

The graphic features a central dark blue circle containing the text 'CVS Falkirk', 'Annual Review', and '2021/22'. Radiating from this circle are several thick, colorful brushstrokes in shades of purple, green, yellow, and teal. The background is white and filled with numerous small, dark blue circular icons representing various concepts such as people, technology, nature, and industry.

CVS Falkirk

Annual Review

2021/22

Third Sector Interfaces: A Brief Overview



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

As a TSI, what is it we do?

There are 32 TSIs (Third Sector Interfaces) in Scotland, one for each local authority, and are all registered charities.

Some, like CVS Falkirk, bring together TSI services under one central organisation for their area; others are partnerships of larger, separate organisations who come together to help the third sector in larger geographical areas.

The TSI Scotland Network

The TSI Scotland Network, the umbrella organisation, offers a stronger, more coherent voice and support for our Scottish third sector. The Network focuses on providing a strategic role for third sector community planning and health and social care integration, along with responding to local sector needs. TSIs operate with key functions at their forefront:

- Building capacity
- Voice and connect
- Source of knowledge



CVS Falkirk: Your Local TSI

Our role as your local Third Sector Interface is to ensure the strength and resilience of our vibrant local third sector, which includes all charities, volunteers, social enterprises, voluntary and community groups working in Falkirk District. Whether you work in Banknock or Bo'ness, Airth or Limerigg, or across the district, we are committed to supporting the sector with a particular focus on:

- more people having increased opportunities to volunteer, and volunteer involving organisations being better able to recruit, manage and retain volunteers
- the growth and development of local social enterprise
- organisations being well governed and managed, to enable them to deliver quality outcomes
- organisations being better connected and able to influence and contribute to public policy



Introduction: Victoria McRae, CEO

I have the utmost pleasure in introducing this year's annual report: an overview of the events we have held, the services we delivered, and the array of supportive engagement and achievement supporting our third sector colleagues, strategic partners and volunteers throughout the Falkirk and District area. It has been a challenging year for the staff and directors of CVS Falkirk, however, despite this, the team continued to deliver services and activities supporting the sector, demonstrating their commitment to the organisation and their resilience in working together to overcome adversity.

Compiling this report has demonstrated to us how unique our TSI role is in the local context and how valuable it is. We are incredibly proud to know through this process that we're making a difference for communities and third sector organisations in Falkirk. We are committed to being enablers and catalysts for third sector organisations, and we also want to focus on building collaborative partnerships and working together as we know from the impact we have had this year, that we are making a difference in this area for the third sector.

As we move into the recovery phase of the pandemic, we will continue to work hard to help the third sector re-open and adapt to new circumstances and funding arenas. We will grow and develop our own organisation, to strengthen and build capacity within our team to support and lead the third sector going forward.



With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'V McRae'.

Victoria McRae

Chief Executive Officer of
CVS Falkirk & District

Reflections: Looking Back at 2020/21

At our last AGM in November 2021, we shared some of the workstreams and activities that we had undertaken, which were completely focused on supporting the third sector and communities' response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We developed our role as a central point of information, a conduit between the third sector and public sector colleagues, a volunteer centre and a funding distributor.

Volunteer Falkirk
new volunteer
centre launched

**Forth Valley Third
Sector Conference
2021**
200 attendees

**Falkirk Funders Fayre
2021**
100 attendees
9 info sessions

COVID-19 web pages
support, guidance, local
activities and how to
help

Online ministerial visit from
Aileen Campbell, MSP,
Cabinet Secretary for Local
Government and
Communities

£1 million in funding
support brought to
Falkirk and District's
third sector

Moving into the financial year of 2021/2022, our workplan was very focused on providing the support our local third sector and partners needed to continue to respond to the pandemic and emerging crisis. Through our engagement and learning from these activities, we have delivered a vast array of support, including volunteer management support, organisational capacity building and development, third sector engagement, and bringing cross sector partners together. We have further developed our role within these arenas this year, and built stronger relationships, as well as holding an array of online events, including our Falkirk Funders Fayre and Third Sector Conference.

Volunteering

While many traditional volunteering opportunities continued to be suspended, the commitment to **COVID-19 response volunteering** has not wavered throughout the pandemic. Roles within emergency food provision, delivering medicines, kindness and garden gate conversations (as well online opportunities) delivered valuable activities and essential services to support those most disadvantaged within our communities.

We have kept in touch with potential volunteers who registered through the Ready Scotland campaign and Being a Good Neighbour initiative with regular **Volunteering Hotlists**, direct mailings and information on our website.

