The Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) is a national development in the Scottish Government’s third National Planning Framework.

With a wide-ranging remit, far beyond a ‘green initiative’, the CSGN is improving the vitality, health and well-being of central Scotland, as well as making the area more resilient to climate change.

The CSGN is being delivered by an active partnership of national agencies, regional organisations, local authorities, local delivery bodies and wider stakeholders, adding substantial value by combining expertise, resources and people to realise ambitious greenspace projects.

The overarching CSGN vision is that by 2050, the area will be transformed into a place where the environment adds value to the economy and where people’s lives are enriched by its quality.

The Central Scotland Green Network Trust (CSGNT) is helping to realise the vision for the CSGN. We promote the initiative, encourage action by others and support the implementation of the CSGN. By working with those who can make a difference through action, advocacy or partnership, we are making central Scotland a more attractive place to live, to visit and to do business in.
Our staff are actively pursuing and managing vital funding streams. The CSGN Development Fund continues to support transformational improvements. This year, we were pleased to see 18 projects share over £430,000 to enhance the local environment and add value to the economy through woodland creation, green infrastructure, community growing and green active travel projects.

The CSGNT has been working closely with Taylor Wimpey, the Scottish government and Abertay University to promote the benefits of raingardens as a means of flood attenuation by conserving and using rainwater as the first step towards achieving a sustainable greener garden. The first raingardens have been completed at Taylor Wimpey’s Holytown development.

The John Muir Way’s success story continues. The route is now widely recognised as offering a quality experience both for those who want to go for a short saunter and for those committed long distance route walkers. Perhaps the Wall Street Journal said it best; “Scotland’s newest hiking trail: Beginner friendly with killer views.”

To maintain this momentum, we have been working with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and partners to prepare a management and development plan for the route. We have established a partnership group and four specialist working groups, and I would like to thank all the partners who have committed resources to these.

This year has seen positive progress. Working with the Scottish Government we are developing a CSGN delivery plan to take us to 2025 (DP25) designed to provide a measurable direction of travel, allocating different responsibilities to our various partners. For example, CSGNT will lead on community growing, vacant and derelict land and habitat, while Transport Scotland has responsibility for active travel.

Glasgow Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership, Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust and Ayrshire Green Network Partnership have signed CSGN concordat agreements which recognise the fundamental role our regional partners play in helping to achieve the network’s aims. We have also been renewing our concordat agreements with our 19 constituent councils and I am encouraged by the ongoing commitment made by council leaders at a time when their budgets are under pressure.

This year we also celebrated five years of learning from the CSGN Forum, publishing a new visionary book, Growing Awareness - How green consciousness can change perceptions and places. Launched at the sixth annual CSGN Forum, the book captures the vision and learning from speakers at previous CSGN Fara.

The CSGN’s delivery is set to provide significant long term improvements to the quality of life of the 3.5m people living and working in central Scotland. The challenges we face are not insurmountable, and through deepening our partnerships we are confident we can continue to deliver.

As usual, thanks to my colleague board members and to our staff whose commitment never fails to impress me.

Keith Geddes
Chair, CSGNT
We have continued to lead and deliver the CSGN through a wide range of project work, partner support activity and participation in numerous initiatives and partnerships. We have worked closely too with colleagues in the Scottish Government to ensure that our thinking remains closely aligned with emerging policies and priorities.

On the project side, we’ve worked on schemes as diverse as landfill restoration to active travel and access routes along the Clyde Walkway. At the landfill site, Greenoakhill next to the M74, we are working to deliver the green network on the ground. This innovative project will transform an unused and derelict piece of land into a valuable greenspace resource for local communities. It will also contribute to our ambition to increase woodland cover across the CSGN bringing with it all the benefits associated with that. The Clyde walkway project will open up access for local communities to this great asset providing healthy recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

Everything we do, without exception, we do with others through partnership working. We understand this way of working and what is required by ourselves, as well as others, to make it work successfully. Our intention now, rolling out from work undertaken in this year, is to deepen, broaden and where helpful, formalise our partnership activity with increasing numbers of our staff playing representative roles on other bodies. Through this way of working we will increase our ‘surface area’ and hence our ability to influence and work with others.

