

An Suidhe Wind Farm Community Fund

**Fund Report
January 25 - December 25**

Highlights



Total number of grants
paid in 2025:
12



Total amount of
grants paid in 2025:
£44,912.81



Annual donation to
the fund in 2025:
£50,686.08



Additional funds leveraged in 2025:
£324,825.18



Value of first annual payment:
£28,500



Value of 2025 annual payment:
£50,656.08 (77.84% increase)



Total number of awards since the fund opened:
147



Total amount awarded since the fund opened in
2011: £515,089.80

Introduction

This report covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2025 for the An Suidhe Wind Farm Community Fund, which Foundation Scotland delivers under an agreement with RWE.

An Suidhe Wind Farm Community Fund supports community projects benefiting those living in the areas covered by the Community Councils of: Glenorchy and Innishail (Eredine only); Inveraray; Furnace, and by Dalavich Improvement Group.

Making a Difference

In this fund year, the An Suidhe fund reached the significant milestone of having awarded more than £500,000 in grants and leveraged a further £1,070,274.37 in funding into the four communities since the fund started in 2011/2012.

During the year a total of £55,670.23 was awarded, with ten standard grants (over £300 and below £9,000) made following two decision-making meetings by the community panel; and two microgrants allocations were made to Inveraray Community Council (£1,787.10) and South Loch Awe-side Community Company (£1,787.10) respectively, which distribute funding directly to community groups in the area in grants of £300 or under.

The following case studies were selected from this year's awards and illustrate the positive impact that funding from the An Suidhe Wind Farm Community Fund had on the wider community. They demonstrate how the availability of community funds has helped to build capacity and potential in communities within the fund's area of benefit. For more case studies: <https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/ansuidhe>

Case study: Dalavich Community Housing Project

Dalavich Improvement Group (DIG) was formed in 2002 to manage community assets in the Avich area of Argyll. The organisation owns a community centre, recreational facilities, foreshore areas and woodlands, serving around 150 permanent residents and up to 500 seasonal visitors in an area that's heavily dependent on tourism. In May 2025, DIG was awarded £9,000 to contribute to the cost of purchasing a house in Dalavich for affordable housing, supporting community growth and addressing local housing needs.

Background

Affordable housing first appeared as a priority in DIG's 2016 Community Action Plan. The community had noticed an ageing demographic and ongoing depopulation. When DIG consulted residents to develop a new action plan, 75% said there was a need for affordable housing, and 58% supported buying existing properties for community-owned housing.

Data from Argyll & Bute Council showed that 59% of residents can't afford market prices, and only 2% of houses were social rented housing—well below the national target of 15%. Around 12% of the housing stock in Dalavich isn't used as a main residence. Brett Sadler, CEO of West Highland Housing Association, stated it's 'no longer financially viable' for councils and housing associations to provide affordable housing in remote rural areas. Meanwhile, local family homes continue to be lost to second homes and short-term holiday lets.

The Project

To respond to this, in 2024, DIG began work to purchase a three-bedroom house in the village and convert it from a second home into permanent, affordable accommodation. The total cost, including purchase, rewiring, decoration and fees, came to £194,113. Alongside the contribution of £9,000 from the An Suidhe Fund, match funding was secured from a range of sources, including the River Avich Hydro Open Grants and DIG Strategic Grant programmes, the Scottish Government Rural Housing Fund and Argyll and Bute Council.

Impact and Outcomes

After the purchase of the house was completed in September 2025 work has continued to make the house ready to provide secure accommodation for a working-aged family, helping to address the ageing demographic. The plan is to secure tenants during 2026. It creates the opportunity to expand the volunteer pool for local groups and increase potential employees for tourism-dependent businesses. Because the property is community-owned, it will remain available as affordable accommodation rather than potentially being sold or converted to another use.

