

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY
REGIONWIDE COMMUNITY FUND
ANNUAL REPORT
2024/25

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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. Maureen Johnstone - Dumfries and Galloway Council
- Dr Stuart Graham – Nature Scotland
- Sharon Walker – NHS D&G
- Honor Gibson – D&G College
- Claire Black – Independent
- Jane Stanistreet – Independent
- Fiona Limbrey – Independent
- Michelle Nichol – Independent
- Jim Cooper – Independent

Meetings during 2024/25

2.4 This year's allocation was confirmed by the Management Committee on 28 May 2025. 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 2025/26 ahead of the fifth round of applications was £129,500 contributed from the Airies Windfarm Community Benefit Fund. An additional £14,144.24 funding that had been allocated but not used by the applicants was carried over from the 2024/25 year to add to the total available.

3.2 Expenditure

The outgoings of the Fund in 2025/26 were: £128,464.79 committed to projects in the region. There is a full list of successful applicants in table 1 below.

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 2024/25 awards

The 5th year of the Fund's operation, 2024/25, supported a variety of community benefit projects covering a range of the Fund's target aims.

A full list of the 44 projects supported is available in the year 5 annual report - [Regionwide Community Fund Annual Report Year 5 Agreed.pdf](#)

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 performance monitoring information will be provided to the Management Committee.

Below is a selection of short case studies of some of the completed projects the 2024/2025 Fund supported across the region.

Langholm Producers Market – Administrator - £1,732.50

The funding was used to support a Freelance Administrator role for the Langholm Producers Market, ensuring the smooth running of market operations, vendor coordination, and strategic promotion. This role was essential following the end of support from The Langholm Alliance, which had previously provided administrative assistance.

With the administrator in place, the market has seen increased footfall, in some sessions welcoming over 300 visitors to the market, drawing visitors from across the region. This growth has contributed to local economic development, benefiting stallholders and

surrounding businesses by increasing customer traffic. When speaking with the local businesses on market days they have seen an increase in footfall on the High Street due to the visitors going to explore what Langholm has to offer.

Additionally, the role has enhanced community engagement and sustainability by maintaining a strong online presence and improving event organisation.

Moffat Water Hall – Energy and Lighting Efficiency Upgrade - £2,286

The charity has spent the grant funding plus additional cash reserves, investing a total of ~£4,500 in improving the energy efficiency of the heating and lighting in the building. Old fluorescent lighting strips were removed and replaced with low-energy LEDs. The old element heaters have been replaced with remotely controlled low-energy panel heaters. Local tradespeople were used to deliver the work

Doing this work has reduced energy demand associated with lighting and heating throughout the winter months, which will help to reduce annual overheads of the charity. This allows us to remain price competitive on rental costs to local people and organisations wanting to hire the hall for events etc.

Thanks for the support provided by the RWCF, as we could not have afforded to carry out the work with cash reserves alone.

The Whithorn Trust – Machars Archaeology Field School Pilot - £3,750

The aim was to test the market for an annual archaeological field school, capitalizing on Whithorn's reputation for archaeological excellence, its record of community excavation and the hundreds of archaeological sites in the Machars which are as yet not investigated.

A complete funding package was achieved through support from The Regionwide Community Fund, TSDG, CLLD and Historic Environment Scotland. In December 2024, we were able to appoint a project assistant to create the documentation for the community archaeology project in conjunction with appointed professional archaeology firm, AOC Archaeology.

The call for community participation was made in December, which had very high levels of response, and dates were set for a public introductory online lecture and a first week of survey techniques, followed by a community dig in March.

Arrangements were made with the landowner for access to an Iron Age site in the NW Machars. All participants were offered BAJR (British Archaeology Jobs and Resources) Skills passports for CIFA (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists) accredited archaeologists to sign off achievements as they are completed.

We are collating results of before and after questionnaires, but the results so far confirm that there is a shortage of field schools available across the country and that there are students looking for practical experience mandated by their courses, which is not readily available; there are also audiences among older adults and retirees who would like to find a new interest, wish to find new connections and activities which support both physical and mental health.

We have also investigated the ability and willingness to pay, the cost of field schools elsewhere, use of local accommodation, and market rates so that we can establish viability and impacts for the future school.

Include Us – Youth Resilience Training - £2,949.11

The funding was used to deliver the youth resilience programme based at Catherine Street Inclusive Park. Benefits achieved from the programme contributed to the following outcomes:

Skills Development: The young people engaging with our Youth Resilience Programme demonstrated observable improvements in managing their behaviour, concentrating and understanding their behavioural triggers. Anti-social behaviour and disruption within group work activities reduced significantly as the course progressed. They gained valuable insight into their own behaviour and that of others they interact with.

