



Annual Report

2021-2022





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Falkirk Community Trust

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 Falkirk Community Trust gratefully
 acknowledges the support
 of Falkirk Council.

An Extraordinary Year



This has been an extraordinary year for Falkirk Community Trust. It was a year in which, as a team, we overcame a series of COVID-19 related service and venue closures and re-openings, as well as ongoing strict adherence to an evolving set of Scottish Government safety guidelines.

It was also a year in which there was a significant amount of detailed work carried out by both Falkirk Community Trust and Falkirk Council to ensure a smooth and successful transition back in to the Council. With people remaining at the heart of everything we do, we worked closely with employees of both organisations, as well as Trade Unions, to safeguard employment terms and conditions and, through all this change and uncertainty, have also ensured that our usual high standards of service were consistently maintained.

Falkirk Community Trust was established by Falkirk Council in July 2011 to give a new lease of life to the delivery of much-valued community services. As we draw this chapter to a close, we can put our hands on our hearts and sincerely say we achieved our mission, and then some.

Over the last decade, Falkirk Community Trust has been at the forefront of the development of culture and sport in the Falkirk area, delivering inspiring services and encouraging widespread participation.

We have grown customer income by 69% to over £7 million annually, and over £5 million has been raised in grants and external funding. We reversed an annual loss of £250,000 in the catering and retail company and generated profits of more than £1.4 million which have been re-invested locally into service delivery to the direct benefit of the Falkirk community.

We have led the delivery of a great many region-enhancing capital projects, including the development of Helix, Home of The Kelpies, and our 5-star visitor centre. The Kelpies have positioned Falkirk on an international stage, with tens of thousands of visitors from around the globe now flocking to the town to visit the sculptures.

We have invested heavily in the region's sporting facilities, including the redevelopments of the Mariner Centre, Grangemouth Stadium, Bo'ness Recreation Centre, Carron Gymnastics Centre, and Stenhousemuir Gym.

We have been at the forefront of the development of arts and culture in the region, proudly operating a range of

venues, from Town Halls steeped in tradition to a unique cinema. Income from our arts venues has increased by 84% during our tenure and the area now boasts a range of popular events including HippFest and Falkirk Science Festival Events.

Our team has now successfully transitioned all these services to the management of Falkirk Council, and they are now looking forward to continuing their good work as an integral part of the local authority.

I would like to personally thank all our staff for their passion, dedication, and commitment over the last eleven years. I believe we can all take a real sense of pride in everything we have achieved together. Our extraordinary network of team members, partners, funders, volunteers, and our customers have been at the heart of our success as an organisation. They carry with them that spirit of can-do, co-operation, and community, and I wish each and every single one of them all the very best for the future.

Finally, I would like to pass on my sincere thanks to the directors, past and present, who served on the Board of the Trust over the past ten years.

David White
Chairman



Making a Positive Difference to People's Lives



Our ability to deliver services to our local community continued to be significantly impacted by the ever-changing COVID-19 related restrictions throughout the year. It was only in the last quarter of the financial year that our venues became fully operational, yet still affected by reduced staffing availability and the lack of many cultural products and events.

As staff adapted and adjusted superbly well to their disrupted working environments, senior staff were also faced with the task of planning and preparing for the transfer of all Trust operated culture and sport services to three different service areas of Falkirk Council from April 2022.

It was against this background of having to be resilient, while considering a change to their employment within the Council, that staff continued to deliver front-line services to an often confused and concerned public. Despite this, customer feedback has been very gratifying. It was important that our services were safe as we stayed true to our values and

placed our customers at the heart of everything that we do. This was evidenced in the Scottish Hospitality Awards which saw Callendar House being named as the 'Family Venue of the Year', the Mariner's Great Mariner Reef being named as the 'Children's Play Centre of the Year' and the FTH Theatre being named as the 'Live Entertainment Venue of the Year'. These achievements in particular were simply outstanding.

We are very grateful to all of our external funders and partners who recognised both the financial impact on the Trust and the social impact on the community that the unavailability of front-line community services had caused. External financial support from several sources helped protect the longer-term sustainability of services. As this is to be the final annual report of Falkirk Community Trust, it is appropriate to reflect on all previous reports and annual accounts which demonstrate the overall success of the Trust as an organisation and on the improvements we made in the development of many venues, income generating opportunities that we grasped, quality standards that we delivered, and the general 'can-do'

attitude demonstrated from all staff in helping to 'inspire active lives' as our long term strategy intended. We are certain that our customers will remember us fondly and acknowledge all that we achieved in such a relatively short time.

We have made real improvements in the manner in which culture and sport services have been developed and delivered and we are proud of all that we achieved. It is hoped that the Council invests our transferring end of year financial surplus of over £411k to these services wisely.

I would like to thank our Directors, Partners, and Funders for their role in helping us achieve our objectives. Most of all I would like to thank our staff, coaches, and volunteers who have been the front face of the Trust for almost 11 years and who should proudly reflect on their service and contribution to the Falkirk Community. I wish the Council every success as they seek to further improve culture and sport services in the community.

Neil Brown
Chief Executive

Falkirk Community Trust has charitable status and is a not-for-profit organisation part funded by Falkirk Council.

Our Mission

To lead culture and sport to enrich people's lives in the Falkirk area

Our Vision:

Falkirk's communities are the most creative and active they can be

Our Values

Valuing the positive difference people make
Acting with integrity
Placing people's needs at the heart of everything we do
Being proud of what we can achieve together

Delivering on objectives

- Mariner generated £335,229 of income, which was 188% of annual income target.
- Health and fitness activities generated £1,272,022 for the year, an increase of 2.4% on the income target.
- Visitors to Muiravonside Country Park up by 20% compared to last year, with over 200,000 visits and 135% of target.
- The Helix, Home of the Kelpies visits of 930k were highest visitor total on record, exceeding pre-COVID-19 levels and 16% above target.
- The number of online walking trails accessed was 6,300 up from 5,000 in 20/21.
- Participation in more than 180 events at The Helix, Home of the Kelpies Park achieving over 16,000 participations, having been on hold during 20-21.
- Return of the Trust's annual pantomime with 7,500 tickets sold for Beauty & The Beast in December 2021, generating £137k of income.
- 67,000 participants in cultural services activities, 138% of target.
- Over 100,000 Sports Development participant sessions delivered in 21-22, 131% of target.
- Step Forth walking programme participation achieved 141% of target with over 4,900 participants.

Improving Service

- 29 schools took part in The Active Schools #12DaysofFitmas challenge.
- The Helix, Home of the Kelpies was presented with a Green Flag Award in recognition of the way it boosted local health and well-being amid the pandemic.
- Callendar House and The Helix, Home of the Kelpies continued to receive 5-star reviews on TripAdvisor.
- Admissions across the Trust's sport and leisure venues recovered well post-pandemic although remain below pre-COVID-19 levels during 21-22.
- Visits to public libraries recovered from COVID-19 restrictions with 151% of target visits.
- Falkirk Library was selected as the perfect home for a new Advice & Support Hub, one of 23 "Council of the Future" projects that aim to modernise and improve Falkirk Council's services to the public. Opened in Aug 2021.
- As part of Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters 20/21 celebrations, Canal Encounters linked The Helix, Home of the Kelpies, and The Falkirk Wheel, transforming the banks of the canal into a vibrant activity trail and welcoming more than 300,000 visitors onto the sites throughout August and September, and the programme of 65 live pop-up workshops, performances, and activities engaged over 1,500 people.

Achieving Results

- Health and Fitness generated income of £1.29M, equating to 188% of target.
- Downloads of MyFitApp 5,150 for the full year v Dec 20 to Mar 21 at 2,250.
- Social media growth of 5.4% and an increased reach of 5.2M. Beauty & The Beast trailer received 28,728 views across social media.
- Hippfest returned in person in 2022 and achieved c.1,500 attendance over the 5-day programme at the Hippodrome and supporting venues.
- Outdoor Activities delivered almost 300% of target, with 3,300 participant sessions.
- Great Place Falkirk app downloaded by 4,851 against 3,315 the previous year.
- Health and Fitness achieved 241,000 usages of gyms and fitness classes.
- Website page views in 20/21 were 886,504 against the 21/22 figure of 2,042,047, an increase of 130.35%.

VisitScotland Thistle Award shortlist success for The Helix, Home of the Kelpies and Canal Encounters event

The Helix, Home of the Kelpies, and Canal Encounters, a public event held in summer 2021, were been shortlisted in the VisitScotland Thistle Awards for the Central, Fife & Tayside Region 2022.

