

Annual Report on Activities from August 2024 – April 2025

Directors of Monimail Tower Project Ltd

Scottish charity number SC049887

v2. April 2024

1 Introduction

Our report to the last AGM in August 2024 included events up to that time, this year we are continuing to report on activities with our AGM cycle rather than strictly our financial year which coincides with the calendar year. This is to make our Directors report more relevant to those present.

We have continued to have a good number of Directors who are all active in various ways. The Directors hold regular meetings, typically every 4-6 weeks, and enjoy a meal together beforehand.

We still haven't recovered from Covid in terms of membership numbers. We recognise we need to work more on outreach, and are doing that via our new website and social media. Magda continues to do top work on the website, and it looks great, lot of pictures as well as content created by other members.

We're going through a period of change at Monimail Tower as all existing residents have decided to move out to their own houses over late winter and early spring. Therefore we no longer have residents, or anyone currently living on site. This has implications for site safety & supervision, rent income, site maintenance. The Directors are developing plans to address this.

2 Listed building structures - Tower and walls

Tower

The tower continues to be popular with visitors. We have instituted an online donation facility via a QR code in order to help recover some of the cost of keeping the Tower open and free to visit.

We regularly make a recorded inspection of the Tower to assess building and fire safety.

The Winery is under/unused and we think there is an opportunity to better use this space.

We have not progressed plans to consider letting the space because we have been focussing initially on a development process for the whole of Monimail Tower Project. This is discussed later.

Walls

No building work has been carried out on the walls or associated structures during this period.

Fruit Terrace

It's not clear whether the Fruit Terrace outside the wall to the west of the Orchard is part of the Listed Building designation because the boundaries and description are vague. However it is part of the designed landscape and we treat it as an important part of the walled garden heritage.

Over winter 24/25 we undertook a major piece of renovation work on the Terrace which included clearing vegetation, removing stumps (~50) with a large stump grinder, removal of hut remnants and clearing the Terrace of debris in order that it can be mowed. The intention is to create a useable space for events and camping.

We also included fresh plantings of fruit trees: apple, quince and plum. These were planted against the walls, where nails in the wall show there has been a long history of training fruit trees. <https://monimailtower.org/?p=1087>

We were successful in getting a £1000 grant from Fife Communities Climate Action Network's Seed and Development Fund which covered most of the costs. The justification is that we are creating an event space to further benefit our climate and environment related courses and events.

3 Other structures including the Segal House

Segal House

We've had a joiner Jason staying in the Segal House in the late winter early spring. He's stayed for free in return for refurbishing the downstairs bathroom which has been in a state of rebuilding for nearly a decade. The bathroom has been taken back to a bare shell, floor joist replaced, new flooring, new lively green lino (kindly donated by Forbo Nairn, Kirkcaldy. Many thanks to them.) A new shower and basin, white walls and ceiling, extractor fan have all been installed. It's now a really bright new bathroom. Thanks to all involved.

The Segal House has also had visits from a number of specialists in connection with bringing the house up to safety standard, and considering letting and HMO licencing. Fire detection alarms have all been renewed, as have fire extinguishers.

We continue to work on the maintenance backlog internally and externally. We have proposed to Centre for Alternative Technology that the Segal House is the subject of a student study looking at an eco-renovation of an eco-house. They have indicated that they have a student interested but decisions on projects will be made in May this year.

Main hut

No significant work has been carried out on the main hut, though Henry has fitted a wood stove in the workshop.

Gatehouse

No significant work has been carried out, but it's very useful for our small events.

4 Gardens

Allotments

We've got a strong group that continue to grow some great vegetables outside and in polytunnels. We also expanded the number of plots and allowed few new allotmenters to join.

One of the polytunnels was reskinned over the winter. We used some of the grant from Fife Communities Climate Action Network's Seed and Development Fund to pay most of the costs.

Main garden

Use of the main garden is in question at the moment as residents have left the house. We are going to let part of the main garden be used for more allotments.

Mieke is working on the amenity side with the intention of running more Garden Open Day events.

5 Orchard

The orchard continues to be managed in an extensive manner. There is potential for more fruit trees.

6 Woods

The scale of work in the winter was a little less than the previous few years. The main work was dealing with windblown trees – there were several. The arising firewood has been shared out between folk volunteering to do the work.

We have done some clearing along the fire and maintenance route in the woods.

7 Course and events

Equinox Bonfires

We ran an autumn and spring Equinox workdays and evening bonfires. Our main focus was final tidy up and clearing the fruit terrace of debris, and then planting the fruit trees on the Terrace.

Around 5pm we stopped work, brought out some tables and chairs to the terrace, and had a potluck supper around the fire. (<https://monimailtower.org/?p=850>)

Doors Open Day

In late 2024, we took part in the Doors Open Days. One of these had over 100 people visit. We provided tea and cake for a fee as well, which proved popular. We are intending to continue participating as it is a good publicity and outreach method.

Scything

Rob held a scything workshop in September - 10 participants
(<https://monimailtower.org/?p=850>)

Apple Day

We ran our annual apple day in mid October 2024. More than 40 people attended. It was a moderate crop of apples but with what other people brought we still produced a lot of juice. We had the press down from Tayport Community Garden, and produced several hundred litres of juice from our own apples and those that others had brought and got pressed for free. Lots of juice was taken for drinking and for making other produce including cider.
(<https://monimailtower.org/?p=900>)

Other Events

Fermentation workshop October 2024 - 10 participants
(<https://monimailtower.org/?p=956>)

Intention in Nature workshop by Jason in December - 10 participants
Drumming circles: three events - up to 15 participants each
(<https://monimailtower.org/?p=669>)

Earth building two 1 day courses by Rebeearth (for architectural technologists from all over Scotland) - 15 participants each (<https://monimailtower.org/?p=644>,

Special visitors

We were visited by a group of teenagers from Balwearie High Department of Additional Support - 15 participants (<https://monimailtower.org/?p=975>)

Local Place Plan

143 people voted on the Monimail Tower proposals for the Local Place Plan to build a small toilet block within the garden area. This will be helpful as we develop this proposal.
<https://monimailtower.org/?p=613>

8 Outlook

Monimail Tower Project continues to thrive, mainly as a result lots of work from local people, members and volunteers. The Directors also continue to put in a large Contribution in Kind to manage the organisation.

We have been going through a development process supported by Community Enterprise who provide 5 days consultancy for free. In this time the Directors participated in 3 one day long workshops on:

- Strategy – why, who, what, where, when
- Processes & Vision
- Events and Funding

We are still building on the outcomes of these workshops in the development process.

As part of this we also recognise that we need to focus on increasing revenue generating activity in order to be secure in the long term.

The Bicentenary of the Walled Gardens is this year and we are planning to hold some special events to mark that over the next year or two, and we'll do that under our banner of Wallfest.