Fife sports and leisure trust

Be active • feel great!

Performance Review

2022/2023

Contents

Active wellbeing: Emma Walker, Chief Executive Officer	1
What we do	2
Making a difference: Jeph Hamilton, Chairman	3
Supporting health and wellbeing	4
Building our services	12
Growing our people	21
Developing the business	26
Financial overview	31

Active wellbeing

Emma Walker, Chief Executive Officer, Fife Sports & Leisure Trust

Making a positive difference to our communities' health remains the overarching priority for the trust. We seek to be champions of health and wellbeing in its widest sense, supporting the residents of Fife to become and stay active and enjoy all the physical and mental health benefits that can bring.

We know that sport and physical activity plays a critical preventative role across a range of health conditions including diabetes, cancer and mental wellbeing, and importantly, in rehabilitation and recovery too. It can positively contribute to reducing health inequalities and maximise prevention. This is why we continue to develop our support for those living with a health condition and seek to encourage as many people as possible to take up the opportunity to improve their health through our tailored expert programmes.

Affordable opportunities that enable people to stay active can help to bring communities together, support families, dissipate loneliness and provide a positive experience for young people. It's vital that we embrace new ways of working to widen access to healthier lifestyles and work to develop programmes and services that support the wellbeing of all Fife's communities. Our Winter Wellness Cafes and free access initiatives are examples of how we broadened our offer this past year, with the help of additional funding from Fife Council.

Working together with Fife Council, and other partners, to deliver growth and innovation, is crucial if we are to transform Fife Sports & Leisure Trust (FSLT) to meet the challenges of the future. While the past year has seen a welcome return to near normal operating conditions, we still have much to do to ensure the long-term sustainability of the trust. The cost of living crisis has intensified the difficult decisions people are having to make regarding their expenditure, including leisure centre memberships, and coupled with rising energy costs and inflation, we face a tough operational landscape.

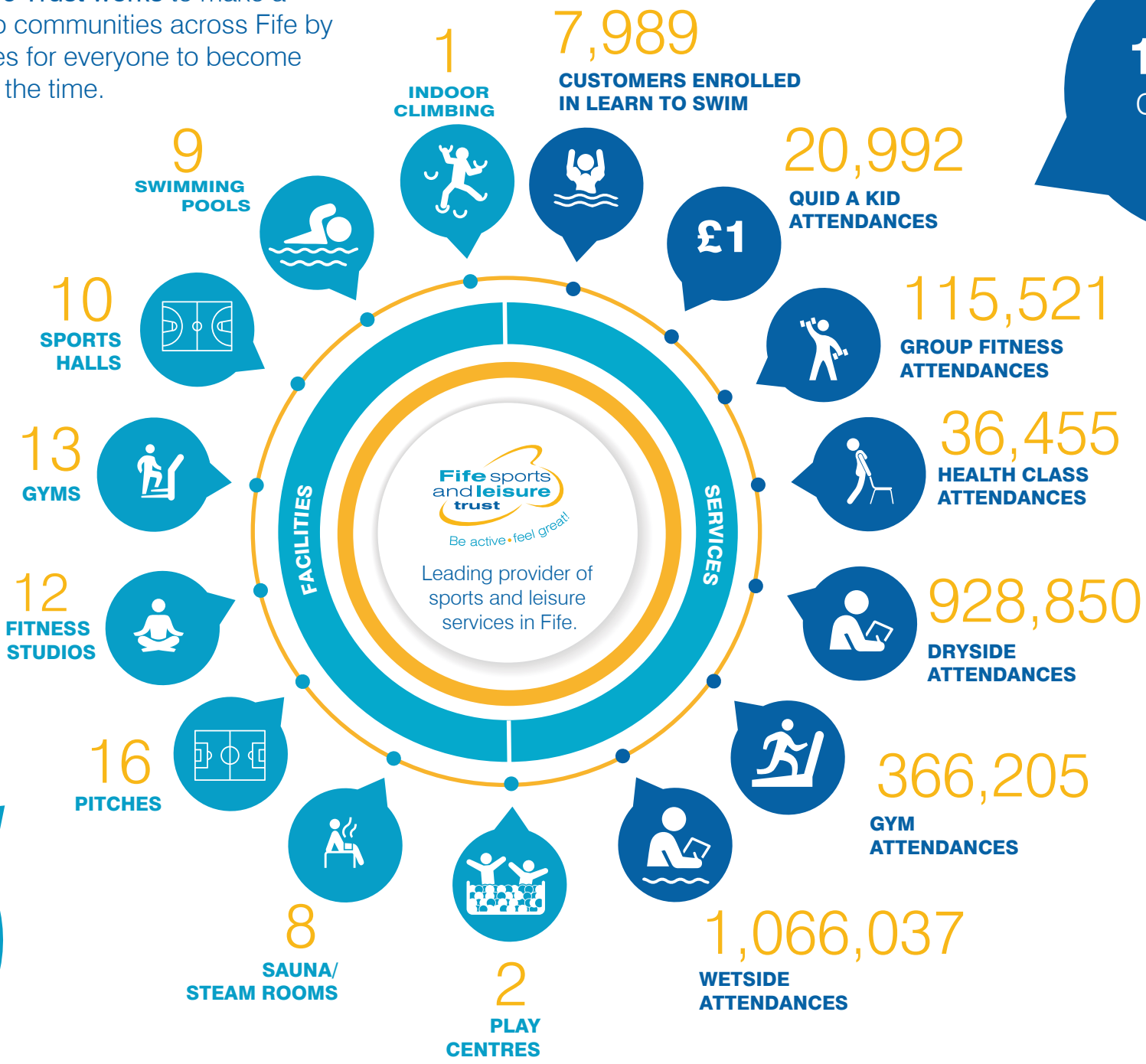
Moving forward, it is our people who will make the difference. They are at the heart of all we do. Their commitment and passion underpin our success and the quality of the services we provide. In return we want to be an employer of choice, supporting a diverse and dynamic workforce where everyone feels enabled to succeed. Prioritising staff wellbeing and development is a key part of this. We also want to attract and support new talent, in particular to address staff shortages. The past year saw us introduce forward-thinking recruitment initiatives, including access to free training to attain relevant qualifications for lifeguards and swim teachers, to help boost our workforce.

