



Perth and Kinross
COUNTRYSIDE
TRUST

Discovery, Learning and Engagement Report 2023



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Introduction

Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust has always played a role in educating and inspiring people to access and learn about the beauty of the local countryside. The ability to do this increased in 2022 with the securing of generous funding from The Forteviot Trust and The Gannochy Trust, enabling the employment of a Discovery, Learning and Engagement Officer to take the Trust's engagement work forward.

The DLE Officer began in post in April 2022 and developed an Education Strategy in order to identify priorities and provide a focused basis for the Trust's work. This comprises of six strategic outcomes:

1. Encourage visitors, new and existing, to come to the countryside in Perthshire. Enable discovery, and enjoyment of, the outdoors.
2. Create opportunities for people to appreciate nature in their local area.
3. Improve opportunities for positive health and wellbeing of individuals and communities through discovering and enjoying the outdoors.
4. Increase knowledge and understanding of nature, conservation, heritage and land use.
5. Inspire action at different levels (individual, community, business) for the climate and biodiversity crises, and to improve access to the countryside.
6. Raise the profile of both education and engagement and wider work of PKCT and encourage support

These outcomes are to be achieved through the development and provision of different programmes and work packages, outlined below.

- Outdoor learning programme – for primary and secondary pupils
- Education and outreach
- Youthwork programme
- Training opportunities – all ages
- Events programme
- Resources
- Volunteer programme development

As we near the end of the first year of PKCT's new education and engagement work, this report aims to summarise achievements to date, provide an analysis of progress and outline what is hoped can be achieved in the coming year.



©Strathallan School

Outdoor Learning Programme

PKCT aims to develop an outdoor learning programme, which links to the Curriculum of Excellence and can be used in both primary and secondary education settings.

Work to develop this has begun, through the development of an outdoor learning programme with the strategic youth partnership, which will be discussed further in the Youthwork section of this report. It is hoped that this programme will, after a trial with the youth groups, be suitable for rolling out to use in formal education settings.

In addition to this structured programme, outdoor learning has begun with primary schools as part of PKCT's education and outreach work and it forms the primary ethos of delivery for our environmental education work.

Education and Outreach

A Tree for Every Child in Perthshire – pilot phase

A Tree for Every Child in Perthshire (TEC) has been the main education project to run in this first year. The main aims of the project are provided below:

- To educate and inspire children about the importance of trees and to provide the opportunity to partake in tree planting as a conservation action
- Provide educators and group leaders with the information and confidence needed to successfully plant and maintain healthy trees
- Deliver tree planting events that coincide with the Trust's 25th anniversary and Queen's Green Canopy

This was to be achieved through two strands:

1. A structured education programme, to be delivered across three sessions to up to five school and/or children's community groups
2. Independent events, at which children are able to take part in tree planting

Four schools were identified, and the fifth group was initially identified as a community group through Pitlochry Festival Theatre. However, the group organised through the theatre became three primary classes from Pitlochry High School and so in essence five schools were involved in the project.

Schools:

- Kinloch Rannoch Primary School (Kinloch Rannoch)
- Our Lady's RC Primary School (Perth)
- Bertha Park High School (Perth)
- Strathallan Prep School (Forgandenny)
- Pitlochry High School – Primary (Pitlochry)

Each school had the opportunity to take part in three workshops, for up to three classes. The first workshop covers the importance of trees, with regards to biodiversity and climate change, and was delivered in September – October 2022. The second workshop was a tree planting event, the culmination of planning which had taken place between the DLE Officer, the schools, and a range of partners. These planting workshops took place in November-December 2022. The final workshop covered how to look after the newly planted trees and was delivered in January-March 2023.

All the workshops are designed to be delivered outdoors, with indoor workshops options available at the school's discretion when concerning the weather. The option to reschedule is also given to the school, if they would prefer the session to take place outside on another day.

A small report on the pilot phase of this project will be produced by the DLE Officer in April 2023 and it will contain analysis of lessons learned, successes, and impact. For the purposes of this report, the key stats are provided below.

Overall, the trial planted 606 trees across the school plantings and two stand-alone events. 346 of those trees have been registered with Queen's Green Canopy – 260 were not, at the preference of the landowner. Around 168 pupils have taken part in the formal education programme, and around 35 children have taken part in the events. The project has been made possible through collaboration with the Woodland Trust and support and funding from PKCT and PKC.