Personal Experience

One potential volunteer receiving the Volunteering Hotlist was surprised at the number of different roles available and having met with the team to discuss various options chose to get involved with the Falkirk Food Train by shopping and delivering groceries to older people in the community.

"I just want to thank you for putting me in touch with these organisations, as I was unaware of them and doubt if my volunteer role would have even started without your help."

- Food Train volunteer

We provided **tailored programmes of support** to 20 local organisations: developing and revising roles where appropriate, providing information and training as well as resources on safeguarding volunteers, vaccinations for volunteers, and mental health and wellbeing.

Securing funding from Falkirk Council and Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), we continued to administer our **Volunteer Expenses Fund**. This fund supported volunteers delivering COVID-19 related activities, while reducing the administrative and financial burden on community groups.

"Thanks for organising [the fund], we would not have been able to provide volunteer expenses within this project."

- Volunteer Coordinator



The Difference We Made

- **73 new volunteer roles** created
- **60 volunteers matched** to appropriate roles
- **20 organisations** more equipped to engage volunteers
- Volunteer Expenses Fund: **26,000 miles** travelled

Volunteering

Following the pandemic, we knew organisations were keen to get back in touch with volunteers and restart paused activities safely, especially as volunteers had played such a crucial part during COVID-19.

We supported local groups and organisations to look at their past volunteering programmes, updating them and ensuring their roles were current, effective and safe, so they could begin recruiting volunteers again.

Personal Experience

One organisation we worked with is Falkirk Delivers. Our team supported them in clarifying the aims of their volunteering programme, discussing ways to structure the new programme, while considering how digital engagement and volunteer applications could boost their reach.

As a result, Falkirk Delivers has been able to begin recruiting volunteers to support them with making the town centre a vibrant space to be.



"Volunteers have continually supported our work and without them dates-n-mates wouldn't be the same. We couldn't have done it without the invaluable support from CVS Falkirk!"

- dates-n-mates Falkirk



"CVS Falkirk have been a valuable resource to the Falkirk Delivers team. They guided us through all the relevant processes and steps to follow, we find CVS a fantastic partner to work with who have helped us with a number of initiatives."

- Falkirk Delivers

Volunteer Friendly Award

The Volunteer Friendly Award (VFA) is a user-friendly quality standard to support, recognise and reward groups who are good at involving volunteers.

The Volunteer Friendly Award was redesigned in 2021 by Volunteer Scotland and the TSI Scotland Network as a result of the phenomenal achievements by small groups and their volunteers in the past few years, and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and various lockdowns.

We were delighted to present dates-n-mates Falkirk (pictured left) with their Volunteer Friendly Award, as the first Falkirk group to achieve the award since its redesign, recognising their commitment to providing an inclusive volunteering programme supporting their members to help within the project, in a way that suits them, while also recruiting volunteers externally.

Celebrating Volunteering in Falkirk

Volunteers make a remarkable contribution to our local communities, and we're keen to recognise volunteering throughout the Falkirk Council area.

Volunteer Awards Ceremony

To mark Volunteers Week and to celebrate volunteering throughout Falkirk and District, we opened requests for our Celebrating Volunteering certificates, and hosted a new virtual Awards Ceremony. Open to all local organisations, and members of the public, we received nominations across 5 different award categories. We are most grateful to our Independent Panel, who were tasked with agreeing each Award Winner. They said:

"The quality of all the nominations submitted, and there were many of them, were very high and each one had a compelling story, giving us a real challenge in just choosing one in each category as they were all worthy of commendations.

Our thanks go to all nominees and those organisations and individuals who took the time to nominate, and to CVS Falkirk for their organisation and allowing us to be part of Volunteers' Week."

2021 Award Ceremony Winners

- Volunteer of the Year: **Lynne Boslem**, Tamfourhill Community Hub
- Young Volunteer of the Year: **Caitlyn Ross**, Forth Valley Girlguiding (Carron Division)
- Innovative Volunteer Award: the **Code Red** group at Denny High School
- COVID Volunteer Award: **Lesley Smith**, Royal Voluntary Service (Forth Valley)
- Panel's Choice: **Laura Stewart**, Forth Valley Sensory Centre



Saltire Awards

In partnership with Scottish Government and the TSI Network, the Saltire Awards recognise the time and commitment dedicated to volunteering by young people aged 12 – 25 years. Despite the pandemic:

- **276 young people registered** for Saltire Awards
- **45 Challenge Certificates** were achieved
- **233 Ascent Certificates** were achieved

Personal Experience

"I do believe that the Saltire Awards provide a good incentive for young people to give back to the community, benefitting the volunteers, the organisations, and the community as a whole. It also gives a boost to your CV which is always a nice added bonus."

