



Fife Walking Club

April 2025



Committee 2025

| | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Chair and Newsletter Editor | Barbara Fotheringham | Margaret Cumming |
| Treasurer | Clare Darling | Emma Hulme |
| Secretary | Angela Drennan | Karin Laurie |
| Walks Convenor | Mike Livesey | Leslie Drennan |
| Membership Secretary | Brian Clark | Frankie Johnston |
| Webmaster | David Thomson | Alison Stewart |
| | | Lorna Thompson |

Fife Walking Club is affiliated to HF Holidays



The twenty nine members in attendance were welcomed to the meeting; seventeen had submitted their apologies. Barbara (**Chair**) reported briefly on a smooth-running year. The Christmas Lunch at the Pitlessie Village Inn in December was well attended and was a very convivial event. As usual, the raffle raised a good amount (over £100) which went towards the club's agreed charity donations.

Clare thanked all the committee members for their contributions throughout the year.

Contents of the April 2025 newsletter:

- AGM 11 January 2025
- Membership reminder
- Keswick Week 26 April – 3 May 2025
- Borders Break 9 – 11 September 25

The 35th Annual General Meeting of the Fife Walking Club was held on Saturday 11 January 2025 at the Lomond Centre in Glenrothes. A summary follows with the essentials included. *If you would like to receive a full copy of the Secretary's minute of the meeting, please contact Barbara at barbara_fotheringham@hotmail.com or text 07904 648 693*

| FIFE WALKING CLUB | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|
| FINANCIAL STATEMENT AS AT: 31/12/2024 | | | |
| Receipts | | Expenditure | |
| Cash Brought Forward | £1,621.16 | raffle books | £7.50 |
| Membership | £494.00 | Room Hire | |
| Guest walkers | £5.00 | Postage & Printing | £79.37 |
| Donations | £43.00 | Charities | £1,020.00 |
| Ramblers Donation | £50.00 | Scotways | £40.00 |
| HF Holidays donation | £50.00 | Christmas Lunch | £839.45 |
| Christmas lunch | £839.45 | Website | |
| Christmas Donation | £20.95 | Speaker gift | £31.50 |
| Christmas raffle | £132.00 | get well | £ 20.97 |
| Total | £3,255.56 | Total | £2,038.79 |
| Balance | £1,216.77 | | |

These accounts are in accordance with the accounting records produced
Alastair CA
4/1/25

Clare (**Treasurer**) circulated the signed accounts for 2024, confirmed as accurate by independent examiner Andrew Kinnon, and asked the membership to consider raising annual dues to £10.

There has not been an increase in dues in at least 15 years. Although our printing and postage costs have fallen in recent years due to email, we now face increasing room hire

costs and new bank charges. Clare asks members to make payments by bank transfer if possible, or in cash to any committee member, as our bank now charges for every cheque deposited, in addition to a monthly charge on the account. With a decreasing number of paying members (see the membership report below), it is important to maintain club funds. As the Webmaster will report, the club may soon have to pay for website hosting. Members were unanimous in supporting this increase in dues, which takes immediate effect.

The treasurer proposed **charity donations** totaling £800. Scottish Mountain Rescue: £300; Scottish Charity Air Ambulance: £200; Fife Coast and Countryside Trust: £150; and the National Trust for Scotland Footpaths Fund: £150. All of these organisations directly support what we do as a club. The proposed donations were accepted by all those present.

Clare finished with a request to anyone booking a holiday with Ramblers or HF Holidays to mention FWC in return for a financial donation to the club

Walks convenor Mike reported that of the 52 walks on the 2024 programme, only 5 had to be cancelled, mainly due to bad weather. He thanked all who volunteer to lead walks. The Keswick week was attended by 25 people who had a choice of walk every day. The week was judged a great success and once again we were treated to excellent walking weather. The group meal at Asaya Thai restaurant was much enjoyed; it was an excellent way to get almost all walkers together.

Mike will continue to produce a 3-monthly programme as this timeframe results in fewer amendments should other commitments for the walk leader arise. However this programme is not written in stone. *Leaders are encouraged to submit walks at any time*, not only when Mike issues a call, particularly if they are at a different grade level from walks closest in date to those on the published programme.

The Keswick 2025 will run from April 26 – May 3, with no walk offered on the Saturdays as these are travel days. Walk proposals are very welcome.

Mike announced a review of the grading system and at Brian's suggestion has introduced a new D category. All other grades remain as they were

Grade D: length under 7 miles/ 11 km; total ascent 350 feet/100m. easy terrain on good paths or racks, no steep ascents.

