

**DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY
REGIONWIDE COMMUNITY FUND
ANNUAL REPORT
2023/24**

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1. Introduction and background

Dumfries and Galloway Council first considered the establishment of a region-wide fund in January 2015 and the arrangements were subsequently agreed by the Council's Communities Committee in October 2018.

The Regionwide Community Fund (RWCF) acts mainly as a 'last resort', to ensure as much funding as possible is drawn into the region from windfarm developers and to give community groups a choice - for example, if there is no local community group in existence to manage the funds; or available groups are unable or unwilling to process the amount of funding available then the RWCF would accept and distribute it.

The Council continues to promote the position that the most local appropriate group receives any available windfarm funding and there will be absolutely no obligation on either communities or developers to contribute to the RWCF - it is entirely at their discretion.

The RWCF has now distributed its fourth year's funding. As evidenced in this Annual Report, the existence of the RWCF and the contribution from Airies Windfarm has provided local groups with funding that is being used for a range of projects that will benefit our region.

2. Management Committee and arrangements

Membership

2.1 Representation on the Management Committee (the 'Management Committee' or the "MC") was invited from public sector bodies and a second set of members were appointed in 2022 for a three-year term from Dumfries and Galloway Council, Dumfries and Galloway College, NHS Dumfries and Galloway, and NatureScot.

2.2 Independent members of the Management Committee were recruited with the assistance of Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway, to maintain a level of separation between the Council and the selection of Independent Members. Five independent members are appointed for a three-year term.

2.3 Members of the MC for 2024/25:

- Cllr. Ian Carruthers - Dumfries and Galloway Council
- Dr Stuart Graham – Nature Scotland
- Sharon Walker – NHS D&G
- Jill Galloway – D&G College
- Claire Black – Independent
- Jane Stanistreet – Independent
- Fiona Limbrey – Independent
- Michelle Nichol – Independent
- Rose Murdoch – Independent

Cllr. Maureen Johnstone was appointed by ESCW Committee 10 October 2024 to be the Council representative for the next round.

Meetings during 2024/25

2.4 This year's allocation was confirmed by the Management Committee on 18 June 2024. Decision was quorate with unanimous decision to approve the allocation. The group will meet again ahead of the next round opening to review the process.

2.5 Constitution and Terms of Reference

Full name

Dumfries and Galloway Windfarm Voluntary Regionwide Fund
Abbreviated to 'Regionwide Community Fund' or 'RWCF' or the 'Fund'.

Aims

The Regionwide Community Fund will be a source of funding to support applications aimed at improving:

- Local business and skills
- Community and environment
- Culture and tourism
- Affordable housing
- Community transport
- Broadband connectivity
- Fuel poverty
- Energy conservation and production
- Support local recovery from Covid-19 pandemic (added for Year 2 by the Management Committee)

Remit

The Management Committee's remit is to:

- Allocate the funds from the RWCF using the information provided in the RWCF's Application Form and based on the above Fund Criteria and associated Scoring Framework.
- Agree grants given have met the aims of the Fund.
- Agree effective and efficient management arrangements of the Fund.

The Management Committee has the power to grant or reject applications for the Fund's money with no right of appeal.

Membership

The Management Committee is made up of 9 members, with a majority of independent members; i.e. 5 drawn from non-public sector organisations and 4 from public sector organisations.

The Chair will be an independent member elected by the Management Committee. Membership of the Management Committee will be for a term of three years. Members will be expected to undertake any relevant training and briefing during their term of appointment.

All Members will be required to adhere to the Standards of Public Life and the Council's Code of Conduct.

Meeting Arrangements

The quorum for making valid decisions at each MC meeting will be a minimum of five, with a majority of independent members required.

If a Member cannot attend an MC meeting and they have a suitable substitute available, the substitute can attend in their place.

In the absence of the Chair at an MC meeting, the Committee will elect a Chair for the meeting.

Meetings are private and the agenda, reports and minutes will be circulated to Committee Members only.

Executive and Administrative Support

An Officer of Dumfries and Galloway Council will provide this support.

Schedule of Meetings

There will be at least an annual meeting of the Management Committee and normally two meetings in each calendar year.

Any changes to the schedule (i.e. more or fewer meetings) can be determined by the Lead Officer in consultation with the committee.

Decision Making Process

Decisions will be made through scoring of applications by the Management Committee against the Fund Criteria and Scoring Framework provided. Committee Members will be provided with applications in advance of meetings, so if unable to attend can submit their scores in advance.

Monitoring and Reporting

Successful applicants will submit a monitoring report on at least an annual basis for the duration of their project, and a report will be scrutinised by the Management Committee to ensure that the funding has fulfilled its purpose.

Finances

The monies will be held and administered on behalf of the Fund by Dumfries and Galloway Council's finance system.

