



Award finalists 2020

Conservation Award sponsored by Anderson Strathern

Balmacara Estate, Kyle of Lochalsh, Ross-shire, Highland

Cared for by the National Trust for Scotland and just three miles from the Isle of Skye, the hidden gem of Balmacara Estate is an outstanding example of a Highland crofting estate. See the flower rich meadows of Duirinish and Kirkton, the enchanting oaks and birch woodlands of the Celtic rainforest at Coille Mhòr, the crannog on the dragonfly laden Loch Achaidh na h-Inich, Murchisons Monument and the planned village of Plockton, the past and present of crofting are all around. The landscape supports a rich and diverse range of habitats and species including large quantities of migrant birds, otters off the coastline, pine martens, red squirrels, 300 types of moth and 18 butterfly and colourful dragonflies! The Ranger service at the estate offers seasonal family activities that coincide with the school holidays and provide bespoke guided walks and activities throughout the year. To really make the most of the area, the estate also offers excellent holiday accommodation in some beautiful cottages by the shore of Loch Alsh. This in turn has boosted the local economy, opened up new job opportunities due to the attraction from tourists to stay on the beautiful estate.

The Borders Birdbox Project, Scottish Borders

The Borders Birdbox Project is a very simple concept; to supply each of the 60 primary schools across the Scottish Borders with 10 boxes and associated learning resources to monitor and enjoy. This simple concept should not belie the effectiveness of the boxes and (associated birds) as tools to engender a love, understanding and empathy for the natural environment in the young people charged with their care. With funding from the Nineveh Charitable Trust and the technical support of Tweed Forum, they hope to help change societal attitudes about and apathy toward the natural world around us all.

Into the Wilderness podcasts, Brechin, Angus

The Into the Wilderness Podcasts, fronted by Byron Pace, aim to bring impactful, entertaining and insightful conversations from a global array of guests. Some famous, some you won't have heard of. From famous explorers to renowned scientists and just good people, all have a story to tell which we can take something from. Topics are wide ranging with a backbone centred on conservation, including hunting, fishing, expeditions, environmental and wildlife management. Byron Pace is recognised worldwide for his work in conservation. Over the last five years, the Into the Wilderness podcasts have grown in subscribers and reputation. With around 15000 downloads a month and 6000 unique listeners, his growing global audience is a testament to his passion, professionalism and enthusiasm. Each unique episode is thoroughly researched and focuses on bringing the most up to date information on topical subjects in the world of conservation. Over the years the Into the Wilderness podcasts have included a broad range of guests, ranging from eminent personalities such as Sir David Attenborough and Levison Wood.

Enhancing Our Environment Award sponsored by NatureScot

Broadmeadows Farm, Yarrowford, Selkirk, Scottish Borders

Broadmeadows Farm has diversified from a 1400acre hill and upland sheep farm into one which rents out 200 acres of inbye grazing to two neighbouring young farmers, has 350 acres of maturing woodlands forming a landscape developed in the early 19th century and extensive riparian plantations. There are 200 acres of hill tops, with plans to create a "montane landscape", a new 650acre multi-purpose woodland, designed for the 21st century, combining commercial forestry, diverse conifers and native broadleaves. They also have three cottages on residential let and timber production. The enhancement of the environment is at the forefront of Broadmeadows activity.

East Lothian Countryside Volunteers (ELCV)

This is a Giant Hogweed landowner voluntary eradication programme on the East Lothian River Tyne and all its tributaries. It is a long-term project of eradication as there are many seeds in the soil seed bank which will germinate over the next 10 years. The objective is to ensure that no Giant Hogweed plants flower exist on the 48 miles of the river Tyne in East Lothian to reduce further seed being added to the soil. We are now at the end of Year 2 and we are about to declare the entire River Tyne free of Giant Hogweed plants for 2020. This project involves landowners who do the eradication and volunteers who survey the river and add all the plants using a GPS app on to an on-line map that the land owners can use to find the plants using google GPS technology on their smart phones. This is a truly unique project funded by the landowners and run by volunteers. We have been fortunate to have been donated some Roundup for treating the plants by Bayer UK. I am a volunteer Coordinator of this project having completed a similar project on the Biel and Whittingehame Water over the last 25 years which was 8 miles of river recovering it from a very wall to wall intensive infestation of Giant Hogweed to now nil.

