



COMMUNITY BENEFITS:

**A BRIDGE TO
COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT**



**Crown Estate
Scotland**
Oighreachd a' Chrùin Alba



Community
Woodlands
Association



**Foundation
Scotland**



HIE
Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean

This collection of case studies showcases ways communities have enhanced social and community benefits, arising from a variety of funding sources. It highlights the range of ways community benefits could be furthered including as part of a high-integrity and values-led approach to the development of the natural capital marketplace in Scotland.

Developed by Highlands and Islands Enterprise in collaboration with [Crown Estate Scotland](#), [Foundation Scotland](#), and [Community Woodlands Association](#) these examples can be considered as a collection of approaches to community benefits which each have long lasting and productive outcomes for the communities involved. The work supports the [Scottish Government's](#) action around establishing a values led, high integrity market for responsible investment in natural capital, an ambition in the [National Strategy for Economic Transformation](#). It is intended to inspire communities and investors alike to explore the art of the possible and to recognise the positive gains for both groups when they work together.

Publication co-authors

■ [Highlands and Islands Enterprise](#)

HIE is the economic and community development agency for more than half of Scotland. It takes a place-based approach when working with communities, enterprises, and stakeholders, tailoring support to unlock the region's potential for growth and progress, while driving fair work and net zero practices. HIE's purpose is to build and sustain a greener, fairer and more resilient region that benefits everyone. Support for community organisations can include: access to expert help through the [Support for Communities Framework](#); funding for local development officers, and support to access the [Scottish Land Fund](#).

■ [Foundation Scotland](#)

Foundation Scotland is Scotland's Community Foundation, bringing together communities, funders, and finance to realise locally led social, economic, and environmental initiatives that create vibrant, enterprising, sustainable and diverse places. With its roots in philanthropic giving, Foundation Scotland also has specialist expertise in community benefit fund design and development, driving up good practice and influencing policy.

■ [Crown Estate Scotland](#)

Crown Estate Scotland is a public corporation, which invests in property, natural resources, and people to create lasting value for Scotland. It manages seabed, coastline, rural estates and more, helping ensure families, businesses and communities can live, work, and thrive on the assets. It also offers grants, for example the Sustainable Communities Fund launched in 2020 aimed at supporting local regeneration and sustainable development around Scotland's coast.

■ [Community Woodlands Association](#)

The Community Woodlands Association helps communities connect to woodlands. It has 200 members most of whom are community groups. CWA supports communities working to acquire ownership or management of woodland.



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Scotland's breath-taking landscapes, rich ecosystems, and vibrant marine environments hold the promise of a greener, more sustainable future. By harnessing the potential of our natural capital alongside our ambition for continuing and sustained community empowerment we can combat climate change, protect and enhance biodiversity, AND drive community prosperity.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT: A BRIDGE TO PROGRESS

Picture a world where local communities take the lead in shaping their future, empowered by financial support and opportunities for growth. This vision can be a reality and there is some rich learning from community benefit arrangements from renewable energy developments which have a proven track record in Scotland in enabling community development. Good practice principles were introduced in 2014 for onshore and offshore energy projects, which helped promote awareness and standards around these voluntary arrangements between developers and communities.

Community benefits from renewable energy installations can vary in scale, sector, and longevity enormously, with around £25m flowing into communities within areas of benefit in the 12 months of 2022/23 alone. Their value in supporting the delivery of community priorities can be life changing.

Community benefits more broadly come in two forms, offering a wide array of advantages:

- 1.** Financial benefits: communities can generate income from owning and operating income generating assets, such as windfarms, for reinvestment into the community or receive cash payments through a range of mechanisms, putting them in control of how the funds are spent. These payments can be one-off or structured regularly over an extended period, ensuring long-term benefits.
- 2.** Non-financial benefits: beyond financial support, focus is on empowerment activities and in-kind assistance. This includes co-designing projects, participating in education and skill development, and providing enriching volunteering opportunities.



