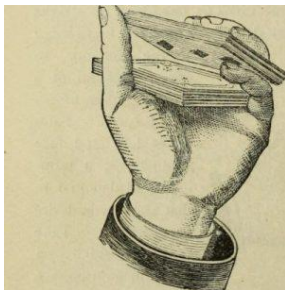


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# SURF ANNUAL REPORT

## 2022/23

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**This report summarises SURF's  
operations over the financial year  
ending 31 March 2023**

**It is presented for the general interest of  
SURF Members and stakeholders**

This report includes information on:

- Activity, Outputs and Outcomes (section 1, p2)
- Key Policy Consultation Inputs (section 2, p10)
- Website, E-bulletin and Social Media Developments (section 3, p12)
- Membership (section 4, p13)
- Board and Staff Team (section 5, p14)

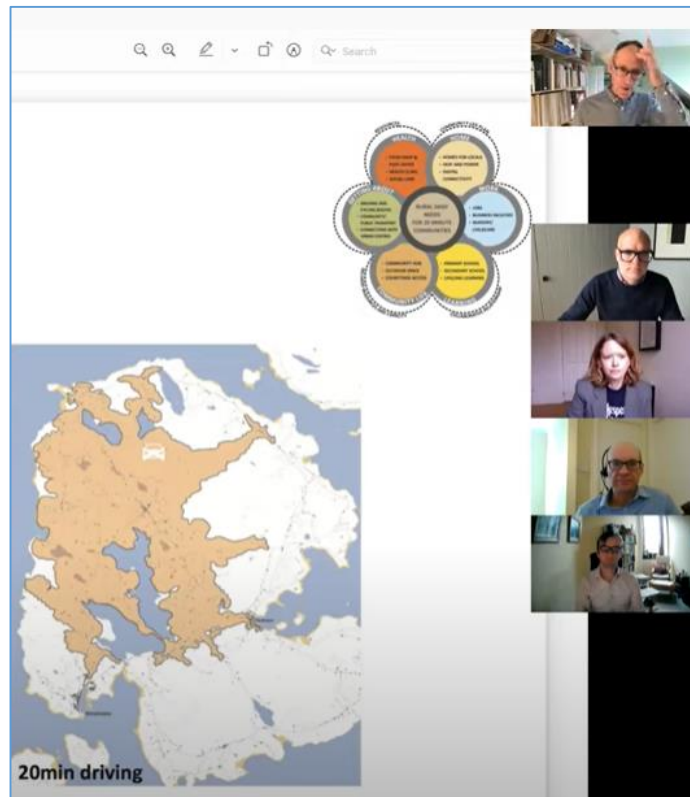
# 1 Activity, Outputs and Outcomes

A brief summary of the main activities over 2022/23 follows:

**20 Minute Neighbourhood Regeneration Practice Network:** SURF's Practice Network is open to practitioners with an interest in the 20 minute neighbourhood concept, and responsibility for the regeneration of disadvantaged places in Scotland. The network size is currently 301, with 50-100 attending meetings.

The policy calls for the creation of more places in which it is desirable for people to meet almost all of their essential daily needs – including employment, education, health care and shopping – within comfortable walking distance from their home. SURF provides regular network meetings, shares information in a dedicated newsletter, provides learning reports and case studies, and arranges national conferences. We also provide feedback to policy-makers.

In 2022/23, we held a National 20 Minute Neighbourhood Conference, which brought together more than 50 practitioners with key speakers from Living Streets, the Academy of Urbanism and transport charity CoMo UK, in addition to the experienced independent urban planning expert Nick Wright, and Natalie Whittle, author of *'The 15 Minute City: Global Change Through Local Living'*.



To support cross-geographic participation, meetings are held online

We held a further four network meetings online, featuring guest experts from national and local government, academia, charities and community groups, with average attendances of 40-60.

The Scottish Government values the network, and has commissioned SURF to expand it into a 'People in Place' Practice Network in 2022/23, covering additional themes including Community Wealth Building, the Place Principle and Local Place Plans.