Jim and Graeme Sinclair, Crookston Hill Farm, Galashiels, Scottish Borders

Jim Sinclair and son Graeme are tenants of Lord John Borthwick at Crookston hill farm, 15km north east of Galashiels. The business comprises 2,100 sheep and 100 suckler cows. With extreme weather events becoming more frequent, the farm tenants (with the landowner's support), were keen to help slow the flow of flood water to towns downstream. Tweed Forum facilitated the work, which includes: 55ha of new riparian woodland planting, the creation of six wildlife ponds, riverbank protection and shading of headwater streams for fish. Over the last five years, with the assistance of Tweed Forum, the Sinclair family have hosted many farm visits. They have held farm walks for local farmers, to help demonstrate that this kind of work can be a win-win situation for the business, for the community and for the environment. Awareness raising events have also been held for the local community.

Iver Salvesen Green Business Award

Forth Resource Management Ltd., North Berwick, East Lothian

Since 2002 Forth Resource Management has provided a sustainable recycling solution for the garden waste generated across South East Scotland and currently handles 70,000 tonnes per annum. The process produces high quality compost which is sold back under the Caledonian Horticulture banner to gardeners, landscapers and farmers. When local councils stopped garden waste collections during the pandemic lockdown FRM rose to the challenge and stepped in to provide a collection service themselves and promoted the use of the compost through a "Keep Scotland Growing Campaign" providing raised bed kits complete with compost and seed potatoes to households.

MiAlgae, Heriot-Watt University Research Park, Edinburgh

Mialgae is a biotech business that aims to revolutionise the animal and fish feed industries. Founded by Douglas Martin in 2016 while he was studying Biotechnology at the University of Edinburgh, the company uses co-products from the whisky distillation process to produce omega-3-rich microalgae. The algae can be processed and sold as a rich feed supplement to the aquaculture industry.

Rural Business Award sponsored by Velux

Borderlink Broadband Ltd, Duns, Scottish Borders

Borderlink Broadband are a wireless internet service provider. As well as their wireless internet solution, which boasts over 1000 customers today, they have recently launched a new Fibre to the Premise business, branded GoFibre. They are the first and only internet service provider for the region who can provide a hybrid approach to providing customers connectivity. Using a mixture of wireless (radio) services and Fibre to the Premise, they are able to connect people who are in the most remote locations with ultrafast broadband.

Craigies Farm, South Queensferry, Edinburgh

Located just outside of Edinburgh, Craigies Farm is the perfect day out for families. Founded in 1996 by husband and wife, John and Kirsteen Sinclair they have turned around a struggling beef and dairy farm into a thriving soft fruit and vegetable growing business plus farm village that now welcomes 260,000 visitors each year. Craigies Farm strives to offer “a complete modern farm experience to showcase the value of farming to our communities and allow them to be part of it.”

Fasque Forestry, Fettercairn Aberdeenshire

Fasque Forestry was established when old commercial woodlands on the estate were falling into disrepair and there was evidence of an emerging growth in the timber market. Fasque, instead of hiring contractors, decided to do the job of planning, harvesting and restocking all in-house and invested in state-of-the-art machinery to do so. Local businesses are invited to use all timber produced on and harvested from the estate in the sawmill. The establishment of Fasque Forestry last year has already provided jobs in all areas of the business. There have been twelve full-time positions created and twenty supply-chain contract positions not including planters and fencers as a result. There has also been a new apprenticeship position in the sawmill, developing talent in the trade. Fasque Forestry also invested £4 million in its equipment and uses only local services for its fleet vehicles, harvesters and forwarders.

Innovation in Farming Award sponsored by Douglas Home & Co

Peelham Farm, Foulden, Berwickshire, Scottish Borders

Multi-award winning Peelham is a family run organic farming and food production enterprise based on 670 acres at Peelham Farm in the Scottish Borders. In its organic on farm butchery, smoker and charecturie facility it produces grass-fed organic beef, grass-fed organic veal, grass-fed organic lamb, grass-fed organic mutton and free-range organic pork alongside salamis, sausages, burgers, bacon and hams which is supplied direct to the consumer. With a strong commitment to sustainable self-reliance, Peelham Farm’s livestock are grass-fed, free range and organic. Whilst no pesticides, herbicides or petro-chemical fertilisers are used and biodiversity on the farm is encouraged.