CREATING A COHERENT NATURAL CAPITAL MARKETPLACE

Drawing on the learning from the practice and experience of community benefit arrangements from other sectors, including the renewables industry, to inform the community benefit from Scotland's wider natural capital is an important opportunity that Scotland now has. But building that pathway requires a strategic approach and framework. Working with a diverse range of stakeholders with experience and knowledge to share can ensure that benefits from wider natural capital reach all corners of society. While the financial gains from natural capital might not match those of onshore wind, our ambition is to maximise its potential for the benefit of all.

MAXIMISING THE BENEFITS

Responsible land managers and developers play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between nature and society. By actively engaging with communities, we can ensure a fairer distribution of wealth. We can create a legacy of sustainable growth and prosperity by:

- uniting around common goals;
- raising awareness of nature-based solutions;
- offering financial aid; and
- involving communities in decision-making processes.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT SUCCESS STORIES

Explore our community stories showcasing the transformative power of long-term support and community-led development. Explore how communities, have harnessed the potential to deliver community benefits and drive positive change.

CASTLEMILK PARK

Through collaboration, community-led governance, an asset-based community development approach and dedicated resources, Cassiltoun Housing Association has not only revitalised a woodland but also uplifted lives, fostered social cohesion, skills development, and created a renewed connection to nature.

Castlemilk Woodlands is a community managed 30ha area sitting within the extensive Castlemilk Park in south-east Glasgow. Its neighbouring residents live in one of a number of housing schemes developed in the 1950s to rehouse people from inner-city areas. Over the years Castlemilk has experienced a range of social problems because of structural inequality.

In 2009, the [Cassiltoun Housing Association](#), a pioneering community-owned housing cooperative, embarked on a project at Castlemilk Park with [Glasgow City Council](#) and what was then Forestry Commission Scotland. The objective was to create access and opportunity within the park - fostering environmental, community and economic benefits for the area.

GOVERNANCE THAT EMPOWERS

Cassiltoun Housing Association is the oldest community ownership housing co-operative in Glasgow. Originally Castlemilk East Housing Co-op, it was registered in 1984. The Association is managed by a voluntary Board made of local people and others from the housing, education and political sectors. With a community-driven approach to decision-making, the set-up ensures that initiatives are directly linked with local needs and aspirations.

FUELLING AMBITION WITH RESOURCES

The project has been supported by a number of funders including the Council and [Scottish Forestry](#). It has also attracted support for specific pieces of work, including from [Paths For All](#), the Linn Area Partnership Committee, Cycling Scotland, [Youth Scotland](#), [Greenspace Scotland](#), and [Action Earth](#). Underpinned by a feasibility study and a robust action plan, Cassiltoun Housing Association recruited a Community Woodland Officer in 2011.

TURNING GOALS INTO REALITY

The creation of this dedicated post has proved pivotal in connecting local people to the park and responding to local people's aspirations for their woodland including through the delivery of an extensive programme of over 900 events. This vibrant range of free activities, educational initiatives, and outdoor experiences has transformed recreational and employment opportunities for the local and wider community.

TANGIBLE OUTCOMES CHANGING LIVES

There was some initial scepticism at the outset that the project would not make a difference to local people. However, its success in drawing people to the woodland and the subsequent delivery of life skills, qualifications, and confidence, and improved mental and physical well-being, has given locals an increased sense of pride and ownership, and has encouraged even more sharing of the skills and knowledge that Castlemilk is brimming with.



CARSPHAIRN COMMUNITY WOODLAND

From community spirit to community opportunity. Find out how a remarkable community woodland asset transfer initiative is breathing new life into the village of Carsphairn in Dumfries & Galloway.

In March 2021, [Carsphairn Community Woodland Ltd](#) (CCWL), took ownership of 48.8ha of Muirdrochwood from [Forestry and Land Scotland](#) under the Community Asset Transfer Scheme. The woods are on the outskirts of the village of Carsphairn in Dumfries & Galloway, about 25 miles south-east of Ayr.