More information at: [www.surf.scot/20-minute-practice-network/](http://www.surf.scot/20-minute-practice-network/)

**Alliance for Action:** SURF's *Alliance for Action* initiative continued to evolve, following exit strategies completed during the pandemic in Rothesay (mid-2020) and East Kirkcaldy (early 2021). In early 2021, an independent evaluation of activity in the three current sites of Dunoon, Govan and Langholm over 2018-20 by Iconic Consulting, reported favourably on its development.

The report clarified the programme met its twin objectives:

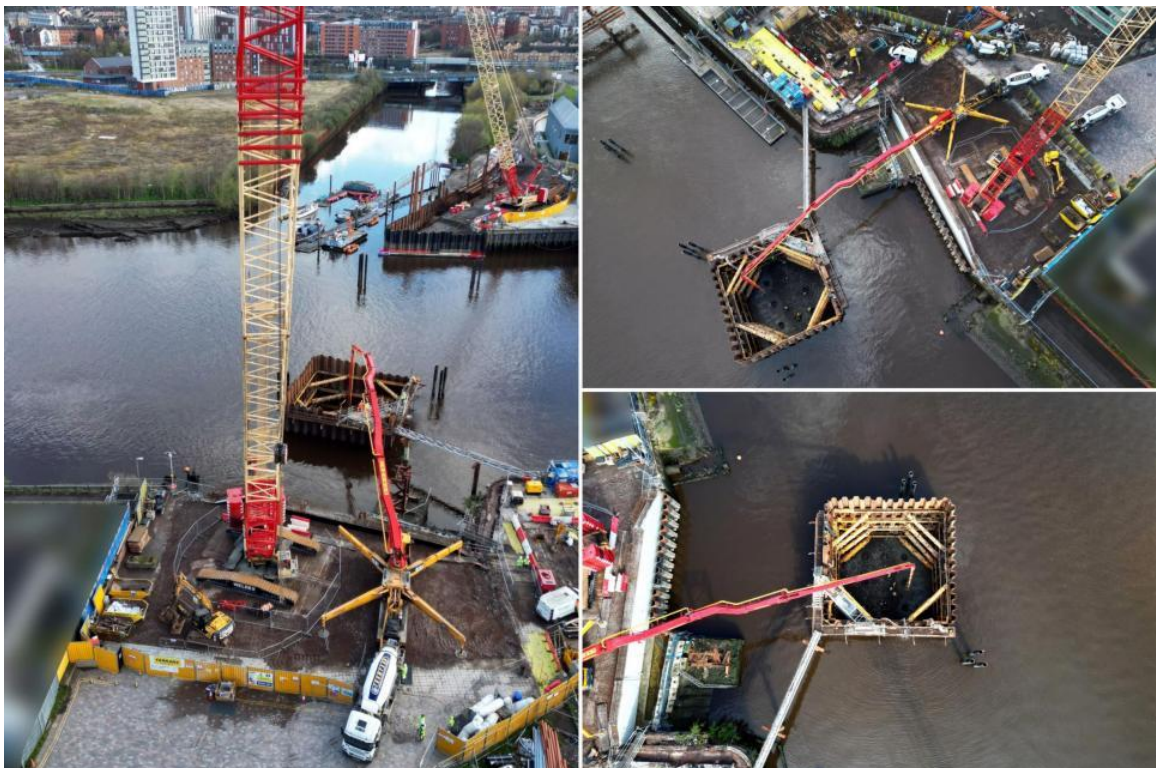
*“Alliance for Action activity met the programme aims... [the programme] helped strengthen community resilience and promote practical regeneration outcomes... by sharing learning, the programme also enhanced knowledge among SURF’s network and strategic partners.”*

In **Dunoon**, Ann Campbell, SURF’s part-time Dunoon Facilitator, made significant progress in securing buy-in from local residents and partner agencies, to establish Dunoon Community Development Trust, alongside project delivery outcomes in heritage, economic development and tourism, active travel, business networking, town centre regeneration and other areas.