Seawater Solutions, South Ayrshire

Seawater Solutions is all about turning coastal farmland into wetland ecosystems. They have designed a way to create 'artificial' saltmarsh on degraded farmland, where you can grow food using seawater and store carbon, promote wildlife, and support regenerative agriculture. Seawater Solutions turns coastal farmland in Scotland into artificial saltmarsh ecosystems where we grow saline vegetables, such as Samphire, using seawater. Their sea-vegetables, grown in South Ayrshire, are the first of their kind, grown on redeveloped farmland that we have turned into artificial saltmarsh ecosystems to tackle climate change and the loss of biodiversity. These crops take in over 30 times more carbon than rainforest, strengthen soils, create habitats for wildlife, and protect us from rising sea-levels...Without a single drop of freshwater!

Education Award sponsored by Bell Ingram

Duffus Estate, Elgin, Moray

Duffus is a family run estate comprising four farms, a mix of residential and holiday lets, newly launched eco-cabin, redevelopment of the mansion house and policy woodland. The Estate is also the venue for Earthtime's Forest School Nursery which aims to have the children outside for at least 80% of the time but they do have a yurt in the grounds if the weather is particularly bad. The children grow an ever-increasing selection of vegetables which they then harvest and eat in their own meals at lunch time. This hands-on knowledge of food and where it comes from is invaluable for children as they grow up. We keep our own chickens, ducks and sheep in the walled garden and we know the children love coming to visit them and learn about them. Duffus provide office space for the social enterprise as well as the necessary grounds maintenance to ensure the safety of children and staff. Earthtime were chosen to be an educational hub during lockdown and provided 18 weeks of emergency childcare provision for 36 children of key workers or vulnerable families.

Riemore Trust, Dunkeld, Perth & Kinross

Riemore is an upland estate modernised and diversified to include sheep-farming, sporting, holiday lets, renewable energy (hydro), ecological interests (woodland & wetland management) and education. The latter is the most important social and community development on Riemore. In 2018, the New School, Butterstone, tragically closed its doors. Since then, Riemore has worked in partnership with Moore House Care & Education to re-establish a school for children with special needs. The Moore House Academy, Butterstone, was established in April 2019, taking back previous students and employing 45 full and part time staff. The academy has now successfully completed its first year with children coming to the academy from across Scotland.

St. Mary's School, Melrose, Scottish Borders

The school is an Independent school for children aged 2-13 years old at the heart of a vibrant rural community. They wish to engender a love, understanding and respect for their beautiful surroundings in the children at the school. In so doing, they aim to for the children to grow to become the future guardians of their natural environment. They have introduced a new subject; Environmental Studies. This is taught to the top two year groups (P7 - S2 equivalent). This subject is specifically designed to give the children an understanding of the issues facing the World as well as investigating their causes, effects and potential solutions. The children helped to execute a number of initiatives to help to mitigate these problems including planting trees, Plastic Free Melrose, Borders Birdbox Building Project, Great Borders River Clean alongside letter writing projects to MPs, MSPs and big businesses.

Community Champion of the Year – Central sponsored by GLM

Conner Pratt, Coaltown of Balgonie, Fife

Conner is 21 years old and from Coaltown of Balgonie, a village in Fife. During lockdown, wearing full Highland dress, Conner piped in his street every Thursday evening to support the NHS. He also played 150 plus performances at local care homes throughout Fife twice a week standing outside to maintain social distancing to entertain the residents. At his own cost, he also played for NHS staff's relatives outside their homes for 21st birthdays and anniversaries when someone contacted him to advise of a special occasion. He has now played at 100 birthdays and, sadly, many funerals.

Discover Scottish Gardens, nationwide

During a time of lockdown where gardens and businesses alike were forced to shut-up, Discover Scottish Gardens did not shut down. Instead the organisation offered its members across Scotland the chance to join the very first Scottish Summer Garden Festival - virtually.

This virtual festival promoted Scottish gardens during the height of the season to ensure visitors both locally and internationally could enjoy gardens, encouraging future visits. Over 50 events invited families and gardeners of all levels to virtual garden tours, tutorials and even a garden-inspired cocktail class. It was a successful and fulfilling experience for viewers and organisers.