The woodland was put on the market by the then Forest Enterprise Scotland (now Forestry and Land Scotland) which at the time was disposing of isolated and unproductive forest blocks. Facing an aging demographic, and seeing local young people leaving to find work, the community grasped the opportunity to develop skills and foster employment opportunities through community ownership of the land.

GOVERNANCE THAT EMPOWERS

Initially, the existing [Carsphairn Community Trust](#) got the ball rolling on the project, before CCWL was set up as a limited by guarantee company (not for profit). The new social enterprise doesn't currently have charitable status, but this is something being considered for the future.

There are up to 10 directors, and close links remain with the Trust. Numbering 70, membership rates are high. Particularly when taking into account that membership is limited to the [Carsphairn Community Council](#) area - which has a population of 170 people. People and organisations from out with the community council area can be supporters.

FUELLING AMBITION WITH RESOURCES

Engagement with the [Scottish Land Fund](#) began in 2016, and CCWL succeeded in securing funding to buy the site from the Scottish Land Fund and [Carsphairn Renewable Energy Fund Ltd](#) in 2020.

Business guidance from [South of Scotland Enterprise](#) (SoSE) bolstered their planning phase. Subsequently, a £300,000 SoSE grant supported development of a versatile forest hub, catering to education, tourism, enterprise, and community events.

TURNING GOALS INTO REALITY

Initial activities include events for local schoolchildren and open days for everyone. A programme of events flourished within their newly constructed wildlife hide. The SoSE grant played a pivotal role in funding the forest shed and essential machinery, enabling woodland management, sustainable firewood services, forestry training, and a communal space for the wider community to gather.

TANGIBLE OUTCOMES CHANGING LIVES

The project is already delivering sustainable local opportunities from community ownership of the woodlands.

Its revenue will bolster the community, as the gradual harvesting of Sitka Spruce trees over 30 years promises consistent income, while also fuelling wood-related enterprises.

Two jobs have been created, with the ambitious goal of reaching 12 positions by year four, all but one of which will be funded by earned income. Toward a greener future, sensitive restocking will heighten the woodland's environmental and recreational value. Plans for 3km of trails will interlace existing routes, creating a 10km network that extends into the surrounding area.



25 years ago, a visionary partnership set the path for Cormonachan woodlands to grow into a flourishing example of community-led education and conservation.

Cormonachan woodlands is 63.9 ha of ancient semi-natural woodland and part of [Scotland's rainforest](#). It lies between the villages of Lochgoilhead and Carrick Castle on the west shore of Loch Goil in Argyll.

In 1998 a project was set up between [Ardroy Outdoor Education Centre](#) (AOEC), [Lochgoil Community Trust](#), [Lochgoil Primary School](#) and what was at that time Forest Enterprise Scotland, which owned the initial project's 20 hectares of woodland. The objective was for the partnership to manage the woodlands to improve biodiversity and to develop them as an education resource.

Today the larger area is managed by volunteer-run [Cormonachan Community Woodlands](#) (CCW), and the long established principles of education and conservation endure. The woodlands continue to be used by AOEC school and youth groups; by Lochgoil Primary for projects; and for recreational walks by locals and visitors.

GOVERNANCE THAT EMPOWERS

CCW is a not-for profit limited company by guarantee. The woodland is managed under a 20 year lease from [Forestry and Land Scotland](#) (FLS) and with a Memorandum of Understanding with AOEC.

The group has around 100 members, in a local community of around 400 residents. Relations with nearby Lochgoil Community Trust are positive and the community generally is supportive and engaged. The membership recently raised a five-figure sum for footpath works.

FUELLING AMBITION WITH RESOURCES

The Ardroy centre uses the woodlands for a wide range of educational activities including aspects of [Children 1st's Bide Oot](#) project. They also maintain a resource centre and provide accommodation for volunteers working in the woods.

