

Working for a sustainable future for the Moray Firth and its communities.

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The Moray Firth Coastal Partnership (MFCP), formerly the Moray Firth Partnership, plays a unique role as a neutral, independent charity in promoting and facilitating sustainable solutions to the marine and coastal challenges faced by the Moray Firth and its communities. We will foster enhanced cross-sectoral, and cross-Authority liaison and action, and develop the membership of the Partnership to ensure a representative and participative stakeholder base.

As the local coastal partnership for the Moray Firth and its 800kms of coastline, we are involved with a wide variety of issues, projects, and stakeholders. Our area crosses boundaries of the Highland, Moray and Aberdeenshire Councils. Our unique overview of the Moray Firth, its communities, and businesses, allows us the privilege to work with a great range of people, projects, and ideas.

We acknowledge the need for 'new normal'. The disruption to our lives due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the climate emergency, both mean we must look at innovative ways of working with our stakeholders, but also in terms of our priorities. We will ensure we are 'fit for purpose' as we develop our ambitious 10-year Management Programme.

We will be developing our communications systems and reaching out to our stakeholders to become more involved with our work and truly influence what we deliver. Our recent conversion to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) will involve a new membership, a new structure and a new way of thinking.

Our Vision for the future of the Moray Firth in 2030 is to be **the most sustainable marine region in Scotland**. This is no small task as other marine regions are already on this path. But we are ambitious and believe we can succeed.

This statement is the first stage in laying out our Vision. Its objective is to provide inspiration and direction. It focuses on the main, identifiable challenges and opportunities currently facing the Firth, and is open to amendment as circumstances and knowledge develop. The Vision is the basis for a forward work management programme for the MFCP and its many future partners.

The Vision recognises the complexity of Firth and the importance of an integrated approach to planning for its sustainable development. The MFCP will invite the collaborative involvement of the communities, businesses and organisations, whose activities impact on the Firth, in helping to achieve this Vision. We will publish our communication plans, including various opportunities for stakeholders to influence the work of the MFCP and the development of the Management Programme, which will outline in detail what is required to deliver on our Vision.

Our Area

From the northern seabird filled cliffs and stacks of Duncansby Head to the busy fishing port of Fraserburgh at its eastern limits, the 800km of Moray Firth coastline embraces a rich marine life that stretches from ocean depths to the shallows of muddy, sandy and rocky shore, where geese, ducks and waders thrive. The importance of the Firth for cetaceans, birds and marine habitats is recognised in national and international designations for protecting nature, such as the Moray Firth Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and other [Marine Protected Areas](#).

Around the waters of the Moray Firth are the many communities where lives remain closely connected to the sea through fishing, tourism, and recreation. Recreation on both sea and land makes an important contribution to the area, with dolphin watching alone worth £4 million to the Moray Firth economy. Many of the settlements have a rich cultural heritage, with a history linked to the changing fortunes of fishing and overseas trade. On shore, the fertile lowland farms are world famous for their malting barley, and seed potatoes.

We are home to 32 ports and harbours around the Firth. They are the focus for much of the area's industry and commercial activity, and operate to support oil production, renewable energy, commercial shipping, cruise liners and recreational boats. Scottish Governments net zero carbon target of 2045 and the energy transition plays a significant role in the local area, with key sites identified within Moray Firth. The evolution of Scotland's energy infrastructure to adapt to the growing demand for renewable energy as a route to decarbonisation of our power, transport and heating systems, will provide economic opportunity for the region.

Our Role is one of oversight. With our strategic overview of the area, we bring together a wide range of interested parties to increase our shared understanding, encourage joint working, and facilitate the development of long-term sustainable solutions. Our aims are to:

- Establish and maintain links with local, national and international individuals, groups, communities & business that have an interest in the Moray Firth;
- Ensure effective exchange of information, acting as a resource and as a consultative mechanism;
- Promote & enable participation & collaboration with stakeholders, to inform & contribute to an integrated management strategy for the long-term sustainability of the Moray Firth;
- Provide support, guidance and facilitation to stakeholders in furtherance of the long-term sustainability of the Moray Firth;
- Maintain oversight of activities in the Moray Firth, identifying need & facilitating, and/or leading in the provision of sustainable solutions;
- Promote education to extend awareness, understanding & stewardship of the Moray Firth.

Our Sustainability Model identifies three strategic areas where we will focus our work in the context of coastal and marine challenges and the long-term sustainability of the Moray Firth Region.

Our Coastal Environment : Our People and Places : Our Sea

Our Coastal Environment		
	What we will do	How we will know we have achieved our vision
Marine & coastal ecosystems	We will work in partnership with other organisations concerned with conservation of the area both in terms of marine life and coastal biodiversity and sustainable management including the Marine Protected Areas in our region.	Local management of the marine and coastal ecosystems has resulted in restoration of biodiversity with public awareness providing strong support for continued sensitive management to maintain their health.
Marine Litter	Building on the success of our SCRAPbook project, we will continue our work on marine litter, focussing on the Moray Firth and targeting some of the most affected areas, in collaboration with local business and community sectors.	The coastline of the Moray Firth is clear of historic litter, and systems are in place to ensure that recurring litter is routinely tackled to reduce its impact on the marine and coastal environment. We will work in collaboration with communities to take ownership of the issue on their beaches and we will support them with education and resources.
Dynamic Coast	We will work with communities, business, and organisations to ensure that coastal changes are recognised and competing interests acknowledged as we form sustainable and appropriate solutions.	Communities at risk of flooding and erosion have mitigation, emergency and adaptation plans in place to manage risk.



