

Vattenfall Unlock our Future Fund

Year 3, 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021



Highlights

- The Unlock our Future Fund supports projects in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire contributing towards a climate smart future.
- In year three of the Fund, 17 awards were made totalling £110,708. This brings the cumulative amount of funding awarded over the first three years to £348,987, supporting 41 projects.
- 96% of the monies available for distribution (excluding those ringfenced for the Blackdog community) have been awarded.
- The application process was streamlined for small grants (£2,000 and under). This was successful in attracting more small applications than in previous years.
- A total of 42 applications were received in the single round of award making during year three, a significant increase from previous years.
- Interest in the Fund has been strong in the run up to and aftermath of COP26, with presentations about the Fund made to a range of audiences.

Introduction

The Unlock our Future Fund is a community benefit fund provided by the European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre, which is owned and operated by Aberdeen Offshore Wind Farm Limited, a subsidiary of Vattenfall.

The Fund benefits projects focused on environmental sustainability and taking place within the local authority areas of Aberdeenshire and /or the City of Aberdeen.

Decisions on grant award and overall Fund strategy are made by a Panel of local representatives (see page 3). The Fund is administered by independent grant-making charity Foundation Scotland.

Vattenfall contributes £150,000 per year to the Fund (as at 2019), tracking the Retail

Price Index, for the life of the wind farm, which is expected to be at least 20 years. This sum is inclusive of contributions to the Fund administrator's costs.

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

The overall purpose of the Fund is to support charitable activity that addresses the following priorities:

- contribute to a **climate smarter world** with sustainability at its core
- invest in **community facilities and activities** that are fit for the future and are environmentally sustainable, especially community spaces and transport
- support **creative solutions**
- ensure a **legacy** (lasting impact) which brings clear benefit to the local community

Grant applications must meet **at least three** of these priorities.

The priorities were informed by an independent consultation which took place in 2017. Minor amendments to the wording of priorities were made following a review by the

¹ This emphasises the importance of reducing energy demand as well as investment in renewables in moving towards a low carbon future; for example, by

Fund's Panel and an online survey at the end of year two of the Fund's operation (October 2020).

In addition, several cross cutting themes are taken into account by the Panel when deciding which applications to support. These are:

- Local procurement
- Strengthening community partnerships
- Capacity building locally
- Match funding / leverage
- Enhancing quality of life for all
- Taking a holistic approach which takes into consideration the 'energy hierarchy'¹.

The Fund Strategy (available from the Foundation Scotland [website](#)) provides a fuller description of the Fund priorities and cross cutting themes.

10% of the annual donation from Vattenfall to the Fund (starting at £15,000 in year one) is set aside for project activity in Blackdog, the community hosting the substation for the wind farm.

ensuring adequate insulation is in place in a building before installing a new heating system.

Financial Statement

1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021

Opening Balance £70,116.13

Income

Year 3 Vattenfall £156,572.44

Vattenfall funding for £500.00

MSc bursary (see page 14)

Interest £73.35

Total income £157,145.79

Expenditure

Expenditure in period £75,833.29

Grants to be released £92,805.81

Sub total £168,639.10

Total funds available at 30 September 2021 **£58,622.82**

£46,169 of the Fund income received in years one to three was ringfenced for project applications from the Blackdog community. From this sum, one award of £4,440 was made to the Blackdog Residents Association for preliminary feasibility work relating to a bridge to access Blackdog beach. Therefore, £41,729 of the £58,623 available funds at 30 September 2021 was ringfenced for Blackdog, leaving £16,894 carried forward for applications benefitting the wider Aberdeen / Aberdeenshire area.

96% of funds available for the area outwith Blackdog have been awarded in the first three years of the Fund's operation.

Unlock our Future Community Champions Panel

The Unlock our Future Community Champions Panel makes decisions on how the Fund is spent (in terms of Fund Strategy and grant awards) and promotes the Fund locally. The Panel was initially appointed in 2018. Panel members are expected to serve up to four years; therefore, two of the founding Panel members stood down at the end of 2020 and an open recruitment process took place to recruit new members. Rob Clunas and Lyndsey Leiper were welcomed to the Panel.

