

Lairg Community Fund



Year 9 Fund report

1st January 2019 to 31st December 2019

Fund Overview

This report is for Lairg Wind Farm Ltd and the Lairg Community Council to report on activity carried out by the Lairg Community Fund for the period 1st January 2019 to 31st December 2019.

Lairg Wind Farm Ltd owns the Lairg Wind Farm, the three wind farm site just outside the village of Lairg. Lairg Wind Farm Ltd makes an annual donation to the community through the Lairg Community Fund.

The Fund is held and administered by Foundation Scotland who receive and process applications. Decisions on awards are made by the Lairg Community Council acting as a local advisory Panel to Foundation Scotland. The Community Council is appointed to represent residents living in the Lairg area.

The Community Council has chosen to consider applications in private after its normal meetings which are held approximately six to eight times per year. The deadline for applications to the Lairg Community Fund is one calendar month before the Community Council is due to meet. There are seven Community Councillors. Membership is open to anyone on the electoral role who can stand for election to the Community Council every four years, and elections are run by The Highland Council. The Community Council membership was renewed in November 2019. The Community Council is paid a secretariat fee for the extra work it incurs in carrying out its role in administering the Fund.

Since the Lairg Community Benefit Fund launched in 2011 the Fund has awarded 80 grants, distributing over £116,000 to community groups in the area. This year saw four awards totalling £8,750 distributed to a range of community projects.

Financial Statements for period 01/01/2019 to 31/12/2019

The year 9 donation from Lairg Wind Farm Ltd was received on 27th February 2019 which includes the Foundation Scotland administration fee.

The Year 9 contribution to Foundation Scotland for fund management was £2,684.21 (10% of the Fund). The Community Council secretariat fee was £603.95. After these deductions, the Year 9 amount available to distribute as awards was £24,690.79.

Opening Balance as at 1st January 2019		£12,825.71
Income		
Year 9 - Lairg Windfarm Ltd Annual Donation	£26,842.11	
Year 9 - interest	£17.86	
Grant Underspend: Lairg Friendship Club	£196.47	
TOTAL INCOME		£27,056.44
Expenditure		
Grants awarded in period	£8,750.00	
Year 9 - Foundation Scotland fee	£2,684.21	
Year 9 – Community Council Secretariat fee	£603.95	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		£12,038.16
Closing balance as at 31st December 2019		£27,843.99

What difference did the Fund make during Year 9?

During this reporting period the Panel has considered three applications all of which were awarded. There was also one further award provided to the Community Council to operate a micro-grant scheme to allow smaller projects to proceed.

The Fund supports projects that impact on many different aspects of community life. Foundation Scotland aligns community benefit grants from the Lairg Community Fund to five headline themes.

The themes are:

1. Adequate provision to improve life chances.
2. Strengthen and diversify local economy.
3. Enhanced community life.
4. Activities and Services.
5. Support Development of Community Assets.

These are the four projects which received an award aligned to one of the five themes:

Organisation	Grant Awarded	Beneficiaries
1. Lairg Community Council	£1,500 for micro-grants 2019	900 Lairg residents
<p>Theme 3: Enhanced community life.</p> <p>The Lairg Microgrant makes £1,250 available from the Lairg Fund to distribute through the Lairg Community Council. Microgrants are designed to release small amounts of funding into communities by supporting individuals or small groups of local people and neighbours who want to run local projects that benefit other community members. Examples of previous awards include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lairg Learning Centre - £250 to put staff through PVG • Lairg Community Association - £230 to buy a projector and screen • Lairg and District Community Initiatives - £250 to buy a bird hide 		
2. Lairg Community Association	£2,500 to contribute to the cost of replacing the lighting in the Centre with LED lighting.	900 Lairg residents
<p>Theme 5: Support Development of Community Assets.</p> <p>Lairg Community Association operates the Lairg Community Centre which offers rental space for anybody in the community and is used by a variety of local groups such as a baby and toddler group, friendship clubs, a lunch club, an indoor bowling club, a pilates group and an art group amongst others. As a large facility with 157 lights the annual utility costs are significant. The Committee identified that replacing the lights to LEDs throughout the facility could save up to 50% on these bills. An award of £2,500 will enable the lights to be upgraded throughout the facility with the exception of the main hall which is going to need a different solution. A retired electrician has volunteered to undertake the work.</p>		
3. Light up Lairg	£2,500 to repair and re-design the group's faulty older-style lights.	900 Lairg residents
<p>Theme 3: Enhanced Community Life</p> <p>In January 2019 Light Up Lairg was revitalised having lapsed through a lack of volunteers. The original Christmas lights were designed and made by a local smiddy in 2001 and these needed to be refurbished. Children from Rosehall and Lairg primary school helped to design the new lights through a summer competition. This grant along with local fundraising events would enable the group to have its new lights ready for Christmas 2019.</p>		
4. Lairg and District Community Initiatives	£2,500 to contribute to running costs including staff costs and volunteer expenses.	900 Lairg residents
<p>Theme 2: Strengthen and diversify local economy.</p> <p>Lairg and District Community Initiatives is the driving force behind a number of community projects. It had reached a critical point in a number of significant projects. The group could demonstrate a clear need for the continuation of Development Officer support to ensure that community benefits are maximised through the delivery and implementation phases. This grant would compliment grants from other funders to ensure the Development Officer could be retained for another year.</p>		