Since 2015, CCW has received £360k from the Centre to fund its activities. This has largely been spent on infrastructure development. Current infrastructure includes two car parks, 4.5 km of paths, a squirrel hide, a labyrinth, a tool shed and resource hut, along with a contemplation shelter. These facilities support woodland management and provide for 10,000+ visitors to the woodland each year.

TURNING GOALS INTO REALITY

CCW has raised all the funding for the red squirrel hide, contemplation shelter and a new car park – all of which are all open every day of the year. The latest funding drive is for a new paths project to enhance a 16th century medieval settlement at Upper Cormonachan and Cormonachan Falls.

The woodland hosted two visits from COP26 delegates, which resulted in an award-winning film: The Ghost Rainforest. It hosts Raleigh International Groups, and a number of arts-based organisations hold events and activities in the wood every year, including outdoor theatre, sculpture and arts trails. The site is used for weddings, memorials and other events.

TANGIBLE OUTCOMES CHANGING LIVES

The initial driver for the woodland, which is still the case, is education for children. One thousand children access the woodland for outdoor education every year. As a result of the close relationship with the Ardroy centre, conservation and recreation have become more important – hence the footpath network. In June 2023 alone there were over 1,500 people on the footpaths. The target for the year is 20,000 people on the footpaths.

Woodland management priorities focus on protecting and enhancing the woodlands, including improvements in age class diversity, reduction in invasive non-natives, conservation of veteran oak and hazel groves, and implementing best practice management of historic woodland pasture.



BURNHEAD MOSS EDUCATION AND TRAINING FUND

The [Burnhead Moss Education and Training Fund](#) has been developed and designed by multiple communities in the Falkirk and West Lothian areas. Their approach working with [Foundation Scotland](#) to administer funds from EDF Renewables has been used as a blueprint for a number of similar community benefit funds for education and training. Their story highlights how leveraging resources for community-driven initiatives can improve lives, address unemployment, enhance skills, and create a path to a brighter future.

[EDF Renewables](#) provides community funds from the [Burnhead Moss Wind Farm](#) for a group of neighbouring communities: [Avonbridge and Standburn](#); [Limerigg & Slamannan](#) and [Blackridge](#), and into the [Burnhead Moss Education & Training Fund](#) (BMET).

A significant portion of the voluntary community benefits, a minimum of 20%, is dedicated to the BMET Fund, and is frequently topped up due to demand. This strategic allocation aims to support and encourage education and retraining opportunities against a backdrop of a long, but declining, history in coal mining and heavy industry.

GOVERNANCE THAT EMPOWERS

Foundation Scotland worked with the communities and EDF Renewables to set up and administer the fund. A dedicated working group comprising representatives from the three community areas played a pivotal role. Their input guides the Fund's design and delivery, aligning it with local needs and opportunities. Recognising the importance of impartial decision-making, the working group entrusted Foundation Scotland to assess and decide on applications from local residents and help them establish a freelance outreach worker who could help ensure residents engaged with this opportunity.

FUELLING AMBITION WITH RESOURCES

An average of £65k per annum has been put into the Education & Training Fund in its first eight years of operation. Within this funding, the working group agreed the need for an outreach worker to ensure the Fund was used in an inclusive manner. The role provides comprehensive support, identifying individuals who need assistance, aligning their employability needs with suitable training or education, and helping them access financial support through the Fund.

TURNING GOALS INTO REALITY

From April 2016 to December 2022, the BMET Fund awarded 403 grants, totalling £450,842, benefiting 247 individuals. In the first four years the Fund directly benefitted 3.6% of the area's population, creating a considerable impact. In 2018 and 2019 rapid growth in demand and the guidance of the outreach worker led to the fund allocating all available resources, including underspends from the setup phase. On several occasions during this time, the working group members committed additional funds from their respective area sub-funds into the BMET Fund pot to meet demand and this practice has continued.

TANGIBLE OUTCOMES CHANGING LIVES

An independent evaluation produced in 2019 revealed the extent of the impact the fund has supported.