Together, we aim to make a real difference to people's lives and support the wellbeing of all.

Fife Sports & Leisure Trust works to make a positive difference to communities across Fife by creating opportunities for everyone to become more active more of the time.

491
Staff Members

13
Board Members



13,417
Concession Members

12,635
Leisure Active Members

Making a difference

Jeph Hamilton, Chair of Fife Sports & Leisure Trust

As a charitable trust, our focus must be on delivering access to opportunities that positively impact the health and wellbeing of the people of Fife. We must encourage and support as many Fife residents as possible to participate in physical activity and sport, including those living with long term health conditions. Continuing to provide affordable access to sport and leisure facilities is essential, as well as delivering a breadth of high-quality services that deliver what our customers need and want.

Physical activity has the potential to transform lives. We need to get more people in Fife active, and staying active, which requires us to develop and deliver the services that can engage everyone – young to old, elite athletes to those with a health condition.

This has been an exciting, busy and challenging year as we returned to near normal operating conditions. Build financial sustainability remains a key priority and going forward, we need to continue to work together with Fife Council to ensure we have a strong financial base.

Quality assurance is at our heart and forms the bedrock of building trust and delivering sustained outcomes for our customers. We must explore potential improvements, embrace innovation, develop our offer and focus investment, to ensure we are providing the highest quality services that we can. It's been very encouraging to see our membership numbers grow back to near pre-pandemic levels and to see increased gym use and fitness class attendances. Our income is predicated on attendance, so our focus has to be on building it through the right kind of service development.

The Board has welcomed a number of new members in the past 12-18 months. This has been truly invigorating. I feel strongly that the commitment and enthusiasm of the Directors to deliver change and develop the trust to be fit for future is crucial, and we are working hard to move from being focused on post-Covid recovery to strategic planning in support of a long-term sustainable business.

I'm passionate about the benefits physical activity can bring for everyone and the impact it can have on health and wellbeing. While our core commitment is to make a difference for the residents of Fife, we must also, as a key employer in the region, support the wellbeing of our staff. The Board welcomed the strategic pillar of 'Developing our People' that will focus activity on supporting the trust's workforce. I'm so proud of the hard work and enthusiasm of our talented staff – the wide range of skills and knowledge they bring to their roles are the engine of our success.

SUPPORTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING

SUPPORTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Developing our health and wellbeing programmes

Fiona Prendergast, Health & Wellbeing Manager:

Our health and wellbeing programmes have always been about supporting those with a health condition to safely engage in physical activity. The impact of the pandemic, and the adaptations we made to continue to support people during those challenging times, actually provided useful learning about how best to serve the residents of Fife. Now we're feeding our knowledge into the development of further condition-specific specialist programmes. Working in partnership with Fife Health and Social Care, we are taking a fresh look at our programmes and looking to increase our effectiveness by expanding the range of specialist classes we offer.

We know people with a health condition need extra support. Tailored physical activity delivered by expert instructors can deliver many benefits and really make a difference. Along with programmes for those with a cancer diagnosis, or living with heart disease, we are developing a new programme focused on falls prevention. Physical activity is so important: it has been shown to prevent disease, lower the risk of falls, improve mental health and wellbeing, and participants at our classes also benefit from the social side of joining together and sharing experiences. We want to develop what we do; trying different approaches and piloting new ideas, so we can reach and engage more people across Fife who would benefit from our programmes.

The Health and Wellbeing team here are a group of very committed, passionate individuals and I'm delighted that we've now been able to make our Co-ordinator and all our Advisor positions permanent roles. This really strengthens our capacity to deliver the expertise and range of classes Fife needs, allowing us to take on more referrals from health and social care professionals as well as from individuals self-referring to our programmes.

"This class is not just for keeping fit, it has a been a lifesaver for me. I had spent years attending physio depts regarding mobility and pain wellbeing, eventually, I was referred here and even after just a few weeks, I can feel the benefits both physically and mentally."

(Active for Health participant at Carnegie Leisure Centre)

"Since I am no longer able to play a round of golf, I rely on this health class to provide me with exercise and social communication with other people."

(Active Circuit participant at Michael Woods Sports and Leisure Centre)

Partner perspective:

Morag Watson, Lead Physiotherapist,
MSK Governance & Rehabilitation,
Fife Health & Social Care Partnership

Fife Health & Social Care Partnership
Supporting the people of Fife together

“I’m one of a group of Lead Physiotherapists serving Fife and we manage a team of 60+ staff who provide out-patient rehabilitation for musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions. These affect the joints, bones and muscles and can range from minor injuries to long-term disorders that commonly cause pain, discomfort and physical disability.

General strengthening and balance activities have great health benefits for those experiencing MSK conditions. This has led us to be one of the main referrers to the specialist exercise programmes FSLT offers and we’ve been working in partnership for many years. It’s much more than just a referral pathway for us; our close association sees us sharing knowledge and expertise, and working together to improve services. For example, we recently looked at new programmes we could jointly offer for the post-Covid world. A member of FSLT’s Health and Wellbeing team took up one of our funded places on the ‘Escape Pain’ course (delivered in partnership with Arthritis Care) to further strengthen our co-working in this area.