Payments will be made to and come from a designated account held by the Council and are only accessed by those authorised to administer the Fund – the funds cannot be spent on anything else.

At least an annual Budget Monitoring Report will be submitted to the Management Committee.

Running costs will come from the Fund itself, initially at 10% in line with other funds of this type. The percentage will be reviewed in the event of extra funds being contributed to the RWCF, to ensure costs are met without over-charging the Fund.

3. Budget

3.1 Income

The total contributed to the Fund for 2024/25 ahead of the fifth round of applications was £124,250.00 contributed from the Airies Windfarm Community Benefit Fund. An additional £21,424.13 funding that had been allocated but not used by the applicants was carried over from the 2023/24 year to add to the total available.

3.2 Expenditure

The outgoings of the Fund in 2024/25 were: £133,249.13 committed to projects in the region. There is a full list of successful applicants in table 1 below. This was the full amount available: 2024/25 contribution minus admin fee + carry over from 2023/24.

As previously agreed, 10% of the Fund will go towards running and administration costs. It is agreed by the Management Committee that any excess funding not allocated will be carried forward for the next round of applications. Admin costs are only charged once – any carryover is not re-charged.

4. Performance monitoring of 2023/24 awards

The 4th year of the Fund's operation, 2023/24, supported a variety of community benefit projects covering a range of the Fund's target aims.

A full list of the 33 projects supported is available in the year 4 annual report - [Year 4 Annual Report PDF Link](#)

Detailed project monitoring returns have been collected from the successful applicants in line with the Grant Agreements entered into by the applicants and conditions of accepting their award; and the performance monitoring report will be provided to the Management Committee.

Below is a selection of short case studies of some of the completed projects the 2023/24 Fund supported across the region.

Portpatrick Community Development Trust – Rockin' The Port - £4,000

This grant supported the running of a free 12 week music programme in Portpatrick, taking place on Sunday afternoons throughout the summer showing music from the 60s, 70s and 80s as well as spotlighting young musicians from across Dumfries and Galloway. The programme attracted a collective audience of over 1800.

The Benefits included giving a notable increase in footfall to local businesses for the duration of the festival, drawing additional visitors to the area and boosting the local

economy. Volunteers also had skills development opportunities, receiving training in First Aid, Manual Handling and Child Protection Awareness.

D&G Hard of Hearing Group – Hearing Aid Care & Maintenance - £3,000

The funding was used to provide free drop-in hearing aid maintenance clinics to our service users throughout Dumfries and Galloway as well as home visits and visits to care homes.

The group opened three new clinics' one in Dumfries, one in Thornhill and one in Gretna – these clinics wouldn't be possible without support from this fund. This means the group now runs 23 clinics per month across the region.

This service has seen 4074 people and maintained over 9000 hearing aids, mostly belonging to elderly and vulnerable people. They have also provided home visits for those most vulnerable who are unable to leave home.

Moffat Water Hall – Drinking Water Supply - £1,328.05

Moffat Water Hall used their grant to replace the old water treatment system at the hall which was no longer functional. The equipment was supplied and work carried out by a local contractor, and the hall now has safe drinking water, which has allowed more use and rentals of the hall to community members and clubs.

Moffat Water Hall contributed an additional £1,264 of its own funds to deliver the work plus a further £250 to add frost protection. MWH has invested over £1,500 of its own funds to deliver this upgrade.

The organization now look towards upgrading the energy inefficient heating and lighting system to provide an up to date facility.

The Southern Uplands Partnership – Replace Gates on SW Scotland Coastal Way - £992.25

Southern Uplands Partnership replaced two of the old, end of life, one-way self-closing gates at Rockcliffe with new two-way self-closing gates.

The reason for the change was to improve access to a very popular path for both locals and visitors alike. Without these gates, people would need to walk over a cattle grid which isn't ideal for everyone and reduces opportunities to independently access the countryside for some.

The upgrading of these gates is a small part of a wider-looking project to create a long-distance route between Gretna and Portpatrick, the 'South West Scotland Coastal Way' which will provide a continuous route along the coast for walkers. Locals and tourists have already responded positively to the more accessible gates.

Youth Enterprise Scotland – D&G Company Programme - £1,275

YE Scotland was very grateful to receive support from the Regionwide Community Fund to deliver the Company Programme to young people in Dumfries and Galloway.

In 2023-24 the project supported 99 young people from 7 local secondary schools across Dumfries and Galloway to take part and to learn essential business and personal transferable skills which will help them achieve a positive future.

The programme supported young people to set up and run their own business over the course of an academic year. They were supported by local volunteers to design their business product or service; to select a company name and job roles; to prepare accounts; to create branding; to sell online and via local trade fairs and to deal with any problems or issues that arose.

Tackling real-life issues, they learned key entrepreneurial skills including creativity, resilience, teamwork, and problem solving and developed a valuable knowledge of business which will have a positive impact on their future aspirations and employment potential. Local training events ran throughout the year and at the end of the year participants competed in local and national competitions.