DIG will develop a Local Letting Initiative where residents agree on a system to allocate the housing fairly. The property will be managed by either a letting agent or housing association and let at a mid-market rent, rising 4% annually to cover management, insurance, repairs and void periods.

The project represents one community's response to the affordable housing shortage in rural Scotland, showing that community-owned housing can be both socially useful and financially sustainable in areas where traditional providers can no longer operate.

Case study: Oban Mountain Rescue Team Command Vehicle Replacement

In May 2025, Oban Mountain Rescue was awarded £9,000 to contribute to the cost of a new command vehicle for mountain rescue, enhancing life-saving capabilities and community resilience.

Background

Oban Mountain Rescue Team (Oban MRT) has been serving the Argyll region since its registration as a Scottish Registered Charity in 2001. The team provides search and rescue services across mountains and remote communities in their operational area, which includes Oban, Loch Awe, and North and South Lorn. With over 50 volunteers, the team responds to an average of 30 callouts per year, tasked by Police Scotland to assist people in distress.

The team serves a population of 41,138 residents and supports approximately 2.7 million annual visitors to Argyll, around 40% of whom participate in outdoor activities.

By 2025, Oban MRT's command vehicle had reached 16 years of age and was beyond its reliable service life. This vehicle serves as one of four specially adapted vehicles the team regularly deploys, functioning as a mobile base from which search and rescue operations are coordinated.

The command vehicle houses specialist equipment, including digital radio, mobile phone, police radio, satellite internet communications, and GIS mapping systems—all essential for coordinating complex operations involving multiple personnel, helicopters, drones, and rescue dogs. Without a reliable command vehicle, the team's search and rescue capabilities would be significantly compromised.

The Project

The team developed a project to replace the command vehicle with a new large commercial panel van, professionally converted to mountain rescue specifications. The total project cost was £110,000, comprising:

- £53,321 for a new Mercedes Sprinter van
- £56,679 for specialist equipment and conversion

The project was planned to run from June to December 2025, with delivery overseen by a steering group commissioned by the board of trustees. Team members contributed expertise from their professional backgrounds, including vehicle mechanics, commercial drivers, IT specialists and procurement specialists. The team also consulted with other Scottish mountain rescue teams who had recently completed similar projects.

Oban MRT developed a comprehensive fundraising plan to secure the necessary funds. The funding package included:

- £50,000 from the Drax Foundation and team fundraising
- £9,000 from the An Suidhe Wind Farm Community Fund
- £5,500 from the River Avich Open Grants programme
- £15,000 expected from the sale of the existing vehicle
- The remaining balance to be met from organisational reserves

The project was structured in two phases: first, procuring the standard commercial van followed by the specialist conversion work, which would take several months due to the complexity and contractor capacity.

Impact and Outcomes

The replacement command vehicle ensures that Oban MRT can continue to provide efficient and effective search and rescue services across their operational area for years to come.

With enhanced reliability, modern technology and better operational capability, the new vehicle strengthens the team's readiness to respond quickly to emergencies. This directly benefits both residents and the millions of visitors who enjoy Argyll's mountains and remote areas each year.

The successful delivery of this project demonstrates effective collaboration between the volunteer rescue team, multiple funders and specialist suppliers. The new vehicle represents a significant upgrade in capability—not just a replacement—which will improve safety outcomes for people in distress.

Fund Distribution – overview

The An Suidhe Wind Farm Community Fund is an open grant programme running two rounds each year – one closing in March with decisions made in May, and another closing in October with decisions in November.

In 2025, the fund received 17 applications, awarding grants to 12 projects and declining 5. This provided a conversion rate of 70.5% from application to award. Of the declined applications, three fell outside the area of benefit and didn't meet the criteria, whilst the remaining two came from the same organisation and didn't sufficiently demonstrate need.

The fund continued to support projects that enhance community assets and provide services and activities for the area of benefit, with £52,096.03 awarded across 10 projects. Additionally, the fund distributed £3,574.20 to two organisations – South Loch Awe-side Community Company and Inveraray Community Council – to administer as microgrants.

