

Charity contact information



John Muir Birthplace Charitable Trust

Scottish Charity Number: SC028244

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Website <https://www.jmbt.org.uk/about/john-muir-birthplace-charitable-trust/>

Twitter: @JM_Birthplace

Facebook: JMBirthplace

Charity Trustees

1. Jacqueline Bell – **Dunbar Community Council**
2. Daisy Clark – **John Muir Trust**
3. Cllr. Norman Hampshire – **East Lothian Council**
4. Emily Henderson – **John Muir Trust**
5. Liz McLean (Secretary & Co-Treasurer)- **Friends of John Muir's Birthplace**
6. Cllr. John McMillan – **East Lothian Council**
7. Duncan Smeed (Chair & Co-Treasurer) – **Co-option**

Objectives and activities

The Trust was established to advance the education of the public concerning the life and works of John Muir and particularly concerning the ideals of environmental conservation propounded by him. The Trust seeks to pursue these objectives by any appropriate means including:

- i. The conservation and interpretation of his birthplace at 126 High Street, Dunbar, and other places or objects associated with him.
- ii. The promotion of the ideals of holistic conservation through the use of his birthplace and related places and objects.
- iii. The encouragement of public participation in environmental conservation projects.
- iv. The promotion of research into, and the interpretation of the life and work of John Muir and environmental conservation, generally.
- v. The participation in projects for promoting the causes and ideals of environmental conservation.

The Year's Activities, Events, Projects and Visits 2021-22

During the course of the year the trustees continued the programme of improvements and refurbishment of the Birthplace. The refurbishments undertaken included repairs and enhancements to the permanent exhibition; maintenance of the décor, fabric and internal facilities.

Maintaining the high quality of the physical fabric of the building and its contents, along with the regular updates to the appearance and content of the Birthplace website, as well as the very helpful and friendly staff, have undoubtedly helped to maintain the very positive comments from visitors. Due to ongoing COVID-19 considerations, however, a physical book is still not made available to visitors and so the comments by visitors are restricted to comments submitted online. Although there are relatively few TripAdvisor reviews over the course of the 2021-22 season the fact that over the past 8 years 69% of reviews rate the visit as *Excellent* and a further 29% of reviews as *Very Good*, is indicative of the very high regard visitors have for the quality of the Birthplace interpretative exhibitions and content and the warm and informative welcome that staff and volunteers provide to visitors.

These online reviews and the visitor ratings of the Birthplace on TripAdvisor have maintained its Certificate of Excellence status for the eighth year in a row and, as a result, the Birthplace maintains its entry in the TripAdvisor Hall of Fame.

Inevitably the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of the Birthplace over the first 4 months of 2021 and the necessary steps to mitigate the pandemic imposed significant constraints to comply with safe practices for re-opening, has had a major impact on visits by tourists, school groups and John Muir Award groups when compared to pre-pandemic seasons. However, since mid-2021 numbers have been slowly improving and have recovered to c. 85% of the pre-pandemic numbers with a trajectory that suggests we will achieve, or even exceed, typical visitor numbers.

In-person activities and events were also impacted during the past year but there's been an increase in the number of workshops for children that have been delivered. Like last year, staff have concentrated on enhancing the online content of the Birthplace website and new and updated resources continue to be made available. Exhibitions and activities are also promoted via the news section of the Birthplace website¹. Potential exhibitors are encouraged to apply to showcase their work in the Birthplace and in November 2021 the opportunity to be part of a 'Climate Call to Action' was announced². Exhibitions hosted between June 2021 and June 2022 included:

- Water-way; Following the Papanua Water to Belhaven Bay³
 - An exhibition of paintings and poetry included in a limited edition book by Anna Davis with a film by Eric Fernandez-Baca Manning.
- The Nature Library⁴
 - The Nature Library is a reference library and reading space connecting people to land, sky and sea, making awe and wonder for the world a part of the everyday.
- The Nature Library: Meet the Artist drop-in⁵
 - The first of several meet the artist drop in sessions with The Nature Library during April and May 2022
- Happy 184th Birthday John Muir!⁶
 - During The Nature Library exhibition period visitors would share their own love of nature by making their own mini-books for the library. For the celebration of Muir's birthday some of these homemade books were showcased.

