

# ANNUAL REVIEW 2021





"Kielder Observatory is quite the trip. Here, the heavens are absolutely smothered in stellar specks, to the point where what you're looking at becomes almost more stars than sky. To say it's breathtaking is no exaggeration."

**Ben Lerwill, National Geographic**



While 2021 has been another rollercoaster year, as for most organisations, we are delighted to have survived and thrived in the ever-changing circumstances, and this annual review brings you some of the highlights.

Not only is our team still intact, we have new astronomers at the Observatory, more volunteers than ever before, and new trustees to help drive the strategy for the next few years. We've been able to deliver that inspirational moment on site at Kielder Observatory itself, have supported more in-depth astronomy study at schools, and launched new arts programmes. Our new radio telescope is installed and community groups helped to create learning resources for it.

Storm Arwen may have reminded us of the wildness of Kielder – 70 trees fell on our access track in one night – but it also highlighted the close ties of the Kielder community, with the Forestry England team working around the clock to help us all out.

We are all so very grateful to everyone who supports the work we do: the team, the visitors, funders and partners. We look forward to 2022 with enormous optimism.

**Peter Standfield, Chair of Trustees**  
**Catherine Johns, CEO**

# WHAT PEOPLE SAY

"It was awesome to see the full blood moon rising, from the heights of the observatory and to see several stars twinkling like jewels through the telescope. Thank you for a wonderful experience!"

"What an experience, literally out of this world! Very informative and expertly delivered by all the enthusiastic team."

"I have never been so excited and awed by looking through a telescope."

"The staff couldn't have been better. Super friendly and really knowledgeable. An amazing experience which I would thoroughly recommend."

"The staff were so knowledgeable and their enthusiasm about their subject is infectious."

"Celebrated my birthday there and it was truly breathtaking. Everyone there was helpful, polite and knowledgeable. Something everyone should experience at least once in their lifetime."

"The experience is totally worth it. The staff are amazing."

"Absolutely brilliant night under the stars. Really well thought out, organised and delivered with lots of expert knowledge and chat along the way."





"I love volunteering at Kielder Observatory because I love the night sky. It takes my breath away every time. I also love meeting all our guests, the team and other volunteers."

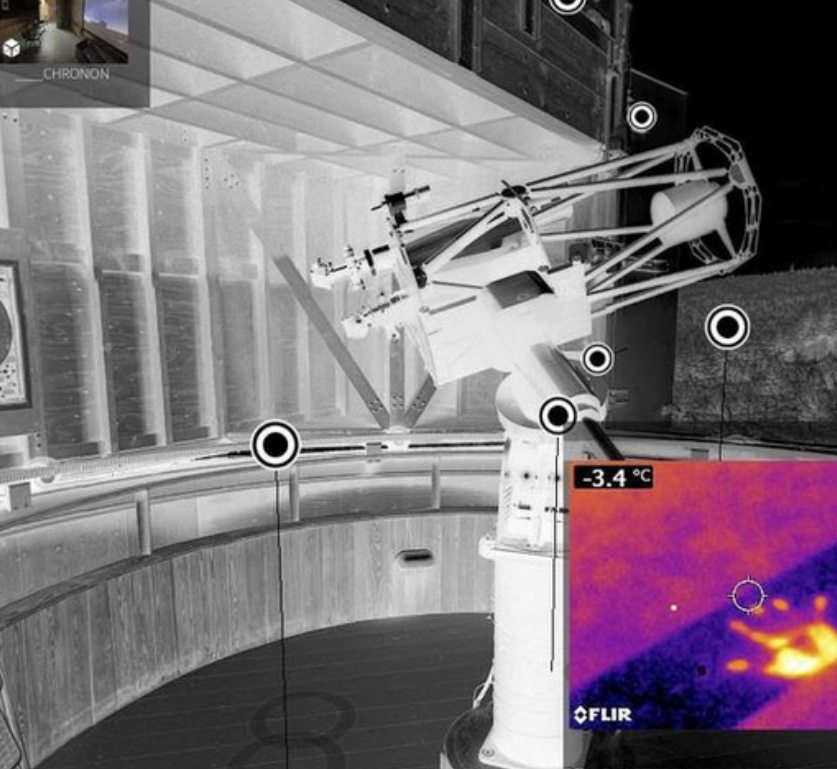
**Stu Tye, Kielder Observatory volunteer**