Not exactly news but we do continue to operate in a time when resources, especially public sector resources, are under immense pressure. This has manifested itself in two ways: being a reduction in the level of funding to carry our project activity and a reduction in staff capacity within partner public organisations. In this context, productive partnership working has been critical to keeping the show on the road. So too has been our winning funding from the private sector to support our work. One notable example of this was funding from the Greggs Foundation which has been put to great use supporting local community bodies.

Simon Rennie
Chief Executive

“Everything we do, without exception, we do with others through partnership working.

We understand this way of working and what is required by ourselves, as well as others, to make it work successfully.”

Our accounts underwent a radical transformation during the year in terms of presentation due to the introduction of a new accounting standard, FRS102. This has increased our apparent net worth to £1,564k. As elaborated on further within this report, the reality is that a great deal of these apparently free funds are committed to paying for future activity. I only mention this rather technical point because it really has generated a somewhat distorted picture of our financial position.

As always, I will close with a huge vote of thanks to all our staff. I am extremely fortunate to lead such a dedicated, talented group of hard working committed people and my thanks go out to each and every one of them.

Simon Rennie
Chief Executive, CSGNT
We have been working in partnership with Taylor Wimpey West Scotland, the Scottish Government and the academic sector on an innovative Greener Gardens project. The project looks at how gardens of new homes can be used to contribute to green infrastructure, biodiversity and storm water management.

It features a number of strands all designed to encourage the development of sustainable places. These include the installation of demonstration raingardens, academic research and raising awareness by promoting the benefits of raingardens both to homeowners and the wider house building industry.

The project is leading the way in innovation within this area for the housebuilding industry, and received recognition in last year’s VIBES Awards (Vision in Business for the Environment Awards).

Meanwhile, we have progressed our work with the Scottish Green Infrastructure Forum (SGIF) to develop a three-year plan for the 10,000 Raingardens project. Raingardens are a natural solution to help prevent surface water flooding after heavy rainfall, and also provide a range of biodiversity and climate change benefits. The project will make a real on-the-ground difference to communities across central Scotland, strengthening local resilience to the effects of climate change.

We were pleased to receive support from the Greggs Foundation this year. With their backing we were able to distribute a successful round of the CSGN Community Project Fund, delivering small-scale greenspace initiatives and fostering community engagement and learning in maintaining and enhancing the local environment.

In addition to the CSGN Community Fund, the Greggs Foundation’s support also allowed us to work with three housing associations and The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to develop and create shared outdoor spaces for tenants. As well as an allotment, a shared multipurpose garden and a therapeutic outdoor area, we were able to produce and distribute our Love our Ladybirds garden pack, designed to help any tenant to improve their own gardens for better biodiversity.

We now look forward to the continued progress of these existing partnerships and projects, as well as developing new ones. It is only with this high level of collective engagement that we can fully realise the CSGN vision.

Partnership support and funders

With the recent CSGN Regional Partner Concordat signings, we continue to acknowledge and formalise our commitment to partnership working to secure the delivery of the CSGN. This year we have also made good progress in developing relationships with our private sector partners.
Located five miles east of Glasgow city centre and split in two by the busy M74, Greenoakhill is a major project that will transform a landfill and recycling site into a community woodland.

This year we made great progress in delivering the second phase of this project, creating a network of pathways around the site. When complete, over 20,000 trees will have been planted to create woodland and greenspace for walkers, runners, community groups, schools and cyclists from the surrounding communities of Baillieston, Broomhouse, Carmyle, Garrowhill, Mount Vernon and Shettleston.

Funding for the project has been provided by Patersons Quarries Ltd through the Landfill Communities Fund, administered by LandTrust. The Environment Secretary, Roseanna Cunningham, recognised the importance of the project in a recent visit, saying:

“By transforming derelict land into thriving woodland we will improve the health, biodiversity and education opportunities for people right across the central belt, while also contributing to our climate change ambitions.”