- Ryan (17 years old, volunteer and Saltire Awards recipient)

Building Capacity

Falkirk's third sector has demonstrated resilience and flexibility in approach in their response to the pandemic: we have provided bespoke programmes of support, one-to-one guidance, online resources and training around topics of funding, governance, business development, volunteer management, start up and crisis support (where we provided intensive help, and brought in specialist and technical expertise).

Together with our colleagues in Clackmannanshire (CTSI) and Stirlingshire (SVE), we provide a consistent support programme for social enterprises throughout Forth Valley with an engaging **Forth Valley Social Enterprise Network (FVSEN)** and have recently launched a new and online FV Social Enterprise Directory: an innovative and easy to access website to spotlight social enterprises across Forth Valley. The directory also helps people buy local goods and services with social, ethical and environmental benefits.

A range of workshops and learning sessions in financial sustainability, branding, developing a social enterprise which creates a net positive impact on people and planet, fundraising and community wealth building, designed specifically to increase skills and resilience within our third sector were delivered at our **Forth Valley Third Sector Conference** in March 2022. This was also a chance to celebrate the sector's collaboration and partnership working throughout the pandemic and beyond.

The **Winter Pressures Project** demonstrated the commitment from all Forth Valley TSIs to come together and support a consortium of third sector organisations to develop a service to help people get home from hospital swiftly, safely and with the support they needed.

We took the lead in developing a communications campaign to raise awareness of the project and to encourage volunteers to join and support the project, including designing the campaign logo (pictured above).



The Difference We Made

We provided general capacity building support to **198 local groups and organisations** around:

- Social Enterprise Start Up
- Social Enterprise Development
- Governance
- Funding Support
- Crisis Support

Personal Experience

In 2019, members of the Bo'ness community came together to establish a free cancer patient transport service operating in Bo'ness: Bo'ness Car 4U (BC4U).

CVS Falkirk provided ongoing support throughout the process, from the first meeting through to the application for charitable status.

This was granted in May 2020; however, due to the pandemic, the organisation was unable to deliver any services, and the coming months proved incredibly challenging.

Through encouragement and support from CVS Falkirk, BC4U was able to navigate its way through getting started to where they are now: in high demand, with a full bank of volunteers and playing an important role to local cancer patients.

“Over the last 2 years, we’ve found CVS Falkirk to be a knowledgeable source of information whenever we required advice. We have been confident throughout that should a problem arise, and if we were to contact them, they would give us sound advice and help us.”

- Rod McNeil,
Chair and founder, Bo'ness Car 4U

With funding remaining the priority for third sector organisations, we are developing our “**Finding Funding for Falkirk**” programme of activities providing a range of support, training and resource easily accessible for community leaders and volunteers as they strive to increase stability and sustainability within their organisations. We supported a local third sector organisation by becoming a partner within a funded project designed to support Falkirk Food Futures, where we provided capacity building and funding support to groups as they sought to create funded projects within the programme.

Perhaps most excitingly, we have developed our role as a Grant Giver, administering a range of funding streams, including:

- COVID-19 Response Community Food and Volunteer Expenses Funds (£310,000)
- Scottish Government Community Based Adult Learning Fund (£43,000)
- Scottish Government Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing (CMHW) Fund (£415,140)

We will seek to strengthen this role securing funding to develop our digital infrastructure to facilitate future funding streams.



Our capacity building support is flexible to the needs of organisations, enabling them to develop their infrastructure, and innovative approaches in response to local need. We are pleased to see that, thanks to Falkirk’s third sector, the investment from these funds has led to more money in the local economy, and more community-based activities and support for local people.

The Difference We Made

- Funding support to **36 groups**
- Groups able to continue operate after crisis support
- **20 community projects** funded to help improve access to food for local people through Falkirk Food Futures

Funding Support

Personal Experience

“The Rainbow Muslim Women’s Group has been working in Falkirk and Forth Valley area for the past 20 years. During the last few years our organisation has developed tremendously in terms of skills, manpower, and reach. Now we run 3-4 weekly sessions for women, children and [young people] and organise various activities for them.

It wouldn’t be wrong to say that most of the guidance and help has been provided by CVS Falkirk. The amazing people of CVS have helped us by pinpointing to various funding opportunities, workshops to improve skills of our volunteers, and making connections with other organisations.

