

# ACF's Funder Commitment on Climate Change

REPORTING ON OUR  
PROGRESS FOR 2023





**The Funder Commitment on Climate Change (FCCC) launched in November 2019 as a high level framework to support funders tackling the causes and impacts of climate change. Since then, over 100 UK charitable foundations of all sizes and working on a wide range of issues have made the commitment.**

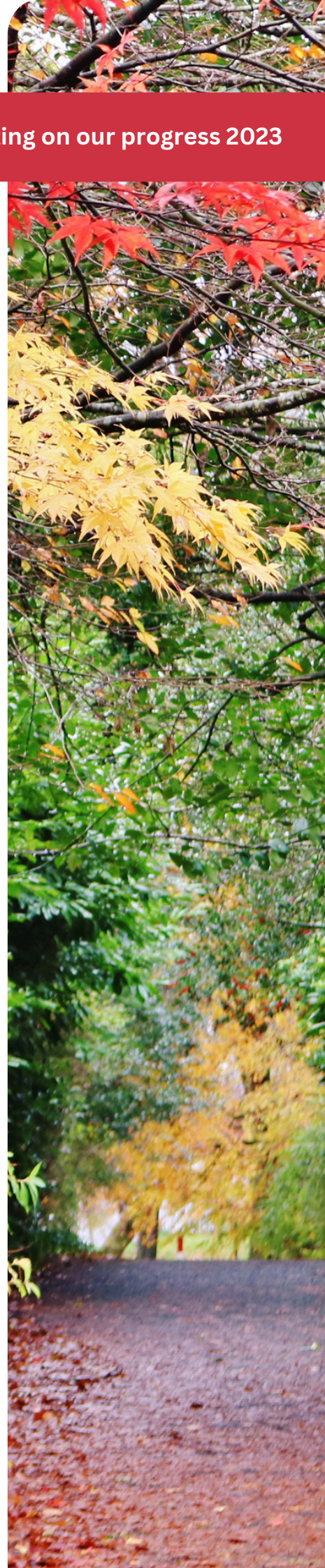
By signing on to the Funder Commitment on Climate Change, we have committed to six pillars, including need to report to ACF annually on our progress. For each of the pillars in our 2023 report, we were asked

- What (if any) actions have you taken in this area since signing the Funder Commitment on Climate Change, or since completing the progress report in 2023?
- How does your foundation plan to make progress in this area in the future?

Below is the response that we sent to ACF to report on our progress against the Commitment areas in 2023.

### Did you know....

Every year, ACF collates the responses from all of the individual signatories and produces an annual, collective progress report. You can see all of those [here](#).



*"We will make opportunities for our trustees, staff and stakeholders to learn more about the key causes and solutions of climate change."*

In 2023, we organised additional Carbon Literacy Awareness training sessions which lead to carbon literate accreditation for staff who were not able to attend courses in 2022. Most of our staff have now completed the training and many are implementing the individual and group activities they identified as part of the accreditation process. For example, we now have an internal second-hand library where staff are able to donate and borrow books; reducing the need to buy new items.

We have also provided a shorter version of the course to our trustees, including those who have recently joined the board.

Looking forwards, we will provide Carbon Literacy Awareness training for staff who did not complete the original training, as well as new members of staff. We are also exploring how we can incorporate a form of this training into the onboarding process for new staff and trustees joining The Robertson Trust in the future. In our recent grant holder survey, we asked grant holders what they are already doing in relation to climate change and what they would like support with. We are using these findings to inform what training and support we should include in our Funder Plus offer to grant holders.





***"We will commit resources to accelerate work that addresses the causes and impacts of climate change. (If our governing document or other factors make it difficult to directly fund such work, we will find other ways to contribute, or consider how such barriers might be overcome)."***

In Our Plan 2022-2025, we have committed to support work that aligns with our Climate Commitment and our strategic aims to reduce poverty and trauma in Scotland. Some of the awards we have made in 2023, include:

- £35,000 over six months to New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) to support the development stage of their Everyone's Environment Programme – People Living in Poverty strand.
- We have committed development support to the Edinburgh Regenerative Futures Fund. The ambition of the fund is to co-design a 10-year fund with community-based organisations to tackle and sustain change in Edinburgh across four key: poverty; racial inequality; the climate emergency; and closing the gap between ambition, policy and data.





## COMMIT RESOURCES

We have been embedding our Climate Commitment through our Open Call application process and ask all applicants to send us their climate policy which we consider as part of the assessment.

In November 2023, we joined the Environmental Funders Network.

Looking forwards, we will continue to identify opportunities to fund and support work that addresses the causes, impacts and potential solutions to climate change, and which is also aligned to our mission of reducing poverty and trauma in Scotland.

### For more information

Click on the logo below to find out more about the Environmental Funders Network



Environmental  
Funders Network

*"Within all our existing programmes, priorities and processes, we will seek opportunities to contribute to a fair and lasting transition to a post carbon society, and to support adaptation to climate change impacts."*

We have been reviewing our Community Vehicles Fund to ensure it reflects our climate commitment and promotes greener transport options amongst charities working to address poverty and/or trauma in Scotland. We anticipate that this will become a Community Transport Fund, offering larger awards, greater flexibility on revenue as well as capital funding, and contributions towards Electric Vehicle leasing.