A quarter of participants were previously unemployed, while others faced underemployment, low wages, or lacked skills for better employment prospects. The initiative brought tangible change to its intended beneficiaries, encouraging individuals to pursue education and training they hadn't previously considered. The outreach worker is a catalyst, not only for accessing funds but also for opening doors to various forms of support and training opportunities.

Help is at hand for communities and social enterprises looking for funding, or who find themselves in receipt of voluntary investment such as annual community benefit funding and need help to administer it. An experienced team at Foundation Scotland can help deliver community ambitions.



Commitment to a greener, sustainable tomorrow is transforming communities and their opportunities, enhancing climate consciousness, and nurturing projects that are building climate smart communities.

The [Unlock our Future Fund](#) is a community benefit fund linked to the [European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre](#), which is owned and operated by Aberdeen Offshore Wind Farm Limited, a subsidiary of [Vattenfall](#).

Working in partnership with panel of decision makers from the area of benefit, [Foundation Scotland](#), administers small (up to £2,000) and large grants (up to £15,000) from the fund for projects in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire contributing towards a climate smart future.

GOVERNANCE THAT EMPOWERS

Decisions on how the Fund is spent are made by a panel of 'Community Champions'. The panel is between six and eight people appointed through an open recruitment process. Panel members, serving between two to four years, bring expertise, geographic insight, and strategic alignment with the fund's goals.

The panel undertook a selection process and appointed Foundation Scotland as the fund administrators. Reviews are undertaken every two years to get feedback from applicants and prospective applicants and used to review the fund arrangements and approach.

FUELLING AMBITION WITH RESOURCES

Vattenfall contributes an index linked sum of £150,000 per annum to the fund for the operating life of the wind farm - which is expected to be at least 20 years.

The fund makes grants of between £500 and £15,000 for activity in any one year, with the possibility of grants up to £30,000 for projects taking place over three years.

Ten percent of the fund, £15,000 per year, is set aside for project activity meeting the fund priorities in Blackdog, the community hosting the onshore substation for the wind farm. The remainder of the fund is available for activities throughout the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire area, which helps ensure that the benefit has wide geographical reach.

TURNING GOALS INTO REALITY

The Unlock our Future Fund is a conduit for charitable initiatives addressing the climate crisis. From fostering sustainability-focused projects to enhancing community facilities and sustainable transport, the fund provides a catalyst for change. It champions innovative solutions, ensuring that every project leaves a lasting imprint on the community.

The Fund has awarded £481,972 over the first four years, supporting 51 legacy projects that are providing local solutions to the climate emergency.

TANGIBLE OUTCOMES CHANGING LIVES

The fund is building capacity and confidence within organisations and in the wider community to tackle the climate emergency head on. Feedback highlights projects are not only building capacity and confidence within organisations, but also fostering community-wide climate awareness. The real-world impact stretches from electric vehicle conversations sparked by volunteers, to localised, practical action plans for low carbon technologies and solutions.



MORVERN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

With over two decades of experience, the Morvern peninsula's remote west coast community is a showcase for the incredible potential of community-led development. Their journey exemplifies the transformative power of local action - delivering multi-million-pound infrastructure projects in tourism, energy, housing and community amenities.

Sustainable development is at the core of [Morvern Community Development Company](#)'s work: making use of community land and assets; advancing education and safeguarding the local environment, culture and heritage; and delivering products and services for the community.

Set up in 1999, they had a vision for their area for the new millennium - to ensure there were enough jobs, affordable houses, leisure services and a quality of life for a sustainable community.

With support from [Highlands and Islands Enterprise](#) (HIE) and the European LEADER programme, they crafted a growth plan to harness their community's potential. Their initial focus on the Cala Loch Àlainn harbour project, with 32 visitor berths, moorings, shore facilities, and access paths, marked the first pivotal steps.

GOVERNANCE THAT EMPOWERS

MCDC operates as both a charity and a Limited company, governed by a Board of Directors, including representation from [Morvern Community Council](#).