Without doubt, the work of the team at FSLT is enabling the end stage support of certain MSK conditions and preventing others becoming problematic. The quality of their physical activity programmes means they stand up well within the robust evaluation we require for delivery to our patients. And it’s our patients who provide the best feedback: they repeatedly tell us they feel welcomed, safe, supported and enthused to exercise by the FSLT instructors. The sense of belonging fostered by the Health and Wellbeing team at FSLT also makes a real difference; the social experience of being part of a programme proving beneficial to the health outcomes of our patients as well.

The established relationship we enjoy with FSLT makes it a collaborative partnership and we know we can rely on the team to provide a high level of care. Working together is a critical part of the integrated health and social care culture we strive to build for Fife.”

Active Move: supporting those with a cancer diagnosis

Jamie Mason, Health & Wellbeing Co-ordinator

We know there is a huge need for personalised, condition-specific support for those living with a cancer diagnosis. Active Move is our new programme that delivers tailored physical activity sessions designed specifically to address this need. Our expert instructors, Susan Wilson and Gavin Keith (both health and wellbeing advisors with FSLT's health team), have the CanRehab Specialist Instructor qualification, enabling them to design and adapt physical activity for each individual to ensure it is safe, comfortable and will aide their recovery.

"The introduction of Active Move further strengthens our collaborative relationships with Fife Health and Social Care Partnership and Maggie's Fife to support local people living with a cancer diagnosis to stay active. The new programme provides a clear pathway for these partners to signpost anyone looking to access physical activity opportunities to us, and we can provide the expert, tailored support that is needed.

"Our focus now is to build further awareness of Active Move, in order to help more people across Fife to benefit from this type of support. Engaging with cancer clinicians, specialist nurses, GPs and other health professionals, we want to become part of an early 'prescription' for support, helping those with a cancer diagnosis at the very being of their journey. We also want to raise awareness that anyone with a diagnosis can self-refer to Active Move.

"Active Move has helped with my mobility and movement. I've received great advice on the correct exercises for me to benefit from and I enjoy the friendly atmosphere of the classes."

Sandy Whitelaw (diagnosis - terminal Brain tumour)

"It's got me moving again after all of my treatments and given me hope that I can improve my fitness further. It's definitely made a huge difference to my mental and physical state."

Gail McAdam (diagnosis - aggressive Ovarian cancer)

"A dedicated class means you know you're going to be with others who share what you're going through. It's helped me come to terms with my diagnosis and definitely improved my physical fitness in preparation for my surgery, but has also really helped with my mental wellbeing. I can't tell you how much I appreciate the opportunity to take this class."

Peter Corbett (diagnosis - Prostate cancer)

Get Moving with Counterweight

Louise MacKay, Health & Wellbeing Co-ordinator

In partnership with NHS Fife, we deliver Get Moving with Counterweight, a free 12-month group programme which supports people to make small changes to their diet and lifestyle to help manage their weight and become more active.

Over the past year, we delivered 33 twelve-week blocks with just over 300 participants joining the programme. We keep class groups small, between 10 and 15 people, to help everyone feel comfortable, and each weekly session lasts 90 minutes, combining 45 minutes of dietary information and 45 minutes of physical activity. When participants have completed the initial 12-week programme they are invited back after 6, 9 and 12 months for follow-up sessions to continue the support of their weight loss journey.

"We now have a health and wellbeing advisor dedicated to this programme, which allows us to be more responsive to the referrals we are receiving from NHS Fife Adult Weight Management team and to deliver more classes in line with growing demand.

"The Counterweight programme has changed my life. My health and wellbeing have improved greatly. The staff are very knowledgeable, helpful and explained everything in an easy way to understand."

Margaret, who completed the programme at Michael Woods Sports and Leisure Centre, Glenrothes

"Counterweight refocused me on what I needed to change. My weight has gone down and my blood sugars have dramatically improved – I've moved from being in the 'confirmed diabetes' range into 'pre-diabetes'. If I can maintain this, my GP has advised I can start reducing the level of medication I'm on. The group has played a massive part in this. I would recommend it to anyone who needs an extra bit of motivation and focus."

Gavin, who completed the programme at Carnegie Leisure Centre, Dunfermline

Partner perspective:

Kerry Aitken,
Clinical Lead Dietitian for Adult Weight Management, NHS Fife

I've been a Dietitian with NHS Fife for over 20 years. I initially specialised in dietetics for acute surgery and critical care before moving into weight management. I'm passionate about supporting people to adopt healthy eating behaviours and increase their physical activity levels and really value the great partnership we have with FSLT.

"Working with FSLT on our weight management programmes, including 'Get Moving with Counterweight' and 'Let's Prevent Diabetes', has been a huge move forward for us to provide physical activity to the majority of our programmes. The physical activity aspect greatly increases the impact and effectiveness of these initiatives. The Health and Wellbeing team at FSLT are fantastic. Their enthusiasm and commitment is inspiring – I love the 'can do' attitude of all the team – and theprogrammes they deliver really make a difference to our patients, helping them to embrace the right kind of physical activity that can have a lasting and positive impact on health. We work really effectively together and I greatly value our partnership.

NHS Fife

Winter Wellness Cafes

Agnes Mehaffey, Health & Wellbeing Administrator:

In partnership with Fife Council, the Health and Wellbeing team delivered Winter Wellness Cafes – a new initiative offered across seven of our venues. As many people struggled with rising energy bills, these warm spaces offering a cup of tea and biscuits and some light physical activity, helped to keep people active and stay social during the colder months. The two-hour weekly cafes focused particularly on engaging people living in isolation and challenging circumstances, where the current cost of living crisis was bringing additional strain.

