

**KIELDER  
OBSERVATORY**  
Infinite Inspiration



# Strategy 2022-2025





# Welcome

This is an exciting time for Kielder Observatory.

Like every other organisation, we had to dig in to navigate the pandemic. We used the time wisely, keeping connected with our visitors and stakeholders, launching many new projects, and investing time in robust analysis to inform our future direction - a direction you can learn about here.

We are proud of what we have achieved to date but it feels as though we are just getting started. We hope you'll join us as we develop new activities, projects and programmes that convey that very special "Kielder moment" to as many people as possible.

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



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# The Observatory

Kielder Observatory is a public outreach astronomical facility located in Kielder Forest, Northumberland, under some of the darkest skies in Europe.

It is in the largest Gold Tier International Dark Sky Park in Europe, as designated by the International Dark Skies Association. It is set in the largest man-made forest in Western Europe, and near Kielder Water, the largest man-made reservoir in Europe.

The primary function of the observatory is outreach via public events. It hosts upwards of 40 of these events every month. Since opening in 2008, we have played host to tens of thousands of people to observe and engage with the night sky, via talks, activities and telescope observing sessions. We do this in a way that is friendly, informative and interesting, through our amazing team of astronomers, guest speakers and volunteers.

A clear sky at Kielder is truly special: the air is crisp, the silence is bewitching, the stars are mesmerising. It is a reminder of how lucky we are to be alive on this tiny little planet near one of the billions of stars in one of the billions of galaxies that exist in the known universe. That's the Kielder moment, and it can transform people's lives.



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## Our Mission

Our mission is to create opportunities for people of all backgrounds and abilities to experience moments of inspiration, revelation, wonder and hope through observing the cosmos.

Our strapline is "Infinite Inspiration".

We are a registered charity with three charitable objects:

A: To promote interest in the science of astronomy in the general public.

B: To facilitate the education of members of the public in the science of astronomy.

C: To maintain an astronomical observatory in Kielder Forest which will be used to support objects A and B.





## Our Values

- **Collaborative** – we work together to deliver our mission
- **Creative** – we find new ways of delivering our mission
- **Credible** – we make sure the quality of our content is high
- **Customer-focused** – customers are at the heart of everything we do
- **Distinctive** – the “Kielder moment” shapes all our activities
- **Inclusive** – we identify and remove barriers to participation
- **Inspirational** – we strive to inspire each other, our customers, and our stakeholders
- **Respectful** – we are courteous, kind, and appreciate each other’s differences
- **Sustainable** – we examine our practice regularly to be responsible for our collective environment





# What We Do

Kielder Observatory's core offer is an inspirational experience, the "Kielder moment".

Our primary activity is public outreach, inspiring people with our love of the night sky. We do this via events on site at the Observatory, hosting thousands of people a year.

We also deliver one of the most significant STEM schools outreach programmes in the North East, visiting hundreds of schools and inspiring thousands of students every year.

We provide pathways into STEM at all ages, with work placements, paid internships, teacher CPD, and a thriving volunteer programme. Many of our staff (and our trustees) started as volunteers and many have come to us straight from university.