Local Initiatives in New Galloway (LING) – Creating a Community Larder - £3,190.50

The grant from this fund covered the time input from the Hub Host, the cost of readying the larder space with shelving etc, publicity costs and a proportion of our running costs.

Together with the other inputs paid for from other sources, we have been able to develop and launch our Community Larder according to plan. The community freezer is well-stocked with freshly cooked soups, mains, breads and puddings all made primarily from donated food, including surplus vegetables and fruit. £200 was spent on some basics for the kitchen and for the larder shelves.

Opening hours are agreed and links with the Galloway Food Hub and the Food Cupboard by the Catstrand are established. Our soft launch on 26th September was attended by Lesley of Galloway Food Hub and Leanne from Castle Douglas Stepping Stones, both bringing donations of surplus foods.

We present this as 'save time, save money, save waste', with a strong focus on sharing. Hubbub sessions, out of which this idea evolved, still run on a Thursday providing a backbone for the larder in terms of staff time and presence. An article describing the Community Larder is appearing in the October/November issue of the Glenkens Gazette.

5.2024/25 Grants

5.1 The application form, criteria, eligibility, and Scoring Framework were agreed by the Management Committee and also the timetable as follows:

- Applications opened – 29th January 2024
- Closing of applications – 5pm 22nd April 2024

5.2 110 compliant applications were received and, after consideration and scoring by the Management Committee, 44 were successful as set out in Table 1. Unsuccessful applicants have been advised they can re-apply to future rounds of the Fund and feedback was given to any applicant who requested it.

5.3 The grant application process, the Scoring Framework, compliance checks on the governance arrangements and financial sustainability of applicants, and the grant conditions are based on established arrangements that are already in place for other grants and are therefore consistent with Audit Scotland's 'Following The Public Pound' and other best practice guidance.

5.4 Each successful project is required to submit a Monitoring Report to evidence the achievement of the project outcomes. These Monitoring Reports are to be returned within 12 months of accepting the award, with the information used to check that funds have been spent on the agreed purpose, and for the information of the Management Committee.

Table 1: **2024/25 Grant Awards**

Applicant	Award Offer
1 st Lower Annandale Rangers	£1,012.50
Annan Rugby Football Club	£5,000.00
Annandale Community Transport Services	£3,750.00
Auchencairn Climate Transition	£4,996.50
Better Lives Partnership	£3,704.63
Borgue Community Council	£3,750.00
Building Futures Galloway Ltd	£3,750.00
Castle Douglas Community Information Technology Centre	£3,148.22
Castle Douglas Development Forum	£2,067.00
Creative Stranraer	£3,525.00
D&G Youth Project Team	£3,119.25
DHBT Rosefield Mills	£3,750.00
EcoArt SCIO	£3,750.00
Galloway Fisheries Trust	£3,750.00
Galloway Pageant	£2,922.00
Gatehouse Development Initiative	£3,750.00
Glentroll and Bargrennan Community Trust	£3,750.00
Heathhall Community Centre	£3,750.00
Include Us	£2,949.11
Kippford Association	£3,645.00
Kirkcolm Bowling Club	£3,750.00
Kirkcudbright Development Trust	£3,750.00
Langholm Producers Market	£1,732.50
Lift D&G	£3,750.00
Local Initiatives in New Galloway (LING)	£3,190.50
Lochside Community Association	£388.18
Machars & Cree Valley Climate Action Network	£2,062.50

Merrick Mavericks Amateur Swimming Club	£375.00
Moffat Water Hall	£2,286.00
New Luce Memorial Hall Management Committee	£3,300.00
Newton Stewart (Galloway) Walking Festival	£2,250.00
Nith Valley Leaf Trust	£2,250.00
Old School Thornhill	£3,750.00
Paragon Ensemble Ltd	£2,625.00
Police Scotland Youth Volunteers Stranraer	£900.00
Propagate (Scotland)	£3,750.00
Restoring Annan's Waters (RAW)	£3,724.50
Stranraer Development Trust	£3,750.00
The Glenkens Community and Arts Trust	£3,646.50
The Stove Network Ltd	£3,187.50
The Whithorn Trust	£3,750.00
Wigtownshire and Stewartry Partnership (WASP)	£1,979.25
Wigtownshire Women and Cancer	£1,987.50
Young Enterprise Scotland	£1,275.00

Total: £133,249.13

6.Communications and information

6.1 A webpage for the Fund sits within the dumgal website:

<https://dumgal.gov.uk/article/20249/Dumfries-and-Galloway-Regionwide-Community-Fund>

6.2 The promotion of the Fund was through the Council's website, social media platforms, information distributed to Elected Members, Community Councils, as well as being included on various third sector funding information websites and newsletters for the region.