

Falkirk Enterprise Action Trust  
**Annual Report 2002/2003**





Caroline Gormley of The Kidz Stop of Bo'ness. Caroline attended the evening start-up course at FEAT before launching her business in the summer of 2003. She employs a number of local people.

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Susan Hope of Medicert in Rumford, near Falkirk. The firm, launched last year, provides repair, maintenance and safety inspection services to dental practices across Scotland. Susan and a colleague have taken advantage of a wide variety of courses at FEAT, including the business start-up course.

Note: Throughout this report the main service contract from Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley and the services provided under that contract have been referred to as Business Gateway. The contract and services were branded Small Business Gateway up until July 2003.



Falkirk Enterprise Action Trust

## Introduction

**Falkirk Enterprise Action Trust (FEAT) provides a range of services to help businesses start-up and develop in the Falkirk area.**

Working in a consortium with Stirling Enterprise and Ceteris, FEAT delivers the Falkirk element of the Forth Valley Business Gateway contract (delivered on behalf of Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley). Under this arrangement, it provides:

- business advice, plus
- training and support for pre-start, new start and growing businesses in the Falkirk area.

**FEAT also offers a number of other services. These include:**

- a marketing club;
- ICT and business training; plus
- hire of training, meeting and conference facilities.

The Trust manages the BP Grangemouth Loan Fund and grant schemes for partners such as BP and Falkirk Council.

To find out more about FEAT, log onto the website at [www.feat.org.uk](http://www.feat.org.uk) or send an e-mail to: [info@feat.org.uk](mailto:info@feat.org.uk)

### Falkirk Enterprise Action Trust Registered Office

Newhouse Business Park, Newhouse Road, Grangemouth FK3 8LL

Tel: 01324 665500

Fax: 01324 474418

Registered in Scotland No. 83144.  
A company limited by guarantee.

## Trustees, Advisors and Administration

### Board Of Trustees

D R F Ferguson (Chairman)

M D Willis (Deputy Chairman)

D A Anderson

Avecia

R W Gow

J R Grant

G Nichol

Royal Bank of Scotland

G S Thomson

E & R Moffat

D J Ross

Falkirk Council

M D Jones

BP Chemicals

A Mitchell

Falkirk Town Centre Management

Councillor D Bryson

Falkirk Council

C Morrison

Palimpsest Book Production Limited (joined the FEAT Board in September 2002)

S A Ross (Company Secretary)

Russel & Aitken WS

### Advisors

Auditors

Blueprint Audit Limited

Solicitors

Russel & Aitken WS

### Administration

Staff:

A S Riddell

Director (Retired Sept 2002)

R A Parker

Director

E Elgie

Office Manager

P Scott

Training Manager

I Jarvie

Database Co-ordinator

C Reid

Office Assistant

J Judge

Business Advisor

C Ferguson

Business Advisor

M Campbell

Training Centre Assistant

T Tucker

e-Business Co-ordinator

D Brown

Business Advisor

G F Johnston

Business Advisor

D Muir

Office Assistant

# Chairman's Report



This year we have seen a number of changes at FEAT. At the beginning of 2002 we started the first year of a three-year contract with Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley as a Consortium, along with our colleagues in Stirling and Clackmannanshire. I am pleased to say that in the main this arrangement is going well and all three organisations are finding benefits from working more closely together.

During the year our former Director, Sandy Riddell, retired and Russell Parker was appointed to the position. I am very grateful to Russell for the way he has coped with the various changes since his appointment and indeed to all of our staff for their dedication in offering a first class service to our clients.

The other major change has been the setting up of a broadband demonstration centre to complement our E-Business Suite.

This has been funded by Scottish Enterprise and is one of only eleven such centres in Scotland. This facility gives us the opportunity to demonstrate even further the benefits of e-business to local businesses and will increase the number of potential clients seeking advice on start-ups.

As you can see from the accounts, we are showing a budget deficit for the year. This is primarily due to several one-off unbudgeted payments, but it does remind us of the need to strictly control costs and initiate more income generating projects.