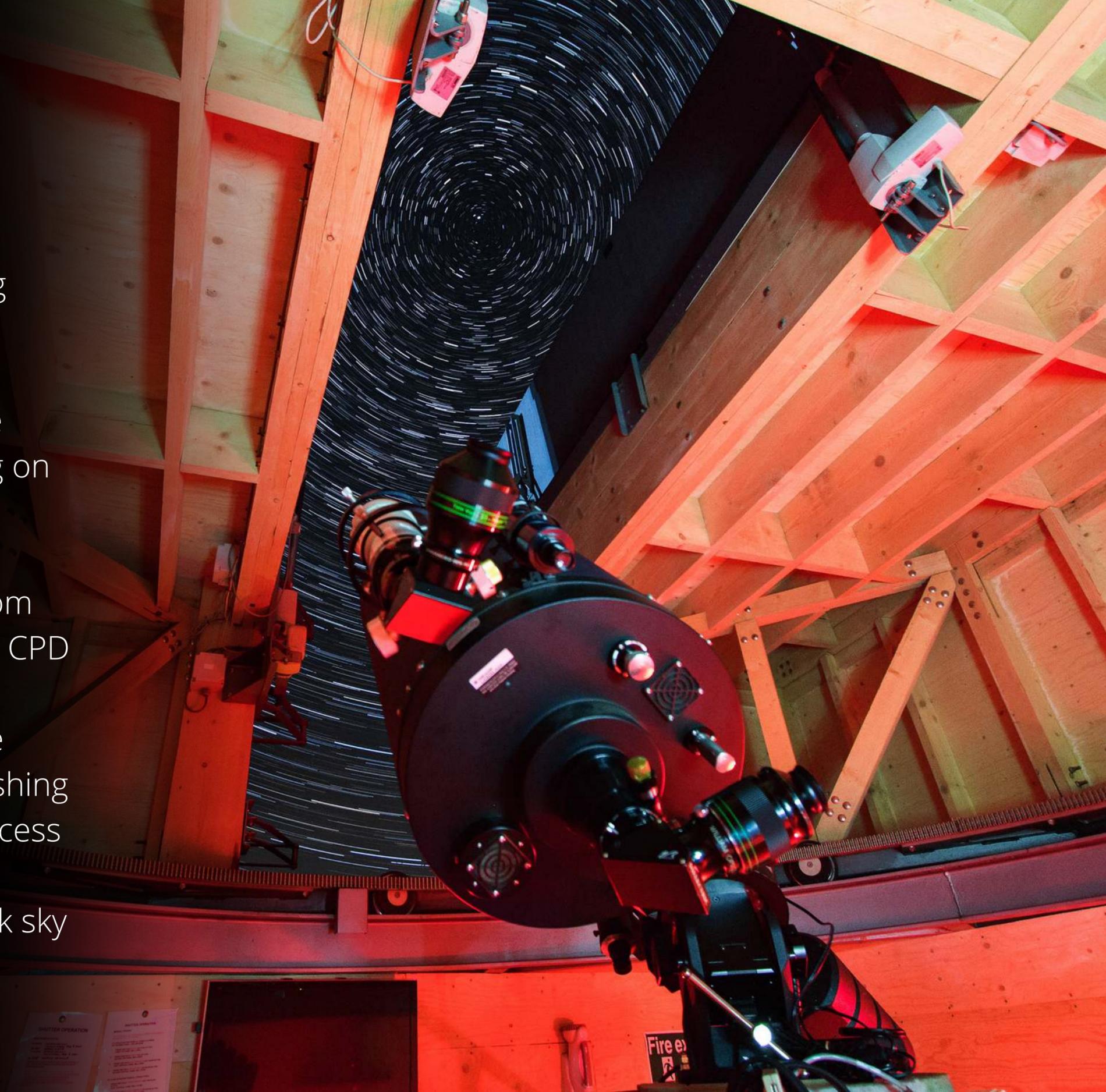




## Our future

Our business planning process revealed four emerging opportunities:

1. Creating a flexible, agile programme of face-to-face public experiences for delivery anywhere, including on site, around Kielder, and remote access
2. Enhancing the quality of our STEM curriculum enrichment, to offer a golden thread of support from primary through to GCSE astronomy (and beyond), CPD for teachers, and pathways to careers
3. Creating a coherent digital offer that underpins the experience and education delivery, including publishing distinctive, high-quality content that anyone can access from anywhere
4. Taking a clearly defined leadership position for dark sky experiences aligned with responsible tourism.