To date, much of the work has concentrated on the southern part of the woodland but Forest Enterprise Scotland, supported by the CSGNT, will now begin to develop the northern part of the site into a community greenspace.
During the period October 2015 to September 2016, we have continued to make progress on our three priority themes as identified in the Scottish Government’s third National Planning Framework.

Our direct delivery arm completed 13 projects, undertook site maintenance for clients and additional land management activities with a combined value of £1,043,758.

In particular, five of our projects have included active travel benefits through the upgrading of paths such as in Kinneil Woods in Falkirk. In the Clyde Valley area we worked on a project addressing the limited access from surrounding communities to the Clyde Walkway; opening up a range of potential healthy active options for local residents and visitors as well as facilitating access to areas and sites rich in cultural value.

We also continued to improve woodland and openspace across the CSGN area. This year we brought nearly 15 hectares of urban woodland into management. One of the projects that contributed significantly to this was Sommers Park in West Lothian. This included woodland thinning and tree works, access improvements and greenspace enhancements.

A notable cultural asset of the site which was removed in the 1970s was an elaborate 17th century sundial. As a nod back to this feature, we installed a new “human sundial” in the same location for local residents to enjoy.

As this year’s annual report demonstrates, our delivery activities have been diverse but they all draw upon our strong partnership ethos allied with a highly skilled, experienced and valued staff group. Having this capacity in-house has enabled us to manage our own landholdings effectively and, where opportunities arose, to generate income off these assets to support our charitable objectives. Collating our work from over the year, some of the key outputs from our delivery work includes:

- 11 paths upgraded (19.3km)
- 5 projects developing active travel routes
- 4 greenspaces improved (16ha)
- 3 projects improving the environment with areas of deprivation
- 3 new paths created (0.5km)
- 2 urban woodlands brought into management (14.6ha)
- 1 new community orchard created (0.15ha)
Drone surveying and imaging

Our new drone (a small unmanned surveillance aircraft) made frequent flights this year, undertaking a number of training and familiarisation exercises. It enables us to conduct detailed surveys of our sites in far less time than by conventional means. The high resolution images produced also has the potential to be a valuable project design and management resource.

As we move forward, there will be added scope for aerial images and video to provide marketing and presentational material, as well as providing large scale before and after photos. We look forward to the possible economies and capabilities afforded by this piece of equipment.

Our drone operator is currently being assessed by a Civil Aviation Authority Qualified Entity, and is scheduled to complete his qualification in October 2016 after which we will apply for a Civil Aviation Authority Permission for Commercial Operations. This will enable us to build costs for the aerial imaging into our activity and will also enable us to undertake similar work for partner organisations in the near future.

Woodlands in and Around Towns (WIAT) project officer

With funding support from Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS), during the year we were able to fund a WIAT project officer with the dedicated remit to develop interest in the FCS’s WIAT grant stream and produce management plans for these woods.

Over the course of the year this enabled us to provide support to 10 different local authorities and overall we investigated 60 different WIAT woodland proposals, applied for grant aid for 20 woodlands and produced 10 management plans.
We know that greenspace projects can make a huge difference to the quality of places and people’s lives, especially when they are delivered in the communities who will benefit from them most.

In February 2016, small community groups were invited to apply for grants of up to £1,000 through the CSGN Community Project Fund (CPF).

The CPF focuses on supporting community-led projects that increase people’s engagement with their local environments. This year, we were pleased to work in partnership with Greggs Foundation to support the CPF which we administered. Greggs Foundation provided funding support from the carrier bag charges in Greggs shops. Funding was available for a wide range of activities such as enhancement, engagement and enjoyment of community greenspaces.

Some 39 grass roots projects throughout the CSGN area received £34,470 funding through the programme, ranging from conservation and educational schemes, such as developing a safe natural learning space for children, community gardens for local groups to tend, and biodiversity activities such as planting and improvements to ponds and wetlands to protect local wildlife.

The CPF holds an important role in the funding landscape. It is designed to interest and stimulate smaller organisations attracted by the relatively simple submission and judging process. We believe a peripheral outcome of the CPF is an increase in the capacity of organisations to take projects forward and make progress on achieving their wider goals. As part of our monitoring process we asked for feedback on this and found out that, on average, most applicants benefited from an increase in confidence and skills.

During the submission process, some organisations benefitted from our support in helping to define their project clearly in order to complete the application form. Learning from this we will have a community development officer in post who will be able to support less confident community groups with their funding bids.

We also manage and deliver the CSGN Development Fund (DF), helping to deliver projects which contribute towards the realisation of the CSGN. The funded projects demonstrate the significant progress that can be achieved with relatively modest investment of time and resources.

Over the last six years some £6M has been distributed across the CSGN area through the DF. For the 2016-17 round, funding was made available by Scottish Government, FCS, Transport Scotland and SNH. 18 projects shared over £430,000 to transform the local environment and add value to the economy.

Projects delivered a rich variety of outputs which contributed to CSGN’s core activities of interest such as tree planting, green infrastructure, active travel and community growing to help transform the quality of life for people living and working in the area.

For example, Beith Street Community Garden in Glasgow is a great example of how an area of urban derelict land can be transformed into a thriving community space. In this instance, the DF helped to pay for raised beds, fruit trees and materials for a seating area with much of the construction work being undertaken by local volunteers.

We also distributed money to projects focusing on urban greening, employment and training, greenspace for learning and play and woodland creation.
As with many of the local authorities in the CSGN area, Clackmannanshire has pockets of inequality which have detrimental impacts on the lives of local people.

In this instance, many residents of South Alloa and the neighbouring town of Clackmannan live within datazones included in the bottom 20% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. The Inner Forth Landscape Initiative identified Black Devon Wetlands, which is located between these two areas, as a fantastic resource able to provide people the chance to view a rich variety of wildlife and undertake recreational activity right on their doorsteps.

In 2015, Black Devon Wetlands was designated as an RSPB reserve. It is a good place to spot species like the black-headed gull, snipe and short-eared owl. To help more people to access the area, a project was launched to create and upgrade pathways on the site, as well as installing fingerpost signs and access gates. At the end of the project over 1,000m of new paths had been constructed, with a further 525m upgraded. These paths now link with the Alloa and Clackmannanshire Park access project, giving local people and visitors from further afield a great network of paths to help them access the wider Inner Forth landscape.

“Disadvantaged areas

Our role was critical in developing and delivering this project; from securing the landowner’s permission, applying for and securing the project funding to designing, tendering and managing works.

Dorrator Woods is a 6.6ha woodland that lies to the north east of Camelon, a disadvantaged area within Falkirk. It is an area of wet woodland dominated by willow and alder of uniform age and structure and is flooded by the river Carron on a regular basis. Whilst offering little in terms of timber quality and value, the wet woodland is of relatively high biodiversity value and provides an important amenity resource. Also there are two significant areas of open ground, and two areas of open water within the central portion of the site, offering additional diversity.

In recent years Falkirk Council has completed a number of access improvements in the wider area, with a new footbridge leading north across the river Carron linking to Larbert and beyond. As part of this project a new surfaced path was installed on the southern edge of the wood mainly to provide a less muddy, more all season alternative to the older path along the river. These paths lead through Camelon reaching the Forth and Clyde canal.

The woodland has had no major management in recent years, and recognising the importance of this riparian woodland habitat, this project sought to improve the woodland condition, diversifying age and structure, removing invasive non-native species and improving public access by thinning and opening up sightlines and paths. The project was funded through Falkirk Council and WIAT.

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During the year, we worked with the Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership (CAVLP) and South Lanarkshire Council to deliver the Clyde Walkway Community Links trails in which five key walking trails linking communities with the Clyde Valley were upgraded and improved.

These were formerly opened in September 2016 by Aileen Campbell, Minister for Public Health and Sport. The project was funded by Sport Scotland and the Heritage Lottery Fund and it improved paths linking the communities of Rosebank, Ashgill, Dalserf, Larkhall, Law, Crossford, Nemphlar and Braidwood with the Clyde Walkway. More people are now able to use the historic pathways following surface and drainage improvements, vegetation clearance, new signage and new style gates.