By the time of the AGM I will have completed over six years as Chairman and I have therefore decided to stand down. Mike Willis, who has served as a FEAT Trustee for many years, will take over the reins after the AGM and I feel sure that, under Mike's leadership, the Trust will continue to develop its range of services to meet the needs of the local small business community.

The various figures in the Annual Report demonstrate another successful year for FEAT and I would like to take this opportunity to thank our various sponsors, in particular SEFV and Falkirk Council, and I hope that the results of our efforts will give them the confidence to continue their support in the future. I am also grateful for the support of all our Trustees and last, but not means least, those people who come to us for advice, assistance or training – our clients.

David Ferguson, Chairman





# Director's Report



Income from our regular activities during the year stood at £374,429 – an increase of £18,800 on the previous financial year. However, expenditure has also increased significantly. Due primarily to substantial one-off expenditures during the year a small surplus has been turned into a deficit of £18,605.

In the 20th year of our existence as an organisation we saw yet another record number of start-up businesses assisted by FEAT. During this year we assisted 283 businesses to start up creating 479 jobs. This was an increase from the previous record achieved in 2001/2002 when we assisted 268 businesses to start up. Of these businesses 98 (35 per cent) successfully applied for and received the Business Gateway E-Business Award.

The increase in start-up numbers achieved in the Falkirk area was in contrast to much of the rest of Scotland where decreases in start-up activity were experienced.

In order to deal efficiently with the high level of pre-start clients, Introduction to Business sessions have been introduced. These group sessions pass on the standard information which pre-start clients require, making a more efficient use of advisor time. However the demand for one-to-one sessions remains high.

Increases in numbers of start-ups have also led to an increased requirement for aftercare support. This has kept our business aftercare team very busy supporting a large number and variety of new start businesses. An increased amount of aftercare contact is now maintained by telephone which enables us to cope with this demand.

Along with the other members of the Forth Valley Consortium, FEAT were responsible for piloting the Start-Up Plus support programme during 2002/2003. Through this programme we were able to identify 29 of the most promising business start-ups in the Falkirk area and provide additional advisory and financial support to assist them in achieving their potential. However, this pilot programme has not been continued into the new financial year.

Although FEAT had a fairly slow start in delivery of our business development services we finished the year very strongly. We were able to assist 161 growing local businesses through the Focus On Growth programme, which we deliver as part of our Business Gateway contract. Financial support for local businesses delivered through this programme totalled £31,959 during the year.

FEAT is working successfully with the other members of the Forth Valley consortium to deliver Business Gateway services across Forth Valley achieving both the contract quality and the quantities demanded by both Scottish Enterprise and local businesses. However, the competition for Business Gateway contracts has never been more fierce and if we are to maintain local delivery of Business Gateway services we must also be very price competitive.

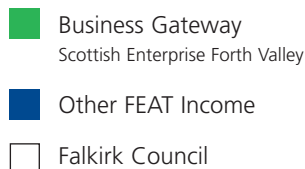
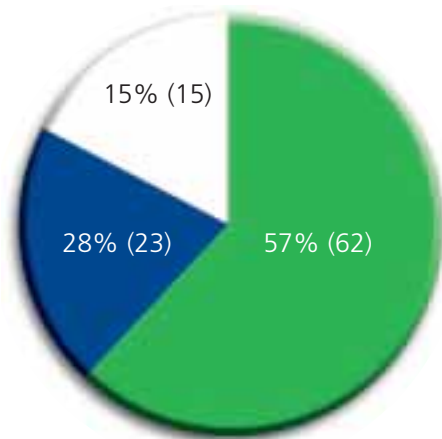
Sponsorship received from private business will be very important. However, developing and delivering services outside our Business Gateway contract, which benefit our clients and generate additional revenue, will be essential to maintain the FEAT organisation. This will be the continuing challenge, which FEAT must rise to.

**Russell A Parker**, Director

In October 2002, FEAT received an Investors in People plaque for maintaining IIP standards. Director Russell Parker is pictured with the plaque outside FEAT's base in Grangemouth.

## ▲ Funding, Staff, Marketing Club

### How FEAT is funded



Previous year's percentage figures in brackets.