The Development Trust will act as a sustainable delivery vehicle for community regeneration aspirations in the longer term, after the town leaves the Alliance for Action programme. Ann’s SURF contract concluded at the end of March 2023. She successfully applied for resources to the Scottish Government’s Investing in Communities Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund, to support three new positions in the Trust.

Namely, a full-time Partnership and Development Manager; a part-time Information & Engagement Coordinator; and a part-time Wellbeing Volunteering Programme Coordinator. Post-recruitment, SURF will work closely with the new team as Dunoon evolves from an active Alliance for Action site to one requiring less SURF support.

In **Govan**, SURF is an active member of the Steering Group of the Central Govan Action Plan, which among other responsibilities, is handling City Deal backed development plans for the major Water Row development site and Govan-Partick bridge, construction of which reached the halfway stage in Spring 2023.



*The Govan-Partick bridge is driving a great deal of regeneration activity led by Central Govan Action Plan, which SURF sits on*

We also provide support to local community groups and engage with public, private and voluntary sector partners on a range of regeneration activities and planned investments in greater Govan. Govan will continue as a 'light touch' Alliance for Action site in 2023/24.

In **Langholm**, Mairi Telford, SURF's part-time Langholm Facilitator, continued to support progress towards two key priority themes agreed in the Langholm Community Action Plan, in enhancing the town centre and the tourism offer, prior to the contract end date of 30 June 2022. Mairi successfully applied for a number of community led tourism grant awards, produced an impressive tourism guide for Langholm and the surrounding Eskdale region, and managed a £60k Shopfront Improvement Programme grant fund.

Langholm exited the Alliance for Action in mid-2022, and existing community groups, several of which manage staff and oversee regeneration activity, took over progress. SURF continues to liaise with local groups, several of which are SURF members, and will leave a strong legacy. Mairi completed a post-exit evaluation in Autumn 2022, which was shared with the Scottish Government, and which contained useful learning outcomes for other Alliance for Action sites.

We also investigated the potential of establishing two **new sites** through several channels:

- Reviewing the most recent 50 Community Charrettes in Scotland, and investigating deprivation levels in places covered, engagement levels in pre-Charrette and Charrette activities, momentum towards delivery of post-Charrette priority projects, and whether any places are participating in other place programmes.
- Liaising with national bodies including Architecture & Design Scotland, Coalfields Regeneration Trust and the Scottish Community Development Centre, to enquire as to whether any of the places they work in through various programmes, are well-suited to the Alliance for Action.
- Liaising with nine local authorities – Aberdeenshire, Angus, East Dunbartonshire, Fife, Glasgow, Midlothian, North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and West Lothian – who expressed a desire to collaborate with SURF in the Alliance for Action.
- Engaging in video meetings with local stakeholders to explore a shortlist of 12 candidate places in our longlist.
- Visiting community groups and public sector stakeholders on location in four leading candidates in a shortlist: Blackburn (West Lothian), Garnock Valley (North Ayrshire), Girvan (South Ayrshire) and Peterhead (Aberdeenshire).

**Peterhead** was selected as our first new site. Linda Hendry, a highly skilled manager who previously worked for Aberdeenshire Council and the Rediscover Peterhead Business Improvement District, took up post as Peterhead Facilitator on 16 January. Linda has made significant progress in engaging with local stakeholders, and reviewing consultation and strategy reports, with a view to identifying priority projects for initial development support.



## ‘Peterhead has so much potential’: New drive to transform town centre into vibrant place for locals and visitors

by Denny Andonova

January 17 2023, 6:00am

Share Comment 0



*The Scotsman, Press & Journal, Daily Record and others reported on SURF's new Alliance for Action sites*

**Girvan** was selected as a second new site. Key community priority themes including town centre regeneration, social and economic opportunities for young people, growing the visitor economy, improving waterfront connectivity, and bringing vacant buildings back into use. A recruitment process was launched in Spring 2023 and Zanne Domoney-Lyttle was recruited as the Local Facilitator. Zanne has a wealth of valuable experience as a Funding Manager, Community Development Officer and Project Officer in the voluntary sector in South Ayrshire.