HIE played a crucial role by supporting a full-time development officer who translated community aspirations into actionable plans.

FUELLING AMBITION WITH RESOURCES

Today, MCDC employs three people, generating income from successful infrastructure projects that provide for the community's needs. Their partnerships brought significant investment:

- With HIE:
Funding for development officer, and support from a wider Local Development Officers network across the region;
Project planning, development and funding advice and support;
Grant funding for the marina, fuel pumps, e-bikes and the community business hub;
Specialist advice to support MCDC staff and board develop their growth plan ambitions;
Scottish Land Fund and HIE Community Assets team advice and support;
Skills support including MIT Entrepreneurship Programme.

- LEADER funding
- Scottish Government's [Community and Renewable Energy Scheme](#) (CARES).
- £2.23m from the [Energy Investment Fund \(EIF\)](#) for the Hydropower scheme
- Triodos bank loan
- [Local Energy Scotland](#) – expertise and development funding for the hydro scheme.
- COVID support and recovery funding - Supporting Communities Fund and Community-Led Tourism Infrastructure Fund.

TURNING GOALS INTO REALITY

MCDC's accomplishments are tangible testaments to their dedication:

- Cala Loch Àlainn berths and moorings with shore facilities and paths;
- An allotment scheme on Ardtornish Estate's leased land;
- A community amenity woodland project;
- The UK's largest community-owned hydro-power scheme;
- A vibrant community hub; and
- Three one-bedroom homes.

TANGIBLE OUTCOMES CHANGING LIVES

MCDC's success has ignited a positive ripple effect on the community. Local employment opportunities have been created directly and indirectly through their projects, fostering economic growth. Businesses flourish, and new opportunities emerge, infusing vitality into the village. Access to land is easier through allotments and a community amenity woodland project. Café LA, situated in the new community hub, has become a thriving meeting place, while the hydro scheme ensures sustainable income for the future. Community housing supports local residents, including key workers.

[See the HIE web feature on MCDC](#)



Community land ownership can be pivotal in cultivating a vibrant, interconnected community that maximises its assets and fosters a unique cultural and social environment. It provides the opportunity and resource to provide vital services, fostering sustainable businesses, and meeting the needs and aspirations of the local community.

The community-owned [Galson Estate](#) in the north west of Lewis is home to around 1,800 people. Within its 56,000 acres there are 860 homes, 145 local businesses, and 22 crofting townships with more than 600 crofts.

Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn (Galson Estate Trust) bought the estate in 2007, with financial assistance from HIE and the Scottish Land Fund. Since then, the trust has managed the estate and delivered a wide range of projects in consultation with, and on behalf of the local community.

The Urras's main aims are to support a thriving and well-connected community which makes the most of its own assets; providing the services and amenities needed for a unique cultural and social environment.

GOVERNANCE THAT EMPOWERS

The Urras operates as both a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. Guided by a strategic plan that stems from extensive community engagement, the organisation employs 16 staff members to deliver day to day daily operations.

Volunteer directors, elected from the membership, steer UOG's direction, ensuring grassroots representation.

Galson Estate (Trading) Ltd, owned by the community, carries out trading activity around assets whilst renewable energy operations are undertaken by Urras Energy Society and Galson Energy Ltd.

Regular community engagement is essential to being able to deliver future plans, as are effective partnerships within and outwith the Estate. The initial estate purchase would not have been possible without widespread support from the community. Extensive engagement was undertaken in the lead up to the estate buyout.

FUELLING AMBITION WITH RESOURCES

The income generated by operations of a community owned wind farm and delivery of a wide range of community services enables the trust to employ 16 people (FTE 12). Income generation is pivotal to growth - prior to wind energy incomes being secured, the Urras employed three staff.

TURNING GOALS INTO REALITY

The Urras' initiatives are designed to improve lives and sustain the community:

- Providing vital crofting administration and advice;
- Nurturing health and wellbeing through the Sunnd programme;
- Easing cost of living burdens for vulnerable residents;
- Boosting tourism through dedicated facilities;
- Enriching school holiday experiences;
- Nurturing community investment via wind income redistribution; and
- Coordinating significant capital initiatives for local organisations.