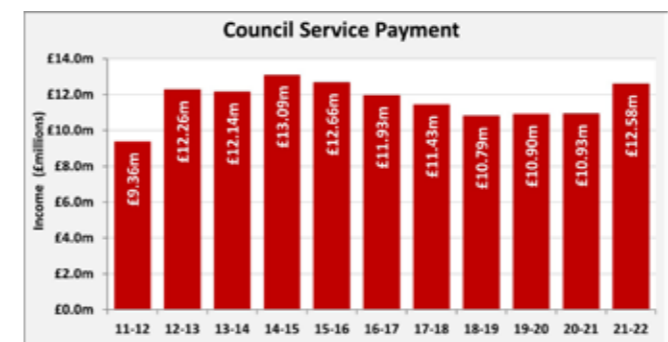
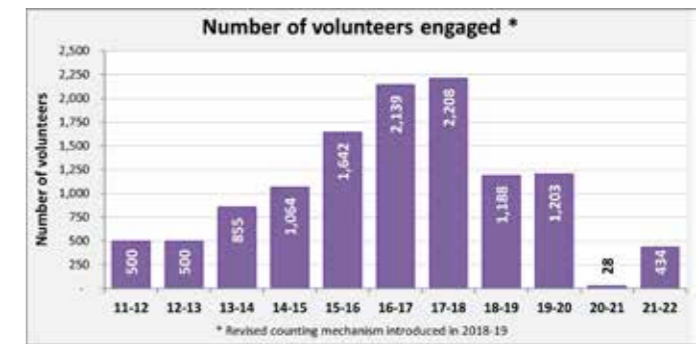
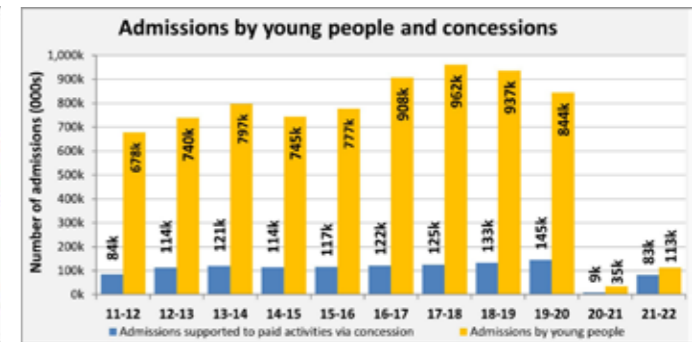
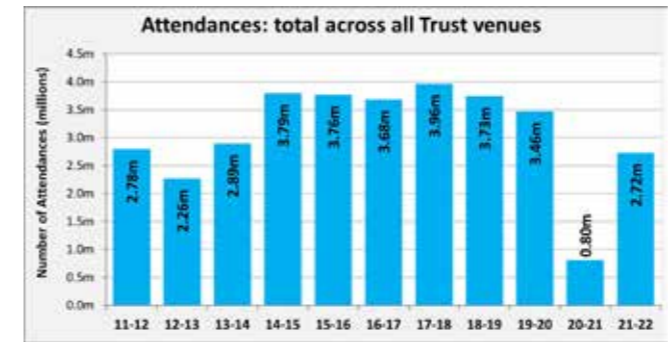
The Thistle Awards honour the very best businesses and events in the tourism industry and everyone within The Helix and Events teams are delighted to be recognised in the regional finals.

The Helix is in the running for 'Best Visitor Attraction Experience' whilst Canal Encounters is up for 'Outstanding Cultural Event'.

The Helix, Home of the Kelpies, has firmly established itself as a top Scottish visitor attraction since its opening in 2013 and proudly welcomes visitors of all abilities to enjoy the park facilities (including a changing-places area, Forth Bikes e-bikes and accessible playground). The Helix team are working towards Gold Green Tourism status and their events programme continues to have sustainability, inclusivity, and community at its heart.

One such event was Canal Encounters, which Falkirk Community Trust led the organisation of in partnership with Great Place Falkirk and Scottish Canals to celebrate the Forth and Clyde Canal in Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters. It took place in August 2021 and extended into September due to its popularity.

The event was a four-mile COVID-safe trail from the Falkirk Wheel to The Helix - celebrating the natural environment, wildlife, history, and cultural heritage of the communities along the waterway. The trail included live performances, interactive games and augmented reality, all via the Falkirk Explored app. Over 300,000 people enjoyed the event and one of the interactive games recorded over 3,000 downloads, more details can be found on page 45 of the report.





During the last financial year, as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all our usual activities and services were either curtailed or disrupted. Our venues were closed, opened, and then closed again. Some haven't had the opportunity to reopen. As a result, we have adjusted the format of our Annual Report to reflect these changes and demonstrate how we have

adapted these services, in many cases providing digital alternatives, to continue to support our communities. We have now transitioned our services under the management of Falkirk Council, and our team is looking to evolve these ambitions and align them with the relevant services within the Council's strategy and plans.

We worked to deliver this ambition through 3 objectives

Be operating from venues that people want to use, with a more responsive programme offering high-quality services for our customers.

Be a trusted and valued organisation, secure in our role as a leader for culture and sport with diminishing reliance on Council funding; we will be more flexible, entrepreneurial, and commercially minded.

Have created champions for culture and sport and have loyal volunteers and a workforce who motivate a huge cross-section of the community to take part in culture and sport that improves lives.

Achievements and highlights this year included:

Meeting customer needs

- The Helix, Home of the Kelpies maintained its 5-star Visitor Attraction rating.
- Adhering to COVID-19 guidance and safely reopening.
- Social media audience has grown to over 191,000 followers.
- App users have continued to grow with now 7,400 downloads and 5,700 viewing sessions over the past 12 months. In July 2021, despite eased restrictions, app usage peaked at over 2,200 monthly users.
- From the Autumn of 2020 until April 2021, Falkirk Community Trust supported several NHS Forth Valley programmes, including Flu Vaccination, COVID-19 Vaccination, Mobile Testing Units and a Fixed Asymptomatic Test Site involving several Trust operated sites.

Ensuring financial viability

- FTH Theatre was successful in receiving further funding of £45,832 in a second round of emergency COVID-19 funds from the Scottish Government through Creative Scotland.
- Received £1,158,207 income from grant making bodies and fundraising.
- Secured funding of £338,487 from the UK Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.
- In February 2021, Falkirk Community Trust was awarded £30k by Creative Scotland's Emergency Youth Arts Access Fund towards our proposed Falkirk Music Project. The project, developed in partnership with Fairer Falkirk, was designed to work with children and young people, currently living in poverty, in the Falkirk area.
- Further development of new income streams from our Fitness App and Outdoor Fitness classes
- In October 2020, we were successful in securing £9k from the Film Exhibition Fund (FEF), to reach new audiences and for at least 60% of our screening programme to be dedicated to independent British and world cinema and the presentation of archive film.
- Reserves have been ringfenced Grangemouth Complex Group Cycling Studio.
- From October 2021 onwards, the Mariner swim admissions exceeded 2019/20 pre-pandemic performance for the same period by 10,328 admissions (15%), endorsing recent investments to attract families.

Leadership and community development capacity

- Celebrated 10 years since the Trust was established by thanking all staff and volunteers in their 'Decade of Champions'.
- Falkirk Community Trust celebrated the 37th Volunteers' Week in June by acknowledging grateful thanks to over 1,000 volunteers whom we work with every year.
- Worked with local voluntary arts groups, organisations and dance schools to ensure that performers, audiences and staff were able to enjoy the return to theatre safely as COVID-19 restrictions were eased.
- Sickness absence for the 21/22 year was higher than last year with 4.83% of working days being lost. This compares with 1.94% in 20/21.*
- There were 26 complaints dealt with during the 2021-22 year which was 12 more than the previous year, but 38 less than in 2019-20.**
- Falkirk Community Trust supported Grangemouth Golf Club in their endeavours to have the operation and management of the course and associated facilities transfer to being the responsibility of the Golf Club under their SCIO arrangements.
- Scottish Government funding was secured to help improve the well-being of children and young people over the summer period. The Active Schools Team developed a programme that would benefit children and young people who had been adversely affected by the pandemic.

* It should be noted that comparisons with last year's figures are limited due to Scottish Government guidance regarding the response to COVID-19, meaning a significant part of the Trust's workforce were on furlough and not working. Sickness absence while on furlough should still have been recorded but may not have been notified by employees to their manager in all cases.

** Comparisons with previous years are misleading due to the impact of COVID-19 on venues and services, and the resulting differences in the number of customers.



“From the moment the curtain goes up, this show captures the audience and has them entertained until the very end.”
The Falkirk Herald

Getting into the Festive Spirit

Panto makes a successful comeback. Oh, yes it does.....

After having to close early in 2020, our 2021 pantomime Beauty and the Beast went ahead successfully, selling 7,497 tickets and bringing in a revenue of over £137k. Activities to promote the pantomime were primarily digital and proved to be very effective, offering a strong return on investment for the show.

Starring the popular Barbara Bryceland as Fairy Fiona, and Scott Watson as Wee Frankie McClunkey, arrogant Prince Angus had been cursed to live as a beast with his only hope of salvation to find love before the last petal falls from the magical rose.

This is a tale as old as time and customers enjoyed the show, lauding both the production and the performers.

Festive Films at the Hippodrome entertain hundreds

2021's festive film programme included perennial favourites such as Elf, It's a Wonderful Life, The Snowman/ The Snowman & the Snowdog, and a recent release, A Boy Called Christmas. While attendances weren't as high as usual during this period, uptake for the festive screenings programme showed signs of increasing customer confidence in returning to indoor venues with over 790 attendances across 13 screenings in the run-up to Christmas Eve.



Festive Afternoon Teas prove Popular

An impressive 640 festive afternoon teas were sold, generating revenues of over £10,000, although they were slightly adjusted to accommodate smaller team numbers. Callendar House also sold 133 festive gift boxes for afternoon tea gift vouchers generating an additional £1,738.