Concurrent to local progress and development, we also continued to deliver the **SURF's Heritage and Creativity Alliance (SH&CA)** initiative. SH&CA formally engages 10 national heritage and arts agencies who are keen to explore the potential benefits of improved collaborative working in the context of *Alliance for Action* learning outcomes. The group was convened digitally and in person several times in 2022/23, including study visits to Greenock and Edinburgh to explore the specific context of arts and heritage in community settings.

More at: [www.surf.scot/alliance-for-action/](http://www.surf.scot/alliance-for-action/)

**2022 SURF Annual Conference:** Our 2022 event took place in Edinburgh's CoSLA Centre (pictured below) on Thursday 25 August. It asked provocative questions, based on SURF network demand, about what practical changes can be expected from Community Wealth Building and Levelling Up investments in our struggling communities.

The event featured Scottish Government Minister Tom Arthur, senior civil servants from the Scottish and UK Governments, project managers in various Scottish regions, and leading figures in economic development, social enterprise, housing and community ownership. Following keynote presentations and panel sessions, the poet, performer and writer Kevin P. Dilday provided a memorable performance.

## Job hunt for person to help reg town and 'make a real differen

The successful applicant will turn local demand for improvement- including

AYRSHIRE LIVE By Abi Smillie

06:38, 5 FEB 2023



The Girvan Facilitator will assist in the development of projects in the town (image: DAILY RECORD)



SURF's Annual Conference asked if we are simply "shuffling the deck" around regeneration policies – or adding value with new concepts like Community Wealth Building and Levelling Up

145 bookings were taken for the event, and a waiting list was in operation. More than 120 attended on the day. Leading Annual Conference participants were invited to reflect on the event and one of its two themes – Community Wealth Building.

The academic John McCarthy, Allan Farmer of Corra Foundation, Colette McGarva from the Community Development Alliance Scotland, and Jocelyn Cunliffe from the Architectural Heritage Society were among those to share their views on what difference Community Wealth Building can realistically make at the community level.

Submissions can be read on the SURF website: <https://www.surf.scot/category/by-issue/autumn-2022/>

**2022 SURF Awards:** The 24th SURF Awards process launched for applications on 9 June 2022, via a launch event aligned with the Scottish Government's designated theme, Scotland's Year of Stories. The timescale followed the standard process, with a June opening of the applications window, an early September closing date, assessments, shortlisting and site visits in September and October, and a Presentation Dinner in early December.

The 2022 SURF Awards application window closed in early September with 61 applications received. This is significantly above the target of 50 applications and testament to busy cross-sector and cross-platform promotional activity by Emma Scott.

A panel of 20 judges then shortlisted three applications in each the five categories, making site visits to all 15 before agreeing on category winners. The SURF Awards process concluded with a successful Presentation Dinner on 8 December 2022, at which around 300 cross-sector guests gathered.



The following projects were announced as winners by Scottish Government Minister Tom Arthur:

- Housing and Regeneration: **Taighean a' Chaiseil** (Staffin, Skye). A £1.6million regeneration project to address the housing, health and business needs of Staffin, delivering six new family homes.
- Creative Regeneration: **Alchemy Film & Arts** (Hawick, Scottish Borders). Alchemy provide year-round access to cultural and creative learning opportunities and deliver Scotland's biggest experimental film festival.
- Community Led Regeneration: **Bressay Development Ltd – Speldiburn** (Bressay, Shetland). A community led venture to repurpose a closed school and multi-court in order to retain communal space and ensure community ownership of the facilities.
- Supporting Youth Employability: **The Larder** (West Lothian). Working across West Lothian, The Larder provide educational and work pathway support for young people unable to identify their next step.
- Improving Scotland's Places: **Alloa** (Clackmannanshire). In response to challenges, Clackmannanshire Council, the community, third sector and businesses have come together to shift the dial on the social, economic and environmental issues facing the town centre.



£6k in booking income was received, £1k above the budgeted target. The after dinner speaker was writer, comedian and co-author of 'Brickwork: A Biography of The Arches', David Bratchpiece. Feedback from guests and participating projects was very positive.