¹ <https://www.jmbt.org.uk/news/>

² <https://www.jmbt.org.uk/2021/11/30/exhibit-with-us/>

³ <https://www.jmbt.org.uk/2022/02/04/water-way-following-the-papanua-water-to-belhaven-bay/>

⁴ <https://www.jmbt.org.uk/2022/04/02/the-nature-library/>

⁵ <https://www.jmbt.org.uk/2022/04/29/the-nature-library-meet-the-artist-drop-in/>

⁶ <https://www.jmbt.org.uk/2022/04/21/happy-184th-birthday-john-muir/>

Structure, governance and management

Type of governing document

Memorandum of Association in accordance with The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended) and The Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations Regulations.

Trustee recruitment and appointment

Trustees are appointed by the four organisations identified in the Memorandum of Association, which are East Lothian Council (2 trustees), the John Muir Trust (2 trustees), the Friends of John Muir's Birthplace (1 trustee) and Dunbar Community Council (1 trustee). In addition, trustees are occasionally co-opted when suitable candidates are identified and they have the enthusiasm, skills and knowledge to support the aims and objectives of the Trust.

Achievements and performance

Some of the main achievements have been summarised in *The Year's Activities, Events, Projects and Visits 2021-22* section above. Many of these achievements have been focused on the enhancement of the visitor experience and the feedback from visitors to the Birthplace is overwhelmingly positive. See, for example, the Tripadvisor reviews⁷.

Additional achievements are mainly focused on tackling the challenges of promoting, sustaining and resourcing the Birthplace. The Trustees have been resolute and determined in tackling such challenges with the intention of securing the long-term future of the Birthplace. Achievements during the financial period include the introduction of an online donation facility⁸ and the planning of the refurbishment and enhancement of the Birthplace's legacy exhibition on the top floor of the building. The additional content will focus on the Climate Challenge that affects us all and what needs to be done to address this specific challenge. A fundraising subgroup involving a number of Trustees and Birthplace staff has met on several occasions during the financial period. A primary focus of this subgroup has been to identify the key elements of specific fund-raising requirements and potential sponsors to secure the long-term relevance and viability of the Birthplace.

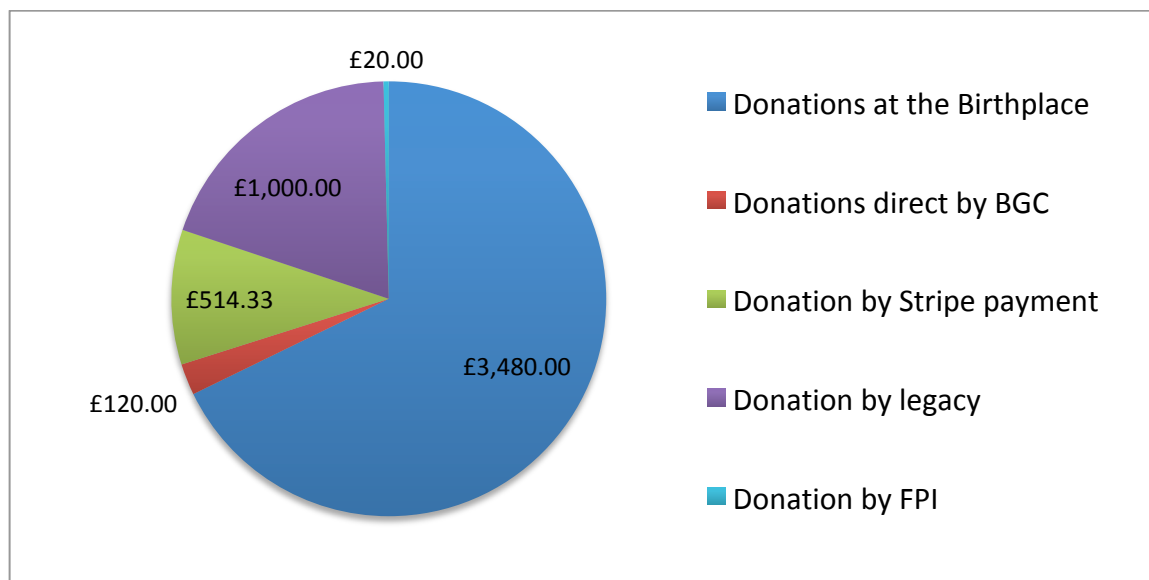
⁷ https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g190923-d3396934-Reviews-John_Muir_s_Birthplace-Dunbar_East_Lothian_Scotland.html

⁸ <https://www.jmbt.org.uk/2021/07/13/donate-online/>

Financial review

ACCOUNT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR TO 12 JUNE 2022

INCOME Total income for 12 months - £5,134.33 broken down as follows:



1. Grants: No grants were received during the year

2. Donations

A facility (**Stripe**) for supporters to make online donations was set up in May 2021. **Stripe** donations totalling £514.33 were received for the 12 month period to 12 June 2022.