“Absolutely fantastic show and funny.”
Customer via Facebook

“The panto was amazing – my son loved it. He is still going about shouting HIYA FRANKIE and singing their version of the 12 days of Xmas (5 toilet rolls!). Will def be going back!”
Beauty and the Beast customer

12 Days of Fitness drives up Membership

12 Days of Fitness ran again throughout December. The offer was 12 gym (including indoor fitness classes) and/or swim sessions in December for just £12, a saving of £66 on our pay-as-you-go prices. 166 new customers used our facilities because of this price-led promotion and 46 of these customers took out the main membership, equating to a conversion rate of 39%. All our Health and Fitness offers were featured prominently on the Falkirk Community Trust website, with bespoke artwork for each campaign. Social media was a key tool for promoting the offers.



Festive Trails are a walk in the Park

As part of our Festive programme, we continued to promote winter walks throughout our parks. This included a Festive Heritage Trail at Kinneil Estate, developed with the Friends of Kinneil, as well as an Elf Trail at Muiravonside, and an indoor Elf Trail at Callendar House to encourage indoor explorers. Maps for these self-guided walks were downloadable from our website.

Stories with Santa are well received

We received permission from all appropriate publishing houses to re-run our Stories with Santa (Gruffalo in Scots, Gruffalo's Wean, Gruffalo's Child, and Stick Man), as well as permission to record The Gruffalo. We also obtained Makaton and SignAlong versions which we published on YouTube. Their return was eagerly awaited, with many taking to social media to thank Santa for his story time and one customer saying, "the best Santa ever is back!"

Even with much more choice available for in-person Christmas events across the central belt, online engagement levels were still strong. The YouTube screenings received 1,293 views and Facebook Premieres had an average reach of 3,750 per performance.



Putting the Girl Power into Fitness



The Trust's mission has always been to enrich the lives of those who live in the Falkirk area and Falkirk Girls Sports Forum (FSGF) has certainly fulfilled that goal.

Established by our Active Schools Team during school closures in 2021, FSGF was a response to the proactive and positive student-led social media content staff observed during lockdown, which highlighted positive active habits and had a strong, positive peer response.

Identifying an opportunity to support and elevate the impact of these young influencers, the Active Schools team undertook several training courses

including We Are Girls, Mental Health Champions (Places 2 Be), Addressing the Mental Health needs of Young People, and Managing Changing Situations in Autism and ADHD, to enhance their knowledge.

Opportunities to join the Forum were advertised via social media and school networks, targeting girls in S3 and S4 and eighteen girls were accepted, two from each of our 9 high schools. The Forum facilitated regular contact with the girls and online training, such as the Fit for Girls programme, which was offered in partnership with SportScotland and the Youth Sport Trust. The Fit for Girls programme offers workshops for teenage girls who are either current or aspiring peer-leaders, to engage girls by building positive relationships.

Building up confidence in the value and power of their voices, the FSGF members volunteered during the Summer of Play, a Scottish Government funded initiative to get children and young people more active over the summer holidays. They also supported a series of pop-up sports festivals, held at local schools,

organised, and facilitated by Active Schools. This was no easy task. It was a high-pressure environment with many rules and regulations to follow, and COVID-19 guidance to which to adhere. The girls also carried out research in their schools to determine some of the barriers facing girls to participate in sport, then supported school-based events as part of Active Girls' Day #SheCanSheWill #FitForGirls #ActiveGirls and became role models for local sports clubs. In June 2021 the girls used their social media skills in an FGSF 'takeover' of @FalkirkSport during SportScotland's monthly Sport Hour.

Feedback from members outlined the positive impact of the Forum, increasing participation in extra-curricular sport at their schools, creating a feeling of being valued, growing as a person, and forming stronger relationships with other pupils and staff.

Going forward, the FGFS aims to break down barriers for girls in sport by listening to girls in schools and making them feel valued. Our Active Schools Team will continue to work with them in 2022.

Shining the Spotlight on our Volunteers

In June 2021, Falkirk Community Trust celebrated Volunteers Week, an annual national opportunity to recognise the contribution volunteers make across the UK and thank them for all they do. Falkirk Community Trust works with over 1,000 volunteers every year to deliver essential community programmes like Active Schools, Step Forth, Great Place, and Care Words. It also offers volunteering opportunities at all its venues including the libraries, The Helix, Home of the Kelpies, Callendar Park, FTH Theatre, and Muiravonside.

With so many to thank, our Volunteers Week campaign highlighted the great work of many, through the inspirational stories of a few.

For instance, Victoria Mitchell was on voluntary work placement with Falkirk Community Trust when she made a significant contribution to developing the 'Our Stories' Exhibition on display at Callendar House, part of Falkirk Community Trust's Great Place project.

Emma Stewart, also a volunteer, has coached thousands of school children from across the Falkirk area in a wide range of sports, from basketball to football, gymnastics to athletics as part of our Active Schools programme.

Our team of 50 Step Forth volunteers and their award-winning, volunteer-led free walking programme, designed to improve physical activity levels, were also celebrated. As were their team of colleagues on the Big Lottery funded the Care Words project which brings together older people in care settings for reading and reminiscence sessions.



"The National Lottery supported us to run Care Words. Many of our clients lived with dementia and our volunteers made a huge difference – one lady recited a poem she learned at school – when most days she hardly spoke."

Tanya Milligan, Project Lead for Care Words

"Participating in creating the new Callendar House exhibition as a volunteer was a wonderful experience - it was incredible to see the whole process of putting an exhibition together and be invited to share your research and thoughts."

Victoria Mitchell, Volunteer



Arctic Explorers

24 March 2022 saw the biggest Polar Expedition to leave Scotland since 1904. The intrepid bunch departing for Greenland included ten pupils and one teacher from Bo'ness Academy and pupils from Stranraer Academy. The pupils were undertaking their expedition across the Arctic with Craig Mathieson's Polar Academy. Local explorer Craig founded the Polar Academy and is Explorer in Residence at the Royal Scottish Geographical Society.

The culmination of over two years of planning and one year of training, at Falkirk Community Trust we assisted the Bo'ness youngsters with their training, working with the students for eight weeks, supporting their fitness levels, and offering free access to the gym and pool at Bo'ness Recreation Centre. Besides working on their fitness levels, the pupils fundraised tirelessly to meet their £20,000 target for the trip. An incredible achievement.



Changing Lives

Skye Bell-Burn, Falkirk Youth Theatre
My association with Falkirk Community Trust started several years ago when I was a member of Falkirk Youth Theatre. Later, I went on to volunteer with both Falkirk Youth Theatre and Re-Action Youth Theatre. Working with both theatres has allowed me to take on a leadership role and become more confident in my abilities.

I didn't expect to be someone who could lead a class or have the confidence or opportunity to try. But I feel myself progressing and growing with every new task or challenge I'm presented with. Given the events of the past few years, working with the youth theatres has been a great mental escape for me. I am so grateful for the opportunities I've been given through Falkirk Community Trust.



Changing Lives

David Hannah, Volunteer

I volunteer across many sites and events run by Falkirk Community Trust including The Helix, Home of the Kelpies, FTH Theatre, Callendar Park, Muiravonside Country Park, and New Parks Farm. My role is to meet and greet customers/visitors, control numbers, offer information, and, most recently, COVID-19 guidance to make the visitor feel both safe and welcome.

I also helped during lockdown. Our local parks were a lifeline for the local community and as such saw a large increase in visitors, and sadly also litter. I helped to keep our parks clean, tidy, and safe.

During the pandemic, I was based at the entrance to the Helix Visitor Centre most weekends for 5hrs per day. As a result of this volunteering activity, I was inspired to go back to formal education, and I am now studying Customer Service at Forth Valley College.

Keeping our customers safe

Certainly, one of the greatest challenges to the organisation was the ongoing disruption and reinvention of services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In an organisation as diverse as Falkirk Community Trust, it's hard to put into words the operational complexities caused by ever-evolving Scottish Government guidance, the relaxing and tightening of restrictions, and the sudden opening and closing of venues and facilities in "different" sectors as the pandemic rolled from Delta into Omicron, and thousands of variants in between.

The Falkirk Community Trust team continued to demonstrate resilience and fortitude throughout this period, never tiring and never giving up hope. Since Autumn 2020, we had supported NHS Forth Valley in the public delivery of several major health programmes including Seasonal Flu Vaccination, COVID-19 Vaccination, Mobile Testing Units, and Fixed Asymptomatic Test Sites in several locations. This continued throughout 2021/22 until the final shift for 40 of the Trust's staff was eventually completed on 18 April 2022.



Dealing with the Demands of Delta

In what was the tail end of the second major winter lockdown of the pandemic, as a result of the Delta variant, many of our venues and facilities remained closed as we entered this financial year. On 15 March 2021, outdoor fitness facilities re-opened to the public, with Grangemouth Golf Club following suit a few days later on 18 March.

It wasn't until 26 April, when restrictions were eventually eased, that a great number of our venues could re-open and our teams return to work. This major re-opening included our libraries (for click and collect services only), our gyms, swimming pools (including the welcome return of swimming lessons), Grangemouth Sports Complex, Carron Gymnastics, and the popular Kelpies Visitor Centre at Helix Park. On 28 April, we re-opened Callendar House and Kinneil Museum both with reduced capacity entry and one-way systems to maximise staff and customer safety. We still couldn't offer indoor fitness classes, however, we combined outdoor classes and online options linking 26 live-streamed classes per week for customers looking to keep fit at home.

It wasn't until 17 May that we were able to reintroduce indoor fitness and outdoor adult contact sport and re-open The Hippodrome.

By 9 August many restrictions had been lifted, albeit with reduced

social distancing and face coverings still in place. With the second dose of the vaccination programme successfully rolled out, the recovery was beginning to take shape.