# MEET THE TEAM

- **Catherine Johns**, CEO
- **Hannah Matterson**, Operations and Marketing Director
- **Daniel Monk**, Director of the Gillian Dickinson AstroImaging Academy
- **Dan Pye**, Director of Astronomy and Science Communication
  
- **Jesse Beaman**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
- **Alison Booth**, Finance Executive
- **Finn Burridge**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
- **Hayden Goodfellow**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
- **Guy Haveron**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
- **Nazanin Jahanshahi**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
- **Sam James**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
- **Natasha Lund**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
- **Ellie MacDonald**, Astronomer and Science Communicator, Science Lead
- **Gregoire Mahaut**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
- **Patti Purcell**, Office Manager and PA to the Board
- **Liam Reid**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
- **Joanne Sharpe**, Astronomer and Science Communicator
- **Adam Shore**, Astronomer and Science Communicator, Education Lead
- **Heather Woodfine**, Communications and Events Administrator, Arts Lead



# HIGHLIGHTS



- Inspiring thousands of schoolchildren across the North of Tyne area
- A monthly podcast series with guests from Royal Astronomical Society, NASA and more
- Participating in the first Northumberland Dark Sky Festival
- Over 50 volunteers regularly attending events
- Brand new range of merchandise, designed by one of our own team, Ellie
- Escape Velocity, a learning resource to help children to take images with mobile phones
- Project Inspire, working with Sunderland Culture and Durham University to create resources for people new to radio astronomy
- Featured on Top Gear, This Morning, BBC News, The One Show, ITV, Channel 5, National Geographic, New York Times, and many more
- Partnering with Beacon Films on a new film for neurodivergent film-makers
- Creation of a lesson plan for schools around Museum of the Moon, an art installation at Durham Cathedral
- Winning funding from Arts Council England to develop a largescale participatory arts project
- Visit by the Aldrin Family Foundation
- Shortlisted for a North East Tourism Award
- Installation of a new Low Earth Orbit Optical Camera Installation (LOCI) to track orbital debris



# KIELDER CONSTELLATIONS

Kielder Constellations is our approach to delivering our purpose: to create opportunities for people of all backgrounds and abilities to experience moments of inspiration, revelation, wonder and hope through observing the cosmos.

We recognise that not everyone can visit the Kielder Observatory site, yet through observing the stars, we can understand more about ourselves, and more about what our place on this Earth means. Everyone needs that moment of inspiration, everyone deserves to have that lightbulb moment. Kielder Constellations, therefore, is our way of bringing that Kielder Observatory moment to everyone.

Kielder Constellations has three overarching aims:

1. To put people at the heart of everything we do, extending our reach to more people and to a more diverse audience
2. To build our reputation as a gold standard in dark sky observation, imaging and outreach
3. To strengthen our organisation, building resilience and inspiring innovation.

These aims and approach form a strategic framework to guide our decision-making about projects, programmes and initiatives.

# LOOKING FORWARD

Have we reached a new steady state? We'd like to think so but occurrences such as Storm Arwen always remind us how privileged we are to be able to share our love of stargazing with as many people as possible.

In the next 12 months, we aim to:

- Develop citizen science programmes to open up access to our radio telescope to all
- Extend our Star Groups to more schools, supporting students and families to learn about astronomy
- Support astronomy learning in prisons
- Create educational resources for the LOCI camera to help children understand space sustainability
- Support young artists in Northumberland
- Deliver Kielder PopUps all over the North East
- Cocreate a Kielder Dark Skies arts project with the communities of Kielder
- Champion the preservation of dark skies





**WITH GRATEFUL  
THANKS TO**

Advance Northumberland  
Arts Council England  
Association of Science and Discovery Centres  
Digital Catapult North East and Tees Valley  
Durham Cathedral  
Durham University  
Forestry England  
The Gillian Dickinson Trust  
Helix Arts  
International Dark Sky Association  
The Joicey Trust  
Kielder Parish Council  
Kielder School  
The Kielder Trust and Kielder partners  
National Lottery Heritage Fund  
Newcastle University  
The North of Tyne Combined Authority  
NORSS  
NBSL  
Northumberland County Council  
Northumberland National Park Authority  
Northumbrian Water  
The Reece Foundation  
Royal Astronomical Society  
Sunderland University  
The Tanlaw Foundation  
Visit Northumberland  
The WISE Academies Trust





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0191 265 5510



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