### Marketing Club

FEAT's Marketing Club has now been in existence for more than 13 years. During 2002/2003 FEAT promoted the club to ensure it maintains a lively and active membership. The programme for the year maintained the high quality of speakers and topics expected by marketing club members. Topics covered included: trading online; effective meetings; getting the most out of your website; and business success.

### Staff Changes

Office Assistant Isabella Jarvie became our Database Co-ordinator in May 2002.

Business Advisor Bill Smith retired in June 2002 following six years of work with new start businesses.

He has been replaced on the FEAT team by former Quality Systems Assessor David Brown. David has also taken an active role in delivery of our training programmes.

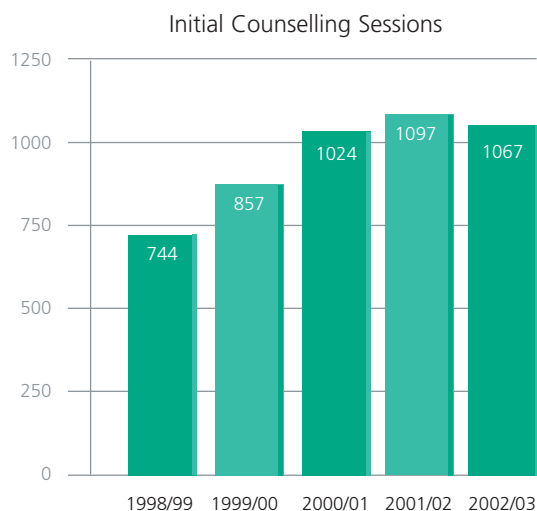
Sandy Riddell retired from his position as Director of FEAT in August 2002 following 10 years with the Trust, seven of which were as Director. Sandy has been replaced as Director by former Assistant Director of FEAT Russell Parker. Business Advisor Grace Johnston joined us as a part-time employed advisor working on the Focus on Growth Programme. Debbie Muir joined FEAT as an Office Assistant to strengthen our administrative team.

### Staff Development

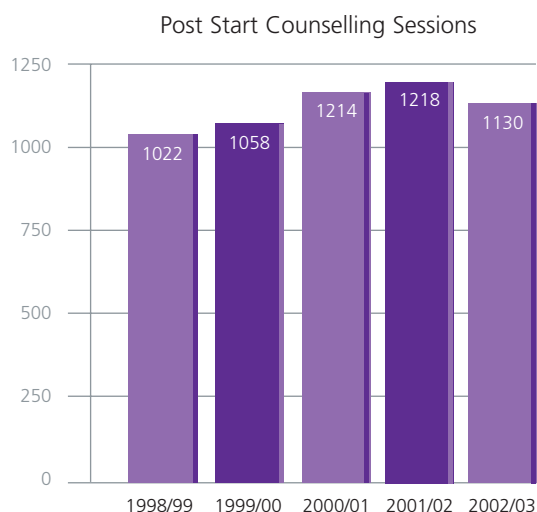
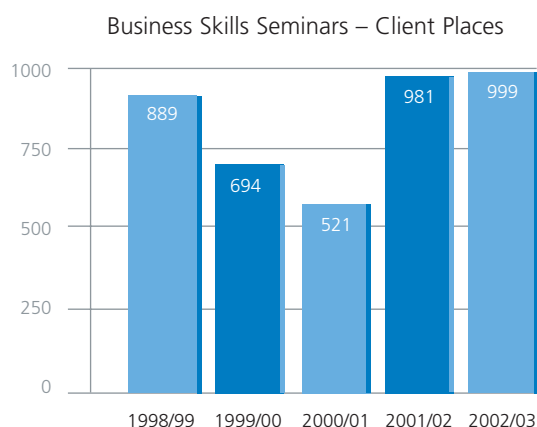
During the year, Russell Parker and John Judge successfully completed the Scottish Enterprise Premier Advisor Support Programme (PASP) and Cameron Ferguson reached the final stages of completion.



Heather Palmer of Step In Time, based at Ladysmill in Falkirk. The firm supplies dance shoes and costumes to an international market. Heather, who set up her business in 1999, has received business development support through FEAT and attended a range of seminars. She now employs five staff.