During year three of the Fund, the Panel comprised:

Rob Clunas

Liz Hodge

Lyndsey Leiper

Lori Manson

Morag McCorkindale

Jean Morrison (Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group representative)

Susan Osbeck (Chair)

At the end of year three, Liz Hodge and Lori Manson retired from the Panel. It is expected Panel vacancies will be filled in February 2022.

The Panel met (online) three times during the year, with one round of award making.

Fund Promotion and Support to Applicants

During the first two years of the Fund, Foundation Scotland and Panel members provided information and support to potential applicants through face-to-face events across the two local authority areas. However, this was not possible in year three because of Covid-19 related restrictions. Therefore, promotional activity and applicant support were delivered online.

An online seminar was held on 2nd March 2021. This was attended live by 27 people. The seminar was recorded and made available online, being viewed 80 times.

In addition, the Foundation Scotland Fund Coordinator attended an online seminar arranged by the Buchan Development Partnership for community groups in the Buchan area. 14 representatives of local groups attended.

The online seminars were followed up with one-to-one support to potential applicants provided by the Foundation Scotland Fund Coordinator, either online or by telephone. 24 community groups received support. Following these sessions, seven groups decided not to proceed with an application at that time as the proposed project was not a good fit with the Fund priorities or the required further development.

Year 3 Applications

During year three, a new application process was put in place, following the Panel's review of the Fund at the end of year two. Small grant applications (for £2,000 and under) were considered separately to large grant applications (over £2,000). The application and assessment process for small grants was streamlined, and the timescale for award decisions on those shortened.

10 applications for small grants were received, for a total combined request of £16,736.60. This was up from four small grant applications in year one and two small grant applications in year two; indicating the new process encouraged submissions. Of the applications in year three, five were funded, totalling £9,213.60, a conversion rate of 50% (by number of applications).

Large project applications were assessed using a two-stage process. Initially, applications were shortlisted based on the projects' likely contribution to the four Fund priorities. At this stage, 15 applications were rejected due to their weaker contribution to Fund priorities. The remaining 16 projects underwent a detailed assessment.

31 applications for large grants were received for a total combined request of £533,454.00. Of these, 11 were funded, totalling £97,054.60, a conversion rate of 35% (by number of applications).

The above figures relate to the portion of the Fund not ringfenced for Blackdog projects. One application was received for the Blackdog ringfenced Fund for £4,440 and was funded.

Fund Year	No. applications	Applications £
Year 3	42	£555k
Year 2	24	£314k
Year 1	33	£415k

The rise in applications in year three may in part be due to the introduction of a simplified process for small grants. It could also be the result of pent-up demand from groups whose plans were derailed in 2020 by the first Covid-19 lockdown which came into force in the months preceding the application deadline.

The high number of applications during the year suggests that moving promotion and support activities online did not have a detrimental impact on the numbers of groups applying.

A full list of projects awarded funding is given on the following page.

The locations of successful and unsuccessful applicant organisations in years one to three, based on the post code of the main contact, are shown in figures 1 and 2. (One awardee, Community Energy Scotland, is not shown as the main contact address is outside the Fund area). Applications were received from across the Fund area of benefit. However, the Banffshire area is underrepresented in successful applications.



Figure 1 Location of Awards (year 1 - 3)



Figure 2 Location of unsuccessful applications (year 1 - 3)

Year 3 Awards

Applicant	Project Description	Amount Awarded
Aberdeenshire Sailing Trust	To fund an electric outboard motor, battery and charger for the Trust's small rescue boat based at Peterhead, replacing an 8hp conventionally fuelled outboard.	£ 9,316.00
Blackdog Residents Association	To fund the first phase in site investigations, including a topographical survey and utility scan, required for the design and construction of a pedestrian bridge to access Blackdog beach.	£ 4,440.00
Bonnymuir Green Community Trust	To fund the repair of the clubhouse roof, including the installation of a sedum matting living roof to the main flat roof section to reduce energy losses and increase biodiversity.	£ 10,000.00
Camphill Wellbeing Trust	To fund energy efficient lighting in the sports hall of the Compass development.	£ 4,200.00
Camphill Rudolf Steiner Schools	To introduce a hot composting system which would eliminate the need to purchase compost from external sources, significantly increasing the sustainability of the Murtle Estate organic food and herb production.	£ 5,074.00
Culter & District Men's Shed	To fund purchase of materials to insulate the gable ends of the men's shed and so improve energy efficiency of the building.	£ 1,341.00
Earth & Worms	To provide greener facilities and improve access for volunteers by installing a compost toilet in the community garden for the benefit of the local community.	£ 5,000.00
Fittie Community Development Trust	To fully insulate the community hall and replace the windows in order to reduce energy consumption, maximise the effectiveness of the air source heat pump and raise climate awareness in the community.	£ 15,000.00

Applicant	Project Description	Amount Awarded
Girlguiding Kincardine & Deeside	To part fund a feasibility study relating to the new Sheiling#2 Girlguiding residential centre in Braemar. The objective is to further the development of an exemplar zero carbon building providing facilities for Girlguiding groups and the wider community.	£ 2,000.00
Meldrum Amenities Improvement Group	To fund a solar PV system to provide the power for the electric utility vehicle and its water pump for maintaining floral displays.	£ 5,349.60
Newburgh Public Hall	To fund purchase and installation of an 8kW photovoltaic array, linked to a Tesla Powerwall 2 battery unit to improve energy efficiency and demonstrate the technologies to the wider community.	£ 15,000.00
Panthers Basketball Club	To fund solar lighting on the outdoor basketball and netball courts at Mineralwell Park in Stonehaven to allow for greater access and usage, by Club members and the wider community.	£ 2,000.00
Port Erroll Public Hall	To part fund the installation of solar PV and battery storage and at Port Erroll Public Hall, and hence reduce the running costs of the hall.	£ 7,262.00
Stella's Voice	To fund the purchase of an electric Nissan E-NV200 delivery van for use in Aberdeenshire and surrounding area for the collection and delivery of larger items of furniture and household goods and the collection and distribution of food provision to those in need.	£ 15,000.00
University of Aberdeen	Feasibility study exploring the potential of scaling up microgeneration from Vertical Axis Wind Turbines (VAWT) retrofitted into existing public and private infrastructure.	£ 1,872.00
Woodside Sports Complex	To fund upgrades to the internal clubhouse lighting and floodlighting, replacing all current lighting with LED and replacing mobile floodlights with fixed LED floodlights, in order to improve energy efficiency and effectiveness of the lighting.	£ 5,853.00

Applicant	Project Description	Amount Awarded
Zero Carbon Daviot	To fund a feasibility study into retrofitting three property archetypes found in the Daviot area, as a precursor to development of a community-led retrofit programme.	£ 2,000.00
	Total Awards	£ 110,707.60

Impact Case Studies

The Unlock our Future Fund is investing in climate smart projects that will provide a legacy. The case studies below provide a snapshot of early impacts generated by a selection of projects since the Fund launched. Further case studies are available on Foundation Scotland's [website](#).

1. Aberdeenshire Sailing Trust and Peterhead Sailing Club

Aberdeenshire Sailing Trust (AST) runs activities in Peterhead, Lock of Skene and Knockburn Loch in Aberdeenshire. It provides opportunities to participate in sailing to individuals and groups of all ages and abilities, including school groups, disadvantaged young people, a mums and dads group, and people with disabilities. In 2019, 1,495 individuals took part in sailing sessions via AST.

One of AST's priorities is addressing its carbon emissions and achieving net-zero. The Trust has considered which parts of its operations have the most impact and has been tackling each of these in turn. In 2019, AST was

awarded £15,000 from the Unlock our Future Fund to purchase an electric van. This was needed to transport boats and equipment between the sites used for sailing.

The impacts of the electric van (EV) went well beyond the direct carbon savings from replacing fossil fuelled vehicles. It has helped to inform and educate a wider audience about electric vehicles.

"The EV has been a talking point, lots of people asking about it, interested in it, asking about how it tows, about the range, about the charging. It has been a really positive point for others to see and learn about, that change is not as hard as they think. In fact it is positive and better."

Angie Fraser, Principal of AST

The next step for AST was working in partnership with Peterhead Sailing Club, which owns and manages facilities used by the Trust, to reduce the emissions from its buildings. In 2020, the Unlock our Future Fund awarded £13,822 to Peterhead Sailing Club to fund installation of solar panels (PV), a battery and an electric car charging point on

the clubhouse. A set of 14 PV panels were fitted to the south slope of the clubhouse roof. They are connected to an inverter in the roof space which feeds a Tesla battery wall for energy storage. The battery unit's charge status and energy use history can be viewed via a mobile app.

As energy use at the Club varies considerably from day to day, the inclusion of battery storage allows the club to maximise the amount of self-generated electricity it can use. In May to June 2021, 73% of electricity needs were met by the new system. This may be even higher in late summer months. Any excess generation can be sold to the grid, providing additional income to the Club. Once again, the installation has generated considerable interest from Club members, social media followers and other sailing groups using the building. Many have expressed surprise about the amount of energy a relatively small system can produce.

The latest step in AST's net zero journey was securing funding in 2021 to test out using an electric outboard motor on one of its rescue boats, replacing a conventionally fuelled 8hp outboard motor. £9,316 was awarded from the Unlock our Future Fund to purchase the new motor, battery and charger unit.

As yet, electric motors are not widely used in the sailing community; AST is aware of only one club in the UK with an electric outboard. However, these motors could offer a major improvement on petrol-driven outboards as

they are quiet and non-polluting, which is particularly important for instructors who spend a lot of time sitting close to the motor, as well as having lower carbon emissions.

Using an electric motor will provide another opportunity for the Trust to show a wider audience what can be done to lower emissions. AST has actively engaged with the industry body, the Royal Yachting Association Scotland, to share its journey to a climate smart future. The recently talked about their progress in a podcast available [here](#).

It's not all been plain sailing for AST in getting these energy saving projects underway. The bureaucracy involved in feed-in tariffs and interest free loans (which supplied the balance of funding for the electric van) have made for a steep learning curve for the organisation. The delivery of the electric outboard motor was delayed as the manufacturer was about to bring out a new model, reflecting the rapid advancement of technology in this area. However, the Trust is committed to working with others in the sailing community to share the knowledge and experience that it has built up.



Solar panels being installed on the Clubhouse at Peterhead

2. Fittie Development Trust

A historic fishing village community, located adjacent to the heart of Aberdeen's oil and gas industry, is combining an energy-efficient refurbishment of a community hall and a future-facing artistic collaboration to play its part in the energy transition in northeast Scotland.

Footdee, known locally as Fittie, is a historic fishing village within the city of Aberdeen. It sits on the edge of the harbour, separated from the city centre by a band of industrial development – most of it related to the oil and gas industry.

The Fittie Community Development Trust acquired the disused Gospel Hall in 2018 through a Community Asset Transfer. The hall needed a full refurbishment to make it a hub for a local community that is geographically isolated from facilities in the city. A major part of the refurbishment has involved improvements to energy efficiency and the installation of a new heating system.

The Unlock our Future Fund has made two awards to the Trust; an award of £15,000 for insulation and double-glazing and a further £8,536 for the heating system, comprising an air source heat pump and underfloor heating.

The Trust sought expert advice from Zero Waste Scotland's Energy Efficiency Business Support Service to identify the most efficient and cost-effective options for the building.

The work was then phased as funding was secured. Today, the hall is now back in use, providing an important facility for a community emerging from Covid-19 restrictions.

The work of the Fittie Community Development Trust exemplifies how a transition to a low carbon economy can encompass both physical changes to buildings and cultural changes, supported by the creative community. The Trust has partnered with a local arts organisation 'Open Road' on a collaborative project funded by Creative Scotland, titled 'Safe Harbour: Open Sea'. This brings together a team of five artists to work with the local community to both celebrate the past and look forward to a net zero future. The project is part of a Scotland-wide collaboration which aims to stimulate public engagement in the run up to and following COP26. The energy efficient hall is both a venue for project activity and an exemplar to those who use it.

"The combination of the building efficiency improvements and the creative collaboration will enable us to secure a legacy for residents and contribute towards the wider transition Aberdeen is undertaking as a city moving on from an economic dependence on oil and gas."

Cheryl Croydon, Trustee of the Fittie Community Development Trust

Lessons from the Fittie Hall refurbishment and other funded projects have also influenced

the Unlock Our Future Community Champions Panel. When the Fund launched in 2019, the priority was to support 'innovative' climate smart projects creating facilities fit for the future. 'Innovative' was later changed to 'creative solutions', which was felt by the Panel to better convey that change is not necessarily brought about by technological innovation, it can also be inspired by artistic creativity and communities being supported to find new ways of doing things.

In addition, the Panel amended fund guidance to put a greater emphasis on the 'energy hierarchy' which recognises the importance of low-tech measures such as good insulation being in place before investment is made in renewable generation technology. Foundation Scotland has also introduced a requirement for applicants to obtain independent advice that takes a holistic approach to energy efficiency.



Members of the Fittie Development Trust outside the Hall

3. Investing in Low Carbon Travel

The transport sector is a significant producer of carbon emissions. Finding less carbon-intensive ways of transporting people and

goods will therefore be an important element of Scotland's journey to net zero.

During its first three years, the Unlock our Future Fund has supported the purchase of electric cargo bikes, electric vans, an electric bus, an electric car and an electric utility vehicle. These have replaced fossil-fuelled vehicles and supported community groups to deliver their services in a less carbon-intensive way.

The Fund has supported Camphill School and Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE) to purchase electric cargo bikes. Both organisations find the bikes ideal for transporting small deliveries of food on short journeys. The bikes are economical, safe and user-friendly. They can be used by students at Camphill School and volunteers at CFINE with a small amount of training. The benefits of the cargo bikes go well beyond the carbon savings they achieve when compared to conventionally fueled vans.

A staff member at Camphill School described the positive impact the bikes had on the students who have additional support needs and are using them to make food deliveries across the school campus:

"Cycling has been beneficial for the students' health and wellbeing. It's improving their fitness, agility and balance and we've seen anxiety levels reduce. The students involved in this project really look forward to cycling and we can see how much joy it gives them..."

Another student smiles from ear to ear when he's on the bike, he just loves it!"

Where deliveries are larger or journeys longer, projects have been awarded funding to purchase electric vans. Aberdeenshire Sailing Trust use their van to transport boats and equipment between sites; Stella's Voice transport food and furniture to households in need. These organisations have remarked on how much interest the vans generate, with people wanting to know more about the practicalities of electric vehicles. These informal conversations are an important part of encouraging electric vehicle uptake in the wider community.



An electric cargo bike being used by CFINE to deliver food

Aberdeenshire, like much of rural Scotland, has areas with poor or no public transport services. This presents a major difficulty for those without cars, particularly if they are in poverty, experience ill health or are less mobile. Buchan Dial-a-Community Bus has been piloting 'Be-link'D', a free service for those unable to access public transport, with timetables built around the needs of users. The service was initially piloted using a diesel-fuelled minibus – but this has now been replaced with a seven-seater electric vehicle, thanks to the Unlock our Future Fund.

Buchan Dial-a-Community Bus runs a fleet of diesel powered minibuses. The purchase of their first electric vehicle is seen as an opportunity to test a smaller electric vehicle in the context of providing a community transport service. As with many projects supported by the Unlock our Future Fund, the funding is allowing the organisation to experiment with a new approach to delivery that saves both money and carbon emissions.

This need to test an electric vehicle was also at the forefront of the application to the Fund from Tigh a'Chomainn Camphill, a community providing care to adults with special needs. The replacement of a diesel car in their fleet with an electric car has confirmed their suitability. As a staff member reported:

"We have overcome a great deal of the hesitancy and anxiety regarding the move to an electric fleet thereby demonstrating the viability of our travel strategy."

One of the more unusual vehicles purchased with support from the Fund is an electric utility vehicle, used by the Meldrum Amenities Improvement Group (MAIG) to maintain the planting and floral displays in Old Meldrum. The vehicle replaced an old diesel tractor. The electric utility vehicle can be seen out and about in the town centre all summer, thereby raising awareness of the role electric vehicles can play among the residents and visitors admiring the floral displays. And, in 2021, the Fund supported the purchase of solar panels

for the MAIG garage, so now the utility vehicle can be fully run on self-generated renewable power, with any surplus being sold to the grid.



Meldrum's electric utility vehicle

The purchase of electric vehicles and bikes by the organisations supported from the Vattenfall Unlock our Future Fund has shown a wide range of benefits in addition to direct carbon savings. It has allowed groups to test electric vehicles before adopting them more widely. The vehicles have also been a very visible demonstration of a commitment to lowering emissions and have generated a lot of interest in the wider community, who may still be hesitant about purchasing electric cars.

There have been some hiccups in adopting electric vehicles – however, these have usually related to delays in procurement rather than difficulties in their operation. Moreover, insurance costs can be higher than some awardees expected for more specialised vehicles.

Fund Publicity

The Fund has been publicised through:

- Press coverage
- Social media

- Bulletins and websites of third sector support organisations
- Foundation Scotland's website
- Presentations at events.

Articles about the Fund were published in various local publications including Grampian Online, the Deeside Piper, Fraserburgh Herald and Mearns Leader.

In early January 2022, the Press and Journal, the regional newspaper with the highest circulation in the North East of Scotland, carried a major article about the Fund in the context of Foundation Scotland's overall work. This highlighted the benefits to the area brought about by the Fund and contained quotes from Vattenfall and a number of the projects funded.

Information about the Fund was circulated in the bulletins of Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations; Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action; local area partnerships; and the Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group. Details of the Fund were also available via the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations funding portal (Funding Scotland).

The Fund page on Foundation Scotland's website was viewed 2,308 times by 1,807 individual users between 1 January 2021 and 16 December 2021. Peaks in views were during February and March, while the Fund was open for applications. Secondary peaks appeared in August 2021, when publicity about the awards was issued, and December

2021 when the recruitment of new Panel members was underway.

Presentations about the Fund were made to Local Energy Scotland's annual conference and a UK Community Foundation seminar, both of which took place in September 2021.

Fund Learning and Development

The Fund Panel worked with a Masters student at the University of Aberdeen during year three to better understand the impacts of the Fund. This study provided some useful learning which will inform the Panel's thinking in future years. The study is summarised below.

Researching the impact of the Vattenfall Unlock our Future Fund

By Anrijs Visvaldis Forsts

Background

The approach adopted sought to recognise the dependence of the North East region on the oil industry since the 1970s. Using ideas from academic literature around theories of 'industrial lock-in' and 'path dependence', the

research highlighted the role communities can have in steering away from an economy 'locked-in' to fossil fuel industries towards an economically and environmentally sustainable low carbon economy.

Methodology

A framework was developed to assess the impacts of projects on enhancing the following dimensions:

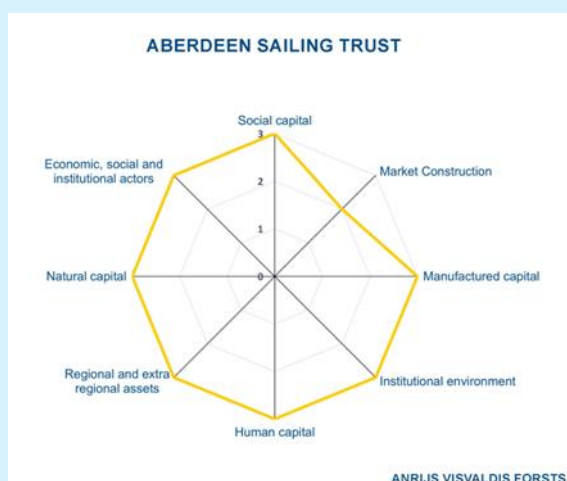
- social capital
- human capital
- natural capital
- manufactured capital
- economic, social and institutional actors
- the institutional environment
- regional and extra-regional assets
- market creation.

Eight projects that had previously received Unlock our Future Fund support were interviewed and assessed against each of these dimensions. The results were written up in the form of case studies and 'spider' diagrams to visualise the key contributions being made by each project (see example below).

Findings

The research findings support the view that community-led action is particularly important in a region where historic

'path dependence' on the oil industry creates a barrier to transition to a more sustainable economy. The case studies showed that the impacts of the projects funded by the Unlock our Future Fund go well beyond direct carbon savings: they can inspire, educate, reach the most disadvantaged, engage with partners, and drive change.



The 'spider' diagram for AST

Recommendations

The research made recommendations to Foundation Scotland and the Fund Panel about using the framework developed to select and monitor the projects which would have the greatest impact on the region. The researcher also recommended that more was done to provide networking opportunities for grant recipients to encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing – a recommendation that the Panel are keen to implement in 2022.

The full executive summary of the research is available on the [case study](#) section of the Foundation Scotland website.

Contact

For further information about the Unlock our Future Fund go to

<https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/apply-for-funding/funding-available/unlock-our-future>

Or contact:

Bea Jefferson

Community Fund Adviser

Foundation Scotland

07554 695 152

bea@foundationscotland.org.uk