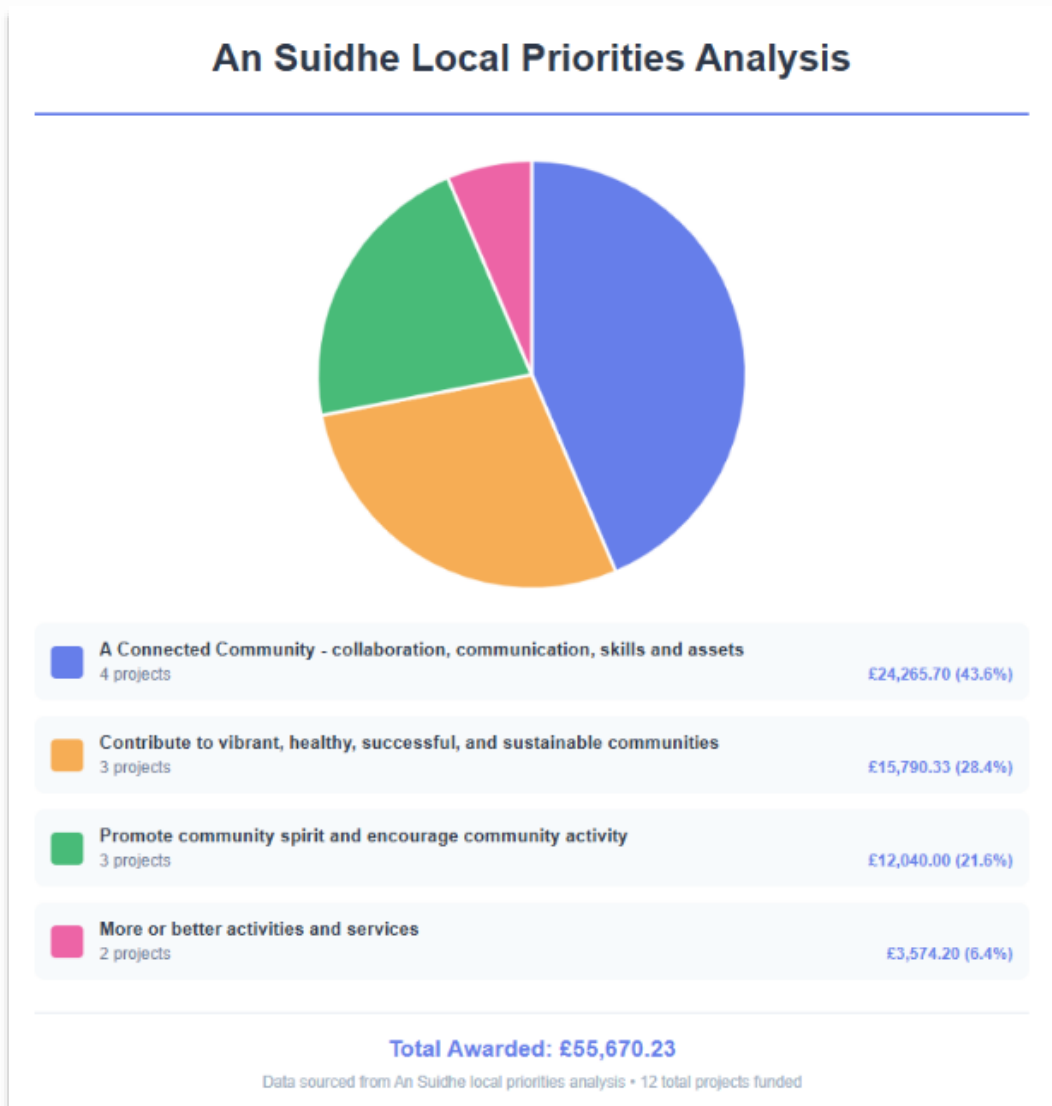
In late 2024 and early 2025 the fund underwent a review to understand the difference the fund has made so far by reviewing the value and impact of projects funded to date and checking if the fund's priorities are still in line with the priorities of the communities as identified by the working group and community consultation in 2010 to 2011.