In October we reopened the FTH Theatre, a space that for much of the pandemic had been central to the NHS Forth Valley community vaccination programme. First to tread the boards after almost two years was the voluntary arts group Project Theatre, followed by Scots comedian Janey Godley.

Overcoming the Obstacles of Omicron

Just as we were getting back into the swing of things, along came Omicron and another wave of national restrictions.

FTH Theatre and the Hippodrome were unable to reopen after Christmas Eve and for our health and fitness teams, we had to put a halt to all indoor adult contact sport and close our saunas and steam rooms again until they could reopen on 24 January. Around this time Snowsports also re-opened with proactive work required to bring in the school groups and give them access to a sport they might not have considered.

On 18 February 2022, we finally re-opened FTH Theatre with Gary Faulds as its first professional show. Throughout all of this, the Test and Protect system was in place, with sanitising stations, and enhanced cleaning regimes throughout all venues and facilities.





Changing Lives

Hope Murphy, Volunteer

As part of Schools' Health Week in February 2020, Hope Murphy gave an inspirational presentation to Primary 4-7 pupils at Grange Primary School focused on her experiences of how sport can help with mental health. Hope explained how sport had helped her during a very difficult time in her life, emphasising to pupils that talking can help, and highlighted that it was ok not to be ok.

Hope said: "Before my presentation, I was very anxious as I had never given a full presentation to so many people before. I wasn't sure if they would enjoy it or find me boring. But once I started speaking, I gradually felt better and better. After the presentation was over, I was extremely proud of myself for standing up and presenting. I was also really happy to know that I had made an impact on the children listening, and that they would hopefully take my story home and share it with other people."

Hope has volunteered at our Sports Academy at Bo'ness, delivered extra-curricular clubs in the Bo'ness Cluster, plus volunteered at the Sports Camps. At Falkirk Community Trust we were all immensely proud of Hope for sharing her personal experiences and for inspiring others with her passion for sport.

creating new opportunities

Making a splash!

Swimming has always been a popular pastime for those in the Falkirk area, both in terms of public swimming and participation in our Learn to Swim programme, part of the Scottish Swimming National Framework.

We have always encouraged those living and working in our communities to lead healthy and active lives and get 'Fit for Life' and to 'Be The Best You'. As we gradually opened up our venues post pandemic, it was clear that swimming remained a popular pursuit, not least as other activities were still restricted.

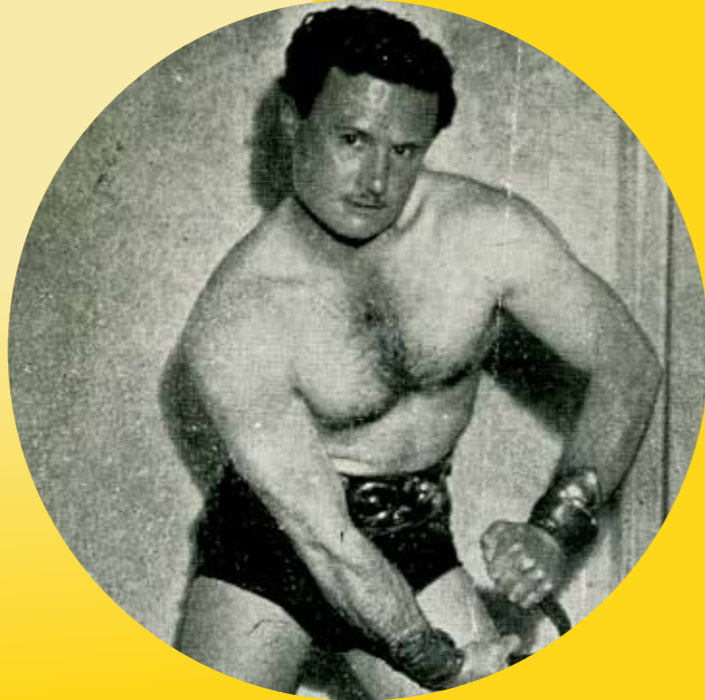
First to open were our three main pools at Bo'ness Recreation Centre, Mariner Centre, and Grangemouth Sports Complex. However, some restrictions remained in place which limited the capacity in our pools from April to September. From October 2021 onwards, the Mariner swim admissions exceeded 2019/20 pre-pandemic performance for the same period by 10,328 admissions (15%), this performance endorses recent investments to attract families to the Centre.

From January to March 2022, our main swim venues saw a return to pre-pandemic swim admission levels.

Restrictions and closures during the pandemic meant that many children's swimming journeys were stalled and, in some cases, not started at all, and so the return of lessons was met with great enthusiasm. Many of our previous swim teachers had gone on to pursue other careers which presented an initial challenge, but we are now back to a full complement of staff and have noticed a particular growth in January – March 2022, with the number of attendees now over 15% higher than pre-pandemic levels. We are aiming to continue to grow capacity, allowing as many children as possible to learn a valuable skill for life.

In our three main pools Bo'ness Recreation Centre, Grangemouth Sports Complex and Mariner Centre swim admissions were 58.5 % of overall admission (excluding Health & Fitness) compared to 49.8% in 2019/20.





creating new opportunities

Celebrating Scotland's Year of Stories at Callendar House

Looking forward to Winter 2020

During 2020 a group of local visual artists were hard at work creating "Winter 2020" which was intended to be Callendar House's post-lockdown re-opening exhibition. The exhibition was only open for a matter of weeks before it closed again for another COVID-19 lockdown. When it eventually re-opened, the exhibition was extended to run in the Park Gallery until June 2021 to enable the public to see it.

Telling Our Stories with Views of Our Past

Running from April to September 2021 and made possible by the support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Great Place Falkirk worked with volunteers throughout 2020 to contribute to a website archive full of historical stories from the region, with the exhibition giving a more permanent voice to these tales from the past. With our industrial heritage as a jumping off point, the exhibition explored brickworks, the iron industry, soap works, and some famous local names sure to spark memories of tasty drinks and snacks, written in the volunteers' voices.

Showcasing our Local Heroes

Open from June until October, this exhibition included pieces from Falkirk Council's Art Collection, featuring the work of internationally respected artists Dame Elizabeth Blackadder and Alan Davie, celebrating two of the area's finest artists. Dame Elizabeth Blackadder was born in Falkirk in 1931 and studied at the Edinburgh College of Art. Working with a variety of media including watercolour, oils, and prints, she is considered one of Scotland's greatest artists. James Alan Davie was born in Grangemouth in 1920 and studied at Edinburgh College of Art. He entered military service during the Second World War, after which he worked making jewellery, teaching art, and performing as a professional jazz musician. He gained international acclaim in the 1950s with his abstract work and exhibited internationally.

Getting back to Nature with the British Wildlife Photography Awards

Celebrating the beauty and diversity of British wildlife, this exhibition ran from October 2021 to January 2022, while Glasgow hosted the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP26. It showcased the work of both amateur and professional

photographers who had submitted their work to the annual photographic competition. The result is an extraordinary legacy capturing British wildlife at its best.

Exploring the Graphic Novel World of Metaphrog

A unique exhibition that opened in January 2022, featuring the work of award-winning artists Sandra Marris and John Chalmers whose illustrations are mainly found in comics and graphic novels. The illustrations included adaptations of poetry, fairy tales, and comic book stories, making it a great day out for the whole family. There were 55 pieces of original art, prints, and artifacts on show, as well as artwork and prints for sale within Callendar House.





Developments at Falkirk Library

Falkirk Library was selected as the perfect home for a new Advice & Support Hub, one of 23 “Council of the Future” projects that aim to modernise and improve Falkirk Council’s services to the public.

With most people now paying for council services digitally or by phone, the Hub is specifically designed for those who need face-to-face support and allow for increased outreach services for those who need it most across the Falkirk area on services including Council Tax, housing benefit, welfare benefits, debt, and housing enquiries. Opened in August 2021, Falkirk Library will play host to the Advice & Support Hub over the next three to four years.

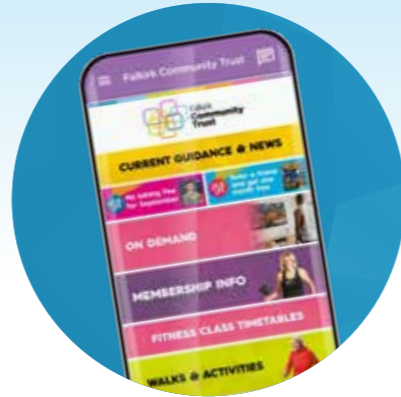
In addition to hosting the new Advice & Support Hub, the library now looks a little different following the successful completion of its essential building works. Boasting the same number of lovely books, the library now offers a bigger Children’s section, and the revamped Adult Non-Fiction section is now in its new permanent home on the second floor.



Keeping our Fitness Customers App-y

Our new Health and Fitness App, introduced in December 2020, was widely used this year with new customers downloading the app regularly. App users have continued to grow with now 7,400 downloads and 5,700 viewing sessions over the past 12 months. In July 2021, despite eased restrictions, app usage peaked at over 2,200 monthly users.

As restrictions eased, the use of the app shifted from using workout videos to booking fitness classes, checking timetables, and keeping up to date with safety measures and the latest guidance. The app



has continued to evolve to meet user needs.

We removed our live online class provision when fitness studios re-opened, however, we still provide a comprehensive fitness library on-demand, via the app offering app users a variety of classes from Yoga, Bums & Tums, Kettlecise, Pilates, and Active Forth Strength & Balance class.

With over 250 classes on offer across our venues, there’s a great deal of choice for Falkirk fitness fans, including our very popular Outdoor Fitness classes at Grangemouth Stadium, initially introduced as a direct result of the pandemic, and led by our popular instructor Norma.



Transitioning our Team and our Services

The integration of two sizable organisations, their teams, and their services is no small undertaking. To achieve it at the peak of a global pandemic is a test of capability, resilience, and commitment. It was with a can-do spirit, and a collegiate attitude, that Falkirk Community Trust’s Senior Management Team approached this daunting task and was instrumental in successfully securing the smooth transition of our 445 employees of which 284 work part-time, 80 sites, and our diverse range of front-line public services on 1 April 2022.



Changing Lives

Rhona Hendrie, Sing Forth Choir
I’ve been a member of Sing Forth Choir almost since the beginning. It’s definitely a highlight of my week!

I’ve met lots of great people of all ages and made some really firm friendships, most of whom I would never have met otherwise. Having the opportunity to sing every week and learn something new is great for my well-being. Even on the dark nights when I feel tired and perhaps can’t be bothered going out, taking the time to go to choir always makes me feel better.

I’ve really benefited from singing with a group of people who support each other. Every Thursday is great fun, and we enjoy a good laugh together. Together we have performed in some great places: FTH Theatre, The Helix, Falkirk Wheel, and Polmont Old Church. It is nice to be able to perform to an audience and makes all the rehearsal time so worthwhile.



Opening a Gateway to Cycling at Callendar Park

Plans have been approved for new cycle skills hub and trails within Callendar Park, with a vision to grow cycling participation at all levels and across cycling disciplines. The project includes space for beginners' cycling, a mountain bike skills area, and the repurposing of the existing Pavilion as a cycling and outdoor activity hub. The cycle trails will be designed to be in keeping with the surroundings, and mindful of other park users' needs.

Subject to final confirmation of funding and planning consent approval, the plan is to promote and develop the cycling facility and our golf course, offering a broader range of affordable activities for visitors to Callendar Park.



Improving facilities at Helix Car Park and Callendar Park

Additional improvements to the Helix Car Park were carried out in November and December 2021, following earlier work in 2017. The outer bays had been damaged by traffic volumes and have now been upgraded with permeable block paving. This provides an environmentally positive solution assisting with natural drainage and is suitable for heavy rainfall.

Callendar Park has focused on ensuring visitor safety having welcomed record numbers over the pandemic. Some older, damaged trees have been felled, and the disabled toilet refurbishment was completed in March 2022. We now have a full set of public toilets open and available to the public, with a team of cleaners looking after them. The Parks team continues to look after the park to keep it clean, tidy, and safe, working tirelessly to ensure the site remains in good condition for the many active, sporting, and family events that take place during the year.



Changing Lives

Kyle Forrest, Active Schools' Young People's Sport Panel

During lockdown, I applied to join Falkirk Community Trust's Young People's Sport Panel. I am passionate about sport and wanted to help others find sports in Falkirk accessible.

I have always been involved in Falkirk Community Trust's Active Schools programmes and wanted to give something back. Following and during lockdown I began to severely struggle with anxiety but one place I feel really supported was being on the Young People's Sport Panel. I was able to offer my opinions and ideas, and everyone was non-judgemental. I was able to be open and confident. The panel has helped me to become less anxious and more confident.

Bringing the Stars of the Silver Screen back to Bo'ness with HippFest '22

The popular Hippodrome Silent Film Festival, affectionately known as HippFest, returned to the big screen live and in-person in March 2022, after postponing its 2020 event due to the national lockdown and hosting its 11th edition during the pandemic fully online in 2021.

The festival programme featured 25 events across five full days at the Hippodrome Bo'ness and included films and presentations rescheduled from 2020, as well as new commissions and additions for 2022. The glittering stars of the silent era including Stan Laurel, Oliver Hardy, Buster Keaton, Douglas Fairbanks, Lon Chaney, Joan Crawford, and Gloria Swanson all shimmered on the big screen once again.

Satellite events were also run at the Barony Theatre, Bo'ness, at SRPS, Bo'ness where Platform Reels were screened on the railway platform, and online. Two events during the festival were live streamed with audiences tuning in from across the UK and Ireland, Portugal, USA, Germany, Canada, Switzerland, and Australia.

A Festival Hub was opened in an empty retail unit in the town encouraging city centre footfall and young people from Falkirk schools took part as musicians and composers

for the New Found Sound project and performance.

1,855 tickets were sold, slightly lower than the last pre-COVID-19 HippFest, but higher than national trends for those returning to cinema after the pandemic. £118,000 in funding was leveraged via public bodies, private trusts, and foundations, to match Falkirk Community Trust's contribution of £12,000. Audience donations during the festival raised £1,200 and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. We also introduced a Pay It Forward scheme, in partnership with Camelon Arts and Artlink Central, to subsidise tickets and travel for those who wouldn't otherwise be able to attend. Over 70 donated Pay It Forward tickets.

The festival achieved widespread media coverage including BBC Radio Scotland, Central FM, The Times, The Scotsman, The National, and The Herald, plus local press and radio. Several of the events were reviewed in online blogs and podcasts.

"So good to be back in Bo'ness, for the unique joy that is silent film combined with live music. @HippFestScot never disappoints."

"#HippFest2022 smashing it out the park again this year on its return for the first time proper since 2019 (though last year's online edition was also superb)."





Celebrating our 10th Anniversary

In July 2021 Falkirk Community Trust marked the occasion of its tenth anniversary with a commemorative video, released on social media, and a heartfelt public thank you to all staff and volunteers.

In the video, Maureen Campbell OBE, the former Chief Executive of Falkirk Community Trust, expressed her thanks to everyone for their passion, dedication, and commitment over the last ten years.

While it's hard to capture everything achieved in just a short two-minute video, she hoped it would capture the very essence of the life-enriching connections we have all made and the pride we share at having been very much a part of that success.

The Decade of Champions video has now reached over 5,500 people.



Recognising our Hearts for the Arts

Last year Falkirk Community Trust was nominated for Best Arts Project for our 2021 digital Hippodrome Silent Film Festival at The Hearts for the Arts Awards, which celebrates creative efforts and encourages local authorities and cultural trusts to prioritise arts and culture.

Hearts for the Arts described the online edition of HippFest as “A really innovative scheme to promote engagement with film at a challenging time for cinemas everywhere.”

While we did not win, judges lauded the event for “the number of platforms used, forums created and extras offered” describing them as “wonderful to see” and demonstrating “a real desire to go above and beyond in creating this festival.”



Celebrating Grangemouth Sports Complex Pool's 50th Birthday

In October 2021, Falkirk Community Trust celebrated 50 years of the swimming pool at Grangemouth Sports Complex.

To mark the anniversary, the team organised a celebration and requested the local community to share memorabilia that tells the history of the swimming pool and the people who have used it over the past five decades. The pool has been the starting point for many aspiring champions and beginners alike through the Trust's Learn to Swim programme, Grangemouth Amateur Swimming Club, and the local disabled swimming club. It's also been the focus for fun family swimming and for those who enjoy swimming as part of their ongoing fitness regime.

The venue has seen many improvements and upgrades over the years thanks to investment from Falkirk Council and Falkirk Community Trust. A recent and most welcome addition has been the Changing Places accessible toilet, to meet the needs of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as people with other physical difficulties.

As part of the celebrations, all customers enjoyed a swim session for just 50p per person all day on Saturday 9 October. This was a great success, with almost 350 swimmers enjoying a 50p dip.



Flying the Green Flag Awards at The Helix, Home of the Kelpies

Hosted by Keep Britain Tidy, Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB), Keep Wales Tidy, and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, eight national awards were presented to recognise employees, volunteers, youths, and initiatives linked to the Green Flag Award, an international benchmark for recreational outdoor space.

The Helix Park was also presented with a Green Flag Award in recognition of the way it has boosted local health and well-being amid the pandemic.



Changing Lives

Bouncing back to Bookbug Sessions

Since his retirement Malcolm Cowie has been the star attraction at special Bookbug Sessions at Bonnybridge and Denny Libraries, playing guitar and leading the singing in the sessions. Having previously been Headteacher at Laurieston Primary School, and headteacher representative on the 'Bairns into Books' Group promoting the role of libraries in Falkirk schools, we're delighted that this year he was nominated for a Book Bug Hero Award from the Scottish Book Trust.

During lockdown, Malcolm missed his library sessions, so instead, he worked his magic outside, hosting singalongs on his front drive with families from his village, complete with instruments and microphones. Malcolm also posted some Bookbug sessions online.

Malcolm said: "At last we're getting back together in libraries and playgroups – singing action songs, reciting nursery rhymes, reading the latest children's book, and sharing the enjoyment of hopping like bunnies, climbing aboard a pirate ship or shoving yer other granny aff the bus. Last week I noticed a wee two-year-old who was joining in with everything I did, all the actions, all the songs. At the end of the session, I spoke to mum about how involved he'd been. She told me how much his big brother had loved my sessions. He'd been watching the videos on her phone over lockdown!"