FETCH.scot, Callander, Stirling

McLaren High School S4 pupil Alastair Cantlay came up with the idea for FETCH.scot which sees young volunteers delivering essential items to those who are isolating at home. The idea quickly grew to a group of 20 S4-S6 volunteers. The service was provided in conjunction with McLaren High School, Callander Community Council, Callander Development Trust, Callander Community Support and Callander Kirk.

Community Champion of the Year – Highland sponsored by GLM

Hello! Campaign 2020 - Highland Migrant and Refugee Advocacy (HiMRA), Inverness, Highland

HiMRA (Highland Migrant & Refugee Advocacy) aims to empower and bring together people who identify as migrants and refugees, to strengthen community integration and social inclusion in the Highlands of Scotland. The campaign aims to send a Highland 'Hello' to those in care homes, and those who can't get out. They ask people to post a video of themselves saying 'Hello' and tell folk something they have done, or are doing, during lockdown that makes them happy - then tag three friends and ask them to do the same. The Hello Campaign and Highland Senior Citizens Network then asks carers to show the films to people they are looking after, to bring the outside world to those stuck inside.

Margaret Payne, Ardvar, Assynt, West Sutherland, Highland

#margaretsmountainclimb During lockdown, 90 year old Margaret completed a "Suilven Challenge" which saw her climb the equivalent of Suilven on her stairs. She climbed 282 times over 73 days or 10 weeks. During that time Margaret raised £434,562 for NHS, NHS Highlands, Highland Hospice and RNLI, with more than half of this coming back into the Highlands. During the challenge the idea of creating a two bed facility in Lochinver, at the Assynt Medical Centre was born, currently nicknamed "the Ardvar Suite", that aspect of the fundraiser became more and more important. To that end a working committee has been formed to try and provide a much needed facility in the West of Sutherland so that not all patients have to travel to Raigmore for treatments, that could be dealt with in the West.

Tulloch Homes, Inverness, Highland

With 95 years' experience and 95% customer recommended feedback, Tulloch Homes is proud of its Highland heritage, delivering a great choice of high quality new homes in the best locations in Scotland, including Inverness, Conon Bridge, Muir of Ord, and Glenrothes. Throughout lockdown, they donated £1,000 a week to Inverness Food Bank and Marie Curie Care, among others.

Community Champion of the Year – North East sponsored by GLM

Dunecht Estates volunteers - Help for the Vulnerable Scheme, Dunecht, Aberdeenshire

The Scheme was set up at the start of lockdown to provide essential support to estate pensioners, tenants and those within the wider local community of Dunecht who were self-isolating or fell within the 'at risk' groups. Support included collecting and delivering shopping, picking up prescriptions and help with pets. Telephone support was also provided to individuals at risk of loneliness due to self-isolating or shielding. The team of 33 volunteers included estate staff, their families and five estate retirees. The scheme was a vital lifeline to many vulnerable individuals and strengthened community spirit at a very difficult time.

Finzean Estate Partnership, Banchory, Aberdeenshire

Run as a partnership by brothers Donald and Andrew Farquharson, the estate stretches across nearly 10,000 acres of farmland, hill, and woodland, and includes 40 properties and seven very long-term tenanted farms. At the time of the announced lockdown, the Estate decided that it would immediately change its Farm Shop business to food delivery, collection and restricted food shopping. Despite the logistical challenges, the business didn't close for one day, being able to provide valuable employment but also a much needed food delivery service (provided free of charge to the local community and nearby care homes) to anyone who needed but especially the elderly and other higher risk groups. It also gave an opportunity to support local suppliers and small producers, who had lost in particular their restaurant customer base. Elsewhere, tradespeople who were able to operate within government guidelines were given employment in a variety of areas such as property maintenance and upgrade. The Estate continued to support the local community bodies throughout with continuous engagement and occasional financial support.

North East Food Hub, Ellon, Aberdeenshire

Ellie Sinclair is owner of VegCo, based near Ellon, a renewable food-based business. Powering their indoor greenhouse through an anaerobic digester, they grow a range of veg and are a specialist in chillies. During the pandemic, with all restaurants / wholesale / distribution channels closing, they saw an opportunity to bring together over 30 of Aberdeen City & Shires local producers and create an online food market. The market ran weekly and VegCo ran every aspect, from the processing of every order, promotion, marketing to hand picking and packing over 140 - 180 customer orders a week - and, delivered them all directly too!