For more on the 2022 SURF Awards process, please visit: [www.surf.scot/surf-awards/](http://www.surf.scot/surf-awards/)



Scottish Government Minister Tom Arthur with winning SURF Award project representatives

**Our Place:** SURF contributed materials to a new website promoting the benefits of place-based approaches to community regeneration. 'Our Place' launched in November 2021, as a joint effort by the Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland and Architecture and Design Scotland.

SURF contributed to the website's development, producing content and providing feedback on draft designs. The website features case studies, signposts to resources, toolkits and policy papers, including introductory materials for those unfamiliar with the discipline.

Visit the 'Our Place' website at: <https://www.ourplace.scot/>

**Place Programme Exchange Group:** SURF established this group of ten national bodies who run place-based programmes with some parallels to the *Alliance for Action*, with a view to sharing project development and learning outcomes, and exploring collaboration and policy influencing opportunities.

The group met quarterly in 2021/22, and is in the process of expanding to include new members such as Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Community Renewal and Foundation Scotland. A successful joint report and associated conference event, 'Working Better Together in Place', were produced in May and August 2021 respectively.

For more, visit: [www.surf.scot/working-better-together-in-place/](http://www.surf.scot/working-better-together-in-place/)

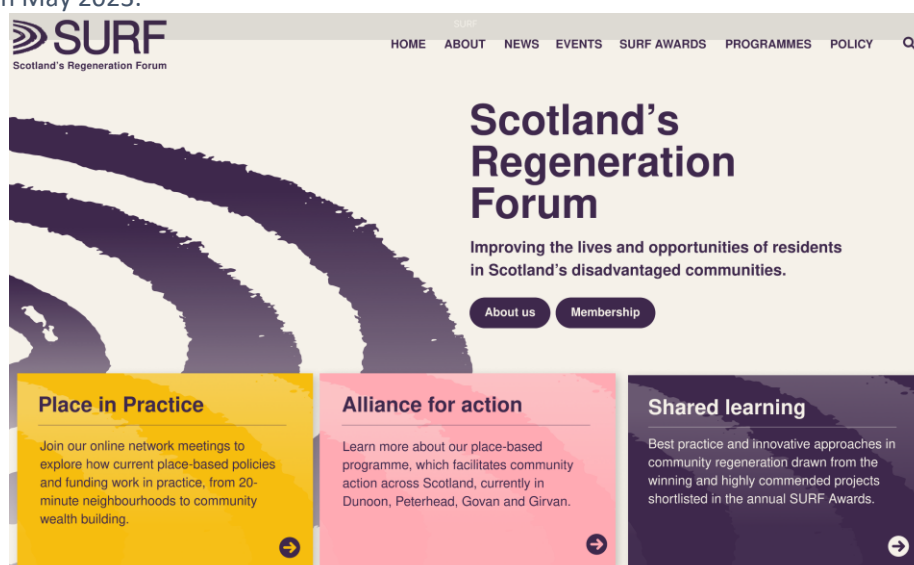




*The visual theme for the 'Our Place' website; SURF authored some of the content on case studies and resources*

**Presentations and Profile:** SURF's role and reputation has been further enhanced by the delivery of keynote presentations and networking at regeneration-related conferences and gatherings throughout 2022/24. Among others, keynote presentations were provided by SURF colleagues at national conferences organised by Among others, keynote presentations were provided by SURF colleagues at national conferences organised by, among others, the Association of Town Centre Managers, Community Development Alliance Scotland, Heriot Watt University, the Poverty Alliance and the Scottish Housing Network.

**Website** – Design company Infinite Eye were commissioned following a tendering process to develop a new SURF website and delivery of associated branding and communications services. Working closely with Euan and Emma, and with some feedback sought from Trustees, several design iterations were produced and populated with content over 2022/23. The new website will launch in May 2023.