Recent community plans (Inveraray and Dalavich) have identified priorities that have been supported by this fund.

For example, in Inveraray, the An Suidhe Fund has supported investment in developing the business case for the redevelopment of the Pier which relates to the themes of developing Business and Commerce, Infrastructure and Environment and Community Cohesion and Pride.

In Dalavich, by investing in the housing project, the fund is supporting the plans created by the community to create affordable housing that is under community control.

Overall, the review identified that the existing priorities of the fund are still relevant and meaningful to the community it serves. The diagram below shows the breakdown of awards per local priority for each year (rounded to the nearest whole number).

Figure 1: Distribution according to local priorities

Foundation Scotland has adopted twelve of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to help understand the impact of grant distribution and how funds contribute to a more inclusive, equitable, prosperous and sustainable future for people and planet.

The diagram below shows that sustainable cities and communities was the dominant focus area, receiving over 84% of total funding awarded, with the quality education SDG receiving over 15%.

More information about how Foundation Scotland works with SDGs can be found here: [Our commitment to the SDGs | Foundation Scotland](#)

Figure 2: SDG Funding Distribution

Grants Awarded

The following grants were awarded during the 2025 funding rounds:

Funding Request	Offer Statement	Awarded Amount
South Loch Awe-side Community Company	To provide a fund for distribution in the local community in the form of micro grants for general charitable purposes.	£1,787.10
Inveraray Community Council	To provide a fund for distribution in the local community in the form of micro grants for general charitable purposes.	£1,787.10
Dalavich Improvement Group	To contribute to the cost of purchasing a house in Dalavich for affordable housing, supporting community growth and addressing local housing needs.	£9,000.00
Inveraray Golf Club	To contribute to the cost of a new trailer for transporting lawnmowers and equipment, enhancing efficiency and ease of maintenance.	£1,500.00
Furnace Community SCIO	To contribute to the refurbishment of the smaller function room of Furnace Hall to create a multipurpose space that will increase the use of the facility, reduce energy use and contribute to the sustainability of the building.	£4,765.70
Oban Mountain Rescue Team	To contribute to the cost of a new command vehicle for mountain rescue, enhancing life-saving capabilities and community resilience.	£9,000.00
Cairndow Community Childcare Limited	To contribute to the cost of new sensory and outdoor resources to enhance the learning environment, support children with Additional Support Needs, and improve safety, gross motor skills, and spatial awareness through updated play structures.	£6,790.33
Inveraray Primary School Parent Council	To fund Inveraray Primary School's Primary 6/7 residential trip to Benmore Outdoor Centre in Dunoon in June 2026.	£6,000.00
Portsonachan Village Hall	To contribute towards detailed designs, engineering studies and planning authority fees, to submit a building warrant application for the extension and renovation of Portsonachan Hall.	£3,000.00
Friends of Argyll Estates Archives	To support the development of an online community heritage archive for Inveraray	£2,500.00

Funding Request	Offer Statement	Awarded Amount
The Avant Gardeners (TAG)	To contribute to the cost of employing a grounds person for garden maintenance, organising volunteer activities, and ensuring the garden remains an attractive and welcoming space for the community and visitors.	£2,040.00
Urras Achadh an Droighinn / The Auchindrain Trust	To contribute to the cost of insulating and heating the visitor centre to create a suitable space for educational visits, events, and activities supporting socially excluded and marginalised communities, particularly during winter.	£7,500.00
Total		£55,670.23

Finance

Fund Statement Summary: 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025

Opening Balance	£39,325.84
Total Donations Received	£50,686.08
Grants Paid	-£44,912.81
Grants Pending	-£13,000.00
Total Grants Cancelled	£0.00
Interest Payments Received	£1,130.57
Room hire and meeting expenses	-£24.79
Available Balance	£33,204.89

It's worth noting that the grants paid figure reflects grants that were awarded in previous years but released for payment during this year.