**Note:** 182 of this year's Initial Counselling Sessions were by phone or online. We also delivered 41 Introduction To Business sessions to groups of pre-start clients.



**Note:** 564 of this year's Post Start Counselling Sessions were by phone or online. We also delivered two Group Aftercare Seminars to groups of post start clients.

During the 2002/2003 year, 283 businesses started up with FEAT's assistance, creating 479 jobs. The number of new businesses helped increased by six per cent. Business start-ups included 113 firms run by women, 40 per cent of the total. The numbers of initial counselling sessions held were slightly down at 1067 (1097 in 2001/2002) and of these just under 17 per cent were telephone or online support.

However, we also delivered 41 Introduction to Business Sessions to groups of pre-start clients. These half-day sessions involved 349 pre-start clients. Of these 32 per cent of those helped were women (35 per cent); 42 per cent were unemployed (29 per cent) and 16 per cent were under the age of 26 (20 per cent). The figures in brackets refer to the previous year.

Piloting the Forth Valley Start Up Plus support programme during 2002/2003 we supported 29 of the most promising business start-ups in the Falkirk area. Providing additional advice and financial support to assist them in achieving their potential.

FEAT assisted 161 growing local businesses through the Business Gateway Focus On Growth programme. This business support programme is designed to help growing businesses achieve their potential through advice and support on business development. Financial support delivered through this programme totalled £31,959 during the year.

The BP Grangemouth Loan Fund is managed by FEAT although decisions on loan awards are made by a panel representing SEFV, Falkirk Council and BP. Launched in April 2000 the fund has been more successful than ever anticipated awarding loans to 103 Falkirk area businesses to a total value of £666,750 by the end of March 2003. Of these awards 24 were awarded in 2002/2003 to the total value of £161,500.

(Figures in brackets denote previous year's total.)

# Training, Falkirk Council and Falkirk College

## Training

FEAT's Training and Conference Centre enjoyed another extremely busy year. A total of 21 business start-up courses were run during the 12 months ending in March 2003. Of the 21, nine of these courses were run as evening courses, reflecting the continuing demand for out-of-hours training. Evening courses are particularly popular for people still in other jobs who want to start their own businesses.

FEAT also provided 122 one-day business skills seminars, including 57 courses on e-business related topics – using the facilities in our e-business suite.

We were also able to run a number of other events including the very popular Employment Law Seminars, which are delivered by Employment Law specialists Peninsula.

Our base in Grangemouth was also a popular venue for other organisations to hold meetings, seminars and workshops.

Those hiring our facilities include:

- [Falkirk Council](#)
- [The Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust](#)
- [The Royal Bank of Scotland](#)
- [Biomar](#)
- [Skanska](#)
- [Falkirk Women's Technology Centre](#)
- [Xerox](#)
- [Business Enterprise Scotland](#)
- [GE Plastics ABS Ltd](#)
- [Sirius](#)
- [Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley](#)



## Falkirk Council

Falkirk Council continues to provide funding to support our two post start-up business advisors.

FEAT administers the Falkirk Business Gateway Start-Up and Growth Grants programme on behalf of Falkirk Council. Through this programme we were able to assist 78 start-up and 48 growing businesses to obtain a total of £44,078 in grant funding. We are grateful to Falkirk Council for their continuing support.

## Falkirk College

We have been working closely with Falkirk College to identify possible joint projects, which will benefit our client base.

Currently we are launching two joint projects one of which will benefit new start businesses and the other which will benefit new and existing businesses with development of their e-business skills and strategy.



# E-Business Centre and Other Activities

## E-Business Demonstration Centre

The FEAT Training and Conference Centre was chosen to host the Forth Valley, E-Business Demonstration Centre. Funded by Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley development of the centre has involved an investment in hardware, software, security and the employment of a Demonstration Centre Manager.

The FEAT contribution to this project has involved providing space for the new facility, including the use of the newly-refurbished room five for hardware demonstration. FEAT management have also worked closely with the Project Manager and SEFV e-business team on specification and development of the centre which is one of only eleven in Scotland most of which are based at local enterprise company offices.