The planting phase of TEC was celebrated with attendees from PKCT's board of trustees, Chair, and Patron and a local professional photographer provided photos for the day.

It is very much hoped that this project will continue as PKCT's flagship education project for many years, culminating in thousands of trees planted by, and for, the future generations of Perth and Kinross. Work has already begun on the next phase of the project for 2022/2023.



Pupils from Pitlochry High take part in TEC workshop 1 (learning about factors to consider when planning tree planting)

©PKCT



Pupils from Strathallan Prep School receiving a demo from Woodland Trust volunteer Ian Baird as part of TEC workshop 2

©PKCT

Pupils from Kinloch Rannoch Primary school enjoying TEC workshop 2, along with special guests in celebration of the planting phase of the project.

©Ian Biggs



Pupils from Kinnoull Primary School, celebrating their tree planting as part of a School's event at Barnhill. Guildtown Primary also took part in this event.

©PKCT

Outdoor Learning Sessions

Another component of PKCT's education and outreach work, is the ability to offer outdoor learning sessions to schools in the region. This has initially been targeted to primary and nursery settings, however secondary schools are also welcome to arrange sessions with the DLE Officer.

Through working with PKC's education team, the opportunity was promoted to all primary schools across Perth and Kinross and bookings have been put in place for several schools across March-June 2023.

As these sessions are currently part of our core offering, a limit of two sessions of up to two hours, per school/establishment, has been put in place. This is to ensure as many schools can benefit from the offer as possible.

Each school works with the DLE Officer to discuss needs and options, and from a broad range of initial suggestions specific session plans are then created for the school's needs. Sessions can take place on school site, or at local sites where appropriate.

Activities offered cover a range of curriculum linked topics, from health and wellbeing to science, maths, social studies, arts and literature. They also link to the John Muir Award, which helps schools participating in this scheme.

As an example, on 17 March the DLE Officer delivered a two hour session to a group of P7's from the Community School of Auchterarder. These pupils had not taken part in that year's residential outdoor learning trip. This session was to provide them with an alternative – the aim was to provide a fun, outdoor experience.

With that in mind the activities planned and delivered during the session were:

- Outdoor games (Name game; Meet a tree; Forty-Forty; Bat and Moth)
- Fire (SOAC ; leave no trace; how to light – practise with flint and steel; marshmallows and smores; how to put out).
- Story bag – to help children create stories around the fire



John Muir Award – Supporting Schools to Deliver

During early discussions with Our Lady's RC Primary in Perth, it was identified that the teachers would like support for delivering the second level of the John Muir Award with their P6/7 and P7 classes. The first level had been achieved the previous year, but due to budget and site constraints, they were now struggling to add more variety to the activities offered. To this end, PKCT helped to arrange and deliver four sessions in March 2023 to provide meaningful, different, and exciting opportunities for the children to complete their award.

As the planning for these sessions progressed, the DLE Officer had been introduced to some of the team from the John Muir Trust through other work. The Conservation Officer, East Schiehallion, was then made aware of this work and was keen to attend to see what has been delivered. Unfortunately, due to schedule clashes this was not possible, but it is very much supported by the John Muir Trust.

The four sessions were:

1. Invertebrates and Wildlife Photography – at Western Edge Park, Perth
2. Habitat Management – a litter pick at Seven Acres Park, Perth
3. Trip to Dunkeld – a walk along the path to Loch of the Lowes, and a visit to the centre to see the Osprey
4. Kinnoull Hill – completion of the tower trail and activities to support map and trail reading skills.

The two classes comprise around 44 children, and for many it is their first chance experiencing these locations and/or activities. It has been incredibly valued by the teachers.

The DLE Officer has already received an enquiry from another primary school with regards to their class completing their John Muir Award – it is something that ties in well with the outdoor learning sessions that we are able to offer.



A pupil finds, and identifies, a centipede during the invertebrates session. ©PKCT

Pupils celebrate after completing a litter pick, resulting in 32 bags of litter! Equipment was borrowed from PKC, and the pick was part of Keep Scotland Beautiful's Spring Clean campaign. PKCT entered the school into the Litter League.

