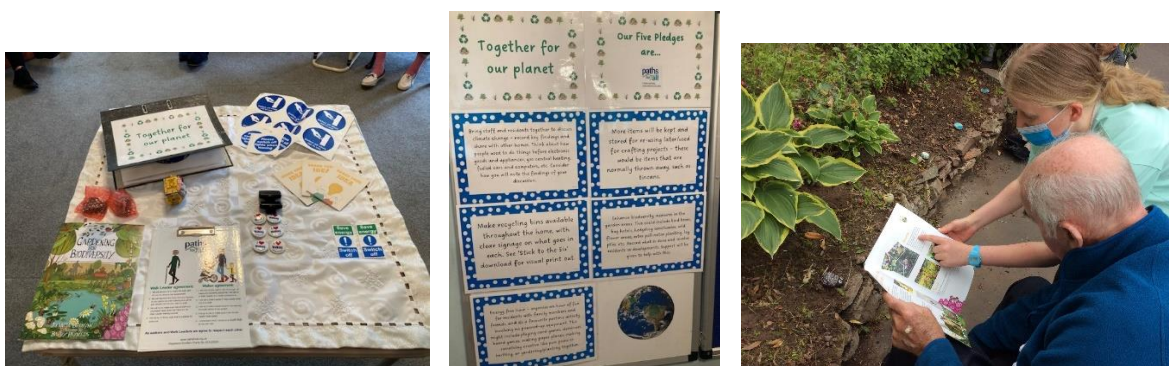


Together for Our Planet – Summary Report 2022/23

Paths for All's, Dementia Friendly team have delivered a 12-month programme of activity that aimed to bring care homes together from across Perth and Kinross, to discuss climate change, identify key areas for action, and facilitate positive change. Taking an informative and action-based approach, seven care homes committed to involving staff and residents to raise awareness and evidence improvements. Care homes taking part included:

- Richmond House, Crieff
- Muirton House, Blairgowrie
- Northlands Care Home, Blairgowrie
- Dalginross, Crieff
- Dalweem Care Home, Aberfeldy
- Kincarrathie House, Perth
- Ruthven Towers, Auchterarder

Working in partnership with P&K Climate Action team, support was given to develop an assessment tool to support care homes to work through 6 identified areas for action, which stemmed from [Perth and Kinross Climate Action Plan](#). Each care home was asked to identify a Climate Champion to lead and develop their action plan, and to evidence progress made against their chosen commitments. A starter pack was also given, containing a wild seed bomb, reminder stickers to 'switch off', a gardening for biodiversity booklet, pedometers, tote bags, reusable keep cups and 'share your ideas' postcards. Residents were involved throughout, with many homes making a whiteboard display of their commitments to act as a reminder and to inform residents' families.



During the project's inception, Eirini Kourtesi, P&K Climate Action Officer, delivered a workshop to care home staff to highlight P&K's Climate Action Plan and how this translates into activity to help care homes be more environmentally aware. Advice was given to support homes to maximise on their chosen commitments, allowed staff to ask questions and served as a signposting opportunity to other organisations and climate action events.

To help raise awareness a video was filmed by Paths for All to highlight the aims of the project for [P&K Climate Action website](#). A quarterly newsletter was sent to 185 recipients across the care home network to engage staff, share learning and areas of best practice. Short news stories were also created to showcase examples of good practice by care home staff and residents.

Action Plans

An overwhelming amount of evidence was received from the Climate Champions, and it should be noted that many went beyond the scope of the project due to the support and enthusiasm shown by fellow staff and residents. Climate Champions were further supported through a series of workshops, hosted by Paths for All to connect staff, provide progress updates, ask questions, and share learning.

The following 6 areas detail some of the developments and outcomes made by the participating care homes which demonstrate both individual and collective impact:

1. **Transport** - Changing transport behavior is crucial in tackling climate change. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the air has a direct impact on the quality of human health.

1a - A bespoke **Step Count Challenge** took place throughout September 2022 with 4 care homes participating. Residents and staff took part by setting goals and step count targets, with the aim of walking a bit further each week, including to/from work. Steps were logged online and converted into CO2 emissions saved when swapping out car journeys. Participants could also build a virtual forest and share their progress.

One participant from Muirton House said *"I enjoy walking because I like to breathe the fresh air and take in all the sights, sounds and smells of the woods, countryside, or seaside. This improves my mental health and lifts my spirits, and the walking can reduce any anxiety I may have at the time"*.

Collectively 1,724,878 steps were taken, which is the equivalent of walking 769 miles or around a football pitch 2956 times! Some car journeys were also replaced by walking which saved 21kg of Carbon, this is roughly how much one tree can absorb each year!

1b – Paths for All's **Care about Walking** resources were utilised by some staff and residents to encourage an increase in physical activity and active travel undertaken by staff and residents. One home reported staff tracking steps whilst on duty, supporting a resident to take the bus to/from central Perth and residents displaying their step count charts to encourage others to take part.

1c – Most care homes reported internal encouragement to use public transport before participating in this project, however many now display local bus timetables in entrance hallways for visitors. It was highlighted that many staff live within close proximity of the care home and actively walk to/from work on most days.

2. **Buildings and energy** - Collectively demonstrate positive behavior change, increased awareness, and improvements to use of water, heating and the equipment used to light and power buildings.

2a – All participating care homes increased signage around the home to remind and prompt staff and residents to switch off lights and electrical devices when not in use. One care home successfully trialed motion sensor lights in all appropriate areas of the home, two switched to energy efficient bulbs (others already had) and another created a battery recycling box.



2b – [Energy free hour](#) is an organized activity involving no powered up equipment. Some care homes started out with various activities once a month, however this quickly grew in popularity with many now organizing meaningful weekly energy free hours. Activities taking place include:

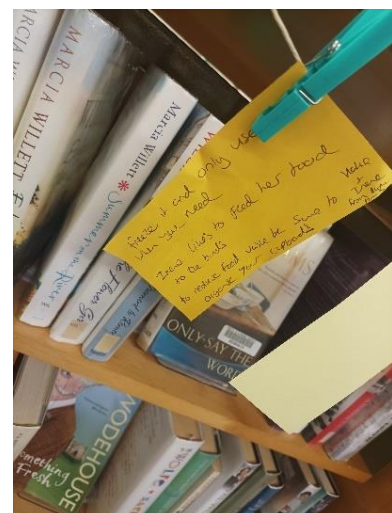
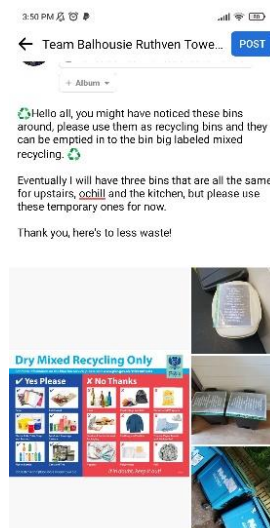
- Making pom poms
- Giant board games
- Arts and crafts
- Upcycling items
- Climate conversations
- Prepping vegetables
- Drawing and painting
- Short poem writing
- Reading
- Group walking
- Bird watching
- Star gazing
- Talking to others
- Nature theme puzzles
- Bingo



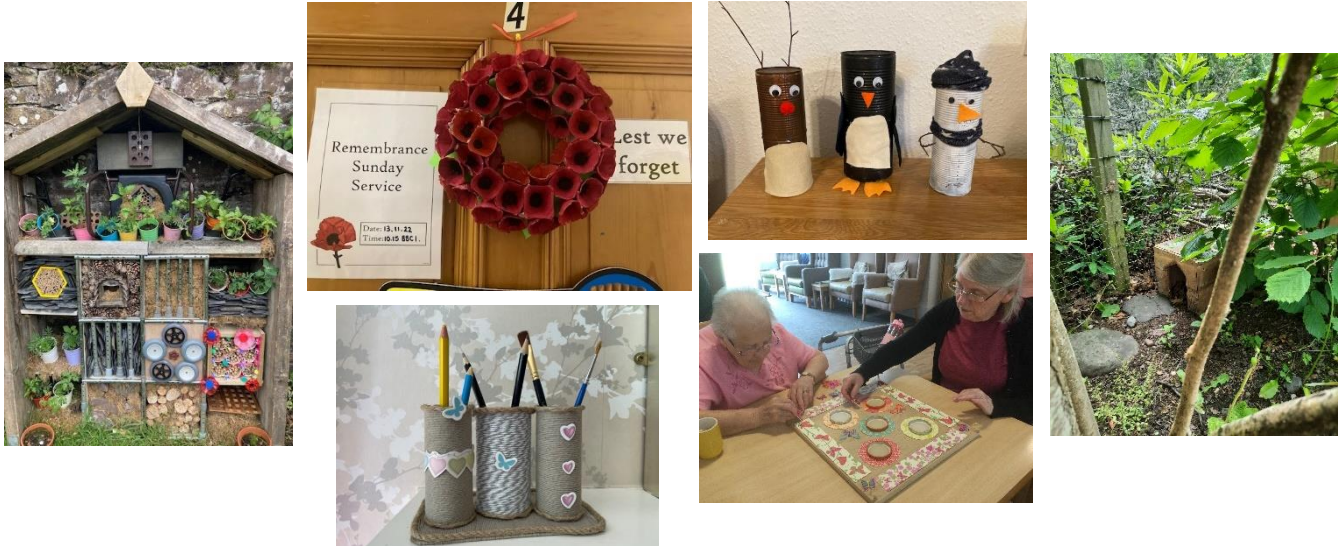
2c. Two homes turned down their heating by 1 degree throughout the care home.

