Glenkens & District Trust (SC042489)

Report from meeting – October 2026

Reports from all our meetings can be found on this page of our website under the heading 'Summaries of our Board Meetings'

We met on 20 October 2026 for a Trustee Meeting. The focus of the evening was on the external environment, governance issues including our Fund Review and succession planning, monitoring ongoing delivery and reviewing the budget for the coming Fund Year.

Trustees

We welcomed Elspeth Sutton as a Trustee. She has taken on the role as the Trustee appointed by Balmaghie Community Council in succession to Lady Susie Ross. We also thanked Susie for her work with GDT.

We were sad to note the death of Ros Hill, who was one of original group involved in setting up GDT and was also a Trustee for several years. We have passed on our condolences to her husband Gordon and family.

We still have a vacant position for an Independent Trustee. There will also be another vacancy when Fiona Smith's term of office finishes on 19th November.

As previously reported, we need someone to bring expertise in financial matters to supplement the current skills on the Board. This is a great opportunity either for someone who wants to use the skills they have acquired over the years or for a younger person to get some experience in overseeing our accounting and financial matters. Most of the actual administration is carried out by Foundation Scotland staff. This important as our fund grows Information on this can be found on our website (https://www.glenkenstrust.org.uk/get-involved).

If you want to get involved in this interesting and rewarding work, please get in touch.

Update

Local issues

There is little to update on in relation to future renewable energy developments as we still await the outcome of the appeal proceedings to the Inner House of the Court of Session by Galloway against Pylons of the Judicial Review of the s.37 consents for the Kendoon to Tongland overhead transmission line. As reported, this is leading to further delay and uncertainty in relation to the timing of those wind farm developments who are dependent on this transmission reinforcement, which makes planning for the future more difficult. The current indication is that those dependent on this transmission capacity will not commission their wind farms until 2031.

Fiona Smith, as Chair, continues to engage with the numerous developers in the area to brief them on the work of GDT and the ambition of the wider Glenkens & District area. She is also introducing Helen Keron as the new Chair from 19 November.

SPEN have recently launched a LORG OVERHEAD LINE & NEW SUBSTATIONS FUND. Foundation Scotland and Local Giving are dealing with the administration with decisions made by a Panel appointed by SPEN. The closing date for applications into this first round is 6 November. This is the first transmission asset community benefit arrangement in our area but there are likely to be further funds as further transmission assets are built.

Although GDT will not have a direct role in administering any of these Transmission community benefit funds, we look forward to working collectively with those involved to maximise the outcomes for our area from these various sources of funds.

Building on our successful Celebration Event in February 2026, we commissioned Becca Nelson to produce a video setting out information on the journey we have been on, our innovative approach and the impact of the fund on the communities of the wider Glenkens. This will be available shortly on our website and You Tube Channel.

After the first Community Learning Forum in Galloway and Upper Nithsdale in July, a further meeting is planned for November. The likely topic will be 'How is an area of benefit agreed, and how can it evolve?' This topic is relevant given the direction of travel of the Good Practice Principles mentioned below and the current review by Dumfries and Galloway Council of the arrangements for Community Councils.

Policy issues

The new Good Practice Principles are expected to be published in November. Fiona Smith has been a member of the Onshore Wind Advisory Group which is a keyway the Scottish Government consults with community members and organisations.

Fiona also continues to monitor the UK Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) in relation to their thoughts/policy on the mandating of community benefit arrangements.

These policy developments will be very important to inform how community benefit arrangements for future renewable energy projects are determined and managed, and we have put a lot of effort into ensuring the community remains at the heart of the decision making on how they are utilised. We feel that the community groups who have

participated have been listened to and we also are grateful for the support of Foundation Scotland, who have also been strong advocates for this.

Education and Training Fund

Since we launched this fund, it has become an important source of funds for individuals across the area. In this funding year, which started on 1 June, we have allocated £50,000 to it (more than 10 % of the total available funds). This is £10,000 more than we allocated in 2025 and 2024. Since June we have made awards to 60 individuals which has totalled £51,530. As the available funds have therefore been spent, we have had to pause any further applications until after the wider Fund Review is complete (see below).

We are delighted with the success of this fund and the feedback we have had from applicants. We can see it makes a real difference. The pausing of the fund has therefore been a difficult decision to make but we do need to ensure we achieve a good balance on the use of the limited funds available to us across the area as a whole.

Fund Review

We previously reported that we are doing a detailed Fund Review and that the Glenkens & District Community Action Plan is currently being refreshed. Both documents will be fundamental components of the Fund Strategy for the Glenkens & District Community Fund going forward.

The process for the CAP refresh includes Roadshows on 7th, 9th and 10th November, so it will not be finalised unto early 2027. Given the importance of it to our next Fund Strategy, we have delayed the Fund Review also until early 2027. This will enable us to take account of the community priorities covered in the refreshed CAP, the priorities across the remainder of the area, and the increased monies we manage because of Benbrack coming into payment.

We want to ensure that the final Fund Strategy reflects the needs and ambition of the wider community and that it can stand the test of time. It is important for applicants and community groups that they know the criteria for awards and that these can be stable to enable effective planning. We will also review the Fund Strategy for the Education and Training Fund at the same time. Therefore, the Spring 2027 round of open grant making will be assessed against the current Fund Strategy, and the new Strategy and associated criteria will be published soon after that and used for the Autumn 2027 assessments.

Funding, Awards and Budget

We reviewed reports prepared by Foundation Scotland setting out information on the current position on awards and funding and the monitoring reports received on awards made. Reading the feedback is a really rewarding part of the job and it motivates us to do the best job possible with the fund. We particularly welcome the time that goes into preparing the monitoring reports, primarily from volunteers. It is a great source of inspiration on what this community does so well, but also the openness in sharing what didn't go so well helps us all learn.

One area we feel needs more focus is better promotion of what projects are funded by the Glenkens & District Community Fund. We have perhaps not made our requirements as accessible and clear as they could be. We are therefore producing a short guidance note for successful applicants to assist them on this. This will supplement the requirements already set out as a condition in our grant award letters. We are also arranging for small plaques that can be used by organisations on capital builds.

Governance Issues

We agreed a number of issues related to Fiona Smith stepping down and Helen Keron assuming the Chair role on 19th November.

We have also produced a document 'Key Principles and Past Decisions Guidance for Trustees'. This has been published on our website www.glenkenstrust.org.uk/funding so that these are transparent to the wider community. As we evolve and change, and the people involved change, we felt it was important to document our approach and the reasons for that approach, so that these can be taken account of in future decisions.

Awards between meetings

None

Areas of focus over the next quarter

We have our decision-making meeting on the Autumn 2026 Round on 10 November.

We will continue to monitor the policy developments and engage with relevant parties to ensure that the community voice is heard.

We will carry out our review of the Fund Strategy informed by our own Fund Review and the Community Action Plans across the area of benefit

We will continue to actively engage with the numerous developers in the area and maintain up to date information on their status. We will seek to get them to enter into Memorandum of Agreements for upcoming developments.

We will communicate the change of Chair to all relevant parties.