

Many happy returns to Friends of the Earth Scotland



Scotland's leading environmental campaign group mark their 35th anniversary today,

Ensuring justice for people and the environment has been the main objective of Friends of the Earth Scotland for those three and a half decades.

Author and loyal supporter of Friends of the Earth Scotland and former Chair of Friends of the Earth International, Mairi MacArthur, has marked the birthday with her own reflections of the organisation.

"Hearing activists years ago from Brazil or Malaysia talk of social justice, human dignity and the need to hold those in power to account was an eye-opener. Those were the broader goals that underpinned their fight for the environment.

"Over many years now I've been struck by how well and how strongly FoE Scotland has developed a similar approach. Whether it be outdated and undemocratic legal rulings, poorly researched planning applications, or corporate decisions that run counter to ethical stances claimed by a company; FoES prods us into awareness that these are the kind of contemporary realities that crucially affect progress toward a fairer, healthier world.

"Indeed, what those responsible often need is a good poke in the eye. So, FoES, keep it up!"

In its first 35 years FoE Scotland has campaigned to convince the government to accept they had to restore grants for

removing lead from drinking water in 1992, talked about job creation linked with the environment in 1995 (a message which is only now part of mainstream thinking), lobbied on European chemicals' legislation, and help defeat the Harris superquarry and the Hunterston coal-fired power station. They also played a major part in helping shape Scotland's world-leading climate change legislation.

FoES have used inflatable chainsaws, dinosaurs and white elephants to creatively campaign on important environmental issues of the day. Current work includes stopping unconventional gas proposals near Falkirk, pushing for a specialist tribunal to hear environmental cases, highlighting air pollution on our cities, pressing for delivery of Scotland's climate targets and promoting community ownership of renewable energy schemes.

Dr Richard Dixon, Director of Friends of the Earth Scotland, said: "It is a privilege to lead the Scottish part of the world's largest grassroots environmental campaigning organisation. Over the last 35 years we have fought and beaten damaging developments, and have promoted positive changes which are making Scotland a more environmentally just country. Despite these successes, there is still plenty of work to do to protect the environment here and around the world."