Keeping the Lights on at FTH Theatre with the Performing Arts Venues Relief Fund

FTH Theatre was successful in receiving further funding of £45,832 in a second round of emergency COVID-19 funds from the Scottish Government through Creative Scotland. The Performing Arts Venues Relief Fund was set up to help performing arts venues to remain solvent, return staff from furlough, and enable new artistic commissions from freelance artists.

As a direct result of this funding, we have secured the services of The Audio Story Company, a professional performing arts collective, to develop and deliver a creative engagement programme that supports our ambition to rebuild relationships with lapsed and new audiences. The Audio Story Company will be 'resident' at FTH Theatre from May 2022 and is particularly experienced in producing work for children, young people and families.



Supporting Young People with Youth Arts Funding:

In February 2021, Falkirk Community Trust was awarded £30k by Creative Scotland's Emergency Youth Arts Access Fund towards our proposed Falkirk Music Project.

The project, developed in partnership with Fairer Falkirk, was designed to work with children and young people, currently living in poverty, in the Falkirk area to create a programme of music activities that will both help them explore and develop their music skills, build confidence and capacity in their abilities, and widen access to a range of other activities that are currently 'off limits' to them due to several barriers, not least economic.

In August 2021 we ran a week-long music project as an introduction to the project at FTH Theatre and 17 young people attended. Following its' success, we scheduled a programme of weekly sessions and workshops, with the core group of participants increasing to 24 young people (aged 10-17 years). The project is led by 3 musicians and supported by 3 project assistants.

Supported by funding from
**Museums Galleries Scotland**
Supporting Scotland's Museums

Digital Resource Funding

We developed a project to create 'digital reminiscence resources', primarily for use in care settings for older people, who had been taking advantage of our successful Reminiscence Loan Box Scheme and were no longer able to do so due to COVID-19. The project also formed part of our recovery planning for Callendar House.

We made a successful application to Museums Galleries Scotland for project funding, with the project commencing at the end of summer 2021. We were keen that the project worked across the generations, so the digital resources are currently being created by children and young people from the Falkirk Young Carers Group, as part of a video/film and heritage project. Fourteen young people, aged 9-11, are working with the project leader, videographer, and filmmaker, Ian Bustard. Once the works are complete they will be distributed to care settings across Falkirk.



Supported by funding from

Museums Galleries Scotland
 Supporting Scotland's Museums

Boosting our Summer 2021 Activities Programme at Callendar House

Our Callendar House Summer Activities Programme was successful in its funding bid to Museums Galleries Scotland to enable us to cover the costs of transport and lunches for attendees, in addition to providing the activities free of charge to participants.

We organised and hosted 14 days of activities and events, which included 49 workshops and engaged 510 attendees. We worked with three community groups Al Masaar, Camelon & Tamfourhill Community Hub, and Forth Valley Sensory Centre to identify participants and help shape the programme. The activities were also open to the general public. Due to COVID-19, we developed primarily an outdoor programme, for the most part working out of a gazebo in Callendar Park. The activities included Circus Skills, Potion Making, and Blast Off! Rocket Making, Printmaking, Fire-pits and Bread-making, and Edible Insect Adventures! They were delivered by a team of artists and practitioners: Think Circus, Eureka Edinburgh, Botanica Fabula, Tessa Asquith Lamb, and Under the Trees.

Our end-of-project survey noted that 85% of participants would not have been able to access the programme if it hadn't been funded.



“It has been marvellous to be able to become involved in activities held outdoors and with other children. We have missed so many activities and interactions like this during the past year.”
 Steve Higson, Tour Guide at the Kelpies

“The priority of our group is to include those who are marginalised for various reasons and cannot participate due to transport. Therefore, removing and providing a secure transport service was so crucial.”



Changing Lives

Competition at Falkirk Libraries inspires a career in writing. We have run a creative writing competition at Falkirk Libraries, The Writing Rammy, for the last few years. Library regulars, Taslin Pollock, along with her son, Aaron, and daughter Aysha, have been entering the competition since it began. They won the 'Family Rammy' award, which is awarded to family groups for two years running, both in 2020 and 2021. One of Taslin's poems was also highly commended, with her son Aaron winning the funniest entry in 2020. Taslin's involvement in the competition over the years has given her the confidence to try and write stories for adults and children alike, full-time. She has recently completed a Scottish Book Trust Online course for Writing Fiction for Children, and is currently working on a Children's Middle Grade novel.

Taslin said: "The children and I were delighted to be told we had won, and we were thrilled to be invited to an evening where our stories were celebrated and shared. After the last few years, finally being allowed out among other people and having an opportunity to share their stories; that detailed their experiences through the pandemic was a truly moving experience. I was extremely proud of seeing my daughter stand up and read her story in front of everyone and prouder still when an audience member told me how moved they were by Aaron's story about the D-Day Landing during the Normandy Invasion. I have very fond memories of writing my first ever Writing Rammy competition entry on the kitchen table. It feels like I have finally found the thing I was supposed to do, and I would not have even realised, had it not been for The Falkirk Libraries' Writing Rammy, so thank you!"



Walking in our own Footsteps in Callendar Park

With funding secured from Youthlink Scotland, The Footsteps Project took place from 2 to 6 August 2021 and looked at the paths that young people have taken to get where they are today, and how they see their pathways looking forward.

Through drama, music, visual art and spoken word the group recorded their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and aspirations in a series of works shared at points along a trail in the park. A visual artist worked with participants on creating sculptural pieces made with natural materials foraged in the park. A spoken word artist worked with the group to create their pieces of poetry and creative writing. A drama artist and movement specialist worked with the groups to create small performance pieces based on the theme. These were performed live on the Thursday afternoon around the trail.

Over 4 days, twenty young people aged 8-16 years took part and all materials used were biodegradable. Over time the trail will be taken over by nature and the elements, just like a footprint.

Rebuilding Cinema Audiences with Film Exhibition Funding

In October 2020, Falkirk Community Trust was successful in securing £9k from the Film Exhibition Fund (FEF), to reach new audiences and for at least 60% of our screening programme to be dedicated to independent British and world cinema and the presentation of archive film.

Due to frequent changes in Government guidelines and the unpredictable closing and re-opening of the venue, we had to reshape our original plans and funders extended the project period to the end of December. We worked with several partners to support our audience development aims including the Forth Valley Sensory Centre, Bo'ness Community Bus, Friends of Scottish Settlers (FOSS), Barnardo's, Fairer Falkirk, RNLI Queensferry, French Film Festival, Fair Saturday, Forth Environment Link, Locavore, Sustainable Thinking, Slow Food Youth Network.

Over the period we screened a total of 92 different films including independent, British, foreign language, and archive

films reaching an audience of 1,971 for FEF supported titles, surpassing our funding target of 980 by more than 100%. Seven of the titles screened had Audio Description tracks and one was presented with captions for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing audiences. All the guest-curated social media trailers and pre-recorded introductions presented in the Hippodrome commissioned for this project were captioned.

Highlights of the programming included The Show Goes On in June 2021, a short season of films guest curated by musician, composer, and broadcaster Neil Brand themed around the joy of musical films on the big screen; Black Enough in July 2021, guest curated by Guardian journalist Joshua Toussaint-Strauss and themed around positive representations of Black people on the big screen; and Reel Women in August and September 2021, a short season of films guest curated by Scottish actor and presenter Clare Grogan themed around female film directors.





Changing Lives

Weightlifting star Giorgio Taliba

Over the decades, Falkirk Community Trust has been committed to enriching the lives of those in the Falkirk area.

Our Active Schools team became aware that Giorgio was travelling outside of the Falkirk area to train, which was not sustainable. Giorgio applied for the Falkirk Community Trust Sports Performance Award, which provides international athletes who live locally in the Falkirk area with free of charge access to train at our venues. As a result, Giorgio was awarded an elite athlete gym pass and was able to train at Grangemouth Stadium gym. This helped reignite his passion for sport and a number of months later he became the 2020 British Champion in the 73kg weight category, an incredible achievement. Giorgio has since gone on to break many records and win titles, in addition to being ranked number one in Scotland, and Britain, in the 73kg category. We're delighted that our Sports Performance Award has helped this remarkable young man to continue his sporting career.

engaging in successful partnerships

Developing our 2021 Summer Sports Programme

With restrictions easing, Falkirk Community Trust was looking to offer a programme of sports activities for children over the school holidays. In previous years we had created a substantial programme of activities for children over the Summer holidays and, in 2021, the Scottish Government allocated £15 million to local authorities for the targeted provision of holiday activities.

The funding was provided to help improve the well-being of children and young people over the summer period. The Active Schools Team developed a programme that would benefit children and young people who had been adversely affected by the pandemic. The priority was to help address the negative impact associated with extended periods of isolation and lack of participation in regular activities during the pandemic. This acknowledges the difficulties children, young people, and families across Scotland have experienced and provides opportunities for children to

socialise and reconnect with peers and others.

Our team planned an extensive line-up of activities, offering free places in Pop-Up Sports Festivals, which ran across various venues in the Falkirk area. We also ran Muiravonside Tribal Camps, Friends, and Family Tennis, Adventure Days, Action Outdoors Days, and Disability Sport sessions. The Summer Sports Programme offered over 4,500 free places, with over 2,940 free places provided. In addition to the range of free activities, our regular sports development programmes continued to operate with 3,246 visits across the summer, an 87% uptake of overall activities on offer.

All attendees were offered a free Grab & Go lunch to ensure that, as well as being active and having fun, they were also well-fed. Holiday hunger is a growing concern, with many children who usually receive free school meals going hungry in the holidays. We are proud to be able to make a small contribution to this.





