Community Trust (FACT)

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Forres Area Community Trust is a Company Limited by Guarantee

Registered in Scotland as Company Number: SC412275

Scottish Charity Number: SC044953