Through Our Funds, we continue to support work which has secondary environmental benefits, such as services which distribute pre-loved clothing, furniture recycling projects, electric vehicles and community growing projects. Following a manual analysis of the awards made in the current financial year to date, we estimated that around 13% of the total number of awards came under this category. This is a slight increase on the previous financial year when we estimated that around 10% of the total number of awards through Our Funds had secondary environmental benefits.







In last year's return, we referenced an award we made in the summer 2022 to the Cottage Family Centre for the Big Hoose Project. This is a partnership between the Cottage Family Centre and Amazon UK. The project distributes surplus products from Amazon and around 30 other local and multinational businesses to children and families in Fife who need them. Whilst primarily an anti-poverty intervention, the Big Hoose project aims for impact around environmental sustainability which aligns with the Trust's climate ambitions. The project supports the redirection and repurposing of goods that would have otherwise been destined for disposal. We have committed continued funding to this project for the third year of this award inclusive of an evaluation.

Looking forwards, we plan to launch the refreshed Community Transport Fund in the new financial year.

We are also reviewing how we can record secondary environmental benefits of awards we make on our grants CRM system to make reporting simpler and more accurate.

## PILLAR 4

## STEWARD OUR INVESTMENTS FOR A POST-CARBON FUTURE

*"We will recognise climate change as a high-level risk to our investments, and therefore to our mission. We will proactively address the risks and opportunities of a transition to a post carbon economy in our investment strategy and its implementation, recognising that our decisions can contribute to this transition being achieved."*

We continue to track the climate profile of our pooled investments portfolio. While the Environment score within the ESG ratings used for our equity funds remained stable across the year, the carbon intensity fell from 71.4TCO<sub>2</sub>e/\$M (0.41 x the Composite equity benchmark) In December 2022 to 46.0TCO<sub>2</sub>e/\$M (0.35 of the benchmark) a year later. The carbon risk score fell from 5.4 (0.58 x the benchmark) to 4.5 (0.53 x the benchmark). Our Investment Committee agreed to a 5% switch from UK equities into three UK renewable energy infrastructure funds from March 2023. Going further than equities, our investment managers Stanhope calculated a carbon footprint for our entire portfolio in November 2023. They have confirmed that we have close to zero exposure to fossil fuel companies.





## STEWARD OUR INVESTMENTS FOR A POST-CARBON FUTURE

Looking forwards, we are seeking advice from our investment managers on ethical, sustainable funds aligned to our Investment Policy to help the Trust further reduce the carbon intensity and risk of our portfolio.

We are developing an active programme of engagement directly with fund managers to understand more about their stock selection and assessment criteria.

We will review the Cazenove/ACF report 'Climate Confident: Charity Investments and Net Zero' to determine applicability to our portfolio.

**For more information**

You can read the Cazenova/ACF report

**here**

***"We will take ambitious action to minimise the carbon footprint of our own operations."***

In August 2023, we introduced the Cycle to Work scheme for staff. This is a salary sacrifice scheme which offers staff savings of 23-39% on a new bike for work. As referenced above, we have also introduced an internal library where all books are donated by staff. This emerged as an action identified by colleagues through the Climate Literacy Awareness training.

Throughout 2023, we have been trialling meat-free catering at our internal staff meetings. We will weight up staff feedback before we decide whether we make this a permanent change.

The Barracks Conference Centre was recently renovated and already has a number of elements which align it to our Climate Commitment, e.g. the building's heat is primarily supplied by a nearby sewerage treatment plant (although for a period this year it needed a replacement part so that alternative gas sources had to be used).





## DECARBONISE OUR OPERATIONS



We know that we have more work to do to make more progress to decarbonise Robertson House – a category C listed building in the centre of Glasgow. We have been investigating different approaches, including energy efficient windows, but they were not cost effective. We are looking into the commissioning of an external consultant for a fixed time period over the next year to help us gauge the best options available to us.

Looking forwards, both of our sites (Robertson House and The Barracks) have a 10-year maintenance plan which we will revisit with an explicit climate lens.

We are also drafting updated travel guidance to help reduce our carbon footprint.

# OVERALL REFLECTIONS

## **Reflecting on your foundation's work to tackle the causes and impacts of climate change in the past year, what are you most pleased with and why?**

We are happy with the progress we've been making across all of the pillars but are most pleased with the work we've been doing around our investments. We believe that this is where we can have the most wide-reaching and sustainable change. It also highlights our promise to use all of our resources and assets to advance our Climate Commitment.

## **Reflecting on your foundation's climate work to tackle the causes and impacts of climate change in the past year, what have you found most challenging in making progress and why?**

Making inroads in decarbonising our operations at Robertson House has been most challenging because of its age and heritage status. This makes any modifications harder to achieve and more expensive. We have been hearing a similar message from our grant holders that the two most common challenges they face are knowledge (about what they can do) and the cost and other resources required to make necessary changes.