We had over 600 visits to the cafes, up to the end of March when the programme ended, and participants varied from the very young to those in their 90s. We know that having the opportunity to talk to others and getting active can have a big impact on health and wellbeing outcomes, so it was good to see communities of support form and uptake of the various activity options we offered. These included indoor curling, table tennis, badminton, football, gentle exercise sessions and board games. Some older visitors with limited mobility simply asked us to support them to up their step counts by walking around the sports halls, while others tried a new activity without the boundaries of a class environment.

Director comment: Jane McGirk

Jane McGirk is a media and communications professional with more than 30 years of experience. She has worked for major companies and the public sector in senior communications roles and is currently a freelance journalist with the BBC. A keen sportswoman, Jane is a committed runner, as well as a tennis and golf player. She is also a qualified fitness instructor.

“I have had a lifelong interest in health and fitness and its impact on wellbeing. Keeping well and engaging in physical activity, regardless of age, is something I am passionate about. So, I’m a real advocate for FSLT’s mission to support all Fife communities to become and stay active and want to do all I can to promote the many ways it is possible to engage with physical activity.

I’m very much enjoying being a Director on the Board, and while I’ve still a lot to learn, meeting people across FSLT has been so informative and really inspiring. When I attended the Wellbeing Roadshow in Glenrothes, what struck me was the commitment and passion of staff for what they are doing. Equally, it has been stimulating to work with the other Directors, and senior management, to consider both the challenges, and the opportunities for the business.

I’m also delighted to have played a role in supporting the launch of Pickleball at FSLT. This is such a fun sport, offering a great way to keep fit, and there’s an exceptionally committed and friendly bunch of people helping to roll it out across Fife.”

BUILDING OUR SERVICES

Increasing access to physical activity

Scott Urquhart, Head of Operations:

Encouraging children and young people to get active is a key priority for FSLT. Through positive experiences we aim to grow their confidence and ability, and to motivate them towards healthy life choices. At a time when household budgets are stretched through the cost-of-living crisis, increasing access to physical activity is hugely important if we are to serve the communities of Fife well.

Through the school holiday periods, initiatives that support increased access include our summer free swimming programme and our Quid-a-Kid promotion, which saw over 49,000 attendances and 5,000 attendances respectively. This is a 24.65% increase on the previous year, with attendances improving across seven of our nine venues. We repeated this provision for the October schools break and saw over 11,700 attendances for free swimming and nearly 2,000 attendances for Quid-a-Kid.

Fife Council provided us with Winter Concessionary funding to support families throughout Fife, many of whom faced tough decisions about their financial priorities. This support made it possible for children to engage in 'Splash out for Nowt', the initiative allowed juniors, aged 17 and under, to swim for free. In the first three months of 2023, we had over 42,000 visits for this initiative.

During the year we also launched a specially designed programme to support youngsters living in kinship, in recognition of the financial barriers they can face to accessing physical activity. The programme offered funded places to our multi-sports Active Kidz camps, as well as gym induction sessions and two months free membership to access our sport and leisure facilities. In addition, we offered free swimming lessons for a 12-month period. This targeted help was a valuable way to support children in kinship care to be active in a safe, fun and nurturing environment, and enjoy the social and health benefits that their peers experience more easily.
We hope it helps to foster a life-long interest in physical activity and sport.

BUILDING OUR SERVICES

Operational recovery and growth

Scott Urquhart, Head of Operations:

“To measure the recovery rate of each of our venues, and FSLT overall, we use figures from our last full year of business (2019/20) as a benchmark. Overall, for the full year of 2022/23, we had achieved a 90% recovery rate by the end of March. Our venues experienced 2,277,379 attendances, which although below our recovery target, was a significant improvement of over 570,000 visits in relation to 2021/22 figures.

Each year Fife Council ask us to report on wetside, dryside and outdoor attendance. Again, using our last full year of business (2019/20) as a benchmark, we experienced the following attendance recovery rates:

- Wetside – 96% recovery with attendances of 1,066,037
- Dryside – 82% recovery with attendances of 928,850
- Outdoors – 98% recovery with attendances of 282,492

These are encouraging figures. We will continue to focus on growing back our attendance to help improve the sustainability of the business.

Reviewing our operational model to increase our effectiveness is a process we undertake continually. To enable the business to be future fit, we must grow our dryside activities in line with customer expectations. Re-organising and developing our staff team into an ‘Activities Team’, focused on provision for the under 12s, including gymnastics, football, athletics and dance, as well as holiday provision and Birthday parties, is part of an approach to improve this area of operations.

Across the sector, leisure providers are facing difficulties recruiting qualified lifeguards. Our ‘Take the Opportunity’ initiative looked to address this issue, offering individuals a fully funded National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ) course to gain the necessary core skills with a lifeguard employment opportunity on completion. Open to anyone aged 16 years or over, we had 65 participants attend our open session, with 27 candidates then short-listed for a funded training place. To date, 14 candidates have completed the NPLQ training and ten of them are in the process of being recruited into contracted and casual lifeguard positions. A further nine candidates have begun the NPLQ course and will hopefully take up employment opportunities in the near future.”

Skills for swimming success: Learn to Swim

Lee Cunningham, Activities Manager

Fife Sports & Leisure Trust is a national leader in engaging more people to improve their aquatic skills. We now have over 8,000 learners in the Learn to Swim programme – either enrolled at one of our leisure centres or participating within Fife Council's community pools where we also deliver the programme. This level of attendance is a fantastic milestone and our highest Learn to Swim numbers to date.