***Whenever we are stuck somewhere, we know that CVS is there to guide us.** We are extremely thankful to all the team at CVS Falkirk for their continued support through all these years.*

***We couldn’t have made it this far without this amazing organisation;** we look forward to many more future collaborations.”*

Voice and Connect

The **COVID-19 Third Sector Response Forum** (TSRF) met regularly online throughout the pandemic, providing an essential space for coordinating the local community and third sector response to the impacts of the pandemic and restrictions that came with it. This forum was necessarily action-focused and a place for information sharing, creative thinking, problem solving and peer support. As a result of these conversations, a sub-forum, the **Compassionate and Included Communities Forum**, was established. Dedicated to wellbeing, sharing resources that were useful for both staff and volunteers, and people using services, the forum was chaired by a third sector colleague. It offered a safe space for members to receive in-depth peer support, and take time to focus on their own health and wellbeing.

"It's been a really useful forum for us, we've made some good links with different organisations."

- forum member

The **Voluntary Sector Children's Sector Forum** (VSCSF) met regularly, providing organisational updates and local policy developments, as well as arranging training for forum members, including "Safe and Together" training.

The **COVID-19 Co-ordination Group** is a multi-agency cross-sector group (with members from CVS Falkirk, NHS Forth Valley, Falkirk Council, Falkirk HSCP, and the third sector) who met throughout the pandemic to connect and discuss issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity, fuel poverty and any other issues occurring in the community. The group provided a stable platform, and a panel for decision-making on the allocation of various COVID-19 support and response grants.

The **Forth Valley Social Enterprise Network**, supported by CVS Falkirk, SVE and CTSI, has steadily increased its membership, with meetings well attended and a vibrant agenda including regular partner updates, learning sessions, and presentations from key stakeholders.

"CVS Falkirk has an established record of supporting the local third sector, demonstrated as highly valuable third sector infrastructure and knowledge during the unique pandemic circumstances of 2020 - 2022."

- local strategic partner

The Falkirk Plan

CVS Falkirk has been acknowledged as greatly supporting Falkirk Council by taking on a coordination role for local third sector response during the pandemic and the recovery phase, as we support the sector to re-open and adapt to new circumstances and a new funding environment.

We actively encouraged the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) to engage with the third sector as they sought to develop their local outcome delivery plan: we hosted consultation events online, promoted discussion events, and encouraged third sector organisations to contribute to the drafting of the Plan.

As a result, the new Falkirk Plan acknowledges the importance of the third sector, and notes the CPP's desire to work much closer with local groups.

The Difference We Made

- 12 TSRF meetings, with **240 attendees** from **199 organisations**
- 6 FVSEN meetings
- 4 Compassionate and Included Communities Forum meetings
- 4 VSCSF meetings

Source of Knowledge: Events

Our annual **Funders Fayre** was held online, bringing together a range of funders and grant giving organisations to speak with the local sector, allowing groups to directly ask questions, and learn more about each funder's criteria and process.

Across the **9 workshops**, we welcomed **281 attendees**, who heard from: Tesco Community Grants, Falkirk HSCP, The Clothworkers' Foundation, The Foyle Foundation, The Henry Smith Charity, People's Postcode Trust, Foundation Scotland, The National Lottery Community Fund Scotland, and Corra Foundation.

"It was good to speak at an event specifically attended by charities based in Scotland ... to speak about Clothworkers', best practice when applying for grants in general. There was plenty of time for a Q&A, which I often think is the most useful part for people attending."

*- Jack Abbotts, Grants Officer,
The Clothworkers' Foundation*

Together with CTSI and SVE, our theme for this year's **Forth Valley Third Sector Conference** (FVTSC) was "Sustainable Places" recognising the increasing demands on the sector.

Deputy First Minister John Swinney (above right), spoke about Scotland's Recovery Strategy, and how the third sector's efforts during the pandemic had influenced its creation. The three Council Leaders (below right) closed the conference and shared their visions for their areas, referencing the value of community wealth building, community benefits and innovation within the third sector.