Grade C: less than 10 miles/16 km; total ascent under 800 feet/250m mainly on good paths or tracks with only a few short, steep ascents.

Grade B: less than 12.5 miles/20 km; total ascent under 1500 feet/ 450m; mainly on on good paths or tracks including undulating terrain

Grade B+: under 15 miles/24 km; total ascent under 2500 feet/750 m. Likely to include steep or rough ground

Grade A: over 15 miles/24 km; ascent over 2500 feet/750m; some very steep or very rough ground with possibly some technical sections.

Important note from Walk Convenor:

The new guidance for all leaders and walkers is circulated with each programme following the emergency incident in June and must be read by all. Here is a very brief summary: **Back marker** to stop group getting too strung out. Whistle advised (integral in Osprey packs)

Recce. Useful to have second walker with you. Carry appropriate OS map

If the walk is on an away event (eg Keswick) and you have not been able to recce, flag this up.

Mobile phone fully charged and switched on. Consider a power pack, especially if using for navigation or tracking

Footwear and clothing, check appropriate for terrain and conditions. No jeans or trainers

Guests Make them aware of nature of walk, need for adequate footwear and clothing, to bring water and food

Emergency: highly unlikely but dial 999 if needed and be as specific as you can, eg 8-figure grid reference or What3Words. When asked for phone number, give yours and that of another walker. Do not panic.

Insurance: the club carries public liability insurance but no personal cover

Do not be discouraged from leading walks in light of this guidance. We have to take health and safety seriously, but remember that serious accidents are a very rare occurrence when guidance has been followed.

Mike noted that walkers still need to book a place on a walk and provide a mobile number.

It is recommended that walkers carry a small first aid kit.

Membership Secretary Brian reported that the roll has dipped from 85 to 83 (65 Ordinary members, 16 Life, 2 Junior).

Please notify Brian of anyone reaching 80 and therefore becoming eligible for Life Membership

Notify Brian of any change in contact details to ensure receipt of club communications.

Webmaster David reported that new user visits to the website increased to 8,638 from 2,327

Anyone using Microsoft Edge trying to access the FWC website should change the default to Google.

Digital Fife, which hosts our website, is now a registered charity, and David has now become a trustee of this charity which offers free websites to over 250 community groups in Fife. As trustee, David will keep abreast of any developments affecting FWC.

Change to constitution The category of 'junior membership' is removed by allowing all Under 18s to walk as visitors, free of charge for an unlimited number of walks.

Review and Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members

Barbara reported that all current office bearers and committee members are willing to stand for re-election. All standing were unanimously voted in and the composition of the 2025 committee can be found in the newsletter masthead. Brian intimated that this will be his last year in office after many years of service.

Lorna Thompson volunteered her services and was unanimously elected. Should anyone else wish to join the committee, they could become a co-opted member.

Events: Keswick Week April 26 to 3 May
Christmas Lunch Saturday 6 December.
Suggestions for lunch venue to Barbara please.

All officers' reports were unanimously approved by members present.

Barbara closed the meeting by thanking all officers for their reports and all the members present for their support and attendance.

Speaker: Iwan Thomas, FCCT:

Angela introduced and welcomed Iwan Thomas of the Fife Coast and Countryside Trust as our guest speaker,

As 2025 marks the relaunch of the Fife Pilgrim Way, Iwan provided an illustrated overview of pilgrimages in general before focusing on the Fife Pilgrim Way which starts at either Culross or Inverkeithing and proceeds through Fife to St Andrews. New custom-made signage with wooden arch frames and stained glass mark major points along the route. Below is the St Andrews sign, next to Holy Trinity Church, on Logies Lane where it meets South Street.

Iwan provided members with leaflets and a map of the route. His talk was inspiring, and we greatly appreciate the time and effort that Iwan devoted to sharing his knowledge with us.



As has become customary after the AGM, we then proceeded to the Beijing Banquet for their excellent lunch buffet and were pleased that our speaker Iwan Thomas accepted the club invitation to attend with us.

Keswick Week 26 April – 3 May 2025

Our annual Lakes Week is fast approaching and we will be a large group again this year. Mike is putting together a great range of walks to suit everyone's ability level. If you have a last-minute walk suggestion, please send to Mike and he will try to fit it into the programme. As usual, he hopes there will be more than one walk on offer each day.

For those who have signed up for the group meal at Asaya Thai restaurant on Thursday 1 May please email your order to Barbara by 21 April.

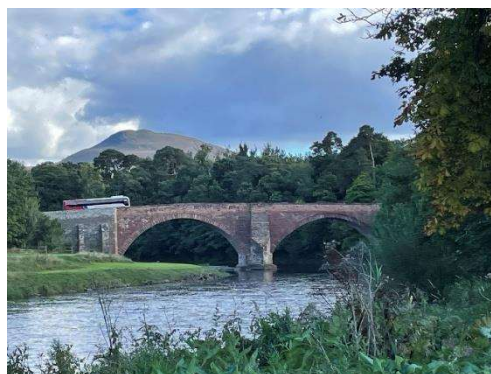
The staff have kindly agreed to allow us to pay separately and will calculate each person's bill based on our orders.

Drinks can be purchased from the bar. The restaurant has always been exceptionally accommodating and staff very pleasant, so please consider adding a tip when you settle your bill by card or in cash



We often hear our first cuckoo call of the year during our Lakes Week. This plump and well camouflaged chick, seen on Harris, was being fed by a tiny warbler that repeatedly flew to and fro bringing morsels in a desperate attempt to satisfy an voracious appetite. Cuckoo numbers have dropped in the past couple of years; no cause has yet been identified.

Borders Break 9 – 11 September 25



After the success of September's 3-day break in Melrose, Bill Fernie, Alison Stewart and Donald Valentine are again leading walks in the Borders. They can't guarantee a repeat of last year's stunning weather but we can always hope for the best.

Some walkers come for one day, others for two days or all three. Members make their own travel and accommodation arrangements.

The three walks will all start at 10am from Melrose Market Square and will be led by Bill, Alison and Donald.

The event is already well subscribed, so, if you wish to go, please contact Bill if you have not already done so.

Tuesday 9 September

Lauder to Melrose, grade B, 10 miles, 280m ascent

Wednesday 10 September

Eildon Hills & River Tweed Grade B, 7.5 miles, ascent 400m

Thursday 11 September

Selkirk to Melrose, grade B, 12 miles, ascent 300m

Meeting space available free of charge

Members may be interested to know that the Tiso shop in Perth is offering a room, free of charge, to local groups and charities for meetings, presentations, etc. It is available while the shop is open, i.e. 9am – 6pm, Monday to Saturday, and 10am – 5pm on Sundays. The room, called The Hutchison Bothy, can accommodate up to 10 people for a meeting, or 16 people for a talk. Free WiFi and projector are available.



For more information and booking see
- <https://www.tiso.com/hutchison-bothy>

Markinch Church Building (St Drostan's)

The Sawyers have kindly forwarded some information that was sent to the U3A's Swallows group

Andy Anderson volunteers with the Markinch Fife Pilgrim Way project as a historical guide who is interested in the St Drostan's Church building, the people who have been associated with it over many centuries and also the importance of Markinch as the once ancient centre of Fife.

Every year from around Easter to October, the church building, tower and grounds are open from 10.30am to 4.30pm. There are volunteer guides on hand during these hours to advise, assist and help visitors.

A prospective walk leader might like to consider adding a visit (which includes use of toilet facilities) at the start or end of a club walk.

The church at Markinch would once have been a popular resting point for medieval pilgrims on their way to St Andrews. They may have lodged in the grounds of the Prior's House and visited the ancient Stob Cross and St Drostan's Church nearby. The tower is original and was built 900 years ago. It is currently subject to ongoing archaeological investigation.

A group visit can be arranged by emailing Andy: blueandya@gmail.com

Letters of appreciation from charities the FWC supports through donations

Knowing how badly all charities need funds, Clare wasted no time in transferring the club's agreed charity donations. All four recipients acknowledged our donations very quickly. Here are some of their comments:

PROUDLY SUPPORTING



Thank you to everyone at Fife Walking Club for your generous donation of £200.00 to Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance.

. With your support, our air ambulance crew can reach more people across Scotland when they need help. People like Riley, who swallowed a £2 coin. "I knew things were very serious and Riley was in real danger of suffocating if the coin moved again. Throughout the entire emergency, the paramedics were focussed on Riley – they weren't going to let anything happen to him," said Nicolle.

Without your support, we couldn't have turned the hour-long drive to hospital into a ten-minute flight, making sure that Riley's mum and dad tucked up three children in bed that night rather than two. With your help we can make sure that urgent medical help gets to the patient when it is needed; no one in Scotland should die because help can't get there in time. Thank you again from all of us here at SCAA for your generous fundraising.

Many thanks once again for your generous support and interest in our service, from the Paramedics, Pilots and all of us in the Charity Team here at SCAA."



Bob Brown, the Footpaths Paths Manager of the NTS wrote to express his deep gratitude for the FWC donation.

"Your donation serves as a testament to the tangible difference we can make in looking after 275 miles of upland footpaths across Scotland. In 2024 we continued to repair and enhance the paths at Grey Mare's Tail as well as at other sites across the country including Ben Lawers, Ben Lomond and Kintail.

Amidst the challenges posed by climate change and both natural and human erosion, we work through hail, snow and rain (and ever-present midges) preserving the habitats under our care.

Your contribution plays a vital role in enabling us to fulfil our mission,"



"On behalf our 25 member teams and their 850 volunteers, and everyone who enjoys spending time in the Scottish Mountains a big thank you for supporting us with your donation of £300 from the Fife Walking Club. We are so grateful that your club has chosen to support the work of our volunteers yet again this year – please pass on our sincere thanks to all of your members."

Two mountain runners who were rescued by SMR described their experience thus:

"for those of us who love the outdoors, we never want to be caught in an emergency obviously, but it's incredible to know that volunteers will go out looking for you. We are forever indebted to those who successfully rescued us from the hill and got us safely back to our families and friends."

"The member teams of Scottish Mountain Rescue are made up of highly trained volunteers who give their time, effort and skill free of charge to respond to emergencies. They are there whenever anyone gets into difficulty in the mountains and wild places of Scotland. We're a vital free service for anyone who uses the outdoors in Scotland, but we rely on donations like yours to fund three out of every five rescues. Your support will help us to give our Mountain Rescue volunteers everything they need as they endeavour to save lives".

"Thank you once again for your generous donation, and I hope all of your members continue to get out and enjoy wonderful adventures in the hills this year."



The Communications Officer of the FCCT wrote:

'Thank you very much for Fife Walking Club's kind donation of £150. The funds will help us to care for and maintain Fife's outdoors.

Our mission at FCCT is to 'Connect Environment and People' so it's wonderful to know that we are achieving that with your club and that your members enjoy the trails, coast and nature reserves we manage.

I'm guessing you enjoy the Fife Coastal Path, and I hope you have discovered the Pilgrim Way too!'

<https://fifecoastandcountrysidetrust.co.uk/>

When you are next on the Coastal path, you might want to look out for eider ducks, wigeon, and redshanks



Coming to Kirkcaldy in June



Kirkcaldy's Lang Toun Fest is a celebration and promotion of all that Kirkcaldy offers. During the month of June, there is a full calendar of events involving arts, history, music, outdoor activities, etc.

Alex Donald, an active FWC member, is planning to submit and lead five walks, one on each Sunday in June. He has a 16.5 mile route, circumnavigating the town of Kirkcaldy. He has split the route into 5 walks. Check out the festival link closer to the time for details.

<https://www.loveoorlangtoun.com/>.

Sarah Nelson OBE



We were saddened to learn of the death last month of Sarah Nelson, aged 75 of pancreatic cancer. Sarah had been unable to join club walks for well over a year as she awaited a hip replacement. However, despite her cancer treatment, she joined us for our Christmas lunch, enjoying the company and a relaxed social occasion.

Sarah's obituary in The Times spoke of her professional achievements as a journalist and academic. Sarah was widely recognised as an expert on child sex abuse, a subject on which she advised the Scottish government. She was an Associate of the Centre for Research and Relationships at the University of Edinburgh. Sarah wrote extensively on incest and also on the lasting traumatic impacts of sexual coercion and exploitation on survivors of abuse.

Hill walking offered a restorative break from her draining research topics, and Sarah appreciated the chat on club walks. She was also an enthusiastic fiddle player as we witnessed at one of our Christmas lunches. Having grown up in Inverurie, she was a loyal supporter of Aberdeen Football Club

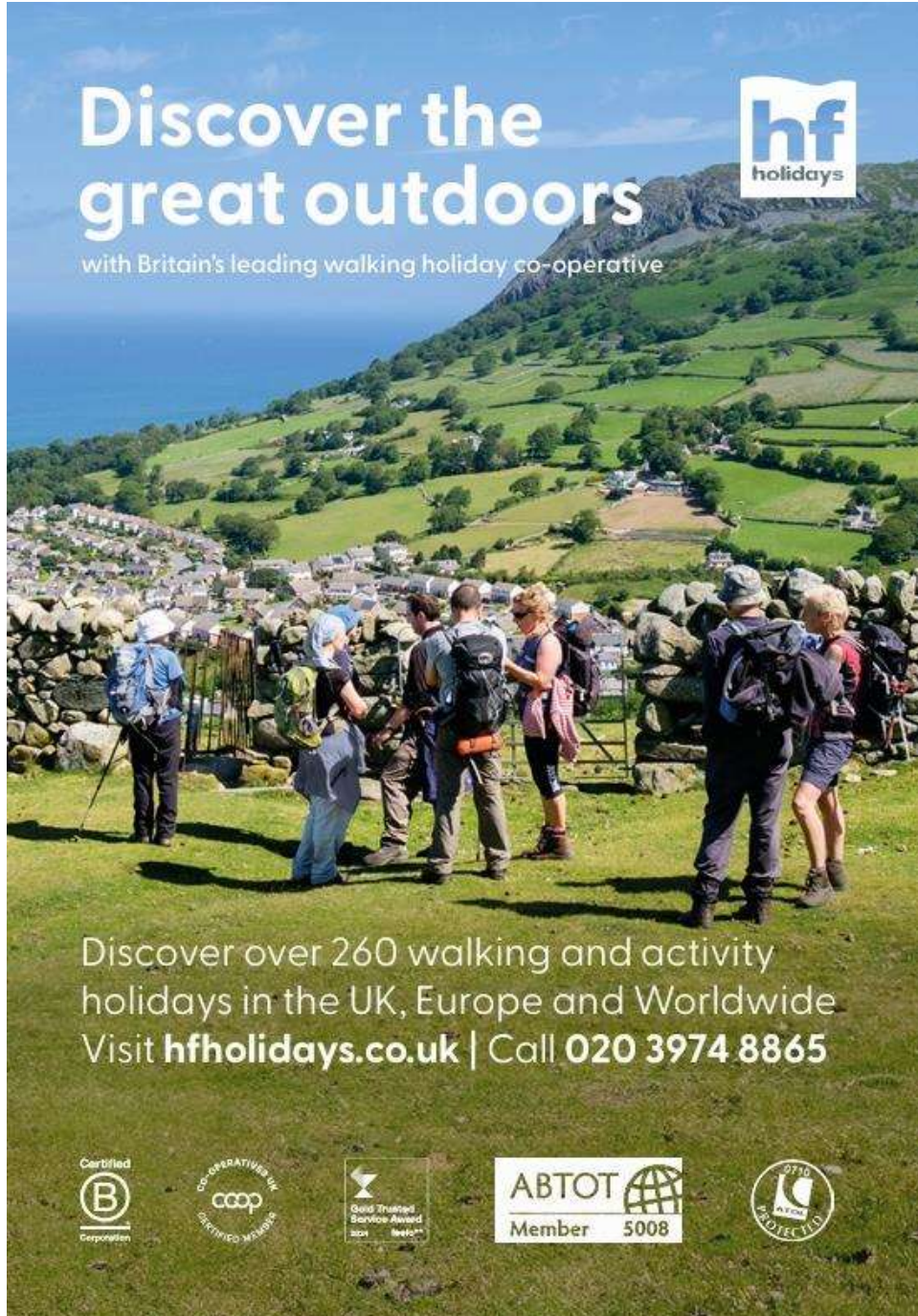
We extend our deepest sympathies to her family, friends and colleagues. Please contact Barbara for information about Sarah's funeral to be held in Inverurie on 28th April. If anyone wishes to make a donation, Sarah chose a Dundee-based survivors' charity that she did a lot of work with called Eighteen and Under <https://www.18u.org.uk/>

Fife Walking Club's Facebook page

In an effort to encourage new members to the club, Angela set up a FB page which is now monitored by Emma. Fourteen club members are now Friends, as are 45 non-members. Emma has checked their socials to ensure they seem to have a legitimate interest in walking. We encourage you to become a FB Friend of

the FWC and to let others know about the page. Emma posts the walks programme as well as photos taken on club walks. This page is now open to the public, so please send your group photos or scenery

shots to Emma. No closeups please for privacy reasons



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PROTECTED

A timely reminder: carry a tick remover and know how to use it properly! Angela managed to pick up a tick on Saturday's Hopetoun Monument walk and is checking regularly for signs of infection. It is good practice to check after every walk or picnic, especially if you have been sitting on long grass.

If you are planning a holiday, it is worth looking at HF Holidays (details in advert above) with which Fife Walking Club is affiliated.

If booking with Ramblers Worldwide Holidays, FWC can earn £10, £20 or £30 per person, depending on the holiday booked, all at no additional cost to you. Just mention that you are a member of Fife Walking Club

Contact barbara_fotheringham@hotmail.com if you would like to write an article for the next newsletter.