In our first year of managing the Learn to Swim programme in all of Fife Council's community pools, we have continued to grow attendances in these venues. Strengthening relationships with our partners to build further engagement with the programme is an important focus, and our work with Active Schools has seen funded provision of spaces throughout our programme to young people who might not otherwise be able to participate in swimming lessons.

We were delighted to be selected as a finalist for 'Provider of the Year' at the national swimming governing body's Scottish Swimming Awards in recognition of our delivery of Learn to Swim. This recognition was a great boost to our aquatics team.

"My son, Cameron, has ASD and the instructor has made it easy for him to participate and progress; he has brought Cameron on in leaps and bounds!"

Parent of LTS participant at Beacon

"The instructor is so welcoming and alleviated all my fears."

LTS participant at Michael Woods

"The instructors taking the adult beginners on Wednesday nights are both fantastic."

LTS participant at Carnegie

"The instructor always goes out her way to help my son who has anxiety about new classes; she goes above and beyond to make sure everyone is involved."

Parent of LTS participant at Michael Woods

"The instructors are all amazing and brilliant with the kids."

Parent of LTS participant at Cowdenbeath

Supporting young people into swimming jobs

Lee Cunningham, Activities Manager

Our Swim to Success programme financially supports targeted young people to gain a swimming instructor qualification. Coupled with work experience and follow-on recruitment at one of our centres, this initiative helps to reduce barriers to gaining the qualification. It also boosts our pool of qualified instructors for a very popular activity, allowing us to further grow our swimming programmes.

We are also working in partnership with Bell Baxter High School and Madras College to give local school pupils the chance to gain pool lifeguard and swim teacher qualifications, funded by the Rural Fife Development Fund. The programme was delivered over the summer and four new members of staff were recruited through it – a fantastic outcome given the nation-wide shortage of qualified swim teachers and lifeguards.

I was delighted that we were able to recruit two new Aquatics managers this year who will focus on supporting the development of swimming across Fife.

Rachel Graham won our poster competition for National Water Safety Week. Young people across Fife were encouraged to design a poster to promote water safety with a top prize of free swimming lessons for the individual creating the winning design.

The introduction of Pickleball

Evelyn Crichton, Group Fitness Co-ordinator

Pickleball is a really exhilarating game for all ages and abilities. It's a mix of table tennis, short tennis and badminton, and one of its attractive qualities is that players can quickly become very competent and get the most out of the game. The reception we've had to Pickleball has been fantastic – from the introductory sessions at Waterstone Crook Leisure Centre, we've grown its availability to 16 sessions a week across eight of our centres.

In addition, we have recruited and trained 16 Pickleball Ambassadors. These volunteers act as champions for the game, encouraging newcomers to give it a go and providing support to those learning the game. The enthusiasm and commitment of our ambassadors has made a real impact – Pickleball has taken off across Fife, and many people are now engaging with this fun and accessible activity.

"Within 12 months I have progressed to playing in the leagues for Pickleball Scotland and am now a fully-fledged Pickleball Coach."

***Stuart Turnbull**, Pickleball Ambassador*

"I love being an ambassador. I support so many people from all walks of life and enjoy seeing new confidence in people who attend my sessions."

***Carol Jaap**, Pickleball Ambassador*

"The involvement and interaction with so many new Picklers who enjoy the sport just as much as I do is great. It's given me a new lease of life."

***Sandy Roxburgh,** Pickleball Ambassador*

Fife's elite ice hockey team, Fife Flyers, tried out Pickleball at Michael Woods Sports & Leisure Centre. Goalie, Shane Owen, commented: "Everybody was smiling and it was great for hand-eye coordination", while Forward, Janne Kivilahti, said: "You get a good work out and it's a lot of fun."

BUILDING OUR SERVICES

Developing group fitness

Evelyn Crichton, Group Fitness Co-ordinator

We want our customer experience to be fantastic, which means we continually review and develop our group fitness offer. During the past year we researched a wide variety of products and in December established a 'test studio' at Kirkcaldy Leisure Centre to build our understanding of what works for our customers and enable them to connect through fun, social and assisted ways to improve their wellbeing. We've not had a fitness space quite like this before, and with the addition of an exciting range of new equipment and brand-new MARS screens, it is allowing us to provide a greater breadth of opportunities. We're evolving new sessions such as yoga, boxing, kettlebells, bootcamps, chair pilates and functional workouts, while continuing our ever-popular sessions such as TRX, Group Cycle and BodyPUMP.

"The enhanced environment aims to encourage anyone to come and try an activity, and with the introduction of the MYZONE app – a real time, gamified and motivating fitness tracker that provides connectivity with others – the studio is really inspiring our customers.

Encouraging teenagers to get active

Our new programme for teenagers, Teen Rebel, was introduced during the year. It looks to support young people to try new activities and aims to boost their confidence, self-esteem, health and wellbeing. Packed with fun activities, it offers a range of options across our centres including Gym Rebel, Dance Rebel, Jump Rebel, Combat Rebel, Climb Rebel and Pickleball Rebel. We also introduced Junior Rebel for a younger age group and are developing a Beach Rebel option for the teen programme. The weekly 60-minute sessions offer teens a variety of ways to get active in a safe, non-competitive environment with a focus on fun and networking.

"I think Teen Rebel is really good. It has helped a lot with my anxiety especially for meeting new people and making new friends. The staff are really helpful, polite and funny."

Paige Philip, Jump Rebel participant at Michael Woods

Free fitness classes for job seekers

In partnership with Kingdom Works, the employability project supported by Kingdom Housing Association, we recently offered jobseekers over the age of 19 the opportunity to attend fitness classes at our Michael Woods Leisure Centre for free. Participants get a real boost from getting active and benefit from the social aspect too, as well as having access to staff from Kingdom Works who are on hand to provide advice and support.