3. [Waste and circular economy](#) - waste can be managed sustainably through reducing, reusing, repairing, and recycling. Improve resource efficiency by helping to work towards a circular economy.

3a. All care homes made significant improvements to their recycling. More bins were purchased, labelled to reduce cross contamination, and situated in more prominent places throughout the homes. All homes were made aware of P&K's '[stick to the six](#)' and awareness raising was done across staff teams and with residents. One home identified significant problems with recycling due to both industrial bins always filling up and general waste bins needing to be used – they increased their recycling contract with their local authority and added another mixed recycling industrial bin to ensure everything could be recycled correctly. The same home attended a local food waste reduction workshop to implement better methods of freezing, storing and using left over food and another had a professional workshop delivered by BINN SKIPS to raise awareness.



3b. Re-using items and materials that would normally be thrown away, for crafting and upcycling projects increased in popularity as more homes shared ideas and 'how to' instructions. All homes reported an increase in homemade event and seasonal decorations and more residents have been involved in upcycling furniture or reusing textiles.



3c. One home has stopped buying plastic storage tubs for baking and instead reuses ice cream tubs and is using washed out yogurt pots to sow seeds instead of buying new plastic ones.

3d. Four homes have established freecycle cupboards and boxes to allow staff and/or residents to offer unwanted items to others. All have reported how instantly popular it's been and have now made it a permanent initiative.

3e. One home switched to electronic pay slips (others were already doing this) and also no longer print newsletters for residents' family members, these are now emailed.

4. Land use - the way we use our land can both generate and sequester (remove) carbon from the atmosphere. Changing our approach to land use is therefore crucial in ensuring that we are prepared for the warming climate and its consequences.

4a. Enhanced biodiversity measures have surpassed expected commitments made at the start of this project by all homes. Staff and residents have become more knowledgeable and increased opportunities for resident involvement. All homes planted their 'seed bomb', more wild areas have been left to grow, bug hotels, bird boxes, and wildlife houses have been made from recycled wood and materials and log piles have been constructed. New planters have been created to increase vegetable and herb growing and many switching to peat free compost.



Two homes took part in the [Queens Green Canopy](#) project, which at the time of planting was to commemorate the Queens Jubilee. This has since been extended to offer people the opportunity to plant trees in memorandum of the Queen and create a lasting tribute.

4b. Food waste has been a difficult area for all homes, with all reporting challenges in how to reduce waste and increase awareness amongst residents. As a minimum, all now have better food waste recycling in place, either through compostable bags (as opposed to general waste) or added to composting bins/heaps. Some homes have reduced the quantity being purchased, particularly on perishable goods, and some are being more mindful to wrap up leftovers for later. Some homes have also increased the number of vegetables being grown in the garden, and one home introduced growing herbs with residents. All have made some considerable progress throughout the timespan of this project, and all have committed to continuing to make improvements throughout 2023.