Community Champion of the Year – South East sponsored by GLM

Border Eggs and MacLean Eggs, Hutton, Scottish Borders

This family run farm is the home of both Border Eggs and MacLean Eggs. They produce and supply the finest quality Organic Free-Range eggs to major supermarkets, local businesses and direct to the public through "Frasers Farm Shop". During lockdown, to help the local community, "Frasers Farm Shop" was built over a weekend to allow individuals to come and buy their basic food shop at any time of the day or night to suit their needs direct from the farm road end. The use of three chilled and ambient vending machines allowed them to be open 24 hours a day and accessible to all. They were also able to employ a local resident on a full time basis to order supplies, top up the vending machines, ensure the shop is clean, presentable and kept covid compliant and to create and maintain an online presence through our websites and social media channels. They are working alongside other local farmers and food producers who suddenly lost their market place (restaurants, farmers markets, etc) overnight. In addition to their organic, free range eggs they sell beef, lamb, pork, milk, honey, jam, chutney, potatoes and tray bakes all produced within 10 miles of the farm.

Forth Resource Management Ltd., North Berwick, East Lothian

Forth Resource Management (FRM) recycles garden waste generated across SE Scotland handling 70,000 tonnes each year. The process produces high quality compost, sold under the Caledonian Horticulture banner to gardeners, landscapers and farmers. When local councils stopped garden waste collections during the pandemic lockdown FRM rose to the challenge and stepped in providing a collection service themselves and promoted the use of their compost through a "Keep Scotland Growing Campaign" providing raised bed kits complete with compost and free seed potatoes to households. FRM already had a significant charitable commitment to the community and increased this during lockdown.

Roxburghe Estates (in partnership with EDF), Kelso, Scottish Borders

Roxburghe Estates (together with EDF Renewables and Hermes) established the Fallago Environment Fund over 5 years ago. This distributes £200k per annum to local community projects that conserve and enhance the natural, built and cultural heritage of the entire Borders region. The Fund is unique at a national level in terms of breadth of scope and the size of eligible area. The fund is administered by Tweed Forum. As the Covid crisis kicked in, the Estate decided to curtail the usual application process and deploy the entire £100k of the March 2020 round to community support during the crisis.

Community Champion of the Year – South West sponsored by GLM

The Food Train, Dumfries & Galloway

Originating in Dumfries & Galloway and now covering a wider area, The Food Train's aim is to help elderly people who are unable to support themselves independently due to age, illness or disability. Over the past 25 years they have made over 445,000 deliveries of food to the elderly as well as helping out with household chores, providing library books and friendly conversations.

John Gold, The Scrib Tree, Douglas, South Lararkshire

The Scrib Tree is a joint venture between John Gold and Douglas & Angus Estates. The building sits at the heart of the village, providing delicious and locally sourced food, drinks and gifts to both locals and visitors. John has run The Scrib Tree since its creation and firmly embedded it in the local community. He has long been involved in the Community Council, the community centre, local church and Southern Uplands Partnership, among others. The COVID pandemic resulted in him increasing his efforts! John has managed to keep The Scrib Tree open throughout the pandemic and operating as a community grocer, supplying fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as meat and dairy produce. He felt strongly that this was the right thing to do for the business – maintaining relationships with his own local suppliers – as well as the village and surrounding area. The business model was changed to collection only with John then carrying out dedicated visits to the more remote rural customers. He worked with others in the community to create a wider delivery network for those customers who were vulnerable or shielding.

Ayrshire Food Hub, Darvel, Ayrshire

The food hub ceased group-health-educational activities upon lockdown and deployed staff and volunteers to produce soups and meals to support individuals and families facing greater disadvantage due to Covid. Upgrading their kitchen allowed them to cook and distribute more than 700 meals weekly. Meals are distributed by the food hub and 13 partners; all ideally placed to identify the most vulnerable within their locality. Recipients include people in shielding and isolation, those experiencing poverty, debt issues or physical or mental illness. To date 13,000 soups and meals have been delivered and serve as a nutritious stop gap whilst alleviating financial stress. Gardeners cultivated redundant sites yielding 114 kg of vegetables for community use. Eager to maintain some engagement and educational activities, they distributed seeds, plants and instructions to people across Ayrshire.