Project Feedback

In general awards are made to projects that expect to complete within 12 months. A further three months is given for awardees to submit a completion report which outlines how the award has made a difference.

The following two projects have received an award from the Lairg Community Fund during the last two years.

Lairg in Bloom received an award in 2018 of £2,000 to buy galvanised static benches to use inside their polytunnel and to replace some hanging baskets.

Lairg in Bloom is a small dedicated group of local people who work throughout the spring and summer to provide floral displays of hanging baskets and planters throughout the village. The group receives a tremendous amount of support from other residents and businesses with the correct machinery to get various jobs done.

Having erected a polytunnel to provide a growing space so that the group to spend less money buying developed plants, instead being able to buy smaller cheaper plants which they can then nurture and bring on themselves. This meant that the group could consider extending the floral displays throughout the village without increasing the running costs.

The polytunnel had been in place for around a year at the time the application was submitted, so the group had time to consider working methods and space in the polytunnel. The group had considered the best way to increase the amount of useable space in the polytunnel and also to provide suitable work space for a range of users who might find it comfortable to work at different heights, whilst still allowing floor space for users who are accustomed to working with their plants on the ground. The final decision was to buy three galvanised static benches to place inside the polytunnel. With the remaining monies the group was able to buy a range of hanging baskets to add to the existing baskets and enable extra places in the village to receive a floral display.



Above: The polytunnel before the shelving was installed showing workers using stacks of wood and pallets to work at a comfortable height.



Above: Floral displays ready to locate around the village.

Jackie Young, the groups secretary said: *"The whole community has benefited as our polytunnel is free for anyone to use. We would not have been able to fund our project without the award."*

Lairg and District Learning Centre received £2,500 towards the cost of improving the Centre's website and social media presence to enable people to access more resources and enrol in classes online.

Lairg Learning Centre's main aim is to provide a local facility along with the necessary resources to support lifelong learning and skills development. The Centre receives over 4,000 requests for learning each year and has a staff base which has gained considerable local expertise over the years running a range of exciting and educational courses, events and workshops on a huge variety of subjects throughout the year.

The Centres main funding source is a Climate Challenge Fund through Scottish Government. In line with its commitments to the Climate Challenge Fund the staff were seeking ways to reduce their carbon footprint. They identified a potential saving if an online course booking system could be developed to replace the need to print and post paper copies of booking forms. A number of other benefits were also suggested which could be undertaken as part of a website redevelopment including being able to have an online shop to enable a Social Enterprise to develop selling upcycled goods or craft items made by learners. Staff also felt that a more user friendly website would reduce the amount of time spent responding to enquiries about services as people will be able to see it all on line rather than phoning or emailing. Updating the website also created an opportunity to streamline the website so that it would appear on google searches where it previous had not. Before proceeding, staff took advice from an ICT Advisor provided by Business Gateway to ensure their proposal had merit and would be worth the investment.

As the project proceeded it transpired that simply updating the website would not be possible its software was out-of-date, and the original designer was unable to complete the work. In the end the website was completely replaced, now students are able to book online, access the prospectus and an online calendar, see maps to outreach class venues, and so much more. Staff have been trained on the website's upkeep so ongoing costs are as minimal as possible.

Jane Dixon, the Centre's Manager said: *"All our students and tutors have benefitted, as they are now able to access more resources and information from the website. This includes downloading our prospectus, booking onto classes, an online calendar which shows our activities at a glance, a search so that students can look for a specific type of class by category, such as community learning, or more specific classes, such as writing. The Learning Centre is busier, as more online traffic can find our website now, because search engine optimisation has been addressed. People are able to find us, and this leads to more classes being full, with funders getting better value for money. Also, as the Centre grows, so the professionalism and upskilling of staff becomes more important. Our website is the access point for most people and organisations, and it better represents our charity, our aims, our activities, and how we are able to meet community need.*



*Left:
Lairg and District Learning Centre staff representing the organisation at the Highland Third Sector Interface 2019 award ceremony where they won the 'Community Initiative' award; an award for an initiative which has been designed and delivered by a community, geographical or thematic, which can demonstrate tangible and evidenced benefits to the community in tackling a community need, issue or vision.*