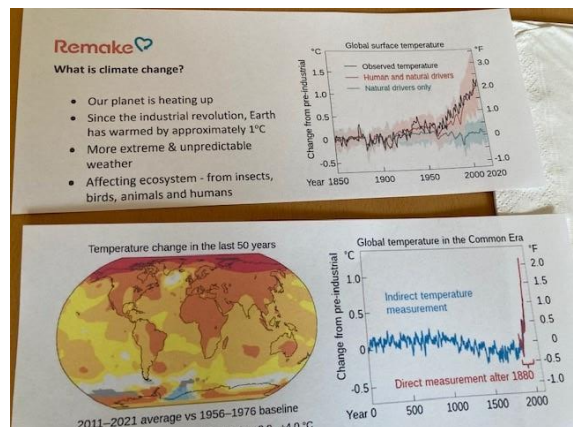
4c. Jamie Ormiston from Keep Scotland Beautiful delivered a biodiversity workshop to raise awareness amongst staff on what could be done on a practical level within a care home garden, highlighted free local resources, including volunteer led initiatives and answered questions relating to both climate change and biodiversity from care staff.

5. Education and engagement - the need for clear and coordinated communication to drive behaviour change.

5a. Raising awareness amongst staff and residents has been pivotal to the success of this work, alongside encouraging positive behavior change. Some homes utilised ‘energy free hour’ to bring residents together to discuss climate change topics, take part in environmental quiz’s, generate ideas, and take part in workshops delivered by professional organisations.



One care home partnered with Remake to create themed sessions to discuss how people used to do things before electronic goods and appliances. Each session was reminiscence focused, comparing life then to now. Flash cards, prompts, models, and props were used and involved an activity to engage all residents and staff in the session. Themes included food, transport, heat & energy, and entertainment.



The homes Activity Support Worker said *“When we held our first Climate Cafe with the residents, I was completely blown away with how much the residents got from this workshop. I wasn’t sure how they would respond as it’s completely new to most of our residents. The feedback and conversation during our chat was amazing. It was explained perfectly to our residents by Fiona, and we used visual prompts along the way that the residents really responded too. If we hadn’t been taking part in this project, we would never have done an activity like this. The project is opening up new learning experiences for staff and residents alike and we are all looking forward to our next climate cafe.”*

6. Business and industry - Individual businesses are becoming more sustainable through reducing water and energy use; reducing waste including packaging, improving transport efficiency, and increasing use of local supply chains.

6a. In line with reducing food waste some homes are reducing the volume of food being purchased, particularly perishable foods, and planning to increase the level of homegrown vegetables, fruit, and herbs from 2023. Most homes now have a better understanding of how much waste there is, have implemented better re-use and storage practices and are now recycling appropriately. More complex changes like this take time, and it was recognised that a whole home approach is required to continue making sustainable change and progress.

6b. One home has switched to re-usable straws to reduce volume of single use plastics and have issued residents with refillable water bottles.

6c. Care home staff and residents are making a more conscious effort to shop locally and support community businesses. Conscious efforts are being made to source products without the need to travel and omit unnecessary emissions.

Summary

Collectively all homes have demonstrated positive behavior change, increased awareness, and made improvements across all areas highlighted within P&K’s Climate Action plan. It was evident that some changes were simpler to embed than others, however there is ongoing commitment to not only sustain changes made, but to make further improvements beyond the timeframe of this project. In some ways this project has served as a discovery opportunity, there are many positives to celebrate and there has been time through P&K Care Home Activity Network to showcase what’s been achieved so far and to raise awareness amongst other care homes.

Challenges and Reflections

Time was a significant factor from the outset of this project – care home staff are extremely busy and achieving the right balance of involvement was crucial. By offering choice and level of commitment, this aided in achieving interest from care homes willing to take part. However, upon reflection, if there hadn’t of been a minimum of 5 commitments to be made, there could have been more homes signing up to make even 1 or 2 commitments, as collectively it all adds up. The total time frame for this project was also short given there were calls to action and a need to evidence change. Whilst so much was achieved in 12 months, with more time this work would embed further and allow for increased opportunity to address other areas of concern.

What’s Next

We now have a collective responsibility to share this learning more widely and showcase examples of good practice which can be implemented across the care home sector. This report will be shared amongst all P&K Care Homes, P&K Climate Action team and the Care Inspectorate, and a

communications plan will be devised. Paths for All will also identify appropriate internal and external networks to maximise on opportunities to reference this work.