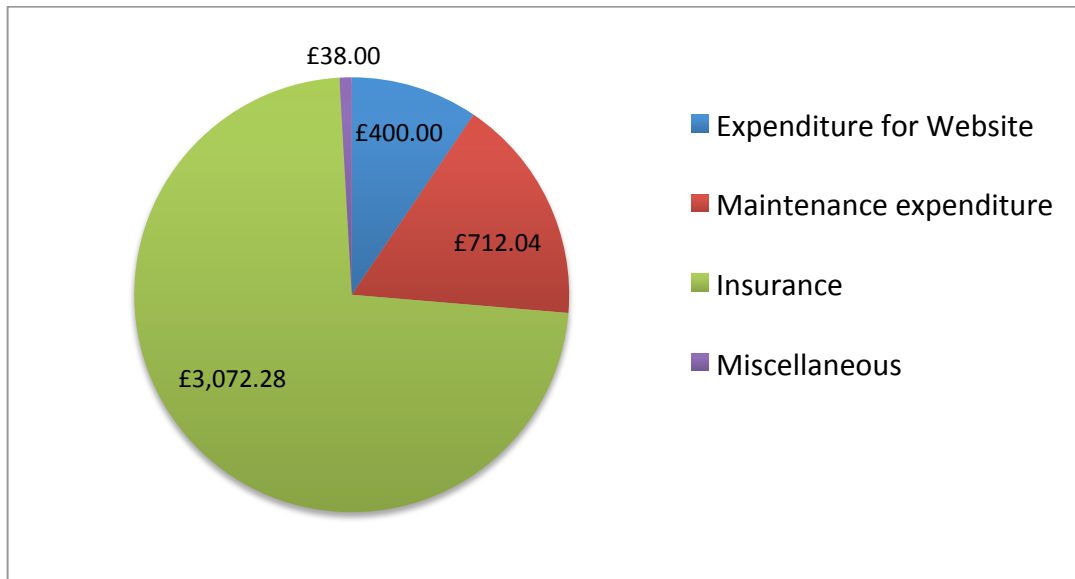
Birthplace donations are via the donations box at John Muir's Birthplace. Donations totalling £3,480.00 were received for the period.

Donations paid direct by **BCG** totalling £120 were received and a single payment of £20 was received by **FPI**.

3. Legacy

A legacy of £1,000.00 was received from the estate of a former supporter of the Dunbar John Muir's Association.

EXPENDITURE Total expenditure for 12 months - £4,223.32



1. Insurance: The insurance premium for JMB building and contents was £3,072.28

2. Website: Licence and hosting by Control X Digital costs were £400 for the period.

4. House maintenance: A total of £712.04 was paid directly by the Trust to local contractors for emergency drainage and other works. Invoices for expenditure for statutory inspections and general repairs has yet to be received from East Lothian Council, which manages this on behalf of the Trust. A request has been made to ELC for this and expenditure will be included in the next period.

5. Miscellaneous: This sum of £38 relates to general expenses.

Statement of the charity's policy on reserves

The Trust aims to maintain a reserve sum of £20,000 to cover emergency repairs. Currently, although income for this period is marginally higher than expenditure, there is additional expenditure for statutory inspections and maintenance for this period which has yet to be invoiced and will be carried over to next year's accounts. The Trust is now focusing on raising long term funding for core operational and maintenance costs to provide future security for the centre.

Future plans

The Trust was established in 1998 and the Birthplace opened 5 years later in 2003. The 20th anniversary of the Birthplace will be celebrated in 2023 and plans for the Trust in this year will be mainly focussed on (a) securing the long-term

future of the Birthplace with the help of sponsorship; (b) finalising the plans for the refurbishment of the top-floor Legacy exhibits and the introduction of the Climate Challenge material; (c) identifying potential grants/funds for the repair and upgrading of the building to become more energy efficient, etc.

Declaration

Signed on behalf of the charity trustees:

Print name

Designation

Date