Grants Pending to be paid in the next financial year:

- Urras Achadh an Droighinn / The Auchindrain Trust - £7,500.00
- Portsonachan Village Hall £3,000
- Friends of Argyll Estates Archives £2,500

Total £13,000

The total closing balance for the fund for the year 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025 is £46,204.89 (available balance plus the grants pending total).

The Community Panel

A Community Panel, made up of people who live, work or volunteer in the four communities, makes recommendations on grant awards from the fund. The Panel also advises on funding strategy and helps to promote the fund locally.

The Panel has up to eight members. One representative is appointed by Dalavich Improvement Group and each of the community councils for Furnace, Glenorchy & Innishail, and Inveraray. One member of the wider community from each of the four areas may also be appointed.

Each member from the wider community serves a minimum of one year and a maximum of three years, with members retiring on a phased basis to ensure knowledge and expertise are retained.

Opportunities to become a Panel member are openly advertised when they arise, both locally and on Foundation Scotland's website, and are selected through a fair and transparent process. Previous Panel members may stand again.

In 2026, Foundation Scotland will be recruiting new panel members to invite fresh perspectives.

Panel members for 2025:

Dalavich	Eredine	Furnace	Inveraray
Carol Thomas	Catriona O'Keeffe	Martin Wilson	Jacqui McDonald / Linda Divers
Chrissie Sugden	Vacancy	Vacancy	Julie Hendry

Publicity

A press release was shared in December 2025 to mark the milestone of distributing more than £500,000 in grants since the programme started. Earlier press releases included funding awards made in January and application deadlines in October, all of which were printed by the Argyllshire Advertiser.

The fund is now featured in the monthly funding bulletin distributed across Argyll and Bute by the local authority, and posters were distributed by the Panel and Foundation Scotland in May 2025 highlighting how to apply to the fund. Further promotion is scheduled for 2026 with the aim of increasing the number of applications to the fund.

The fund has a dedicated page on the Foundation Scotland website with information on how to apply, as well as details on fund balances, panel members, funded projects, case studies and recent news. The fund page was updated throughout the year with all awards and a range of case studies. The page had nearly 500 views during the year.

Read more about the fund: An Suidhe Wind Farm Community Fund | Foundation Scotland (<https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/ansuidhe>)

Conclusion

The An Suidhe Wind Farm Community Fund is now 14 years old and has celebrated a significant milestone this year, distributing over half a million pounds in grants, supporting 147 projects that have benefited the four communities across the area. The fund has also helped leverage a significant amount additional funding across a wide range of projects which reflect all four of the communities' local priorities for the fund.

Further Information

For further information about the Fund:

www.foundationscotland.org.uk/ansuidhe

Contact

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Appendix 1: Background to the Fund

An Suidhe Wind Farm Community Fund supports community projects benefiting those living in the areas covered by the Community Councils of: Glenorchy and Innishail (Eredine only); Inveraray; Furnace, and by Dalavich Improvement Group.

The fund is provided by RWE Renewables and Green Gecco, the owners of An Suidhe Wind Farm near Loch Awe.

The fund opened in 2011. An annual amount of £28,500, rising in line with inflation, will be paid into the fund for the operating life of the wind farm. In 2025, the annual contribution to the Fund was £50,686.08.

Purpose of this fund

The fund provides grants to support charitable activities that:

- Enhance the quality of life for local residents
- Contribute to vibrant, healthy, successful and sustainable communities
- Promote community spirit and encourage community activity

Grant requests to support a wide range of costs and activities will be considered, such as equipment costs, running costs for local groups, staff or sessional worker costs, consultations, and maintenance or refurbishment of community facilities.

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