



Glenkens & District Trust (SC042489)

Report from meetings – August 2023

We met on 14th August for a Trustee meeting and also to spend some time considering our longer term approach to the opportunities and challenges linked to community benefits over the next few years.

New Trustee

We were delighted to appoint Giles Dearden as an independent Trustee. Giles has lived in Moniaive for a number of years and works for Natural Power so is knowledgeable about the area and brings considerable experience to our group. There is still space for two further independent trustees and information can be found here <https://bit.ly/3E5abNi>

Funding Round - Next closing date

Remember the deadline for application for the next round is **19th September**, with decisions in mid-November.

The annual payment from Blackcraig Wind Farm (Scotland) Ltd has yet to be received but Foundation Scotland is chasing. The small grants communications to Community Councils will come out as soon as the monies are received.

The Glenkens & District Community Fund

As reported in our May meeting we are moving to a new arrangement to reflect the fact that we now have more than one fund within our administration arrangements. We agreed the steps necessary to make all the changes and you will see this reflected in our website and in some promotional work over the next few weeks. This also supports us in our discussions with new developers where we will seek to include them into these arrangements which make accessing funding more straightforward for our community groups.

Arrangements re Community Benefit Monies

We are close to finalising the arrangements with Carsphairn Renewable Energy Ltd (CREFL) in relation to the £18k per annum from Windy Rig Wind Farm coming via CREFL.

Red Rock Power Ltd have decided that a third of their community benefit monies will be paid to GDT. This is c£112k per annum and payment is likely to commence in spring 2026. We are awaiting the legal agreement to document these arrangements and hope to be able to sign this later this year. No formal announcement is expected in advance of this.

Constructive discussions continue with Fred Olsen Renewables and Energie Kontor who have indicated their support for GDT.

Arrangements with Foundation Scotland

We are also close to finalising a new contract with Foundation Scotland to reflect the evolving nature of GDT and the support provided by the team at Foundation Scotland. This will give a firm contractual base for the services provided by them, replacing the previous Memorandum of Understanding. They bring a wealth of experience in community benefit arrangements and are well regarded in the sector. As well as fund administration (including all the financial controls over the money held in the fund etc) they also provide support for the governance arrangements of GDT and maintain the necessary books and records for us.

Community Action Plans

We noted the recent report from the Glenkens & District Community Action Plan Steering Group and also that Dunscore Community Council had recently published their Community Action Plan.

Fund Strategy

As discussed at our AGM we need to review our Fund Strategy in light of our evolving operating context. Blackcraig Windfarm (Scotland) Limited remains the main source of funding that GDT is distributing. This payment is not index linked so in real terms the value of the fund is effectively reducing, while costs to funded projects continue to rise. The donor is not open to renegotiating indexation. While we now receive c £52k from Windy Rig looking at the pipeline there will be no further change in the amount of funds available to us until at least 2026.

Therefore against this backdrop we want to ensure that the fund strategy is in the best shape possible to deliver on GDT's commitment to *ensure that any community benefit funds coming into the area are maximised for the long-term benefit of the local communities, through good stewardship and positive partnership working.*

We discussed the options available to refine our distribution mechanisms with a series of practical steps to ensure that money is focused where it is most needed, can have most impact and funding is not becoming diffused outside the main grant giving rounds. Final

proposals will come back to the Trustees for approval in September and will be communicated after they are approved.

Blackcraig Wind Farm Fund Annual Report

We noted the Report prepared by Foundation Scotland in relation to the above Fund. This includes a substantial amount of information on how the funding has been utilised. This can be found at this link <https://bit.ly/ReportMay2023>.

The Future

With support from Rachel Searle who is Head of Communities and Impact at Foundation Scotland we had a very useful discussion to help shape our priorities going forward. We gained useful insights into what is happening nationally and regionally in relation to community benefit monies from onshore wind farms.

National and regional bodies are becoming much more interested and engaged in how these monies are utilised and it is important that we keep abreast of these discussions while staying focussed on doing the best job we can in relation to the monies we currently and in the future will steward. Linked to this, we are expecting the report from Biggar Economics that was commissioned by South of Scotland Enterprise to be published shortly. The Chair was interviewed by Biggar Economics as part of this process as were Rachel and Suzy from Foundation Scotland.

While GDT and the wider community is well regarded for the work we are all doing it is clear that we need to remain focussed on doing the best job possible and also evolve to meet the challenges. We are very focussed on ensuring that our communities remain at the heart of the decision making in relation to these voluntary payments from developers while recognising that we need to be up to this task.

The Board discussed GDT's response to the changing landscape and agreed to prepare for a further discussion later in the year. In the meantime we will continue to input into discussions with relevant bodies and individuals to ensure we stay abreast of these issues and seek to influence where we can.

Decisions made outwith the Board meeting cycle:

27th June 2023 – Awarded a new grant FR-0072498 to LING of £3,600.00 to extend the Project Officer position to oversee the final stages of the refurbishment of New Galloway Town Hall.

Areas of focus over the next quarter

We will implement the arrangements to reflect the Glenkens & District Community Fund and make the necessary changes to our documentation/website etc.

We will review and agree changes to the Funding Strategy at our September meeting.

We will finalise arrangements with Foundation Scotland

In preparation for the next funding round we will do a detailed review of our budget and funding commitments as well as review the usual Funding Report at our next meeting

We will review the Biggar Economics Report and respond as necessary.

We will continue our work to ensure we evolve to meet the challenges we face.