SURF's new website is designed to be significantly more engaging and accessible

## Participation:

Event attendances across 2022/23 are as follows:

- 20 Minute Neighbourhood Meetings and Conference (four events) – 343
- 2022 SURF Awards Workshop Series (four events) – 219
- 2023 Annual Conference – 125
- 2022 SURF Awards Presentation Dinner – 260
- SURF Heritage and Creativity Alliance Network Meetings – 21

This comprises 968 event participants in 2022/23, counting physical and digital event attendees. This compares with 1123 participants in 2021/22, a fall of 155 or 14%, albeit SURF's Annual Conference was split over three online events in 2021, and delivered as a one-day in-person only event in 2022.

## 2 INFLUENCING POLICY

SURF engaged in a range of high-profile policy debates and forums. Our 2022/23 activity included:

**2021 SURF Manifesto:** We continue to promote 2021 Manifesto themes in various channels, including by developing new policy links around climate change and transport. We took opportunities to highlight SURF 2021 Manifesto policy recommendations, including increasing investment in retrofitting in housing, bringing empty homes back into use, and taking action to increase provision and usage of bus services, in relevant discussions and consultations.

**Community Wealth Building:** The SURF Chief Executive sits on the Scottish Government's Community Wealth Building Steering Group, and in early 2023, SURF responded formally to a Scottish Government consultation on Community Wealth Building. SURF provided feedback on legislative options for implementing the new approach to establishing more sustainable local economies, and drew attention to wider barriers around implementation. We also engaged with a wide range of players, including Community Land Scotland, the Corra Foundation, Poverty Alliance, and Social Enterprise Scotland in unofficial pre-consultation engagements with a view to sharing respective network views and amplifying shared interests.

**Cross Party Groups:** SURF is a member of the Architecture & Built Environment, Poverty, and Towns & Town Centres Cross Party Groups. SURF regularly contributed to meetings of all three in 2022/23.

**Local Government, Housing and Planning:** SURF worked closely with the Scottish Parliament's Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee, which holds oversight of key regeneration topics including community empowerment, local governance and town centres. We responded to stakeholder views, arranged a study visit in Govan for Committee Members, and liaised with the Scottish Parliament's Participation and Communities Team to facilitate online workshops during Committee evidence gathering sessions.



*In Spring 2022, SURF organised a study visit in Govan for MSPs on the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee*

**Land Reform:** SURF responded to a Scottish Government consultation towards a new Land Reform Bill that aims to diversify land ownership patterns while progressing linked policy agendas around climate change, economic development and community empowerment. SURF shared views on proposed new obligations for 'large-scale' landholdings, highlighted the different rural and urban dynamics in land reform, and argued that policy-makers should take action to implement the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement in practice.

**Ministerial Engagement:** The SURF Chief Executive has a schedule of quarterly video meetings with the Minister for Community Wealth and Public Finance, Tom Arthur MSP. Meetings are also attended by senior civil servants, and used to discuss emerging policy developments, and share reports and learning outcomes from SURF activities. In March 2023, the new First Minister amended the Minister's portfolio, with regeneration functions now shared with the Minister for Local Government Empowerment and Planning, Joe FitzPatrick MSP. A 2023 SURF organised study visit to Dunoon with Joe FitzPatrick is under discussion.

**Planning:** SURF continued to promote 2021/22 activity on Local Place Plans and the Fourth National Planning Framework: via Parliamentary Committees, Cross Party Groups and the Scottish Parliament's Participation and Communities Team.

**Policy Committees:** SURF attended regular meetings of the Poverty Alliance Policy Forum, SCVO Policy Network and SCDI Policy Committee

**Public Finance:** SURF provided a response to a consultation by the Scottish Parliament's Finance and Public Administration Committee, on the nation's public finances in 2022-23 and the impact of COVID-18. SURF's response drew from the 2021 Manifesto and recent Annual Conferences.

**Transport:** SURF engaged with a Transport Scotland consultation on STPR2, which provides recommendations to Scottish Government Ministers on transport policy and investment decision making over the 2022-2042 era. SURF welcomed recommendations around access to affordable public transport, active travel, strategic connectivity, and decarbonisation of the transport network, but called for more attention on bus service provision, community engagement, and a



more joined-up experience between active travel and public transport.