The approach taken to this project has been to make the whole Training and Conference Centre capable of demonstrating broadband. A range of broadband connectivity and applications can therefore be demonstrated in every room of the centre via a wireless connection.

This development has added considerably to the facilities available in our Training and Conference Centre and is already proving a significant draw to businesses from throughout Forth Valley.



David Ferguson, the Chairman of FEAT; Frank O'Donnell of Scottish Enterprise; and Russell Parker, FEAT's Director, at the launch of the new e-business demonstration centre at FEAT's Newhouse Business Park base in Grangemouth. The event also marked the enterprise trust's 20th birthday.

## Business Support Network

FEAT has worked closely with other organisations in the business support network to provide services to local businesses.

We actively support the Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust (PSYBT), supplying advisor time and meeting rooms. Programmes delivered by our consortium partners have also been supported.

The Business Investment in Growth (BIG) programme provided customised training and support for new and existing businesses introducing them to alternative sources of business growth funding. Clackmannanshire Enterprise delivered this programme, while FEAT assisted with recruitment in the Falkirk area and a local venue.

SEFV Social Inclusion Project - SIP Into Business in the Stirling and Falkirk Area has been delivered by Stirling Enterprise. This programme provides additional support to that provided by Business Gateway for people from SIP-designated areas to start and develop businesses. FEAT has assisted in the identification and support of clients in Falkirk's SIP areas.

## Local employment initiatives

There were a number of company closures and redundancies during the year. Companies affected included Jones and Campbell, BP and Avecia. FEAT offered advice on self-employment to staff from all these organisations. FEAT also attended the Jobs Fair organised by the local PACE team.

**Opposite Page:** Patrick Kelly, Managing Director of ExtraMed Limited, at the company's base in the E-Business Incubation Unit at Grangemouth Enterprise Centre. The firm won the Forth Valley Best New Business Award in 2002 and were in the finals of the Enterprising Scotland Award for Most Entrepreneurial Young Company 2003. Set up in 2001, ExtraMed has been supported by the team of Business Gateway advisors at FEAT.

# Statement of Income and Expenditure

	Year ended 31 March 2003 £	Year ended 31 March 2002 £
<b>Income</b>	250,277	245,297
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Staff Costs	182,414	171,652
Establishment Costs	97,663	74,086
Miscellaneous	1,266	942
	281,343	246,680
<b>Operating Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	(31,066)	(1,383)
Interest Receivable	8,990	11,878
Surplus/(Deficit) on ordinary activities before taxation	(22,076)	10,495
<b>Less</b>		
Taxation on ordinary activities	1,418	2,302
Prior Year Tax Adjustment	-	1,135
Surplus/(Deficit) for year after taxation	(23,494)	7,058

## Training and Conference Centre

<b>Income</b>	124,152	110,331
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Staff Costs	71,092	72,605
Establishment Costs	48,169	37,294
Miscellaneous	-	-
	119,261	109,899
<b>Operating Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	4,891	432
Surplus c/fwd to Training Reserve	238,025	233,134

# Members and Sponsors

A9 Partnership

Avecia

Walter Alexander & Co. (Coachbuilders) Ltd

Anglo Overseas Transport Ltd

Bank of Scotland

Barratt (West Scotland) Ltd

Barrie Scott & Co., Chartered Accountants

BP Chemicals

Callender Trust

D B Projects Ltd

Falkirk Council

G E Plastics ABS Ltd

Ideas Design

Inglis Allan Ltd

Inveresk Plc

Johnston (Falkirk) Ltd

Lloyds TSB Bank plc

Marks & Spencer

Minto Associates

E & R Moffat

Recognition Express

Royal Bank of Scotland

Russel & Aitken WS

Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley

Syngenta

Tapside Marketing Ltd



Above: Ann Marie Dibben of Ann'll Stitch It in Denny. Ann attended the Business Gateway start-up course at FEAT. Since launching last year, Ann has picked up a number of large contracts.

Left: Robert Christie of PDL (Professional Direct Logistics) in Denny. The freight and haulage courier firm was started in February 1996. The company has been a FEAT client since its inception and has recently attended a number of Business Gateway growth seminars at FEAT.





Falkirk Enterprise Action Trust

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