The Difference We Made

- **500 attendees** at FVTSC 2022
- **12 speakers at 11 workshops** on community wealth building, environmental and financial sustainability, and volunteer retention and investment



*"I am profoundly grateful to **everyone** in the third sector across Scotland for your contribution to Scotland's efforts in combatting the impacts of COVID-19."*

*- Deputy First Minister John Swinney, MSP,
in his keynote address to Forth Valley Third
Sector Conference 2022*



Source of Knowledge: Training

We hosted Volunteer Scotland's Disclosure Services team, who delivered a training information session, **"Who Needs PVG?"**

Open to anyone in Falkirk District's third sector, "Who Needs PVG?" was designed to be a supportive and informal session to familiarise participants with recent legislative updates. There was also an opportunity to ask questions and seek guidance from both our team and Volunteer Scotland's, on determining which volunteer roles require PVG membership, and those that don't.

The Difference We Made

- "Who Needs PVG?" training:
6 attendees from 5 organisations
- Cyber Resilience training:
52 participants from **18 local groups**
- P4P session: **12 attendees** from **10 organisations**
- Safe & Together info session:
16 participants from **11 VSCSF member organisations**

The session allowed participants to hear from our own team about their experiences, benefit from Volunteer Scotland's insight in a practical way, and from each other's shared learning.

"Thank you so much for organising this, it was so useful and will be a big help in developing our roles."

- "Who Needs PVG?" training attendee

As part of a TSI Network initiative, we also delivered bespoke **Cyber Resilience training** sessions for smaller third sector groups and organisations.

Understanding that "Cyber Resilience" can be a daunting topic (especially for those who were new to working digitally and using tools like Zoom and Teams regularly), the training was designed to be supportive and accessible (whatever people's previous level of experience), and to focus on the human behaviours that can help boost cyber resilience, rather than technical concepts and language.

We organised an information session on the **"Safe & Together"** model for VSCSF members, delivered by Aberlour and Barnardo's in January 2022.

The session was attended by 16 members from 11 organisations, where they learned more about the key components and principles of "Safe & Together", as well as receiving more information on how the model has been implemented locally across the Falkirk area.

In February 2022, we also invited **Partnership 4 Procurement (P4P)** to deliver a session to members of the Economic Resilience and Employment Forum. The session was designed to enhance the procurement knowledge of members and ensure organisations are ready to take advantage of procurement opportunities.

This fantastic introduction to public sector procurement covered the size and scale of the market, the benefits to investing time and effort to become "procurement ready", getting to grips with procurement language, and understanding why and how attendees might collaborate to bid.

Financial Summary

Our role in administering COVID-19 response grant funding is demonstrated clearly within our accounts. We have distributed £728,756 to the third sector for COVID-19 response activity: emergency food, volunteer expenses, and mental health and wellbeing, along with community-based adult learning, were some of the funds administered throughout the year, distributed to:

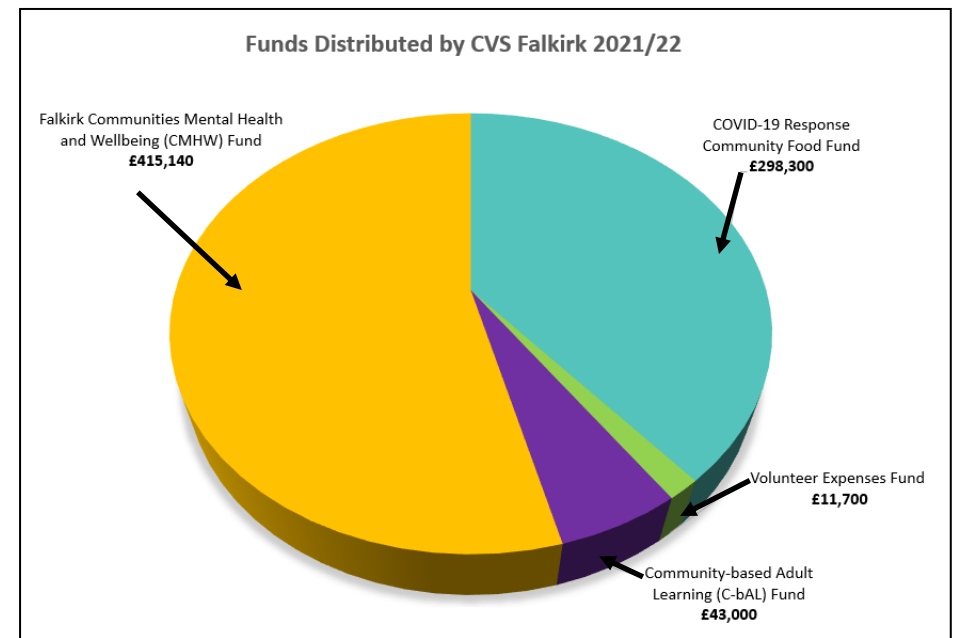
- COVID-19 Response Community Food Funds: 21 local groups and organisations
- Volunteer Expenses Fund: 12
- Community-based Adult Learning Fund: 8
- Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund: 36

Our core funding streams during 2021/22, from Falkirk Council and Scottish Government, remained static in comparison to the previous financial year; however, this is proving challenging in terms of delivering our core activities. The balance on general funds at the end of March 2022 was £189,711, a decrease of £22,986 from 2020/2021. Restricted funds held at the end of March 2022 were £88,584, the majority of which were grants redistributed to the community early in 2022/23.