Fitness outreach

While a great deal of the fitness team's work happens in our centres, we also take our expertise out to partners including Fife Council, Fife College and Active Schools. This type of engagement sees us maximising the potential of our instructors to make a difference across Fife; for example, through our wellbeing workshops, stress busting sessions for school pupils, and fitness sessions delivered in person and virtually to partners' staff to help them be more active more easily and support their physical and mental wellbeing.

BUILDING OUR SERVICES

Growing gym user numbers

Craig Watson, Gym Manager

This past year, many of our gyms have surpassed pre-Covid levels of use, and we are particularly pleased to see increased numbers of junior users. We welcome young people to our gyms from age 12, and the number of 14-16 year olds taking up our offer of discounted gym membership has risen significantly, with many of them taking advantage of the free swim that's built into our Silver membership product. It is really positive development to see more young people coming along to engage in physical activity after school; they are building a healthy habit, improving their fitness and enjoying opportunities to socialise in the safety of our centres.

"Access to a gym is really important for many people across Fife and I think that's coming through in our growing numbers. We aim to offer a welcoming, enjoyable, comfortable and safe experience for all of our users and our friendly instructors are keen to help anyone get started or keep going with their gym-related fitness goals. Building our capacity is important and during the year we were able to double the gym provision at our Cupar Leisure Centre through imaginative repurposing of an under-used squash court. We refurbished it into a permanent circuit gym that giving customers more variety and workout space and access to some new equipment.

Callum Foster, Gym Manager

At Cupar Leisure Centre we've expanded and refurbished the gym in line with customer feedback and our own customer survey. This has doubled Cupar's gym space and facilitated the option of free body and light free weight activity, as well as the introduction of some new equipment. It's great to be giving customers more variety and workout space.

Director comment: Julie MacDougall

Julie MacDougall is a local Councillor for Burntisland, Kinghorn and Western Kirkcaldy. She has worked in the UK and overseas in both the private and public sectors in hospitality, travel and tourism, property management and was office manager for a former Fife MP. She joined the Board of Directors of FSLT in August 2022.

“I am delighted to have become a member of the Board for Fife Sports & Leisure Trust. Sometime back, I established a local charity for which I continue to be a trustee and I also serve as a trustee on another local Board. As a strong communicator and definite people person, I have the right skills and experience to help make a difference.

When I was elected as a local Councillor I was particularly concerned about the future of The Beacon. My late father, John MacDougall, who was a Local Councillor in the 80s and 90s, fought tooth and nail to have the Beacon Leisure Centre built in Burntisland. I was very keen to work with Fife Council and FSLT to make sure this great facility was retained, as it’s so important to people of all ages across the local community. In one of my first meetings after being elected I met Emma Walker, recently appointed CEO of FSLT at the time, and together we toured The Beacon and discussed its future. I could see Emma had the same passion as myself for supporting our communities to have access to facilities like this.

As part of the Board, I’m committed to seeing all our centres in Fife reach their maximum potential. There is a great team of dedicated, professional and enthusiastic staff, and working with them to deliver the best facilities and experiences for all residents of Fife is a really rewarding and stimulating role.”

GROWING OUR PEOPLE

People are at the heart of all we do

Lana Turnbull, Head of People

We want to offer a positive work environment that enables everyone to succeed. Our recent Human Capital project, implemented in partnership with leading consultancy Turning Point HR Solutions, looked at our staff structure and key service delivery roles with multiple post holders. It also gathered staff views on what's working well and what isn't, and recommendations for improvements. The project is allowing us to better align our people and roles to support FSLT's strategic priorities, and to modernise job descriptions, career pathways and how we develop our talent.

As part of this, we are looking at the barriers that can prevent staff from moving into people management roles, considering how best to support them to gain the skills and necessary qualifications, including by vocational approaches. Through our new Management Training Academy, created in partnership with Carnegie Business School, we are developing training programmes tailored to our culture and specific needs. The Academy will drive performance management skills, as well as improve our learning culture more generally. The majority of our managers have already attended sessions, developing their skills which will make a difference across all areas of our operations.

Many of our staff are hugely passionate about their roles and being part of FSLT. Promoting our employer value proposition, and developing it, is important to retain and attract people committed to our values and ethos. During the year we further developed our engagement with schools to raise awareness of career options in the sport and leisure sector and to provide meaningful opportunities for school pupils to experience what working with us could involve. However, it is not just the younger generation we seek to attract; we are also working to engage the 'Restless' generation and with others whose skills and experience could align with roles in sport and leisure, such as ex-Armed Forces personnel. We applied for a bronze Defence Employer Recognition scheme and are committed to working towards the gold award. This approach is all about developing a dynamic and diverse workforce which will underpin our success going forward.

Partner perspective:

Lee Hepburn,
Principal Teacher: Career Pathways (Business Education)
at Lochgelly High School

Fife Sports & Leisure Trust provided us with a fantastic range of support from work placements to attending our Career Fair. When I first approached Lana and her team about Lochgelly High School's work experience programme I was hoping that FSLT might take on one pupil. Instead, fifteen opportunities were offered – from leisure attendant and gym instructor to administration and finance – which was just terrific!

Getting the chance to interact directly with an employer and learn more around the expectations of the world of work, is so important for helping our pupils develop the ambition for achieving future positive destinations. The FSLT placements provided our pupils with knowledge about careers in sport and leisure and the possible progression within various roles which is so helpful for pupils to understand.

The responsiveness of FSLT was brilliant and we are looking forward to building on our partnership to further ignite aspiration and build pupils' confidence to go after jobs that inspire them.