In addition, the improved trails have been digitised and publicised via a new digital trail website for the CAVLP, funded under the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places initiative which aims to encourage less car use and more journeys by foot, bicycle, public transport and car share.

Details of the new improved routes are available online or as a download from the CAVLP website www.clydeandavonvalley.org
Vacant and derelict land (VDL)

One of the indicators selected to document the progress of the CSGN specifically relates to the volume and number of VDL sites across our area as recorded in the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey (SVDLS).

Over the last few years our staff have been working with the Scottish Government and local authority officers to review the dataset and explore the potential to improve the recording process considering land removed from the register for reasons which contribute towards the delivery of the CSGN.

Guidance notes produced from this process have now been accepted by the Scottish Government and will be included in future SVDLS reference material for local authority staff. It is hoped this guidance will help to identify particularly derelict sites that are emerging as ecological assets and contributing to habitat networks.

We have worked closely with North Lanarkshire Council in developing their bid to the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Fund for 2016/17 with approval secured for two key projects, one at Craigneuk and the other at Ravenscraig. A review of over 250 vacant and derelict sites in South Lanarkshire was completed for the local authority with a number of recommendations for the creation of wildlife sites identified.

We now plan to undertake a retrospective exercise which reviews all sites removed from the register in the last six years. The results from this work will establish the number of sites removed from the register for new uses which are relevant to the CSGN such as naturalisation, community greenspace and greenspace access. This information will be of great value to us moving forward on this theme.

The Craigneuk VDL site is to become a new community bike track facility.
The funding partners acknowledged on the following page contributed to our financial activity this year. Their support and engagement is greatly appreciated.

These organisations are part of a much wider group of stakeholders who are fully engaged with the task of making the CSGN a reality. There are too many to mention here, but their participation and support is equally important and valued.

The accounts of the CSGNT overleaf have been prepared in compliance with the charities SORP and FRS102. The consequences and implications of this accounting standard present a significantly different balance sheet for the CSGNT.

The FRS102 balance sheet is showing reserves standing at £1,564k, however not all of this funding is under the control of the directors and must be spent on the delivery of project works in future.

This is, for example, income to deliver and maintain project works that will create the CSGN over time, trees planted must be checked and replaced over a number of years to ensure the site has actually established.

The balance sheet funds recognised under the accounting standard (which only applies to charities) FRS102 have been recognised with no recognition of corresponding costs.
Balance Sheet
as at September 30 2016

Fixed Assets
- Tangible assets: £804,176
- Investments: £100

Current Assets
- Debtors: £343,687
- Bank and cash: £1,003,063
- Third party bank accounts: £2,461

Creditors
- Amounts falling due within one year: £445,324
- Net current assets: £903,887

The funds of the charity
- Unrestricted reserved
  - Revaluation reserve: £372,790
  - Fixed asset reserve: £431,386
  - Working capital reserve: £375,000
  - Land and project fund: £283,110
  - Accumulated surplus: £19,242
- Restricted reserves: £364,923

Company Statement of Financial Activities
Incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 30 September 2016

Income and endowments from
- Donations and legacies: £25
- Investment income: £3,422
- Incoming resources from charitable activities: £2,493,604
- Other incoming resources: £3,773

Total: £2,500,624

Expenditure on
- Charitable activities: £2,580,500

Total resources expended: £2,580,500

Net expenditure/income: £-79,876

Reconciliation of funds
- Total funds brought forward: £1,464,137
- Total funds carried forward: £1,564,261

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. Full accounts available on request.

Thanks to our funding partners:
- Clyde & Avon Valley Landscape Partnership
- Clackmannanshire Council
- Dedridge Environmental Ecology
- Dalmahoy Estates Office
- Falkirk Council
- Falkirk Community Trust
- Forestry Commission Scotland
- Glasgow Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership
- Greggs Foundation
- Heartlands
- Inner Forth Landscape Initiative
- Land Trust
- North Lanarkshire Council
- RSPB
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Government Food and Drink Scotland
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- South Lanarkshire Council
- Sustrans
- Sport Scotland
- Transport Scotland
- West Lothian Council