**Wellbeing:** A Private Member's Bill on Wellbeing and Sustainable Development was proposed to the Scottish Parliament, and SURF responded to an open consultation on the Bill. Among the proposals are new legislation based on clear definitions of sustainable development, an accountability structure centred on a new Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Commissioner, and robust reporting and scrutiny mechanisms.

*SURF consultation response papers are available online at: [www.surf.scot/consultations](http://www.surf.scot/consultations)*

### 3 Website, E-bulletin and Social Media Development

#### ***SURF E-bulletin***

Each month, SURF distributes an e-bulletin featuring information on upcoming SURF events, SURF Awards and Alliance for Action developments, new website content and publications, opportunities to get involved in SURF network consultations, and general regeneration policy and practice news.

E-bulletins are circulated to more than 2,200 SURF contacts, and are also available to view via SURF's social media channels and website.



***SURF's busy monthly ebulletin has a circulation exceeding 2200***

#### ***SURF Website***

SURF's website is regularly updated with news items, SURF reports and information on forthcoming events.

In 2022/23, statistical reports show consistency in attracting 500-2000 unique visitors per week,

spiking when SURF's e-bulletin distribution encourages click-throughs to news and events items.

Design company Infinite Eye worked with SURF to develop a new website in 2022/23, which is ready for launch in May 2023.

### ***Social Media***

SURF is active in several social media channels including Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and YouTube. We have 4031 followers on Twitter – a growth of 100 since March 2022 – and encourage 'live tweeting' from our events via dedicated hashtags.

We sent at least 50 tweets a month in 2022/23, promoting information on SURF activities and Scottish regeneration-related news, events and policy developments. We also published seven videos on our YouTube channel with an average viewing of 173.

## **4 SURF Membership**

As of 31 March 2023, SURF had 334 members:

- 7 sponsors
- 240 organisation members
- 44 community groups
- 43 individuals

The membership levels are largely unchanged, with SURF having 337 members at the start of the financial year. SURF receives strong support from seven key delivery partners:

- Creative Scotland
- Glasgow City Council
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Museums Galleries Scotland
- Scottish Enterprise
- Scottish Government
- Wheatley Group

The current membership list is available on our website at: [www.surf.scot/our-members/](http://www.surf.scot/our-members/)

## 5 Board and Staff Team

### *Board of Directors*

As of 31 March 2022, the SURF Board comprised 9 individuals:

- Laura Black
- Hazel Cross
- Diane Gray (Vice Chair)
- Brian MacDonald (Chair)
- Mariarose Ngosi
- Andrew Ormston
- Ian Wall
- Iain Wardrop
- Kate Wimpres

There were seven resignations in 2022/23: Martin Avila, Linda Christie, Alistair Grimes, Annette Hastings, David Hume, Susan Jones, Robert McDowall and Mohammed Razaq.

### *Staff Team*

SURF's directly employed staff team over 2022/23 was as follows:

- Chief Executive – Euan Leitch (full time)
- Policy Manager – Derek Rankine (full time)
- Information, Communications and Events Manager – Emma Scott (full time)
- Dunoon Facilitator – Ann Campbell (2.5 days/week)
- Langholm Facilitator – Mairi Telford-Jammeh (2 days/week)
- Peterhead Facilitator – Linda Hendry (2.5 days/week)
- Financial Administrator – Alison Boyd (1 day/week)

During 2022/23, there were several changes to Alliance for Action contracts. Contracts for Mairi Telford and Ann Campbell expired on 30 June 2022 and 31 March 2023 respectively. Linda Hendry joined the organisation as Peterhead Facilitator on 26 January 2023.

For more on SURF, visit our website: [www.surf.scot](http://www.surf.scot)

#### **SURF – Scotland's Regeneration Forum**

Unit 15, Six Harmony Row, Glasgow, G51 3BA Tel: 0141 440 0122 / Email: [info@surf.scot](mailto:info@surf.scot) / Website: [www.surf.scot](http://www.surf.scot)

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