Creating Wonderful Canal Encounters

Supported by EventScotland, Scotland's Events Recovery Fund and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Canal Encounters was a self-led walking, cycling, paddling, boating, or wheeling trail, which combined real life with the imaginary during August and September 2021. The partnership of Falkirk Community Trust, Scottish Canals, and Great Place Falkirk designed an event that only required a mobile phone with the free Falkirk Explored app downloaded to enjoy the entire experience.

As part of Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters 20/21 celebrations, fusing art, community participation, digital innovation, and two of Scotland's most iconic tourist attractions, The

Kelpies, and The Falkirk Wheel, the event brought the Forth & Clyde Canal alive in many weird and wonderful ways.

The banks of the canal between The Helix, Home of the Kelpies, and The Falkirk Wheel were transformed into a vibrant activity trail featuring interactive art installations, audio guides, and augmented reality hot spots.

The Helix, Home of the Kelpies, and the Falkirk Wheel welcomed nearly 300,000 visitors onto the sites throughout August and September, and the programme of 65 live pop-up workshops, performances, and activities engaged over 1,500 people. Highlights included five

boat excursions, 24 performances, including unusual tours by mythical creatures, Classic Music Live Concert, and Tony Mills breakdancing. Twenty-three workshops were delivered by a range of partners and artists. Ten walking tours happened along the canal at The Helix and the Falkirk Wheel, and three cycle tours. The project also engaged nine volunteers who delivered 76 hours of support to deliver all these activities.

The activity trail was extended until 30 September, and most of the sculptures now have permanent locations between the Falkirk Wheel and The Kelpies. Some of the trails will feature on the FREE Falkirk Explored app for the next five years.



Creating a legacy with the 2021 Falkirk Science Festival

This was Falkirk Science Festival's second year and very different from what was originally planned. Taking place in July to give us enough time to plan and deliver, the timing of the festival coincided with the easing of COVID-19 restrictions and school summer holidays. It was the perfect time to re-engage with families.

The festival took place across The Helix, Home of the Kelpies, Muiravonside Country Park, and Callendar Park, with science walks at Skinflats, Grangemouth, Maddiston, and Standburn. We offered 17 outdoor workshops and five online workshops, and, working in partnership with Great Place Falkirk, we generated three new STEM boxes and digital science trails which continue to be available on the Falkirk Explored app. We tapped into subject area expertise at St Andrew's University, RSPB, ORE Catapult, and the Institution of Civil Engineers to help create the STEM boxes.

Hailed as "everything a teacher could want" these boxes and accompanying trails have subsequently been

delivered and promoted to all 56 schools in the area. Doing more than just teaching the latest scientific research, they are a combination of a lesson plan with an experiment/activity that is specific to the local area, industry, and heritage.

The boxes and trails, which are a very positive legacy of the 2021 Science Festival are:

Blue Carbon in Falkirk which profiles the science of the Skinflats area of Falkirk, a unique place of scientific interest and developed in conjunction with the Scottish Blue Carbon Forum.

Wind Power in Falkirk developed by ORE Catapult and explores the history of energy sources in Falkirk, profiling wind power as the fastest growing renewable energy source.

Flood Risk in Falkirk developed by the Institution of Civil Engineering highlighting famous Falkirk floods and how to mitigate flood risk and the impacts of climate change.

"I found both workshops very informative and interesting. I also found that having them within these great parks meant that we could enjoy a full day out. My daughter still has her mealworm farm from the edible insects workshops- so is continuing to learn at home."



Providing Respite to Unpaid Carers

As part of the Scottish Government's supported project, Respite, co-ordinated nationally by Shared Care Scotland, Falkirk Community Trust provides free swim passes to Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre. Respite aims to provide a short vital break for unpaid carers when they need it most.

This is achieved by connecting carers' organisations with hospitality, tourism, and leisure businesses who are willing to donate a break free of charge. The swim passes enable carers to switch off, enjoy some exercise and have a good time. A small gesture can make a big difference, and feedback from the scheme is overwhelmingly positive. One carer saw a big improvement in their health and wellbeing, and another saw a big improvement in their relationships with their children, stating "My children get on very well when swimming, so it's a huge weight off my shoulders to see them get on."

Attracting Young Audiences to the Hippodrome

Through the Young Audiences Generation Scheme, we introduced £4.50 cinema tickets for 16-25-year-olds to attract a younger audience, an initiative that has proven popular in the past and continues to trend upwards. The ability to reach out to new, younger audiences, has been a crucial aspect of rebuilding our cinema audience during the recovery and contributing to the 13,267 tickets sold at The Hippodrome this year.

Hippodrome Bo'ness partners with the Glasgow Film Festival

In March 2022, we were delighted to partner with the Glasgow Film Festival (GFF) alongside other cinemas across the UK to simultaneously screen some of its biggest premieres.

For the first time ever, GFF partnered with cinemas across the UK to simultaneously screen some of its biggest premieres. The opening gala UK premiere of *The Outfit*, the closing gala UK premiere of *Murina*, plus a special International Women's Day gala UK premiere of *Happening* on 8 March, were shown on big screens throughout the country, from Stornoway to Bristol via Edinburgh, Manchester, Dundee, Sheffield, London and right here at The Hippodrome, Bo'ness.

Securing funding from the Recovery Fund for Independent Cinemas

In February 2022, Falkirk Community Trust made a further successful bid to Screen Scotland Independent Cinema Recovery and Resilience Fund. Awarded £72,395, our application was for two purposes. Firstly, ensuring stability for our cinemas during another period of uncertainty, between December 2021 and August 2022, of a potential reduction in admissions due to the impacts of COVID-19. In addition, we required investment to bring in additional specialist resources to build our business, particularly the marketing planning work required for the Hippodrome, including supporting our returning audiences, re-engaging those who remained cautious about returning, and reaching out to new audiences.

the hippodrome
BO'NESS



governance

Falkirk Community Trust is a company limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital. Falkirk Council is the sole member of the Company. The Company commenced trading on 1 July 2011 and any surpluses generated by the Company are reinvested to improve the facilities and services which we provide to the communities of the Falkirk area.

The Company is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association through a Board of eleven Directors. Five independent Directors are drawn from local business, sport, culture, environment, and learning sectors. Five Directors are nominated Elected Members of Falkirk Council. There is a provision for an Employee Director nominated by Trust staff which is not presently filled.

The Board can appoint two additional co-opted Directors to allow the Trust to benefit from relevant skill sets and expertise as required. The Chair of the Board is elected by the Independent Directors.

Directors		
David White (Chair)	Re-appointed 28/08/20	
Derek Easton	Re-appointed 28/08/20	Resigned 31/03/22
Cllr Jim Flynn	Re-appointed 01/06/19	Resigned 31/03/22
Cllr Lorna Binnie	Re-appointed 01/06/19	Resigned 31/03/22
Cllr Joan Coombes	Resigned August 2021	Resigned 31/03/22
Andrew Roberts	Re-appointed 28/08/20	Resigned 31/03/22
Alan Stewart	Appointed 01/03/2019	Resigned 31/03/22
Cllr Niall Coleman	Resigned August 2021	Resigned 31/03/22
Cllr Robert Spears	Appointed 01/10/20	Resigned 31/03/22
Simon Rennie	Resigned 09/03/21	Resigned 31/03/22
Cllr Gary Bouse	Appointed 26/08/2021	Resigned 31/03/22
Cllr James Blackwood	Appointed 26/08/2021	Resigned 31/03/22
Chief Executive		
Maureen Campbell		Resigned 31/07/21
Neil Brown	Appointed 01/09/21	Resigned 31/03/22

Company Secretary	
Shepherd and Wedderburn	
Registered Office	
Suite 1A, The Falkirk Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk, FK2 9EE	
Auditors	
Wylie & Bisset LLP	
Solicitors	
Shepherd and Wedderburn	
Bankers	
Royal Bank of Scotland, 2 Newmarket Centre, Falkirk FK1 1JX	
Charity number	Company number
SC042403	400657

financial performance

Accounts

Income from customers, for the year 31 March 2022 totalled £6,046,793, which represents an increase of 346% of that generated in the previous year 2020/21.

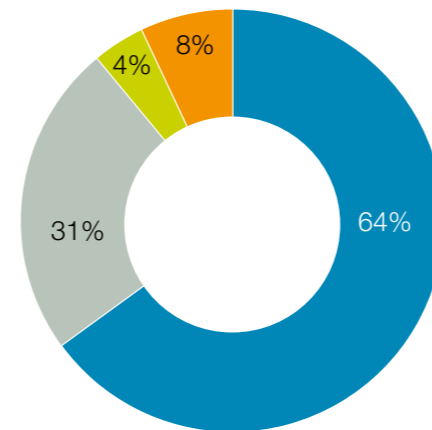
Additional income of £1,158,207 was secured through grants and fundraising. The overall funding received from Falkirk Council of £12,582,000 is an increase of 15% on that received in 2021/21. Included within the additional income is grant funding of £338,487 from the UK Government's 'Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme' which was successfully secured.

Gross expenditure of £19,376,000 increased from the previous year by 19%, due to the gradual reopening of services that had been closed due to COVID-19-related closures and related costs.