Community: Engaging with the most vulnerable youth - those not attending school, excluded, or disengaged from the curriculum, the young people exhibited how an 'out of school' setting and a relational approach brings out the best in them. Each participant was trusted with volunteer duties in addition to training and every one of them responded positively to that responsibility and demonstrated a positive connection to the wider community and other park users.

Addressing Poverty & Inequalities: Preparing our youth trainees for adulthood, our programme supports the reduction of inequalities and poverty to ensure successful transition to independence. Conversation with participants revealed adverse childhood experiences, low self-esteem and worth, a poor understanding of their diagnosed conditions, difficulties with family relationships and a deep mistrust of statutory bodies such as police, education or social services. They had difficulty asking for or even accepting help. Our programme facilitated learning of a variety of skills and learning that was not accessible to them elsewhere. From simple skills such as learning about food hygiene and how to use the kettle and microwave, to personal hygiene, sewing and repairs and developing an enjoyment of being creative.

Old School Thornhill – Community Food Initiative and Community Garden - £5,000

Thornhill Community Food Initiative (TCFI) moved from the Library in Thornhill (where it was previously based) to Old School Thornhill (OST) in 2024. This funding supported the move and establishing the TCFO at OST where we have moved to a Larder/Pantry Model.

The Thornhill Community Food Initiative has run from OST since then. OST has undertaken a successful marketing initiative so the people using the service were aware of its move. We had an initial dip in numbers, but this has increased where we are helping on average 19 families each week.

At the same time OST has established a community garden which sits next to where people access the food initiative. This community garden is run by 12 volunteers (many of whom have expressed how it has positively impacted their mental health). As the summer progressed the food initiative and the community garden merged and young people who

used the food initiative were picking fruit and vegetables from the community garden as well as tomatoes from the polytunnel.

As the number of events have increased at OST there has often been overlap with the TCFI. It has been nice to see visitors to TCFI being drawn into different relevant events at OST.

TCFI has been funded for 3 years by the Robertson Trust with a grant of £8,000. This grant is dependent on the TCFI continuing to secure match funding which the Regionwide Fund contributed to. In 2025 we will be looking to grow the impact of TCFI and support those most in need of support with a variety of services which support them in their lives.

Heathhall Community Centre – Flooring Replacement - £3,750

Replacing the flooring was a priority due to it lifting and causing bubbles which was becoming unsafe for the users, many who are children, vulnerable and/or elderly – if this worsened then we could not operate. Closure of the Centre would have left a lot of people isolated and lonely.

With the contribution from the Regionwide Community Fund as well as other funders, we were able to complete work using local business AH Flooring. There is also a lighting refurbishment planned, but this is on hold until further funding can be sourced.

5.2025/26 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 – 17th February 2025
- Closing of applications – 12pm 11th April 2025

5.2 105 compliant applications were received and, after consideration and scoring by the Management Committee, 32 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: **2025/26 Grant Awards**

Application	Award	Ward
The Mull of Galloway	£5,000.00	1
The Furniture Project (Stranraer) Ltd	£4,545.25	1
Stranraer Development Trust	£5,000.00	1
Creative Stranraer	£5,000.00	1
Stranraer Millennium Centre Community Trust	£4,383.00	1
Portpatrick Community Development Trust	£2,500.00	1
South Machars Community Centre	£4,560.00	2
WASP	£5,000.00	2
Galloway Community Transport	£5,000.00	2
D&G Woodlands	£3,750.00	3
Auchencairn Climate Transition SCIO	£5,000.00	3
Loch Ken Trust	£2,870.00	4
Threave Rovers FC	£5,000.00	4
Think Differently Dumfries and Galloway	£2,520.00	4
Castle Douglas Development Forum	£3,750.00	4
Dumfries YMCA	£5,000.00	6
Doughlicious D&G	£2,575.00	6
Wanlockhead Museum Trust	£1,220.54	7
Old School Thornhill	£3,804.00	7
Moniaive Playcare	£4,746.00	7
The Depot (formerly known as MOOL)	£940.00	9
Paragon Ensemble Ltd	£3,724.00	9
Quarriers	£5,000.00	9
Dumfries Y Gymnastics Club	£4,070.00	9
Dumfries Mens Shed	£5,000.00	9
Guild of Gaming	£5,000.00	9
Newstart Recycle	£5,000.00	10
Lochmaben Community Gardens	£2,500.00	11
Langholm Initiative	£5,000.00	12
Step Together Volunteering	£4,081.00	Multi
Young Enterprise Scotland	£1,926.00	Multi
Ocean Youth Trust Scotland	£5,000.00	Multi

Total: £128,464.79

6.Communications and information

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

[Dumfries and Galloway Regionwide Community Fund | Dumfries and Galloway Council](#)

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.