TANGIBLE OUTCOMES CHANGING LIVES

The Trust's impact is evident in the fabric of the community. They've sparked meaningful discussions on critical issues that might never have happened under private ownership, promoting collaboration and co-operation. Informed decision-making tackles critical issues that private ownership might overlook. Their intrinsic understanding of how the community functions optimises resource use and facilitates effective partnership work. They also channel local views and contributions more effectively for formal regional/national consultations, thus ensuring local residents and organisations have more of a voice.

The model fosters wealth building through local capacity development, creating socially responsible employment, and influencing land use. Their efforts also spur decentralisation of services, aligning them with local needs.

A deeper engagement with the community empowers the creation its own agenda to deliver rural regeneration solutions. Community landowners such as the Urras can evolve into exemplar socially responsible employer which helps to raise standards across the area.

[See the HIE web feature on Galson Estate](#)

GLENKENS AND DISTRICT TRUST (GDT)

How prospective community benefit income was an impetus to formalise collaboration, leading to an arrangement that was greater than the sum of its parts

[Glenkens and District Trust](#) is a community-led fund distributing body, operating across ten communities in Dumfries and Galloway - Balmaclellan, Balmaghie, Carsphairn, Corsock & Kirkpatrick Durham, Crossmichael, Dalry, Dunscore, Glencairn, New Galloway & Kells, and Parton. Established as a charity in 2011, GDT set out on its journey to resource and enable community-led development in 2018, as the first local windfarm became operational.

The Trust has set out a clear vision for the area's priorities, a timeline for achieving them, and options for implementing them. The area is already reaping the rewards.

GOVERNANCE THAT EMPOWERS

GDT wants to ensure that any community benefit funds can be maximised for the long-term benefit of local communities, through good stewardship and partnership working. Transparency and accountability are core values and in 2020 GDT became a two tier Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, retaining Community Councils at the heart of its governance, but enabling the addition of independent Trustees to ensure appropriate skills and diversity are present, and also creating a tier of Associate Membership to ensure people could feel a real sense of ownership of the Trust's activity. The Trust also has a robust communications approach supporting its governance, delivered at events, in a regular newsletter, online and with public reports made available from every meeting and regular posting on social media, aiming at further enhancing the sense of community ownership in the activities of Trust and use of community money.

Fuelling ambition with resources

As a fund distribution body, GDT is an enabler of projects rather than a delivery organisation. The Trust works in partnership with [Foundation Scotland](#) to deliver the [Glenkens and District Community Fund](#). The community benefit funding currently provides around £300,000 annually for distribution to local community initiatives. Eligible groups can apply for annual or multi-year grants of between £500 to a maximum of £25,000 per year of support for a maximum of three years.

In order to maximise the benefits from the Blackcraig Wind Farm and multiple other pipeline windfarm projects in development locally, GDT commissioned a cross-area Community Action Plan using an enablement grant from CARES. This grant supported GDT to bring external consultants on board, adding community action planning expertise and advice, and an independent and broader perspective. The consultants helped find innovative ways to reach out to less active members of the community, ensuring all voices were heard. The end result was a strategic community action plan published in September 2020.

TURNING GOALS INTO REALITY

Following this, GDT aligned its Community Fund Strategy wholly with the priority themes in the Community Action Plan, in order to recognise the Plan's importance as the distillation of community ambition and aspiration across much of the Fund area, to support its implementation and to deliver impact against articulated community objectives.

As a result, everything the Trust has funded to date is aligned to one of the four priority themes in the Community Action Plan, using a mixture of open grant making, commissioning and targeted grants.