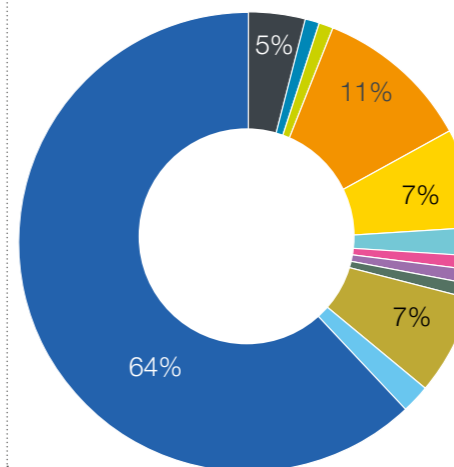
The impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected the overall 2021-22 year-end performance, both in terms of income generated and customer participation levels. Most Trust-operated venues and services did not fully re-open until 18 February 2022, when we finally re-opened FTH Theatre.

The full accounts can be viewed or downloaded from our website at www.falkirkleisureandculture.org

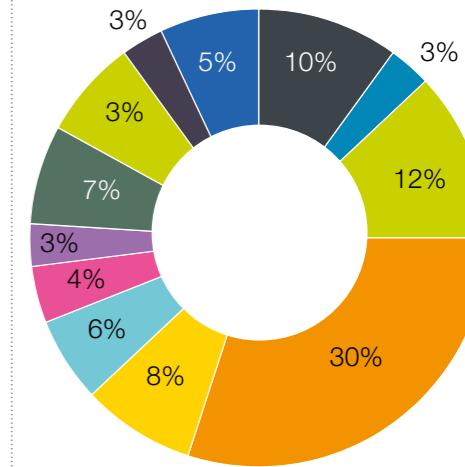
How we were funded			
	£	21/22	20/21
Falkirk Council	£12,582,000	64%	65%
Grants	£384,319	2%	23%
Fundraising	£773,888	4%	4%
Income	£6,046,793	31%	8%
Total	19,787,000		



How our income was generated			
	£	21/22	20/21
Arts	£961,000	5%	4%
Heritage	£20,000	0%	0%
Libraries	£74,000	0%	0%
Sport	£2,181,000	11%	4%
Fitness	£1,290,000	7%	1%
Helix	£312,000	2%	1%
Parks & Golf Courses	£258,000	1%	1%
Outdoors	£141,000	1%	0%
Business Development	£169,000	1%	1%
Trading Activities	£1,461,000	7%	1%
Job Retention Scheme	£338,000	2%	22%
Falkirk Council Service Fee	£12,582,000	64%	65%
Total	19,787,000		



How our resources were spent			
	£	21/22	20/21
Arts	£1,895,000	10%	9%
Heritage	£663,000	3%	4%
Libraries	£2,364,000	12%	13%
Sport	£5,896,000	30%	31%
Fitness	£1,498,000	8%	7%
Helix	£1,160,000	6%	5%
Parks & Golf Courses	£784,000	4%	5%
Outdoors	£625,000	3%	3%
Business Development	£1,416,000	7%	8%
Trading Activities	£1,400,000	7%	5%
Governance & Management	£615,000	3%	3%
Falkirk Council Service Payments	£1,060,000	5%	7%
Total	19,376,000		



Falkirk Community Trust Trading Ltd

A subsidiary company of Falkirk Community Trust, Falkirk Community Trust Trading Ltd operates the catering and retail outlets within our facilities and provided a charitable donation of £90,537. This represents the subsidy achieved by the company in 2020/21 & 2021/22.

The Trading Company Generated a surplus of £65,000 in 2021/22, despite unfavourable trading conditions and all the surpluses generated have been donated to charity.

The hospitality industry has continued to struggle with recovery from COVID-19 lockdowns and this has been evident throughout our business, we have seen unprecedented cost increases, staff shortages that have caused reduced operations and COVID-19 restrictions that have continued to impact on our operations.

We continued to benefit from our commercial agreements with the external catering providers within Falkirk Community Trust operated parks. These operators provided a service to our customers while our venues were forced to close and continued to provide a much-needed revenue stream.

Our business recovery continues to be impacted by challenges that are out with our control, however we are happy that we have still been able to record a profit and subsequent charitable donation.

Retail

Retail has been a shining light within our recovery, providing a much need beacon of hope that we can return to pre pandemic sales levels. Despite reduced footfall to our venues, we have seen increases in like for like sales when we have been operational.

Catering

Catering performance continued to be heavily impacted by restrictions for large parts of the year.

Indoor service was not available until May.

Cafes within sports centres were only operational for around 5 months of the year due to restricted footfall.

Lock down introduced in December at one of the busiest times of the year for our business.

We have also been impacted by an industry wide staff shortage, these shortages have led to significant reductions in our offering and at times closure of our facilities at peak times.

Looking forward

We will continue to respond to customer demand and ensure that we are delivering the best quality products at a reasonable price to ensure that our customers receive good value for there money in what is a very challenging time for everyone.

Income	
Turnover*	£1,460,423

Expenditure	
Cost of sales	£1,205,884
Administrative expenses	£107,591
Investment	£81,948
Charitable payment**	£65,000

*Charitable donation of £90,537 has been paid to the charity in the financial year of 2021/22, this payment consists of £25,537 from trading for 2020/21 and payment of £65,000 from trading in 2021/22, both of these payments have been processed as Falkirk Community Trading ceased to trade from 31/3/22

Directors	
Suzanne Arkinson (Chair)	
Maureen Campbell	
Ased Iqbal	
Shona Dunsmore	
Chris Morris	
Andrew Roberts	
Registered Office	
Suite 1A, The Falkirk Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk FK2 9EE	
Company number	
400658	

Directors resigned on 31/03/22 with the exception of Maureen Campbell who resigned as Chief Executive on 31/07/21.

The following organisations supported the work of the Trust during 2021/22 either through a grant award, sponsorship, or providing in-kind support.

Agnes Watt Trust Fund, the	Film Hub South West & West Midlands (BFI Film Audience Network)	Scottish Government
Artlink Central	Forth Environment Link	Scottish Railway Preservation Society
AMA School	FVDS (G Harvey funding Active Schools)	Screen Scotland
Barony Players	Great Place Falkirk	SportScotland
British Association of American Studies (US Embassy)	Indy Cinema Group	Stirling Council
Carleton University	Museums Galleries Scotland	University of Edinburgh
Confucius Institute for Scotland	National Library of Scotland Moving Image Archive	University of Glasgow
Corbie Inn, Bo'ness	National Lottery Community Fund	University of Minnesota
Creative Scotland	Nature Scot	University of St Andrews
Digital Cinema Media	Photoplay Productions	Visit Falkirk
East Anglian Film Archive	Richmond Park Hotel, Bo'ness	VisitScotland
Event Scotland	Scottish Book Trust	Watershed Arts Trust
Falkirk Council	Scottish Historic Buildings Trust	Youth Theatre Arts Scotland
Falkirk Council- Growth & Investment	Scottish Library & Information Council	YouthLink Scotland
Film Hub North (BFI Film Audience Network)	Scottish Canalsand generous donations from the public
Film Hub Scotland (BFI Film Audience Network)		

our venues and services

With a turnover of £19,787k as of the end of March 2022, 445 employees of which 284 work part-time, we manage over 80 sites across the Falkirk Council area and offer a huge range of programmes and activities for a wide variety of customers. We like to think that we can offer services of interest and value to all Falkirk area residents throughout their lives from pre-school to retirement.

The venues we operate and manage are diverse and range from the unique heritage attractions of Grade A listed Callendar House and the Hippodrome Cinema, specialist facilities such as the regionally significant Grangemouth Indoor Athletics Centre to local libraries, sports venues pitches in neighbourhood areas.



FalkirkCommunity Trust

- 1 Head Quarters / Bookings & Sales

Arts

- 2 FTH (Falkirk Town Hall Theatre)
- 3 Hippodrome
- 4 Bo'ness Town Hall
- 5 Grangemouth Town Hall

Heritage

- 6 Callendar House
- 7 Callendar Park
- 8 Muesum Store
- 9 Kinneil Museum

Libraries

- 10 Bo'ness Library
- 11 Bonnybridge Library
- 12 Denny Library
- 13 Falkirk Library
- 14 Grangemouth Library
- 15 Larbert Library
- 16 Meadowbank Library
- 17 Slamannan Library

Fitness

- 18 Health & Fitness - Grangemouth Sports Complex
- 19 Health & Fitness - Bo'ness Recreation Centre
- 20 Health & Fitness - Mariner Centre
- 21 Health & Fitness - Stenhousemuir

Sport

- 22 Bankier Sports Centre
- 23 Bo'ness Recreation Centre
- 24 Denny Football Centre
- 25 Denny Sports Centre
- 26 Grangemouth Golf Course
- 27 Grangemouth Sports Complex
- 28 Grangemouth Stadium
- 29 Mariner Leisure Centre
- 30 Polmont Sports Centre
- 31 Polmonthill Snowsports Centre
- 32 Carron Gymnastics Centre

Parks

- 33 Kinneil Estate
- 34 Muiravonside Country Park
- 35 Zetland Park – amenities
- 36 Dollar Park – amenities
- 37 Helix Park

Outdoors

- 38 Outdoors Base

Community Access Schools

- 39 Bo'ness Academy
- 40 Braes High School
- 41 Denny High School
- 42 Falkirk High School
- 43 Graeme High School
- 44 Grangemouth High School
- 45 St Mungo's High School



*we
were*



Falkirk
**Community
Trust**