"My experience made me want to pursue a career in the sport management industry. The leisure centre gave me lots of opportunities to develop my understanding of potential careers."

M Inness, *Lochgelly High School pupil*

"The Fife Leisure stall made me realise how many different roles there are in sport centres and has encouraged me to try hard to get the qualifications needed."

L Quigg, *Lochgelly High School pupil*

"My work placement in the Head Office gave me the confidence and ambition to continue my studies in Accounting and Administration & IT. I am now looking for apprenticeships in this field."

T Kelly, *Lochgelly High School pupil*

Developing the wellbeing of our staff

Karen Marsh, Human Resources Manager

“We are proud to be promoting menopause awareness and are committed to supporting all colleagues who may be affected, directly or indirectly, by the impact of menopause symptoms. Building on the model we established last year for Mental Health First Aiders, we introduced a Menopause Policy and created 21 Menopause Champions across the organisation. In action, these voluntary champions offer a ‘listening ear’ and are trained to enable appropriate conversations with signposting to further support. They are helping to build communities of support across FSLT. I was delighted to be asked to deliver a presentation to colleagues at Fife Council and NHS Fife on our Menopause Policy and share our knowledge on building a model that supports staff wellbeing.

The September Wellbeing Roadshow project, in collaboration with Fife Council and FSLT’s Health and Wellbeing team, saw over 200 FSLT and Fife Council employees attend three live roadshows across Fife. Together, we also ran 28 webinars and over 300 members of FSLT and Fife Council staff attended online sessions.

Our latest initiative is supporting our employees Financial Wellbeing. This feels particularly timely in the light of the cost-of-living crisis and focuses on helping people to feel more in control over their financial situation, now and for the future. Retirement training, delivered by financial specialists, will help our staff explore choices, build their understanding of pensions and prepare for this transition. We’re also introducing financial guidance information sessions, which cover an array of topics from everyday money concerns to family care, savings and financial planning.

We have also been developing our Employee Benefits platform that aims to support financial wellbeing in little ways that can add up to quite a lot of savings. The platform provides access to useful discounts across things such as the weekly shop, petrol and entertainment. We’re working to promote the platform and encourage all staff to take advantage of it, as well as developing the benefits it offers, including introducing a Spree card.”

Director comment: Deirdre Joy

Deirdre Joy has significant human resources, organisational development and wellbeing expertise, gained at a senior level within the public and private sectors, and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (FCIPD). She joined the Board of Directors of FSLT in March 2022.

“I retired from my role as Head of HR & Wellbeing with the Scottish Ambulance Service in early 2022 and was looking at how I might contribute in other ways. I was used to working with Boards as an employee in the public sector, and thought it would be interesting to experience things from the other side and become a Director myself.

I’m passionate about health and wellbeing, so being part of FSLT appealed to me, and when I learnt the Board was looking for human resources expertise at Director level, it seemed like the perfect fit. I’m finding the role very rewarding. The Board is genuinely engaged – the quality of the conversations has really impressed me – and there is a real commitment to embracing fresh approaches to drive success.

Without doubt, human resources is crucial to success – without committed, engaged people businesses just don’t work. I am truly enjoying utilising my knowledge and experience to support the increased strategic focus on developing and supporting people across FSLT and delighted to witness some of the new initiatives that are coming through.”

DEVELOPING THE BUSINESS

Enhancing the customer experience

Fraser MacKenzie, Head of Sales & Commercial Development

Striving to achieve the highest standards of customer service has seen us continue to develop our quality assurance programme. We've introduced our new Customer Charter, which defines the purpose, scope and standards of our commitment to customer service and explains how we will meet the standards we have set. To complement and measure the delivery of the Charter, our new Customer Experience Evaluation Programme is currently under way. The programme involves 'Mystery Shopping' visit and covers 11 venues, each of which will receive three in-person visits every quarter. The visits will be spread across core product areas of fitness classes, gyms and swimming. Mystery visits involve individuals who are trained to evaluate customer service; they pose as 'real' customers and undertake a series of agreed tasks which monitor service delivery.

Our Customer Satisfaction Survey allows our customers to review key business areas including reception, changing and activities and to score us across various categories such as staffing, catering, quality and cleanliness. Since we introduced the survey, we've received a total of 7959 responses from customers. For 2022/23, from the 4431 responses received, 'Overall Satisfaction' stands at 86% and 'High Satisfaction' at 57%. The survey helps to highlight issues for service improvement – both at individual centres and at a strategic level – and to identify best practice, so that we can work to improve standards and our approach.

We've also launched our Talk To Us platform to capture comments and complaints. This new bespoke service is an online customer relationship management tool that allows all customer feedback and comments to be logged effectively and automatically sent to the most suitable manager to deal with. It is designed to provide FSLT with management information about complaint types and how they are handled at venue, functional and organisation levels, enabling us to better understand how we can serve our customers and respond to their needs.

Building back Leisure Active memberships

Alma McIntyre, Sales and Memberships Manager

This past year we have focused on building back our Leisure Active members to return to pre-pandemic levels. We've made good progress, achieving a 93.1% recovery rate, which is really encouraging, particularly as the cost of living crisis is impacting on people's discretionary spend and affecting leisure membership across the sector.

We ran five targeted campaigns to boost membership, with a winter campaign resulting in over 800 new members and our most recent campaign in March achieving 1,025 new members across all twelve of our centres. Some of our campaigns were tied to national events, for example special promotions linking to the Platinum Jubilee and Black Friday, and we hugely enjoyed returning to in-person events, inviting people into our venues or going out to meet them. The Sales and Membership team are passionate about Fife Sports & Leisure Trust, and there really is no substitute for talking directly with people about the benefits of physical activity for health and wellbeing and how our membership options can support them to participate in the way that best suits their needs.