©PKCT



Pupils receive a talk and activities about the Ospreys from Scottish Wildlife Trust staff at Loch of the Lowes Visitor Centre. ©PKCT

Pupils had exclusive access to the Crannog Hide, from which many of them saw their first ever Ospreys! ©PKCT



John Muir – Junior Rangers Programme

In addition to providing outdoor learning sessions which support the John Muir Award, PKCT were approached by the John Muir Trust to help deliver their new Junior Rangers programme with Fairview School, Perth.

The first of these will cover pond dipping at Quarry Mill Woodland Park and the second will be based around outdoor skills (fire, shelters, and games) at Viewlands Park in Perth. Session plans and site visits have been in development and dates are set for delivery in April and May 2023. This work is funded by the John Muir Trust and it is hoped that PKCT may have further involvement in future years.

Highland Perthshire Primary School Birdbox Project

In 2022/2023 PKCT was excited to partner with GreenTweed Eco to deliver the Highland Perthshire Primary School Birdbox Project. This project resulted in each primary school in Highland Perthshire receiving 10 hand-made birdboxes. A high quality, curriculum linked, digital resource pack has also been created by PKCT to accompany the project and is now available for teachers to use.

A celebration event took place at Kinloch Rannoch Primary School, who were one of the first schools to receive their boxes!

This project was made possible thanks to funding from Basil Death Trust, Jimmie Cairncross Charitable Trust and PKCT.

Looking ahead, we hope to deliver a second phase of this project to other schools in Perth and Kinross in 2023/2024.



Pupils receive their birdboxes
and resource pack examples
© Ian Biggs



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Youth Work

A key focus of our work is to provide opportunities for young people across Perth and Kinross, in an informal setting, through the Strategic Youth Work Partnership.

Groups were offered support with their programmes, using the same outdoor learning session framework as has been offered to primary schools. In July 2022 the DLE Officer delivered a day of outdoor learning at Den O'Alyth for the Alyth Youth Partnership. A total of 16 children attended and 3 adults from AYP stayed and assisted. Activities included: shelter building; river dipping and using animal diversity to assess water quality; fire and marshmallows; and outdoor games.



©PKCT



©PKCT



©PKCT

Work has also been ongoing to establish the policies and procedures needed for the launching of a PKCT Youth Council and an outdoor learning programme is in development with the Strategic Youth Partnership. It is hoped that these two aspects will combine into a project, which we will seek funding for and launch in 2023.

Training Opportunities

Engagement and Communications Internship

In November 2022 PKCT was delighted to welcome its second intern, and first Engagement and Communications Intern, to the team. This intern position is funded by the GCAS scheme and allows the graduate to support PKCT's engagement and marketing work across its projects, primarily education, while gaining valuable experience and knowledge.

The Engagement and Communications Intern has been responsible for developing the resource pack for the Highland Perthshire Primary School Birdbox project and has also managed the booking and delivery of the Wildlife Watch sessions, for which resources have been created which can be re-used in future. The Intern is going on to support mapping and design projects with other member of the team, as well as the core marketing work of PKCT.

PKCT hopes to host another intern through the GCAS scheme, once this internship comes to an end in May 2023.

Scottish Outdoor Access Code – Pilot Workshops

PKCT was thrilled to be part of the development and delivery of NatureScot's pilot workshops about the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC). These workshops are aimed at education providers (such as teachers, rangers, and community group leaders) to help them teach young people about the code.

Two SOAC workshops took place successfully on 14 September for the 13 teachers of Our Lady's Primary in Perth, and on 20 September at Bertha Park High, to 7 teachers from across Perth and Kinross's schools.



Teachers take part in the SOAC pilot workshops © PKCT

PKCT continue to work with NatureScot on this project and have been funded to create an additional resource box for NatureScot to use for the workshops. It is also hoped PKCT will be invited to support future workshops and the DLE Officer is booked to do so, at a workshop organised by NatureScot on 28 April 2023.

Outdoor Learning Training - CPD

PKCT has received requests, and is happy to provide, informal outdoor learning training as part of CPD (Continued Professional Development).

The first of these came through our partnership work with Crieff Hydro hotel, who support PKCT's Big Tree Country programme. Two sessions of two hours were designed for the staff who work at the children's club at the hotel. The first of these is based around health and wellbeing and the second is about outdoor play. Both workshops are designed to provide the attendees with a range of activities that can be used with children outdoors.

