



Glenkens & District Trust (SC042489)

Report from meeting of Trustees – January 2022

We expressed our thanks to Julie Garton, one of our independent Trustees who recently stepped down as Trustee for all her help and support. She made a very valuable contribution, both as a trustee and as a member of the CAP Steering Group, and will be missed.

There are still opportunities for interested individuals to apply to become a Trustee and we also welcome applications from groups or individuals to become Associate Members. All the information is here: <https://www.glenkenstrust.org.uk/get-involved>

The focus of the January meeting was on the following areas:

Arrangements with Blackcraig Windfarm (Scotland) Ltd

With great support from Foundation Scotland, we have now been able to secure a longer-term funding arrangement in relation to Blackcraig. You will recall that they had refused to give any binding commitment to fund more than one year at a time. After considerable effort we have now secured a fixed four-year arrangement and, if they want to terminate the arrangement after that, they need to give at least two years notice of termination. We were delighted that they are now confident enough in us and Foundation Scotland to give us this longer-term certainty on funding. We will consider how this will be reflected on our Fund Strategy going forward.

Funding Round

Eleven applications were received by the closing date of 10 January. These totalled just over £194K. Foundation Scotland have started on their formal assessment process and the Trustees will be meeting in mid-March to decide on awards.

As previously reported, we envisaged having around £110K available in this round taking into account monies we had ringfenced to enable work on CAP projects to continue and, in these still uncertain times, to ensure we had monies available in reserve for any applications that might come in under the urgent funding criteria. As part of the decision-making meeting, we will also review the amount ringfenced.

Community Action Planning

We discussed the work done with Helen Keron, the Executive Manager at Glenkens Community & Arts Trust Ltd. to transition the leadership on the Glenkens & District Community Action Plan to GCAT. A key focus has been agreeing the Terms of Reference for the CAP Steering Group which also sets out in some detail information on responsibilities, reporting etc so that all key information can be found in one document.

The next step is to seek new people to join the Community Action Plan Steering Group. In doing this it is important to have a sufficiently diverse group from a geographic/skills/experience perspective and the current Steering Group will work with Helen to achieve this. Details on this can be found at <https://www.glenkenstrust.org.uk/get-involved>

The Housing Needs and Demand Assessment being done by South of Scotland Community Housing is now underway with a survey out for completion. Thank you for the work you have done to promote this important survey and anything further you can do to encourage completion is welcomed and a poster giving information is attached. It is important that we get a good response to evidence of need.

Governance Issues

We had intended to have our AGM on 18 January but decided that, since it was not prudent to hold a face-to-face meeting, we would delay it until it was possible to have an in-person meeting. We have obviously been unable to meet face to face during a period of some change for GDT and we felt that it was better to wait until we could do so, as it was more conducive to full discussion with Members. We have therefore decided to have the AGM on 2nd March at 7 pm in The Smiddy in Balmaclellan. Formal Notice of the Meeting will come out soon.

Potential further developments

We continue to engage with developers across the area. There are two specific projects to mention in this report:

Windy Rig wind farm has now been commissioned and the first payment is expected in summer 2022. Statkraft, the developers, have now commissioned Foundation Scotland to work with the Windy Rig Community Liaison Group to support the process of agreeing the Community Benefit arrangements for Windy Rig. There are nine communities in the the group (Carsphairn, Dalry, Glencairn, Kirkconnel & Kelloholm, Penpont, Tynron, New Galloway & Kells, Sanquhar and New Cumnock). As previously discussed, GDT will take the lead on behalf of Dalry and New Galloway & Kells in line with the arrangements agreed for negotiating community benefit arrangements for our Members, that the benefits for a wind farm in any area should be available across the whole area covered by GDT.

Vattenfall have also recently issued a consultation survey in relation to the Interim Report prepared for them by Stantec on the Community Development Strategy for their proposed development at Whiteneuk. They are inviting feedback by 11 February. Last summer we collated comments from our Member Community Councils on the Initial Report by Stantec and submitted a very detailed response. We were pleased to see the points we raised set out in the Interim Report including the need for the area of benefit to reflect the needs and

priorities of the area and the communities as a whole. They have also recognised that the arrangements have the potential to be combined with other community benefit funds for other developments. Our response to this Interim Report will welcome the way our comments have been reflected in the Interim report and will reinforce that it is important to maintain flexibility on how any arrangements and community priorities will be finalised once we know whether the wind farm is going ahead. This development, if consented, is many years away and a lot is likely to change over the years, so it is important that any arrangements reflect the wishes of the community at that time. We have also been in touch with Glencairn Community Council and Moniaive Initiative to suggest a meeting to discuss how we are all approaching this Interim Report and how we can work together.

Moving to a related topic which is somewhat broader in its focus; as previously reported we have been considering what we and the wider community need to do to prepare for the potential flow of community benefit monies into the area i.e. what can this transformative level of funding do for our communities and how do we achieve this effectively? While identifying the issue is relatively straightforward the work to address this is multi-faceted and involves many parties.

GDT Members have confirmed that we should be the vehicle to deal with community benefit arrangements on their behalf. We have also proposed that any resultant community benefit funds due to come to communities in the GDT area of operation would be paid into a pooled fund. Whilst it is helpful to have reached this position it nevertheless comes with complexity and with this we recognise it is worth taking the time to consider how best to take this work forward.

We wanted to draw on the experiences of other groups across Scotland who have grappled with similar issues. Our partners Foundation Scotland works right across Scotland on these issues and have many years' engagement experience with developers and communities. Discussion with them helped clarify a mutual interest in working on this broader issue, through shared values; for GDT, the issue has been identified through the lens of both minimising risk and maximising pipeline impact; for Foundation Scotland this work represents a continuation of the developing partnership with GDT, where there is a shared interest in maximising community benefit but also in developing good practice in what is a dynamic and complex operating context.

This has led to agreement that Foundation Scotland should take forward work to facilitate a process to support GDT in its role to negotiate community benefits and to maximise the effective use of these funds for the communities as a whole when secured. Planning for this has now started and the work will start in the Spring with the intention of having completed the work in this calendar year. We will work with community stakeholders throughout this process and will seek to engage widely across the community.

Awards

No new awards have been made since the last report.

Areas of focus over the next quarter

As highlighted above we will work with Foundation Scotland to take forward the work on the development pipeline.

We will participate in the Community Liaison Group for Windy Rig to get arrangements in place for the community benefit monies flowing from it.

We will push forward the work on the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment.

AGM to take stock and discuss the future

In March 2022 we will hold decision making meetings in relation to the next funding round.

GLENKENS & DISTRICT HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

TAKE PART NOW!

Housing is a hot topic in many rural areas as Covid impacts the housing market. To find out more about the local picture, GDT has commissioned a 'Housing Needs and Demand Assessment' (HNDA) from South of Scotland Community Housing. An HNDA is the key that unlocks the door to strategic and funding support for community led housing initiatives. The survey covers Balmaghie, Balmaclellan, Carsphairn, Corsock & Kirkpatrick Durham, Crossmichael, St. Johns Town of Dalry, Dunscore, Glencairn, New Galloway & Kells, and Parton CC areas.

Use the link below to take part in the survey, which takes 10 minutes to complete.

If you aren't online and want to take part, please ring GDT on 01557 814 927

tinyurl.com/gdthousing

