

This was a year of transformation when the changes decided on by the Directors and Members of Re-Union Canal Boats Ltd were carried out. This transformation of Re-Union was initiated to secure the long-term sustainability of the organisation and included transferring the operation at Falkirk into a new charity, realising the investment funds in Capercaillie Cruisers Ltd, and creating a new Community Development Trust at Fountainbridge by merging Re-Union with the Fountainbridge Canalside Initiative.

Fountainbridge Canalside Community Trust (FCCT) came into formal existence on 18 November 2021 when the change to the name and constitution of Re-Union Canal Boats Ltd were approved at our last AGM.

Staff, Board and Office

In September 2021, Pat Bowie, General Manager, retired from Re-Union after 13 years' service. Without her hard work, drive and determination, the organisation would not be in the fortunate position of still being afloat post-COVID. It would not also have been possible without Pat to secure the financial advantages of the shareholding in Capercaillie Cruisers Ltd. The transformation of Re-Union into FCCT, with its new scope and new opportunities, was also a result of her skill and expertise.

Rachel Sedman (Development Manager) continued her role and Rob Locke was appointed as Volunteer Development Officer in July 2021. Pdraig O'Neill joined the organisation in February 2022 through the No One Left Behind employment scheme. The team were supported by Sessional and Freelance Skippers and key volunteers.

During the year we initially worked from the office boat, Gosling in Lochrin Basin. This boat was sold in September 2021 and we moved in to share Scottish Canals' office at Edinburgh Quay.

FCCT are taking a more active role in management at the quayside, such as assisting boaters with facilities (particularly holiday boaters) and raising and lowering the Leamington Liftbridge.

Our Board went through some big changes as we welcomed 7 new Board Members at our AGM in Nov 2021. Heartfelt thanks to our outgoing Board Members: Christine Wilson, Gordon Hodgson and Colin Butterwick.

Project Activities

Due to the continued impacts of the COVID pandemic, the majority of the organisation's activities during the year were focussed on this transformation project, re-starting volunteering and reviewing business systems.

Private Hires, Community Hires and Gin Cruises started tentatively with very limited numbers from May 2021 and slowly increased during the summer and autumn. Later in 2021/22 due to the re-introduction of COVID restrictions, trips were cancelled and operations curtailed, particularly in December 2021 and January 2022.

Sessions on the Lochrin Belle
Apr '21 to Mar '22



Falkirk - Go Forth and Clyde

The Deed of Asset Transfer to transfer assets, cash and staff to Go Forth and Clyde Ltd was signed by both parties on 31st March 2021, with an implementation date of 1st April 2021. The physical assets transferred included the canal boat Jaggy Thistle, as well as office containers and equipment used at the Falkirk base.

Re-Union's Development Manager continued to support the new charity for a further 3 months, including raising funds for a Manager of their own at Falkirk, and Re-Union's General Manager supported the Board for a further 6 months. Go Forth and Clyde remain a working partner of FCCT, particularly in relation to training (First Aid and RYA Helmsman).

Project Activities Continued ...

In Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022, we were able to offer 2 x 12 week programmes on the Lochrin Belle in partnership with the Royal Edinburgh Hospital Psychiatric Unit (In-patients and Community patients) to help support recovery and improve mental health. We also received funding to run boat trips for various youth groups and organisations from across Edinburgh, again to support positive mental health.

Upon appointing the Volunteer Development Officer in July 2021, we restarted regular volunteer training and supported volunteers in re-joining our crew, post-Covid. Work has also been done on updating volunteer documents, improving volunteer monitoring and support, as well as attracting new volunteers. We continued to run the Postcode Lottery funded Boatmaster's training programme on a limited basis for several candidates.

During the year, the Lochrin Belle hosted 137 events and carried 1,763 passengers. Volunteers gave 1,475 hours to deliver the activities on the boat, which included 544 hours of training. If this was calculated at real Living Wage value this would equate to £14,597.55.

The sale of Re-Union Canal Boat's shares in Capercaillie Cruisers Ltd reached a suitable share buyback agreement. The first tranche of cash for the majority of Re-Union's shares was received by FCCT in November 2021 with the second and third transactions expected in July and October 2022. Re-Union had legal support through Social Investment Scotland for this process.

April 2022 and beyond

- 2022/2023 will be a year to consolidate and stabilise the transformation of the organisation and build back boat bookings and sales income (to support our organisational costs).
- Having re-started the Edinburgh Canal Festival (in June 2022) in a developed format, we hope to initiate other activities, events and partnerships which provide community benefit in the Fountainbridge area.
- At the end of March 2021 FCCT had over 100 Members signed up. We aim to grow this considerably in the next year as we start more activities and projects.
- Following the sale of the investment shares in Capercaillie Cruisers Ltd we are investigating investing in a day boat for use in Edinburgh.

We wish to thank our funders, volunteers, members, customers and partners for their continued support. We look forward to moving forward together as the Fountainbridge Canalside Community Trust and for the opportunities that this will bring.