

CARSPHAIRN COMMUNITY BENEFIT CASE STUDY



OVERVIEW

Development: Wether Hill
Developer: ScottishPower Renewables
Technology: Onshore Wind
Installed Capacity: 18MW
Location: Dumfries and Galloway
Date of completion: 2007

ScottishPower Renewables has 29 operational windfarms across the UK and to date has provided more than £11,500,000 in community benefit to the communities surrounding their windfarms.

BACKGROUND

As a developer who is firmly committed to the responsible development of renewable energy, with over £1 billion invested in Renewables projects across the UK, ScottishPower Renewables work with local communities to provide benefits in a number of ways such as supporting specific projects and providing local community benefit funds.

One such project is ScottishPower Renewables Wether Hill Windfarm in Dumfries and Galloway, which has contributed more than £380,000 locally. One of the recipient communities is in Carsphairn. The Parish of Carsphairn is around 100 square miles in size, and currently has a population of around 200 people.

To support the administration of funds received, the community has set up a trust to manage funds from Wether Hill windfarm and any other windfarms in their vicinity - Carsphairn Renewable Energy Fund Limited (CREFL). CREFL has received almost £140,000 from Wether Hill Windfarm which has contributed to a number of projects which have helped the community to enhance the Carsphairn area.



BENEFITS

The positive impact for a small community such as Carsphairn can be felt in all aspects of community life, from creating and maintaining key services to supporting educational and recreational pursuits.

Taking a walk around Carsphairn it is easy for locals to spot where the community benefit has contributed to much needed work. The village hall has been largely upgraded with funding going towards new floors and tiling; exterior and interior decoration and the installation of a new heating system and insulation to improve energy efficiency.

The village hall is not the only place to have received funds for a facelift; Carsphairn Parish Church has welcomed repair and redecoration, mechanisation of the church bell as well as funding for social events.

Billy McCreath, CREFL Chair, said of Lagwyne Hall:

“The village hall is owned and run by the community, and is one of the best maintained village halls around.”

The heart of many small communities is the local community shop and this is true in the case of Carsphairn. The community benefit received enabled the community to have the ability to own the shop and ensure that this service was maintained with in the village. Funds were used to cover the legal fees for the contract, install a new boiler and general maintenance as well as the re-slating of the rear and front roof.

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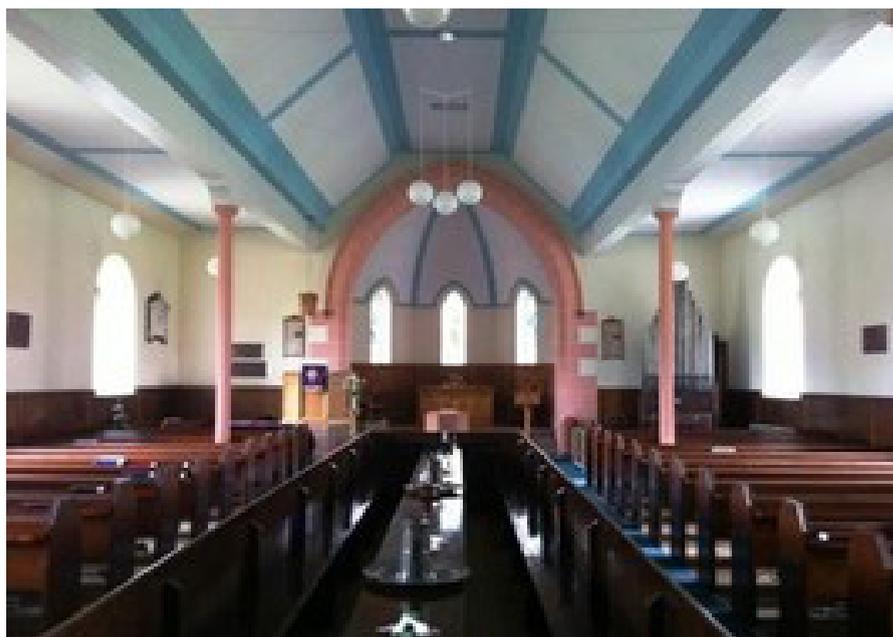
Local outdoor spaces have also been transformed thanks to such initiatives as the Carsphairn Community Garden Project. Using community benefit funds to purchase the community garden land, fencing and gates, dyke maintenance, drainage works and groundwork, turned a once derelict piece of land into real community asset that can be enjoyed by all.

“The community owns the shop and it is run for the benefit of the community, because of windfarm funds” Billy McCreath, CREFL Chair

The opportunity to positively influence the local primary school has also been taken, in the case of Carsphairn Primary School. The School have taken advantage of Community benefit funding a school grounds project and playground bench, the purchase of compost bins for the gardening club and contributions towards a mountain bike outing.

As well as helping the local Primary School, community benefit funds have also been used to contribute to further education grants. A total of 21 local people have enjoyed grants to fund their studies and enhance their future employment opportunities.

Carsphairn is a small community with a beautiful landscape and as such every effort has been made to ensure some of the community benefit funding has gone towards bringing in visitors by supporting the Carsphairn Heritage group to host annual exhibitions.



Community benefit has been used to ease a lot of the practicalities of organising such events such as security requirements as well as helping to raise the profile of events and advertise them by funding Information boards and a new Heritage centre sign.

Other groups which have been supported to thrive in Carsphairn include the Pastoral and Horticultural Society. Support helps this organisation hold a successful Carsphairn show each June. Community benefit has contributed towards the purchase of sheep pens, new staging tables, a marquee for craft fairs, catering and hospitality, facilities for the show field and contributions towards printing the show catalogue.

Billy McCreath, CREFL Chair,

“Windfarm community benefit has made a tremendous difference to keep the community alive, without funds I doubt there would be much off a community at all...the shop and village hall would be long gone.”

Carsphairn is a prime example of a small community fully utilising community benefit provided by developers such as ScottishPower Renewables and Wether Hill Windfarm to reach its full potential.

This case study has been created under the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme.

The Community and Renewable Energy Scheme is delivered on behalf of the Scottish Government by the Local Energy Scotland consortium:

