

Greener Kemnay Annual Report

We have had a very active 2024/2025 across all areas of the organisation.

Greener Kemnay's purpose is the advancement of environmental protection and the provision of recreational facilities and activities in the Kemnay area. We are achieving this by means of the following activities:

1. Supporting local growing opportunities and promoting community composting schemes
2. Promoting sustainable energy and development
3. Supporting access to the local paths network

Included within all of these is the promotion of the green agenda.

Community Garden

The Community Garden at Birley Bush is our main way of promoting the first of our activities.

In May 2025 we held a very successful Open Event at the Garden, where we were delighted to show and discuss possibilities, and to thank the other regular contributors. However, even with the good weather numbers attending were down on the previous year. We will be reviewing how to attract more people to attend the next one in May 2026.

In the summer of 2025, the garden was very colourful early on, and despite a very dry season, all our fruit trees and bushes produced good crops.

We have started creating a new woodland path around the wooded area to the south of the garden, running from behind the large oak tree to the red container, taking walkers through the old tree nursery. Please enjoy it but please be mindful that it is a natural woodland path.

A major project in 2025 was renewing our water supply system. The old pallets beneath our IBC tanks had rotted, and the tanks were sinking under the weight of water. With funding from Kemnay Bargain Box for sand and cement, and thanks to Mark (and his employer) for providing a cement mixer and industrial platform, we have now installed the tanks on a firm new base between the containers and the shed. All we need now is rain to fill them!

Looking ahead, we are planning to install a new fence next year. Sue has submitted a bid to the *Just Transition Participatory Budgeting Fund* (JTPBF) for a grant to fund this. Participatory Budgeting is a process whereby residents in Aberdeenshire are asked to vote for projects that they would like to see funded and so we will be looking for your vote — and that of anyone you know in Aberdeenshire!

Energy Group

The establishment of an Energy Group is our main way of promoting the second of our activities.

Our application to the SSER fund for funds to undertake 15 retrofit surveys of volunteer homes in Kemnay was unfortunately rejected. However, subject to some final validation checks, we have successfully secured funding to have 15 homes professionally surveyed over the coming winter. The results will be presented to a community meeting in February 2026 and will demonstrate the value of identifying where energy is wasted thus encouraging residents to integrate better insulation, ventilation, and alternative heating sources into home maintenance and renovation. This project was assisted by the circulation of a booklet produced by Udney Climate Action entitled 'Fit is Retrofit' to all the homes in Kemnay. This was facilitated by the Kemnay Newsletter distributors, for which we are most grateful.

The Group has forged links with NESCAN, AVA, and the Udney Climate Action Group which will prove invaluable in the future for informing and validating funding applications before submission.

As part of funding applications, it has become apparent that a number of administrative policies are required. Thanks to Gabby, we now have a number of policies ready for funding applications — a big step forward that should help us secure more grants in future. There may be others that may still be needed however!

Group members have attended a number of online and in-person events to learn more about sustainable energy issues, to share concerns and to discover what is happening elsewhere.

Paths Group

The Paths Group is our main way of promoting the third of our activities.

At the start of the year, the Paths Group faced challenges when several key members retired, leaving it in danger of collapse. The group holds a contract with Aberdeenshire Council to maintain the Dalmadilly Path, agreed in partnership with Positive Steps. The path work had not been completed in 2024, but after a meeting in May, a successful work party managed to repair a large section, with a follow-up visit to finish the job. The group will continue to monitor its condition.

The Paths Group then turned its attention to the Place of Origin. These paths and Mavis's bench area had not been maintained for many years and were in need of attention. A large group of villagers volunteered to help cut back encroaching trees, widen paths, clear broom, and generally improve access. A follow-up work party has since taken place, and plans are now in place to add new signage, plant bulbs, name the paths, and organise children's activities and guided walks.

The Group consists of members of both Greener Kemnay and Positive Steps.

Steens

Some years ago, seven Steens were carved by a local artist and placed at various places in and around Kemnay and Fetternear. Two new display boards have been installed at Fetternear Car Park and Bogbeth Park, created with the help of the artist and featuring a QR code linking to the Steens information booklet. The boards were installed by the Aberdeenshire Council Landscape Services team and funded through a Council grant, for which we are very grateful.

Finances

Our financial year runs from 1 October to 30 September. During the financial year 2024/25 we received a total of £1,314 and spent a total of £891, resulting in a surplus of income over expenditure of £423. Consequently, our bank balance increased from £8,149 to £8,572.

Income was made up of £1,064 received from donations, and £250 from Aberdeenshire Council towards our insurance costs.

The main items of expenditure were £330 for insurance and £345 for the printing of the 'Fit is Retrofit' booklet, the other items of expenditure were website costs, hire of the Village Hall for meetings and some minor items.

Full details can be found in the annual accounts statement which has been sent to members along with this report.

Conclusion

All in all, a very busy year, with successes including the paths work and the survey grant award. We would like to give a huge thank you to everyone who's contributed their time, skills, and enthusiasm during the year. Your efforts make Greener Kemnay what it is.

However, we continue to need more volunteers to support our three groups — *Community Garden, Energy and Paths*. We also need to strengthen our Trustee group. If you're interested in helping us achieve our green aims, please leave your details with us.

Here's to another successful and sustainable year ahead.

Signed

Richard Lamplugh

Chair Greener Kemnay 27 October 2025