“The Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. The 17 Goals are all interconnected, and in order to leave no one behind, it is important that we achieve them all by 2030” — United Nations

We have identified 8 of the Goals as being directly linked with our work and we will undertake actions to address some of the issues in the Moray Firth—helping us to achieve Our Vision



Our People and Places		
	What we will do	How we will know we have achieved our vision
Economy	To ensure thriving communities, we will identify actions that promote sustainable training, employment, and business opportunities across the coastal region; our fishing & aquaculture, ports & harbours, energy and recreation & tourism industries.	Moray Firth is home to thriving communities with inspiring education, sustainable employment, and business opportunities.
Heritage	We will seek out opportunities to help preserve, promote, and enrich the heritage of the Moray Firth area	The coastal heritage of the Moray Firth is recognised as a unique, diverse, and valued resource, of local, national, and international significance, and is preserved and enriched for the benefit of the local community and of the nation.
Energy Transition	The Moray Firth Partnership will work with existing oil and gas companies, renewable energy developers and the local communities in the transition to net zero and will provide a clear route for consultation, education, and engagement. We will provide regional information and data, to support the community benefits process.	Energy companies have a clear route for consultation and engagement with communities, with communities fully participating in the transition process. Community benefits are fully aligned with the aspirations and needs of the communities.
Climate Change	We will engage with projects, business, and people to take measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change and other changes and will focus on sharing information to enable our communities to build resilience for years to come. We will promote the research and development of blue carbon storage in helping tackle climate change	We have clear measures and recognition in place to celebrate success and provide benchmarks for sustainability for communities and businesses that have taken significant measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, building resilience for the future.
Our Sea		
Fishing and aquaculture	We will work with individuals, business and organisations involved in the fishing and aquaculture sectors, to promote environmental sustainability, highlighting and addressing issues in a collaborative way.	Local fishing and aquaculture industry has pioneered progressive initiatives that address environmental and economic stability with Moray Firth celebrated for its responsibly sourced, quality seafood.
Ports & Harbours	We will engage with ports & harbours in establishing a sustainable business and ecological environment. This will include identifying problems and forming collaborative and co-operative solutions.	All ports and harbours have sustainable business practices which maximise opportunities for local people and attract new people and businesses to the area.
Recreation and Tourism	We will engage with the recreation and leisure sectors to promote the sustainable use of the Moray Firth, and to encourage businesses, individuals, and organisations to protect the natural environment, providing sustainable solutions as required.	Tourism & other recreational use of the Firth is sustainably managed, encouraging access and responsible enjoyment, adhering to codes of practise where applicable, to retain our status as one of the top visitor destinations in the world.

	What we will do	How we will know we have achieved our vision
Integrated management processes/ Marine Planning	<p>We will actively engage with and encourage consultation on national and local plans affecting our marine region, providing support in the consultation process to enable a wide range of participation.</p> <p>We will engage with planning organisations and act as a neutral, consultative body, in the development of marine planning processes from a wide standpoint and with a strategic overview.</p> <p>We will ensure that our Management Plan aligns wherever possible with other organisations' providing a cohesive approach.</p>	<p>Integrated and sustainable management practices are embedded in the systems for planning and management of the Firth</p> <p>Marine Planning Partnerships are active ensuring effective and well-developed marine planning in the Moray Firth.</p> <p>As participation and consultation have increased, industry, local communities and the public have become fully engaged in understanding, protecting and enhancing the Moray Firth.</p>

Our History

The Moray Firth Project was initiated in 1993 after the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. In 1996 The Moray Firth partnership was launched and became a charity and a company limited by guarantee in 1999. During this time, the Partnership has been involved with, supported, and led on several projects including:

Moray Firth SAC Management Programme, Best Practice Seminars, Fisheries Action Group, Engaging Young People & Businesses, Sustainable Marine Tourism Study, Inshore Fisheries Group, Seafood—See Here!, Sectoral Interactions Matrix, Gansey Project, Beach Guardians, Nortrail and many others.....

SCRAPbook is an exciting initiative, led by Moray Firth Partnership and Sky Watch UK Civil Air Patrol, using aerial photographs taken from light aircraft.



SCRAPbook
targeting coastal litter

Working with our partners and with funding from Marine Scotland and other donations, we have created a map showing all the coastal litter and pollution hotspots around the mainland coast of Scotland. This is available on line at <https://www.scrapbook-scotland.org.uk/> and on the National Marine Plan Interactive (NMPI) at <https://marinescotland.atkinsgeospatial.com/nmpi/>

We will bring the focus of the SCRAPbook project to the Moray Firth tackling marine litter issues across the area.