Some key projects include:

- Creation of the Glenkens Hub website
- Creation of the Glenkens Local Food Network
- Creation of the Glenkens Youth Group
- Creation of the Glenkens Community Spaces Network
- Positive work on the creation of new Community Housing
- Hosting D&G Citizens Advice Service in the Glenkens
- Creation of new support scheme for local childminders
- Many other projects and capital upgrades and investments.

A report on the Community Action Plan successes to date can be read [here](#).

TANGIBLE OUTCOMES CHANGING LIVES

GDT's journey embodies the transformative power of community engagement, strategic planning, and resource allocation. Amongst other hallmarks of this successful arrangement, the delivery of the Community Action Plan has been crucial. Not only did this serve as an important opportunity for community aspiration to be heard and recognised but also acted as a unifying force, identifying, and articulating for the first time what shared aspirations the communities held in common, right across the area of benefit. This in turn helps underline the drive and benefit to the 'all for one' pooled fund approach that GDT is actively promoting regarding the future significant pipeline of community benefits coming into the area. Finally, the action plan acts a strategic road map, guiding and enable the allocation of funds in line with the long-term interests of the community.

GET INVOLVED: GROWING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Are you ready to be part of the next chapter in community-led empowerment and sustainability? Scotland's vision for community empowerment fits perfectly with opportunities within the natural capital marketplace and within the context, more broadly, of changing land use.

Simply securing a development officer to develop plans, raise funds and coordinate activity can be transformational and over time, success breeds success leading to greater cumulative benefits for your community. Start by being clear about the outcomes you want.

It's time to tap into emerging areas of opportunity from Scotland's rich natural resources. And a great place to start is with a bridge between natural capital and community benefit.

Where to find more information and support:

NATURAL CAPITAL SUPPORT

- Community Land Scotland <https://www.communitylandscotland.org.uk/>
- Community Woodlands Association <https://www.communitywoods.org/>
- Forestry and Land Scotland <https://forestryandland.gov.scot/>
- Peatland Action <https://www.nature.scot/climate-change/nature-based-solutions/peatland-action-projectPart>
- Crown Estates Scotland <https://www.crownestatescotland.com/>
- Scottish Land and Estates <https://www.scottishlandandestates.co.uk/>
- Scottish Environment Link <https://www.scotlink.org/>
- Scottish Crofting Federation - <https://www.crofting.org/>
- Scottish Forestry <https://forestry.gov.scot/>
- Woodland Carbon Code - <https://woodlandcarboncode.org.uk/>
- Peatland Carbon Code - <https://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/peatland-code/introduction-peatland-code>
- Private Companies set up to support investors or land managers explore and manage carbon credits
- Scottish Land Commission – Good Practice Programme <https://www.landcommission.gov.scot/our-work/good-practice>

LANDOWNERS SUPPORT

- Scottish Land Commission <https://www.landcommission.gov.scot/>
- Scottish Land Fund (SLF) <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/scottish-land-fund>
- Scottish Land and Estates [Helping Rural Scotland Thrive | Scottish Land & Estates \(scottishlandandestates.co.uk\)](https://www.scottishlandandestates.co.uk/helping-rural-scotland-thrive)
- Nature Scot <https://www.nature.scot/>
- Land agents such as Galbraith, Bell Ingram, Strutt and Parker, Savills

COMMUNITIES - GENERAL CAPACITY SUPPORT

- Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS) <https://dtascot.org.uk/>
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) <https://www.hie.co.uk/>
- South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) <https://www.southofscotlandenterprise.com/>
- Find business support <https://findbusinesssupport.gov.scot/>
- Just Enterprise <https://justenterprise.org/>
- Community Enterprise <https://communityenterprise.co.uk/>
- Community Energy Scotland <https://communityenergyscotland.org.uk/>
- Foundation Scotland - <https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/>

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SUPPORT, FUNDING AND INVESTMENT

- Foundation Scotland - <https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/>
- Social Investment Scotland (SIS) <https://www.socialinvestmentscotland.com/>
- Firstport <https://www.firstport.org.uk/>
- Crown Estates Scotland <https://www.crownestatescotland.com/>



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