One session took place successfully in November 2022, although due to weather it was moved largely indoors. The other rescheduled at the hotel's request due to hotel staff shortage – it is hoped to take place in June 2023. All participants received a certificate of participation for their records, designed in-house by PKCT's PR and Marketing Officer.

These session plans have since been offered to other establishments who have enquired about training, and one is due to be delivered to a nursery later in the year.



Attendees from Crieff Hydro take part in outdoor learning training, about health and wellbeing. Here making bird feeders as part of the “Give” aspect of the five ways to wellbeing. ©PKCT

Outdoor learning training was also provided to students studying outdoor learning at UHI Perth. A two hour session in March 2023 consisted of using the grounds, and the grounds of Goodlyburn Primary School, to demonstrate activities and considerations needed for outdoor learning sessions. Students will be using knowledge gained from the session to help them design their own outdoor learning sessions, to be delivered to pupils from Goodlyburn Primary School as part of their course.

A student at UHI takes part in training, here completing the “Meet a Tree” activity. ©PKCT



Events

PKCT is dedicated to organising our own events, and attending external events in the hope of promoting our work and helping people to access the countryside.

PKCT Events

In July 2022 a pop-up event at South Inch park in Perth was organised for general awareness raising and family activities. Activities included: drop in bug hunt; bark rubbing; nature's colour wheel; and park photo quest. In total there were interactions with 14 children and 25 adults, and PKCT were visible to many more who were enjoying the sunshine at South Inch.



©PKCT

Project support

When needed the DLE Officer has been available to support aspects of events for other PKCT projects. This includes the provision of education activities for school children during the launch event of the all abilities path in Kinloch Rannoch in 2022, and the design and delivery of a consultation event about active travel to Abernethy Scouts, in support of the Bridge of Earn to Newburgh Active Travel Route project.

Perth Wildlife Watch

A key and regular feature of PKCT's events programme is the Perth Wildlife Watch group, a children's nature club which is run in partnership with the Scottish Wildlife Trust who manage this Scotland wide network of groups.

The group is for children aged 8-12 and meets once a month at different locations around Perth. Each session is themed around different aspects of wildlife and conservation and the club gives children the chance to experience nature and the outdoors in a fun and informal way. The volunteer recruitment is all processed through the Scottish Wildlife Trust, and the group also receives resources and an initial start up cheque of £50 from SWT. The group is managed and delivered by the DLE Officer, and the Engagement and Communications Intern and the partnership enables PKCT to provide a volunteer opportunity for people in the Perth area.

The most recent session took place at North Inch in March and was themed "Marvellous Mammals". A total of 16 children took part in the session – the maximum for the sessions is 20, to ensure high quality and safe provision by the leaders.

PKCT plans to continue working with the Scottish Wildlife Trust to deliver Wildlife Watch in future years.



Some of our regular Wildlife Watchers having fun making bird feeders in January. ©PKCT

Toasting marshmallows during February's session. ©PKCT



Wildlife Watchers were able to learn about and touch different mammal skulls in March, kindly loaned by Scottish Wildlife Trust.
©PKCT

External Events

The DLE Officer attended two large events in autumn 2022:

Scotland Big Picture Conference – 24 Sept

PKCT manned a table in the conference marketplace and spoke with around 300 adults, and one child. There were lots of quality conversations and people appreciating the walks and cateran trail leaflets, in addition to a lot of interest in PNCP. This event also resulted in very useful networking and connections opportunities.



© David Tollick

PKC Youth Climate Conference – 04 November

An inspiring day, during which we ran a workshop for around 25 pupils across three groups on the importance of accessing the outdoors and of nature's role in health and wellbeing. One workshop (around 10 children) was unfortunately cut from the timetable due to speakers over-running in the first half. A talk was also delivered by the DLE Officer on the Tree for Every Child in Perthshire Project. This was to around 100 pupils and their teachers as well as adults from other organisations who had stayed since the workshops. The talk was recorded to be shown for any schools who had to leave early.



© PKCT

PKCT continues to support external events, and the DLE Officer is booked to provide a workshop and stand at PKC's Earth Day event on 22 April 2023 in Perth.

Art on the Tay

PKCT is collaborating with Pitlochry Festival Theatre to support various aspects of their Art on the Tay project. This includes supporting the promotion and delivery of the "TAYken by me" photo competition, which launched in March 2023 and providing support to artist workshops which are due to take place in the summer of 2023.

Resources

One of the primary objectives initially was to establish an Education area of the PKCT website. This was achieved during summer 2022 and provides an excellent space for people to see the range of education and engagement work on offer, and to access resources made for sharing externally. The page can be found here: [Education | Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust \(pkct.org\)](https://pkct.org/education/)

Several activity sheets that were made for use during events have been published in the resources area, as has the excellent resource pack made by the Engagement and Communications Intern for the Highland Perthshire Primary School Birdbox Project.

In addition to resources shared publicly and for free on the PKCT website, a number of resources have been made as part of session delivery, which can be re-used in future sessions. Stock items have also been bought for education using the

core funding, which enhances the range of activities that can be offered for education and outreach sessions, and events.

Where possible, resources are borrowed from partners to ensure minimum waste and most effective use of equipment. PKC have leant use of pond dipping and litter picking equipment, and the Woodland Trust leant tree planting tools for the Tree for Every Child in Perthshire Project.

The DLE Officer and Engagement and Communications Intern also provide supporting content for the website and social media platforms.



Event resources (left) and the resource pack for the Highland Perthshire Primary School Birdbox project (below), available on the PKCT website. © PKCT

PREVIEW

Volunteering

Volunteer development has begun, including the production and reviewing of policies and procedures, to provide PKCT with more flexibility in the ability to create and enhance roles – for example the Youth Council volunteer role, which we hope to offer in 2023.

The DLE Officer has begun to co-ordinate corporate volunteering opportunities for partners such as Gleneagles as well as enquiries which come through from other organisations. Opportunities are matched on a case by case basis, and have included a tree planting event for Gleneagles staff, in partnership with the Woodland Trust, and a litter pick event organised by the DLE Officer for a small group from NHS Tayside. Unfortunately both of these events hit issues through volunteer drop out (various reasons) – the first had to go ahead with PKCT staff, and the second has been rescheduled. A third volunteer opportunity, arranged by linking both of these groups to a planned litter pick event by PKC, has been offered to both groups and is taking place on 05 April 2023.

Valuable volunteering opportunities have been provided through the Wildlife Watch group and we continue to work closely with external groups such as the local Paths Groups. A blog about the value of volunteering outdoors was written and published by the DLE Officer.

As volunteer development continues at PKCT, we hope to expand our range of valuable and meaningful opportunities in a way that is in keeping with the capacity of the Trust's small staff team.



Volunteers Sara and Demi help to explain an activity to children at Perth Wildlife Watch. © PKCT

Project development

A range of other contacts have been made, and meetings begun, to explore further education projects across the programmes, strategic outcomes, and geographic locations. These have not been detailed here as they are in their very early stages but ongoing development is a key part of the DLE Officer's role.

Education Figures

PKCT keep a very basic track of our education and events figures, to enable us to assess our impact and provide information when needed. A summary of key stats from April 2022 to 29 March 2023 is provided below:

Running Totals

(From education and engagement led events alone)

Number of interactions with children: 986

Number of interactions with adults: 479

Across this number of independent activities/events: 39

Proportion of those at Perth postcodes: 21 (53.8%)

Thanks

PKCT would like to thank the following funders and supporters, without whom much of the work outlined in this report would not have been possible.

Funders

- ❖ The Gannochy Trust
- ❖ The Forteviot Trust
- ❖ PKC
- ❖ The Jimmy Cairncross Charitable Trust
- ❖ The Basil Death Trust
- ❖ GCAS
- ❖ NatureScot
- ❖ John Muir Trust
- ❖ The Scottish Wildlife Trust

Supporters

- ❖ PKC
- ❖ The Woodland Trust

- ❖ The Gannochy Trust
- ❖ Strategic Youth Partnership
- ❖ Weller Poley Park Committee
- ❖ Pitlochry Festival Theatre
- ❖ GreenTweed Eco
- ❖ The Queen's Green Canopy
- ❖ Cameron McNeish
- ❖ Teachers and support staff across Perth and Kinross