Our membership currently stands at over 12,600 and we are just 7% away from achieving the goal of 13,560 – our pre-pandemic membership figure. We are always looking at ways to make our memberships more affordable to increase physical activity and have plans to enhance our offering to juniors and teens to better support families to be active together.

Partner perspective:

Paul Vaughan,
Head of Communities and Corporate Development, Fife Council:

“I think across the sector we are seeing an important shift in how public leisure services are perceived with regard to the vital role they play in the health and wellbeing of our communities. Strengthening that connection between physical activity and health and wellbeing is really important if we are to help people live longer, healthier and happier lives.

Fife Council and FSLT are well placed to achieve this with our strong working relationship, characterised by a high level of collaboration. Area teams, established through the 4DX project, are still in place and have broadened to include the NHS and Health and Social Care. Working together, we are jointly designing services to add value and support the delivery of key local priorities.

As an anchor organisation, FSLT offers a breadth of opportunities across Fife which have impact beyond improved levels of physical activity. Initiatives such as the Winter Wellness Cafes, free access for youngsters in the holidays, and specialist programmes for those with a health condition, support wellbeing in its widest sense across all ages in our communities.

Working together we must further reduce barriers to physical activity engagement, utilise local community resources better and develop the services people want and need. Innovation and thinking differently must underpin our collaborative journey, if we are to create a healthier future for everyone in Fife.”

Fife COUNCIL

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Financial review of the year 2022-23

Vicki Wyse, Head of Finance and Governance

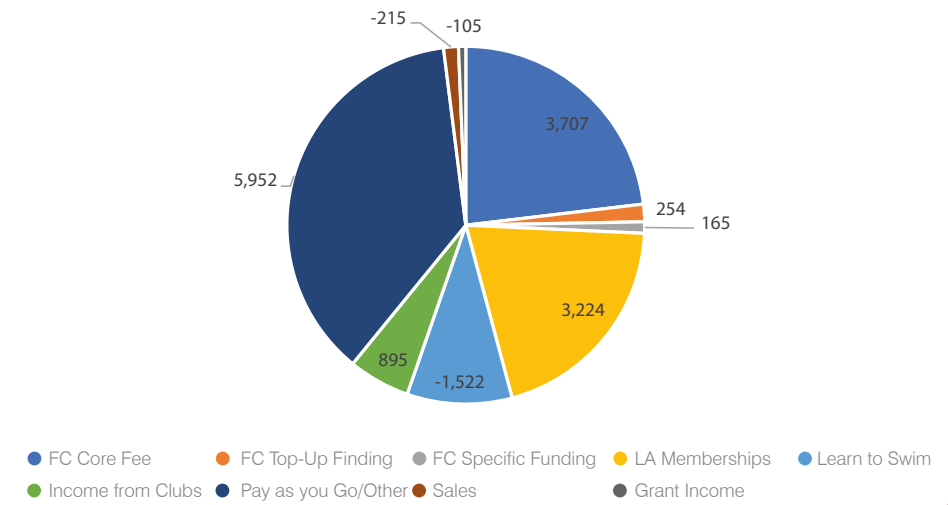
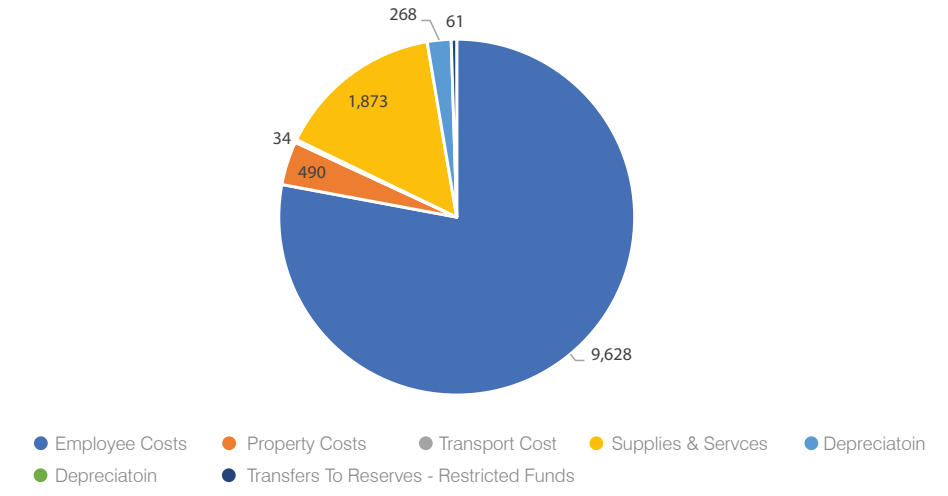
At the time the budget was placed before Directors in March 2022 there was a continuing challenge to assess how income would recover and at what rate, taking into account the economic conditions and the impact of inflationary pressures on our customers disposable income.

The budget produced indicated an increase in the fee from Fife Council to £5.3m would be required to support the Trust during 2022-23 to continue its journey to recover to pre-pandemic levels of income.

I am pleased to report that the levels of income generated for the year exceeded budget expectations by over £1million, generating £8.2million, a 22% increase over the previous year's results, and overall reduced the total level of support from Fife Council to £4.1million for the year.

Average Income per visit stayed broadly in line with last year at £3.69 (2021-22 £3.70), another fantastic achievement in the current financial climate, and demonstrating the continued commitment of our customers. The increased level of attendances achieved during 2022/23 reduced the Fife Council subsidy per head from £2.47 in 2021-22 to £1.85 for this year, a 25% reduction overall.

Where our funding came from £000



How we spend it £000