There were no new project grants undertaken in 2021/22, with our focus still very much being on supporting the sector through the pandemic. Funding continued for the full year from Falkirk HSCP towards our strategic work, supporting the Health and Social Partnership to work with Falkirk's third sector. Management fees were also received towards administration costs incurred, in terms of our role as grant distributor throughout 2021/22.

We have been very prudent in our expenditure and have made a few savings on general overheads due to the office being closed for most of the year with staff working from home. Our main item of expenditure in 2021/22 was staff costs, including additional staff consultancy fees in the year. We are committed to implementing efficiency savings and seeking smaller premises to further reduce our overheads and premises costs as a result.

We will make available our Audited Accounts and Directors Report for the year to any person wishing to see them. They are available on request and to download from our website, on our [About Us](#) and [Publications](#) pages: www.cvsfalkirk.org.uk



Looking Toward 2022

In 2022/23, we will be re-launching our **Thematic Forums and Networks** encouraging third sector leaders and colleagues to meet regularly where they can discuss and seek collaborative solutions to emerging issues and topics while being in an arena to network and seek peer support:

- [Community Leadership Network](#)
- [Connecting Volunteering Network](#)
- [Economic Resilience and Employment Forum](#)
- [Forth Valley Social Enterprise Network](#)
- [Funding Officers Network](#)
- [Health and Wellbeing Forum](#)
- [Safer and Empowered Communities Forum](#)
- [Voluntary Sector Children's Services Forum](#)

As we work through the recovery phase of the pandemic, we are acutely aware that funding for the third sector is of particular prevalence and so building on our existing support services we will be launching our **Finding Funding for Falkirk** initiative: regular funding bulletins, online funding search portal, Funders Fayre, comprehensive mapping of available funding in Falkirk as well as our new Grant Funding Portal.

Unfortunately, many organisations have reported diminished **Volunteer Resource** over the pandemic. We will deliver bespoke support programmes, host and support volunteer recruitment events, and increase our social media presence to encourage people to get involved in safe and appropriate volunteering placements.

Community Leadership has driven forward the third sector response to the pandemic developing local solutions and initiatives to tackle inequalities and disadvantage within local communities, through local knowledge, drive and determination. We will seek ways in which to bring training and resource to support our Community Leaders to further develop their skills and expertise.



Thank You!

Our Funders

During 2021/22, we received funding from Scottish Government, Falkirk Council, Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), and the Integrated Care Fund. We would like to thank our funders and strategic partners for their continued support.

Our Board and Staff

We would like to extend our thanks to our team: staff, directors and volunteers who have who have been dedicated, committed and have supported the organisation throughout the year. We would like to thank and recognise the contributions to our colleagues who have left the team: Beverley Francis, Claire Bernard, Louise Smith, Maureen Hill, and Scott Malcolm.

The Board would like to thank David Mellor, who recently resigned from the Board. David joined the Board in 2015 before taking on the role of Chair in November 2018. The Board would also like to recognise and thank Annie Macdonald, who joined the Board in 2020 and who is stepping down at the AGM in November 2022. We wish everyone all the very best for the future.

A very special thanks goes to the families of our staff team, directors and volunteers who have allowed us into their homes via Zoom and Teams each and every day throughout the last year and have supported “working from home” with smiles, delivery of cups of tea and delayed dinners.

Staff Team (as of March 2022)

Eve Winters: Development Officer – Volunteering (Trainee)
Kerry Kennedy: Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Laura Jamieson: Communications Officer
Lynsey Hansford: Partnership Manager
Nicola Cox: Business Manager
Pam Dixon: Finance Officer
Tariq Mahmood: Team Leader – Organisational Development
Vicki Stokes: E-bulletin Volunteer
Victoria McRae: Chief Executive Officer



Our Board (as of March 2022)

Annie Macdonald
Brian Humphries
Bill Mitchell
David Mellor
Kayleigh Hirst
Margaret Pow
Natasha Reynolds
Wendy Turner