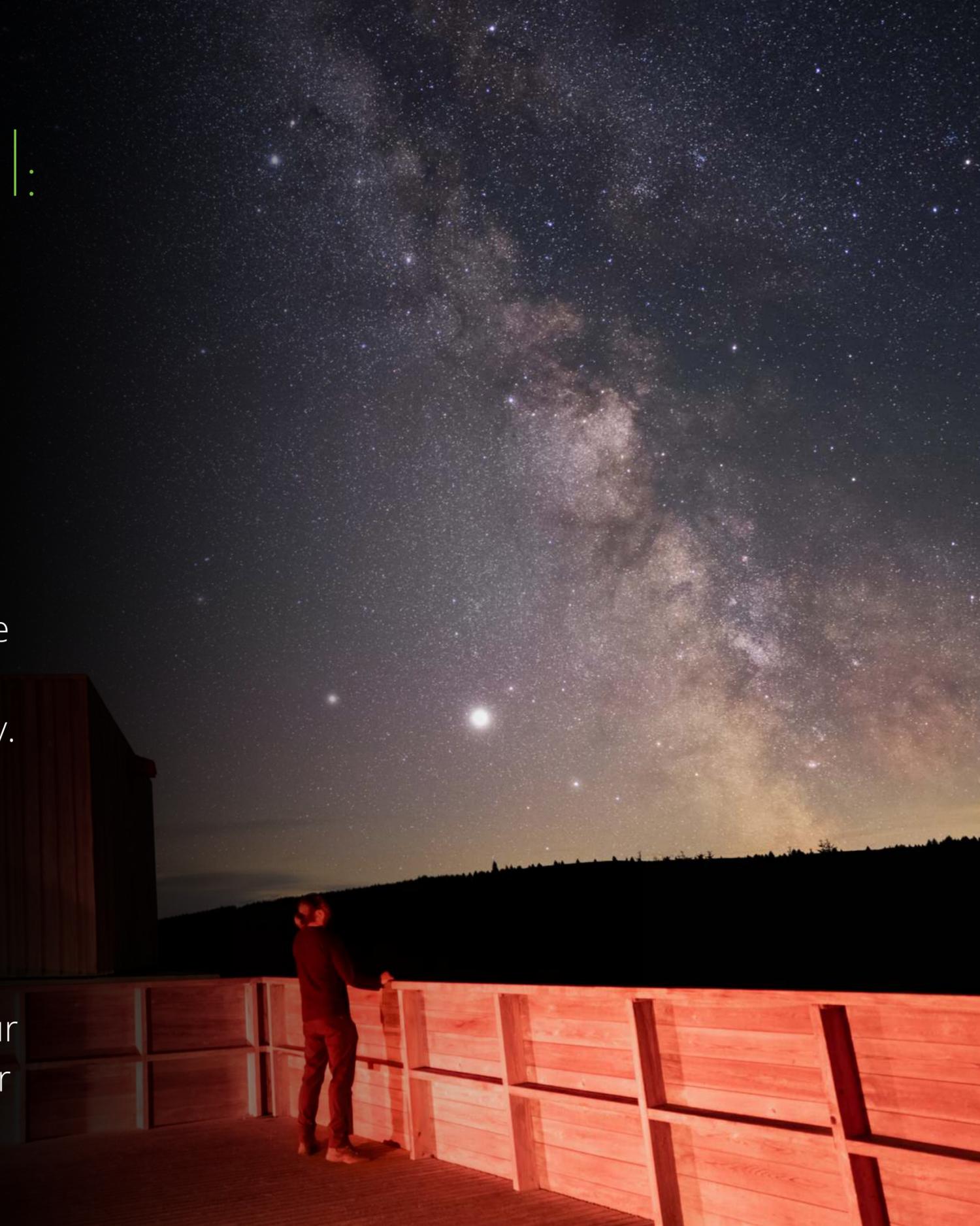
# Priorities - We Will:

Strengthen our organisation:

- Invest in our team by contributing to learning projects and formal study and implementing 10% time for self-directed projects.
- Improve representation and inclusion by assessing how representative we are of our communities, taking action, and publishing an annual impact study
- Improve our approach to environmental responsibility by using the B-Corp framework to assess our areas of strength and areas for development, taking action, and publishing an annual impact study.

Maintain excellence in delivery:

- Ensure continuous improvement by creating a peer group and a Kielder customer panel
- Support schools, teachers and underserved groups by focusing our STEM curriculum enrichment and enhancing our teacher CPD offer at critical Key Stages





# Priorities - We Will:

Extend the reach of our public events:

- Establish informal events, "Kielder PopUps", around the North East.
- Pilot event delivery in national and international locations.
- Open up the wonders of the dark skies to all by working with partners to deliver dark sky tourism and cultural experiences.

Develop programmes with high impact:

- Maximise the reach of our assets and skills by establishing citizen science programmes around astro-imaging, radio astronomy and satellites.
- Enhance our connections with new audiences by bringing together our website, our augmented reality app, and our digital learning platform into a consistent customer journey.
- Ensure the dark skies heritage is available for future generations by working with partners to develop activities that educate and inspire the general public.





## Our Vision

In delivering these priorities, we aim to achieve these outcomes:

**People:** Everyone feels represented, welcomed, enriched and inspired, enabling equality of access to opportunities in science, whether as a one-off engagement, participation in study (formal or informal), and/or a career.

**Place:** We consistently inspire more people of all backgrounds and abilities to reflect upon their place in the universe and the fragility of the Earth, and catalyse individual and collective action in response to the need to protect our dark skies, and wider natural heritage.

**Organisation:** We welcome the uncertainty of fresh challenges and continuously improve our offer as opportunities emerge from new technologies, new audiences and evolving practice.



# Our Supporters

We cannot do what we do without the income we receive from ticket and merchandise sales, donations, and Gift Aid. We are also profoundly grateful to have support from a wide range of funders and partners, including the Tanlaw Foundation, the Joicey Trust, and the Gillian Dickinson Trust, and many others, including those shown below



Thank you



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