



## Annual General Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> May 2026 Convener's Report

It is customary to begin the Convener's report by stating the aims of Friends of John Muir Birthplace (FoJMB) as given in our constitution. These aims are:

- to advance the education of the public concerning John Muir, as the Dunbar-born pioneer of world nature conservation, and his belief in the unique and irreplaceable value of wild places and wild creatures;
- to implement John Muir's philosophy practically by conserving, restoring and enhancing landscape and wildlife in East Lothian and Scotland;
- to support the ongoing work of the John Muir Birthplace Charitable Trust and the staff of John Muir's Birthplace.

The FoJMB representation on the John Muir Birthplace Charitable Trust (JMBCT) – Liz McLean as the nominated FoJMB Trustee, and myself as a co-opted Trustee – has been a very important contribution to that Trust. The latest JMBCT Convener's Report [linked off the *About JMBCT* page<sup>i</sup>] gives insight to the scale of the efforts that the East Lothian Council's Museum Service staff and the Trustees contribute to the vitality and viability of the Birthplace.

The FoJMB online presence on its website<sup>ii</sup> and social media - Facebook<sup>iii</sup> - and online meeting platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams remain important resources to support its activities. E.g.:

- Delivering a limited programme of events and consultations in support of the proposed refresh of the John Muir Birthplace 'Legacy' exhibition.
- Publishing regular news items and blog posts containing items regarding John Muir, environmental issues and the work of JMB and related organisations; published and promoted on its website and through social media.
- Liaising (mostly virtually) with people and organisations of influence both locally and nationally. Including: John Muir Birthplace Charitable Trust; Sustaining Dunbar; North Light Arts; John Muir Trust; Scottish Communities Climate Action Network; East Lothian Climate Action Network; VisitScotland; US National Parks Service.

Sustaining Dunbar<sup>iv</sup> (SD) – a local community development trust – continues to collaborate closely with FoJMB and have been instrumental in the organisation, and support, of the '*What If*' network<sup>v</sup> of local groups that are tackling many of the challenges identified in our *John Muir, Earth-Planet, Universe* (JMEPU) exhibition<sup>vi</sup>.

As reported in the Convener's Report of the past two years, the FoJMB involvement in the East Lothian Climate Action Network was an important element in the successful establishment of the East Lothian Climate Hub<sup>vii</sup>. SD and FoJMB shared a table at the Hub's January 2026 Green Futures Festival<sup>viii</sup> event to promote our activities. The *Continuing the Legacy* exhibition panels, the content of which had been inspired by the various workshops that FoJMB have facilitated, formed part of the

display at GFF. Our consultations with a range of community groups and individuals have helped to identify some key themes for the new exhibition content in John Muir's Birthplace. Namely:

- **Our Wellbeing and Natural Connection**
- **Interconnectedness**
- **Biodiversity and ecology**
- **Pollution and destruction**
- **Climate justice and Reparations**

Given one of our major aims is to support the ongoing work of the John Muir Birthplace Charitable Trust and the staff of John Muir's Birthplace we continue to collaborate with them on their plans to augment and refresh the JMB top floor exhibition area to incorporate content that highlights the nature and climate challenges that affect us all and how we can all help to mitigate these challenges. Developments on that front included the JMBCT's short-term appointment of a consultant to help develop the plans for the exhibition refresh and as a result of that consultation heritage consultants were appointed and tasked with the production of a detailed plan for the augmentation and refresh of the museum's exhibition content and the indicative costs for the upgrade. The working title for this wide-ranging new project is ***Muir the campaigner – you're the campaigner!*** which will see JMB incorporate elements of an ecomuseum<sup>ix</sup>. The aim of this project is to:

- engage with audiences to imagine a people and planet positive future
- inspire people to take individual and community action
- signpost out to activities, organisations, places and ideas both locally and worldwide
- reach new audiences through greater accessibility
- reinterpret the heritage and legacy of John Muir as a 21<sup>st</sup> century call to action.


Many of the above aims will provide the ideal opportunity to revitalise the FoJMB, both through the activities that will be on offer, and with programme of events that could include:

- Sauntering – modest guided and themed walks during the season which would be open to everybody and potentially organised in collaboration with other groups.
- Seminars or talks
- Film showing events

I'd like to thank all my fellow Council members - past and present - for their tireless efforts in promoting Friends and the Birthplace. I sincerely hope that in the year(s) ahead we will be reinvigorated and will rise to the challenges that have been identified in our JMEPU exhibition and in the refresh of the Birthplace exhibition content.

Best wishes.

Signed:



Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026

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

<sup>ii</sup> <http://muirbirthplacefriends.org.uk>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/fojmb>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://sustainingdunbar.org>

<sup>v</sup> <https://sustainingdunbar.org/what-if/>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://muirbirthplacefriends.org.uk/exhibitions/john-muir-earth-planet-universe/>

<sup>vii</sup> <https://eastlothianclimatehub.org>

<sup>viii</sup> <https://eastlothianclimatehub.org/green-futures-festival-east-lothians-festival-for-a-sustainable-future/>

<sup>ix</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecomuseum>