

## Vattenfall Unlock our Future Fund

Year 4, 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022



### Highlights

- The Unlock our Future Fund supports projects in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire contributing towards a climate smart future.
- In year four of the fund, 12 awards were made totalling £140,375. This brings the cumulative amount of funding awarded over the first four years to £481,972, supporting 51 projects.
- 97% of the monies available for distribution (excluding those ringfenced for the Blackdog community) have been awarded.
- The fund was oversubscribed, with 27 applications being received totalling over £406k in requested funding.
- Interest in the fund has been strong, with presentations on the fund being made to communities in Scotland and elsewhere who are likely to be in receipt of funds from offshore wind farms.
- The fund strategy was reviewed in November 2022. As a result, parts of the strategy are being redrafted to increase clarity for potential applicants.

### 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 up to £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. 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'<sup>1</sup>.

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.

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

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

## Financial Statement

**1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022**

<b>Opening Balance</b>	£156,778.23
<b>Income</b>	
Year 4 Vattenfall	£168,392.23
Vattenfall – event costs	£436.50
Interest	£142.16
Total income	£168,970.89
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Expenditure in period	£95,520.66
Grants to be released	£156,763.00
Fund expenses	634.45
Sub total	£252,918.11
<b>Total funds available at 30 September 2022</b>	<b>£72,831.01</b>

£63,008 of the fund income received in years one to four 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, £58,568 of the £72,831 available funds at 30 September 2022 was ringfenced for Blackdog, leaving £14,263 carried forward for applications benefitting the wider Aberdeen / Aberdeenshire area.

97% 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 recommending 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 2021 to allow for phasing in of new members. David Nicolson, Amy Gray and Roederer Rose Lyne were welcomed to the panel following an open recruitment process.

During year four of the fund, the panel comprised:

Rob Clunas  
Amy Gray  
Lyndsey Leiper  
Roederer Rose Lyne  
Morag McCorkindale  
Jean Morrison (Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group representative)  
David Nicolson  
Susan Osbeck (Chair)

At the end of year four, Susan Osbeck retired from the panel.

The panel met four 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 feasible in years three and four because of Covid-19 related restrictions. Therefore, promotional activity and applicant support were delivered online.

An online seminar was held on 7 April 2022. This was attended live by 21 people. The seminar was recorded and made available online, being viewed 17 times.

The online seminars were followed up with one-to-one support to potential applicants provided by the Foundation Scotland Fund Adviser, either online or by telephone. 11 community groups received support. Following these sessions, one group decided not to proceed with an application at that time as the proposed project was not a good fit with the fund priorities.

## Year Four Applications

Small grant applications (for £2,000 and under) were considered separately to large grant applications (over £2,000).

Four applications for small grants were received, for a total combined request of £7,517.00. This was down from the ten

applications received in year three, when a new streamlined process for small grants was introduced.

Of the small grant applications in year four, two were funded, totalling £3,917.00, 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, 11 applications were rejected due to their weaker contribution to fund priorities. The remaining 12 projects underwent a detailed assessment.

23 applications for large grants were received for a total combined request of £398,714.00. Of these, 10 were funded, totalling £136,458.00, a conversion rate of 43% (by number of applications).

The above figures relate to the portion of the fund not ringfenced for Blackdog projects. No applications were received relating to Blackdog during the year. However, discussions are ongoing with the Blackdog Residents Association about potential future projects.

Fund Year	No. applications	Applications £
Year 4	27	£406k
Year 3	42	£555k
Year 2	24	£314k
Year 1	33	£415k

The number of applications made to the fund was down in comparison to year three. This could be partly due to there being greater publicity about the small grant awards in year three with the launch of a new streamlined process. It could also be due to years two and three being somewhat untypical because of the covid pandemic: 2020 saw many community groups putting plans on hold while dealing with pandemic related issues, creating pent up demand in 2021 as groups got back on track.

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

The locations of successful and unsuccessful applicant organisations in years one to four, 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.

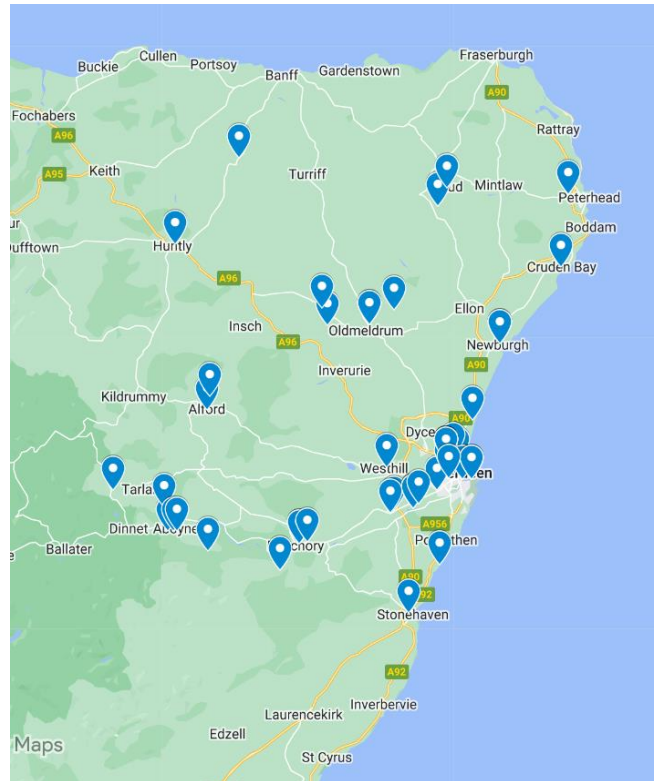


Figure 1 Location of awards (years 1 - 4)

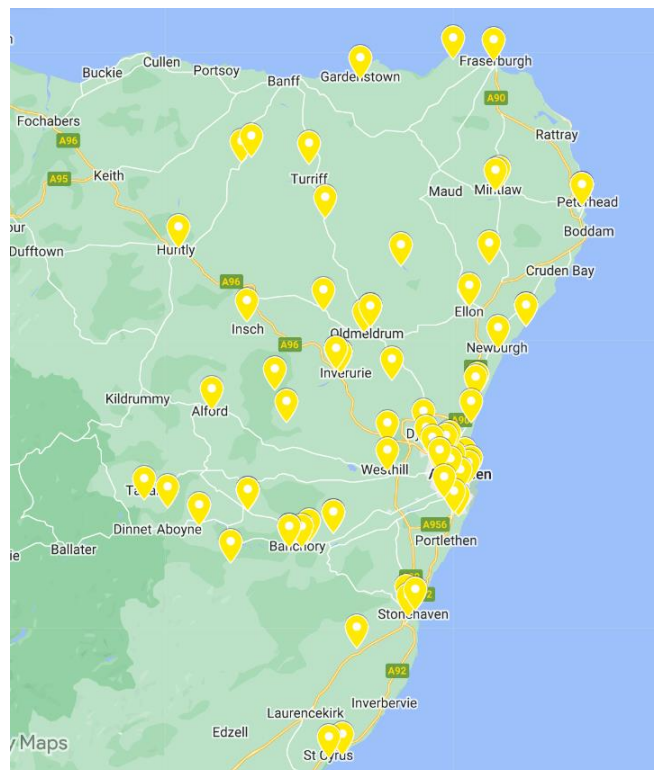


Figure 2 Location of unsuccessful applications (years 1 -4)

## Year Four Awards

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Purpose of Grant</b>	<b>Awarded £</b>
Aberchirder Village Hall	To part fund insulation, air source heat pumps, PV and battery to improve the energy efficiency of the village hall.	15,000.00
Aberdeenshire Sailing Trust (SCIO)	To fund an electric outboard motor and spare battery for the Trust's rescue boat at Loch of Skene, replacing a 6hp petrol outboard, to support the delivery of sailing activities and reduce carbon emissions.	3,028.00
Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action	To fund the upgrade of lighting in the Magpie shop to improve energy efficiency and the customer experience.	2,324.00
Alford Valley Community Railway	To part fund energy efficiency improvements, in particular double glazing, of the Alford Valley Community Railway station building, as part of the initiative to bring the railway back into use and establish the station building as a community facility.	15,000.00
Camphill Rudolf Steiner Schools Ltd	To contribute to the cost of the installation of PV Panels including a battery storage system on a new residential home for young people with complex additional support needs.	12,500.00
Charlie House	To part fund insulation and solar PV on a new specialist support centre for children with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions.	30,000.00 (over 2 years)
Inverurie Loco Works Football Club	To part fund the replacement of floodlights with LED to improve energy efficiency and illumination levels on the football pitch, in order to reduce costs and help to increase usage during the winter periods.	15,000.00

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Purpose of Grant</b>	<b>Awarded £</b>
Logie Coldstone Trust	To part fund solar PV and batteries to reduce energy costs and increase resilience of the village hall.	15,000.00
Newton Dee Store	To part fund the purchase of a Citroen e-Dispatch with a drawer storage system to undertake deliveries from the Newton Dee Store.	15,000.00
Seed Box Ltd	To fund solar PV panels and battery storage at the relocated and expanded horticulture and outdoor therapy centre.	13,606.00
Bon Accord Heritage	To fund a retrofit energy appraisal of Bon Accord Baths, to inform the development of an energy efficient refurbishment, and ultimately, to bring the baths back into public use.	1,995.00
Newtonhill Community Hall Association	To fund thermostat controls, lighting sensors and upgrades to LED lighting in the Bettridge Centre, to reduce energy usage.	1,922.00

## Case Studies

The case studies below focus on the impacts which small awards can have when projects are at a developmental stage.

Further case studies, including studies about the fund's larger awards, are available on Foundation Scotland's [website](#).

### Braemar Guide Sheiling#2

***A design review showed an amended design could produce 95% energy savings at no additional capital cost.***



The Braemar Sheiling was a wooden ex-army hut which for 62 years provided basic residential accommodation to Girlguides and youth groups in the Aberdeenshire village of Braemar. The property was demolished as it was no longer fit for purpose and Girlguiding Kincardine and Deeside embarked on plans to construct a new purpose-built facility.

An initial design for the Sheiling#2 was developed. However, Girlguiding Kincardine and Deeside wished to ensure that it would

meet future needs by embracing net zero targets.

An application was made to the Vattenfall Unlock our Future Fund for £2,000 to carry out a review and upgrade of the existing design, so that Sheiling#2 would meet Passivhaus standards.

As a result of the review, significant design changes were proposed to the structure and energy systems in the building.

The revised design is two storey, rather than a single storey, however it is only very slightly taller than the original design and many aspects of the design, such as the roof, have been simplified. The revised design requires a smaller, lower cost heating system and overall costs no more to build than the original design. However, the revised design saves a remarkable 95% of the forecast energy use.

*"The lesson learned from this is the value of taking the time to do this high quality feasibility study will save many times over the money spent on carrying it out - in this case, a one year payback based on current electricity rates."* Warren Burgess, Girlguiding Kincardine and Deeside

As well as costing no more than the original design, the Passivehaus design is proving attractive to donors and potential funders required to make the new facility a reality.



# Zero Carbon Daviot

## ***Developing practical retrofit solutions for households in an Aberdeenshire Community.***



Zero Carbon Daviot (ZCD) is a community run organisation which was established to bring about radical reductions in carbon emissions, whilst improving the quality of life for the community by making homes warmer, the air cleaner and lives healthier. ZCD's priority projects include the development of a retrofit programme for housing, development of community owned renewable energy generation, a pilot e-bike scheme and the development of a network of community paths.

The village of Daviot in Aberdeenshire has approximately 450 homes with an average EPC rating of D. ZCD identified that there are three main types of house present in the village. Therefore, in order to understand the best options for retrofitting local housing to improve energy efficiency, they commissioned John Gilbert Architects to carry out a study of three typical properties occupied by volunteer households. Each property selected was surveyed and a Whole House Retrofit strategy

developed, supported by modelling of the potential energy savings. A 'step by step' approach was adopted in the retrofitting strategies proposed, recognising that it can be impractical to implement all proposed measures at the same time.

The full reports can be found [here](#).

The study took place during January 2022, and was funded by a £2,000 award from the Vattenfall Unlock our Future Fund.

The three studies provided practical and geographically specific information to the local community so that they are better placed to understand what is likely to be required to improve the energy efficiency of their properties. As Matthew Clubb, a trustee of Zero Carbon Daviot explained:

*"Installing a heat pump without first installing fabric-efficiency measures can spell disaster, so it was important for people to understand what types of measures are required. The project has really helped people in the community start to understand what retrofitted homes of the future look like. Many of the volunteers learnt a lot about their houses and were surprised by some of the suggestions, like external wall insulation, not realising that their homes were suitable."*

ZCD held an event to disseminate the findings of the report which was attended by 20 people with 30 more attending online.

The next step is to cost up the proposed measures for each house type and investigate funding options for householders unable to afford the works. ZCD also intends to look at training local tradespersons to carry out retrofit work and, alongside other partner organisations, develop a retrofit hub in the North East.

## 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 the Press and Journal, Grampian Online, Ellon Advertiser, Inverurie Advertiser, Turriff Advertiser and Banffshire Journal.

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 1,718 times by 1,366

individual users between 1 January 2022 and 10 November 2022. Peaks in views were during February and March, while the Fund was open for applications. A secondary peak appeared in September and October 2022 when publicity about the awards was issued.

An award event was held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at the Garioch Heritage Centre. This was attended by 33 representatives from projects supported during the first four years of the fund, panel members and Vattenfall. Organisations gave presentations about their projects and had a chance to network with fellow awardees.



Figure 3 Award Event, Inverurie, 7 September 2022

Interest in the fund has extended beyond the fund area of benefit.

Foundation Scotland's Fund Adviser has given presentations about the fund to Local Energy Scotland's 2022 annual conference and to communities engaged in consultations about an offshore wind farm development off the Norfolk coast.

The Fund Advisor was joined by a panel member and representatives from funded projects to talk to communities in Caithness discussing a proposed development in the Pentland firth.

## Fund Review

Following the completion of year four's grant making, an online survey and selection of stakeholder interviews were conducted to inform the panel's annual review of the fund.

Key findings of the survey were that:

- There is a high level of agreement with the fund priorities. However, the priority 'creative solutions' received the lowest level of support.
- There was a reasonably high level of agreement with the cross cutting themes. However, match funding/leverage received the lowest level of support.
- The majority of those responding are supportive of the current maximum award.
- Applicants found online information sessions helpful, but there is support for a return to face to face information sessions.
- Feedback was generally positive about the application process, with some suggestions made for improvements.

The stakeholder interviews highlighted:

- Areas which other funders don't support (such as certain types of insulation).
- Issues in obtaining building audits and quotes in a timely manner.
- Difficulties that third sector organisations are having in funding core costs, such as staffing costs, which can prevent project development.
- Impacts of rising prices on projects and impacts of the cost of living crisis on communities.
- The importance of resilience, particularly in the aftermath of storms.

The following changes to the 2023 fund strategy were agreed as a result of the review:

- Greater efforts would be made to ensure the strategy was written in plain English. Where terms were used which are not plain English, these would be defined.
- The use of the term 'cross cutting theme' would be replaced to better describe these additional criteria. The current themes (see page 2) would be replaced by:
  - Energy hierarchy***
  - Making best use of other funding sources***
  - Sharing knowledge and experience***
  - Community impacts***
  - Organisational impacts***

- Further examples of what can be funded and case studies would be added.
- Further examples would also be added of what cannot be funded, informed by the types of applications which have been rejected at the shortlisting stage in previous years (e.g. contributions to general refurbishment costs; environmental improvements with minimal carbon impacts; projects which are unable to start within the next 12 months).
- More would be added about the support available to applicants and the project assessment process.

A number of potential changes to processes were discussed as a result of feedback from applicants, including the option of introducing an Expression of Interest stage to applications. This was rejected as it was not felt that it would significantly reduce the workload of applicants and would increase the length of time taken to make decisions.

Improvements to be implemented in 2023 as a result of the survey include asking applicants for feedback immediately after events and application rounds rather than the current practice of surveys at the end of the funding round every other year; and returning to face to face support for applicants alongside online support.



Figure 4 Representatives of Inverurie Loco Works Football Club with Mimi Mwasame, Vattenfall, and Susan Osbeck, Chair of the Unlock our Future Fund panel

## 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>

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